

**Annual Conference March 12-15, 2003
Sheraton Society Hill, Philadelphia, PA**



ACA 2003 Conference

One Participant's View and Creative Connections

by Ed Maciocha

At Saturday morning's closing ceremony, ACA board member and creative consultant Alan Black asked each of us to close our eyes and focus on the images engendered by the conference and the insights and learnings gained. Many conference experiences came to mind and I would like to share a few of them and the connections they triggered for me.

One of my first images was Ann Herrmann-Nehdi's preconference workshop. Ann presented a very playful workshop to experience the whole brain model. Participants were given the opportunity to play-act the various brain dominant quadrants enabling the participants to take on the mindset of a contrasting quadrant and thus obtain an empathetic understanding of how someone in an opposing quadrant perceives. Creative thinking types gained an understanding of those with a less creative but strong implementation mindset. I found it particularly interesting as to how my thinking style counterparts from other cultures shared similar interests with me. I enjoyed the opportunity to talk with Ann about Ned's avocational interest in the Triune Brain concept of the neuro-scientific theorist Paul MacLean.

I recalled the deep relaxation induced in the guided imagery led by Sid and Beatrice Parnes in their visionizing session. For me this proved to be an effective method to access the right brain and to feed the subconscious mind various stimuli. Judy Laws reported on her phenomenological investigation of research and development scientists' experience of creative self-efficacy. I couldn't help but make the connection to Dr. Thomas Metzinger's book *Being No One: The Self-Model Theory of Subjectivity*. According to the philosopher, Dr. Metzinger, nobody had or was a self. All that exists are phenomenal selves, as they appear in conscious experience. The phenomenal self is not a thing but an ongoing process. We can make this ongoing experience creative by having a creative self-image. We can gain a belief in our own creative self-efficacy through our hobbies and can then transfer it to our professional lives.

Each and every session I attended provided me with useful insights. Tara Coste and Daniel Reuster's session used fractal patterns as a way to explore creative thinking. We were given various fractal patterns from nature upon which to program thinking patterns for solving problems. Dr. Andrei Aleinikov stressed the importance of nonverbal communication. I recalled a book I read earlier in the year by Dr. Rhawn Joseph entitled *The Right Brain and the Unconscious: Discovering the Stranger Within*. Dr. Andy and Dr. Joseph both stress how our nonverbal behavior influences our lives. The unconscious interpersonal signals that we send out determine with whom we come in contact and thus the ideas we entertain.

I recalled the igniter presentation by Roger Firestien. I had previously experienced forced connections at a creativity workshop led by Roger but as with all creative techniques you always make new connections. ACA provides wonderful opportunities for networking and at the networking lunch, I had the chance to listen to Roger talk about using creative problem solving with the Buffalo Yacht Club to come up with ideas to attract new members.

The presentation by Rosita Brennan on the ancient Chinese art of Feng Shui was mind-blowing. Rosita showed how through imagery and the spatial arrangements of a residential dwelling one could influence perceptions and program the right brain. From a Western standpoint, it had Skinnerian and Jungian elements. Rosita used convincing anecdotes that stunned the audience with the effectiveness of Feng Shui. Rosita, in addition to demonstrating the effects of positive Chi (life energy), also showed the effects of Yi (intentionality) in bringing about the fulfillment of a goal in some area of life.

Equally fascinating was Henry Tio's presentation. He showed a slide of a room dedicated to creative thinking at the Ngee Ann Polytechnic in Singapore. Personally working in a highly left-brained focused organization, I immediately saw the utility of such a room. This brought powerful associations with the concept of the Safe Room described in the WSJ on 3/14/03. Just as a Safe Room is designed to protect from terrorists and burglars, the Creative Thinking room would provide a sanctuary from the left-brain world and from one's own left-brained intrapersonal put-down artist. It would serve as an adult playground for right brain activities. ACA's conference theme was *Creating the Future* and my imagery began to do just that. In a corporate setting, I envisioned a virtual reality capability, in which one could plug and play a creativity consultant for just in time inspiration. Creativity consultants could provide advice on a pay-per-view basis. The wisdom and insight that conference attendees gained from Roger Firestien, Alan Black and all the other igniters and session presenters could be given a wider virtual audience. Also, one could play-act the various Herrmann brain dominance quadrants with virtual counterparts.

My mind's journey was coming to the end of its path. Lastly, I recalled the special night event. It was a visit to Lost Highways Archives art gallery. The featured artist was A. C. Radebaugh whose work in advertising was done during the 2nd World War. The futuristic art of A. C. Radebaugh conceptualized the future as an environment built of sleek vertical buildings and ultramodern means of transportation. In contrast, the vision advocated by presenters I was fortunate to experience was of a future of self-confident beings living fulfilled lives. Creating the future begins in our imagination.

Ed Maciocha works at the Naval Inventory Control Point in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania and is an avid personal explorer in the field of creativity and its application. He has devoted much of his time to reading, training, networking and applying creative concepts to his work and life.