



Paintings © Adriaan van Schaik c1980

This month the newsletter is made up of a number of contentious issues (with a small c). These include creativity and its definition, brainstorming, counterintuitive ideas, confirmation bias, and the myth of psychological types.

Working with people of all kinds, each having mapped out their own AQAL tertiary, an area where a lot of development is needed, there is the need to develop creativity in ALL quadrants. Whether this is at primary (Koestler, Maslow), secondary, or tertiary level doesn't really matter for now (it will later of course). The creative stages of development in our work, we define as: status quo; translative; transformative; and emergent.

Life without creatively makes sure it doesn't transcend let alone translate. In order to give a slight glimpse of the area covered see the key words below that are enfolded by the term creativity. There is also a need to realise that the narrow way the term has been hijacked by the business community is just not sufficient as a definition. A bit like a dead branch on a blossoming tree.

Creativity

Key words: (Take on different meaning at each stage of development):

Abstract; Adaptable; Broad-minded; Complexity; Creative; Curiosity; Dynamic; Enthusiastic; Elaboration; Emergent; Excited; Explorative; Flexibility; Fluency; Humour; Imaginative; Impulsive; Independent; Ingenious; Innovation; Inspired; Inventive; Metaphorical; Motivated; Nonconforming; Novel; Open-minded; Originality; Passionate; Resourceful; Risk-taking; Spontaneous; Stimulated; Visualization; Wholehearted.

Out-of-the-box thinking; a different ball game; beyond blue sky thinking; divergent/convergent thinking; no limits; emotionally independent; lateral thinking; day dreaming; tolerance of ambiguity; order in chaos; freedom of spirit; tendency to play with ideas; aware of taboos; not afraid to make mistakes or to fail; tolerance of lack of security.

Not just seeing what one expects to see; not de-limiting the problem area; ability to see problems/issues from a number of view points/perspectives; ability to utilise all sensory inputs;

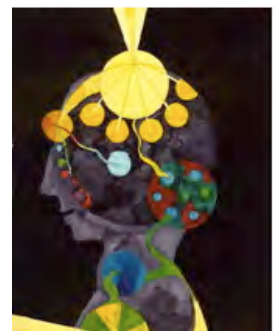
The ability to transcend traditional ideas, rules, patterns, relationships, or the like, and to create meaningful new ideas, forms, methods, interpretations, etc.; originality, progressiveness, or imagination:

To understand exactly what should be done requires first understanding the new story emerging from neuroscience. The lore of pop psychology is that creativity occurs on the right side of the brain. But we now know that if you tried to be creative using only the right side of your brain, it'd be like living with ideas perpetually at the tip of your tongue, just beyond reach.

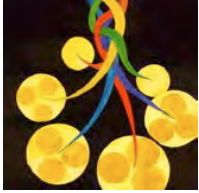
When you try to solve a problem, you begin by concentrating on obvious facts and familiar solutions, to see if the answer lies there. This is a mostly left-brain stage of attack. If the answer doesn't come, the right and left hemispheres of the brain activate together. Neural networks on the right side scan remote memories that could be vaguely relevant.

A wide range of distant information that is normally tuned out becomes available to the left hemisphere, which then searches for unseen patterns, alternative meanings, and high-level abstractions.

Having glimpsed such a connection, the left-brain must quickly lock in on it before it escapes. The attention system must radically reverse gears, going from de-focused attention to extremely focused attention. In a flash, the brain pulls together these disparate shreds



of thought and binds them into a new single idea that enters consciousness. This is the "aha!" moment of insight, often followed by a spark of pleasure as the brain recognizes the novelty of what it's come up with.



Now the brain must evaluate the idea it just generated. Is it worth pursuing? Creativity requires constant shifting, blender pulses of both divergent thinking and convergent thinking, to combine new information with old and forgotten ideas. Highly creative people are very good at marshalling their brains into bilateral mode, and the more creative they are, the more they dual-activate.

University of New Mexico neuroscientist Rex Jung has concluded that those who diligently practice creative activities learn to recruit their brains' creative networks quicker and better. A lifetime of consistent habits gradually changes the neurological pattern.

What's common about successful programs is they alternate maximum divergent thinking with bouts of intense convergent thinking, through several stages. Real improvement doesn't happen in a weekend workshop. But when applied to the everyday process of work or school, brain function improves.

Claremont Graduate University's Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi and University of Northern Iowa's Gary G. Gute found highly creative adults tended to grow up in families embodying opposites. Parents encouraged uniqueness, yet provided stability. They were highly responsive to kids' needs, yet challenged kids to develop skills. This resulted in a sort of adaptability: in times of anxiousness, clear rules could reduce chaos—yet when kids were bored, they could seek change, too. In the space between anxiety and boredom was where creativity flourished.

It's also true that highly creative adults frequently grew up with hardship. Hardship by itself doesn't lead to creativity, but it does force kids to become more flexible—and flexibility helps with creativity.

Lines of development that are important to include:

Cognitive Intelligence (IQ); Emotional (EQ); Creative (CQ); Values Graves et al (VQ); Self S C-G et al (SQ); Morals (MQ)

What you think you know about fostering creativity is wrong.

A look at what really works.

Forget Brainstorming

It's more about social/ideas alignment consensus than creativity or generating new ideas.

How Creative Are You?



Brainstorming in a group became popular in 1953 with the publication of a business book, Applied Imagination. But it's been proven not to work since 1958, when Yale researchers found that the technique actually reduced a team's creative output: the same number of people generate more and better ideas separately than together. In fact, according to University of Oklahoma professor Michael Mumford, half of the commonly used techniques intended to spur creativity don't work, or even have a negative impact. As for most commercially available creativity training, Mumford doesn't mince words: it's "garbage." Whether for adults or kids, the worst of these programs focus solely on imagination exercises,

expression of feelings, or imagery. They pander to an easy, unchallenging notion that all you have to do is let your natural creativity out of its shell. However, there are some techniques that do boost the creative process:

Don't tell someone to 'be creative.'

Such an instruction may just cause people to freeze up. However, according to the University of Georgia's Mark Runco, there is a suggestion that works: "Do something only you would come up with—that none of your friends or family would think of." When Runco gives this advice in experiments, he sees the number of creative responses double.

Get moving.

Almost every dimension of cognition improves from 30 minutes of aerobic exercise, and creativity is no exception. The type of exercise doesn't matter, and the boost lasts for at least two hours afterward. However, there's a catch: this is the case only for the physically fit. For those who rarely exercise, the fatigue from aerobic activity counteracts the short-term benefits.

Take a break.

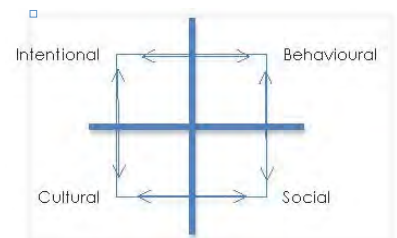
Those who study multi-tasking report that you can't work on two projects simultaneously, but the dynamic is different when you have more than one creative project to complete. In that situation, more projects get completed on time when you allow yourself to switch between them if solutions don't come immediately. This corroborates surveys showing that professors who set papers aside to incubate ultimately publish more papers. Similarly, pre-eminent mathematicians usually work on more than one proof at a time.

Reduce screen time.

According to University of Texas professor Elizabeth Vandewater, for every hour a kid regularly watches television, his overall time in creative activities—from fantasy play to arts projects—drops as much as 11 per cent. With kids spending about three hours in front of televisions each day, that could be a one-third reduction in creative time—less time to develop a sense of creative self-efficacy through play.

Explore other cultures.

Five experiments by Northwestern's Adam Galinsky showed that those who have lived abroad outperform others on creativity tasks. Creativity is also higher on average for first- or second-generation immigrants and bilinguals. The theory is that cross-cultural experiences



force people to adapt and be more flexible. Just studying another culture can help. In Galinsky's lab, people were more creative after watching a slide show about China: a 45-minute session increased creativity scores for a week.

Follow a passion.

Rena Subotnik, a researcher with the American Psychological Association, has studied children's progression into adult creative careers. Kids do best when they are allowed to develop deep passions and pursue them wholeheartedly—at the expense of well-roundedness. "Kids who have deep identification with a field have better discipline and handle setbacks better," she noted. By contrast, kids given superficial exposure to many activities don't have the same centeredness to overcome periods of difficulty.

The Flip Manifesto

And to counterbalance some of the above see Daniel H Pink's – the Flip Manifesto (16 Ideas for Shaking Up Status Quo): 16 Counterintuitive Ideas About Motivation, Innovation, and Leadership – interesting read. Counterintuitive ideas, sensitive parameters, positive feedback loops etc. so often pushed by Peter Sange, Whittely and the Meadows (Limits to Growth etc.) were ideas developed in Jay Forrester's work System Dynamics, developed in the 1960s, a very LR modelling system but with some LL inputs. Anyway Pink's counterintuitive ideas (based on research) include: Start doubting yourself; take as much vacation you want whenever you want; Give up trying to find your passion; Keep a To-do list; Do the reverse of whatever you are doing now; Pass your problem to someone else; For God's sake, talk like a human being; Talk less listen more - plus a few others. See <http://www.danpink.com> for this and more.

The Limits of Reason

Why evolution may favour irrationality.

Confirmation bias

An idea sweeping through the ranks of philosophers and cognitive scientists suggests why this is so. The reason we succumb to confirmation bias, why we are blind to counterexamples, and why we fall short of Cartesian logic in so many other ways is that these lapses have a purpose: they help us "devise and evaluate arguments that are intended to persuade other people," says psychologist Hugo Mercier of the University of Pennsylvania. Failures of logic, he and cognitive scientist Dan Sperber of the Institut Jean Nicod in Paris propose, are in fact effective ploys to win arguments.

That puts poor reasoning in a completely different light. Arguing, after all, is less about seeking truth than about overcoming opposing views. So while confirmation bias, for instance, may mislead us about what's true and real, by letting examples that support our view monopolize our memory and perception, it maximizes the artillery we wield when trying to convince someone that, say, he really is "late all the time." Confirmation bias "has a straightforward explanation," argues Mercier. "It contributes to effective argumentation."



The Myth of Typology

Posted September 24th, 2009 on Integral+Life by Elliott Ingersoll. (no comment needed! Our highlights - iM)

"Since Theophrastus inherited the Lyceum from Aristotle **people have tried to "type" human personality.** The yearning is genuine and the efforts over 2300 years have been nothing short of heroic but they have all failed. David Zeitler and I address this in our upcoming book on Integral Psychotherapy (Inside-Out/Outside-In). **As psychological constructs typologies fail on every level from validity to reliability.** But, with all things Integral, there is something more. I feel that Ken Wilber appreciates that notions of typology have little psychometric value but have use as metaphors or myths. In this respect a typology offers a story we can explore ourselves through. Like any tool these can be used toward honesty about one's self-sense or deception. There is no support for the Enneagram or MBTI as having reliability in the psychological sense. However, if a client comes in and tells me they are an ENFJ, they are sharing a story with me that we can start from and weave outward. Ontologically we don't "know" what we "are" (but what's the surprise there? We don't even understand what dark matter is). A typology can be viewed as a "style" we try on and may stay with or may move on from. Viewed fluidly as styles typologies can be a tool in telling the story of the self. Viewed concretely I think they are simply another scam that "for-profit prophets" use to milk the gullible. So I guess my view is that the intent one approaches the type system with is the key -especially if others have put themselves under your care. Ethically as a psychologist I cannot endorse types as a psychological construct and as a psychotherapist I can engage a story about types if it helps the client make aspects of herself objects of awareness."



And now a bit of news in this 'final' newsletter in this format [well maybe!].

Integral Without Borders has a new website at url: www.integralwithoutborders.org. Check it out - it is growing into a very interesting site.

integral**MENTORS** has a nominal site at url: www.integralmentors.org this is a basic site to point you in the directions of events and other activities. Hopefully we will develop it more fully when we have time. But for now you can find a number of our resources on the IWB site.

So far this year there will be two gatherings hosted or co sponsored by integral**MENTORS** and **Integral Without Borders**. One in South Africa and the other in Peru – more information can be found on the websites. Both organisations also have Facebook pages – 'Like' these to keep up to date on all activities.

integral**MENTORS** is re-grouping and now has an un-organisational structure consisting of Directors who will cover day to day activities and a group of aug**Mentors**¹ (highly respected individuals in various fields) to provide input and guidance. (See the website for more information)

Ciao from a snow bound Italy - Paul J van Schaik

¹ From to augment – to add value

