

INNOVATING *your* Opportunities



by Sidney J. Parnes

Adapted from *Fifty Years of Creative Problem-Solving* . . . the second of a series of University of Georgia Annual Lectures on Creativity at the turn of the Century.

I am heartened to see school adoptions of creativity programs growing and expanding significantly, both nationally and internationally—programs such as Future Problem Solving, Odyssey of the Mind, and Invent America. These and other programs emphasizing creative problem-solving are helping us move into the “universal awareness” stage that I talk about in the 21st century.

As I contemplate the 21st century from the 50-year perspective we now have, I propose another concept I have been clarifying in my mind. It has to do with getting education’s full attention to and application of the power of CPS for children and students at every level.

My concept involves the well-known three “R’s” — “Reading, wRiting, and aRithmetic.” These three basic skills are generally accepted as fundamental to all educational growth. And

I agree. But now I want to connect CPS as a fourth BASIC skill that enables students to USE those other three skills much more powerfully. I tentatively call the skill “Reframing.” I introduce the word both to serve as a fourth “R” and also to talk about CPS in a new way that may have no emotional baggage attached to it as the word creative often has. Let me elaborate.

“Framing’s” many definitions stress or imply—devising, adapting, bringing about, making, constructing, shaping, forming, planning, adjusting, composing, fitting, putting together, doing. Therefore, the word “Reframing” captures for me the key thinking skills involved in the CPS process. Over the years, I have found

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If you've been there (and almost certainly you have), you'll find resonance in the theme for ACA 2005 — *Feel the Fire: Hot Keys to Creativity*. Move from passion and thought—to creativity. Find the key that unlocks the mind and body for creative action.

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President's Column

by Tara G. Coste

CREATIVE Talismans

Rubber chickens, funny hats, post-it notes, bouncy balls, vibrant t-shirts, colorful stickers, scented markers, braided bracelets, crayons, ribbons, dice, pin-wheels, paint. . .

Over the past few weeks, I have been speaking to various creative professionals about the use—and misuse—of talismans in our field. You know them, the ever-present enhancers and distracters that appear in many of our sessions.

Although they certainly can add a festive air to the environment, what do they really do? Are they just decorative or do they serve a higher calling?

In the best hands, each object placed in the room has a specific purpose. A game played with dice is used to evaluate group dynamics. Stickers chosen to decorate a name tag are used to celebrate individual differences. Bracelets handed out are used to bring a particular way of thinking to the forefront of consciousness.

In a less powerful presentation, the colorful objects merely lend to the appearance of a playful atmosphere. Now, don't get me wrong. A playground for the mind can be quite valuable, and having fun while working through a tricky problem can clearly improve the experience. But, too often I fear, the purpose of the objects and their use is muddy, both for participants and the facilitator.

How many times have you been in a session where the toys provided distanced you from the activity you are supposed to be attending to? How many times have

you left a session somewhat entertained for the period of time you spent there but at a loss to find meaningful takeaways that you can use in the future?

A talisman has no power if the symbolism isn't shared and internalized. Let me give you an example from my personal experience. Many years ago, I was given a green stone in a session Marilyn Schoeman Dow did on "Green Light"

In a field that is often misperceived as "fluffy" by many in the external world, it is critical . . . what the point is, what the deeper meaning is and how it can be used to enhance the creative experience.

thinking. The stone was silky smooth, a deep emerald green, cleanly clear and deeply colored at the same time. And it spoke to me.

For some reason, this simple stone had meaning, a powerful meaning for me. Ever since that time, I have carried it with me to reinforce the message it conveyed. Why was this talisman effective? Because it was presented in such a way that the power of what it represented was communicated, and communicated in such a way that it struck home and stuck.

Intentionality is key here. In a field that is often misperceived as "fluffy" by many in the external world, it is critical that the more playful elements of our work are carefully positioned so that it is clear what the point is, what the deeper meaning is and how it can be used to enhance the creative experience.

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Nomination Requests for 2005 ACA Awards

*Fredricka Reisman, chair
of the Awards Committee,
requests nominees by
September 15, 2004.*

Process

*Nominations for the awards will be
submitted by ACA members
to the Awards Committee and
they will recommend honorees
to the ACA Board of Directors
for approval. The awards will be
presented to the honorees
at the 2005 ACA Annual Conference
in Austin, Texas
at a special awards ceremony.*

ACA Creativity Hall of Fame

The Creativity Hall of Fame recognizes people who have substantially contributed to and enhanced the field of creativity. The Hall of Fame will be housed at the new Institute for Applied Creativity on the campus of Texas A&M University.

ACA Lifetime Creative Achievement Award

This award is presented to an individual whose life and career are characterized by extraordinary creative accomplishments that have substantially contributed to the betterment of society. Such accomplishments may be in the form of inventions, discoveries, works or performances of art, a body of research, educational curricula or practices, professional service, or service to the community in general.

ACA Special Achievement Award

This award is presented to an individual who has made an outstanding creative contribution to the field of creativity or to society in general. Such contribution may take the form of an invention, discovery, work or performance of art, research study, educational program, or special service to the community.

David Tanner Champion of Creativity Award

This award is presented to an individual who has been an outstanding proponent of creativity and has put forth extraordinary effort in the service of creativity and innovation as evidenced by their vigorous advocacy for the development and support of programs or environments that support and encourage creativity; and /or their courage and persistence as an advocate or sponsor of a valuable concept, service or product.

E. Paul Torrance Student Scholarship Award

The E. Paul Torrance Student Scholarship Award honors Dr. Torrance's lifetime commitment to supporting graduate student studies. This award recognizes a graduate student whose study shows promise that he or she will become a leader in the field of applied creativity.

ACA Special Service Award

This award is presented to an individual who has given generously of their time, energy, or resources in support of the mission and values of the American Creativity Association.

✓ Check your nomination

- ACA Creativity Hall of Fame
- ACA Lifetime Creative Achievement
- ACA Special Achievement
- David Tanner Champion of Creativity
- E. Paul Torrance Student Scholarship
- ACA Special Service

mail to: ACA Awards
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Philadelphia, PA 19128
fax to: 888.837.1409
email to: ACAinformation@aol.com

due by

September 15, 2004

Please use the following format for nominations

Your Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____ Country _____

Work Phone _____ - _____ - _____ Work Fax _____ - _____ - _____

Home Phone _____ - _____ - _____ Email _____

Nominee: _____

Achievement:

(attach narrative—up to 250 words describing why this person is being nominated.)

Information for contacting nominee:

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____ Country _____

Work Phone _____ - _____ - _____ Work Fax _____ - _____ - _____

Home Phone _____ - _____ - _____ Email _____

Website _____

Reframing . . .

Re-Viewing—

Fact-Finding

Re-Defining—

Opportunity-Finding

Re-Structuring—

Idea-Finding

Re-Solving—

Solution-Finding

Re-Assuring—

Acceptance-Finding

that talking about CPS in new ways often reaches people who didn't understand the meaning of the words we originally used. Many people confuse the specific TECHNIQUE of brainstorming with the full process of CPS. So let me try to convey the meaning of CPS by means of the "Reframing" term.

Reframing involves

1. Re-Viewing: viewing data anew—*Fact-Finding*;
2. Re-Defining: so as to glean and devise interesting and fruitful opportunities from desires, messes, challenges, or problems—*Opportunity-Finding*;
3. Re-Structuring: remaking the givens into new and effective, satisfying ideas—*Idea-Finding*;
4. Re-Solving: in ways that are sensitive to many more than the obvious effects, repercussions, consequences—*Solution-Finding*;
5. Re-Assuring: then devising effective plans for adequately refining, testing, implementing, and gaining acceptance for the chosen solution—BEFORE acting on the plan—*Acceptance-Finding*.

Thus all Reframing can be done and tested in the mind and/or on paper before taking impulsive action that one may later regret. I am reminded of a favorite cartoon showing two trapeze artists trying a newly conceived stunt. They are both flying away from their bars, toward one another with dismayed looks on their faces as they realize that neither is holding onto the bar with any part of their body. They certainly regret their inadequate preparation and evaluation of their plan.

When Reframing is practiced repeatedly it results in what I call a creative attitude or stance instead of a habit-bound one. This can then be used by effective teachers to serve the other "R's" by helping learners see the relevance and application of everything they absorb in the "3 R's" and elsewhere.

Reframing turns what is commonly called "intelligence" into "intelligent creativity," which is to me the ultimate purpose of intelligence—to USE abilities and talents constructively—to DO something worthwhile with them.

Reframing takes into account processes stressed by Calvin Taylor in his "Talent Totem Poles" of the 1960's, by J. P. Guilford in his "Structure-of-the-Intellect," and more recently by Howard Gardner in his "Multiple Intelligences." These are processes explicit or implicit in any definition of intelligence that fully includes the creativity/application factor. Hopefully, by stressing this "4th R" of Reframing in CPS efforts in education, we may see geometrically increasing applications of knowledge in all learning.

Critical Thinking emphasized in education and particularly in programs for the gifted has also been an integral part of the Osborn/Parnes process. Perhaps the "Reframing" emphasis may help educators understand and apply the critical as well as the imaginative aspects of CPS.

I look to future centuries of Abraham Maslow's self-actualizing individuals, whose main purpose in life is self-actualizing themselves and helping others to do the same—children, families, students, employees, friends, colleagues, mentees—to ever-higher levels on an infinite continuum of human potential development.

With the half-century foundation of theory and research, and the equally mature structure of organized thinking skills and aids, we can push past that proverbial 50-year lag between educational theory/research and its widespread application. We can now greet the 21st century with the wherewithal to turn it into the century of intelligent creating by masses of people everywhere.

Sidney J. Parnes is

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at Buffalo State College and*

*Founding Director of the
Center for Studies in Creativity.*

*Dr. Parnes is a member of the
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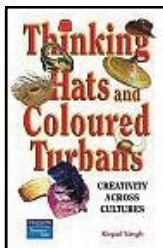
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Thinking Hats and Coloured Turbans

Creativity Across Cultures

by Kirpal Singh



published in 2004
by Prentice Hall



Reading Kirpal's book
is like attending a
creativity workshop.

It is an exhilarating
experience that leaves one
feeling fully energized.

Kirpal Singh's new book *Thinking Hats and Coloured Turbans* immediately engages the reader with its conversational style as it explores the multifaceted theme of creativity. One gets a contact high by virtually accompanying Kirpal on his exploratory journey into the roots of creativity. The familial, educational, sociological and corporate contexts are discussed as to either fostering or hindering creativity.

In one chapter Kirpal examines the language question. Are some languages inherently more creativity-enlivening than others? Are there creativity-deadening languages? Kirpal proposes an interesting hypothesis for future field for research. Since languages are prisms through which we perceive the world, can a bilingual or multilingual ability make one more creative? Does being monolingual limit one's creativity ability?

Kirpal rolls out an excellent narrative in his presentation of creative individuals from around the world. The stories are visually enhanced with color photos that enable the reader to truly connect to the person that Kirpal is conversing about. All of the case narratives highlight individuals who have parlayed their creative drive into an economic success story.

The creatives range from Verity Roennfeldt, creator of the Merbears concept, a fanciful bear that is the bear counterpart to the concept of a mermaid. Verity's creations have effectively enriched the fantasy world of our children. Another creative the reader gets to meet through Kirpal's eyes is Professor Feng Da Hsuan, the Vice President of Research and Graduate Education at the University of Texas Dallas. Professor Feng Da Hsuan is at the cutting-edge of Nanotechnology, which will radically revolutionize how things are made. UTD is in the heart of the Texas Telecom Corridor. Kirpal reveals to us Alejandro Fogel and Shelly Berc's personal take on creativity. Both Alejandro and Shelly use their complementary talents in creativity workshops at high cultural destinations such as Florence, Prague, Venice and Provence. Kirpal examines the career path of Ong Keng Sen as he moves from lawyer to an internationally renowned artistic director of a Singaporean theater group.

We share in a visit that Kirpal makes to the

English country-side estate of Anita Rodnik, founder of the Body Shop and later find ourselves in SeaWorld's corporate headquarters on the Gold Coast of Australia to meet Peter Doggett. Peter is the International Marketing Director of SeaWorld and the strategist for bringing affluent Asian tourists to this theme park destination.

Kirpal's excellent narrative structure in the book illuminates his literary background with his many references to literary figures. He holds in high esteem the creative contributions of artist William Blake and the writers Aldous Huxley and Henry Miller.

Kirpal's book presents us with many challenging thoughts on creativity. Creativity as a concept is idiosyncratically defined. Everyone from bear artist to nanotechnology researcher has their own take on what it is. There is a consensus on the prerequisites that make creativity occur. We have to let go of self-censorship, fear of authorities, fear of judgment, and fear of disapproval. We have to have the courage to be different and to trust. The creative mode of thinking is an upsetting mode, it disturbs and it challenges. Authorities fear that creatives may not follow their bidding or instructions. We need a cultural change in our work ethic, which allows time to think and dream.

Singapore Management University where Kirpal teaches has made his Creative Thinking (CT) course part of the university-core which every student entering SMU has to do and pass. The future of Singapore to remain a viable economy within the global village is dependent on the resourcefulness and creativity of its citizens. Singapore's prime minister has evoked the theme of Learning Schools, Thinking Nation for his people. In an intellectual and economic global landscape being transformed with dizzying speed by new technology, we need to develop curriculums that enable our youth to think creatively.

The title of Kirpal's book is somewhat ambiguous; it evokes associations with Dr. Edward de Bono's *Six Thinking Hats* and suggests a contrasting methodology. After reading the book, one cannot help but see the title as metaphorical for the multifarious nature of creativity.

— — — — —

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.

John H. Lienhard's
remarks from his
acceptance of the
ACA Special
Achievement Award
at the 2004
Houston conference

*This award is presented to
an individual who has made an
outstanding creative contribution
to the field of creativity or
to society in general.*

I guess there's little use in bothering to be humble when I'm so obviously outclassed. My, what company I find myself in, here! By the way, my wife and I bought *Finding Nemo* and watched it before we sent it to our grandchildren. They could not have enjoyed it more than we did.

Of course, I feel a frisson of worry when I see creativity being celebrated on such a scale. For the creative daemon is released at great peril. I'll read you something from Mary Shelley's introduction to her book *Frankenstein*.

She describes the creative sequence by which she created the story of Victor Frankenstein and his monster. Then she switches over to Victor's creative adventure. Listen to her words:

Night waned upon this [talk]. When I placed my head on my pillow, I did not sleep, nor could I be said to think. My imagination, unbidden, possessed and guided me, gifting the successive images that arose in my mind with a vividness far beyond the usual bounds of reverie. I saw—with shut eyes, but acute mental vision,—[a pale] student of the unhallowed arts kneeling beside the thing he had put together. I saw the hideous phantasm of a man stretched out, and then, on the working of some powerful engine, show signs of life, and stir with an uneasy, half vital motion.

So here's a process you all know very well. We watch *thought* being transformed. We witness the arrival of a new idea. Mary Shelley calls up the universal experience of that moment of detachment just before sleep—that time during which, ideas come.

As she reaches that moment, still replaying the evening's conversation in her mind, bits of talk fuse into the most perfect tale of horror ever written.

Now, that's just the creative process as she experienced it. She goes on to reach another—far more ghastly—a moment that you and I need to fear, when we court creative daemon.

She asks, "How would Victor Frankenstein react to this *thing* he'd created?" Here's what she writes:

Success would terrify him. He would [rush] from his odious handy-work, horror stricken. He would hope that slight spark of life would fade; that this thing would subside into dead matter.

[He falls into] sleep; but he [wakes]. The horrid thing stands at his bedside, opening his curtains, and looking at him with yellow, watery, but speculative eyes.

And there it is—the great terror that we all do have to face once we allow it into our lives.

Let me ask you something: Why is it that we hear the word *innovation* all the time? Industry always wants to foster innovation. But you never hear the word *invention*. Nobody likes to use it. It is a word we all fear.

I don't much like to torment people with dictionary definitions; but in this case I think you'll find them very illuminating. Under *innovate*, I get: *To introduce something new; make changes in anything established*. And when I look up *invention*, here's what I find: *The exercise of imagination or creative power*.

The innovator is safe. But watch out for the inventor. The exercise of imagination or creative power means trouble. Coleridge spoke to this business. He broke off his poem about *Kubla Khan* and *Xanadu*, and ended it abruptly.

He wheels on us, wild-eyed, and cries out a warning to beware the creative daemon. Here's what he says about that creature:

I would build that dome in air,
And all should cry, Beware! Beware!
His flashing eyes, his floating hair.
Weave a circle round him thrice,
And close your eyes with holy dread,
For he on honeydew hath fed,
And drunk the milk of paradise.

Coleridge wrote *Kubla Kahn* in 1797; then he sat on it. He didn't publish it until 1816, the same year Shelley wrote *Frankenstein*. Both were keenly aware of the danger of the creative daemon. All the Romantic writers were.

Earlier, in 1804, Wordsworth had also written this about this creative arrival. He said:

There was a darkness—call it solitude
Or blank desertion; no familiar shapes
Of hourly objects, images of trees,
Of sea or sky, no colours of green fields,
But huge and mighty forms that do not live
Like living men moved slowly through my mind
By day, and were the trouble of my dreams.

The Romantics were hell-bent on unleashing the creative daemon, but they'd also caught a clear vision of the terrible power of the beast.

Now, all that's prelude to what I was asked to talk about this evening. I was asked to say something about my radio program, *The Engines of Our Ingenuity*, and how I got into it.

Well, that's easy. Back in 1987, I was handed a small window of opportunity. I discovered that I might do a few broadcasts on public radio. On a lark, I designed the format, wrote three episodes, co-opted the manager of KUHF radio, and, two days later, I was ready to go.

It was a lark—a bit of creative fun. Write and record sixty-five episodes, then air them the following spring of 1988. That'd saturate the listening audience, and I'd be off to my next adventure.

But the genie was out of the bottle. That was 16-1/2 years, and 1900, episodes ago. That was several books and a thousand speaking engagements ago. That lark—that creative peccadillo—redirected mine and my wife's lives.

Now: two things to be said about the creative daemon at this point. First, I believe that if anyone had told what I was in for—that my entire existence would be redirected, I would have fled the daemon when he appeared to me, like old Scratch appeared to Faust, that Friday evening, so long ago. I really *would* have “closed my eyes with holy dread.”

That much must be said about the creature. But I've also caught a glimpse of the beauty of the beast. Having done what I did, I would never, never, never trade it for anything else.

So to anyone who catches a whiff of the creative daemon's menace, and is frightened by it, I say, *Leave him alone. Go back to the kinder, gentler word innovation. Stay out of trouble. Leave things as they are.*

But, to you in the American Creativity Association—to all you winners who put my own award to shame, I say, *Bless you.* You transform my world. You sometimes do it at a terrible personal price. But you do it, and we all profit. You do it, and you breathe your own life into ours.

John H. Lienhard,

*professor of engineering and history
at University of Houston,
writes and hosts the series entitled
Engines of Our Ingenuity on KUHF radio
delivering 1,824 episodes since 1988.
The series highlights creative inventions,
processes, and events and tells the story
of how our culture has been formed
by human creativity from cable cars to
Civil War submarines,
from the connection between
Romantic poets and Victorian science to
the invention of the bar code using
history to reveal the way art,
technology, and ideas have shaped us.*

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Larry Keeley, President and Co-Founder, The Doblin Group, author of the upcoming book from HBS Press, *Taming the New: The Emerging Discipline of Innovation*

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ACA mission

The American Creativity Association (ACA) is the national organization of professionals in the field of creativity. Through its programs and services, it offers individuals and organizations opportunities for learning, professional development and networking. It is dedicated to enhancing the use of creativity throughout our society for the betterment of the human condition.

ACA vision

ACA is the virtual academy that leaders and professionals in the field of creativity turn to as the primary source of ideas and information dealing with creativity and where initiates to the field can begin their journey of discovery. To achieve its vision, the ACA provides: 1) forums to present, test and exchange ideas; 2) opportunities for networking and fellowship; 3) clearing-house services for information on the state of the art in creativity research and practice; and 4) means to link theorists and practitioners.

ACA application

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Request for proposals to present at the American Creativity Association National Conference

THEME



March 30 – April 2, 2005
Omni Hotel, Austin, Texas

GOAL . . .

to offer conference participants a joyful experience exploring the world of creative thinking and its applications to enrich their personal, family, work and community lives.

At the ACA 2005 conference our focus will be on all aspects of creativity—from the practical to the extreme—as applied to real-world situations. What happens when people confront a challenge not seen before or one that is beyond their current means? How does the *heat* of the challenge accelerate the search for creative solutions? How do the *connections* get made that lead to new, creative and innovative ideas or approaches? We will share valuable keys to creativity and understanding that come from these real-world encounters, including the *magnificent failures*, where the lessons learned provide valuable insight to the application of creativity.

SEEKING PRESENTATIONS REFLECTING conference theme and applicability to the following areas:

- ◆ business and technology, education and training (including gifted education), spirituality, music and the arts, non-profits, health and science, communications, military and government
- ◆ the repertoire of practical strategies and techniques for creative problem solving, and their application to real-world situations
- ◆ *classic* and new models for creativity & problem solving—Osborn-Parnes, Synectics, TRIZ, lateral thinking, whole brain, Kepner Tregoe or other decision-making models, Value Engineering, etc.
- ◆ creativity as a key part of the front end of innovation

Electronic versions of the form which includes technical requirements, selection criteria, benefits and costs of presenting are available at www.feelthefire.org. If you have questions contact us at info@feelthefire.org or call 888.837.1409.

deadline

September 30, 2004

