

The Human Experience Pt 2: Creativity as a natural state of being

"We need to watch out because there are so many animals that we know nothing about and they could be dangerous" said Jeremiah. Louise was foraging through the undergrowth of the backyard. Picking up a worm with the calm composure of an experienced explorer she said "Look, here's a deadly snake".

"What are you two doing?" asked Mum.

"We are in the Amazonian jungle and we're trying to find the lost people of the Sateré Mawé tribe" explained Louise.

"Oh!" said mum in hushed tones. "Can I come too?" "Shush!" replied Jeremiah. Mum got on all fours and followed Jeremiah's lead in the expedition.

All three moved along the fence-line - eyes alert as they tracked beneath the bottlebrush and cautiously moved behind the well-established two meter high pink, cream and white flaxes. Louise (being the only trained botanist on the expedition) explained that the flaxes contained a deadly poison on their razor sharp leaves and warned against getting too close to them. As they moved out from the cover of the flaxes Jeremiah quietly hushed the group. "Stop" he said, "don't move". "What?" said Mum in quiet conspiracy. "The village..." he replied.

Three pairs of eyes looked beyond the deadly leaves that concealed them and gazed over a clearing. There, mounted on stilts, was a village hut.

"What can you see?" asked mum. "Nothing, nothing at all" answered Louise.

Jeremiah, with an inflated sense of courage, commanded the others to stay where they were, saying "I'll go and check it out". Louise and Mum looked at each other with indignation, following him as he walked into the clear light of day. Jeremiah looked back, slightly annoyed at their disobedience, and at that all three walked towards the stepladder that hung from the entrance of the hut.

Slowly, he placed his left foot on the first rung, and ascended; his eyes fixed upwards towards the edge of the platform while Mum and Louise surveyed the surrounding area. Reaching to platform he pulled his body cautiously upwards and peered into the darkness of the hut.

Suddenly, a primal sound, a roar, was heard in the darkness and unexpected arms encased him; dragging him into the blackness of the hut. He screamed, and struggled to free himself from the vice-like grip his captor held him in.

A familiar voice whispered in his ear "Got you!" Jeremiah's heart was pounding, but it was only (gratefully) Dad, and not some savage who'd imprisoned him.

Gradually, Jeremiah calmed down, taking comfort in his Dad's embrace. The remainder of his Expedition Force clambered up and, concern now gone; began to laugh. What an adventure! And what a surprising twist at the end!

Creativity is who we are

We've all been in the world of imagination and creativity - a world where we are transported into another reality.

As human beings we have a natural and unique ability to expand our reality; to reach well beyond the ordinary. For some, the gift is ever present and dynamic. For others, the gift has sadly been long-dispatched to childhood. For those, pretence is for children. They say "I haven't got time for such foolishness", or "I have more important things to do with my time".

Interestingly, even those with scant regard for the spirit of ingenuity and imagination often have an inventiveness which 'leaks out' through their special talents. There is 'no time for play' but many men are found in backyard sheds where the important work of tinkering with 'projects' is pursued. Or they will be unconsciously creative with art, music, cooking, poetry and other special interest groups.

Originality is born from a mind free of the entanglements that we create. Fear, worry, anxiety about getting a result, anger through to irritation - they all drive us further away from an innovative and fresh experience of life. In our story, Mum could have insisted that Jeremiah and Louise get out of the dirt, avoid the flax plant - any number of anxious thoughts could have destroyed the moment. In her anxiety, she could have prevented the natural flow of the unfolding adventure.

Dad too could have contaminated the story. He could have chosen non-participation over fun and being involved in the 'expedition'. But he didn't. Instead, he chose to enliven and make real the adventure.

There is plenty of credible research to support the fact that creativity is a source of healing, rejuvenation, renewal; and the essential juice to the human spirit. Even the modern workplace, the last bastion of resistance, is discovering that when the human capacity for creativity is supported, encouraged and brought alive; innovation, happiness, productivity, stress and sick leave and workforce retention are all influenced positively.

Creativity is the consequence of a free and uncluttered mind. We know it is time to let go of our constricted and obsessive thoughts when we are laughing less, not having much fun, or finding insufficient time to reflect or relax. When these things are occurring, we rarely experience the beauty (and ignition of) fresh ideas and new insights - more importantly; the feeling and joy of being alive. ■ ■

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