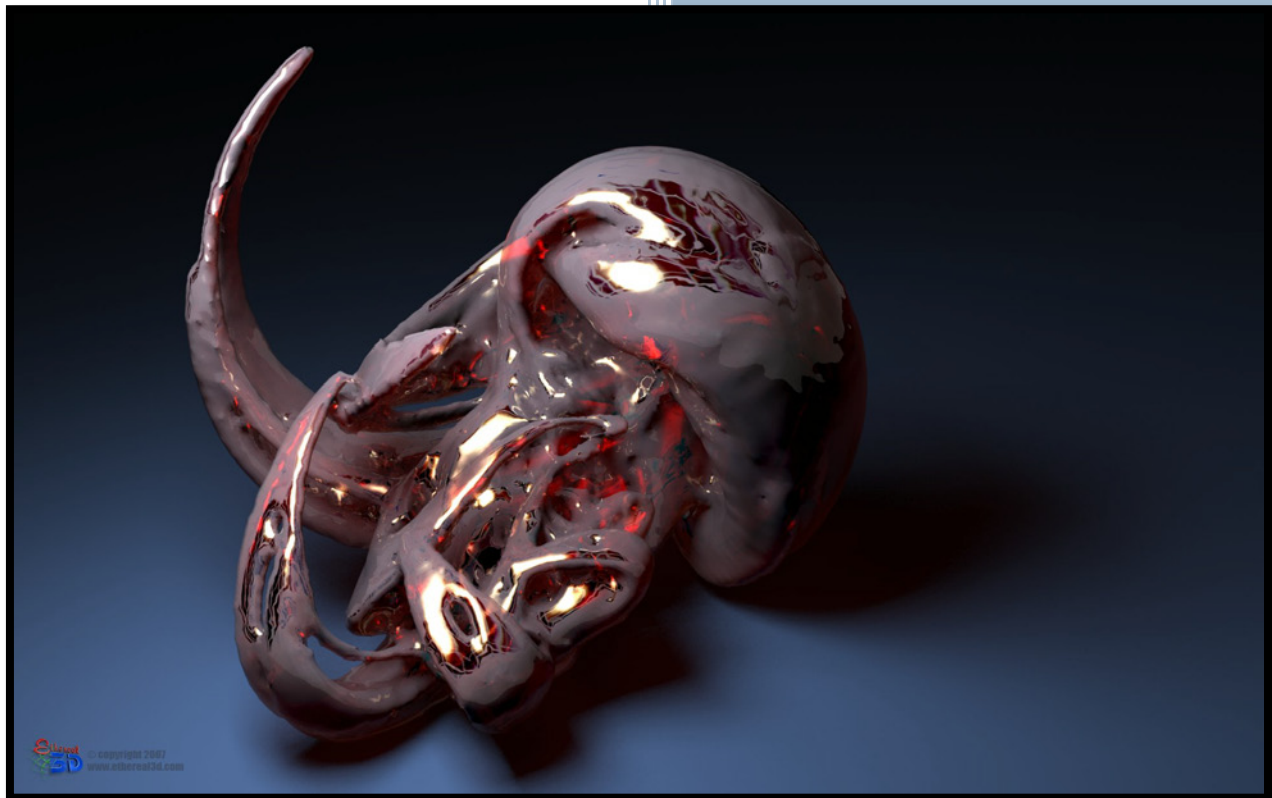


008

# Imaginative Mind



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Creativity is one of my most favored traits and any activity with creative components is one I can easily value. My engineering role in designing software, developing others as a manager in new and creative ways and my writing and 3D graphics I create on the side are all examples of how I enjoy letting creativity spill out in life. I personally believe I've been crafted with the gift of creativity (as is everyone) and so there is great purpose and value in employing creative tasks in your life.

There are many ways to explore creativity and it really is a part of any learning experience and new task so its an endless topic, which excites me a great deal because ultimately, the exercise of writing about it is also a creative exercise. This article looks specifically at how one can build an imaginative mind using creativity. An imaginative mind is one that can visualize beyond direct input and one that can explore things outside of the immediate reality and vicinity. To me, this is a great ability and one I am quite passionate about so, let's explore it a bit deeper!

### **Initializing Thoughts**

Our thoughts are nearly continuous and tuning in to them can be done specifically for creative juices. Often we suppress our own ideas or thoughts in a split second without ever letting it surface to a voice or considered item. We often put a validation screen on our thoughts and bias everything we let surface by the judgments we assign or expect others to assign to that thought. This limits our mental creativity and kills a thought that would otherwise become the start of a great associative linking of thoughts and advanced creativity. We need to let any thought be developed and explored as our mind makes the neural connections and associations with more and more thoughts. This can happen in moments or it may take hours but it most imaginative if you let a thought continue to build and linger, don't dismiss it or kill it on purpose. Ever.

### **Brainstorming**

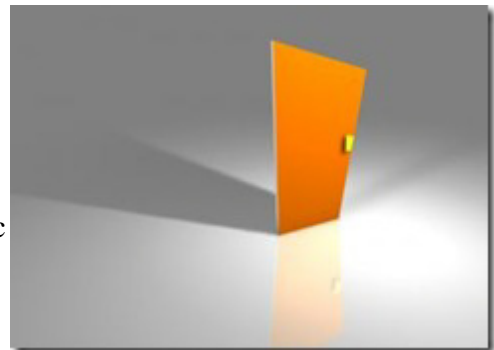
Putting the mind to an exploratory session like this is also known as brainstorming. Brainstorming is often considered something you do in groups and while that is true, it needs the same guidelines in your mind to let the imaginative mind explode with its full capacity and creativity available. Brainstorming at its best means that anything thought of on a given topic is

valid. Anything goes. Any idea is considered no matter how obscure or off-base it may first seem to the logical mind. Logic is often the nemesis of creativity as we tend to judge our ideas and thoughts the moment they begin and we simply don't give our imaginative mind a chance to develop them.

1. Explore as many possibilities as you can
2. Any idea is worth exploring at least for a short time
3. Sometimes you need to give ideas time and let the subconscious work away

## Outside the Box

The other effect our logical mind has is to keep us bounded into what seems reasonable. This unfortunately has a very negative consequence on our imagination as its very difficult to explore outside this box of reason or box of logic. The logical mind is bounded by what we know as well so anything outside this box is suppressed by any logic at first consideration. It's important to get by this and let the creativity and idea be unbounded and originated from well outside the box.



The imagination is an amazing thing and you can certainly allow it to take hold of you in visualizing, day dreaming or full on dreaming. We've all experienced the power of the mind's creativity in dreams and its possible to enable that same creativity in waking life if it's practiced and repeated instead of suppressed. Let your mind wander, have fun with it, just imagine what that seemingly crazy idea might actually be like if you explore it further in your mind.



This article continues with the topic of the imaginative mind and today I've cover another look at creativity, but from the social aspect this time. If you missed the last article, here it is: [The Imaginative Mind: Mental Creativity](#)

## **Cycles of Creativity**

Creativity is very much a process, not a single event and so there are cycles of creativity in our actions and thoughts. Some days creativity just flows and others, it seems so distant. These cycles exist within our minds in all the same areas covered from the previous section on mental creativity but now we'll look at it these cycles in a larger social environment. The same type of cycles where creativity is obvious, encouraged, built on, extended and heavily supported occurs in all kinds of social arenas.

- friendships and relationship
- organizations and clubs
- businesses and work groups

Even larger segments like geographic regions, industries, municipalities or media exposure groups can experience these up and down cycles of creativity. All of these cycles occur because of creative influence that either inspires or suppresses creativity throughout that social sphere and it cascades the effects. The same reasons why brainstorming is useful to the mind to spark new ideas and keep associations active in the mind applies here to social creativity. Each idea feeds the ideas of others, expanding the creative impact to larger groups. Things that stifle creativity make a similar impact by slowing down or eliminating the connections for creativity to grow.

## **Impact on the Mind**

Understanding how these cycles impact our work, lives and environment gives us a more accurate model to predict and control the swings that social creativity is impacted by. Keeping active with the actions that spread creativity and avoiding some of the typical problems areas that kill creativity works in a social environment to ensure the imaginative mind has a sandbox to explore. I believe the mind is at its best when learning, growing and building itself and it can

only do this to its fullest when the imagination is active with as many options for creativity as possible.

## **Contributing to Creativity**

There are a number of ways to contribute to social creativity. The ones I think have the biggest impact are the following:

### **Eliminate Criticism and Complaining**

Criticism and complaining are really the quickest things that kill creativity. Criticism can emotionally shut down a person so quickly that the only creative thoughts they will have is of escape or revenge. It is something that naturally transforms our minds into a completely new state unless we learn to handle criticism and [control our response](#) and [state of mind](#) consciously.

The social impact this can have can reach many people at once and unfortunately this bad behaviour can also be quite contagious. The best thing you can do with these items to contribute more to social creativity is to eliminate criticism of others, of ideas and of actions. The same goes for complaining since it encourages a very negative thought process not helpful in activating the imagination in any way. Obviously eliminating these is not easy, but they can certainly be reduced and they can definitely be done in private at least in order to minimize the influence to any audience available.

### **Brainstorming**

While I covered this in the previous article on mental creativity it is certainly applicable here in a social atmosphere as well. Brainstorming in a group activates the imagination of the whole group and quickly allows ideas to germinate with each other and spread between everyone's minds. It can be done as a group on purpose with a specific topic or goal in mind or it can happen through other media with no initial intention of doing it! Social media and viral systems are perfect examples of this as a group gains access to shared thoughts and ideas, they become enabled to share more themselves which continues to feed the process. This type of social brainstorming happens a lot with online social groups like [twitter](#) and [stumbleupon](#) , as with all the other social networks.

### **Asking Questions – Question everything**

Questions come about from curiosity and of course curiosity broods creativity. Therefore, questions are a powerful action to contribute more to creativity as well. Everything a person questions, they can learn from and gain some kind of insight from. Questions about how and why something is how it is, leads to seeing more pieces of any puzzle and that puts the mind into a state where it has to think beyond the logic to imagine the solution before all the pieces are understood.

Questions are a huge part of a healthy learning process and they will trigger the mind to explore and wonder with curiosity at things. I've written about using questions for learning and training others in this article here, [Using the 5W Questions to Provide Training](#) . Questioning the things around you has other benefits as well, it is a useful tool to expand your relationships as well. This is because it shows curiosity to another person. Read about that here, [Open Ended Questions](#) .

### **Avoid Perfectionism**

My final point in looking at social creativity and the ways to contribute to it is to avoid perfectionism. Perfectionism slows down any creative process and it quickly strangles any new ideas from emerging as it keeps the attention on an original subject or topic while it is closely scrutinized and perfected. There is some room to explore perfecting something with a creative look, but it is usually too focused on one thing where new ideas have no place to be explored until the first topic or item is first perfected.

Getting past perfection so that more ideas can be explored gives way to identify more possibilities and have more options to approach things with. This applies in everything from simple day to day life plans and tasks, to complex engineering design problems or even social planning. The Perato principle is useful with social creativity as well and that is where you apply the 80/20 rule. Perfectionist try to get things to that 100% level and they spend most of their time and effort making very little progress once past that 80% point.



This article explores how the mind and its imagination is useful for innovation. Innovation to me is about the pollination of ideas. Not only that they are spread to others but also how that innovation provides gains and benefits compared to what was used or available before hand. I've explored how your own mind's creativity can be enhanced as well as the creativity powered by a social atmosphere and now this explores how that kind of creativity can be put to use for improvement through innovation.

### **Incremental**

The first area of application where creativity from an imaginative mind can drive innovation is in incremental improvements and change. This is a popular one for me and obviously through my writing here at [LearnThis](http://LearnThis.ca) since personal development is largely about incremental change. Those active in it strive to innovate new methods and teaching styles to reach and expand their influence to bring that incremental change both into our own lives and the lives of those we connect with.

Many businesses also look to gain from incremental innovation by building continuous improvement programs and training. It's a crucial part of change and adaptation that every strong business should have.

### **Radical**

The next level of innovation intensity is that involving more radical change. This is needed when larger systems / beliefs change or when a change has a much bigger impact to a person or organization. The radical aspect of this is sometimes seen as shocking or unexpected as well since it requires outside the box thinking and improvements to be put into place. It is much more than simple or continuous incremental changes and it requires a major step change to jump from one way of doing things to another.

Radical innovation is something that is risky and requires some courage to create. It's far outside any comfort zones and it isn't something you can hide under the surface whether its a personal innovation or not. Radical innovation will be seen by others and have enough impact on your life that the change will be a significant one.

## **Revolutionary**

The final kind of innovation is a revolutionary one. This level of innovation is so large that it causes change well beyond your direct environment or self and causes a wave of change well beyond the circle of direct influence. Revolutionary thinking is of course thinking that encompasses each of the other types but what sets it apart is that it is for an innovation that affects a wide group of people, an entire region or perhaps a whole industry or market. It is such a massive change that once it is in place, its very difficult to go back since the new innovation engrains itself into society and the lives of those within.

## **Take Creativity Personal**

So, I hope this short series on the imaginative mind and creativity sparks you to look at where you allow your creativity to surface in your life but also how far you are willing to take it. We all have creative thoughts and so its what you do with them and how you let them work in your mind that will drive change around you and in your life. Don't settle in and suppress your imagination, instead, embrace it, activate it in your own mind, in your social sphere around you and turn those innovations into action!

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