26 | Creativity and You
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Introduction

Creativity is inherent in all of us. It finds expression in the form of hobbies or interests that we pursue in life. Creativity can be instrumental in devising innovative solutions for difficult problems. Therefore, creativity forms an integral part of any innovation process. Creativity empowers us to sustain in a dynamic world and unleashes a universe of possibilities. With enhanced creativity, instead of challenges you see opportunities; instead of problems you see a chance to create breakthrough solutions. Creativity is not just writing poems or making an art or solving complicated mathematical problems. Creativity exists in our day-to-day life, in all areas of human activity, even at work and play.

Creativity is an essential human ability that can be applied to a wide range of activities. Each and every human being has creative abilities, and all of us have them differently. When we are able to channelise the power of creativity in ourselves, it produces a great impact on our overall achievements.

What is Creativity?

Creativity is an integral and important part of the innovation process. Creativity requires right-brain thinking for imagination, intuition, and feelings and the left-brain thinking for analysis and collation of data.

Albert Einstein was once quoted saying that "Imagination is more important than knowledge. For knowledge is limited, whereas imagination embraces the entire world, stimulating progress, giving birth to evolution." (Calaprice, 2000)

According to OSHO "Creativity is the quality that you bring to the activity you are doing. It is an attitude, an inner approach – how you look at things. "So the first thing to be remembered: don't confine creativity to anything in particular. A man is creative – and if he is creative, whatsoever he does, even if he walks, you can see in his walking there is creativity. Even if he sits silently and does nothing, even non-doing will be a creative act. Buddha sitting under the Bodhi Tree doing nothing is the greatest creator the world has ever known."

"Creativity is defined as the tendency to generate or recognize ideas, alternatives, or possibilities that may be useful in solving problems, communicating with others, and entertaining ourselves and others." – Robert E. Franken, Human Motivation

Plato argued that creativity (such as a poet's work) involved dictating whatever the Muse chanced to speak. (Rothenberg & Hausman, 1976)

According to Wikipaedia, creative problem solving is the mental process of searching for a new and novel creative solution to a problem, a solution which is novel, original and not obvious.

What we understand about creativity is that, creativity is the ability to generate ideas for products, services or processes that are new or those which never existed earlier. It requires deviating from old methods and patterns of thinking and embracing new methods. It is a process of producing something new, innovative and useful.

The Idea of Creative Solutions

Creative solutions are more than ideas - they must work in the real world. Therefore they need to have the following three main attributes:

a) New

b) Useful

c) Feasible

Creative ideas, simply by themselves, cannot be of much help. They need to be developed into feasible solutions. The creative solutions have to work for the real world.

The idea has to be new (otherwise it would not be creative). The idea has to be useful, in that it solves the problem (otherwise it would not be a solution). The idea has to give rise to a new product or service or process. The product, service or process has to be useful as well. Further, the mass production of the product or mass use of the service or process has to be feasible, given the messy real world constraints like money and time.

A creative solution is a combination of a creative environment, creative person, and creative process. A creative process involves both the tools and techniques. This means that

Creative Outcome=CEPP

where **C** is for creative, **E** is for environment and **P** is for person and process. This is shown in Fig. 26.1 below.
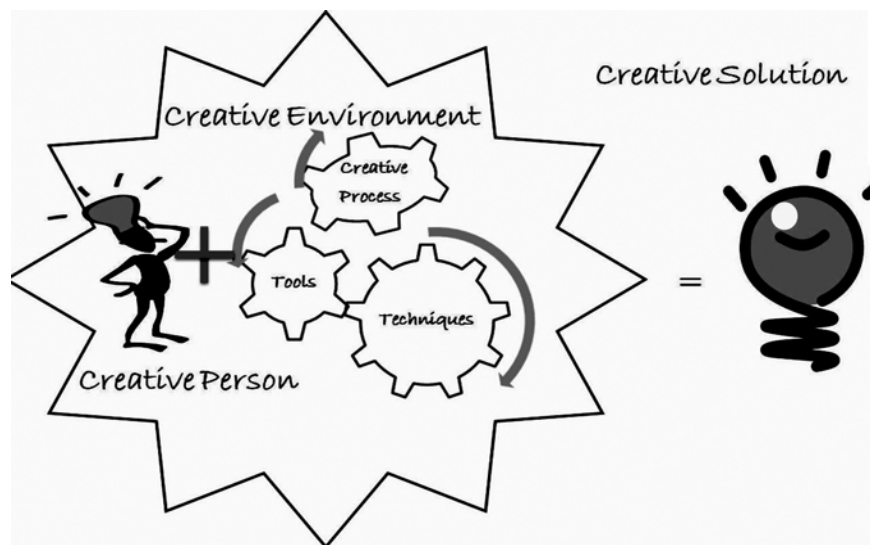

Fig. 26.1: Creative Outcome=CEPP

- *The Creative Person*: A Creative Person is someone who can:
    o channelise the curiosity through knowledge and imagination
    o use imagination as a catalyst to generate and consider new alternatives
    o have an attitude which apply strategies to solve problems
- *Tools:* To foster creativity and generate innovation, many techniques or tools are available. Some of these are:
    o Divergence
    o Convergence

o   Going with the flow

o   Feel the situation

o   Letting the subconscious lead

o   Common ground rules

o   Multiple methods

To begin with, a large number of ideas are generated through the divergence tools such as brainstorming or taking videos. The ideas are then filtered and converged through selection tools such as anonymous voting, consensus mapping, etc. Another tool is to encourage the creator to relax and do whatever comes to the mind. The creators are usually asked to closely understand a situation that needs the innovative solution. Then s/he should feel the intuition and work as it directs. There are some common rules during idea generation, such as only one person should speak at a time for generating ideas, and then another person can speak, and this pattern has to be followed. These methods can be followed in isolation or together in a group.

- *Techniques:* Various techniques are used to generate and finalise an idea. Then the idea has to be implemented to develop a product or process. The techniques used are:

o   Problem Definition

o   Idea Generation

o   Idea Selection

o   Idea Implementation

At the outset, the nature of the problem is defined. Then the ideas for possible solutions are generated through a brainstorming process and these are elucidated through idea selection process. The final step involves the idea implementation process. The process of idea implementation is explained in Fig. 2.
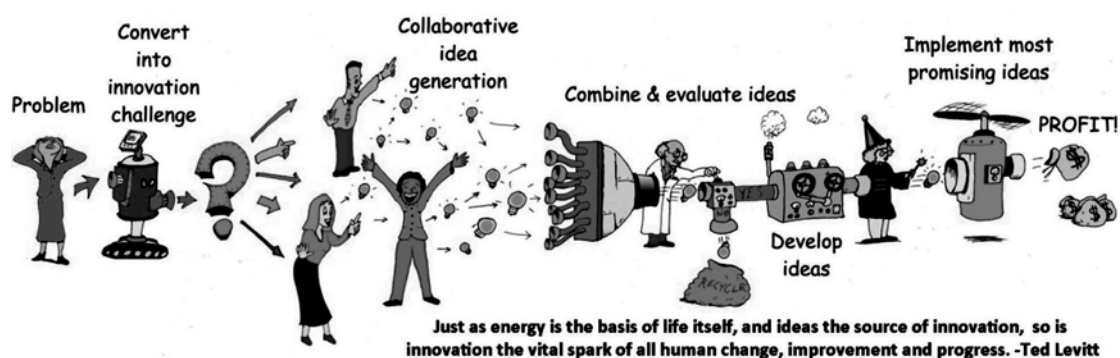

Fig. 26.2: Idea Implementation Process
(Source: Massey, 2012)

Encouraging Creativity of Workplace

Creativity needs to be encouraged at the workplace for optimum performance of the individual and the team Employers need to create a conductive environment where creativity and expression of an individual can blossom. The multinational giants have set an example in this.

As mentioned by Strickland (2008) in his article at Google the 20 percent time programme is a great success. This is a scheme which enabled the employees of Google to use full one day every week, to work on a project unrelated to their normal workload. This is quite a

successful scheme at Google which also empowers the employees to be creative. Google claims that many of their products in Google Labs started out as pet projects in the 20 percent time programme.

A presentation by Toth (2012) on 'Social and Workplace Innovation' mentions that

- 3M has a 15 percent programme that promotes employees spending paid time dreaming, brainstorming and testing their own ideas.

- Gore & Associates provides 'dabble time' where employees are not held to bureaucratic policy manuals and instead are empowered to experiment without fear of punishment for failure.

Conclusion

In a world of increasing complexity, change and competition, generating new ideas and implementing them in day-to-day life has become essential to thrive. The ability to think creatively and drive innovations is an important skill for everyone. Creativity is futile and useless if it is not followed with actions. It is extremely essential to evaluate, polish and market ideas properly to make them valuable. The idea should not only be original and useful, it should also be possible to convert it into action. Various tools and techniques can be used for this. These can be used as part of problem solving, artistic expression, or therapy. Creativity and knowledge creation are considered extremely important to the success of organisations. Creativity of the workforce has a considerable influence on the capability and efficiency of any organisation. Therefore, it is essential to foster creativity in individuals. Special emphasis on encouraging and promoting motivation and problem solving can help in achieving this.

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