

Harvesting Creativity



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It is impossible to tell whether another person is being creative or not. It is difficult enough to tell whether you are being creative yourself. This is because the essence of creativity is surprise and the invisibility of origins. What is taken for creativity can be merely the repetition of something that was creative in the past, or that was learned elsewhere. Think of the aging pop star singing his only hit from 40 years ago, for the zillionth time. Even the most original works can morph into platitudes. This is not to disparage creativity but

rather to exalt it by setting it apart from its relics and imposters. In addition to its many practical and aesthetic benefits, creativity is thrilling.

At the most basic level creativity is not a systematic process, although it can be systematically cultivated. Beneath the surface of consciousness lies an enormous bubbling stew of constant neural and glandular activity; a mob of impressions, thoughts and impulses, all high on various endocrinal drugs. Some of these subconscious sirens sing in distinctive voices. There are among them geniuses and idiots, devils and saints, muses and gorillas; all clamoring for our attention. To dwell there is insanity, but it is from this babbling chaos that creativity emerges. We can watch this cacophony from above and impose some unexpected order on it, as though our unconscious were a Rorschach inkblot that we can interpret and render according to our craft and disposition; which it is. If the result surprises and delights us, then we experience it as creative and we get the rush of exhilaration that we seek. Creativity can be intentionally cultivated and harvested. Trust me. Call me.

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