

On Creativity

Creativity - the attempt to expand the boundaries of a domain

Creativity is to cultural evolution as genetic mutation is to biological evolution
(Donald T. Campbell)

Cultural creativity vs. personal creativity

To excel in a domain and push its boundaries, one needs talent, training, and a lot of luck.

Creativity research looks into the lives of very creative persons to learn how creativity works. It can provide prescriptions for how to make day-to-day experiences more vivid, more enjoyable, more rewarding.

Based on research by Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi
Author of “Creativity: Flow and The Psychology of Discovery and Invention”

Every person has potentially the psychic energy to lead a creative life.

Four major sets of obstacles prevent many from expressing the potential:

- being exhausted by too many external demands, not activating creative energy
- being easily distracted and having trouble protecting creative energy
- laziness or lack of discipline to control flow of energy
- not knowing what to do with the creative energy one has

The brains of highly creative individuals don't differ much from other people's brains.

The major difference between people consists in how much uncommitted attention they have left over to deal with novelty.

Cultivation of curiosity and interest, allocation of attention to things for their own sake.

How to make the pursuit of new knowledge and new experiences self-sustaining?

- Sense of purpose, a goal that makes you get up in the morning.
- Things that we do well become enjoyable.
- To keep enjoying things, increase complexity over time.

Creative energy needs to be protected from distractions and interruptions.

- Reduce the amount of decisions.
- You need to decide whether it's the right time to be open or to be focused.
- Find out what time is the best for you to be creative.
- Make space for reflection and relaxation.
- Shape your space.
- Increase self-knowledge: What do you like and what do you hate about life?
- Do more of the things you love, less of the ones you hate.

Personality traits: Internalize supporting structures into your personality

- Develop what you lack
- Shift often from openness to discipline
- Aim for complexity: differentiated and integrated at the same time

Problem Finding

Creative people are constantly surprised. They don't assume they understand what's happening around them. They question the obvious, ... because they see the shortcomings of accepted explanations before the rest does.

Creative problems generally emerge from areas of life that are personally important.

The first step in solving a problem is to find it, to formulate the vague unease into a concrete problem that can be turned into solutions.

- Find a way to express what moves you.
- Look at problems from as many viewpoints as possible.
- Figure out the implementations of the problem
- Implement the solution.

Divergent Thinking

- Produce as many ideas as possible-
- Have as many different ideas as possible.
- Try to produce unlikely ideas.