



Lateral thinking, programmed thinking, going slow, inventing, experimenting, risks, epiphany, illumination, paradoxical, unconventional, impossible, forbidden, unknowability, intuition, sixth sense, muse, subconscious.

Tickledbylife.com's first anniversary gift for readers



Panna Lal's Guide to Boosting Creativity

A selection of 10 life changing articles to boost your creativity



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About Panna Lal and TickledbyLife.com!

Panna Lal wants happiness. Panna Lal wants money. Panna Lal wants good looks. Panna Lal wants love. Panna Lal wants validation. Panna Lal wants praise. Panna Lal wants approval. Panna Lal wants success. Panna Lal wants to be a winner. Panna Lal wants status. Panna Lal wants power. Panna Lal wants glory. Panna Lal wants peace of mind. Panna Lal wants wisdom. Panna Lal wants fame and recognition. Panna Lal wants a continuous high. Panna Lal wants to live life to the full.

But who is Panna Lal?

To know Panna Lal, just look into the mirror! Panna Lal is the common denominator in all of us, symbolising each one of us most tellingly. Don't we all want good things to happen to us? Don't we all want to avoid tensions, pain and disease? Whatever differences we have are only on the surface. Deep down we are all the same, muddling through life in our search for happiness and success - struggling to make it big but not sure what we really want from life.

Tickledbylife.com was set up on 21st August, 2008 with the objective to surprise, provoke, inspire and wow the Panna Lal in all of us with articles on personal development and life skills. The website is a co-creative adventure for, by and of Panna Lals and we stand by our original promise to enable you to live joyously and creatively in your own way. As of now, we have over 750 articles by more than 100 writers whom we call ticklers. And we keep adding more and more every month.

Many friends have shared with us that just spending 10-15 minutes on this site every day gives them enough tickles to keep them on a high all day! Do go through the existing articles and keep coming back for new ones. Make [tickledbylife.com](http://www.tickledbylife.com) a habit and let the Panna Lal in you stay tickled!

Yours warmly,

Who else but

Panna Lal

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For the Panna Lal in all of us!

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Intro

Panna Lal's Guide to Boosting Creativity

Intro

PS: The character Panna Lal symbolising all of us in this world was conceived by PS Wasu when he launched his life skills workshop The Fine Print of Life in 1996. The book version of the workshop titled The Fine Print of Life: How Panna Lal Found Happiness, Wisdom and Mishri Devi was published by HarperCollins Publishers India in May, 2009. The book is essentially Panna Lal's quest to live life joyously and creatively. To read the opening chapter please click [here](#).

Team Tickled by Life

- [Shalu Wasu](#) - Founder and Publisher
- [Carol Ann](#) - Editor
- [PS Wasu](#) - Mentor
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Panna Lal's Guide to Boosting Creativity

Panna Lal's guide to Boosting Creativity

Simply expressed, creativity is the art of mind expansion. The creative energy is expressed in life by experimenting, taking risks, breaking rules, suspending belief, making mistakes and making history. We have culled the ten most inspiring articles on creativity from our website [tickledbylife.com](http://www.tickledbylife.com) into this e-book. Almost everything you might want to know about creativity is touched on here in a series of fascinating, evocative, informative, funny (at times) concise (well, sometimes) and easily digestible articles.

Some perspectives may allow you to look at yourself and even the world more expansively and imaginatively. Some may help you to remove the self-imposed creative blocks of programmed thinking. Some may even cause you to shout "Eureka!" at nothing in particular.

More about this ebook:

- ✍ This e-book is FREE! It is our gift to you as we celebrate our first anniversary. Please enjoy these tickles and share this gift with your friends, relatives and colleagues.
- ✍ This e-book has been designed for reading on the screen, and will also to print out nicely.
- ✍ It looks great! (book design by)
- ✍ It makes an invaluable gift.

Intro

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Paradox: The Heart of Creativity! By KR Ravi

The test of a first rate intelligence is the ability to hold two opposite ideas in mind at the same time and still retain the ability to function.

– F.Scott Fitzgerald

All behaviour consists of opposites...learn to see things backward, inside out, and upside down.

– Lao Tzu

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The Green Tortoise bus line operating with about a dozen old vehicles, made scheduled runs up and down the US West Coast and into the interior at about half the price of the Greyhound. Its owner Gardner Kent gave up trying to compete with Greyhound on price in the low fare business. Instead of hopelessly trying to reduce the journey time he did the contrary—he increased the journey duration – six rather than four days! He used the extra two days to build more 'fun' into the trip – games, walks in the woods, fishing, etc. His business multiplied and he was able to take over another bus service. His idea, a product of paradoxical contrarian thinking, produced extraordinary results. His fun trip strategy led him to a new segment, a niche opportunity made possible by the socioeconomic changes that turned travel into a pleasure industry.

Paradoxical thinking involves, among other things, switching to the opposite of what is conventional.

One of the most brilliant displays of paradoxical thinking is by scientist Faraday in the 1830's. He had observed that a current of electricity passing through a wire could have the effect of causing the magnetized needle of a compass to deflect, that is, move in a rotational direction when a compass was located close to the wire. This was the basis of his invention of the electric motor. Faraday did not stop with this. He took a mental leap – a gigantic one as it turned out. He reasoned that if an electric current could make magnets to move, maybe the reverse could also happen. Could a moving magnet cause electricity to flow? He found that it did. Thus was born the generator.

Typically our NRI relatives buy fancy things including gadgets at duty free shops elsewhere in the world on their way to India. The Government of Philippines had a similar situation at hand. Millions of their countrymen and women work all over the world. Noticing the huge gifts visiting Philippines were seen carrying across the arrival hall at Manila airport, the Government opened duty free shops at that airport so that NRP's could buy gifts after their arrival home!! At the Manila shop one could buy even tractors. This shop has catapulted that country into the fourth largest seller of such goods in the world.

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The Philippines government reasoned that no matter what the world is doing one may gain enormously by doing the opposite – paradoxical thinking. Opposites are everywhere. Yet we hardly stop to think about these omnipresent opposites. Because opposites are in the background we do not see them. To be creative, we have to pull opposites out of the background and put them in the foreground where they will be clearly visible. It is said that a fish does not know that water exists – because the fish takes water for granted. We are like fish – we see so many opposites that we take them for granted and do not notice them anymore. If we notice and handle opposites imaginatively we could all become creative.

Let us look at some commonplace 'opposites'. Is a straight line the opposite of a curve? “Of course,” one may say. Yet a scientist will tell you that a curve is but an infinite number of straight lines. Is a square the opposite of a circle? “Obviously,” is the answer. Yet it can be proved that both are polygons. If you keep adding sides to a square it turns it into a hexagon, an octagon and so on. The more sides you add the more it comes to resemble a circle!

The two opposite things are deep down the same thing. Can we learn paradoxical thinking? Of course, we can. Here is how.

Be open in your thinking. Openness, courage and curiosity are essential. Be particularly aware of the so-called absurd ideas floating in your mind. Note them down, dwell on them, play with them refine them. Openness also means you are open to learning new subjects unconnected with your profession. Listen, explore, be curious. Pay more attention to things you have been ignoring or taking for granted. When you look at something, say a gadget, visualize how they would look and function if it were different in shape, size, etc. Ask yourself, can I change this into the exact opposite? Look at the rug on the floor. How would it be if we had rugs designed for the roof? Look at the lights on the roof and ask, how would it be if we had lights on the floor? Recall that such products exist.

It pays to be sceptical. The more sceptical you are the better a paradox thinker you will be. You do not take for granted what others accept as a matter of routine. Examine customs, practices, rituals, conventions, fashions, etc.

Paradoxical thinking is one of eight skills related to intelligence. The others are memory, logic, judgment, perception, intuition, reason, and imagination. Paradox is perhaps the least used of these skills. It involves the ability to reverse, manipulate, combine and synthesize opposites.

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In their path-breaking book *Built To Last – The successful habits of visionary companies*, authors James Collins and Jerry Poras write that companies that survive are those, among other things, that do not oppress themselves with the 'tyranny of the or' – the rational view that cannot easily accept paradox, that cannot live with two seemingly contradictory forces at the same time. The 'tyranny of the or' pushes people to believe that things must be either A or B, but not both. The authors have demonstrated that organizations that have liberated themselves from this tyranny go on to grow exponentially and are seen as extremely innovative.

One last example: Is it possible to make a car that is as exquisite as a BMW or Mercedes Benz but does not cost a bomb? Quality and affordability – a paradox is what many thought but not in a Japanese company that came out with the Lexus which was a great example of paradoxical thinking.

Article by KR Ravi. To find out more about him – please click [here](#).

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15 elephant tethers that stop you from being creative!

2

Are you willing to break free? - By [Shalu Wasu](#)

The problem is never how to get new, innovative thoughts into your mind, but how to get old ones out. Every mind is a building filled with archaic furniture. Clean out a corner of your mind and creativity will instantly fill it.

– Dee Hock

When still a baby, the elephant is tethered by a very thick rope to a stake firmly hammered into the ground.

The elephant tries several times to get free, but it lacks the strength to do so. After some time, the animal gives up trying, believing that it cannot be free.

At this point, the trainer changes the thick rope to a thin one but the elephant makes no attempt to run away. Even when the elephant reaches adulthood, it continues to be tethered by a thin rope, reconciled to its captivity.

As you grow up and gain experience, you absorb assumptions which then drive your life and limit your choices. They are similar to the elephant's thin rope tied to a post. You can break away from them with a simple tug if you want to but you don't.

As you acquire more and more experience, your repertoire of blind assumptions grows too, correspondingly limiting your choices. Your experience becomes a hindrance in your being creative.

Here is a list of 15 elephant tethers that possibly hold you back from being creative. Look at them and do identify the ones that apply to you. Are you willing to do something about them and break free?

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Tether 1. What will people think?

Your self consciousness is one big hurdle in your being creative. You don't even try to do so many things in life because you are afraid of making a fool of yourself. You waste a lot of your energy in protecting yourself and presenting a 'good' image.

You had no such inhibitions as a child and therefore you were naturally creative. It is perhaps the fear of the unknown and what might happen that makes you selfconscious. It holds you back and hinders your creativity.

When you walk into something in spite of the fear, it simply vanishes because by then the unknown turns into the known. The trick is not to think in terms of conquering fear but being with it.

When you let go of your self consciousness, you turn more creative.

Tether 2. But I've never had any great ideas!

Most people don't have enough opportunities to bring out their creativity. So their creative abilities remain untapped. It seems to make no difference because not being creative is not too inconvenient.

Being creative is actually a search for a better way and in today's world most solutions come ready-made. Most of the things that you do have been researched and the 'best' ways to do them have been arrived at.

Most people follow the standard 'best' ways without questioning – how to clean teeth, how to reach office, etc. They do a great number of tasks automatically.

Trying a 'different way' may in fact be inconvenient in most situations – driving speed, the route to office, how to tie your shoe knots, standing in the queues, etc.

Most of these automatic ways are perhaps good. By sticking with them, you are able to accomplish many tasks without thinking. They save time but you end up with the habit of not thinking afresh.

Over time, you develop attitudes and assumptions which prevent you from thinking creatively, locking you into the existing ways of thinking and doing things. You become a prisoner of familiarity. You never have great ideas.

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As a result, even when the need arises for you to think differently and generate new ideas, you are unable to do so.

Tether 3. What is the right answer?

One of the worst aspects of formal education is the focus on the correct answer to a question or problem. When somebody asks a question, you generally give an acceptable answer instead of an original one fearing it might be wrong.

While this approach helps you to function smoothly in society, it hurts creative thinking. Real-life issues are ambiguous. There is no one single answer to any problem. There can be several answers if only you think about them. They may all be contradictory and yet correct.

Tether 4. I don't want to fail.

The fear of failure is something that you learn in school and it never just goes away. All through school, you perhaps take hundreds of tests, exams, assignments, etc. You are in one big trouble if you fail even once. You are scared of failure.

By the time you finish school, the fear of failure has seeped into your system and you avoid situations which could result in failure. You are extra-careful about whatever you take up. You play safe.

The fear of failure does not let you try new things, crippling your creativity.

Tether 5. That's not my area.

Creativity requires finding connections between unrelated things. The diversity of your interests and experiences enhances your ability to find connections.

When you explore completely unrelated areas, you are pleasantly surprised by the interrelatedness of almost everything. You start seeing new possibilities when you discover new connections.

In an era of hyper-specialization, the scope of work is getting narrower and narrower. Loss of creativity is the immediate casualty.

When you just stick to your area, you hinder your creativity.

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Tether 6. I don't like uncertainty.

If you are not confused, you are not thinking clearly – Tom Peters

When people are confused, they feel compelled to resolve the situation quickly, making it systematic and orderly again. They are likely to miss the key issues in their haste to do so.

There is something in the culture or perhaps in the education system, which makes people want to be 'knowers' rather than 'find-outers'.

This attachment to 'knowing' makes you feel jittery and inept when you 'don't know'. This tendency is so engrained that even small kids begin to lose their curiosity in order to become 'knowers'.

However, when it comes to creative thinking, not knowing is a good thing and ambiguity is a great thing. Certainty is the enemy of creativity.

If you are certain about something, you don't have much leeway to generate new ideas to solve problems.

Tether 7. That's the way it is done!

The need for standard ways of doing things is perfectly legitimate. But then it gives rise to an ever increasing number of rules that govern people's lives.

While some of the rules are legitimate, some are totally unfounded. They are not very different from the thin rope that tethers the elephant.

Tether 8. Everyone says so.

When all think alike, then no one is thinking. — Walter Lippman

The desire to belong is a powerful one and at times it leads to 'groupthink'. This herd approach is probably a relic from the cave age. It is important to have a mind of your own in order to be creative.

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Tether 9. How can a boss lose face ever?

Bosses are generally hung up on being always right. It is unimaginable for them to be proved wrong. They just can't afford to lose face. Such over-protection of their ego hinders their creativity.

Employees almost always tend to go along with bosses. While harmless minor disagreements are okay, they are careful not to have a difference of opinion when it comes to larger issues.

No boss can be creative if he is surrounded by people who can't dare to contradict him. He will be provoked into thinking creatively only when his views are challenged by someone.

Tether 10. My work is so boring.

One of the perils of over specialization is repetitive and uninteresting work. It makes you resentful, robbing you of your creative urges.

Tether 11. Smart people respond quickly.

When quick response is valued, you avoid deep thinking missing out on the finer points of an issue. You start giving out readymade answers. In trying to be smart, you sacrifice creative possibilities.

Tether 12. I feel safe when I am like everyone else.

People start off as unique beings. They are very different from each other as children and young adults with their very own likes and dislikes.

Yet, as if by magic, they get into a common mould after they reach their thirties. Their likes, dislikes, wants, needs and goals somehow begin to converge. They seem to become more and more like one another. As a result, their creative abilities suffer.

Tether 13. I have strong views and firm opinions.

There are people who pride themselves for having firm stands and being inflexible. They have strong views and unshakable opinions. They are too judgmental.

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Being judgmental means blocking or ignoring other points of views. It means reducing your options and leaving your mind with much less to work with. It is then reflected in your ability to generate ideas and solutions.

When you are nonjudgmental, you have an open mind. You have more choices. Being nonjudgmental reduces the surface functioning of your mind, stimulating its deeper functioning.

Tether 14. Why keep thinking unnecessarily when I have found the answer?

Such is the hurry to find a solution that people are satisfied with the first one that comes to their mind. They stop thinking further.

However, if you don't share your 'first' idea and keep thinking more and more, the subsequent ones are sure to be better.

The more you think, the more the chances to find better solutions. You never know when you will hit the jackpot.

Tether 15. Self-fulfilling prophecy

Two similarly qualified groups of engineers in a company were exhibiting different levels of creativity.

The two groups were alike in all respects. In the research subsequently conducted by the company, there was only one finding.

The difference between the two groups was that engineers on one group believed that 'I am creative' and engineers from the other group believed otherwise.

Article by Shalu Wasu. Shalu is a Singapore based creativity consultant and trainer. To find out more about Shalu Wasu – please click [here](#).

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Awake To The Power Of Daydreams!

Dream Your Way To Reality - By Nidhi

Dreams are precursors to the realities that we are about to experience - Author Unknown

We were all day dreamers once. Who can forget sitting in class in the middle of a hot summer afternoon, daydreaming about the previous year's cool mountain vacation, or which games we would play when we got back home. We daydreamed about what we wanted for our birthdays; how cool we would look in the new pair of jeans, and sometimes even how somebody who looked and behaved exactly like Raj of DDLJ would come over and sweep us off our feet.

Well, those were just daydreams you would say, especially because it wasn't something to be proud of. Weren't we told that daydreaming meant that you were absolutely lazy, inattentive and bored and had nothing better to do with your life? Well, well, all of us daydreamers are going to be absolved of the 'lazy tag' thanks to a recent study by a group of University of British Columbia researchers. The study led by Prof. Kalina Christoff, UBC Dept. of Psychology, suggests that daydreaming is in fact, an extremely active, cognitively complex mental state of our brain.

Until now, the brain's "default network" which is linked to easy, routine mental activity and includes the medial prefrontal cortex (PFC), the posterior cingulate cortex and the temporoparietal junction, was the only part of the brain thought to be active when our minds wander. However, the study finds that the brain's "executive network" associated with high-level, complex problem-solving and including the lateral PFC and the dorsal anterior cingulate cortex, also becomes activated when we daydream. The study, published in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, finds that activity in numerous brain regions increases when our minds wander. It also finds that brain areas associated with complex problem – solving, previously thought to go dormant when we daydream, are in fact highly active during these episodes.

The findings suggest that daydreaming is an important cognitive state where we may unconsciously turn our attention from the tasks at hand to sort through more important problems in our lives. "When you daydream, you may not be achieving your immediate goal – say managing the account book or paying attention in class – but your mind may be taking that time to address more important questions in your life, such as advancing your career or personal relationships," says Christoff.

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In simple terms, daydreaming is a fundamental feature of our minds, quite like the brain's default mode of thought. Many scientists are validating the fact that daydreaming is a vital tool for creativity, a thought process that allows the brain to make new associations and connections thereby enhancing creativity.

The ability to think abstractly that flourishes during daydreams also has important social benefits. Mostly, what we daydream about is our essential social and personal interactions, our career goals, etc. While we are playing out these scenarios, the mind retrieves memories, contemplates “what if” scenarios, and thinks about how it should behave in the future.

Think about it, while we go through our days on auto-pilot, we are mostly responding to events, many a times not giving any thought to our reactions. Daydreaming in this situation can become an effective feedback and therapeutic tool. Many of us have had episodes when we have said or done something we are not particularly proud of and then while replaying the scene in our minds have conjured a different, more pleasant outcome. The immediate benefit is an immediate sense of relief, well being and emotional freedom. What's fascinating is that often, the situation does turn out the way we envisioned it to be. In this sense, the content of daydreams often resembles a soap opera, with people reflecting on social interactions both real and make-believe. We can leave behind the world as it is and start imagining the world as it might be, if only we hadn't lost our temper, or had listened to our intuition. Or, just as well, we could be sipping an iced latte in a café in New York (I've even taken long walks in Central Park).

It is this ability to tune out the present moment and reflect on the make-believe that gives the human mind its uniqueness. In case your wondering how daydreaming changes reality, look at it from the law of attraction or energy matrix point of view. The universe does not distinguish between what is real or what is make believe, it only responds to our thoughts and its underlying emotions.

A daydream is an emotionally charged fantasy experienced while awake, especially one of happy, pleasant thoughts, hopes or ambitions. For those of us who have difficulty attaching emotions to our thoughts while we visualize future outcomes, a guided form of daydreaming can and will do wonders. It helps us align ourselves to the energy flow by offering vibrations of high intensity which will only then attract experiences which are vibrating at similarly high frequencies. Are we not more creative when we are relaxed? Don't we get ideas when we just go with the flow; well a

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guided daydream is just the process to get into that flow.

Research suggests that people typically spend a third of their waking time daydreaming and if we are able to guide our thoughts and emotions toward more positive outcomes, we are in a position to turn those dreams into our waking reality.

For those of you who have forgotten the art of daydreaming, just close your eyes, take a deep breath and think of a situation you would like to be fulfilled today. Then daydream about how you would like it to feel, get in touch with the emotions you would have, hold conversations, and see yourself living the outcome NOW. For example, you are neck deep in work with the deadline around the corner. Now imagine yourself asking your co-worker for assistance, him saying yes, and the work getting done on time. The first benefit of this short exercise is that you feel relaxed and calm almost immediately.

Beginning the day with even five minutes of a guided daydream will help you to 'turn on' your feel good vibes and you can start your schedule of activities on the right note. A quick five minute session in the evening will help in the course correction of the events that didn't make you happy. A guided daydream is your best visualization tool for the future and a good therapeutic tool for past events, so go ahead, dream on. The more you can daydream, the more creative you will feel. Daydream your way into reality and live the life of your dreams !!

Article by Nidhi Sharan.

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Creative quickies: The wonders of 15 minute time restraints By Danielle LaPorte

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I've noticed a definite pattern in the countless jam sessions I've had with colleagues and clients – the best idea gems often surface in the last few minutes.

A morning spent teasing out the best strategy...two hours back 'n forth on what to name the campaign.... and, just as you're clearing away the coffee cups and packing up your sticky notes, someone says, “You know....what if we just called it Whazam and went direct to whozit?” Silence. Everyone looks at each other and someone exclaims, “That's it!”

Those innermost feelings that needed to be spoken, the winning formula – they often slip onto stage as the curtain is getting ready to drop, because we've stopped performing and relax into the creative high. It's usually at the end of meeting when people start to joke and goof off. We save comfort and play for last.

Creative quickies are the way to go: 15-minute jam sessions

If the good stuff so often surfaces at the end, then the trick is to end it sooner. Quit while you're ahead. Short idea intervals work wonders. “Let's jam on the story line for 15 minutes.” And stick to it. Then you can brainstorm on fund raising for 15 minutes. The pressure gets the energy rising. The bursts of creative focus will start to feed each other. It'll all weave into a big picture.

Really good ideas often come when:

We get distracted. Consider distraction fodder for brainstorming. So go ahead, let your mind wander in meetings and tie it back to the issue at hand. Thinking about what's for dinner may trigger a great marketing strategy.

Our defenses are down: when you feel like there's nothing to lose and that you won't be criticized.

We've exhausted the possibilities and give up. “Give up” is the operative term here. When we stop looking so hard, the view expands – and you can see what's sparkling just within your reach.

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Article by Danielle La Porte. To find out more about Danielle – please click [here](#).

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Top 10 tips for being highly uncreative By Derek Cheshire

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- ✗ Always hold meetings at the same time and same place, with the same people and with the same fixed agenda. You believe that it shows you are in control and that everyone likes structure.
- ✗ Always listen to the same music, eat the same food and read the same books. You believe that this shows you know what you like.
- ✗ Say 'it will not work' instead of 'I wonder what will happen.' This avoids embarrassment and you can always blame luck if it really does work.
- ✗ Try to avoid failure at all costs. People never get to the top by making mistakes. Do they?
- ✗ Always take the easy way out or use the first idea that springs into your mind.
- ✗ Never start anything unless you know how it will turn out. This is also a sign of control and avoiding mistakes and always makes sure that wacky ideas are never given the light of day.
- ✗ Never ask 'why' or 'how' because you may discover something unpleasant or the answer may contravene tip number
- ✗ Always discard ideas or plans that have flaws in them. They are useless and can never be made to work.
- ✗ Never share ideas with others, yours are too valuable and they have nothing to contribute.
- ✗ Always believe that you are creative and that others are idiots.

(If you recognise any of these in yourself then you might wish to modify your behaviour unless of course you control nuclear reactors for a living. If you recognise any of these in your boss or colleagues then start job hunting.)

Article by Derek Cheshire. To find out more about Derek— please click [here](#).

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Challenging Einstein

Why We Should Be Questioning The Status Quo - By Dr. N Annamalai

It is time to challenge the Einsteins and Newtons of this world.

Do you have the courage to stop making a product, even when it is the largest selling one in its category?

Can you think of wanting 'demanding customers'?

Do you start developing the next model even before introducing the earlier one in the market?

Can you intentionally include few dissidents in your team?

What about making your own product obsolete?

Can you publicly declare to your workers, "We can afford to make mistakes?"

What about challenging Newton's laws and Einstein's theories?

Can you listen to people whom you dislike, love your enemies and watch for one hour the TV channel you hate most? Well, it's time we are prepared for all these. Traditionally creativity is considered as conceiving of new ideas and converting them in to reality. With the unprecedented growth (read: explosion) in every field, even outlooks are changing.

Gillette's market leader Excel was superceded by the Sensor and Sensor 2, and then by Mach 3 and Mach 3 Turbo.

3M has a policy that 30% of their revenues should come from products introduced in the market during the last 6 months. And how do they achieve it? – by making their own successful products obsolete.

Intel's philosophy is to cannibalize its own business by constantly bringing out better processors to replace the ones that are already market leaders.

Any new product in consumer electronics always comes from Sony (of course, except for iPod,) and in a couple of months Samsung and LG bring out the same product at 40% less cost (again, that's a different story.)

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When the companies launch a new product, they are already working on the product that will replace it. Microsoft launched Windows Vista in January 2007, but they had already started working, from October 2006 onwards, on the next operating system that is going to replace Windows Vista.

Despite being the number one in the market as the largest selling vehicle in SUV category, Toyota stopped production of the model "Qualis." In the Indian business scenario, this is simply unheard of and never an option to be considered.

Gravity for instance, is taken for granted, as a fact of life. But it was recently reported that Boeing, the world's largest aircraft manufacturer, is working on experimental anti-gravity projects that could overturn a century of conventional aerospace propulsion technology if the science underpinning them can be engineered to hardware. Boeing's Phantom Works advanced research and development facility in Seattle is trying to solicit the services of a Russian scientist who claims he has developed anti-gravity devices.

3M's corporate philosophy describes, "We have continued to accept mistakes as a normal part of running business. It's important to add, however, that we expect to have originality in our mistakes. We can afford almost any mistake once."

It used to be 'black boards' for several centuries, and people accepted. Yes, black boards ought to be black, how can they be white? If asked why is a black board black, someone would respond, "The chalk we use to write is white." A reasonable man is content with this answer and stops there as things are in order. An unreasonable man challenges the logical answer, "Why should you write with only a white chalk? Why not with blue or black or red or green?" He then comes up with the brilliant idea of the white board which is suited for writing with any colour.

An optimist invented an aeroplane, while a pessimist (read: dissident) helped put a parachute there. Had there been no dissidents, there would not have been any safety devices, no security departments, no defence services, no emergency lights and no standby arrangements. The earth would still be at the center and the sun revolving around us. We would still have to travel thousands of kilometers to watch the cricket match being played in Australia or New Zealand, black boards would still be black and Neil Armstrong landing on the moon, a hoax.

To spur imagination and ignite discovery research, DuPont as a company, have defined a set of large, "unreachable" goals. Some of those goals do indeed seem unreachable: immortal polymers, zero-waste processes, elastic coatings as

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hard as diamonds, elastomers as strong as steel, materials that repair themselves, chemical plants that are run by a single chip, and coatings that change colour on demand. Nevertheless, they are entirely serious about these “stretch” programmes. They publicise them widely. The specifics are not important as the expression of such goals. Goals like these convey an attitude – DuPont is a company that believes its people are extraordinary achievers whose achievements know no limits.

People accept things as they are known at that time and our lives revolve around those accepted principles. About 400 years ago it was believed that Earth was at the centre and the sun and others planets revolved around us. It was true at that time and life was based on that belief, and everything went very well. Suddenly this belief was challenged, and the sun was put at the centre. Now everything is going smoothly with this new belief.

During the 1940s, Juran and others proposed that there will be some unknown factors in our manufacturing processes and they will affect the quality of products. By analysing the past data we can estimate them because of their random occurrence and we have to accept things within those limits. In other words, we have to accept and live with things, with varying qualities. It was true at that time and with this knowledge some of the major developments took place – transistors were made, televisions and computers became popular, Neil Armstrong landed on the moon and satellites were put in orbit and used for communication purposes. However during 1980s, Deming and others challenged these beliefs and asserted that everything is happening with our knowledge and by properly designing systems we can get the same quality without any variations.

When young children start colouring, they often go beyond the boundaries. It is believed that this is due to the poor muscle control or undeveloped hand movements. However, some psychological research shows that it is also due to their open outlook – not getting bogged down by boundaries. They ask, “Why should one be limited within the boundaries?” That child, who challenges even the real boundary, when he/she becomes an adult, creates an imaginary boundary of his/her own, even when there is none. Most of us take for granted that what the rules say, or what is written in the hand book is final. That is the imaginary boundary we have built and we continue to remain within that boundary. What we are not aware of is that what the rules say or what is written in the hand book is true, but not final.

Final is yet to come and will, likely, never come. Challenging the status quo has been going on ever since man first

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walked the earth. However, the actual changes have been happening occasionally 'just like that.' Now it is time that we integrate it as a basic necessity of our existence and even, accelerate the process. So go ahead and colour outside the lines, but be certain that you are staying on the same page.

Article by Dr. N Annamalai. . To find out more about Dr. N Annamalai – please click [here](#).

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Vu ja de: See old things in new ways By KR Ravi

"The question is not what you look at, but what you see"

– Henry David Thoreau

Young executives can draw much insight into the art of innovative thinking from this Thoreau wisdom.

In World War II, British and US air forces faced a rising number of their planes being either destroyed or having to hastily abandon their missions in the face of enemy fire, with the returning planes badly damaged. A group of scientists was entrusted with the task of advising where to put armor and strengthen the planes. This group closely examined the damaged planes and was about to recommend a 'solution' when a young statistician Abraham Wald thought about the planes that did not return!

Wald put a mark on every bullet hole in the planes that returned from battle. He found that two major sections of the fuselage – one between the wings and the other between the tails – had fewer bullet holes. He decided to put the armor in these places, where he saw fewer not more holes. Why? The planes he analyzed had not been shot down! So it was the holes he was not seeing in the planes that were not returning that needed extra protection – a new way to look at old things.

De ja vu, is the feeling that you have had an experience before even though it is brand new. Vu ja de a term coined by author Robert Sutton, is what happens when you feel and act as if an experience or an object is brand new even if you have had it or seen it hundreds of times. In situations where innovative thinking is required it pays to have a vu ja de attitude. It helps us to see the same old things in a new way as the example of Wald shows.

Some people are born with this mentality but all of us can cultivate it. Vu ja de can be a cultural characteristic of companies and groups too. Ettore Sottsass is a world renowned Italian designer. Even at 80 he retains the vu ja de approach. His firm takes a radical approach to designing anything at all -- from Olivetti typewriters to telephone directories, to a resort in China. For example he and his team designed the commercially successful 'Valentine' typewriter in 1969 that was the colour of bright red lipstick. His approach was that while most designs are meant to be bland, rational, functional and not noticeable, the things we use should provoke strong feelings.

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Speed is the modern mantra -- fast food, quick fixes, fast life, rapid action are everyday terminology. But there is a creative genius who believes that when you look at things more slowly than everyone else does, the same old things look different to you and you can think about them in different ways. Joey Reiman rejects the assumption that faster is better. He tells his clients – Coca-Cola, for example – that he would generate creative ideas for them at the speed of molasses! He openly advertises that his is the slowest company anyone could meet. He bases this philosophy on his understanding that most advertising firms are in a rush to be 'creative' and deliver results to multiple clients and this, according to him, stifles creativity. Reiman and his team ever so slowly developed a most unusual marketing positioning for their client, Coty Inc, a top fragrance giant. Reiman created a unique positioning of a 'ghost myst' the first perfume to embrace values and spirituality – inner beauty rather than physical beauty. 'Ghost myst' became the best selling perfume in 1995 and in fact launched a 'spirituality in beauty' movement that many other companies copied. Reiman's competitive advantage is that his firm is a tortoise in a world filled with speedy hares.

Vu ja de also involves:

- ✍ Shifting our opinions and perceptions in any which way – is it likely that the poor have more children because they are poor?
- ✍ Shifting our focus from objects or patterns that are in the foreground to those in the background – can terrorism be better tackled by looking into the problems of the families of the terrorists?
- ✍ Thinking of things that are usually assumed to be negative as positive and vice versa – is it not more pertinent to consider our mass of poor people as a major business opportunity?
- ✍ Reversing assumptions about cause and effect or what matters most versus least – is slack consumer demand fuelled by redundancies or are redundancies fuelled by slack demand or both fuelled by other forces?

In creativity ignorance is bliss, especially in the early stages of the ideation process. Involving ignorant people in an exercise ensures that they are not conditioned by the baggage of 'knowledge' and are able to see the same old things in new ways. A company would do well to hire novices to come up with creative ideas for problems The most famous case of a novice being brought in and going on to become an internationally renowned expert is that of Jane Goodall .

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Anthropologist Louis Leakey hired Goodall to do two years of intense observations of apes in Africa. Goodall hesitated because she had no scientific training but Leakey insisted that not only was a university degree not necessary but it had serious drawbacks! Goodall realised that he wanted someone with a mind uncluttered and unbiased by theory who would take up the study for no other reason than a real desire for knowledge. The rest is history as Goodall shocked and awed the world with her pathbreaking revelations of the apes and their behaviour that forever changed the way we view these animals. The other ways of promoting vu ja de is to hire people who have formal training in some area but are not jaded by the historical and arbitrary and outdated customs in the industry. Dyson Appliances of UK, the makers of the largest selling vacuum cleaners, is a case in point. CEO Dyson believes that his company's success could be attributed to hiring fresh graduates – unsullied by 'experience.'

When Daniel Ng an American trained engineer opened Hongkong's first McDonald's in 1975, his local food industry competitors dismissed the venture as a non-starter, "Selling hamburgers to the Cantonese? You must be joking!" Ng credits his boldness to the fact that he did not have an MBA and had never taken a business course -- quoted by James Watson, Professor of Chinese Studies, reporting that McDonald now has 158 thriving restaurants in Hongkong!

Article by KR Ravi. To find out more about him – please click [here](#).

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Deafening Silence

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The story of life - By PS Wasu

Who am I? What is the meaning of life? Its purpose? What am I doing here? These and similar questions have baffled man since ages. Trying to find the answers, you run in circles, come to a dead-end or get lost in a maze. You visit gurus. After imbibing their speculative theories you yourself become a guru. The search continues. But the meaning remains ever elusive. You ask the meaning of life only because life runs through you. So your being alive itself is the meaning. Anything else is speculation, a mere contrivance and a shadow of the real thing. To the extent that the meaning of life becomes more important than living it, you miss it. The more you seek the answer, the more you get away from it.

THE PEAK EXPERIENCE

There is a story about a mountain that when you scale its peak, you'll meet an old man who has the answers to all the questions. As you begin climbing, you look forward to meeting the old man as much as you want to make it to the top. Finally, reaching the summit is a great feeling. Time comes to a standstill as you drink in the view. Your heart expands. You are alive as never before. In that wonderful state, all questions disappear. The old man grins. You grin too. But no questions are asked. Because the meaning of life has already been glimpsed.

THE GREAT FLOW

Lucy was greatly bothered about the meaning of life. She approached a wise man for guidance. The wise man took her to a stream and filled a pitcher with stream water.

Wise man: (Pointing to the stream) What is that?
Lucy: A stream.

Wise man: (Pointing to the pitcher) What is this?
Lucy: A pitcherful of stream water.

Wise man: Why don't you call it a stream?
Lucy: The water doesn't flow in the pitcher. So it's not a stream.

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Wise man: How can it be a stream?
Lucy: When you let go of it.

As Lucy made the gesture of letting go, she understood what the wise man was driving at. Life is like a flowing stream and the meaning of life is only a pitcherful of water.

THE PERSIAN RUG

In Somerset Maugham's *Of Human Bondage* (1915), Cronshaw gifts an intricately woven Persian rug to Philip Carey, telling him that it might answer his question about the meaning of life. Philip can't make out anything initially. Later the message of the Persian rug dawns upon him.

Just as the weaver makes patterns for the joy of doing so, a man too can look at his life as a pattern. There is as little need as use for a particular kind of pattern. It's the uniqueness of the pattern that counts. Out of the manifold events of his life, his deeds, his feelings, and his thoughts, a man creates a design, regular, elaborate, complicated, or beautiful. Philip is thrilled by this new way of looking at things.

To quote from the book: "His (Philip's) life had seemed horrible when it was measured by its happiness, but now he seemed to gather strength that it might be measured by something else. Happiness mattered as little as pain. They came in, both of them, as all the other details of his life came in, to the elaboration of the design. He seemed for an instant to stand above the accidents of his existence, and he felt that they could not affect him again as they had done before. Whatever happened to him now would be more motive to add to the complexity of the pattern, and when the end approached he would rejoice in its completion. It would be a work of art, and it would be nonetheless beautiful because he alone knew of its existence, and with his death it would at once cease to be."

JUST PLAY IT

A new monk in a monastery had just finished his breakfast. Finding the master alone, he approached him and asked: "What is the meaning of life?" The master said: "Have you had breakfast?" "Yes," the monk replied. "Then go and wash your bowl," said the master.

When a ball comes your way, you play it. Life is also a ball game. It's about doing what needs to be done here and now.

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When you finish your breakfast, you wash your bowl. The bowl washed, there's another ball to be played. The unknowability of the next moment is intrinsic to the nature of life. You never know what is going to come your way.

If you knew that, it would be no fun playing.

THE SILVER PLATTER

Speculating about the miracles that people look forward to all their lives, Henry Miller says in *Tropic of Cancer* (1934): “What if at the last moment, when the banquet table is set and the cymbals clash, there should appear suddenly, and without warning, a silver platter on which even the blind could see that there is nothing more, and nothing less, than two enormous lumps of shit.

“That, I believe would be more miraculous than anything which man has looked forward to. It would be miraculous because it would be undreamed of...

Somehow the realization that nothing was to be hoped for had a salutary effect upon me. For weeks and months, for years, in fact, all my life I had been looking forward to something happening, some extrinsic event that would alter my life, and now suddenly, inspired by the hopelessness of everything, I felt relieved, felt as though a great burden had been lifted from my shoulders.”

It would be a mistake to look at the hopelessness of Miller as despair. For him, hopelessness is a positive factor. It consists of, to borrow from Anaïs Nin, “a wild extravagance, a mad gaiety, a verve, a gusto, at times almost a delirium.” His hopelessness is about savouring life as it unfolds instead of waiting for something to come your way on a silver platter. It is about abandoning the dream of a magical future and waking up to the magic of this moment.

BUDDHA NAGAR

Jason had heard that there was a place called Buddha Nagar where everyone was enlightened. He set out looking for this mythical town. After years of wandering, he came to a river. Across the river was Buddha Nagar.

Jason got onto a boat. The cool breeze felt so good. A wave of joy swept through him. At last, he had made it to Buddha Nagar. He congratulated himself on the success of his mission. His patience, his struggles had borne fruit. As he looked around with a sense of satisfaction, his eyes fastened onto a corpse floating away. He looked carefully. Why, it was his own corpse. In a single moment, all his achievements, his virtues, his spirituality, even his making it to Buddha Nagar

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were gone forever. What a loss!

In deep sorrow, Jason started crying, first slowly and then uncontrollably. Then through his tears, he looked at the corpse a second time only to find that his sorrow and sense of loss too had floated away. An all-enveloping peace descended on him. He was liberated from joy and sorrow. So, when you can see your own corpse, when you can see your judgments floating away, every place is Buddha Nagar. Then you come alive for the first time.

THE CHATTERBOX

Gautam Buddha is said to have been the greatest chatterbox of all times. For forty-nine years, he went from place to place and gave thousands of discourses. And yet there were moments when he was dumbstruck. He just wouldn't open his mouth. This happened every time he was asked metaphysical questions—about God, about the unknown, about the purpose of life. Buddha maintained that life was too short to bother about these questions. The closest he ever came to answering these was when he said, “When a poisoned arrow pierces your flesh, you don't bother about where it has come from. You take it out and dress the wound.”

If you lived in Buddha's time and were tired of his continuous chatter, you only had to ask him the meaning of life and the chatter would come to a stop.

ALL SAID AND DONE

Life is an imponderable puzzle, the mother of all koans. All other koans have, in fact, been derived from this one. Anything that can be stated about life can be contradicted—including this statement. So if you think you understand the meaning of life, you don't.

Article by P S Wasu. To find out more about him – please click [here](#).

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16 habits of highly creative people

If they work for them, they can work for you too! - By [Shalu Wasu](#)

There is no use trying," said Alice. "One can't believe impossible things." "I daresay you haven't had much practice," said the Queen. "When I was your age, I always did it for half an hour a day. Why, sometimes I've believed as many as six impossible things before breakfast.

- Lewis Carroll

Many people believe that creativity is inborn and only a chosen few are creative. While it is true that creativity is inborn, it is not true that only a chosen few are creative.

Everyone is born creative. In the process of growing up, educating yourself and adapting yourself to your environment, you slowly add blocks to your creativity and forget that you had it in the first place.

The difference between a creative person and a person who is not so creative is not in the creativity that they were born with but in the creativity that they have lost.

How can you enhance your creative ability? One possible way is to observe the habits of creative people, identify the ones that you feel will work for you and then make a plan to cultivate them.

Here are 16 habits of creative people. If you cultivate some of them, you will feel an increase in your level of creativity. In the process, you will also feel tickled by life!

1. Creative people are full of curiosity.

Creative people are wonderstruck. They are tickled by the newness of every moment. They have lots of questions. They keep asking what, why, when, where and how.

A questioning mind is an open mind. It is not a knowing mind. Only an open mind can be creative. A knowing mind can never be creative.

A questioning stance sensitizes the mind in a very special way and it is able to sense what would have been missed otherwise.

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2. Creative people are problem-friendly.

When there is a problem, some people can be seen wringing up their hands. Their first reaction is to look for someone to blame. Being faced with a problem becomes a problem. Such people can be called problem-averse.

Creative people, on the other hand, are problem-friendly. They just roll up their sleeves when faced with a problem. They see problems as opportunities to improve the quality of life. Being faced with a problem is never a problem.

You get dirty and take a bath every day. You get tired and relax every day. Similarly, you have problems that need to be solved every day. Life is a fascinating rhythm of problems and solutions.

To be problem-averse is to be life-averse. To be problem-friendly is to be life-friendly. Problems come into your life to convey some message. If you run away from them, you miss the message.

3. Creative people value their ideas.

Creative people realize the value of an idea. They do not take any chance with something so important. They carry a small notepad to note down ideas whenever they occur.

Many times, just because they have a notepad and are looking for ideas to jot down, they can spot ideas which they would have otherwise missed.

4. Creative people embrace challenges.

Creative people thrive on challenges. They have a gleam in their eyes as soon as they sniff one. Challenges bring the best out of them – reason enough to welcome them.

5. Creative people are full of enthusiasm.

Creative people are enthusiastic about their goals. This enthusiasm works as fuel for their journey, propelling them to their goals.

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6. Creative people are persistent.

Creative people know it well that people may initially respond to their new ideas like the immune system responds to a virus. They'll try to reject the idea in a number of ways.

Creative people are not surprised or frustrated because of this. Nor do they take it personally. They understand it takes time for a new idea to be accepted. In fact, the more creative the idea, the longer it takes for it to be appreciated.

7. Creative people are perennially dissatisfied.

Creative people are acutely aware of their dissatisfactions and unfulfilled desires. However, this awareness does not frustrate them. As a matter of fact, they use this awareness as a stimulus to realize their dreams.

8. Creative people are optimists.

Creative people generally have a deeply held belief that most, if not all, problems can be solved. No challenge is too big to be overcome.

This doesn't mean they are always happy and never depressed. They do have their bad moments but they don't generally get stumped by a challenge.

9. Creative people make positive Judgment.

A new idea is delicate. It can be killed by a sneer or a yawn. It can be stabbed to death by a quip and worried to death by a right man's brow – a businessman Charles Brower

The ability to hold off on judging or critiquing an idea is important in the process of creativity. Often great ideas start as crazy ones – if critique is applied too early the idea will be killed and never developed into something useful and useable.

This doesn't mean there is no room for critique or judgment in the creative process but there is a time and place for it and creative people recognize that.

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10. Creative people go for the big kill.

Creative people realize that the first idea is just the starting point. It is in the process of fleshing it out that some magical cross-connections happen and the original 'normal' idea turns into a killer idea.

11. Creative people are prepared to stick it out.

Creative people who actually see their ideas come to fruition have the ability to stick with their ideas and see them through – even when the going gets tough. This is what sets them apart from others. Stick-ability is the key.

12. Creative people do not fall in love with an idea.

Creative people recognize how dangerous it is to fall in love with an idea. Falling in love with an idea means stopping more ideas from coming to their mind. They love the process of coming up with ideas, not necessarily the idea.

13. Creative people recognize the environment in which they are most creative.

Creative people do most of their thinking in an environment which is most conducive to their creativity. If they are unable to influence their physical environment, they recreate their 'favourite' creative environment in their minds.

14. Creative people are good at reframing any situation.

Reframes are a different way of looking at things. Being able to reframe experiences and situations is a very powerful skill.

Reframing allows you to look at a situation from a different angle. It is like another camera angle in a football match. And a different view has the power to change your entire perception of the situation.

Reframing can breathe new life into dead situations. It can motivate demoralized teams. It helps you to spot opportunities that you would have otherwise missed.

15. Creative people are friends with the unexpected.

Creative people have the knack of expecting the unexpected and finding connections between unrelated things. It is this special quality of mind that evokes serendipitous events in their lives.

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Having honed the art of making happy discoveries, they are able to evoke serendipity more often than others.

16. Creative people are not afraid of failures.

Creative people realize that the energy that creates great ideas also creates errors. They know that failure is not really the opposite of success.

In fact, both failure and success are on the same side of the spectrum because both are the result of an attempt made. Creative people look at failure as a stopover on way to success, just a step away from it.

Article by Shalu Wasu. Shalu is a Singapore based creativity consultant and trainer. To find out more about Shalu Wasu – please click [here](#).

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Getting To Know You

What Is Your Hidden Talent? - By [Sining Malaya](#)

I was in awe when my friend Rebeka showed me her work. Abstract shapes were exquisitely worked in untamed patterns and fused with breathtaking hues. Her painting was amazingly beautiful, but absolutely surprising to me. Why, you might ask. Well, it was her first attempt at painting. She started barely three months ago – Rebeka is 57 years old.

My friend has had no formal education or basic training in art. She just happened to see some unused acrylic tubes on her neighbor's trash and decided to try them on a canvas and boom – she created one amazing artwork. Her newly discovered talent came as a surprise not only to me, but especially to her. Who would have known for certain that Rebeka has this hidden talent waiting to be discovered after 57 long years.

Rebeka's story reminds me of an article I read in a newspaper last month. There is a seven year old boy from the province of Pangasinan (northern Philippines) who regularly drives a backhoe! Yes a backhoe which is a piece of heavy equipment used in construction. Amazing isn't it? But this was quite an early self discovery.

For me, I can say that I'm lucky. Because of this great willpower in me, I never had problems perfecting a new experience to my advantage. When I tried scribbling a short story (I was nine at the time), I surprised my parents and teachers. When I did my first sketches (at the age of 11), it was really a discovery for me. When I tried song writing (at 15), it worked. When I tried paper clay art (at 26), it was marvelous. And when I tried swimming (at the age of 28, huh), I didn't drown.

One can never be too old or too young for self-discovery or rediscovery.

Life is constant learning and human talents are limitless. One just needs some concentration, inspiration, encouragement and cheers to be able to realize that hidden talent waiting to be expressed.

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So whether you're five years old or in your twilight years, the opportunity and power to explore the undiscovered you is in your hands. Learn new things like playing a new sport; singing new kinds of songs; doing exotic dances; experimenting with cooking; trying some artwork (like Rebeka did); starting your own vegetable garden; embarking on some eco-friendly practices (for Mother Earth) or simply indulging in a totally new experience. But do it now, so you'll have some time for improvement in order to become a master or expert (wow!).

Explore. Experience. Learning is always fun. And constant self-discovery is not only exciting and stimulating, it is really a never-ending experience.

Sining Malaya works as a news writer in an award-winning Filipino newspaper. To find out more about Sining Malaya – please click [here](#).

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Panna Lal's Guide to Boosting Creativity



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