

Self-awareness and Creativity

What stimulates your creativity? Do you create from your intellect, from technique and learned skills?

There are a multitude of resources available to learn the technique: of pottery making, of photography, of sculpture, of almost any creative endeavor. We all know Einstein's comment that says imagination is more important to us than knowledge. My interpretation of this is not that knowledge is not required, but that imagination will take our work in new and different directions. Imagination according to my Webster's dictionary is using one's memory bank to combine mental images for the purpose of creating something fanciful that is not available to our senses.

Imagination is a resource for creation. We can do many things to stimulate our imagination, to fill our creative well. But, it is not the purpose of this article to examine all of our resources. It is my intent to touch on our inner worlds, that includes our higher self, as a source of inspired creativity.

Our inner physical world includes our sense of sight, touch, taste, sound and smell. When we experience our world with all of these, we create a fuller expression of our environment. This implies, for example, that when we take a walk in the park, we don't see the trees, water, people and voices, in the same way every time. We actively listen to the way the wind sounds as it travels through leaves and the laughter of children. We see the loneliness and heaviness in someone's face and her walk. It is seeing and listening with our heart, as well as our mind and having the emotional freedom to see and listen and smell deeply, with intention. We can, if we try, take a moment to experience a tree in different ways: responsive to its environment, life giving, alive with it's own history.

Our inner emotional world takes us into our past, our personal story. Many people seem to believe and refer to our past as 'garbage'... something that no one else wants or needs. Many are convinced that facing pain, regret and mystery takes too long with no fast payoff. It may be that many of us are not ready to face our damaged areas because we aren't ready to believe that we will never be perfect.

And, yet, we long for others to understand us, to recognize our uniqueness. If we don't really know ourselves intimately, our past and how it influences not just our personality

and our values but our true voice, our essence... how will anyone else see us? We may well be invisible to others.

Darkness holds mystery. Mystery holds secrets that are rich with lessons to be learned, opportunities to be taken. The nature of secrets is to be withholding and lifeless, which of course, builds fear.

Fear is the absence of love and it is my belief that when we accept and love ourselves as we would our family and friends, we begin to stand tall. Generosity of heart cannot be shared with others if we are not kind and loving to ourselves. Good health and wholeness requires a balance and integration of mind, body, spirit and heart. It does not mean that we can or should seek perfection. It is in our imperfection that our story lives. Scars are a sign of healing, an indication that although damage has been done, we have come through the fire. We are moving ahead by becoming self-aware. And, self-awareness leads us in the direction of inspired creativity.

Inspiration rarely arises spontaneously. In fact, it does not arise from a plea or even from prayer. It does not come from the mind, experience or a level of skill. Inspiration has little to do with the technique and style of others. It is a good thing, indeed, to learn from masters but no one has become a master from copying one.

Creative people do not take inspired action by looking outside themselves and simply struggling and trying to force creativity. Inspiration implies going inside, finding our center. It has more to do with surrender... that is not to be confused with giving up. It has to do with understanding that our cages are within; created by fear and the walls we have built around our heart.

Here are some tips that help to identify whether you may need to find resources for assisting you to uncover and understand your personal life history:

- You repeat negative patterns that don't give you your desired outcome.
- You continually strive for perfection and believe this is a desirable goal.
- You are in pain: frequently stressed, unhappy and unwilling to face it.
- You often feel lost and empty, that there is more for you but it always seems just beyond your grasp.
- There is an awareness within, that you can do and be more but don't know where to start.
- You receive repeated rejections of your work over long periods of time and perhaps, even give up creating.

- You recognize that your work is not original.
- You feel stuck.
- You over-do, over-eat, over-exercise, over-drink.

Creativity implies originality. We cannot create our best work when we are not functioning in our fullest capacity. And how do we unleash our potential? We set a sincere intention to find the people and resources to help us transform our patterns. We ask for help from an employee assistance program or from trusted friends and family. You may join self-help groups or find books that support you in your quest to live your fullest life. Meditation is helpful to many people in finding clarity of voice and focus, in finding inner peace or your observer self, that quiets the constant mind-chatter.

Soon, you begin to see yourself in new ways... you say "Yes" more often. You feel less heavy and a little more light-hearted.

In finding who you are, what you believe and what you value, your creativity is gradually unleashed. You begin to unlock doors and discover what you carry in your own basket. Uncover your life force and your creative spirit is released.