
CREATIVITY SPHERE

*Creativity is the ultimate skill of mankind
(However there is nothing called ultimate in creativity)*

July 2007 / 48

Back to the basics What is creativity? *(continued from CS 47)*

Creativity is listening for smells. The king of Syracuse ordered Archimedes to find out whether his crown is made of pure gold or it is mixed with something else. He was doubting the integrity of the goldsmith who made the crown. Archimedes was pondering over the problem for sometime. His mind was prepared – prepared with a problem, to receive ideas and for the thrill. And inspiration struck him one day in the form of intuition when he was in the bath tub. He felt something pushing him from below and the water over flowing from the tub. “Eureka,” he ran thro’ the street forgetting to wear cloths. He was in the bathroom and at that time he got an idea and he recognised it. He could have rejected the thought by saying, “No, I don’t want any disturbance, I am taking bath.” Unfortunately several of us are doing this, by not recognizing the idea at that moment and loosing it for ever.

Intuition is the good work of the subconscious mind. The conscious mind, when faced with a problem and could not find an immediate way out, leaves the

problem to the subconscious mind (by deliberately shifting the attention away, to something totally different.)

Creativity is expecting the unexpected: Several ideas are accidental. “Serendipity,” it is called, is the faculty of making happy and unexpected discoveries by accidents. Sir C V Raman was studying the effect of diffraction of light thro’ different materials. The amount of light being lost varied from material to material. Suddenly a spark strikes, the amount of light lost depends on the constitution of the material – a tool for analysis of material comes through, as Raman Effect.

The torch shown on a cat reflected back to stumble upon the idea of the ‘cat’s eye’ road markings. Failed experiments at 3 M Laboratories led to “Post it” slips.



Selfishness is not living as one wishes to live, it is asking others to live as one wishes to live – Ocsar Wilde

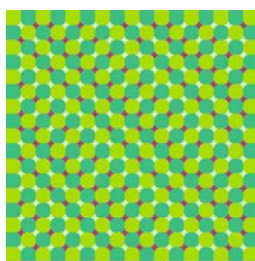
We always do things expecting something and if we don't get what we are looking for, we ignore it as useless. Steel samples rejected as useless for making the gun barrel ended up as stainless steel. The scientist who was developing microwave communication systems made the Microwave Ovens.

Creativity is solving hitherto unsolved problems, developing novel solutions to problems others have solved differently, or developing original and novel products. Scientists practice this type of creativity.

Some **strategies** followed by organisations can also be considered as creativity. **Creativity is making your own product obsolete**, as practiced by Gillette, and several others. Gillette's market leader Excel was superceded by the Sensor and the Sensor2. 3M has a policy that 30% of their revenues should come from products introduced in the market during the last 6 months. And how do they achieve it – by making their own successful products obsolete. Intel's philosophy is to cannibalize its own business by constantly bringing out better processors to replace the ones that are already market leaders. When these companies launch a new product, they are already working on the product that will replace it. Microsoft launched Windows Vista in January 2007, but they had already started working, from October 2006 on the next operating system that is going to replace Vista.

Creativity is also the attitude of not accepting the existing as best. Despite being the number one in the market as the largest selling vehicle in SUV category, Toyota stopped the production of their model "Qualis." In the Indian business scenario, it was unheard.

Creativity is challenging the things that are accepted. Honda is working on vehicles that drive with endlessly reusable power source.



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They believe that challenge is what drives them to turn dreams into reality.

Gravity for instance, is taken for granted, as a fact of life. But it was recently reported that Boeing, the world's largest manufacturer, has admitted it is working on experimental anti-gravity projects that could overturn a century of conventional aerospace propulsion technology if the science underpinning them can be engineered to hardware. Boeing's Phantom Works advanced research and development facility in Seattle is trying to solicit the services of a Russian scientist who claims he has developed anti-gravity devices.

Creativity is a dynamic tension between several opposing forces – freedom versus discipline, speculation versus safekeeping, divergence versus convergence, relaxation versus alertness, feeling versus thinking, learning versus problem solving, ideating versus evaluating, and experiencing versus abstract thinking.

Creativity is a state of being. Abraham Maslow, the father of humanist psychology, has identified creativity with openness in expressing feelings, receptivity to receive ideas, concern for others, desire to grow as a person and actualize ones potential, and so forth.

To conclude, several of these definitions are incomplete, as they look up on creativity only in terms of novelty and usefulness or elegance of a product. Creativity is more than that, in fact it is the **process** – the extent of imagination and divergent thinking, playful, 'if-suppose' combinations, the relating of remote ideas and so forth.

The list of definitions of creativity is also incomplete. In fact, that is what creativity is, a means to an end and not an end in itself! *

The way to get started is to quit talking and begin doing - Walt Disney

HOWS'T?

- * The later books are not as good as the first one of many authors
- * Twins are always dressed alike
- * Fans are installed in the middle of the room, but no one ever sits there
- * Whenever we are not using the air-conditioner, we use the geyser
- * Glossiness makes a good friend with stiffness, but not with softness

LETTERS

Channabasaveshwar, Bangalore: Your articles are real eye openers!. They have helped me to look at things from different perspective. I am experiencing enormous peace of mind at home and office after reading them.

Secrets of a sexy marriage (CS 47), were really sexy. Perhaps this is an excellent medicine for the ill health of divorce. The paragraph "nobody's perfect" makes lot of sense. Trying to change or improve the other really won't help. One has to change first to see a change in others.

Abbasuddin Ahmed,: I go through CS earnestly and do find it interesting. Many of the things written or mentioned have become a part of us but the main thing which we all must remember is that if we want to grow as in success or whatever we have to be open to "CHANGE." This I feel is what many people do not want to accept. That's where Complacency creeps in!

Dharma Rao, Hyderabad: I am Faculty Head HR in a reputed Institute at Hyderabad teaching MBA students.

Copies of Creativity Sphere are very useful for me for teaching the subject on Creativity. There are so many aspects to learn and teach. I have downloaded the articles and took print-outs. Kindly continue sending these copies.

S K Mukherjee, Durgapur: I believed some people, they are friends, and they deceived me. I'm not able to forget them nor able to forgive.

Both are same, Sunil. If you can forgive them, you will be able to forget them. If you are not able to forgive them, they are still the winners and you continue to be the victim. Of course, forgiving calls for greatest strength.

Sunil, decide first whether their friendship is more important and you would like to continue. If you answer affirmatively, forget about that money and continue with their friendship taking care not to get deceived again. If you think that is difficult, forget about material losses and continue to be friendly, and don't get bothered, if you are deceived again. Alternately, if you think you want terminate their friendships, again there are two alternatives. First one is to get that money back, by hook or crook. The second one is to forgive them, forget that money and also their friendship.

However, don't come to the conclusion that the world is bad!

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Perpetuation is what other people know about you. Humour is what you know about yourself - **Lois McMaster Bujold**

I Couldn't really change till...

(From Creativity Sphere 26, September 2002, Source: Annual report of "Paripurnata" , Kolkata, a half-way-home in pursuit of rehabilitation)

I was a neurotic for years – anxious, depressed and selfish. And everyone kept telling me to change.

And I resented them, but agreed with them, and wanted to change, but couldn't, no matter how I tried.

What hurt the most was that, like the others my closest friend kept urging me to change. So I felt powerless and trapped.

One day he said. "Don't change; I love you as you are."

Those were music to my ears. "Don't change, don't change... I love you as you are."

I relaxed. I came alive. And suddenly I changed.

Now I know that I couldn't really change till I found someone to love me whether I changed or not.

I find lot of meaning in this piece. We always put a condition for a change. If you get 90% marks (if you change), I will give you a bicycle (I will love you.) It's like a business. I will give you this if you give me that. How many bargains and negotiations we make with our spouse, children, team members, friends, parents and others.

Mother Teresa always used to tell "Love all." At that time I didn't realise the meaning.

LETTERS.....

Krishnakumar Ramanathan, Thane: This is a great endeavour. It is nice to know what great minds are thinking, and an opportunity to get inspired.

I have a proposal, a suggestion: Why don't you publish a Real-life practical problem (Work-related), and seek answers or solutions from your reader community? The best replies can be published in the next issue. The person seeking an answer can also announce a reward for the solution.

Arvind Khare, Nashik: Your training programme was an eye-opener. It was really a shock to know as how many assumptions I am carrying. How to identify and overcome them?

Awareness is the first step to change. Owning the deficiencies and developing a deep driving desire to overcome them are the next steps. The next key step is action.

More often the way we frame a problem contains an assumption that prevents us from solving it. In the Middle Ages the definition of astronomy was 'the study of how the heavenly bodies move around the Earth.' The definition implied that the Earth was at the centre of the universe – which was the prevailing view at the time. So whatever was found was garbage as it was confined to this assumption. Had it been like 'the study of how the heavenly bodies move,' mankind would have progressed farther. So in every situation seeing upon the purpose, and not as an activity is one way to come out of assumptions.

The greater danger for most of us is not that our aim is too high and we miss it, but that it is too low and we reach it – Michelangelo

PUZZLE - WRONG NUMBER (CS 47)

The marketing department of a major bank prepared a direct mail campaign to launch a new product. They printed over two million brochures but were horrified to find a mistake in the brochure – it had a wrong digit in the telephone number. Callers would get a dead line instead of the call centre.

What should they do first – fire the marketing manager or reprint the brochures?

ANSWER: The marketing manager called the telephone company that issued numbers and bought the wrong number. The line was redirected to the call centre and the mailing was sent out.

CONGRATS, A Selvam of Vijayawada, Sanjay Kumar of Ranchi, Arun Mishra of Pune, Kishore Ranjan of Chennai, S Vadivelu of Belgaum, Varun Maity of Silvassa, Mohan Das of Kochi et.al have sent in correct answers.

Channabasaveshwar, Bangalore: Get a rubber stamp made of the correct no. and put the no. stamping on the brochures.

Rajgopala Rangnath,: The question is answer specific. What's the first action? Would the CEO of the Bank waste his time on such non-important question at this given time? The question being answer specific, calls for only one of two actions, both wrong for the CEO. It is something like the lawyer asking the husband in a divorce proceeding." Have you stopped beating your wife? answer yes or no." Creativity lies not in the question; but outside of it.

R Sreedharan, Chennai: One is I would look at the cost of printing 2 million copies of Phone No. alone as errata and supply along with the brochures, the other one is can I get the printed no. from the phone company for some time.

Rakesh Khandelwal, Chennai: *writes the following in the context of the discussions in CS 46 Option in answer sheet:*

"The silencer fitted gun missed the target, so all the five are alive."

Above sentence tell us that all five are alive in case silencer gun missed the target. But question indicates one pigeon dead.

Hence answer will never be five. It will always be less than five. Answer will be five in case when the dead body falls from the roof to floor. But question is not defining the location – it may be roof or anywhere else.

PUZZLE for this issue

THE SCHOOL INSPECTION

A school teacher knew that the school superintendent would visit the next day. The superintendent would ask questions such as spelling or mental arithmetic of the class, and the teacher would choose a pupil to answer. The teacher wanted to give a best impression of the school. What instructions did she give the children in order to create the best impression and maximize the chances that the right answer was given to each question?

Send your ideas before the publication of the September issue of CS.

Let us not look back in anger, or forward with fear, but around in awareness -
James Thurber



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