

# **Chapter 1: CREATIVITY**

**Why not read this book with an open mind?**

**DO NOT READ THIS BOOK FROM THE LAST CHAPTER.**

This book is for those who wish to have their creative minds freed and expanded. It is for those who have a true passion to be creative. I am not trying to brainwash anyone or influence anyone's thinking, I just wish to help creative thinkers realise their full potential. I do not wish to dictate what you do, but simply open your eyes to your own creative visions and possibilities. If you commit yourself to the suggestions in this book, you will change your viewpoints and develop a much higher sense of the creativity within yourself. Being creative is not just academia but rather changing one's way of viewing, thinking about and interpreting the world around us. Before you read further, open your mind to the creative possibilities that you and you alone possess. You should develop creativity for your own sake and not to impress others. What you learn here is not a formula for differentiating yourself from others but a way of thinking that will transform the present you to a more creative you.

Though it sounds only slightly different, there is a big difference between being yourself and differentiating yourself from others. Being yourself is accepting who you are and

concentrating on what you do. On the other hand, differentiating yourself is always driven by others and is based on the idea of comparison. If you just wish to differentiate yourself from others without changing yourself, this would not be the best book for you. If you are working in an HR department and your reason for reading this book is to make others creative, remember that it is impossible to extract the potential of someone who does not wish to be creative. Also, making people creative is letting them be partially or completely free from other people's way of thinking. So if everybody became incredibly creative, totally free from other people's thinking, no one would like to work for a company. So for companies, it is important to control how much creativity, or freedom to think creatively, they allow their employees. Being creative is not taking risks, being unique or differentiating yourself, but letting your mind free from constraints and limitations. For some people, it may sound spiritual or philosophical and that there would be no point in their daily life; that it would not be practical.

Here is the first trap. Are you able to explain exactly what is meant by being "Practical"? In many cases, it is just about economic value. Your work is part of your life. Your life is your time. So if you live your life and spend your time dedicated to making someone else richer, that would be the worst practical thing ever. Though being free from common-sense or a way of thinking proposed by someone else may be something that is enjoyable and/or a cheerful experience. Many people are

hesitant to take this step for fear of changes. They stay in the same place emotionally.

It is often said “Don’t procrastinate when you have a problem”, “Don’t procrastinate about decision making”, or “Don’t procrastinate about things that you do not want to do”. Wait, what do you “procrastinate” about regarding your life? Most people procrastinate about death, wondering when, how or why? For many people, the worst thing that can happen is to die. This means everything can be better than death. Sometimes, it is scary for some people to be creative because it changes the way they see the world, yet they feel nothing can be scary in the face of death. Am I too serious or do I exaggerate? It may sound exaggerated, but it is an important factor to remember, because your unconscious way of thinking influences your decision making. Sooner or later, you will face a moment in which you will feel fear of being changed as a result of being creative. Remember, we all die sooner or later, and there is nothing to be afraid of by being creative.

People frequently ask me about the likelihood of success and the probability of being creative. “Do you think I can be creative?” “What is the success rate?” and similar questions. The most important thing to remember here is that if you believe that you are not creative, you will not be creative, but not being creative now is not the same as not being creative in the future. If you believe you are creative, you will be creative. Moreover,

you are creative from this moment. The power of belief is so strong. All the great creative thinkers believed their ideas would change the world. All the great athletes have believed that they would be the best in their field. All the great entrepreneurs have believed that they would make the world better. Regardless of skills, abilities and capabilities, you will not be creative if you believe you are not creative. Nothing hurts you by believing you are creative. What is a logical reason for you not to believe in yourself? So, if you think you are ready to be creative, quietly promise the three things below to yourself.

1. I am creative and I create everything that I want.
2. I am willing to fully exploit my creativity.
3. I am happy to set my mind free and be creative.

These 3 sentences are very simple but important to maximise the effectiveness of this book in order to accelerate your creativity. If you question your potential, how can you exploit it? Creativity is an internal factor and you are the only one in the world who can extract it and take advantage of it. This book is to lead you to harness your potential and get control of your talent.

## **What is this book about?**

This book is about “Creativity”, not about art or design. What this book talks about is the ability to realise the world that you can imagine or think of. For you, it may be a world where no

violent actions take place, a world in which you are one of the most important business people or a world where you live on a small island with your family having a relaxed life. Regardless of your current occupation or nationality, there would be some sort of ideal world or things that you have desired to make happen. In my case, I have been dreaming to be free from common-sense or other people's thinking since I was about 3 years old. I often had a conflict with myself about why I could not be creative enough to change my life. I had been wishing to be creative but what I was doing was only hoping to have unbelievable inspiration through an experience of illumination. I used to think musicians or artists were selected people and that the rest of mankind was non-creative and that this was a predetermined destiny. Actually, for a long time, "Creativity" has been seen as only for people who are closely related to artistic works such as painting, drawing or music. For people in the business field, it is a sort of taboo to see themselves as creative people or to talk about creativity as if it had been relevant to the field of business, except in some industries such as advertising. Though it is easy to imagine the reason behind this, we have been hesitant to discuss this topic for decades or, possibly, centuries. What happened? The idea of capitalism and the evolution of industrialisation have enabled our society to produce enormous amounts of goods on time and the role that artisans used to play has been replaced by machinery. At the same time, this evolution made even human resources a commodity, which can be traded in the market. When you see the economy in the

US, it is obvious the huge success of the economy is partially based on this point. In the huge economy, the importance of a single person has decreased and labours have been treated as a small part of the huge entity. It is clear that a small gear of a huge machine does not have to be creative, but has to be obedient and organised. In this respect, creativity should be only for selected people in order to keep people confined inside the box that they would simply follow the common sense of being a part of a huge entity: a corporation to run the system. Materialistic economy with the idea of capitalism can work only when the majority of people follow its rule to run this system, like thousands of small parts working together to make a car go forward. The combination of the education system and the mass media have been playing an important role to promote this idea. People learn what society expects them to be capable of and what it requires them to know. And the media reports and tells you what they want you to know and to talk about. For example, as with knowledge, most people know that the level of education is often relevant to economic success. However, they actually run after a higher education and try to proceed to university, wishing for a successful future. Perhaps, having a higher degree would give you a wider variety of options when you look for a job. I am not arguing about the effectiveness of the educational system or the validity of the mass media. Just remember, what you are told and what is reported by them has a strong effect on your perception and behavior, regardless of your personality, because you know only what you have been

told: information in your brain. In this context, this book is a challenge to save people from imprinted notions.

The most important objective of this book is to make a paradigm shift in your way of thinking, to enrich your life and to help you become successful by being creative. This book is designed to provide you with a new way of thinking, to let you have a different perception towards your work, business and, most importantly, your life. It is often the case that you forget the fact that work is merely a part of your life: not everything. But, your perception towards life has an influence on everything in your life - even on your work and its performance. This book is designed to share the idea of "HOW TO THINK" with you. Knowledge, experience, background, nationality, mother language and personality are different from person to person, but we can share "HOW TO THINK". This is the most important aspect of being creative. Just think about any creative people you are aware of. You will realise that creative people, by and large, are creative because of their way of thinking - not because of their knowledge. Knowledge is definitely important to heighten the level of work, but it is not everything. For example, I used to work for one of the biggest security companies in Japan as an investment strategist. Though there were hundreds of analysts in the company or even in the industry, only one person could have foreseen the future of the stock market as if he had been a prophet. Foreseeing the future requires you to have a great imagination and to be creative to anticipate human behaviour.

The interesting fact here is that all the analysts literally had access to the same information and the level of knowledge that they had was more or less same. There was no information gap amongst analysts, even though some of them had higher authority to access the information in the economy than others had. So why should one be able to project the future accurately? Did he control the market? No. What he had that others did not have is his unique way of thinking. It allowed him to process information regardless of the situation and thus he could predict the future of the economy accurately, like fitting pieces of a puzzle. Steve Jobs had an interesting viewpoint in terms of creativity. *“Creativity is just connecting things. When you ask creative people how they did something, they feel a little guilty because they didn’t really do it, they just saw something. It seemed obvious to them after a while. That’s because they were able to connect experiences they’ve had and synthesise new things.”* This quote concisely and clearly mentions that “HOW TO THINK”, which normally people have never thought about in their life, is an important factor to consider about creativity. In this book, what you learn is not “WHAT TO THINK” such as specific themes or subjects that you have become used to through education, but “HOW TO THINK” in order to be creative, to open your eyes.

## **What do you think and how do you think?**

Usually, people are so busy that they are mostly interested

in only the consequence, not the process, because they believe there are too many things to be concerned with. People literally ask “What do you think” but this really means in most cases “What do you think I need” in order to come to a conclusion, from daily errands to a huge project. It is true that it would disturb the economic activities if it was necessary to explain each process to get to the conclusion, “What do you think”, all the time when making some decisions. In that sense, “What do you think” is a question that accelerates the decision making process and makes the economic activities smoother. The question “What do you think” allows people to come to a conclusion quickly and in turn people are forced to avoid burying matters. The question “What do you think” allows you to take time paying attention to consider the processes of information and to discern the pattern of thinking. The important thing to remember here is that each person has his or her own pattern of thinking and a tendency to process information that normally takes a long time because this pattern is acquired whilst growing up. By contrast, “What do you think”, can be changed from time to time, depending on situations and circumstances. You may like to eat a hamburger after drinking but may like to eat vegetables when you have a hangover. What you eat is changed by the pattern of eating: eating big meals when you are hungry and eating something light when you feel bad. Usually your pattern of thinking is not changed, but the situation is changed. What happens in society is that we drift unconsciously back and forth between hope and despair because we tend to evaluate results

instead of processes. On a daily basis, evaluation based on results accelerates business activities and competition that contributes to the economic growth. However, the performance can be easily subject to the environment and the situation. For example, until the 2000s, Japan was clearly one of the most important world leaders in the global economy. However, they are now struggling with generating new technology, making innovation and competing with fast growing countries. This is because they have been focused on only “WHAT TO THINK”. Until the 2000s, the strength that Japanese people had fit perfectly with the value that the global economy had; improving on the concepts that were originally made in Western countries, such as TV, automobiles and music players. However, the revolution in technology has globally changed the values and these are now totally different from the ones before. Clearly, the way people think in Japan has changed at the same time. Unlike in the past, young people are likely to prefer a stable life instead of competing with others. Also, the advancement of technology has made them question the old-fashioned Japanese value that is a life devoted to work. As a result, the competitive advantage of Japan has weakened. Focusing only on performance or results accelerates the growth in upturn. However, it makes it unclear as to the reasons for these preferable results. In the Japanese case, it is unclear to people why Japan is now in the difficult situation in terms of generating new values and making innovations. In fact, their GDP has not performed well over the last 5 years.

Are you still only interested in “WHAT TO THINK”? Reading this book is a good opportunity to learn “HOW TO THINK”.

## Why we need to be creative

Why do we need to be creative? Of course, it sounds amazing to be creative and make the most of your capacity and ability to improve your performance at work and enrich your life, but why now? The biggest reason for answering this question is that the environment we live in now requires you to be more creative to survive. How come? The technological advancement brought a paradigm shift in society so that the environment people are facing is very different from the one in the past. Thanks to the advent of the smartphone, SNS (Social Networking System), and all the technologies that support our current lifestyle, you can now access a huge amount of information immediately, whenever you want, regardless of your location. Using SNS allows you to communicate with your friends living on the other side of the planet. Translation software has been improved so dramatically that you do not even have to be fluent in a language that you are not familiar with. If you are interested in photography, you can use Instagram to edit and publish photos swiftly and efficiently. It is literally possible to acquire six figure followers without any professional experience as a photographer. If you are interested in making videography, you can make it, which has the same quality as only the professionals had in the past, using just a laptop and some free software. You can share your own videos

on YouTube, Vimeo and many other platforms for free and get a million views. Some people who have uploaded videos there have become millionaires by sponsorship and others have become celebrities. If you are more interested in conducting business, you still have options. You can be an entrepreneur in just 10 minutes. Now there are a number of crowd-funding platforms such as Kickstarter and Indigogo that can help you to raise money, from people you have never met, for the project that you aspire to realise. In fact, more than 70 projects have succeeded in raising over \$1 million on Kickstarter. If you aspire to join an accelerator program, you can find hundreds of startup accelerator programs around the world. Many of them simply require you to describe your business plan and business model in order to apply and interviews can be conducted online via Skype. It is no longer necessary to physically visit investors to share your vision to raise capital. Vice versa, you can invest your money in companies or projects and purchase financial products and real estate from your bedroom or from a beautiful beach in a Caribbean resort. In short, you can endeavor to be whatever kind of person you want in just a minute by using current technology - whether that be as an artist, creator, investor, or entrepreneur. Geographic location and economic status can no longer be excuses for not following your dream. It is totally up to you. At the same time, many corporations have adapted this situation to their business. When you see Elance, which is an online platform to outsource and subcontract jobs, chances are that you will find many companies placed in South

Asia or the Middle East that use this site as a sales channel. You can hire them on a project basis or pay them an hourly salary in exchange for their skills and ability to deliver tasks. This means that being creative lets you be a person you want to become, but at the same time, you must be creative to survive in the great blue ocean of economy. If you look at the world, there are a number of people who have realised their goals by using current technology wisely. For example, Justin Bieber uploaded many video clips on YouTube to show him singing. Scooter Braun found his talent engaging and arranged a meeting with Usher Raymond IV, which pushed Bieber to stardom. Using technology is not only a way to make your life a little better, but also to change your life dramatically. We have now such a powerful tool on our hands. Unlike in the past, when only a limited number of people could access the media, we now live in the world full of opportunity. I have joined FITC, one of the most important international creative conferences in the world, in Tokyo in 2014. I got this chance not because I was an incredibly famous person at that time, but made the most of the Internet and the resources that I had then. When I was a student, I read an article about FITC and its speaker, Denise Jacob, internationally known creative evangelist, and I sent her an email requesting an interview to write a blog post. I met her in Amsterdam and did the interview. Later, she introduced me to Shawn Pucknell, founder of FITC, which is one the most creative conferences in the world and it ended up bringing about the opportunity to join FITC Tokyo as an official speaker. What

if I had not sent an email to her? Nothing would have happened for sure. If I had started by thinking only of possibilities, I would have not taken action. But once you have taken an action, you will be able to notice the world is now filled with opportunities.

On the other hand, most current education systems do not reflect the current situation, although the majority of people look for solutions in the academic world. Most educational systems are focused on teaching a specific subject: **WHAT TO THINK**. You can easily face the fact that what you would learn through compulsory education is determined by the government, and in most cases, the curriculums are designed to heighten the average level of knowledge in order to make citizens fit in with the pervading social system – a system which was built a couple of decades ago. It is not designed to extract your potential and schools are not the place to learn “**HOW TO THINK**” to make the most of your creativity. Most schools are the place to become the person somebody else wants you to be. It is easy to find a school to learn mathematics, management or computer science, but it is nearly impossible to find a school to learn “**HOW TO THINK**” so as to make the most of your capacity to be the person you want to become. It is necessary to be aware of the fact that what you would learn in most schools is determined by someone else, and not by you. Needless to say, I do not try to say “You do not have to learn in schools”, but I would like you to know “It is important to understand what you learn there”. The technological development now allows you to enjoy

your potential and extract your creativity with a relatively small amount of capital, and it provides a wide range of opportunities. So why not make the most of it?

If you are still questioning the reasons why you need to be creative to survive, here is a good example. No matter what kind of industry you belong to, it is unavoidable that you need to understand the social tendency and current trend that is so called consumer behaviour in the field of traditional business. Technological development has changed the environment surrounding people. This has also changed the structure of how human desires are fulfilled. Until recently, society, by its structure, had fulfilled the human desire of Belonging, the 3rd level of human desire after Physiological needs and Safety, according to Abraham Maslow. The stable supply of commodities has allowed people to live without thinking much about their basic needs, such as safety, food and water. The stable society has helped us set the default lifestyle so that citizens are able to fulfil their desire of Belonging by simply following the life cycle defined by the society they belong to. For example, most people go to secondary schools, proceed to university and find a job after graduation. The 4th desire, Esteem, and 5th desire, Self-Actualization, were fulfilled through acquiring social position, fame or property, and people compare themselves with others to fulfil their desire to be accepted and admitted by others into a distinct social circle. The lower level demands should be fulfilled prior to the higher ones and the majority of people do not take the

risk of losing their environment to fulfil their lower demands. The structure of society naturally determines the path society should take to fulfil the 4th and 5th desires. However, the increased dispersal of mobile devices and SNS has enabled people to fulfil their unconscious desire of Belonging. Forming communities and groups to belong and communicating with people duplicates the experience of belonging that they had previously in the physical world. So, “Belonging” has become the default standard to be met in the environment with smartphones and SNS. The action of pressing “Like”, such as in Facebook or Instagram, has let people earn recognition and acceptance in the community, so that they can fulfil their desire of Esteem instantly. People used to work hard to purchase huge houses, fancy cars and gorgeous luxury products; they now work hard to earn “Like” given by others to fulfil their demand of Esteem. As people look for opportunities to be paid attention to and given respect by others, you can convert the number of Likes you get or followers you have into money. This means that our “value” has been changed from materialistic products to spiritual experiences. Human life is no longer taking place only in a physical world, but also in virtual reality. And it is obvious that “being creative” is mandatory to survive in this environment. In fact, a number of small corporations have become famous through their unique marketing without a huge amount of investment, and many traditional gigantic corporations these days have wasted their money investing in meaningless campaigns. The amount of information that both small and huge corporations can

access is definitely equal, and although the manpower of huge corporations is bigger, the result is different. This is because the way they think is different, not because either of them have secret agents or access to hidden information. On this point, Rei Inamoto, Chief Creative Officer of AKQA, has been in charge of advertising campaigns for Nike, WWF and other huge companies and each time led them into becoming successful. In an interview, he showed his interesting viewpoint that “*The Future of advertising isn't advertising*”. What it means is that the way the consumer behaves and their values, have changed. In fact, he said that experience is one of the most important points. The majority of people simply think that he could make successful campaigns or ads because he is creative. However, what makes him unique is his way of thinking that has resulted in making his works creative. Like these examples show, it is necessary to be “creative” and learn “HOW TO THINK” not only to enjoy your creativity but also to survive in this environment.