

How to be
more
creative

**A Handbook
for Alchemists**

by Marelisa Fábrega

How to Be More Creative – A Handbook for Alchemists

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INTRODUCTION

Creative ideas run the gamut from gradual improvements of existing products, services, or concepts, to radical breakthroughs which extend the boundaries of human knowledge and create paradigm shifts.

In addition, creativity is not the sole domain of the arts-whether it's painting, theater, music, architecture, dancing, literature, and so on-but is important in any field, from medicine to business, and from engineering to economics.

Being creative can involve cooking a meal from scratch, creating a novel marketing campaign, making up a bedtime story for your child, finding ways to cut costs, or even developing a creative solution to a negotiation impasse. Whatever you do, creativity helps you do it better.

CREATIVITY CAN BE LEARNED, PRACTICED, AND PERFECTED

Some people believe creativity to be the result of an abnormal chromosome that causes a muse-like effect, or of a neurological quirk. Others associate it with psychosis, temporal lobe seizures, or childhood trauma. And then there are those who believe it's about winning the genetic lottery: you're either born creative or you're not.

"I am not a businessman, I am an artist."

– Warren Buffett

However, as most creativity experts hold - including Jack Foster, Roger von Oech, Edward de Bono, and many others - creativity is a process that can be learned, practiced, and perfected.

Dr. Edward de Bono is a leading authority in the field of creative thinking and is the originator of the term "lateral thinking". He explains that creativity is a skill that everyone can learn. He adds that even if some people may be better at being creative than others, like some people are better at playing tennis than others, when specific techniques are applied it becomes possible for anyone to generate new ideas in any field.

While Dr. de Bono emphasizes creativity techniques, Rice Freeman-Zachery, author of "Living the Creative Life: Ideas and Inspiration from Working Artists", has this to say about how to be more creative:

"Instead of looking at the world as it is, look at everything as being full of possibilities. Instead of seeing what is, look for what could be. If you're an artist, you look at everything as a possibility and inspiration because you know that ideas can come from anywhere."

Psychotherapist and creativity coach Dr. Eric Maisel, Ph.D. has been working with creative and performing artists for over twenty years and has written many books teaching others to be more creative, including the following:

- "Coaching the Artist Within"
- "Fearless Creating"
- "A Writer's Paris"
- "The Van Gogh Blues"

He explains that everyone wishes to create, but some people nurture and honor this desire, while for others the urge to create is dimmed. Dr. Maisel encourages poets, filmmakers, human resource specialists, biochemists, and everyone else to make creativity their religion.

There are also those, such as Dr. Caroline Myss—a pioneer in the field of energy medicine and human consciousness—who argue that creativity is not just an artistic or intellectual inclination; instead, working with your creative energy is as essential to your health and overall well-being as breathing and eating. She has this to say about the creative energy:

"Creative energy is a basic survival instinct; it motivates us to become part of society, to become productive, bring things to life, and to distinguish ourselves from others by what we make, the crafts we pursue, the skills we develop in business or in cultivating friendships, the entrepreneurial ideas we conceive, the problems we resolve, and the children or communities we birth and nurture."

THE WORLD NEEDS ALCHEMISTS

In today's world the importance of creativity cannot be emphasized sufficiently. The problems being created by a population that is increasing exponentially and an environment that is on the verge of collapsing require ingenuity and innovation. Although productivity—which is basically the proper management of resources—is a move in the right direction, what is truly needed is innovation, creativity, and whole-mind thinking, all of which can be referred to as "alchemy".

In the book “Unlimited Wealth”, the brilliant economist Paul Zane Pilzer explains that for the past four hundred years virtually all economists have agreed on the notion of scarcity. That is, a society's wealth is determined by its supply of physical resources--its land, labor, minerals, water, and so on—and, as we know, these are finite resources. Pilzer goes on to argue that with today’s technology we now effectively live in a world of unlimited wealth, or in what he calls an Alchemic world.

As an example of how technological breakthroughs are vital to expand the world’s resources, consider the following: In the 1960s it was widely predicted that the chronic food shortages suffered by India and Pakistan would result in mass starvation.

However, the Indian government called on Norman Borlaug, a plant breeder born in Iowa, who--together with his team—had developed a special breed of dwarf wheat that resisted a wide spectrum of plant pests and diseases and produced two to three times more grain than the traditional varieties.

By teaching local farmers in the region how to cultivate this new strain of wheat properly, they achieved an astounding increase in the yield of wheat within the span of a few years, which saved over a billion people in India and Pakistan from starvation. Some credit Borlaug with having saved more human lives than any other person in history. As this anecdote illustrates, more and more the world needs innovative ideas to solve complex problems. That is, the world needs alchemists.

PRACTICAL CREATIVITY

Nurturing and developing your creativity will help you in any area you wish to pursue. Having the ability to come up with creative ideas can help you each and every day. For example, being more creative will help you with all of the following:

- Solve everyday problems more efficiently and effectively.
- Turn problems into opportunities.
- Find unexpected ways to resolve conflicts.
- Create new products, processes, and services.
- Find new ways of doing things.
- Make creative, innovative and entrepreneurial thinking part of your everyday work life.
- Generate ideas for creative pursuits such as writing, drawing, composing, photography, and so on.

- Find creative ways to generate more income.
- Create new business opportunities.
- Become indispensable to your organization.
- Lead a more fulfilling life by being “a creator”.
- Making do with whatever is at hand to reach your goals.

CREATE A WORK FILE

The purpose of this ebook is not just to give you information, but to transform you into a more creative and innovative person. Print it out and place it in a ring-binder; you'll be adding lots of things to your binder, including creativity techniques, journal pages, quotes, photographs, doodles, ideas, and so on. At the end of most of the chapters of this ebook you'll find instructions on what to do with your work file.

You can start by writing down on a piece of paper—or in the white spaces of this page--your purpose for purchasing and reading this ebook, and what you hope to accomplish with the knowledge you gain herein.

- Are you a writer searching for ways to generate ideas for topics to write about?
- Do you want to be more creative at solving problems at work?
- Do you feel you've let your creative spark wane and are hoping to reignite it?

Whatever your purpose is for reading this ebook, write it down.