

Creative Seeds of Hope

“Happiness lies in the joy of achievement and the thrill of creative effort.”

— Franklin D. Roosevelt

Commentary

Creativity is not limited to writers, artists and musicians. Anyone can be creative if they open themselves up and listen to the ideas inside. Almost everyone has had an idea about how to make things better.

There are creative business people who have new ideas about how to improve the business. There are creative doctors who develop better ways to treat patients. My dentist has developed 12 products that he has sold to other dentists.

Unfortunately, some people bury their creativity deep inside. They even announce loudly to those around them: “I don’t have a creative bone in my body.” We all have the potential to be creative if we allow ourselves the opportunity.

Creativity is one of the most thrilling acts that we as humans can participate in. If you have ever experienced the excitement of chasing a new idea or exploring a new way of seeing the world you will understand what Roosevelt is saying.

Some people might say that Roosevelt was not creative. He did not produce any great works of art. His creativity lay in his ability to change the way he and others saw the world. The ideas that rose to the surface during his Presidency dramatically changed life in the United States and around the world. People today are still trying to understand the impact of the changes Roosevelt created in our society and our politics. Roosevelt was a creative leader.

How to Nurture Creativity in Yourself

What are you doing to cultivate creativity in your life? Give yourself the freedom to look at the world in new ways. See the world in ways that others don’t. Don’t accept things as they are. Question why? Creativity is not about technique. It is about seeing the world in new ways. Here are six ways to nurture your creativity.

First, we need to be willing to fail. Many people won’t try new ideas because they might fail and look foolish. If you are going to be creative, you have to be willing to fail. Failure is part of the creative process.

Thomas Edison, who invented thousands of items including the light bulb, said, “I have not failed. I’ve just found 10,000 ways that won’t work.”

Second, take walks. I have found that when I take walks alone, I have some of my best ideas. There is something about the repetitiveness of walking that opens up the subconscious and the ideas flow. I find the same is true about driving alone for long periods of time on the open highway.

If your mind is focused on some repetitive task, it opens up the flood gates of creativity.

A third way to nurture creativity in yourself is to seek multiple answers. Most problems have several solutions. Don’t accept the first idea that comes to mind. Explore various ideas. Even listen to the crazy, impractical ideas. Sometimes the best answer lies in making the impractical practical. The crazy absurd ideas often lead to better ideas.

One of the keys to nurturing your creativity is playing the role of a skeptic. You need to question everything. You have to be willing to break a few rules in your thinking. Just because we have always done it this way does not mean it is the best way. Are there other ways we could do the same thing more effectively? Nothing is sacred. Question everything.

Most of life is not black and white. Most of life is gray and ambiguous. The fifth way to nurture creativity in yourself is to become comfortable living with ambiguity. There are more than one possible solution to problems you face. Become comfortable with the fact that not everything has an easy solution. You will have to live with uncertainty.

In school, kids are punished for daydreaming. Yet, daydreaming is essential to creativity. Sometimes you just have to let your mind wander on its own. Let it go and follow where it leads.

Daydreaming primes our imagination and inspires creative thoughts. Daydreaming gives us an opportunity to imagine new ways of conducting business.

People assume that daydreaming is a lazy mental process, but research shows that the brain is extremely busy during this state. There is an elaborate electrical conversation between the front and the back parts of the brain. Research by Jonathan Schooler, a psychologist, shows that daydreaming increases creativity.

Franklin D. Roosevelt

- Born January 20, 1882 in Hyde Park, New York to James Roosevelt and Sara Ann Delano. Both parents came from wealthy families.
- Homeschooled by tutors until age 14. Attended Groton School, an Episcopal boarding school.
- Attended Harvard College in 1903 with an A.B. in history.

- Entered law school in 1904 but dropped out after passing the Bar Examination.
- Franklin was the fifth cousin of Theodore Roosevelt who became President in 1901.
- Franklin married Eleanor Roosevelt in 1905 against the wishes of his mother. Eleanor was a niece of Theodore and a fifth cousin once removed.
- Franklin and Eleanor had six children.
- Elected to the New York State Senate in 1910.
- Served as Assistant Secretary of the Navy from 1913 to 1919.
- Diagnosed with polio in 1921 and remained permanently paralyzed from the waist down.
- Served as Governor of New York from 1929 to 1932.
- Elected President in 1932. Inaugurated on March 4, 1933. Served as President from 1933 to 1945. Won 57% of the popular vote in 1932.
- Created the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation.
- Created the Tennessee Valley Authority.
- Passed the Social Security Act of 1935 through congress.
- Established the Works Progress Administration (WPA).
- Established the National Labor Relations Board.
- On December 7, 1941 the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor killing 2,403 Americans.
- On December 11, 1941 Hitler and Mussolini declared war on the United States.
- Authorized and funded the Manhattan Project to develop the first nuclear weapons.
- Passed the G.I. Bill in June 1944 creating massive benefits for returning soldiers.
- Elected to a 4th term in 1944.
- Died of a massive intracerebral hemorrhage on April 12, 1945.

