

Passage Points Newsletter

This month's topic: *The Art of Ideaphoria*

As I type "sparking possibilities" into the closing of my email message, I stop to digest the words. I have no doubt that it is essential to embrace the spark and be on alert for possibilities, but what if your imagination is feeling deflated by waves of change or the downturns of life? How can you dislodge creative blocks and release your best creative impulses?

Creativity is a natural ability--we all have it: The simplest definition of creativity is "the combination of two previously related ideas into something new". So, relax, you don't have to start from scratch. You just need to trigger your own unconscious and conscious sources of brainpower to begin to see "new" associations of ideas. Your mind is like a satellite dish receiving messages continuously through the channels of imagination, intuition, logic, and knowledge. Tune in and dare yourself to believe in your own creativity.

Blast through creative blocks: Mental rigidity can cause mental arthritis! Other blocks may include: fear of not knowing the answer, force of habit, overlooking the obvious, boundaries, stress, a rush to judgment, too many rules, criticism, paralysis by analysis, polarizing ideas into right and wrong, competition. Others? Identify your own blocks and step back to release and imagine yourself breaking through them. Use dynamite...in your imagination!

Practice Ideaphoria: When musicians improvise they surrender and allow new ideas to hatch. They hear what's around them, pick up on someone else's ideas, see possibilities, and play around with them in a way that gives birth to new music. You can spark your own creative juices by improvising. Daydream or use guided imagery to encourage your own visual thinking. Recruit information and ask "What if...?" Work backwards, sideways and in bits and pieces. Look for patterns and chunks. Open yourself up to instinctive thinking, intuition, and sensations. Suspend judgment, connect unrelated ideas, and expect the unexpected.

Got a problem? Open Your Mind and Say Ahhhh....Don't become so enmeshed and tied into a problem that you *become* the problem. Step back and view the problem from the outside, not as though you are the problem looking out. It's hard to be innovative, or to reach out for new information and take risks, when your mental circuits are tied up personally in a problem. Ask, "What do I want to accomplish?" "Where am I now and where would I like to be? (You'd be amazed how often we forget to answer these questions *before* we attempt to problem-solve!) Shower the problem with possible solutions and then bring logic back in to see what's probable, positive and reachable. This type of mental flexibility allows you to see situations from different angles and perhaps stumble onto something new!

*Sparking possibilities,
Vicki*

Recommended Reading:

The Artist's Way: A Spiritual Path to Higher Creativity by Julia Cameron

A Whack on the Side of the Head: How You Can Be More Creative by Roger von Oech

The Nature of Creative Development by Jonathan S. Feinstein

Food for Thought:

The key question isn't "What fosters creativity?" But it is why in God's name isn't everyone creative? Where was the human potential lost? How was it crippled? ...We have got to abandon that sense of

amazement in the face of creativity, as if it were a miracle if anybody created anything. Abraham Maslow

Passage Points Workshops are coming to UNC Friday Center this Fall!

Check them both out here:

<http://www.fridaycenter.unc.edu/pdep/pds/index.html>

<http://www.fridaycenter.unc.edu/pdep/ccs/index.htm>

Passage Points offers support such as coaching, consulting, workshops and seminars, CD's and publications for anyone navigating or creating change at midlife and beyond. Check out www.passagepoints.com to learn a bit more.

**Forward to a friend who may benefit from this information.
As always, I welcome your comments and ideas!**

**Thanks to everyone who sent humorous stories, links, and even magazines
in response to last month's newsletter on humor!**