

Developing Creativity - Biblical Leadership - Part 3

Howard Hendricks

Introduction.

A. I want to begin with three pontifical pronouncements.

1. There is no one without creative potential but creativity is often stifled.

a. Teachers often stifle creativity.

1. I teach Bible and ask students to creatively paraphrase Acts 3.

2. One student read a poem that brought a thunderous applause.

3. This was the first time he had the courage to share it because a 5th grade teacher threw a poem of his in the waste basket.

b. Parents often stifle creativity.

1. Parents who speak in vulgar words hinder their kid's creativity.

2. Allowing children to watch much TV hinders creativity.

2. The conditioning process can be reversed.

a. There is a cost, however, and only those who want freedom will get it.

b. Complacency is the enemy of creativity.

3. Creativity is essentially a lifestyle.

a. It must permeate every area of life.

b. Christmas decorations and wrapping should never be done the same way twice.

c. Sexuality should never be expressed the same way twice.

B. I want to introduce you to a field called the contagion of creativity.

1. Alex Osborne wrote *Applied Imagination*, one of the ten greatest books I have read.

a. Alex is called the father of the creativity movement in America.

b. The value of the book is not in its content but in the ending exercises.

c. If a family would apply these exercises they would find creativity soaring.

C. Three questions.

1. Why is creativity an option?
2. What is involved in the process?
3. How can you activate your creativity?

I. Why is creativity an option; five values help here.

A. Creativity perpetuates the learning process.

1. As long as you live you learn; as long as you learn you live.
2. If you stop learning you cease living.
3. Discipleship is a call to perpetual learning.

B. Creativity is essential to meet the demands of a changing society.

1. Packaged thinkers are out of business.
2. There are two things certain; taxes and death, and I add a third, change.
3. Evangelicalism is not preparing people for change.
 - a. We are destined to be conformed to the image of Christ, thus much change is coming.
 - b. If we don't prepare people for change we will be maladjusted for the future.

C. Creativity infects your communication with freshness and vitality.

1. We are commanded to communicate.
2. We need not bottle truth but dispense it through provocative questioning.
3. Many only want sluggish thinking but this is deadly.

D. Creativity develops your leadership potential.

1. The greatest need in evangelicalism is creativity.
2. The top organizations I know of are looking for creative leaders.

E. Creativity will overhaul your lifestyle.

1. Most Christians don't live, we just exist.
2. People intoxicated with life are rare.
3. We act as if we are weaned on a dill pickle.

4. Christ came that we might have life.
5. Are you living or just existing?
6. Most of us are either living in the past or the future, not enjoying the present.
 - a. We should be delighted in work.
 - b. One culture has no expression cursing a man to hell; rather they curse him to a life of inactivity the rest of his life.
 - c. Many Christians' motto is "I came, I saw, I concurred."

II. What are the principles of creativity?

A. Creativity is largely a matter of effort.

1. The mind is like a muscle; it grows with use and atrophies with lack of use.
2. One of my habits is surgery and viewed an autopsy recently.
 - a. I asked the doctor if he ever saw a worn out brain.
 - b. He never saw one even slightly used.
3. The mind is like a rubber band; once stretched it will not return to original form.

B. Quantity is essential to quality in the creative process.

1. Most of us use only the left side of the brain, where analysis goes on.
2. The right side of the brain is involved in the creative process.
3. Analysis is not the only way of thinking.
4. Only six percent of our ideas are any good.
5. Therefore we need more ideas to get winners.
6. If you are asked to provide a title for a message you probably write down one title.
 - a. If we multiply ideas we will have more to draw on.
 - b. For a common piece of silverware companies come up with 6000 names before selecting one.
 - c. I spent time with Cecil B. DeMille who directed "The Ten Commandments" and saw how he spent hours filming a 30 second piece after the Jews crossed the Red Sea. He shot this scene 62 times in one day and didn't get it right.
 1. Are you convinced that you're communicating important truth?

2. If not you won't pay the price for creativity.

C. Results that are good, bad, or indifferent are all welcome.

1. In brainstorm, writing down everything that comes to you.
2. Think out loud.
3. Withhold judgment until later.

D. Syncopation generates illumination.

1. Suppose you have a creative assignment.
 - a. Break it up into three segments.
 - b. Then drop it and do something else.
 - c. The mind rests but never sleeps.
2. Putting ideas on the back burner allows them to simmer like a soup.

E. Group efforts stimulate creativity if you have learned to listen.

1. We are trained to speak but not to listen.
2. We have two ears but only one mouth.
3. My best Bible studies are not with my colleagues but with my wife.
4. Women often exceed men in the application of the Bible because men are too cerebral.

III. How can we activate creativity?

A. Experience provides fuel for ideas.

1. That's why we should travel more.
2. We have wrong priorities; pastors need to travel more.
3. Personal contacts are the ground upon which God wants us to interact.
 1. We dare not become insulated from common people.
 2. Ask questions to see how people are thinking.
 3. If you are impressed with yourself you are probably unimpressed with others.

B. Problem solving is an opportunity for creativity to shine.

1. Cognitive testing shows how much a person can cram into his brain.
2. We need to tackle a problem, for this teaches us about ourselves.
3. David make mistakes but he had creative genius.

C. Hobbies and the fine arts are helpful in developing creativity.

1. Develop unusual hobbies.
2. Get exposed to the fine arts.

D. Reading helps creativity but your reading cannot be passive.

1. Read a paragraph of Scripture then close the book and tell someone what you've read.
2. If a book explodes in your mind so that you think about it for hours that's a good book.
3. I read liberal and conservative material.
4. I rely on close friends to challenge me in this area.

E. Writing helps the creative process.

1. Keep a journal.
2. Jim Elliot was my little brother in Wheaton College.
 - a. His thinking was profound.
 - b. His dad told him when he was a little boy to write something every day.
 - c. If we can't write our thoughts down we don't understand them.
3. Keep a notebook of ideas for illustrations.
 - a. Donald Barnhouse taught me to make illustrations.
 - b. He had me take something from his desk and make up an illustration.
 - c. After I failed he showed me to illustrate the balance between the sovereignty of God and the free will of man with a scissors.

F. Spend time with creative people.

1. Ask penetrating questions.
2. Develop a small think tank.

3. Think wildly, out of the box.

- a. Ray Stedman and I would take sides on theology.
- b. Drop ideas on people you know will challenge your ideas.
- c. Most of us don't have convictions, we just have prejudices.
- d. Teachers that like quiet, mild children are not interested in genuine thinking.
- e. The "hell-raisers" often impact their culture for Christ best.