

Crazitivity

by Dr. Edward de Bono

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Crazitivity is a new word that needed inventing. Crazitivity is that sort of creativity that is solely driven by desire to be different. Creativity is always new and different so the belief is that something new and different is necessarily creative. So anything different, bizarre and off-the-wall claims to be creative.

I have no objection whatever to this belief and this style of creativity. My only concern is that people should equate crazitivity with creativity. This would be a pity and would be a great disservice to serious creativity. Creativity can be low key, simple, unostentatious and very logical—in hindsight. Creativity does not have to announce: "Look at me. Aren't I creative!!"

In the advertising world something that is crazy may catch attention and may therefore have a direct value. This is seldom the case elsewhere. Since much of the impetus for deliberate creative effort came from the advertising industry (brainstorming) there is this residue of belief that bizarre is creative.

Bizarre does not attract attention in general. So those who want to make a statement or parade their disdain for normal conventions may seek the crazitivity of bizarreness. Sadly, there is a huge convention of unconventionality—just as all hippies had to wear hippie uniforms. There is nothing wrong with the motivation to seek to be different. It is a pity if it just stops at being different for the sake of being different. In lateral thinking there is an important role for provocation. "Po cars have square wheels" is a typical provocation. The point of provocation, however, is that you use movement to move forward from the provocation. You do not just sit on the provocation and say: "Isn't that creative?" So you move forward from the square wheel provocation to design intelligent suspension. Provocation is a valuable step but not a useful result.

The main reason why crazitivity is so often equated with creativity is that crazitivity is so very easy. So those people who want to be noticed and want to flaunt creativity find this the easiest route to take. That is a choice and an option. In my view it is not a very constructive one. I regard highly those creative contributions which deliver more value than just being different. So the key question is: "What value does this creativity deliver?" It may be eye-catching but then a shout is ear-catching. Do you really want to live in a world full of shouting?

Dr. Edward de Bono is a leading authority in the field of creative thinking and is the originator of the term "lateral thinking." He has written over 50 books in the field of creativity and thinking—including the international bestsellers, Serious Creativity, Six Thinking Hats, and Lateral Thinking. He has been a keynote speaker at two of ACA's annual conventions.