

**BEYOND**

**DUH**

**CREATIVITY  
IN  
ACTION!**



by **ART FETTIG**

Use your imagination 24 hours a day!

# **Beyond Duh!**

## **Creativity in Action**

### **By Art Fettig**

**A book for everyone who ever had a great idea!**

Motivational Humorist, Author, Speaker, Song Writer, Bongo Drummer, Art Fettig has been using his creativity and humor to improve management and worker performance for major corporations and associations throughout North America for over half a century.

- \* Develop your own creativity!**
- \* Nourish creativity in others!**
- \* Expand your imagination for fun and profit!**
- \* Use your subconscious mind 24 hours a day**
- \* Write a book, a dynamic presentation, a song!**
- \* Turn on that creative genius within you!**
- \* Make creativity the key to your expanding future.**
- \* Jump start that book you always wanted to write.**

**Published by**  
**Growth Unlimited Inc.**

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**Dedicated to bringing positive living concepts to people.**

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“You can't depend on your eyes when your Imagination is out of focus.” Mark Twain

# **Beyond Duh... Creativity in Action**

**By**

**Art Fetting**

Author of *Mentor...Secrets  
of the Ages*

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**“There is one thing more powerful  
than all the armies of the world and  
that is an idea whose time has come.”**

**Victor Hugo**

# Chapter 1

## Being Different

*“Individuality of expression is the beginning and end of all art.”  
Johannes Wolfgang von Goethe ”*

Here I am over seventy eight years old and the idea just came to me that maybe I am different. All my life people have been asking me things like, “Where did you ever get an idea like that?” Or “What are you thinking now?”

In high school they called me the class clown. I was a troublemaker because my answers were different than what the teacher expected. I was an odd ball and just couldn't think straight like everyone else in that school.

I was a square peg in a world full of round holes.

I didn't know it then but I was carrying around the burden of being creative. Creativity was for little children, that is, children who were so young that all wise teachers and parents had not yet taken their creativity away from them. Creative children asked too many questions, often questions that the teachers and parents could not easily answer.

Thomas Edison suffered from the same blessing. His mother finally resorted to home schooling for her son. The teachers said he was stupid and would never learn.

Einstein had a similar problem. Not that I am, even by the wildest stretch, putting myself in a class with Edison or Einstein. George Carlson, the comedian, had the same fate.

As I look back on my childhood I think of all of the problems I had in school because of the wisecracks I'd make in classrooms. Just the term itself is threatening to teachers. “Wise

cracks. Hmmm...no room for the wise in this classroom.” The teacher is the wise one and there is no opening for competition.

Actually, it wasn't so much wise, the thinking I was doing; It was simply different. After all, most humor is just switching things around. Rather than picking an obvious word, switching it with the opposite. Sure I was thinking fast, first picking the obvious and then saying the not so obvious. The problem is that so many things in this world are just pure bullshit that when you get in the habit of calling out opposites, far too often, you are right on target and it makes people nervous.

And so my childhood left something to be desired. I spent more time in detention after school than any other student. And The only thing I was really guilty of was being too creative for the system. Of course, at the time I did not realize this. No one did. I was just a troublemaker. That is how it is in this world. Creative people stir things up and do not conform and that spells trouble.

But where did I ever get an idea like that? What is this business of being creative all about? Can people learn it? Is it a gift or a curse? Let's explore it together.





## Chapter 2

# Conform or Collide

*“Look with favour upon a bold beginning.”*  
*Virgil 7-90 BC*

When you worked for a railroad, as I did in the late forties and fifties and sixties and seventies and eighties, you had two choices. Conform or collide. If you conformed then you might build a career out of saying, “Yes Sir that is a great idea you have there.”

Never mind that the idea is to continue doing things pretty much the way that things had been done for the previous half-century; never mind either that the company was losing its caboose in the market place. Many years ago I read a remark that someone, who has since been lost in the shuffle, made in regard to the railroads. It went something like this. “If the railroad just knew what business they were really in then they could today own all of the trucking companies and airlines.” The idea was that the railroads were in the business of moving freight and people. And the railroad believed that they were in the business of moving freight and people on railroad tracks. There was a big difference.

The railroad also believed that airlines and truckers were just a couple of weak conspirators that didn't really pose much of a threat to their business. After all, who would want to fly in an airplane? And just how many trucks could you get out there on the highways that existed back then?

Back then, if you ever watched a passenger conductor at work then you might also come to the conclusion that the railroad's motto was, “The public be damned.”

Let's just sum this up by saying that the railroad, at least the railroad where I toiled for some 35 years, for many years was not a fertile bed for creative minds to thrive in.

**For the first 25 years of my employment I was known as an oddball; a guy who rocked the boat; definitely not a team player...A maverick. It was pretty much the same as high school. Instead of the class clown I was now the corporate clown. And worse yet, I was a corporate clown who was moonlighting. I was writing on the side and to make matters worse, I was writing humor.**

**God knows, there was no place in the railroad for humor. This was a very serious business, transporting freight and people on railroad tracks and every year there seemed to be more airlines and more trucking companies out there stealing our lunch.**

**Then after 25 years of total frustration a horrible accident happened. A locomotive fireman got down off the engine in a dark railroad yard and some boxcars cut off two legs and an arm. It changed my future with the railroad and it changed my life.**



## **Chapter 3**

# **Meeting a Vice President**

*“A journey of a thousand miles must begin with a single step.”  
Lao-tsu 604-531 BC*

**John Burdakin had just been appointed Vice President of Operations on our railroad a few months before I met him. He was a remarkable man, especially for a railroad executive. He really cared about the employees who worked for him.**

**They called me out of bed early one morning to come to the yard office as soon as possible. A road train crew was at the office reporting a horrible tragedy. Their locomotive fireman had been run over and when they loaded him into an ambulance he was minus two legs and an arm. I spent a couple of hours talking to the crew in the office and then typing out statements from them. Then, later, when the company’s safety director arrived we drove over to the scene of the tragedy near Kalamazoo, Michigan.**

**In my 25 years in the General Claims Department I had seen the results of many fatal accidents and I was used to seeing torn bodies and scenes of tragedies. My time in combat in Korea was also a bloody experience, still that morning the scene really shook me up. I remember digging into the ballast with sticks and burying chunks of flesh and bone that had been left behind by the emergency crew when they loaded up that injured man in the ambulance in the dark.**

**I remember how sick I felt and how I vowed that I would never do this again. I had been in the claims department for twenty-five years and I had turned down 3 promotions to Detroit for the manager's job. I knew that a move to Detroit would put me under the thumb of our Legal Department and I really hated the lawyers who worked there. They represented everything I despised about big business. They had a saying around the railroad that if you passed up three promotions that your career was ended. They would never ask you again and I was so totally**

frustrated because I was not allowed to use any of my creativity on my present job. I'd tried many times to get a transfer out of the department and had had several opportunities where other departments wanted to hire me, but each time the Legal Department put their kiss of death on my transfer. I was too valuable in my present job.

I felt trapped and as I dug that hole in the ballast and buried those remains I just lost it. I got sick to my stomach and I promised myself that that was it. I couldn't take it any longer. I had four teenagers at home to support and since I'd started working for the railroad right out of high school I really didn't know what kind of job I might get but I vowed to make a change.

I got daily reports from the hospital and, amazingly, that railroad fireman survived. He had a fantastic fighting spirit and it wasn't long until he could have visitors. I made arrangements to call at the hospital to see him but before I did I got a bright idea. I picked up the telephone and called John Burdakin our new operations vice president. "He's going to live, Mr. Burdakin, and I want you to go with me to the hospital and tell him that we care about him and his family and that we will do all we can to make a future for him."

To my amazement John Burdakin agreed to meet me at my office the following Monday morning.

I had never met a railroad vice president before. Our former management people stayed in their little ivory tower called headquarters and they never got into the field to meet the troops. This was a brand new management team we were working with and none of us had a hint of what the new rules would be. I just took a chance that some real change might be possible and, sure enough, my hunch was right.

I went to work the minute that Mr. Burdakin agreed to visit the injured fireman with me the following week. Let me explain that part of the moonlighting that I was doing involved the creation of audiovisual shows. These were 35-millimeter slide

shows with sound tracks. I'd produced a few presentations already and had visions in my mind of how I could create slide shows for the railroad that might have a real impact on the workers and their attitudes. The few attempts I had made to interest others within the railroad in such things all fell on deaf ears. This time I figured I would have the ear of the new Vice President as we drove from Battle Creek to the hospital in Kalamazoo and back.

I went right to work creating the initial script for a presentation I called *What's A Grand Trunk?* I worked for Grand Trunk Western Railroad Company and my plan was to ask the question "What's A Grand Trunk?" The answer being that a Grand Trunk was a collection of professional, dedicated people whose goal was to deliver the best railroad service in the nation, safely. That was one hell of a far stretch from reality but it has always been my opinion that the right way to get the best of anything was to start out by expecting the very best.

Picking out some music for the background of the opening of the sound track was easy and then I wrote a script that fit. By the time Mr. Burdakin arrived in Battle Creek the following week, I had the first five minutes of the proposed audiovisual show completed. The minute I shook hands with him I realized that he was a special kind of person. He asked me a load of questions about the injured man and it was obvious that he was not just paying lip service in his concern. He really cared.

I hadn't gone down the highway a mile before I started making my pitch in regard to the slide show I had in mind. When I finally played the sound track on his cars cassette player I was so hyped up that Mr. Burdakin suggested that we pull over and stop while he listened. After he listened he started asking questions. Could I add a section where the new President said a few words to the troops? Could I have the vice presidents each say a few words? Could I, could I, could I. And I said yes, yes, yes, yes, I could do anything. Just give me the opportunity.

The visit at the hospital was wonderful. The injured man

really appreciated the visit and we did everything we could to put his mind at ease.

Then on the drive back to Battle Creek, Mr. Burdakin invited me to come to Detroit the following Monday with my recording equipment and my camera. He arranged for me to meet our new corporate president and the other vice presidents. I had written little scripts for each of them just stating some positive ideas about the future. I had only about ten minutes with each of them but when I drove back to Battle Creek I had enough film and enough recorded audiotape to complete my project.

About a month later I set up a meeting where I could make my presentation to all of them. I was scared to death because I planned to lay my job on the line at that meeting. It was a small room and I set the slides up so that the last slide to come up would be a colored jell. At the end I walked in front of the screen and said, "Gentlemen, this is my thing. I plan to spend my future making slide shows and making speeches and writing and if you can't find a place for me to do that in this organization then I am leaving."

With four teenagers at home to support, I was terrified and when John Burdakin asked me to step outside I feared I had blown the whole thing. He asked me to wait and a few minutes later he came out and got me and gave me a hug. "We aren't really sure what you want to do, Art, but you have so much enthusiasm that we are giving you your own department and a free rein. "Just do what you think needs to be done and send me a report once a month," he told me.

I was stunned. I had my own department. I was the only one in it, of course; but still, it was mine.

First thing, I arranged for the president and all three vice-presidents to go on tour of the whole railroad so that every employee could look them in the eye and shake hands with them. I wrote little speeches, which they rewrote, and we took my new slide show and the top brass on tour. The results were amazing.

**Almost none of the workers had ever seen a vice president, much less an actual railroad president. It was the start of a whole new era.**

**That Christmas I came up with the idea of a Santa Train. This time we loaded the president and vice presidents and their wives on a special train that went from town to town with Santa Claus and the top brass shook hands with the worker's whole families. We gave them nice little gifts and I had created some special slide shows to view while they waited for a chance to visit Santa. I also came up with the idea of a talking Christmas tree. This was some 37 years ago and I believe we had the first talking Christmas tree in the nation.**

**I had an amplifier and a little lavalier mike and I went to the Salvation Army Store that was located just a block from my office and picked up a tree for just a dollar. I just put cotton over the speaker, ran the cords back to a little dressing room in the back of the special coach car we had outfitted for the occasion and we had someone in that room talking to the kids through the speaker we had put underneath the tree. With the mike on the tree they could hear what the child said. And we had spies at the door relaying the child's name to the voice of the tree. We had everybody baffled with that tree the first year.**

**As the years passed I introduced that idea at a number of meetings and then I began to spot talking Christmas trees at J.C. Penny's and other stores. I had shared the idea with a fellow who handles displays for such stores.**

**For ten years I worked on positive attitudes with cassette tapes for our railroad's managers, dozens of slide shows, speeches written for execs, monthly posters and a dozen other creative approaches.**

**When we started out the railroad was experiencing wildcat strikes on a weekly and monthly basis. Labor and management were continuously at each other's throats. We were losing over \$28 million a year and our safety record was one of the worst in**

**the nation. In one year we went to a \$10 million profit and strikes ceased completely. We set up an employee assistance program to cut our drinking problem on the railroad. Our safety record improved so that for several years we won the award as one of the safest railroads in the nation.**

**Now don't get the idea that all of this was my doing, far from it. Mr. Burdakin was soon promoted to Executive Vice President and then to President of Grand Trunk. He gave me more and more freedom and allowed me to moonlight all I wanted to. He was clever enough to realize that most of the great ideas I was introducing to our railroad came from the many other clients I was working for. I was shuffling stuff around and we were all benefiting from my travels.**

**At about the same time that I got my new job, I gave a speech at the Michigan Safety Conference. It opened the doors to more speeches and when I spoke at the National Safety Congress in Chicago in 1976, I received invitations from major corporations and associations to speak throughout the U.S. and Canada.**

**My salary and my income soared. Ideas were pouring out of me like popcorn. I started creating slide shows that appealed to other railroads and for several years my sale of our products to others more than covered the expense of my department.**

**The only real tough part of my job was trying to keep the lid on what I was doing around the railroad. No one except the president really understood what I was doing there. I had the privilege of selecting which projects I wanted to work on and this drove a lot of top managers mad because they were used to having control over almost everyone in the organization. The other problem was that I was away so much giving speeches. Then there was the fact that I hired a personal secretary to work for me and she was not a railroad employee. Nobody around the depot really knew what she was doing there. She was a fantastic lady, named Eileen, who just worked half days. I noticed that she would never drink coffee and it was several years before I discovered that she had never used the ladies' rest room. She was afraid that others**



might ask her what she was doing there and she didn't want to get me into trouble. What a woman. What a bladder.

I guess I probably had the best job in the world for a while. Like everything, in time it lost its glamour. John Burdakin was appointed president of several other railroads and started spending nearly all of his time in Washington, D.C. and one day he called me in and said that he was too busy to handle the various departments that still reported to him and so he was turning all of us over to a Vice President who was a lawyer, an accountant and the biggest a—hole I have ever met.

Then John Burdakin decided to retire and I felt it was a great time for me to be moving on too. I was just about to be 53 years old and there was no way I could qualify for a pension then. True, I had 35 years service and the combination of my age plus my years of service added up to more than 85 but although that was one of the criteria, another was that I must be at least 60 years old.

I started a really creative campaign about then. I started calling all of the people I knew who would go running back to this lawyer, accountant a—hole and asking them complicated questions about retirement. I must have called more than a half a dozen. And I did a lot of other things to really endear me to that vice president. Then one day he called me and asked me, "What is going on? Why are you asking everyone about retirement? You are only 53 years old." I explained that I had already worked several lifetimes for that company and I needed a break.

One day the vice president asked me what I wanted to retire and I told him 70% of my best 5 year average gross and a few fringe benefits. He said, "Well, I was going to offer you 20% or fire you." I told him that I didn't believe he had enough authority to fire me and it proved to be a correct statement.

About a week later Mr. Burdakin called me in and we worked out a deal for me to become an outside consultant for a couple of years with a 60% deal plus some fringes.

**We didn't broadcast the fact that I was available for consulting and so the number of calls I got was really limited.**

**Once again creativity had given me an out where none really existed. I figured out a whole new plan and then sold it to the company.**

**Meanwhile my speaking career flourished. I started a new corporation and as I write this it is now twenty-five later and I am still going strong in work that I love and thrive on.**

**Why did I take so long telling you a lot of the story of my life? Because I want you to know that creativity is not just for thinking up smart remarks that might get a lot of laughs in high school. Creativity can get you the job you want. It can double and triple your income. It can get you seated with the president of major corporations and open doors that you figured would never open for you. In time it might even get you the president's job.**

**Why is creativity such a key to success and an open sesame for you if you choose to go the creative route? It is because most people in the world wouldn't know a new idea if it smacked them right in the mouth. Creativity is a rare gift, a special talent, a blessing, a breath of fresh air. And you know something else? Everyone is born with this creative talent inside him or her. It is just that it has been thwarted, stifled, beaten to near death. But have hope. It is still there inside you. All we have to do is find a way to let it out. Let's get on with figuring out how to make your creativity come alive once again.**

**We'll start right now.**

## Chapter 4

### Stuff

*“If at first an idea is not absurd, then there is no hope for it.”*  
*Albert Einstein*

Stuff has always stirred up my imagination. I guess that is why I have so much stuff. And it is also why I like to go places where there is a lot of stuff around.

I like to go to garage sales. There is always a mess of stuff that no one knows what in the world to do with. Sometimes I just buy things because I know they will be very special to someone I know. And I've bought a lot of stuff just to give to people I don't even know because I believe that the stuff will mean a lot to them.

I've purchased old books for a dollar or less and then sent them to people or to libraries or whatever and sometimes it turns out to be a very special treasure for them, or a special memory.

I love to look at old stuff and then see if I can find a different use for whatever it is.

Sometimes I drive to Chicago and attend special shows just to look at stuff. One day I saw a fellow who had safety pins for sale. Since I do a great deal of work in the safety field it just struck me that safety pins might make sense as a special hand out, after all, the word “safety” was already in the product.

This was a dealer's show I was visiting and they sold wholesale only. I asked the fellow what was the smallest quantity of safety pins I could buy from him and he said “A gross, gross.” I had to think about that one. A gross is 144 so I guess a gross-gross would be 144 times 144, which is 20,736. That would be one hell of a lot of safety pins but that wasn't the worst of it. He wasn't talking about individual safety pins, he was talking about the little sets of pins that came 12 in a set. So he was talking about

**248,832 individual pins. A quarter of a million is one hell of a lot of safety pins.**

**He gave me one little set of 12 pins and his business card. What can you do with safety pins that will justify buying a quarter of a million of them? Now that was a real creative challenge. I put a few pins on my desk and few more on my dresser at home. I pinned a couple on my coat in the morning.**

**Here's what I came up with. It was a card about the size of a business card and on it I put all twelve pins and the card read, "Safety De Pins On Me." Pretty neat idea. You give every employee a card with the pins on it. But so what if you do? What good is that? I thought about it for a long while and came up with the idea that every employee is given the pins and instructed to wear a pin on their shirt or whatever.**

**We assigned a number of employees to spend a few moments each morning moving around and asking workers what the pins meant and if they answered, "It reminds me that safety depins on me," they were given a neat ball point pen that had a sign on it saying simply "De-Pen" Then if the employee asked what De Pen was for, the response was, "To sign De Card" and if they asked what De Card was for they were told it was for "De Drawing." We tried it a few places and management bought a huge boom box and put it on display with a big sign that read simply "De Prize."**

**I've passed out the pins with the idea written up on it and had to order a second gross, gross of pins within a couple of months. Now we've sold over a million pins with that idea.**

**What did all of this accomplish? Well a lot of people at a lot of organizations had a lot of fun with the idea, but better yet, a lot of people wore those pins and reinforced the concept that safety really did depend on them.**

**Stuff. Great stuff. It is all around us and all we have to do is to match up a creative idea with that stuff and look out!**

## Chapter 5

# Creative Postcards

*“The profit of great ideas comes when you turn them into reality.”  
Tom Hopkins*

It was one of those house contents estate auctions. Who knows, they might have been auctioning off the house too but I wasn't interested in another house.

I'd done what good auction buyers do; get there a little early and nose through all of the stuff there, especially the stuff in boxes. I've found that you can often buy a box of stuff for a dollar or so because no one knows what is in that box. Often the auctioneer doesn't know either and so you just might have an advantage.

So this time, what did I spot that others probably overlooked? Penny postcards. That is right, the plain ivory colored postal department postcard with a green stamp printed on it. There were five or six hundred of them in a box.

The auctioneer was in a bit of a hurry with a yard full of stuff to auction and things were moving quickly. He reached into the box, pulled out a few postcards, held them up and said, “Here's a whole box full of penny postcards. Something every one of you should want. What am I bid?” I said “Two dollars.” And he just looked around for a second and said, “Sold.”

As I write this the cost of mailing **a postcard is twenty one cents. Over the years I have used those postcards to remind** people that the cost of everything is going up and they should not delay buying my books or my services or whatever.

I put as many stamps as I could fit on the entire front of that postcard with the exception of some space for the address. I checked it again yesterday and that complies with the current U.S.

**Postal regulation. I put a mess of one and two and three cent stamps and whatever it takes to fill the card.**

**Stupid or creative? Well, often there is a thin line between the two. But you know something; people really appreciate getting that old postcard with all those stamps on it. They seem to get a laugh out of it and it sure gets read.**

**Sometimes I use an old joke on the card when I say in very small print, “Please note. The price for carrying this postcard is still just one cent. The rest is for storage.”**

**Let your imagination run wild once in a while. The more you use your creativity the more creative you will become. When we are children, those around us, our parents, teachers, and other members of the family often turn us off. Those creative juices might have stopped flowing altogether and you might have to prime them for a while.**

**If you want a physical exercise to help you on the road to uniqueness and non-conformity then try this. Pretend you are a little kid and skip. Go ahead. I dare you to try skipping around the room. Now, if you get past that dare then here’s one that I bet you are afraid to try. Go outside and skip all the way around the block. You might want to try this early in the day, like perhaps two o’clock in the morning, at least to begin with. Just skip and tell yourself that it is OK. Good luck. And if friends and neighbors stop calling then just chalk it up to your new creativity. I didn’t tell you this would be easy, but believe me, it sure is a lot of fun.**



## Chapter 6

### Song Ideas

*“The great majority of men are bundles of beginnings.”*  
*Ralph Waldo Emerson*

On Tuesday I had lunch with another songwriter. I was feeling pretty creative and all seemed right with the world. I let my mind be open for an idea for a new song. Just when I was about a mile from the shopping mall where we were to meet I noticed a bumper sticker on the car in front of me as I waited at a light. It read, “I can fix anything but a broken heart.”

I had a yellow pad on the seat next to me and I quickly scribbled that down on the pad. Great line. Never heard a song that quite said that either. Immediately my mind started coming up with all the stuff that this guy could fix. The first rhyme that came into my head was “broken cars and bent up bicycle handle bars.” I wrote that down too and I was at the mall and so I went inside to meet my friend.

We had just agreed to meet at the food court. I looked the place over real good and he didn’t seem to be in sight so I sat down and worked on the song. I wrote down a few more lines that popped into my head. What could a guy fix? A toilet. A horserace. A dog. Vacuum cleaners. I could write out a list of a dozen things that the guy could fix. That was easy. But what about the broken heart? Had he ever tried to fix one? With glue. With a hammer and nails. With a screwdriver? With a little tenderness?

What rhymes with toilet? A room to let. Wine vinaigrette. Sure, the guy could fix a salad and then go and fix a toilet. What a tasteless contrast.

Well, by the time I found that guy who had been sitting there all that time I had a respectable list of stuff that would weave itself into a tolerable song. I might let it stew in my subconscious

**mind for a while. I'd play with different song structures and come up with a chorus to be repeated but I had the makings.**

**We'll go into how to put your subconscious mind to work for you, on a full time basis, later.**

**The whole point is this; I was open to finding an idea. I was prepared with a pad and a pen. I was having fun and I was just filling in time that might have been sort of anxious time. If it weren't for that song I probably would have looked a little harder for that guy but I was enjoying myself anyway.**

**Oh yeah, we had a great meeting. Really stimulating. I know that I learned a lot from that guy and I believe he learned some things too. It is great now and then to get together and break bread with someone who also has a great imagination that is being used on a daily basis.**





**Next time we meet we will both probably have a lot of activity to report. A little friendly competition seems to stimulate creativity. Try it. And it wouldn't hurt you to try your hand at a song. Even if it is just writing a parody of a song you already know. Pretty soon you will be standing back like a proud father saying, "I can do that."**



## Chapter 7

# The Credit

*“Setting a good example is a slander seldom forgiven.”*  
*Ben Franklin*

When it comes to creativity, I think we are all a little bit like puppy dogs. We like to get petted a lot. We like to get positive strokes, words of encouragement, compliments.

We might survive without them but they sure help.

When someone accepts our idea and then maybe even implements that idea then it just sort of triggers all sorts of new creativity inside us. At least, that is the way it has always worked with me.

Now one of the things that you have to learn to accept is that not every idea is a good idea. I've seen some reports showing that only one idea in about twenty ideas would actually work. I've read somewhere that Thomas Edison tried 10,000 items before he came up with the right one for his light bulb. The rest of them burnt out in just a few minutes. He even went into jungles looking for the right material. Now you might say that he invented the light bulb ten thousand times, each time a little differently but he only came up with one really great idea. That was enough. It changed the world.

Thank goodness, Thomas Edison had the good sense to surround himself with a lot of really creative and patient people and they did most of the experiments for him. I've heard those who claim that Thomas Edison was not that much of a genius, that his employees were the real brains of the outfit. You hear that most places where new research is being done. Everyone likes to think that an idea is his or hers. In fact, there is a world full of idea thieves. They often just sit around an office and when they hear about someone's new idea they quickly write out the idea and sign their name to it. You probably work with a few idea thieves.

**In my own work experience I often found that lawyers were the worst idea thieves in the world. I met some real bastards in my time. The best way to handle them is to ask them a lot of questions about the idea after they have claimed ownership. Generally they don't even know what the idea is all about. It is really fun to watch them squirm.**

**Let me put you on notice right now, though, that you will seldom get recognition, praise, thanks, glory, money or much of anything else for your ideas.**

**Mostly you will find resistance.**

**Ben Franklin found a great way to get his ideas implemented. First he would introduce an idea to someone who might implement it. Then he would let the idea sit around in that person's head for a while. Next he would introduce a problem, which that very idea would solve. After presenting the problem he would wait around until the other party came up with the solution. Then Franklin would show his real genius. He would argue weakly that the idea would not work, and he might even imply that it was a stupid solution.**

**Often that would get the other party's dander up and he would go out to see that the solution worked.**

**Finally after his original idea was implemented, Franklin would congratulate the other person on their cleverness and persistence.**

**Now you have to be willing to give up authorship to your ideas to make this work but what Franklin sought was the result not the glory. Actually, he had so many great ideas that he could give a load of them away and still have plenty left to be declared a genius.**

**He came up with the Post Office, the Fire Department and much, much more.**

## Chapter 8

# Getting A Groove

*“Don't play the saxophone. Let it play you.”*  
*Charlie Parker*

There is a big difference between a groove and a rut. A rut is something you get into; at least I do every now and then. A groove is a beat, a rhythm, often very loud, maybe even loud enough to sort of shake the room.

You hear it coming out of the rear end of cars crammed full of teenagers.

I'm not into rap grooves. They disturb me. I like a good Dixie Groove or an old Jazz Groove. The right kind of a groove playing in the background can really excite my creative muse.

Let me tell you how I used music to stimulate my mind to edit hours of material down to an hour or so, for a presentation.

I used to work in some offices in the old railroad depot in Battle Creek. We had a huge lobby with oak benches and a high, high ceiling. Sound would really bounce around in that huge room. There was a big picnic table over in the corner of the room and once in a while I would pull that big table out into the room with lots of walking room around it. Then I would plug in my boom box and play some really loud music with a hammering beat to it. I'd lay out all of my cribs, cheat sheets, cards, vignettes, jokes, everything on that table and then I would start walking and skipping and dancing around and around that table.

I'd really get cranked up and as I circled that mess on the table I would see how different segments seemed to fit together. I began moving the cards around working on an opening for my presentation and a close and the different elements that I needed between those two.

Perhaps it is needless to say that I was alone there. Sure there were a few train dispatchers in the back room but they seldom bothered me. I'd do this at night or on weekends after most of the other workers had gone home for the day.

It was a really exciting time for me. I could just see new improvements appearing every time I circled the table. Next I would start eliminating the stuff that didn't seem to fit. I just tossed it over on a corner of the table. Then with a little more room on the table I was able to change the sequence of the material that remained.

All this time the music was blasting away. Maybe it was a Stan Kenton tape or it might be The Dukes of Dixieland.

I'd find myself doing something similar on the computer. I'd cut and paste and move items around on a continuing basis. I kept on honing. New stuff came in, old stuff went out and, quite often, the old stuff went back in again and again because it was my best. Today the different segments of my presentations are in constant competition with one another.

I met one speaker who did mostly humor and he would tape every presentation and listen to the laughter he got from every joke. He'd number the response from a one to a ten. When a joke started getting weaker laughs it would be knocked off the list by a stronger response to something new.

But what's with the music? I don't know. What is that saying, "Music has the power to calm the savage beast...." Or something like that. Well, with me, music can get me charged up, enthusiastic, creative, energized, insightful. I can visualize audience reactions just looking at the notes.

Try it out yourself. Experiment with different types of music. Different strokes for different folks.

Don't get hung up on the fact that some of this stuff I am telling you sounds crazy. We are dealing with a very strange

**critter, your imagination-- your creative ability. There really isn't a whole lot known about this subject. People will tell you there is, but trust me; we don't really know what will work best for you. Keep experimenting.**

**Every creative person will tell you something a little different about what works best for them. Some will tell you deadlines. When their car payment and their rent and their telephone bill are all way overdue and so is their girlfriend then some will tell you, then, then, then they really get creative as hell. WHAM! That idea that has eluded them for weeks will pop into their head just like that and save the day.**

**Try the music; there is a lot less stress.**



## Chapter 9

# Brainstorming and Humor

*“Creativity varies inversely with the number of cooks involved in the broth.”*

*Bernice Fitz-Gibbon*

See if you can complete this statement. “Nobody likes a s- - - a- -.”

Do you know what a smart ass is? That is a guy who can sit on an ice cream cone and tell you what flavor it is.

But can you tell me when smart asses really come in handy? They can be a real asset. So, all you smart asses out there, how would you like to become smart assets?

Hmmm. Where is this going?

If you have ever attended a really great brainstorming session then chances are there was some joker there bouncing stuff off the wall that was so ridiculous that it made people crawl outside the perimeters they had set for themselves and really come up with something new.

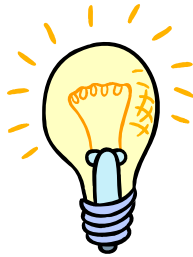
Let me hit that again. The wise-aker’s idea might not have been within the bounds of reason, however it just might trigger an idea in one of the other attendees minds. Or maybe it just gave her or him the freedom, the daring to come out with an idea that is a bit wild but possibly at the same time fantastic.

I have attended brainstorming sessions where I didn’t have a clue as to what the other attendees were talking about. My only defense in such a situation, that is, my defense against feeling really stupid, was to call on my sense of humor. I would simply listen to what people were saying and then make a few cracks about that in the form of suggestions. I began to realize that when I got a really great laugh that someone would follow it with a great

**idea. Maybe it was a sensible hitchhike on an idea I had presented or maybe it had nothing to do with my remark.**

**There is a great deal of resistance to new ideas. Many creative people have been turned down and even ridiculed for their creativity and so they tend to keep their talent and their imagination hidden under a basket. A little laughter and fun at a brainstorming session can often encourage the meek to speak out.**

**There just might be ten really great ideas in that room at your idea session and just maybe none of them will be exposed.**



**So the next time you attend a brainstorming session let your imagination soar and let your humor break out of its stall too. Quit writing humor on the walls in the john. Bring it into the meeting room with you and explore it.**



# Chapter 10

## Funny Thinking

*“Creativity is the sudden cessation of stupidity.”*  
*Edwin Land*

Every now and then I would look at the morning newspaper and write a joke. Then that night I would watch the Johnny Carson show to see if my joke was in his opening monologue.

Sometimes it was. Now tell me, how did some comedy writer in New York climb inside my head that morning and steal my joke?

Of course, that is not what happened at all. The guy was just using his knowledge as a gag writer and applying one or more of the formulas for comedy writing.

Most inventors have a raft of lawsuits when they come up with a patent on a great idea. Alexander Graham Bell just won his lawsuit by a hair and retained the most valuable patent of all time. It was the telephone. And just think of it, he wasn't trying to invent the telephone at all. He was working on the hearing aide.

Thomas Edison once said that all of the great ideas are out there in the ether of the air and all you had to do is reach out and grab them. Better yet, if you grab them before someone else does.

Now what about this idea of thinking funny? Well I used to try thinking bigger than, smaller than, the opposite of and sounds like.

Just picture an elephant as an ant and an ant as an elephant. The best humor of all seems to be when you set up an idea and then reinforce it. Then when the listener believes that a third thing will follow in order you give them the exact opposite of what they expect.

**Picture yourself drawing a straight line. Now make the line twice as long. And now, when folks think you will continue with the straight line you throw them a curve.**

**I guess pitchers use the very same device when they want to strike out a batter. Two fastballs and then a curve. Or two curves and then a blazing fast ball. Surprise—you are out!**

**Comedian Steve Allen said that comedy is surprise.**

**Now why in the world would you ever want to learn how to write a joke? Simply because to write a joke you have to start thinking different. You have to get out of the ordinary. You must learn to punt.**

**In your business dealings most problems have obvious solutions but the difficulty comes when they don't work. For some reason the obvious either doesn't work or else it isn't obvious to you when you need an answer right now. Twenty-twenty vision usually only comes with hindsight.**

**Try thinking differently today. Take a chance and say the opposite of what you mean. Explore.**



# Chapter 11

## Push The Barriers

*“Creativity involves breaking out of established patterns in order to look at things in a different way.”*

*Edward De Bono*

When I first made a personal commitment to become a professional speaker I set out to test the limits. I began experimenting at our local Toastmasters meetings. I'd try to get the opportunity to give a five to seven minute speech each week. Since many of our members were old timers who were content to just sit back and watch I had a lot of chances to fill in as a substitute speaker.

I wanted to test all of the elements of public speaking. For instance, just take vocal varieties. I would write a little speech that had characters whispering and shouting their lungs out. I would tell a three-person joke using three different voices and even try to make each of the speakers look different.

When it came to using gestures I would wave my arms, point, slam my fist down on the podium, throw papers into the air and then top it all off by grabbing a member by the lapels and pulling him out of his seat.

One night I wore my best navy business suit, white-collar shirt, silk tie and I gave my presentation. When I finished I asked the members if they noticed anything unusual about me that night. Of course I got a lot of cracks but no one had noticed that I wore no shoes or sox. I was barefoot.

Another night I did a talk with the fly of my pants unzipped. I didn't tell anyone about that one but no one noticed. I just went back behind the lectern and zipped up. Years later, while speaking for an audience of several hundred people, I

**noticed that my fly was open and I casually went behind the lectern once again and zipped it. Again no one noticed. I knew I was rehearsing for such an occasion if it ever arose.**

**Now I was not practicing screaming my lungs out so that I could do it later in a speech. I simply wanted to go there, go as far as I could with that vocal variety. Later I could pull it back within some sensible bounds and use it to my advantage in making a point.**

**The same with whispering. In some monologues I have characters I'm talking about whisper. Here's an example that just popped into my head.**

**A businessman wanted to hire an accountant. He called the first candidate in and asked him, "What is two and two?" And the guy said, "Four."**

**He called the second accountant in and said what is two and two? And the guy says, "Either 22 or 4."**

**He calls the next guy in and asks him, "What is two and two?" The guy goes over, closes the office door, looks around cautiously and then after pausing a moment goes up to the guy and whispers, "Whatever you want it to be." That guy he hires.**

**Creativity is often essential to get the job done, even in accounting.**

# Chapter 12

## Serendipity

*“Creativity is allowing yourself to make mistakes.  
Art is knowing which ones to keep.”*

*Scott Adams*

Once upon a time in the principality of Serendip there lived two princes. The two princes were famous for their journeys to nearby provinces. I guess that today you would say they had an attitude. The good thing is that they had a most positive attitude toward life and toward everything they viewed.

The two went through life looking for the good in everything and everybody they met.

I have long ago become convinced that for every negative force in this world there is an equal positive force. The trick is in finding that positive force.

For every disaster there is a blessing. Disasters bring people together. OK maybe that is a stretch.

I’ve used this example in other books I have written but since this event changed my life and the lives of most of the others involved in it let me use it again. Please.

When I first made the commitment to become a professional speaker I signed up to attend a one and a half day seminar presented by Cavett Robert and his partner Merlyn Cundiff. Cavett was the founder of the National Speakers Association, an organization that currently has over 3,000 members.

The schedule was that Cavett would speak for the first half day and then they would bring in something that none of us had seen before firsthand. It was a videocassette recorder. Now this is back in the seventies and VCR’s were new stuff. Cavett offered

each of us the opportunity to do our best ten minutes of speech material and it would be tape-recorded. Then the following morning the tapes would be played and Cavett would give each of us a personal critique and some suggestions.

I had heard Cavett speak several times before and, frankly, I was disappointed with the first half day. Most of what he said I had already heard him say before but I was excited about the chance to be video taped.

I recall that each of us paid \$550 enrollment for the seminar and at that time it was a fortune to me. I had 4 children and a wife to support and a job that really didn't pay all that much. It was a sacrifice for the whole family for me to attend and then there was the hotel charges, food and gas money to drive to Chicago too. I really wanted this to be a great seminar.

There were just over 20 of us at the seminar as I recall and we all did our very best ten minutes. It took a while and we ran into the evening before we completed taping.

If the other attendees were anything like me then they didn't sleep that night. I was really anxious to hear what Cavett would say about my presentation.

The next morning Cavett made a few opening remarks and we went right to the videotape to watch the first speaker. The picture came on the tube and we listened but nothing came out. There was no sound. Cavett messed around with the dials and we still didn't have any sound. He checked out the recorder and the monitor and then called in a technician from the place he had rented the outfit. Finally after a half hour delay the technician announced, "I'm sorry, Mister Robert, but evidently you did all that taping yesterday with no sound. We just don't have anything but the picture."

I figured it was a disaster. I would demand that I get my money back. The whole thing was a horrible waste of time. Then I looked at Cavett.

**He just stood up and tugged on his French cuffs on his shirt a bit and he said, “Good, Good, Good!”**

**I thought to myself, “Bad, Bad, Bad! We’ve just wasted a couple of days each and you’ve charged us over \$10,000 and....”**

**Cavett messed with his French cuffs again and then he said once more, “Good, Good, Good. How many of you have audio cassettes of your talks?”**

**We all had audiotapes. I’d taped hundreds of my talks. I listened to them all the time and tried to improve each speech. We all raised our hands.**

**Well most of you know what you said yourself and we all just heard you speak yesterday so we know about what you said. But what message were you giving with your body while you were talking? Were you really feeling your message inside your gut or were you just talking?**

**He then introduced us to his partner, Merlyn Cundiff. She had just had a book published on body language.**

**Cavett played back every tape we had done and he critiqued them just as promised. It was an accident. A potential disaster. A horrible error. Or was it? It was the best seminar I ever attended in my whole life. It changed my approach to speaking. It made me become honest with myself and with the material I was doing.**

**Every attendee had the same reaction. Thank God the sound didn’t record. It would have just been in the way. Cavett had an attitude of Serendipity. He just tugged on his cuff lengths while he thought a minute. Good. Good. Good! He was thinking, “I know there is the potential for a powerful force of good here if I can just find it.” And he went on to provide a life changing experience for every one of us.**

**Now since I attended that seminar I have had my eye out for examples that show how someone took a mistake, a boo boo and turned it into a breakthrough.**

**Sure this is creative thinking. This is creativity at its finest.**

**A fellow was producing wallboard and somehow set the dials wrong and they pressed the board about 4 or 5 times harder than they should have. Masonite was the result. It turned out to be one of the largest selling products in the building business.**

**Kellogg's Corn Flakes was a mistake sticking to the top of something else. One of the Kellogg brothers tasted it and said, "Good, good, good! I bet we can get up to \$5 a box for this stuff some day."**

**Did you know that Coca Cola used to be made with tap water until some Soda Jerk...er, some Soda Fountain Person, accidentally pushed the wrong tap and got soda water by mistake. Word got around fast about how good it was and then everybody wanted theirs made with carbonated water. Good. Good. Good! And now, billions of bottles later they are still using carbonated water.**

**Vulcanizing was a mistake.**

**One day a fellow let a vat of soap cook too long and when he checked it out it was floating on the top of the tub. He just looked at it and he said, "Good, good, goo...No, he said, "This stuff is ninety nine and forty four one hundredths percent pure. It floats." Ivory Soap was a mistake.**

**Did you ever look in your Fridge and see mold on something. Sir Isaac Fleming did and he came up with penicillin. He saved thousands of lives with his attitude of Serendipity.**

**Columbus was headed where? India? Good. Good. Good!**



**Sir Isaac Newton had an apple fall on his head and what did he say? “G...G...G...  
GRAVITY!”**

**Want a breakthrough in your own creative imagination? Then try looking at everybody, everything, every event with an attitude of Serendipity.**

**Try this idea on for a while and see if it fits. For every negative force, event, happening, whatever, there is an equal positive force. Find it and you might have a breakthrough.**

**Good! Good! Good!**

## Chapter 13

# Where Does Creativity Begin?

*“There is no such thing as a great talent without great will-power.”*

*-- Honore de Balzac, French novelist*

Where does creativity begin? Good question. Sometimes when I am called upon to be creative I go to my library and take out several reference books. I’m not certain why this works but I feel that I am required to feed a certain amount of nourishment into my subconscious mind. One of my favorite books for turning on my imagination is *The Word Finder* from Rodale Books, Inc. published in March 1967, which was the Eighteenth Printing.

In a book search a while back I found an earlier edition and was really disappointed. Unlike a thesaurus, this book does not merely yield a substitute word but produces an augmentative word, one to embellish and add to the idea. Thus, by referring to the adjective *large* the user is taught to describe “how large?” by a selective list of words such as *incalculable, incredibly, preposterously, overwhelmingly, prodigiously, inordinately, etc.*

Rodale also published *The Synonym Finder*. Mine was printed in March 1967, the sixth printing.

Then I have a thesaurus and a couple of dictionaries and I will take a few words that seem to fit around the subject I am exploring and I will look these up in these reference books and I will copy the pages that deal with these words. I reread these several times and let my mind wander and it is an exciting, invigorating experience for me. My mind often wanders off on tracks that I never imagined.

If I am working on a book or an article or a speech idea I find that this little experiment in research triggers memories of

other things I have worked on before. I often remember stories or experiences or other references.

In other words, these resources serve as triggers to my memory and my imagination. They open doors I would never think to approach.

In The Word Book I looked up the word *imagination*. Here is what I found.

*Imagination... adjectives: luxuriant; emotional; proud; copious; splendid; morbid; ardent; vivid; exacting; realizing; kindling; atavistic; inquisitive; teeming; creative; youthful; pure; retired; somber; poetic; sympathetic; rustic; capricious; irreverent; kindly; lively, indolent, voracious; astounding; exuberant; glorious; fertile; constructive; powerful; sanest; diseased; dim; contemporaneous; heated; restless; headlong; respective; fond; sluggish; cultivated; warm; historic, disorderly, ardent; ribald; popular; foul; cumulative; daring; tensest; fruitful; disordered; morbid; pure; solitary; retired; limitless; salty; fever-driven; agile; plastic; epic; hyperbolic; inventive; apt; quick; gifted; robust; defective; delicate; irrepressible; unconfined; dire; dark, mortal; heated; distempered; boyish; idealizing; burning; jaded; penetrating; scientific; riotous; melancholic.*

*Verbs...ballast---; capture---; check---; confine ---; confound ---; curb---; develop ---; distort' ---; drift in ---; dull ---; enslave ---; exercise ---; fire ---; flow from ---; inflame ---; infuse into ---; kindle ---; nurture ---; parade before ---; pursue in ---; revel in ---; seize ---; spur ---; stagger ---; stain ---; stimulate ---; stretch ---; tax ---; transcend---; break loose ---; --- elucidates; --- envisages; --- pictures; --- recoils; --- runs away; --- soars; --- vaults.*

*(See conception, image, fancy, fantasy, vision, mind, brain, power.)*

Do you get it? Are you as turned on as I get about the endless possibilities, the unending varieties, and the endless potential in the areas of creativity? Boundless.

# Chapter 14

## Seeing Your Book In Print

*“Make visible what, without you, might perhaps never have been seen.”*

*Robert Bresson*

**A powerful, creative process that works!**

### Getting Started

How would you like to have a really great looking book in your hand with your name on it as the author in just a few months' time?

If you are like the thousands of other would-be authors I have talked with over the past thirty plus years that I have been writing, then you probably have already started writing a book that never was completed.

The problem is not that you do not have a great topic. That remains to be seen and I am certainly no judge of this. The problem is most likely one of goal setting and visualization.

I like to remind the members of my audiences that with any worthy project **FIRST COMES THE DREAM.**

When I first began my writing career, one of the first things I did was to go down to our local print shop and order a set of business cards that read, Art Fettig, Freelance Writer.

At that time I certainly was far from being a freelance writer; however, I had a dream and I had a goal and so I began visualizing myself as a freelance writer.

Since I bought that card I have sold over a thousand different things to publishers. Articles, verses, fillers, photo

stories, books of fiction, non-fiction books, foreign book rights and much more. I've seen 36 of my books in print. I certainly feel that I now qualify for that old business card I had printed so many years ago. **FIRST COMES THE DREAM!**

Over 20 years ago I decided to become a professional speaker. First I had a business card printed that said, "Professional Speaker" followed by my name. At that time I was really just an aspiring speaker. Now I've presented over four thousand professional presentations and in 1988 I was certified by the National Speakers Association as a "Certified Speaking Professional."

What is the point? Again, let me make it clear to you, **FIRST COMES THE DREAM!**

So, let us now agree for the purpose of this project that you are the author of a great book. At least you soon will be. And for the purpose of getting on with it, let us now put that in writing. Fill this in.

I, \_\_\_\_\_  
(Write in your name.)  
am the author of

---

(Write in the title of your book.)

Don't tell me you do not have a title. If you don't have a title then create one this instance. You have one minute to complete this assignment. I know that a halfway decent procrastinator could spend a year selecting a title but we are serious about getting this book done, so put something down. As we progress, I guarantee you that an absolutely fantastic title will come to you. You can write in something as simple as, "My Book" if you must, but let us get on with it!

Now I would like you to write down the color of your book cover. First let me tell you that white is not a color but black is. Most printers will give you a two-color cover for a reasonable

price. Generally, four colors cost a lot more. If you are creative you can do a lot with two colors printed on a white stock. So let us now select the colors. Let's go for two at this time and you can get fancier later if you want to. The two colors you selected are

\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_  
(You've got it! Write in the two colors.)

Do you think that this is far too simple for you? Don't you believe it? The main reason that most people never finish their book is because they have no idea of what their finished book is supposed to look like. They are shooting in the dark. They have no vision of the completed project. They are going down a road to nowhere, blindly, and so they cannot be expected to reach their destination.

On my shelf I must have at least 50 books I have received from authors who claim that I was instrumental in getting their book completed and published. Of course, the truth is that they were instrumental in getting their book finished and published. I simply showed them the right road to reach that goal, their destination.

That is exactly what I plan to do in this chapter. In just a few moments I expect you to have one of those creative AHA's

If you're like the scores of other authors I have worked with then it will all come clear to you in just a few moments and you will get on with the happy business of completing your book.

Let's pick the size of the book now. With the printer I have been working with for many years I have just three choices. He will print my book in the 8½" x 11" format, the 5½" x 8½" format or the 6" x 9" format. The latter two cost the same price and I believe that the 6" x 9" format has a higher perceived value so I use it. I also use the 8½" x 11" format for my workbooks.

**You can print any size book you care to, provided you are willing to pay for the cost of printing it. It might cost you two or three times as much but if that is your desire then go to it.**

**Of course, you just might make it absolutely impossible to break even on your book because of the size you select. Let's work with the premise that you might like to make a few dollars profit from this project. If I am right then, please write down one of my numbers above.**

**The size of my book is \_\_\_\_\_ by \_\_\_\_\_  
(Write in size, please.)**

**Maybe right now I should explain something. By now you might have concluded that I expect you to publish your own book. Maybe you will find a publisher that will be willing to spend thousands of dollars promoting your book. Fat chance. You might find a publisher but the fact is, you, the author will be solely responsible for selling the book or causing sales.**

**You might do this by appearing on the top talk shows along with the other top stars but once again, Fat chance! It just makes good sense to me that if you are going to sell all of your books then it makes more sense every day that you benefit from those sales with all of the money that comes from them, not 5% or 10% or often nothing at all.**

**Besides, this process has nothing to do with selling books. It had to do with getting you started and moving along with this book writing process that stymies most would be authors. We are using a process of visualization. First comes the dream and you had better see your book in your mind's eye first if you hope to create it. I'm helping you paint a clear picture of what you are doing in your mind's eye so let's get on with it.**

**Aha, your book is taking shape now. Next we have to determine the length of your book. How thick is it? How many pages? Most books are printed in something they call galley's. If you want a course on book publishing go to someone who knows a**

lot more than I do. I just know that my printer prints books that are at least 64 pages long and then he will go up to 640 pages, 16 pages at a time. That is 64, 80, 96, 112, 128 etc.

Personally, I prefer shorter books. I believe that people actually read my books and that is more than you can say for many books. I've heard or read authors of those 300 page business books report that most of the books they sell are not read. People buy them to sit on their desks to make others believe that they are current. I like 96, 128 and my book titled *How To Hold An Audience In The Hollow Of Your Hand*, a book with some 500 jokes, plus 200 opening lines, runs just 176 pages. I figure that is plenty for any subject. Besides, thinner books cost less to publish and you can therefore hold down the price for buyers.

Pick a number from 64 to 640. The choice is yours. You can change it later but make it realistic.

If you have difficulty with that number then let's try something else for a moment. How many chapters do you plan to have in your book? That might sound like a tough question but you would be surprised at how many people give me an immediate answer to that.

One fellow I asked that question this week said this, "Art, the topic is integrity and there are 9 letters in that word." I said, "Fine, let's ad a chapter to get into the book and one to get out of it. A go-in chapter and a go-out chapter. That makes 11 chapters."

The next question is this. How many pages per chapter? We agreed on ten pages per chapter. "Some will be longer, some will be shorter," he said. "But they will average out to ten pages per chapter."

It was simple to figure that we would need a 128-page book. He wanted some extra pages for illustrations. We needed a cover page, a copyright page, a few pages of *About the Author*,



**some pages for him to advertise his services as a professional speaker and VOILA! We had a 128-page book.**

**I hope you have been thinking as we ran through that little process. Let me ask you this, how many chapters in your book?**

\_\_\_\_\_ **(Enter number.)**

**If you have that answer then let us answer this one. How long are your chapters?**

\_\_\_\_\_ **(Enter number of pages)**

**Now just add some pages for what I call “stuff”. Stuff is the title page, copyright page, bio, advertising, a foreword or preface or whatever you care to add. After all, this is your book; you can add anything you like. Want a few endorsements in front? Just put them in. Want a six-page dedication? Fine. Want to write a tribute to every person you ever met, just hoping that if you put their name in your book they might buy a thousand copies? It is all yours, it is your book and you can do as you like. Just tell me your total of the pages you want to do this. Add them up and then add your total to the pages you used in your chapters and you have a rough idea of the size of your book. Now what does it come close to with a number that you can divide by 16? Remember, 96, 112, 128 etc. What did you get?**

**Did you want an addendum, a reference list, a directory in the back? Add the pages now. What did it all come to?**

**Your book will be how many pages long? \_\_\_\_\_  
(Enter number)**

**Did you get that AHA! feeling yet?**

**Any second now you should get a wonderful feeling that you have just made a breakthrough in the process of making your book a reality. You have a title, you know the color of the cover, you know the size of the book, you have selected the number of**

**chapters and you know the approximate length of each chapter and you've even given some thought to all of the "stuff" that you want in your book. Now I want you to find a quiet place and just sit imagining yourself holding the published book in your hand. How does it feel? How do you feel? I hope it feels divine and that you feel totally awesome.**

**Now I want you to do a little design work. I want you to make up a cover for your book. Just draw out your title and put your name under it as author. Take some time with this next challenge. I want you to write the copy for the back of your book. Tell the reader what your book is all about and the benefits they will enjoy when they read your book. Play the role of an advertising director and really lay on the benefits.**

**I don't know if you will be working on a computer or not but it doesn't matter. I want you to count the number of chapters and I want you to write the name of each chapter on a 9" x 11" manila folder.**

**On another folder write Bio. And on another write STUFF.**

**Now I want to challenge you to cram those folders full of everything you can find on the subject you are writing about. If you find an article, a book, an idea of any kind of information that might fit into your book or trigger something in your imagination, then put it into your file.**

**Get on the Internet. If you find something interesting then hit "print". You may never find it again. Explore! Explore! Let your mind take a dozen different roads to your destination.**

**Start writing. If you are a speaker, like many of my friends and acquaintances, then just maybe you have been working on research for your book for many years. If so, then start writing out all of the things you talk about on this subject.**

I've taken my actual speeches, taped on cassette, and transcribed them. I have produced whole books that way. Of course, I have edited the speeches so that they read better, but the ideas were there already captured for me. I just had to get them down on paper.

This little booklet was prepared just to get you on track. If you are like most of my friends, I have opened a door for you.

Quite likely you will get your book done. Oh, I almost forgot the most important part of this whole process. I didn't close the sale. There is just one more thing we need and that is a commitment to a deadline.

Here goes. I \_\_\_\_\_  
(Insert your name above.)

do hereby resolve that I will have my completed manuscript camera ready for the printer on

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Insert date above.)

Now sign it \_\_\_\_\_  
(Your signature.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Have it witnessed.)

Dated at \_\_\_\_\_ this \_\_\_\_\_ day of  
( Your location.)  
\_\_\_\_\_ 20 \_\_\_\_\_

There. You have made a signed commitment to the project. Probably something you have never done before. It is no longer a "When I get around to it" project. You've signed your name. You have a deadline.

**You are on your way.**

**One last thing. If you have not experienced a feeling of exhilaration as yet then just maybe you have learned something by this process. Maybe you have discovered that you are like millions of other people. These are people who just say that they would like to have written a book. They would like to be a published author but they have no desire whatsoever to actually write a book. If you find you fit into that category then for goodness sake, quit telling people that you are going to write a book some day.**

**You might hire a ghostwriter and let that person write your book for you. That is a perfectly acceptable practice today.**

**If you did get the vision, if you do have the dream, and if you do have something to write about, then I believe that you will be one of those who send me their book and try to tell me that I am the one responsible for their having a book of their own. HOGWASH!**

**It is your book and I wish you all the luck you will need with it.**

**There are some great books already published on how to make your book better and sell it, once it is written. I'll give you a list of such books and send you on your way. Now...**

**GET ON WITH IT AND MAKE YOUR  
DREAMS COME TRUE.**

**Recommended Reading:**

***The Self-Publishing Manual* by Dan Poynter, Para Publishing,  
Phone 800 PARAPUB**

***Is There A Book Inside You?* By Dan Poynter, Para Publishing,  
Phone 800 PARAPUB**

***1001 Ways To Market Your Books* by John Kremer, Open  
Horizons, Phone 515 472 6130**



## Chapter 15

# Killing Creativity

*“A committee is a cul-de-sac down which ideas are lured and then quietly strangled.”*

*Barnett*

Early in my railroad career I often turned in different creative suggestions and they were often met with disinterest and down right scorn. I silently believed that our management had an instruction book of lame excuses to not only turn down but also actually ignore suggestions. I pictured the list looking something like this. 25 ways to kill an idea. See if you've heard a few before.

**It's not in the budget.**

**We've already done that before.**

**We've got too much on our plate right now.**

**There just isn't time for that.**

**The union would never buy it.**

**Management wouldn't stand for it.**

**It's too expensive.**

**We might get a sexual harassment claim.**

**We'd get sued.**

**We could put it on the inactive agenda if you like.**

**We need further study.**

**It might hurt somebody's feelings.**

**Why rock the boat?**

**We wouldn't know what the repercussions might be.**

**It would take too long to implement.**

**I can't believe you said that.**

**It is too big for us right now.**

**We don't have the staff.**

**It might involve overtime.**

**We're shorthanded right now.**

**We'd have to have engineering study it.**

**The boss hates new ideas.**

**There isn't enough space for it.**

**OK, I'll put you in charge of it and you can do it in your spare time.**

**It might make us look bad.**

**Not instituted here.**

**And finally, frankly I don't think you will be around here long enough to see how it turns out.**

# Chapter 16

## Twenty-five Creative Words Of Encouragement

*“Creativity is a method of progress.  
Conformity . . . maintains the status quo.”  
Kimball Wiles*

*Let's try it!*

Let's see if we can get the kinks out of it.

Go for it!

What an AHA!

We'll just have to find the money for it!

Let's put it in the budget immediately.

I think we can sell it to top management right now.

I'm with you all the way on this one.

I'm just glad you are on our team, not our competition's.

That idea is like a breath of fresh air.

I know this took a lot of extra work and I'm grateful.

The workers will love it.

I think the timing is right too.

It'll really save us money in the long run.

Brilliant!



**What a breakthrough!**

**Oh, man, I can't wait to get working on this.**

**I want you to get all the credit on this one.**

**You're movin' on up!**

**Just what I expected from you. Fantastic!**

**We never could have made it without you.**

**It's a heck of a start. Now let's follow through.**

**If I'd a thought of that I'd have taken a half a day off to celebrate,  
but I didn't, so why don't you take it off instead?**

**Mind Boggling!**

# Chapter 17

## Turning On Your Mind

*“Conditions for creativity are to be puzzled; to concentrate; to accept conflict and tension; to be born everyday; to feel a sense of self.”*

*Erich Fromm*

Here are 10 ways to turn on your mind.

1. Listen to music that excites you. Jazz, classical, heavy rock, Broadway, Cuban. Use your fingers or drum sticks to play along.
2. Take a walk in the park. Touch a leaf. Let a waterfall flow through your hand.
3. Take a shower and sing out loud.
4. Explore a rhyme book.
5. Take one word and look it up in a dictionary, a word finder, and a synonym book.
6. Go to the Web and explore one subject.
7. Visit your library and just wander.
8. Listen to a great lecture, live or on tape.
9. Take care of someone’s five-year-old child for half a day.
10. Spend an afternoon at the Zoo with a notepad to capture your ideas.

# Chapter 18

## Exploring an idea

*“Creativeness often consists of merely turning up what is already there. Did you know that the right and left shoes were thought up only a little more than a century ago?”*

*Bernice Fitz-Gibbon*

Getting creative about a subject.

1. Teach it!
2. Start writing a book on it!
3. Schedule yourself to give a talk on it.
4. Chair a discussion group on the topic.
5. Attend related seminars and talk privately with each presenter.
6. Dedicate an evening to explore the topic on the web. Get into a chat group.
7. Phone five people who are experts on the subject and ask open questions. Listen!
8. Take the opposite position to what you believe and have a good argument with yourself.
9. Think bigger than, smaller than, the opposite of.
10. Climb outside your paradigm. (If you are not familiar with paradigms then get familiar with them.) Take a giant leap.

## Chapter 19

# Capturing Ideas

*“While the spoken word can travel faster, you can't  
take it home in your hand.  
Only the written word can be absorbed wholly at the  
convenience of the reader.  
Kingman Brewster, Jr.*

**Great ideas have the habit of coming and going. They just pop into your head when you least expect them and if you fail to capture them right away then they flee.**

**I had a friend who was a writer and he kept his vivacious blonde secretary next to him all night long just in case he got an idea in the middle of the night. That is what he told me.**

**I keep a note pad on the light stand next to my bed. It is much less complicated. I don't have to feed it.**

**My mind is an incubator. I put a lot of stuff in there and it has a little mulling device. It mulls ideas and every now and then it spits a new idea out for me to capture. If I ignore the idea then it quickly vanishes and I must wait for another idea to appear. Time and again an idea has come to me in the middle of the night. A great idea. An exciting idea. Just the answer I had been seeking and I have said to myself. “I'll remember that. I don't have to write it down.” And do you know what happened? The next morning I went just about out of my mind trying to remember that idea. Write it down immediately.**

**I start out each day with great expectations. I expect to get new ideas throughout the day and I carry a yellow pad around with me all the time. For special events I might make a compromise and put the pad aside but I always tear off a few sheets and have them in my pocket for an idea emergency.**

**I've learned that the mere act of expecting ideas to come doubles and triples the number of ideas that show up.**

**It is good to let your mind know in advance what you'd like it to produce. In my early writing career I used to actually talk to my subconscious mind. When I ran into a block in a certain project I would tell my mind what the challenge was and also that I expected to sit down at my typewriter the following morning and pound out the solution to my dilemma. Quite often, when writing fiction, I have gone to my typewriter first thing in the morning and, without really consciously giving it any thought, typed out the completion of a story. My mind had worked on the story while I was sleeping, not even consciously thinking about the tale and, as I requested, delivered the rest of the story through my flying fingers onto the paper.**

**In Spain I wrote my book Mentor—Secrets of the Ages without giving it any conscious thought. The tale just flowed through my hand onto the yellow pads I was carrying. Now this might sound a little spooky and I am not asking you to believe it. I cannot explain it. The book isn't written in my style of writing.**

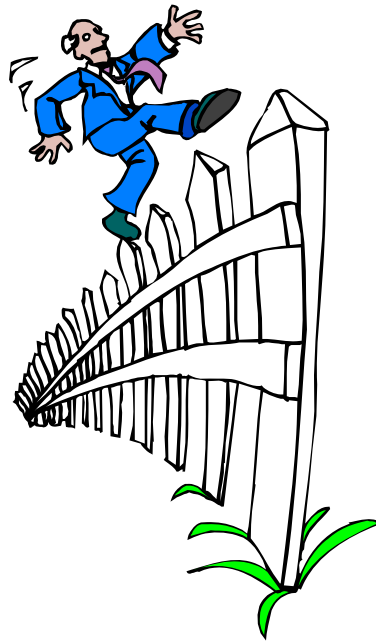
**I was sitting in a railroad depot in Madrid rather upset with my daughter because she had not purchased our train tickets beforehand, and it was getting to be train time and she was still in this long line. I just pulled out a yellow pad to try to take my mind off my frustration and I wrote the first words of the book.**

**I try hard not to fight my imagination. If it tells me something I try to write it down. Sometimes it ends up in the wastebasket; but often I find a use for the idea, perhaps not then but later.**

**I find that the more I work with my imagination the better it works. My special lady's grand-children have concluded that I am a horrible liar because I like to tell them stories that just fly off the top of my head. It is fun but when I tell them the absolute truth I find that my credibility has suffered a severe blow.**

**Just the same, allowing my creativity and my imagination to work in that manner frees it up to work in other areas such as songwriting, creating humor and such.**

**Here's an exercise you might try. Read something out loud and as you do, change the words and the ideas of the article or story you are reading. Try to make the meaning of what you are reading the opposite of what it says.**



## Chapter 20

# Travel and Creativity

*“God provides the wind, but man must raise the sails”*  
*—Saint Augustine*

They say that travel broadens one. Maybe that is why I avoid scales when I first return from a trip to a foreign country or such. But the kind of broadening I was thinking about was the stretching of the mind and the imagination.

In 1950 I was inducted into the United States Army and within a few months I found myself first passing through Camp Drake in Yokohama, Japan and then a few days later at Inchon, Korea. It was a life changing adventure. I was nearly killed by mortar fire while attacking a communist held hill and soon flown to Kobe, Japan on a litter.

I wrote a book of fiction using much of what happened and then added to the facts my wild imagination.

Just last week I was writing a blues number and I started wondering where I got my background in blues. Before I went overseas I used to visit some Jazz clubs in Detroit and before that I visited the Paradise Theatre there and had the joy of hearing most of the great bands of the 40's. Count Basie, Duke Ellington, Lionel Hampton, Louis Armstrong, and if I included the big swing bands I could name a dozen more.

But I believe I really got the feeling for the blues as I walked guard duty some lonely evenings in Korea and Japan. I used to sing the blues and I felt them deep down inside my gut. I was homesick, lonely, miserable, afraid, all of those feelings that are coming out in the blues songs that I write today. Somehow I got in touch with my feelings that way.

Then in the late 50's and 60's I lucked into free airline passes to Europe and I made a trip abroad either with my wife or

**with my children nearly every year. I also had a fist full of railroad passes and we would just sort of bum around Europe seeing everything we could and trying to travel in Europe on \$10 a day. It was a real adventure and my big challenge each year was to write and sell an article about the trip for some magazine to pay for all of our expenses.**

**At that point of my life my imagination was soaring and I would often come home from a trip with a new children's book manuscript or a new inspirational book or short story.**

**When I visited a special art museum or a cathedral or perhaps attended a concert I would feel as if my creative forces were being rejuvenated and on my return home my output would be amazing even to me.**

**Just think of all of the creative Americans who did their best work abroad. See if you can name a dozen authors and artists that fit into this category.**

**Try a trip yourself and make it a habit to give yourself some all-alone time each day. Wander the streets and listen to the foreign languages. Use your eyes, ears, nose, fingers...let the new sights and smells and sounds invade your subconscious mind.**

**One warning though. Avoid the organized tours. (As long as your arthritic knees allow.) Stay away from the big Americanized hotels. Find a B&B to stay in. Buy a guidebook and find your own way around. Try to avoid as many Americans as possible. Ride the subways and busses. If you eat at a McDonalds or such then set up some sort of self-punishment. Eat where the natives eat and if you can't order verbally then point.**

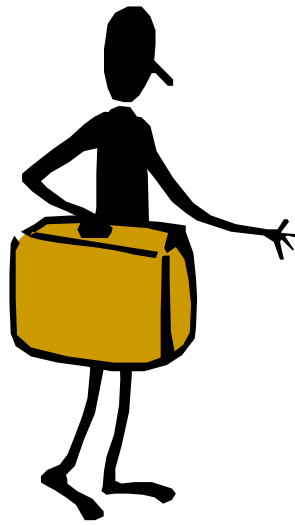
**I believe in education by osmosis. That is by letting things just sort of soak into my system. Touch things. Taste them. Take a good whiff. Hum along. Examine everything closely and in your own mind try to describe what you find.**



**Remember, you may not pass this way again. Take it all in. Enjoy it all.**

**After my first trip to Europe I came home with a whole new outlook at life. It helped me think bigger, better, different.**

**Give yourself a great trip abroad. You deserve it.**



# Chapter 21

## The Fear of Failure

*“When in doubt, make a fool of yourself. There is a microscopically thin line between being brilliantly creative and acting like the most gigantic idiot on earth. So what the hell, leap.”*

*Cynthia Heimel*

See if you can finish this statement without peeking...

**“Anything worth doing is worth doing  
\_\_\_\_\_.”**

Did you peek for the answer? You didn't want to answer incorrectly did you? You wanted to answer correctly on the first attempt and the fact that the correct answer is probably contained in this or the next paragraph has just been an incentive for you to peek.

OK, I will give you the answer. “Anything worth doing is worth doing wrong.”

Did I throw your sense of balance off just now? Aren't you positive right now that the correct answer is this, “Anything worth doing is worth doing right.” Well, you are absolutely right that that is what most people believe the answer should be. But if you are really into creativity then the other answer should be obvious to you.

Anything worth doing is worth doing wrong. If you did it right and everybody else is doing it right then who needs you around to do the same thing the others are already doing? Imagine applying for a job and telling the interview person, “I can do anything the same way everybody else is doing it. I won't rock the boat.”

**That would have stood you in good stead years ago but today businesses are in a rapid, constant state of change and they are starving for new ideas they can implement.**

**Besides, the statement is not all that hot to begin with. What did you ever do that was worth doing that you did right the first time? Maybe you were one of those rare specimens that popped out of the womb and started walking. Is that true?**

**Of course not. You just lay there and kicked for a while. Then in time you tried to crawl. You probably failed at that for a bit and then you crawled successfully. And what about walking? Just think of how many times you fell down before you actually walked.**

**And what about talking? Did you ever listen to a baby talk before they learned such things as words? It is marvelous how a baby can ad lib. Then after a while they say something that sounds like gibberish to most people but proud parents are sure the baby is saying, mama or daddy. It depends on which one is doing the listening.**

**Most everything that you and I have done that is truly worthwhile came after a round of failure. If it wasn't difficult then everyone could do it and then it wouldn't be all that special, perhaps.**

**“What about sex?” You might ask. Well if we were really truthful then we might admit that we weren't all that great at that either when we started out practicing.**

**And remember, practice makes perfect so I guess we better just keep on practicin'.**

**Now if we can accept the concept of “Anything worth doing is worth doing wrong,” can you see the freedom that it gives us? We can try all kinds of new things, take all sorts of new risks and if we fail then it is OK. I'm not suggesting that we make a**

**habit out of failing but I do suggest that we try new things and that we should give ourselves permission to fail.**

**Persistence is what often makes a series of failures into a parade of triumphs.**

**At one time Babe Ruth held the record for hitting home runs and at that same time he held the record for strikeouts.**

**Adolph Hitler could have conquered Great Britain and quite possibly won World War II if Winston Churchill had not been so darn persistent. In one speech he said simply, “Never, never, never, never, never, never, never give up.” And he didn’t.**

**Creativity demands persistence. It also requires that we move on from failure with greater determination and commitment. If you have a new idea you will be required to crawl over an awful lot of naysayers if you hope to make your idea work.**

**I’m in the process of customizing a presentation for a client and they have requested that I include in my talk the request that they “challenge the process.” For the first time in some industries top management is acknowledging the fact that they can no longer grow and compete by doing things the way they have for centuries. Nothing is sacred. Everything is being questioned. These are exciting and can be rewarding times for the creative.**

**Anything worth doing is worth doing wrong. So go ahead and fail and then get on with it. The right way will come to you in time if you persist.**

**Persist!**

## Chapter 22

# Hitchhiking

*“Creativity represents a miraculous coming together of the uninhibited energy of the child with its apparent opposite and enemy—the sense of order imposed on the disciplined adult intelligence.”*

*Norman Podhoretz*

Did you ever hitch a ride? Catching a ride on a passing vehicle is a practice that probably goes back several centuries. When I was a kid I hitched many a ride without spoiling my reputation. Today it is frowned on because there are a lot of nuts out there right now and they say that it is not a safe practice any longer. It is dangerous for the hitchhiker and for the driver who might be kind enough to pick up the rider.

The kind of hitchhiking I want to discuss is not done with the thumb. I want to talk about mental hitchhiking. Latching onto someone else’s idea and taking it for a ride.

There is a big difference between hitchhiking on an idea and just stealing an idea. The first involved creativity. The second involves plagiarism.

Someone once said, “There is no such thing as a new idea.” I don’t like that quote. It sounds like something a know-it-all might say. Like something the same guy might say, “Oh, I thought of that before but didn’t say anything.”

Most inventions, most new ideas, come about from the combination of two or more other ideas. Sometimes two ideas come crashing together inside your mind and you have an exhilarating AHA experience. “Wow!” You might say. “I’ve got a new idea.”

**It really doesn't matter what you hitchhike on either. You might take a ride on something that has nothing to do with the field in which you are working. In fact, most really great breakthroughs come from outside a particular field where they apply.**

**I like to let my mind take a ride on a wide variety of subjects. They might not seem the least bit related to something I am working on but then, out of the blue, an idea will pop up and I might trace it to something else I have read or heard on an unrelated topic.**

**At this moment I have at least half a dozen books lying around this house in North Carolina and at my home in Michigan. When I wander through a bookstore or a discount store I often pick up half a dozen books that catch my eye. I can't explain why they appealed to me. They run such a wide spectrum of topics that it makes no sense at all and yet, I get something from every book I open.**

**Sometimes I will hear a song that I like and I will borrow a line or two. I said, "borrow" not steal. Generally, that line I borrowed will not even show up in my song but certainly the idea will. I might even change the idea that started it all but if it wasn't for the original idea my imagination would not have started to work.**

**I was at a songwriter's concert at Border's Bookstore the other evening and seating was limited. My friend, Pete, called me over to meet some of his friends and I saw that there were three seats open and I asked him if they were taken. He said, "If you get up here you lose your seat. Just take one." It started me thinking about the fact that I had just read an announcement that Xerox would be cutting 5,200 jobs.**

**Then I hitchhiked on the ideas and came up with the idea that in today's business climate if you get up from your desk you cannot be sure that it will be there for you the next day. You can leave a little sign on the desk with your name on it but that is no**

**guarantee. Tomorrow not only might your desk be gone but the hundreds of desks around you might be gone too.**

**It is not yet a song. It is an idea. It is a couple of things that came together in the form of a quiet aha! in the back of my mind.**

**I'm not certain that I will work on that idea. I have a few thousand more written down and stored at various locations. That is the way it is with ideas, if you are open to them then you will find them everywhere.**

**Mental hitchhiking is invigorating. Take an idea, add another and discover that one plus one is often not just two. It can be eleven or any number you care to name. That is the magic of synergism and of creativity.**

**Have a hitchhike on me. Take any idea you have found in this book and take a little walk with it. Add an idea of your own or even someone else's idea. It doesn't matter where ideas come from. Put them together and AHA! You will soon have an idea of your own.**

**Have a nice ride.**



## Chapter 23

# Competition and Creativity

*“It hinders the creative work of the mind if the intellect examines too closely the ideas as they pour in.”*

*Friedrich von Schiller*

I’m a natural born show off. Just give me the chance to show off my creativity in competition with someone else and the ideas will just come pouring out of me. And put me in competition with someone else who is really creative and the quality of my ideas will improve.

Don’t ask me to explain this. Just see if it works with you and your creativity.

There is a process called the Phillip’s Slip Technique, I believe. I suppose that someone named Phillip or some organization with Phillip in his or her name either came up with this approach or else claimed to have come up with it.

The meeting chair narrows a topic down to a manageable size and then gives all attendees a stack of slips of paper. Then a time limit is set and attendees are invited to write down as many ideas or suggestions as they can come up within that time.

Just seeing others writing down ideas seems to stimulate my imagination. I write like crazy, often having a hard time capturing all of the ideas I have on paper.

Then after the time is up, each participant is invited to read his or her ideas to the group.

Often different participants come up with the same ideas or ideas that are quite similar.

It is almost like a new source of energy to have the element of competition introduced to idea finding sessions.



**The person who gets the most ideas gets a reward.  
Nothing much but some token of being the winner.**

**Some people will, by nature, kill for a ballpoint pen.**

**Competition!**

## **Chapter 24**

### **Stick ‘Em Up!**

*“For me, insanity is super sanity. The normal is psychotic.  
Normal means lack of imagination, lack of creativity.”  
Jean Dubuffet*

I’m pretty sure you know what Post It Notes are. They are sheets of paper in a pad with some kind of stick-em on the back so you can stick the notes on things.

I’ve seen them in all sizes all the way down to about an inch square. But the ones I want to talk about are huge. They come on a pad that fits on a big flip chart you use at meetings.

They are really great when you are working at brainstorming or idea seeking.

A person is put in charge of writing all of the great ideas that people come up with and then you just pull the sheets off the pad and hang them up all over the room.

If some of the ideas look like winners then all of those sheets hanging around the room give you a real sense of accomplishment and can serve as an incentive to continue and come up with more and even better ideas to be put on display.

If some of those ideas on the wall are yours there is a certain feeling of pride too.

There, now the next time somebody says, “Stick it up!” regarding one of your creative ideas it should have a whole new meaning.

## Chapter 25

# The Idea Wall

*“It is the function of creative men to perceive the relations between thoughts, or things, or forms of expression that may seem utterly different, and to be able to combine them into some new forms -- the power to connect the seemingly unconnected.*

*William Plomer*

At one of the plants I visited they had what they called their Idea Wall. Anyone seeking a solution to a problem could hang a description of his or her problem on that wall and any other visitor to the wall was invited to write out a suggestion or a solution.

No need to give your name for the problem or the solution. It was open to all. A janitor might come up with a suggestion or the president of the organization could put his or her two cents in. Or if they felt like it the top dogs could hang up their note too calling for some help on an idea.

No ownership. No credit. Just the good feeling of helping a fellow thinker on the journey to a new solution.

Why not set up your own idea center? Try it out. The folks that had the wall claim that it is used daily and a source of some really great solutions.

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## Chapter 26

# Transmutation

*“I can always be distracted by love, but eventually I get horny for my creativity.”*

*Gilda Radner*

In his book titled *Think and Grow Rich*, author Napoleon Hill talks about transmutation of the sex drive. He claims that an active sex life diminishes our imagination and creativity.

I suppose a case might be made for that idea. Many of our great artists, composers and authors are reported to have had little luck at romance. Of course, on the other hand, many of our greatest artists, composers and authors are reported to have been real rounders.

Hill talks about what he calls Transmutation of the Sex Drive. He claims that long periods of abstinence are beneficial to both the soul and the mind.

Now I was really impressed with some of the ideas in Hill's book and so I set out to check this concept for myself. At one time I went for a period of twenty-three days to see if it really worked. I failed to tell my wife about the experiment and while I was transmutin', she suspected that I was commutin' and we soon were disputin'.

I had a surge of creativity during this period and in addition to doing my regular job with the railroad, I managed to turn out a completed manuscript every day during that period and most of the work sold to magazines.

I would not recommend the practice. There are a number of other ways to improve your creativity that are less demanding.

## **Chapter 27**

### **Drill Team**

*“Man, the living creature, the creating individual, is always more important than any established style or system.”*

*Bruce Lee*

The following is an excerpt from my book titled **Selling Lucky**. It is an example of a creative mind in crisis. Most truly creative people have a real problem with regimentation, at least I sure did. This chapter was titled “Get Out Of Step.” We’ll skip the go in and get on with it.

After a couple of months in the hospital I reported to my old company, ...Able Company, First Battalion, Seventh Regiment...and I was assigned back to my rifle squad. Only things had changed. We had all new people in our outfit. What they had done is activate the Tennessee National Guard and our outfit was just loaded with young, inexperienced kids who were just loaded with rank. We had a Sergeant Major...a Sergeant Major...that’s the old Army Guy who is loaded with experience and really runs things. Our Sergeant Major was a kid nineteen years old who had never seen action except in the back of a bar one night in Tennessee.

A bunch of National Guard kids running around with stripes all over their arms. We found out that most of these kids had made their rank in the Cub Scouts and then when they joined the Guard they let them keep it.

It was awful. All of the privates had tasted months of bitter combat, and because of all of the fighting and confusion, none had been promoted, and here we were being led by a lot of kids who knew nothing but playing field maneuvers on weekends in the woods back home.

And then to make matters worse, the Army picked our unit to attempt a new style of integration. They had split up

the all black units in the Army and were attempting to assign the black non-commissioned officers to units throughout the Army. Just happened, our platoon landed a Staff Sergeant by the name of Sergeant Crass. And he had a dream. And his dream was to turn us into the best drill team in the Far East Command.

Now any of you who has ever done any kind of drilling knows that the only way to get to be the best drill in the Far East Command is to drill and to drill and to drill.

Sergeant Crass had us out there marchin'...marchin'...marchin'. He had us marchin' day and night.

Now most of us just weren't natural born marchers. I mean the sun for us didn't really set on the spirit of Hup, Hope, Hip, Four. In fact, it wasn't too long until we were all pretty darned bored with the whole thing.

Now when Sergeant Crass saw we were losin' interest he introduced us to what they call "The Jodie Cadences." Maybe you've heard them. Maybe you've heard different ones than I'm gonna tell you about. But the Jodie Cadences are a kind of a chant and the Sergeant would call out these rhymes and we would march in time to them and learn some replies that we shouted together. They went something like this.

Hey, ain't no use in goin' home

Old Jodie's got your gal and gone.

Ain't no use in goin' back,

Cause Jodie's stole your Cadillac.

So sound off!

ONE, TWO!

**Once more!**

**THREE FOUR!**

**Cadence count!**

**ONE, TWO, THREE, FOUR**

**ONE TWO.....THREE FOUR.**

**You had a good home but you left.**

**YOU'RE RIGHT!**

**Jodie was there when you left.**

**YOU'RE RIGHT!**

**So sound off!**

**ONE TWO!**

**Once more!**

**THREE, FOUR**

**Goin' back home today,**

**YOU'RE RIGHT!**

**See my Moosamae,**

**YEAH! YEAH!**

**Far, far away from home,**

**THAT'S RIGHT!**

**Do you want to go?**

**YOU'RE RIGHT!**

**Then sound off!**

**ONE, TWO**

**Once more,**

**THREE FOUR**

**He had us out there drillin' and shoutin'...marchin'...marchin'...day and night....night and day...**

**And then he started getting fancy....He started callin' out stuff like**

**Double to the rear to the right flank march!  
Double to the rear to the left flank march!  
SQUAD...column left, left, DO IT!**

**AND WE DID IT!**

**It was horrible...hour after hour...marchin'...marchin'....marchin'...**

**And all of a sudden it dawned on me, "Fettig, you aren't doing your own thing.**

**Now all my life I've been preachin' about the importance of being an individual. About being yourself. About stepping out from the crowd and being unique, and there I was with everybody else doing...Your left...your left...your left.**

**Now in the Army they've got this thing they call The Change Step. All it is is a little skip. You just give a little skip and all of a sudden you're marchin' along by yourself.**



**And this old Sergeant had us out there for hours  
and he was goin', YOUR LEFT, YOUR LEFT...and I just  
gave a little skip and there I was marchin' to my own beat.**

**Well, he had a pretty good eye and right away he  
noticed that I'm not in step and so he yells, "Fettig, get in  
step! Fettig, get in step! YOUR LEFT! YOUR LEFT!"**

**And I just kept doing it my way and I was  
thinking', "That's right, Baby, that's right!"**

**And he looks right at me and he screams,  
"FETTIG, GET IN STEP!" And I just kept on ignoring  
him and doing my own thing.**

**Well, now this guy wasn't the dumbest thing that  
ever walked, so he takes a good deep breath and yells  
out..."Everybody but Fettig, CHANGE STEP MARCH!"  
And everybody but me gives this little skip and now all of a  
sudden we're all marchin' along together.**

**Only now they are doin' my thing. Now they are all  
marchin' to my drum. And you know, just then for a minute the  
Army wasn't such a horrible thing.**

**Sometimes, if you want to be you, it is necessary  
for you to skip. To get out of step.**

**Maybe Henry David Thoreau explained this best  
when he wrote, "Why should we be in such desperate haste  
to succeed and in such desperate enterprises? If a man  
does not keep pace with his companions, perhaps it is  
because he hears a different drummer. Let him step to the  
music which he hears, however measured or far away."**

**Creative people have the courage to step out.**

# Chapter 28

## Four Rules For Brainstorming

*“The more you reason the less you create.”*  
*Raymond Chandler*

In the field of advertising, creativity is king. And for many years Alex Osborn was the king of advertising in New York. A partner in the prestigious advertising firm B.B.D.& O., Alex made his home in Buffalo, New York and commuted by train weekly to New York City. If you can remember the forties then you will remember the advertising slogan that began with L.S.M.F.T. Can you remember it? It was one of the best-known advertising slogans of all time. “L. S. M. F. T. Lucky Strike Means Fine Tobacco.”

When the best tobaccos were used for cigarettes shipped to our fighting men overseas, Alex came up with the slogan Lucky Strike green has gone to war.

Working with his New York staff at the agency, Alex Osborn developed the process he named “Brainstorming.”

Brainstorming is a technique for generating ideas in a group. The key to the success of the process is the use of suspended judgment. Everyone takes a positive attitude toward all ideas that are offered. Excitement is one of the keys. An air of expectancy.

Here are four rules for having a successful brainstorming session.

1. Have a well-defined and clearly stated problem.
2. Assign someone to write down all the ideas as they occur.
3. Endeavor to find the right number of people for your session. This can be from two to ten. More than that seems to become a burden.

**4. Put someone in charge to help enforce the following guidelines.**

- Suspend judgment
- Every idea is accepted and recorded
- Encourage people to build on the ideas of others. (Hitchhiking)
- Encourage far-out and odd ideas
- Have fun

Remember, these sessions are to come up with ideas. Judging the ideas comes later and others might even do this. The key to a successful brainstorming session is to rid the room of negativity. If you find that an attendee tries to judge or criticize ideas then make sure that party is not invited to the next session. These sessions should be fun and challenging. Let the good ideas flow. Let your little kid out. Little kids are generally creative.



## Chapter 29

# Sammy Davis Jr.

*“Creativity is a method of progress. Conformity . . .  
maintains the status quo.”*

*Kimball Wiles*

Some time in 1947 I took my sister Florence to the Paradise Theatre in Detroit, Michigan and we saw Count Basie and his Orchestra. There were the regular singers with the Basie Band but there was also a special attraction. The Will Mastin Trio.

I'd never heard of the Trio before but the sign outside the theatre said, The Will Mastin Trio featuring Sammy Davis Jr. Will was Sammy's uncle and Sammy Davis Sr. made up the trio.

The trio came running onstage after an introduction and did a really great dance number. As I remember the act they each did tap dance solos and I can remember thinking that Sammy Davis Jr. was the greatest dancer who had ever lived.

Then Sammy did a series of imitations of famous movie stars. Jimmy Cagney, James Stewart, Edward G. Robinson and the usual characters that imitators did in those days. He was terrific. And then he did a song featuring the voices of the most popular stars of the day. Frank Sinatra, Billy Eckstein, Satchmo, Herb Jeffries and then I can still remember him calling out, “And now the voice of Sammy Davis Jr.” He sang the rest of the ballad in a really original voice. It seemed to be a combination of all of the other styles plus a lot more. Obviously Sammy had really studied the styles of all of the other singers and could do them as well as the original. He had been in show business with his dad all of his life and had worked with many of the top stars of the day.

Sammy had learned from the masters and then he had the good sense to step out and be an original.

**Sammy Davis Jr. is gone now but his original style can still be remembered in such songs as The Candy Man and such.**

**What does this have to do with creativity? It has to do with imitation. If it is art or music or whatever, most of the great ones have first learned what has been done before them and then they endeavor to take it one step further.**

**If you want to be really creative then find out what has been done before that worked. Find several sources and then mix and match and yes, copy. First do what the best in your field has done before and then see if you can tear it apart and find the magic ingredients.**

**In music they often ask an artist what other singers or composers or whatever influenced them in their early days. Usually the artist can name two or three other artists whose work they admired and possibly copied in the early stages.**

**Isaac Newton once said, "If I have seen further it is by standing on the shoulders of giants."**

**How do you keep from just being a poor copy of the original? You do it by taking things one step further.**

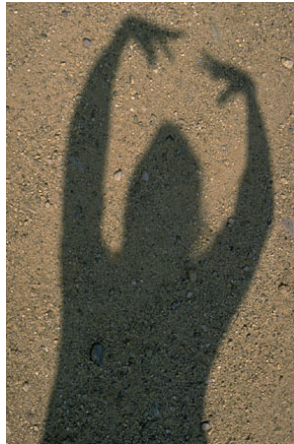
**Once in a while I run into something that is so wonderful I cannot resist it. I must capture the idea and make it my own. Certainly someone else had been using the idea and the temptation is to just lift it as it is. I have a rule that I have endeavored to follow throughout my career as an author and a speaker. That is, if I cannot convince myself that I have made a worthwhile, significant improvement on a piece of material then I leave it alone. If there is no way that I can rewrite something, mix it and match it with a new or different idea or approach then I cannot in good conscience use it.**

**Oh, I might take a quote and give credit for the quote but I am referring to a story or a process or such.**

**Imitation is said to be a form of flattery. That depends, I guess. I have found other speakers who have lifted a whole twelve minutes off of one of my tapes and used it in their speeches. Every word was the same. One speaker, I discovered, took a twelve-minute routine I had developed over a period of some ten years. It was a series of stories about naming our children. The thief talked about my children as if they were his. He used the same names; in fact, he used every word just as I had done it on tape.**

**When I asked him if he had children he said no. And then he added the final touch. When I asked him about the audience, he replied, “Oh, what the hell do they know?”**

**Imitation is flattering; plagiarism is the sign of an uncreative mind.**



## Chapter 30

# Leadership & Creativity

*While we have the gift of life, it seems to me the only tragedy is to allow part of us to die -- whether it is our spirit, our creativity or our glorious uniqueness*  
*Gilda Radner*

I'm sure it won't come as a shock to you to hear that creativity is more essential in leadership than ever before.

I know one railroad Superintendent who's only decision each day was whether to pass the buck up to his boss or down to his subordinate. His desk was like a switching operation. If the boss asked him something he would send it down to his Trainmasters to answer. If his Trainmasters asked him something it would be shuttled, without delay, to his boss for a decision.

Unfortunately he had a boss who let him get away with it and he had a couple of Trainmasters who were bucking for his job in the hope that he would be either found out or promoted. They were right. He got promoted to headquarters where he became a professional Yes Man. His new duties called for him to run behind his new boss some 4 paces and whenever the new boss said anything he would call out, "Yes Boss. Yes Boss. You are absolutely right Boss."

Now you might believe that this particular Superintendent was a sort of a creative genius. When he worked in our area his work was done by 10 A.M. and he spent a lot of the rest of the days out of the office with his very attractive secretary. She was married to one of the clerks in the office and I don't know just what she told her husband about her out of office missions but,

fortunately, he died soon after this started. A few years later after he had been transferred to headquarters and arranged a nice job for her there too, in a moment of weakness, he married the lady.

With all of the downsizing that has occurred in the past decade, his former job has been abolished. In fact, 90% of the jobs in the area have been abolished and the home office now runs things. The character I am talking about finally retired with a nice pension and lived happily ever after with his former secretary.

The only reason that I am passing on all of this gossip is to tell you what might have happened in large corporations in what might be called “The Good Old Days.” Offices were full of paper pushers who pushed decisions up the ladder or down the ladder and if you turned in a creative idea it was generally doomed to a slow death getting lost or declined in the shuffle.

Today, corporations are begging for creative ideas that will save time, money and needless work. The managers who remain are in a constant battle to improve their firm’s bottom line and thus insure his own job security.

Ideas. Ideas. Ideas. Create them, steal them, revise them, and reinstate them. Whatever. But please, please, please, everybody, bring us some ideas that will make us quicker, smarter, better in every way.

There is a great opening for ideas today. Find your own way to share them.





## Chapter 31

### Let It Flow

*“It is the creative potential itself in human beings that is the image of God.”*

*Mary Daly*

If you studied ancient Greek as a foreign language in college you might have learned that when a performer turned in a particularly fine performance and was congratulated for it, the performer’s attitude was that it wasn’t really he who had done well, it was the Muse flowing through him. He was just a channel—it was the Muse that had done well.

When my mother died several years ago I attended a service the night before the funeral. An old, old nun sang the Ave Marie and it was the most beautiful rendition of that song I have ever heard. When I went to congratulate her she simply said, “Praise the Lord.”

I think she was expressing in her own way exactly what the Greek performers were saying.

Later I had a great visit with that old nun and she shared her experiences with me. “Whenever I am asked to sing in a large cathedral I am overwhelmed by the size of the church.” She laughed, “I have a tiny, tiny voice and often they have no sound systems to use. I look out at that huge area and I know that I cannot possibly fill that church with my voice and yet, when I sing, the church is filled with my song. I couldn’t possibly do that myself,” she explained. “I am but a channel of the Lord. Praise the Lord.”

From my own experiences as a speaker I know exactly what she was saying. For instance, on one occasion at Lansing, Michigan, I was the luncheon speaker for a school counselors association. The teachers from grades K-12 had each invited their prize student and that student’s parents. In addition, the head

table was filled with the Michigan Board of Education members. Most of them had PhD's and when the President of the Board addressed the audience before me she talked for just a few moments and it was a disaster.

Before I went on I looked out at that audience. What a challenge. Students of every age. Proud parents. A highly educated panel at the head table. I took my hand mike and a deep, deep breath and went out to face the challenge.

Following my talk, the President of the Board came up and we talked. "Mr. Fettig, maybe you can explain what happened just now. I have had the honor of watching you before but this time I was up on stage at the head table and you were down on the floor with the audience. I had an opportunity to see every face in the audience as you spoke." She smiled a faint smile. "I had already faced that audience and it was a horrible experience. In just a few minutes I had lost every one of them. The children started playing, the parents started talking to one another, reading newspapers, nodding off. And I have been told that I am an excellent speaker. I watched and you held every member of that audience spellbound for forty-five minutes. I watched the head table too and you had them enchanted. How did you do it?"

I explained that after her experience with the audience, I went back behind the stage and prayed for a miracle. Sometimes that is what it takes to get through to a particular audience and that is what I got that day.

There are times when I am out in front of thousands of people and a whole new idea will come to me and I will just go with the flow and it sometimes turns out to be the very best segment of my talk. Or it might be an ad-lib bit of humor.

Most comedians will admit that their ad-libs are really bits of rehearsed material that they were able to call in from their memories at the appropriate time. They have a joke file and when the occasion arises for something from that file their memory pulls up the bit and they do it as if they have just created it.

**In most of my talks I customize my talk to fit that particular audience. I listen to the other speakers, especially their CEO's or Presidents, or their Union officials. If possible I might quote them and then tie in something from my own material file that has been in a constant state of improvement for over a quarter of a century.**

**So often the folks who hire me and other attendees feel that my presentation was created just for them and that moment because it was 100% on target. Most of the time someone had heard me speak before and that is why I got the assignment. I was often already talking their language and my message was one they wanted to or felt they should hear.**

**It just takes a little more time and effort to be really creative. You have to make it your mission and, oh yes, you have to get your big, fat ego out of the way too because it will often block out any help you might get from the Muse or the Holy Spirit or from whatever source you get your special inspiration.**



## Chapter 32

# Success Breeds Success

*“Creativity is not the finding of a thing, but the making something out of it after it is found.”*

*James Russell Lowell*

Platitudes, platitudes, platitudes. Why do I keep calling on platitudes to do my work for me? Have you noticed how popular quote books have become? Just about a year ago a publisher asked if I would knock out two or three books of quotes for her.

I would imagine that by now she no longer needs an author to crank out her little quote books. By now she no doubt has all of the world’s great quotes in her computer and she can merely call up a subject and the computer will cough out her latest book.

One thing I’ve learned is that if you look far and long enough you can find a quote or a proverb to back you up on almost any stand.

Here are a few contradicting proverbs that might amuse you.

He who hesitates is lost. vs. Look before you leap.

Birds of a feather flock together. vs. Opposites attract.

You’re never too old to learn. vs. You can’t teach an old dog new tricks.

Ask no questions and hear no lies. vs. Ask and you shall receive.

Variety is the spice of life. vs. Don’t changes horses in midstream.

**Doubt is the beginning, not the end of wisdom. vs. Faith will move mountains.**

**The pen is mightier than the sword. vs. Actions speak louder than words.**

**Don't cross the bridge 'til you come to it. vs. Forewarned is forearmed.**

**Silence is golden. vs. The squeaky wheel gets the grease.**

**Clothes make the man. vs. Never judge a book by its cover.**

**And finally,**

**The best things come in small packages. vs. The bigger the better.**

**The next time someone throws a platitude, a quote or a proverb at you to make a point then put your creativity to work. Find one that will take an opposite stand.**

# **Platitudes**

## Chapter 33

# Five Sensing

*“Let us be about setting high standards for life, love, creativity, and wisdom. If our expectations in these areas are low, we are not likely to experience wellness. Setting high standards makes every day and every decade worth looking forward to.”*

*Greg Anderson*

**Want to expand your viewpoint? Try bringing your five senses into your creative approach to things. Use your good senses. What are you trying to create? What problem are you trying to solve? What would you like to improve?**

**See it. Take a really good look at what you are working with. View it from every angle. Take it apart and put it back together and observe how everything fits together. Using the sense of sight is an essential part of creativity. Picture it in your mind as it might be.**

**Smell it. Take a good whiff. What does it smell like? Can you relate it to some other smell in your past? Close your eyes and just smell and take your time about it. Let your mind run free.**

**Listen to it. Does it have a sound? What are the other sounds around it? Have you heard that before? Is it too loud? Should you find a way to make it quiet down?**

**Touch it. Run your fingers over it. Again close your eyes and your ears and just concentrate on how it feels to your fingers. You might rub it on your face. Note every detail and spend some time just touching it. Is it appealing? Should it be changed?**

**Taste it. Now I am not familiar with just what you are working on but the sense of taste is just a part of this five sensing process and you should try it all. Ever watch a little kid at play with a new toy. First thing they do is put it in their mouth. Hmmm. It tastes just like my rattle, or my bib or my Mom.**

**You've got five good senses and when you are seeking to improve your creative imagination they will serve you well.**

**Once again, the mind works on the information that you feed it. Put as much information on a subject as you can in your mental computer and you'll be that much better off you are when you seek solutions.**

**Next time you try to write a description of anything put your five senses to work and use those senses in your writing.**

**Five sensing is just one more way to look at something from a slightly different point of view. The more the merrier.**

**Finally, engage your sixth sense—your sense of humor. Approach your challenge with a playful attitude. It could add a whole new dimension.**



## **Chapter 34**

### **Brain Dead**

*“No matter how old you get, if you can keep the desire to be creative, you're keeping the man-child alive.”*

*John Cassavet*

**Do you want a sure way to become brain dead in a hurry? If so, then just repeat after me. “I’ve only got two years to go and I’m out of here.”**

**I’ve actually heard brain dead workers in federal offices say, “I’ve only got ten more years to go and then I’m out of here.”**

**They have already put their brains in retirement and they are just hanging on for a free ride until they can cash in on their retirement programs.**

**They are the people who came up with that ridiculous slogan, T.G.I.F. Thank God It’s Friday. Any day that had work connected with it is a sad day. A reason for mourning.**

**All my life I have been a T.G.I.M. type. Thank God it’s Monday and I have a job to go to.**

**Fire any one of these people and after a parade of hearings where they will lie and defend their incompetence, many of them will go out and find a job that excites them and really become professional in a different endeavor. They have the potential but the system has rendered them brain dead.**

**How do you avoid this happening to you if you happen to work for an agency of the government or some other such organization?**

**If you are really ambitious and creative I would suggest that you run, not walk, to the nearest exit and keep on going. Don’t waste your life feeling unhappy. Your chances of really**



**soaring with your imagination and your creativity are just about zero. Freedom of expression is limited to sending anonymous notes to your congressional representative and mailing them from a foreign post office.**

**Now I don't want to just get nasty with government jobs. There are thousands of organizations that might fit into the very same category. I found that the railroad industry patterned itself on the government. My dealings with certain railroad people in the past five years has convinced me that everything is still just coming out of the stone age. Frankly I don't think most railroads will make it out of that era.**

**More and more mergers are cutting more and more jobs but my observation is that instead of getting better in providing national rail service it is getting worse by leaps and bounds.**

**If you are creative, really creative, then put all of your creative energy to work in finding a job that will challenge your imagination every day. There is a great deal of money to be made by creative, innovative, hard working, persistent people and just maybe you are one of them. If so, get out of that rut you are in today. Don't let the world catch you sitting behind a desk with that glassy eyed look saying, "I only have six years to go and I'm out of here." Better yet to be so excited and involved in your work that you don't even know what day it is and you don't care. All you know is that you are really living at that moment that day and your creative juices are flowing.**

**There is joy, there is excitement, there is a feeling of being worthwhile and of importance when you discover ways to use your creativity and watch it grow.**

**If you are reading this book then it is a pretty good indication that you have a special talent and you are seeking ways to make it work for you. Get on with it!**

## Chapter 35

# Creative Happenings

*“The brain is a wonderful organ; it starts the moment you get up in the morning and does not stop until you get to the office.”*

*Robert Frost*

**If you usually pull into the driveway try backing in.**

**Take a different route to the supermarket. Shop in aisles you’ve never visited before and buy some foods you’ve never tasted.**

**This week visit a restaurant you’ve never been to and try something you’ve never had before.**

**On your way home pull off the highway and get yourself a double dip ice cream cone. A flavor you’ve watched others eat but never tried yourself. If it spoils your appetite all the better.**

**If you are in business, phone your office, use a disguised voice and see how other people are treated.**

**Get a different haircut.**

**Buy a weird tie and wear it.**

**Forget the elevator. Take the stairs and see whom you run into.**

**Say “Hello” to everyone you see today. Watch their reactions.**

**Use a different bathroom and think of something clever to write on the walls.**

**Try walking barefoot outside.**

**Wear socks that don't match.**

**Kiss your wife like you were back in high school.**

**Allow yourself to look different, act different, and be different.**

**Be cool! Be cool!**

**Go Fishin'**



## Chapter 36

# Thomas Edison

*“Everything comes to him who hustles while he waits.”*  
*Thomas Edison*

In 1877 Thomas Edison started out to create an electric lamp. He went at it with a passion and within a year he had performed 1,200 experiments. Then finally, in 1879, after spending some \$40,000, he made a bulb using a carbonized cotton thread for a filament. The bulb burned for two days. Then later he used carbonized cardboard and finally, carbonized bamboo. The bamboo model proved to be the first economically feasible incandescent light bulb.

Always the showman aware of the importance of publicity, his bulbs were first installed on the steamship “Columbia” and later in a New York City factory.

At the time of his death in 1931, he held 1,033 patents including the phonograph and the movie projector.

As a boy, Edison worked as a news butcher selling candy and newspapers on the Grand Trunk Railroad between Port Huron and Detroit. He discovered the Detroit Public Library in his off time and soon read his way through the entire collection of books.

Although he had only a few years of formal schooling, school was really never out for this remarkable man. He was still learning up to the time of his death.

What might we learn from this creative thinker? First, he was persistent. When working on a battery he had some 10,000 failures before he finally found what he was seeking. He surrounded himself with the best minds he could find and got them together to work on his experiments. He invested in discovery. His way was not like the engineers he employed.

**Edison's way was to try everything and then figure out what worked best. Time and time again he was able to blunder through with discoveries that the engineers and scientists could not come up with.**

**One of his most famous quotes was "Success is 1% inspiration and 99% perspiration."**

**Edison often proved that ideas without action were useless. Time and time again he took his inventions and spent years making them work. He wired the city of New York working around the clock for years just making the light bulb a reality for millions.**

**The next time you come up with a great idea then stick with it and start in selling the idea to others. Help implement the idea. Unless you have the passion to see it through then the idea will probably die with you.**

*"What we call 'creative work' ought not to be called work at all, because it isn't...I imagine that Thomas Edison never did a day's work in the last fifty years."*

*Stephen Leacock*

*Note: These biographical meanderings are meant as just a stepping-stone for you.*

*Visit your internet and under search just call up the names of these creative pioneers.*



## Chapter 37

# Albert Einstein

*“God may be sophisticated, but He is not malicious.”*  
*Albert Einstein*

Although he is best remembered as the man who made the atom bomb possible, Albert Einstein was a pacifist. His greatest regret was that in 1939, fearful of the world where only Hitler would have an atom bomb, he signed a letter encouraging President Roosevelt to go ahead with the project that ultimately led to that first atomic bomb dropped on Japan.

A simple, humble man, he worked more like an artist than a scientist, not arriving at a theory so much by experimental deduction but confidently by intuition.

He believed that if you could set up a theory that was really beautiful in its simplicity and generality then there was a good chance that this theory would turn out to be correct.

Einstein encouraged others to follow their intuition.

Obviously, he was unafraid of time and would work for years on an idea, far beyond that which most men would strive.

He developed an indifference to material things. He once said, “Each possession is a stone tied around my neck.”

Born in Ulm, Germany, March 14, 1879, he is best known as the creator of the Theory of Relativity. In 1921 he received the Nobel Prize for his theory of Photoelectric Effect.

After a series of business reverses, his family moved to Italy, and Albert seized the opportunity to become a “high school dropout.” When he finally decided to go back to school he had to make up courses before he could begin college-level studies.

**He graduated from the Polytechnic Institute of Zurich, Switzerland in 1900 and then worked for many years at the Swiss Patent Office.**

**He spent a year at the German University of Prague and then two more years at Zurich Polytechnic after which he settled in Berlin in 1914 as professor at the university and later director of the new Kaiser Wilhelm Institute of Physics.**

**In 1933, while Einstein was visiting England and the United States, the Nazi government of Germany took his property and deprived him of his position and his citizenship. Einstein then moved permanently to the United States where he became a member of the newly created Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton, New Jersey.**

**One of the interesting things to me is that Einstein did not show any signs of genius while in school. He appeared to have a tough time with languages and resented the discipline exerted in German schools. It was while he was working in a Patent Office that he wrote his most important papers and they went on to change our whole world. He was not yet twenty-seven years old then.**

**To me this indicates that he had this genius inside him and it could not find a way for expression in the regular school environment. It is sort of staggering to learn that creativity takes such a beating in many school environments. Who knows what genius has been beaten down into submission, never to show its unusual head again?**

*Note: These biographical meanderings are meant as just a stepping-stone for you.*

*Visit your internet and under search just call up the names of these creative pioneers.*

# **Chapter 38**

## **Ben Franklin**

*“A lonesome man on a rainy day who does not know how to read.”*  
*Benjamin Franklin*

I'm fascinated at how many different fields some creative minds seem to wander through. Ben Franklin is certainly a great example of a man who used his creative talents for the good of all humankind and he was forever open to new ideas.

As a boy he learned the printing trade. Being born in 1752, the third youngest of 17 children, he began his apprenticeship at a very early age. First he was a printer and then he began writing items for the newspaper he worked on. Then he published Poor Richard's Almanac. He often lived by the proverbs that he wrote, especially in regard to the need for a continuing education.

When others saw Ben Franklin out flying a kite with a key tied on the kite in a thunderstorm they often thought he was crazy but actually he was determining if lightning was electricity. When he had his answer then he invented the lightning rod.

He served as Philadelphia's postmaster and established the city's first lending library. Franklin treasured books and spent many evenings discussing their contents with similar minded friends. He established the fire department and founded the city's schools. Then he studied ocean currents, invented bifocal lenses and the Franklin stove.

Franklin helped draft the Declaration of Independence and then traveled to France where he persuaded the French to aid the Americans during the Revolutionary War. This accomplishment played a big role in the success of the revolution.

At the Constitutional Convention the big states wanted representation according to population while small states wanted



**equal representation for each state. Franklin proposed the solution which was two houses of Congress, one based on equal representation for each state and one based on population.**

**Franklin was a continuing student of human behavior and his autobiography is a great lesson of creativity in action.**

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*Visit your internet and under search just call up the names of these creative pioneers.*



## Chapter 39

# Leonardo da Vinci

*“I have offended God and mankind  
because my work did not reach the quality it should have.”  
The last words of Leonardo da Vinci*

Can you imagine feeling that you had offended God and mankind because your work did not reach the quality it should have? Whatta ya want anyway? This is the artist that painted the “Mona Lisa”, “The Adoration of the Magi”; the brilliant scientist, architect, inventor; the man who is credited with first imagining the helicopter, the machine gun. The list of Leonardo’s imaginative concepts goes on and on.

But what about this feeling of failure? Is it a part of the creative spirit? Can it be that Leonardo sort of summed it up for everyone involved in the creative process? Is good never enough?

I’ve had some creative partners in projects who refused to let go of something such as an audiovisual product until I literally ripped it out of their hands. One of my sound people could never satisfy his desire to improve a sound track. Generally we were working on deadlines and he preferred to just ignore them. And many times I had to go into the recording studio and pull the tape out of his hands because he refused to quit working on the product. He always wanted to make it just a little better.

I have read of a number of writers who have this same problem. Editors, publishers, agents, all have had to make dire threats and often physically tear the manuscript from the author’s hands so they could get to press with the work.

That old expression, “He had the good sense to let well enough alone” might be the kiss of death to all progress. Unless creative people continue to get the itch for improvement then this world would be a sorry place.

**“If it ain’t broke then don’t fix it,” is another expression that is a favorite of the status quo.**

**Can you imagine riding around in the first car, or the first airplane or working with the first computer?**

**What really boggles my mind is the rate of progress we are making in the field of information.**

**Somewhere I read a definition of hell. It said that hell would be when just before we die we are shown just what we might have accomplished with our opportunities and our talents. And then we are sent to some place where we can do no more.**

**I guess maybe that was what Leonardo was thinking about with his last words. Oh, the things I might have done if I just had a little more energy and a little more time because there is so much yet to be done.**

**One of the creations of Leonardo was a system of writing in Italian using a special kind of shorthand. People who study his notebooks have long been puzzled by something else, however. He usually used “mirror writing”, starting at the right side of the page and moving to the left. Only when he was writing something intended for others to see did he write in the normal direction. It was quite likely that even in Leonardo’s time there were those who would steal ideas if given the temptation. Leonardo’s mirror writing might have kept many of such thieves out of temptation.**

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*Visit your internet and under search just call up the names of these creative pioneers.*

## Chapter 40

# The Wright Brothers

*“The Wright Brothers flew through the smoke screen of impossibility.”*

*Dorothea Brande*

You’ve heard the expression “One small step for man, one giant step for mankind.” That was said by the first moonwalker but it would have been right on target out at Kitty Hawk the day the Wright Brothers first succeeded in flying. Orville who was at the controls on the initial flight flew just 120 feet for only 12 seconds. Then Wilbur took the plane up and it flew 195 feet. And now we have flown to the moon.

Like so many creative people, the Wright Brothers were at first moonlighters. They ran a successful bicycle shop and spent most of their earnings and spare time working on their dream of powered flight. It soon became an obsession and a passion.

And when they did succeed in flying there was the expense of patent attorneys and then a great deal of litigation to protect their patents. Politics also became an obstacle as they tried to sell their creation to the military.

One of the lessons to be learned from the Wrights and many other creative geniuses is this ---get a great patent lawyer. If you do your research you will find that most of those credited with the major breakthrough inventions always had a patent attorney by their side. Creating is one thing. Hanging on to that creation is a whole different thing.

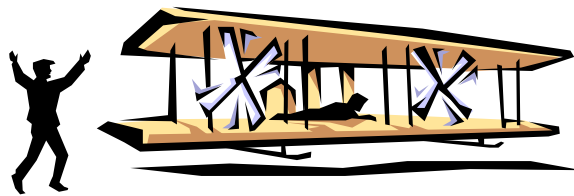
I’d encourage you to visit the site of those first flights at Kitty Hawk, North Carolina. As I walked the line of that first flight and then the second and the third I could not help but think of that saying, “The journey of a million miles begins with just one small step.”

*“Begin at the beginning... and go on till you come to the end: then stop.”*

*Adventures in Wonderland , Lewis Carroll*

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*Visit your internet and under search just call up the names of these creative pioneers.*



# Chapter 41

## Henry Ford

*“Whether you believe you can, or whether you believe you can’t, you’re absolutely right.”*

*Henry Ford*

In his lifetime, Henry Ford became one of the richest and most powerful men in America. What was the most important idea that led to his success? Building a simple automobile that people could afford. It might not sound like a world shaker right now but that idea was radical for its time. In the early twentieth century, automobiles were built only for the very rich.

When Henry Ford came up with the Model-T in 1909 he discovered that he could sell 11,000 of them in the first year.

Then his engineers developed the moving assembly line in order to mass-produce the Model T cars. The price—just \$300. And they came in wide range of colors just so long as you wanted black. By 1914 they were able to produce 248,000 Model T’s.

Ford had a revolutionary idea when it came to paying his workers. He paid them \$5 per day, far above the going rate of the day. His plan was to pay his workers enough so that they could enjoy the finer things in life, especially their own Model T.

Congress was persuaded to provide funds to build highways and the roadside businesses of restaurants, gas stations and motels thrived.

Should Henry Ford be included in a book about creativity? I’d say yes because he had the wisdom and the guts to follow through on great ideas. He was a pioneer in an idea that changed America forever.

Sure he was anti-Semitic. He fought brutal battles against organized labor. He fired any worker that he discovered owned a

**competitor's brand of automobile. He hired internal spies and had a plant protection force that was brutal and crude.**

**Just the same, if you want to look for a man who could take a revolutionary business idea and run it to a touchdown then Henry Ford is your man.**

*“The more you think, the more time you have.”  
Henry Ford*

*Note: These biographical meanderings are meant as just a stepping-stone for you.  
Visit your internet and under search just call up the names of these creative pioneers.*



## Chapter 42

# Creativity and Dreams

*“You’ve got to have a dream, if you don’t have a dream,  
how you goin’ to make that dream come true?”  
Bloody Mary in South Pacific*

We can discover references to dreams a number of places in the Bible. In Matthew 2-12 we find “And being warned of God in a dream that they should not return to Herod, they departed into their own country another way.”

There are a number of instances where creative breakthroughs were made from information received from dreams.

Kekule was inspired to understand that the molecular structure of benzene is shaped round, like a ring, after having a dream of a snake biting its tail. I’d call that a hitchhike.

Generally, dreams that produce answers come to those whose minds are seeking answers.

Elias Howe had a dream in 1844, which directly resulted in the creation of the first sewing machine. This dream-connected discovery initiated the Industrial Revolution.

As a teenager, Albert Einstein had a dream that gave him the idea for his Theory of Relativity. Years later he concluded that his entire scientific career was based on an extended meditation of that dream.

I believe that creative breakthroughs will come to us in many, many ways, including dreams, when we make our minds open to new ideas. We must prepare to capture ideas when they do come, because ideas are very elusive critters. They come quickly and often go away just as quickly. I’ve had great solutions come to me when I am sleeping and unless I get up and write them down



**then, I find, to my disappointment and utter frustration, that I cannot bring them back to mind if my life depended on it.**

**Now I must admit that some of those fantastic ideas that come to me in the middle of the night are not all that hot or sensible in the light of day. Nevertheless, I keep a pad and pen by my bedside just in case.**

**More and more I am coming to believe that information has a way of swirling around in my head and the more information that I feed into my mind on a particular subject, the better chance I have for coming up with something which is new and original.**



## **Chapter 43**

### **Some Thoughts on Creativity**

*“Creativity can be described as letting go of certainties.”*  
*Gail Sheehy*

**Some quotes from Art Fetting**

**“Just taking a fresh look at everything that comes  
your way.”**

**“Question. Always question.”**

**“When people tell you not to ask so many questions,  
chances are, they don’t know the answers.”**

**“Be unafraid of time.”**

**“Intuition is a major key to opening doors.”**

**“The free exchange of ideas is essential for  
a creative environment.”**

**“You can’t see forward when you are  
always looking over your shoulder.”**

**“Let science catch up with my theories,  
I’m moving ahead.”**

**“Follow your intuition, follow your heart.”**

**“Seek influence, not power. Change tomorrow.”**

**“Be open, be inquisitive, be passionate, and be daring.”**

**“Be brave enough to champion your ideas and wise enough to abandon them when you discover that they are wrong.”**

**“Ignore the Nay-Sayers”**

**“Surround yourself with great minds, great books and great music.”**

**“Set aside time to create.”**

**“Expect criticism. The more powerful the idea, the greater resistance to it.”**

**“When science catches up with your theories, it is best to be somewhere else, miles ahead.”**

**“Chase ideas, not dollars.”**



## Chapter 44

# The Creative Life

*“Success seems to be largely a matter  
of hanging on after others have let go.”*

*William Feather*

“How did you ever become so creative?” I have been asked that question a thousand times and I am always tempted to ask, “How did you ever become so unimaginative?”

I believe that the creative mind is a lot like every other muscle in your body. If you fail to use it and give it a good work out every day then it will become inoperative.

What if you failed to walk for a year or two. Just stayed in bed or on a chair and let people carry you around. Do you believe that you would be able to just decide one day that you would go for a ten mile hike and then do it? Probably not. I suspect that your legs would not hold you up if you haven't used them for a year or two.

I believe the same is true with your creativity and your imagination. You have to use it daily and give it a good challenge every now and then.

No pain---No gain.

How did I get my imagination in gear each day? Well one way is to make lists. I make lists of dozens of items that I might try to accomplish that day. Do I do those things? Probably not, but it is a start. If I write down a dozen things then I can generally find something that really appeals to me and I might find a thing or two that it is imperative that I accomplish that day, or else. Quite often I will do that thing first so that I can get on with the joy of doing what I darn please.

Today I wanted to mail a fellow a book that I promised to send. I sent it out first thing with a letter. I wanted to update the file on this book and so I took a disk I had been working on at my Battle Creek, Michigan home and pulled up the new stuff to my computer here in Hillsborough, North Carolina where I spend about half my time.

In a few days I will be attending a meeting of the North Carolina Song Writers and I wanted to select a song to play for the members' critique. I have three CD's of my songs but I now have eight new songs that haven't found their ways to CD's just yet. Here are the titles just to show you to what depths I have allowed my creative mind to fall recently. *'Fiddlin' Around, Sanctified Again, I Love Wakin' Up With You, Rye Whiskey, Sleepin' Alone, You'd Be My Dog, Don't Wait Too Long and Too Long Partyin' Blues.'*

Let's see what we have there. *Fiddlin' Around* is a country fiddle duet. *Sanctified Again* is a Christian revival sort of thing. *Wakin' Up* is a tender love song. *Rye Whiskey* is the chant of a well-oiled group of blues musicians trying to hustle a drink. *Sleepin' Alone* - well that has a line that goes, "I never slept alone 'til I got married." I guess you can figure that one out. *You'd Be My Dog* says, "If I loved you any more you'd be my dog" - one guy's idea of the ultimate love. *Don't Wait Too Long* is a blues number with a band vocal feedback that shows that a band can repeat back the exact words that the lead singer calls out. We accomplished that remarkable feat by having Greg Brayton call out the words on one track and then answer back on half a dozen other tracks in slightly different voices. Same thing with *Too Long Partyin' Blues*. I was so enchanted with the results of that earlier cut of *Don't Wait Too Long* that I brought the same group of instruments and voices, all done by Greg Brayton, back for an encore.

The above represents my creative musical output for the past six months or so. That is, the creative output that has made it into the recording studio for taping. I have a dozen more songs in a current file that I would like to record if I had the time and the

money that I'd like to invest in the project. I generally record just one song a month. It is something like a therapy session. The taping with Greg generally lasts around 3 to 4 hours and I come out of it with a really great feeling about my musical talent and about the song we have recorded. In the last three and a half years I can recall only one or two sessions where we failed to produce a song that I really like. And to compensate there are a few sessions where we produced two songs in a session.

These sessions are one of the most creative experiences I have found in my lifetime. I go into the session with a set of lyrics that I have worked up to the point where I feel they are ready to work on. Generally I have a definite melody in my mind. Getting that melody from my head into Greg's is sometimes a challenge since I do not read or write music and I find it difficult to carry a real tune. Just the same I will read the lyric to Greg and then I will go through it again and get closer and closer to an actual melody.

Often Greg will Braille out the words at this point. I sing the song again and again as Greg puts a bass line into the computer. I can sit there and watch Greg's mind at work. He is figuring out the key, the rhythm, and what is so amazing to me, he is actually doing an often elaborate arrangement at the same time.

He seldom has to go back in an arrangement. Sometimes I observe that when he is creating the final product and doing the mix he might drop out one or two tracks that he feels did not add anything to the arrangement.

In a recent blues number I noticed how he brought up the guitar and pulled down the piano, which was the instrument we started out with on that number. I asked him why and he explained that he felt he played much better guitar than piano and it just sounded better that way.

Going into Greg's studio always gives me the impression that he has a thousand musicians there just waiting to be called upon at a moment's notice. He has all of the instruments of a

major orchestra and every style of music you can think of at his command. If it is a love song he can pull in strings at the touch of a computer key. He can give you a chorus for a background just that quick. Brass, reeds, bells, whatever you can imagine, Greg can produce.

Greg's vocal range and repertoire are equally amazing. Often I challenge him to sing both the male and female voices on some of our humor productions and he comes through just like the pro he is.

Let me run the risk of repeating myself. Greg Brayton is a blind man. He lost his eyesight as a baby. If you think like most people think, then perhaps you might look at the fact that Greg cannot see like you and I can as a disability.

When you get to know Greg and work with him you soon discover that he has an insight and a vision like no sighted person you have ever met. His mind can see things that are invisible to us who are sighted.

He has the ability to concentrate on several levels that I would find impossible. So when we use the term "see" we are often limiting it to just what the eye can view. But when you move on to vision and insight, perception, viewpoint, focusing and observation then instead of handicapped, Greg is actually gifted.

Again you might attribute his many talents to what I call the law of balance. For every negative in this world there is a compensating positive if you can find it and put it to work for you. Take away Greg's eyesight and you sharpen the other senses. Greg hears things that you and I miss both from the outside and from the inside.

Working with him has proved to be one of the most enjoyable and rewarding creative experiences of my lifetime and I only hope that we can continue this relationship for many years to come.

**If you ever find that you have a song stuck in your mind and in your heart and you just can't seem to get it out then I suggest you book a recording session with Greg Brayton. Just call me at 1-800-441-7676 and I will put you in touch.**

**Today I am working on my speaking material, on my writing of this book, and on my songs. Today is like most days.**

**Sometimes I travel to make presentations. Sometimes I travel just for the joy of it. And often I just putter around creatively and allow myself to go in any direction that my mind takes me.**

**Assuredly, I am now blessed that I can make a good income just venturing out now and then to deliver a speech or a seminar. My retirement checks and the dividends on my investments take care of all of my financial needs and the money I receive from speaking and writing is just icing on the cake.**

**If you are working at a "regular" job then you will possibly offer the excuse that you do not have time to be a creative person or lead a creative life.**

**Let me tell you that I have been working and living creatively for the past 45 years and during that time I toiled long hours at a "regular" job and did my creative thinking in my other time, often into the wee hours of the morning. For the past forty years I have had my work published and for the past twenty eight years I have been creating and delivering speeches on a professional basis. The songwriting is something very recent in my life.**

**Creativity is a force within you that you must simply turn loose. You give yourself permission to be creative and to think differently. When a new thought pops into your head you write it down. In other words, you encourage your creative mind to produce more and more. In time you will find yourself challenging your mind to come up with specific areas of thought.**



**If you are like me then you will eventually find yourself talking to your subconscious mind asking it to solve problems and to give you bits of original thinking.**

**Start reading. Dig into the field of creative thinking, and if you want to write then read books about writing. If you care to become a public speaker then join Toastmasters and take a Dale Carnegie course for beginners. The big challenge is to just do it. Write. Speak. If you want to write songs then write songs. Pursue and set free whatever area of creativity lies within you.**

**If your job allows you to implement the creative ideas that you come up with then you are fortunate indeed. Work through those you report to if possible and remember that every idea must be sold and often to a number of different levels before it can be put to use.**

**Give yourself permission to become creative.**

**Once you learn to turn on your creative imagination you will find that life will take on a whole new meaning for you.**

**Using your mind and your talents for the good of all human kind is what life is all about.**

**Get on with it.**



## Chapter 45

# Summing Up

*“To be what we are, and to become what  
we are capable of becoming, is the only end of life.”*  
*Robert Louis Stevenson*

Perhaps by now you have discovered that I am pretty well hooked on the creative process. Today, you might get me to admit that a creative “Aha!” might be better than sex.

There I go transmuting again.

Creativity is king, or queen, or jack, or...hit me again dealer. Sometimes creativity is allowing yourself the luxury of foolishness. Allowing your little kid to have free rein.

I've had the rare privilege of letting my creativity run wild for forty some years now. For the past forty-two years I have been paid very well for my creative efforts. I have a shelf full of books and booklets I've written and a couple of shelves of videocassette programs. Then there are three CD's of my songs and another on the way.

Professional speaker, veteran of over 4,000 presentations the brochure says, and it is true. I've managed to visit all fifty of the United States and eight Canadian Provinces so far. And the list of foreign countries keeps growing. I've faced audiences as small as two people and as many as twelve thousand. That was a thrill, being billed as one of the seven greatest speakers in the world. The audience made me feel that way too.

Author of a thousand published articles and, and, and... and it has all been a labor of love.

**I sound a little bit like a guy who is ready to chuck this creative thing. Not on your life. I have a play to finish and find some way to get it produced. There is the new CD. I also have an idea about selling CD's on the web and I've moved my songs around in a way that would create seven new CD's.**

**Then there is that new video project I'm working on.**

**The speeches keep coming in and the travel is getting more and more fun for me now that I have a companion who just loves to travel with me.**

**My Muse is well and very productive. In fact, all of my creative endeavors are going well and I believe they will continue to keep me young at heart for a long, long time.**

**Why am I such an advocate of developing your creative mind? Because it is a way to really become alive. The creative life is the only one that seems worth living for me.**

**For so many years of my early life I was brain dead because I could not find ways to put my imagination to good use. As the ads say, "A mind is a horrible thing to waste."**

**I invite you, no make that I *challenge* you to turn your creative on high. You'll find, as I did, that you have no further need for stimulants.**

**Over forty years ago I took my last drink and made myself a promise that I would become a freelance writer. It happened all in one day. I made arrangements to attend my first meeting of Alcoholics Anonymous and I went out and bought a used Underwood typewriter and a ream of paper all at once. I let the one substitute for the other.**

**I'm sure glad I did because I know I would be dead long ago if I had continued my drinking habits.**

**You might not like to hear it, but I have a theory about alcoholism, drug addiction and such. I believe that some people are given more talents, more imagination, more potential for creativity than others. And it just seems to be true that finding any success at all in those areas is not only difficult but also often impossible.**

**I believe that there is something that I call a frustration factor that comes into play with creative people. They have this greatness, this talent, this special stuff inside them and the more they try to use it the more failure they often encounter.**

**And so this failure, this rejection, this treatment from others who see to them as different, weird, oddball and such leads them to seek ways to escape from that frustration and heartache. They drink. They do drugs. They eat too much. They gamble. They do most anything that will take their mind off the fact that they are doing what they really should be doing but cannot be allowed to do.**

**Some creative people cut off their ears. Many commit suicide. But the majority just cop out with alcohol or whatever.**

**The secret, of course, is to hang in there. Find a mentor. Do what you have to to use your talent and that might mean waiting on tables or moving from one job to another seeking an environment where your creativity can be put to good use.**

**It took me nearly 25 years working at a job I learned to hate before I found a door that I could go through to a whole new life using my talents and the experiences from that job.**

**I had to first find success while moonlighting before I could use my talents full time on a job that I loved. I worked with passion once I was given the opportunity to learn and to produce and to grow.**

**Before I could begin to succeed in any creative field I had to first sell myself on the idea that I was already successful. Before**

**I could become a writer I had to have business cards printed saying that I was a “Freelance Writer.” First comes the dream.**



**So what is the challenge I give you? Get out there and use your mind. Be creative. Get those ideas out there in the open and find a way to sell them.**

**SOAR!**

## **Funny Stuff & Creativity**

**One of the first things that Thomas Edison recorded on the phonograph he had invented was this joke. A lady was having liver problems and so she bought several bottles of a remedy sold by a traveling huckster. She took the medicine faithfully for two years and when she died they had to beat her liver with a stick for three days to stop it working.**

## **Funny Stuff and Creativity**

**There is an old story still around that says one day Thomas Edison called a press conference and when he had all of the people involved gathered together in a crowded room he walked over to a table in the corner of the room and uncovered an electric light bulb. He gave the signal to an assistant and suddenly the light turned on and the reporters started to rush for the door with the amazing story but Edison stopped them and said, "That isn't it." He walked over, picked up the light bulb, put it to his ear and said, "Hello!"**

## **Funny Stuff & Creativity**

**A distant uncle of mine invented a new soda drink and after much research he finally released the drink and he called it *One Up*. It failed and he lost his life's savings. Determined to carry on he worked three jobs to raise more capital and finally, two years later he had worked up a new formula. He invested every cent he had and released the new product calling it *Two Up*. Again he failed. This went on for a number of years. He introduced *Three Up* and then *Four***

*Up, Five Up and then Six up. Now he was an old man and he just gave up never to try again. He came that close.*

## **Funny Stuff & Creativity**

*Henry Ford told the public that they could buy his car in any color provided it was black. One day, his friend, inventor James F. Kettering, invited Ford out to lunch and he kept talking on and on, so the meeting would not come to an end. Finally, he got a signal from one of his workers and the two men walked outside the restaurant. There sat Henry Ford's car painted a bright red. Kettering has succeeded in producing the fast drying paint that Ford had hoped for.*

## About the author....

Art Fettig has been exercising his creative muscles since he got an A on a writing assignment in his English class in the 8<sup>th</sup> grade. Born in Detroit, Michigan in 1929, he graduated, conditionally, from the University of Detroit High School. "The condition," he claims, was that he didn't tell anyone where he graduated from. He feels that all of those connected with this agreement are now dead and so he now feels free to reveal this.

"Most of my problems in school were a direct result of my use of my sense of humor. I was known as the 'class clown' and our graduation yearbook indicates that I spent more time in detention after school than any student in the school's history. All of this was a direct result of my exercising my imagination in an unimaginative environment."

His next formal training was at Fort Riley, Kansas and Fort Bliss, Texas with the United States Army where he was trained in killing the enemy. Again, in the military, his sense of humor found him in constant trouble and he admits that he was promoted to the rank of 'Private First Class,' several; times. He then served as a combat rifleman in Korea where he was wounded and awarded the Purple Heart.

He worked in the claims department of the Grand Trunk Western Railroad for 25 years before finally convincing a railroad vice president that he had special skills. He has been making a living with the use of his creativity since that time.

His first book, *It Only Hurts When I Frown* was a collection of his humor articles about family life. Next, *Selling Lucky* was again a collection of articles he'd sold to magazines on sales and other topics.

He is the author of some 46 books and booklets including *The Three Robot Series* of books for children.



**Fettig began speaking as a professional in 1972 and has since made over 3,000 professional presentations in each of the 50 United States, 8 Canadian Provinces and a number of foreign countries. His clients include G.M. Chrysler, Toyota, Intel, DuPont, Abbott Labs, Consumers Energy, A.T.& T., The United States Army, Navy, Air Force and Marine Corps and dozens of major Petrol and Utility organizations worldwide.**

**He has served as a consultant and a speechwriter for a number of professional speakers, for corporate leaders, and even a Supreme Court judge.**

**His creative humor has appeared in many magazines and even in the popular Marmaduke cartoon.**

**Fettig was married for some 38 years to Ruth who died in 1993 after a long bout with cancer. They had 5 children and the 4 surviving children have presented him with 8 grandchildren.**

**Today Art Fettig and his wife Jean reside in Hillsborough, North Carolina where he continues to write and speak creatively.**

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