

Transcript of Video: How To Be Creative

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=weIQlthC3Ks>



Julie Burstein

Some people think that creativity is just one of these things that you're born with, but what creative people that I've spoken to talk about is that it's a process. One of the first creative acts is figuring out, "How do I do this?" That's one of the scariest moments, is not knowing where to begin. Whatever we can do to

expand our capacity for uncertainty, that's a wonderful preparation for creativity.

One of the key elements I think is something that the English Poet John Keats called "Negative Capability" This ability to stay in a space where you don't exactly know what's going to happen next. Willing to chase down ideas and also willing to understand that not all of them are going to lead somewhere. But the experience of pursuing an idea will influence the next idea. Each creative person I think develops his or her own set of tools and props for their creativity. The creative impulse is one piece of the process but at a certain point you have to sit down and do the work.

Understanding how to work is a key part of bringing your creativity to a point where you can share it with other people. For me the challenging part is, understanding that it is this spiral of excitement and despair and to allow myself the despair because it leads to new things. That's another piece of creativity that's so essential, is knowing that you have to keep at it. It's not going to spring full bloom out of your head. The painter Chuck Close has this wonderful saying, "Inspiration is for amateurs, the rest of us just get to work"

Barry Kaufman

The latest neuroscience of creativity is really exciting to me because we're finding that it's not just a simple left brain right brain distinction. People who are more open to combining lots of different associations that are coming from various different brain networks, do tend to be more creative. There's lots of stage to the creative process you take into account and different stages of that process activate different neural networks. A neural network is just simply different areas of the brain communicating with each other. During the stage which I'm trying to learn lots of things, called the preparation

stage, you see a lot of brain activation in areas associated with attention and deliberate focus called Executive Functioning. Then there is this important stage where you let it go. It's called the Incubation Stage. It's really important.

There is research showing that mind wandering away from the current task and then returning to the task, those people have more creative ideas when they come back. Then there's another stage of Illumination or Insight. Where these connections automatically and subconsciously collide and then reach the threshold of consciousness and you're like, "Oh my gosh, that's the idea," and then once that happens you're not done, you're not creative yet. That's why it's really important for this last stage of the creative process, Verification, where you use these executive processes or this critical thinking skills to think about your audience and you really craft the message so it's best received by people. Because some of the greatest creative ideas of all time can easily be lost because they're not packaged in the right way or not consumable. I think what cognitive scientists are on the forefront of trying to discover right now is isolating all these separate processes.

What interests me is how we bring all of these together to account for the more nuanced model of creativity. A complete understanding of creativity is going to require bringing all these perspectives together.

Ramsay Nassar

A good healthy collaboration will always make a creative process better. It may be that when a time when the tools that we have available to us, especially the digital tools are so deep in their complexity that they really challenge the limits of the experiences of a single human being. I think any endeavor or any discipline that requires you to create something novel and new, is going to benefit from collaboration. It's almost like the members of a collaborative group make up a single meta artist that is the sum of all the skills and the sum of all their perspectives in a way that you really couldn't possibly do as a single person. It's the conversations that are really the result of additional ideas that are more than just the sums of individual people. But, there's a creative maturity that you need to take very seriously and they need to stand by that your ideas are not you and criticisms of your ideas are not criticisms of you.

You also need to be not married to your ideas. You need to be graded like though. I've benefited from working with people with very different views. If you're going someone who's a carbon copy of yourself, you may as well be working alone. I think it's very difficult to be creative without trust. A healthy collaborative process will only amplify your voice and the voices of your teammates. Certainly when you work alone, there is a sense of pride that you made this thing all by yourself with your own hands and that's a great feeling.

But when you work in a group, it's rewarding in that generally what you made as a lot grander. There's a different sense of pride of like, "I can't believe I was part of something this big." It's just such a beautiful way to connect with other human beings that make something together.

Kirby Ferguson

I don't think there's any creating without being influenced by other work, by other people. It can't just come from nowhere. I think we have to let go of this notion of originality. We have this romantic notion that ideas kind of come out of the blue. We have a visual of the light bulb going off. Even though we have these sparks of insights, we have these flashes where we suddenly realize something, that doesn't mean that that came from nowhere. Even though it happened in your subconscious, you're still processing all these influences that you have in your system. How we create new ideas is by using this remix-like technique. By copying things, by transform, by combining them. It's in all sorts of creative work. By copying I mean, simple mimicry. It's something that we do a ton of. That's how we've learn.

Transforming is simply taking an idea and creating variations on it. You're going to innovate, I think it requires innovating on top of a base. You are transforming what is there. You are innovating on top of a platform that already exist. By combining ideas, I simply mean when you can take existing ideas that nobody thought of putting together and make them work, make them harmonize; that's extremely innovative. Works that seem extremely radical. I think they are also a product of these techniques. Something like the Gutenberg Press, the Printing Press, that invention didn't just kind of come out of the blue, it was very much a merging of different technologies that came together; movable type and ink and paper and then what Gutenberg added to the mix was the Screw Press. The Screw Press was not used in printing technology. It was used to press for oil or to press wine. So Gutenberg took a technology from another field and merged it into his own. It's not something that people would think of as being a remake necessarily but I think those same techniques are at work. He's copying a lot of elements, he's taking elements from another field, he's merging into his own and he's doing a lot of very clever transformation on top of it to make it all work.

The benefits that we get from letting people use these techniques are the same benefits that we get from any kind of creativity. It really is giving people the freedom to copy and transform making mind, make new stuff out of old stuff.

Barry Kaufman: Anyone can be creative in the domain that is best for them to express themselves. It's important to think about creativity a little bit differently than just this casual thing.

Julie Burstein: For me creativity is making something that didn't exist before. That could be a work of art, it could be making dinner. Creativity is something that you can find just about everywhere.

Ramsay Nassar: By any definition of hasn't been done before, having additional perspectives and skills to draw from, I think will always be beneficial. I can't see it hindering anybody.

Kirby Ferguson: I think most people who do creative work are combining things and transforming them. At the end of the day if you keep pushing, you can eventually get someplace that is beyond what you thought was possible.