

Chapter 14

Creative Problem Solving

EXERCISE 14.1

The Roles of Creativity

Roger von Oech is right when he states that many hats are worn in the creative process. Reviewing these four specific roles, take some time to examine how you can integrate these creative aspects into your repertoire of skills. If you are like most people, you tend to see yourself as wearing only one of these hats, rather than all four. This is OK when projects or problems require more than one person to contribute their talents. For now, let's assume that you can wear all four hats.

1. **The Explorer.** To help you think outside the box, make a list of ten new places you can explore to find new ideas for any creative project. Next, make a list of five new resources to explore for any creative project.

- a. _____
- b. _____
- c. _____
- d. _____
- e. _____

2. **The Artist.** Inside each and every one of us is an artist begging to play. Make a list of five new ways to engage in the art of play!

- a. _____
- b. _____
- c. _____
- d. _____
- e. _____

3. **The Judge.** How good are your judgmental skills? Are they too good? Are you the kind of person who judges first and asks questions later?

4. **The Warrior.** The warrior is the “legman” in the creative process. A great idea without someone to market it and implement it is not really a great idea. How good are your warrior skills? What can you do to improve them?

EXERCISE 14.2

Getting the Creative Juices Flowing

Living in our left-brain culture tends to inhibit the creative process. The following exercises are provided to help you whack your way of thinking (from left brain to right brain) so that the creative problem-solving process may become just a bit easier.

I. Create two metaphors or definitions for an optimist and a pessimist.

a. An optimist is someone who . . .

1. _____

2. _____

b. A pessimist is someone who . . .

1. _____

2. _____

II. Describe two things that a cat and a refrigerator have in common.

III. Describe the following colors to a person who has been blind from birth.

a. red _____

b. white _____

c. blue _____

d. green _____

e. yellow _____

f. black _____

g. purple _____

IV. In the following line of letters, cross out six letters so that the remaining letters, without altering their sequence, will spell a familiar English word.

BSAINXLEATNTEARS _____

V. Create a metaphor for the meaning of life. Finish this sentence:

Life is like _____

EXERCISE 14.3

My Creativity Project

This exercise is designed to help inspire you to take some initiative in starting and completing a project that requires some creative license. Initially, this assignment was developed for a holistic health class to fully engage students in the creative process. Many people found this project to be the ticket to a new job. The purpose of this exercise is to challenge you to extend your creative talents to your highest limits. This project involves three aspects:

Part I: First, play the roles of the *explorer*, *artist*, *judge*, and *warrior* respectively, to come up with a very creative idea and then bring it to reality. If you wish, you can use the template in Exercise 14.1 ("The Roles of Creativity") again for this exercise.

Part II: Next, write up the experience, describing what you did (describe your experience in each of the four stages of creativity) and how you accomplished it.

Part III: Finally, explain what you learned from this experience.

The area and magnitude of creativity are entirely up to you. It is suggested, however, that you pick an area that is somewhat familiar (in other words, don't try to build the Brooklyn Bridge if you have never played with Legos), but not one in which you have a five-star command. Challenge yourself! Select a project, which can range anywhere from art, poetry, cooking, composing, photography, designing fashions, writing a screenplay, choreographing a dance, to anything. Start with an interest, passion, or a desire. Build from this a dream. Consult your intuition and then come up with a finished product. Remember that the creative process cannot be rushed or demanded. This assignment will take some time, so plan accordingly.

Make the project manageable. In other words, do not, repeat, do *not* try to build a re-creation of the Eiffel Tower in your backyard or compose the sequel to Handel's *Messiah* in 2 days. On the other hand, simply putting a new message on your answering machine is not the best way to go either. Make the project a quality job of which you will be proud.

Examples from Previous Students and Workshop Participants

1. Producing a music video presentation.
2. Writing a family/neighborhood cookbook.
3. Producing a YouTube presentation.
4. Creating a holistic cancer treatment plan.
5. Recording/producing a musical CD.
6. Planning a vacation around the world.
7. Designing/planning a rose garden.
8. Writing a nonfiction book proposal.
9. Starting a yoga studio.
10. Organizing a 10K road race for charity.