

Creative and Innovative Thinking

Dear Friends, Let's start off with the definition of creativity; Creativity is, simply, "improvement." You don't have to be a nuclear scientist or an artist in order to be creative. All you have to do is develop the ability to improve your situation, wherever you are and whatever you are doing. All great fortunes were started with ideas for improving something in some way.

What is Creativity?

- **Ability:** A simple definition is that creativity is the ability to imagine or invent something new. As we will see below, creativity is not the ability to create out of nothing (only God can do that), but the ability to generate new ideas by combining, changing, or reapplying existing ideas. Some creative ideas are astonishing and brilliant, while others are just simple, good, practical ideas that no one seems to have thought of yet.
- **An Attitude:** Creativity is also an attitude: the ability to accept change and newness, a willingness to play with ideas and possibilities, a flexibility of outlook, the habit of enjoying the good, while looking for ways to improve it. We are socialized into accepting only a small number of permitted or normal things, like chocolate-covered strawberries, for example. The creative person realizes that there are other possibilities, like peanut butter and banana sandwiches, or chocolate-covered prunes.
- **Process:** Creative people work hard and continually to improve ideas and solutions, by making gradual alterations and refinements to their works. Contrary to the mythology surrounding creativity, very, very few works of creative excellence are produced with a single stroke of brilliance or in a frenzy of rapid activity. Much closer to the real truth are the stories of companies who had to take the invention away from the inventor in order to market it because the inventor would have kept on tweaking it and fiddling with it, always trying to make it a little better.

Creative Thinking

An innate talent that you were born with and a set of skills that can be learned, developed, and utilized in daily problem solving.

Creativity can be perceived by the following:

- Doing things differently
- Utilizing existing resources in novel ways
- Accepting change and new things
- Creativity is the act of turning new and imaginative ideas into reality. Creativity involves two processes: thinking, then producing.

The problem is not that you don't have the ideas but, rather, that you fail to act on those ideas. Most people dismiss their own ideas because they think that those ideas cannot be very valuable if they were the ones who thought of them. **If you have ideas, but don't act on them, you are imaginative but not creative.**

Why to be creative?

Progress would not have taken place; we human might be dwelling in jungles.

History of human civilization is a history of human creativity which includes the following:

- Problem solving
- Decision making
- Self expression
- Change and innovation

Creative Solution

Creative solutions are more than ideas - they must work in the real world. A creative solution has three attributes:

- It is new (otherwise it would not be creative).
- It is useful, in that it solves the problem (otherwise it would not be a solution).
- It is feasible, given the messy real world constraints like money and time.

Types of Creativity

- Business Model Innovation involves changing the way business is done in terms of capturing value.
- Process Innovation involves the implementation of a new or significantly improved production or delivery method.
- Product Innovation, involves the introduction of a new good or service that is new or substantially improved. This might include improvements in functional characteristics, technical abilities, ease of use, or any other dimension.
- Service Innovation, is similar to product innovation except that the innovation relates to services rather than to products

Blocks and Blockbusters to Creativity

Block	Blockbuster
Making assumptions	Checking assumptions
Following the rules	Breaking the rules
Over-reliance on logic	Use imagination and intuition
Fear of failure	Risk-taking culture

Three Components of Creativity:

- Expertise is, in a word, knowledge – technical, procedural, and intellectual
- Motivation: Not all motivation is created equal. An inner passion to solve the problem at hand leads to solutions far more creative than do external rewards, such as money.
- Creative Thinking Skills: Creative thinking skills determine how flexible and imaginatively people approach problems.

Tools for Defining Problem:

Kipling Method: Rudyard Kipling used a set of questions (5W + 1H) to help trigger ideas and solve problems.

- One approach with this is to use the questions in a particular order to help guide you through a sequence of thought towards a complete answer, such as: What is the problem? Where is it happening? When is it happening? Why is it happening? How can you overcome this problem? Who do you need to get involved? When will you know you have solved the problem?

Problem Statement

- When starting to solve a creative problem it is a good idea to define the problem you are trying to solve.
- Start by discussing the overall context and situation in which the creative activity is aimed.
- Write down more than one draft of the problem statement. Remember that defining the problem is almost a complete project in itself and you may benefit from going through iterative stages of convergence and divergence.
- Listen and write down everybody's opinion of what the problem really is. Find the points of agreement and then discuss the differences.
- Stating the problem may seem obvious, yet many creative efforts fail because the problem is either unclear or it is focused in the wrong place.
- The way you state a problem is half the problem and half the solution. Once you have identified a good problem statement, sometimes the solution is so obvious that you need little, if any, creative thought afterwards

Challenge Method

- Use it to force yourself or other people out of a thinking rut.
- Use it to test out ideas for validity.
- Use it to challenge the problem or situation you are considering when initially defining the problem.
- Select all or part of the problem domain that you are going to challenge. Perhaps it is something that has been particularly difficult to be creative around.

- Find something to challenge and question it deeply. You can challenge many things, including:
 1. Concepts - and broad ideas
 2. Assumptions - and beliefs that are not questioned
 3. Boundaries - across which you do not yet cross
 4. Impossible' - things that are assumed cannot happen
 5. 'Can't be done' - things that are assumed cannot be done
 6. 'Essentials' - things that you assume cannot be disposed of
 7. Sacred cows - that cannot be challenged
 8. One way in which we deal with the complexity of the world is to make assumptions about many things. Our pattern-matching ability is a great help in allowing us to take short-cuts but it often ends up in us not noticing many things.
 9. If we do not take deliberate and conscious action, our subconscious will let many assumptions pass by unnoticed.

Tools for Creating New Ideas:

- **Attribute Listing:** Use Attribute Listing when you have a situation that can be decomposed into attributes - which itself can be a usefully creative activity. Particularly useful with physical objects. You can use it elsewhere, too. Highly rational style. Suitable for people who prefer analytic approaches. Good for engineering-type situations.

For the object or thing in question, list as many attributes as you can. It can also be useful to first break the object down into constituent parts and look at the attributes of each part in question. For each attribute, ask 'what does this give'? Seek the real value of each attribute. It is also possible that attributes have 'negative value' -- i.e.. they detract from the overall value of the object.

Finally look for ways in which you can modify the attributes in some way. Thus you can increase value, decrease negative value or create new value.

- **Brainstorming:**
 1. Brainstorming is probably the best-known creative tool.
 2. It can be used in most groups, although you will probably have to remind them of the rules.

3. It is best done using an independent facilitator who manages the process (so the group can focus on the creative task).
4. Typically takes around 30 minutes to an hour.

- **Visioning:** A vision is a 'motivating view of the future'. It creates pull. It gives direction.

1. Imagine brilliant and innovative future. Think about what you are trying to achieve.
2. Go out into the future. Look around and see what is there.

BASIC IDEAS TO IMPROVE CREATIVITY

- Stimulate your senses.
- Have visual focus.
- Give yourself the gift of free time.
- Enjoy Privacy.
- Accept all ideas.
- Try some background music.
- Push beyond the obvious
- Avoiding too much structuring.
- Develop creative hobbies.
- Ask inventive, open questions.
- Have a creative atmosphere.
- Get close to nature.
- • Focus on efforts not on results.
- Inspire perseverance.
- Learn by doing.

Creativity Killers

- Lack of Leisure Time.
- Over Control.
- Competitions – Putting yourself in a win –lose situations.
- Restricting choice of activities.
- Availability of readymade electrical equipments.
- Rewards - The excessive use of prizes. . . deprives a person of the intrinsic pleasure of creative activity.

Myths about Creativity

- The smarter you are, the more creative you are
- The young are more creative than the old
- Creativity is reserved for the few – the flamboyant risk takers
- Creativity is a solitary act
- You can't manage creativity

Remember you are a Genius

You were born with the potential for exceptional creativity. But creative abilities are latent. They are like muscles that grow with use. You can increase your creative powers by using them, over and over, in every situation, deliberately and specifically, until creativity and a creative response to life is as natural to you as breathing in and out is. There are very few things that you can do that can have a more powerful positive impact on your entire life than becoming excellent in creative thinking. And you can if you think you can.

By: NTC Team

Note: Hope you liked the content, we value your feedback.

In case of any query or suggestion feel free to write on email: info@ntc-india.co.in