

MASTER YOUR LIFE

BY DISCOVERING YOUR OWN CREATIVE GENIUS



By no means does a creative person have to be an artist, composer, director, or designer. Creativity, the ability to think outside the box, is valuable in any profession, because it helps us find the best solution for difficult tasks, and thus to achieve success. An inner creator literally lives in each and every one of us; all we need to do is to exert a little effort to wake it up.

ALPEON's expert **Olga Zbarskaya, Ph.D.** will conduct a **marathon of creativity** that starts in this issue with a survey devoted to the creative process. Acquaintance with diverse techniques that develop your mind and liberate your creative potential will allow you to apply them to solve any problems—professional, business-related, or personal—and to generate interesting ideas as well.

English physicist and mathematician Sir Isaac Newton contradicted the ancient Greeks' ideas about light by demonstrating that sunlight consists of a spectrum of colors. Newton realized that the earliest telescopes, in which glass lenses were fixed in a tube, distorted colors as the lenses broke the white light of bright astronomical objects into a rainbow. He constructed a new reflecting telescope that used mirrors instead of lenses to focus the light. Newton's innovative approach was made possible by his ability to see conventional ideas from a different angle.

So, what is it about creativity? Creative thinking improves self-esteem and motivation. It doesn't simply increase achievement; it makes people more open to more challenges in which achievement is a potential endpoint. Creativity is the emotional motivator behind every endeavor that results in innovative concepts.

Today's world is stuffed with new concepts, ideas, and technology. The capacity to produce new ideas is one of the mind's most valuable traits.

Creative thinking can be defined as a postponed closure of flexible combinations of fluent thoughts with original interpretations. So, what can we do to become more creative? The good news is that creativity is a skill that can be learned and improved. Special techniques can help you promote creative patterns of thinking for better overall performance in everyday life. We can train our minds to become more conducive to features of creativity and original decisions.

Five major characteristics of creative thinking comprise a kind of survival kit in a complex environment. Enabling fluency, flexibility, and originality while postponing premature closure leads to self-empowerment and a concomitantly greater chance of succeeding. Developing these characteristics will help you in problem solving across all aspects of life, while extending your means of self-expression and leading toward mastery.

The links among the five major characteristics of creativity can be outlined as follows:

- **Fluency**—the ability to generate multiple responses, ideas, and alternatives—increases the potential connections among various selections and, subsequently, the likelihood that one of these ideas will be developed into a great invention. Fluency additionally refers to an aptitude for expressing ideas simply and coherently.

- **Originality** is essentially the tendency to be able to generate unexpected responses to a challenge, thereby increasing the possibility of novelty. Originality eschews reproductions, imitations, and clichés.

- **Flexibility** entails looking at the same problem from different perspectives, which permits new connections and unexpected combinations. Flexible associations increase the likelihood of coming up with novel and successful combinations.

- **Elaboration** is the ability to expand and improve ideas by embellishing their details. This personal capability assists in forming more flawless, precise, and pleasing ideas with better logic and more in-depth analysis. Elaboration results in amplifying the initial idea and moving it toward enhancement and implementation.

- **Suspending premature judgment or criticism** effectively delays the disapproval of new thoughts and thus prevents a reduction in the number of possible ideas and their combinations.

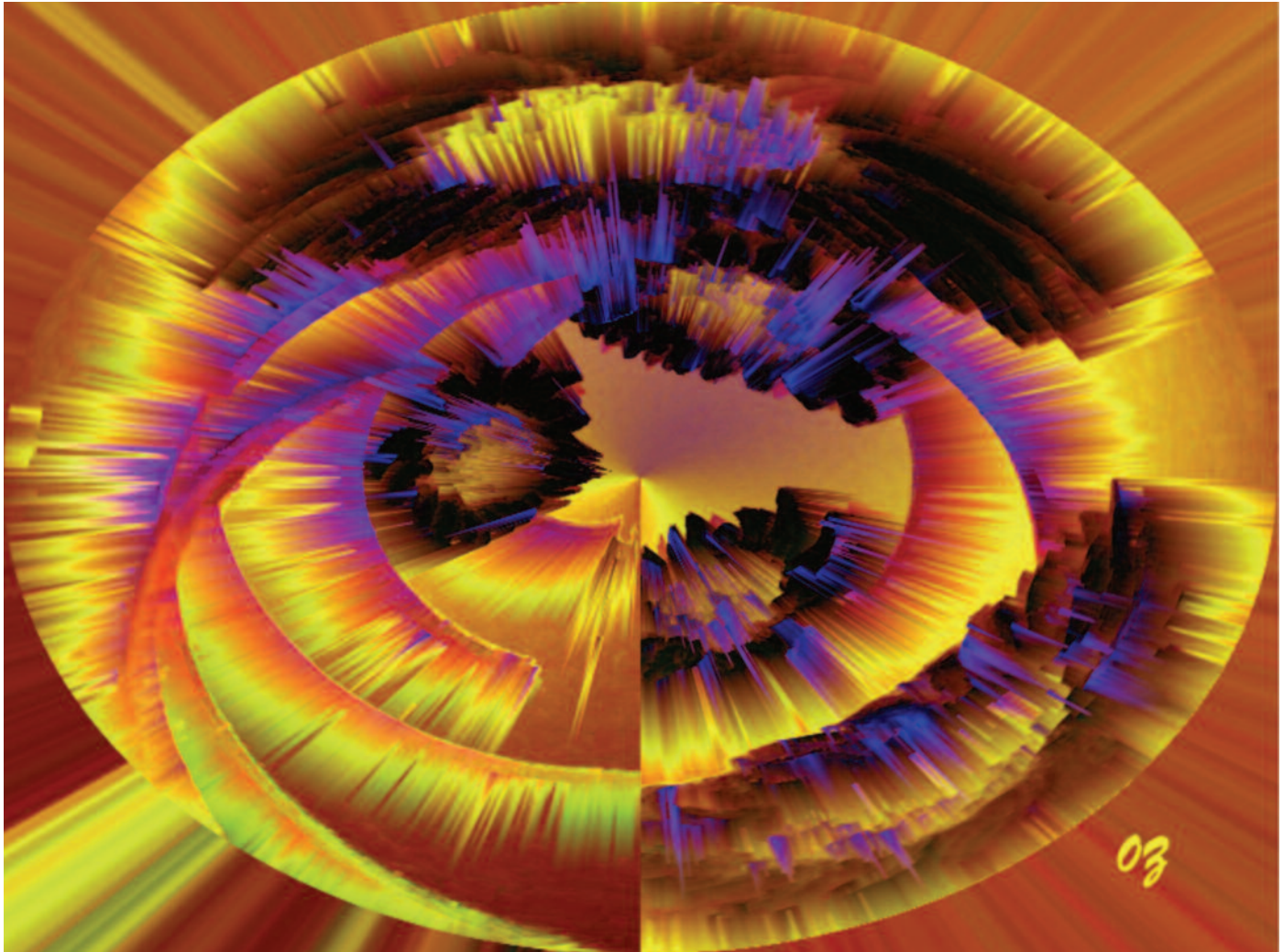
There are various techniques for enabling and nurturing creativity, boosting innovative problem solving, and making improvements in the overall quality of life. Having as many ideas as possible and easily drifting among them prompts a novel viewpoint. The oddest combinations between random choices may lead to the most unusual and valuable ideas. Going beyond typical reflection and suspending the verdict will allow more flexible association and combinations among them.

Thinking from different points of view, being spontaneous, tolerating ambiguity, and making unexpected connections will most likely result in a novel format of thinking. Try to experiment, reflect upon contradictions, and determine the relevance of certain ideas to increase the likelihood of novel decisions. The ability to think of fresh ideas, fall in love with those ideas, and make meaningful patterns of original ideas requires decreased premature filtering in recognition of the creative process.

Creativity enhances the quality of our solutions to life's problems and predicts life achievements even better than intelligence. Creative people can adapt to different situations and reach their goals. To increase creativity in general and improve its characteristics in particular, it is essential to display interest, think new thoughts, open up to experiences, imagine, take risks, and ignore distractions. It is also desirable to set clear goals.

Making unusual connections, forming opinions, putting ideas into practice, and classifying information are powerful tools for successful decision-making. Comparing and contrasting, postponing evaluation, and adapting new attention patterns promote creative outcomes.

Exercise your mind and become more creative:



Let's finish with an exercise in creativity. Take a look at this picture.

What do you see? **Unusual trains of thought are most welcome!** Once you're in a creative mindset, think of a country you have never visited. Imagine you've just come back from that country. Describe what you saw. Whom did you meet? What was your most unusual experience there? Interpret what you experienced: people, shops, forms of communication, food, landscapes, architecture...