Creativity

How often can a person come up with wrong ideas and still be considered creative?

To what extent can creative people have habits and rituals?

Is there a difference between the kind of creativity that allows you to think outside yourself, and the kind that allows you to think like someone (or some thing) else?

Are creative people virtuosos in the sense of masters of the violin, or in the sense of jack-of-all-trades, master of none?

How important is faith to creativity? How about trust?

Do creative people have to know themselves, as the Delphic oracle asserted?

Is creativity mostly about the ideas, or about the execution of those ideas?

Why do people not create or innovate?

Is there anything new under the sun?

Does creativity thrive on imperfection in self and other?

How important is it to be at the right time and place? How does chance favor the prepared mind exactly? Is it possible to so over-prepare, that you eliminate the possibility of a creative outcome?

Can dreaming make you more creative? What about lucid dreaming? What about day dreaming?

Are art and work ultimately incompatible? Can the industrial be considered artistic?

Are most creative ideas actually ridiculous masquerading as good ideas?

Is being creative necessarily a wasteful process?

Is tinkering a good metaphor for brainstorming? And vice versa?

Is there really a fine line between genius and madness? Do creative people tend to be crazy people?

Where do preconceived notions come from?

Is creativity contagious?

Was Santayana right when he said, "Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it"?

Do creative people crave clarity or do they thrive on ambiguity and the unknown?

Do certain occupations attract more creative people than other occupations? Why so?

If actors are so creative, why do they make for such dull interview subjects?

How many people does it take to launch a revolution? That is to say, how many people did it take to start the Renaissance, or the American Revolution?
Is it possible to put yourself in a more or less creative environment? Are there places that are better for generating ideas than others?

What is the relationship between creativity and personal emotional state? Can disgruntled people truly be creative?

What are the etymological origins of the word “creativity” and “create” and “creator” and “creative”? Check the OED.

Is there a relationship between creativity and godliness?

What is the relationship between creativity and love or passion? Is it possible to manufacture creative solutions, as by some sort of automatic machine or algorithm?

What is the relationship between creativity and conformity? Is it true that the best leaders are those who tell you, in an articulate way, what you already believe?

What is it about new ideas that can make them seem frightening? Is creativity destructive as often as it is constructive?

Are uncreative artists truly artists? Why is artistic creativity prized, while creative accounting is abhorred?

Is it possible to use up your stockpile of creativity?

Why do some people claim that meditation or yoga or exercise enhances personal creativity? What is the relationship between body and brain?

Can grave people be as creative as playful people? Why are rigid people not generally considered creative?

Is there such a thing as an orthodox creative thinker, and an unorthodox creative thinker?

Can creativity be learned, or is it an innate personality trait? Which majors do you think accept that creativity is something innate versus something learned? (Education majors think it is innate; biology majors say learned; engineering majors split 50-50.)

Creativity is often applied in solving problems? Is there anything wrong with thinking of creativity in this way?

What are the best ways to express creative thinking to others? Visually? With PowerPoint?

Why is curiosity perceived as really important to scientific and mathematical creativity, but perhaps less so in other fields?

Should creativity be taught like reading, writing, and arithmetic? Why or why not?

How important is creativity to career success, when compared with intelligence, personability, persistence, curiosity, and fearlessness?

Is it easier to learn creativity at work, at home, or in the classroom?

Is working hard and doing more incompatible with being creative?
How important are technologies as tools to augment or support human creativity? Can human creativity, or any "parts" of human creativity, be supplanted or automated?

How would you go about testing an individual human being for creative thinking or ability?

What are the great barriers to creativity? Which is the greatest impediment to creativity: lack of time, lack or resources, or lack of training?

Does creativity typically diminish in collaboration, or does it increase? Why or why not?

Which countries (or American states) would you consider most and least creative? How would you measure such a thing?

Would you as a college student be more or less creative if you had to incorporate input on any given project from children, people your own age, people of middle age, or elderly people?

Is there a link between mental illness and creativity? Which mental illnesses tend to make a person more creative? (bipolar, schizophrenia, setting of dementia, depression) If this is so, is it fair to say that the mentally ill are actually diseased? Or is it possible that creativity is a disease or infection? By medicating the mentally ill, are we making them less creative? Perhaps society sees creativity as a danger that must be assuaged or removed by medication or counseling?

Do counselors and psychiatrists tend to make people less creative by making them less excitable, tumultuous, or depressed?

When and how should we treat the creative mentally ill? How do we know when, and when not, to treat them? Are certain societies “too quick” or “too slow” to medicate?

Are your professors more creative than the general population? Are JMU students more creative than the general population of young people? Are JMU Honors students more creative than non-Honors students?

If you mimic the mentally ill, can you make yourself more creative?

Is there a link between creativity and dopamine level in the brain? Or other brain chemistry neurotransmitters?

How important is happenstance or serendipity to creativity? Is serendipity more important than flexibility in the site in which work is performed?

Is the product of a deranged mind – as with a painting or piece of music, for example – inherently less interesting than the product of a normal mind, even if the two products looked, felt, or sounded the same? What if the product was a business plan instead?

Is it wrong to think of the best creative activity as different from maximum titillation?

Would it be possible for a creative person to enter a state of “flow,” by creating an emotional resonance in their brains and sensing a beauty or harmony or sense of meaning in the world that rarely if ever exists? Would this person then be deluding themselves in order to achieve maximum creativity?

Is homogeneity a possible outcome of creative thought and action?
Do you believe that certain nootropic drugs might make you more creative? Do certain drugs improve certain aspects of creativity more than others?

Is using drugs to "get another perspective" so different from trying to put yourself in another's shoes? Could creative thoughts be equated at all with hallucinations or altered perceptions?

Is psychedelic therapy or cannabis cheating if it works? Is it cheating in the same way that getting a formal education or running is cheating?

Could creativity be enhanced by impairing or interfering with our access long-term or short-term memory?

What are the various "aspects" of creativity? Is creativity multispectral? Can we put creativity on a spectrum like we do autism?

Could we say that creativity is an evolutionary adaptation? What is it an adaptation to?

Do people who suffer from synesthesia tend to be more creative?

Are women more creative than men?

Is creativity mostly about visual insight? Which sense organs have the potential to be most creative? Is that inherent? Or is there something cultural about the potential accorded to each sense?

Why do we privilege the experience of the "flash of insight" (Eureka!) over the slow, painful process that accompanies release from habit or convention or custom?

Is opposition to change the same as opposition to creativity? Are traditional societies less creative because they are conservative? Are all traditional societies conservative? Is it possible to think of traditional societies as more creative than international popular culture today?

Are we engaged in an anthropological and ecological transformation due to interaction between evolutionary factors and human creativity that has no historical precedent? Are we remaking ourselves in a way that has no parallel? What is the relationship between creativity and transhumanity? Are we driving evolution in the direction of a more diverse world and more diverse people, or instead into a blind canyon?

"Entrepreneurship" and 'Japan' are two word that are not frequently associated." Are the Japanese really less creative than Americans (or the Chinese, for that matter)? Is it racism that makes us think so? Are we failing to see creativity that is there because of cultural blinders? What if I told you the Japanese think they have a problem, for instance, in creating software that's as good as their hardware.

How important is social hierarchy and worker mobility to creativity?

What's the difference between creativity and innovation and productivity?

Is creativity a problem for capitalism? Or for government and the law? Or family?

What makes young people apathetic or dejected or disengaged or indifferent?

Are creativity and conformity opposites?
Do creative young people deserve a creative curriculum and incubator custom-tailored to their needs, much in the same way that football players need exercise programs and equipment that fill their particular needs?


Do liberals tend to be more creative thinkers?

Are planning, discipline, and certainty antithetical to creative thinking? Why does creativity automatically presume risk, flexibility, and uncertainty?

Can we actually “mold” people into “freethinking” individuals? If people are taught to question authority, are they really questioning authority? Or are they simply learning to accept authority that says they must question it?

How do creative people react to injustice or bullying?

What does it really mean to “rock the boat”?

Is choice and individualism more important than standards in taking creative action?

Assuming for the moment that we are on the “right” side of the fence, should we have sympathy for uncreative people? Or is this one of those situations where “might makes right“?

Where do we draw the line between “room to grow” and “chaos”?

Is creativity contextual? Think of the metaphor of the hothouse flower, for instance.

Metaphors: What the heck is “thinking outside the box”? What does it mean to “put two and two together”? What does it mean to “see both sides of the problem”?

How important are leisure and rest to creativity? My graduate advisor used to say that I could rest when I was in the grave. Was that advice meant to make me more creative? Or just more productive?

Is entrepreneurship just business-code for creativity?

Does the consensus-making process invariably reduce creativity?

Why does international society prize “disruptive innovations”? Can’t those be dangerous things, especially at this time in world history? Is sustainability dis-disruptive? Or fundamentally uncreative? If you take as your motto, “Do as little harm as possible,” is it still possible to be creative?

Is it creative to put “old wine in new bottles”? How do you know that when a label says something is “new and improved” it really is new and improved?

Is a college degree or graduate degree a license to start printing “creativity”?

What happens to young people when they are supposed to be relatively energetic and bold, but have their motivation and behavior constricted? Do we as a culture send mixed messages like this with regard to creativity?
Does helicopter and bulldozer parenting style inhibit creativity? Are honors students, then, among the most uncreative students? Why isn’t deviance seen as inherently creative?

How does cultural hybridization bring about diversity and creative solutions?

Does state power to shape individual lives always hamper creativity? Is institutionalization the worst thing you can do to creative people?

Does a formal education quash genius and creativity? What about memorization?

What does “teaching mastery” have to do with creativity?

Can creativity actually compensate for a lack of intelligence? That is to say, can only intelligent people be creative? Is it possible to be too intelligent to be creative?

Where are the most creative cities in America located? What makes them safe harbors for the creative class? What’s the difference between a creative city and a cultured city? What do creative people do to change the way cities look or operate? What attracts creative people to certain places? What lures can draw them in? Why does a “bohemian” downtown look creative?

Are creative people typically producers or consumers? Can there be such a thing as a creative consumer? What is a prosumer?

What are the most and least creative professions?

Evaluate the following: “It is as if cities and regions lost faith in generating their own wealth and began to believe that wealth could only come from elsewhere.”

Should creative people be more competitive, or more collaborative? What’s the right formula for “success”?

What is the “creative economy,” and what kinds of businesses are part of it? Are creative industries mostly service and tech industries? What is the “knowledge economy”?

Is talking about a creative class kind of classist? Is there a 1% of people who are highly creative within the creative class? What separates the top one or ten percent of highly creative people from the rest of the creative people in our economy? Programmers talk about how the top one percent of developers are ten times as productive as the average. How do they get that way?

Is post-industrial creativity different from pre-industrial and industrial creativity?

What is the relationship between creativity and academic achievement? What is the relationship between creativity and intelligence quotient?

Does creative achievement depend of geography? Are some cities or countries or places more creative than other places? Can high engagement or isolation breed creativity? Are rural places less (or more) creative than urban places? Are “placeless” people who move around a lot (or have no place they call home) more creative than people who are tethered to specific locations?

How can/do creative people compensate for a lack of innate intelligence?

Are young people more creative than old people? Why or why not? In what sense?
Are some industries more creative than others? Why is this so? Have there always been industries we described as particularly creative?

Are some cultures more creative than other cultures?

What's the relationship between creativity and consumption (particularly cultural consumption)? Prosumption? Production? Are creative always looking out for “the new” and “the next big thing” and “the awesome” and “the cool.”

Are people who watch television or read books or engage in other hobbies and interests more or less creative than others?

What are the “magnets” that draw creative people to certain cities or institutions or communities of interest/participation?

Are growth and competition signs of creative action?

Which socioeconomic class is considered the most or least creative?

Why does knowledge matter more than manufacturing for cultural creative?

How is cultural/historical heritage and tourism a creative product?

What's the difference between creativity and innovation?

Is creativity a prominent feature of individualistic people, or social people?

How do we know how much “value” a creative or artistic people contributes to society? Can it be calculated in any meaningful way?

Can we find pockets of creative laborers in the wild, or must they be developed in some way first?

Does cultural production depend on the fashion model? Can what was once be described as creative, go out of style?

Do creative people tend to be self-employed?

Do people who are creative in certain disciplines tend to be (relatively speaking) creative in all disciplines? To what extent? Perhaps only in related disciplines? To what extent there?

Do creative people tend to congregate in certain occupations? Which ones? Why?

Pop interviewers sometimes complain that actors/actresses are lousy interviewees. Are movie stars as a group less creative somehow than the usual staples of pop culture – musicians, artists, comedians, writers, and so forth? Or do we tend to underestimate the creativity of pop culture performers in general, or within certain groups?

Can government policies encourage creativity where a deficit existed? How are creative deficits perceived in the first place?

Why do hosts view visitors as excuses to engage in creative activity or patronize creative institutions?

Do creative people organize their groups and clubs differently from non-creative people?
Do creative people live different private lives than non-creative people? Are they messier? More private?

Does being around messiness lead people away from conventionality? Does tidiness elicit a desire for convention? If you spend more time in a messy environment, will you naturally be more creative?

Is divergence from the status quo the essence of ingenuity?

Are people who are highly educated more creative than those who are not?

Are artists more creative than accountants? Are scientists more creative than engineers?

Are certain cities or regions more creative than other areas? Why might they be considered more creative?

Are white collar workers more creative than blue collar workers? Or is it the other way around?

How do the behaviors that people exhibit inspire creativity?

Do the ecosystems of creative cities make creative people? Or do creative people make creative cities?

Are the self-employed evidence of creativity? How is risk taking related to creativity?

Does unemployment, automation, and economic distress make people more creative? Do limits, rules, and constraints boost creative thinking?

Are parochial people less creative than those who are footloose and fancy free?

Do people who live and work closer to one another have opportunities for serendipity that are not available to those who living in sparsely populated areas?

Are the politics of creative people different from the politics of less creative folks?

Are creative people more, or less, wealthy than the average?

Who are the patrons of creative people? Who identifies and hires them?

Is entrepreneurship the same thing as creativity, but just focused on business creativity?

How exactly do people gain “inspiration” or “get an idea”?

What did Francis Galton think “genius” was?

Are creativity and intelligence directly linked, as Alfred Binet believed?

What did Freud mean when he called creativity the sublimation of drives?

What are the psychoanalytic, cognitive, behavioristic, and humanistic explanations of creativity?

Does testing reduce the chance of rewards for “divergent thinkers”?

How do creative people turn out differently than other people? Is it a function of nature or nurture? How much of both?
Can you best measure the creativity of people by looking at their lives, or instead the product or outcomes of their lives?

How much does personal wealth inspire (or foil) creative pursuits?

How would different disciplines grapple with the problems of creativity?

Should the West be engaged in encouraging “democratic” or “ordinary” creativity, rather than aristocratic or “high” (exceptional) forms of creativity?

Why are some people good at improvisation, and others are not?

Can creativity be learned?

Does a Montessori education produce more self-expressive, creative people than other educational models?

If the ideal learner is one who conforms, are we education people wrong? Or right?

What is the role of mentorship in modeling creativity?

What is lateral thinking?

If we can find gifted people in our classrooms, can we also find and identify uncreative or unoriginal kids? What should we do, in terms of an education, for each group? The same thing? Or different things?

Is creativity gender specific in any ways?

Is the Eastern conception of creativity different from the Western conception of creativity?

What does it mean to be “inspired”? Where does inspiration come from?

Is it possible to systematize or automate a pattern of “divergent” thinking?

What is the effect of certain types of work on creativity?

What inspires creativity in the classroom? Is nature a more creative place for people?

Do people tend to be more creative when they develop their own problems to work on? Or does it help when other people assign them the tasks?

How important is extrinsic reward and intrinsic drive in harnessing creativity? Can extrinsic rewards actually undermine creativity?

If you were going to develop a test for creativity, how would you set it up? What would it include?

What is true novelty, and what is just cyclical styles or planned obsolescence?

Can the creativity of one person be judged against the creativity of another?

The economist Joseph Schumpeter coined the term “creative destruction” as a description of the capitalist enterprise. Is this what we mean by creativity in business?
Is criminal behavior creative? Or is it generally considered the product of uncreative minds? Why are we so fascinated by criminal minds?

Are some generations of people less creative than other generations? Do we live in a “sit back and be told” generation, or a “make and do” generation?

Are people made more creative with the use of technology and computers, or less creative?

Do you think men and women have different ideas about what constitutes creativity? Do men seem to prefer novelty, and women ideas and elegance?

Is creativity something that is culture or society specific? Are the Mennonites and Amish less creative than other Americans?

What does it mean to be a good improvisational actor, dancer, musician, comedian, or other performer? How does a person go about “losing themselves”?

What’s the difference between talent and creativity? Can creativity be inherited? Is the creative person made or are they born?

Is it possible that creative people are just “lucky”? That their creativity is perceived only because they were at the right place at the right time?

Could creative expression be considered addictive behavior? Or possibly something a person does to get the dopamine rush demanded?

What is spontaneity? Or quick-wittedness? Do some people just operate at a higher clock speed? Perhaps this is what happens to people as they age? Their perceived clock speed goes up, which causes somatic damage.

What happens to the brain during jazz improv? Is improv the opposite of memorized performance?

What is the relationship between focused attention and ability to engage in creative work? How about the relationship with working and long-term memory?

Does meditation, focused observation, exercise, or yoga make a person more likely to engage in creative activity?

Does sleeping and dreaming really help us with our waking hours and plans? Do our dreams (lucid or otherwise) and uncontrolled consciousness lead to creativity while awake? It’s been said that sleep deprivation causes lag in prefrontal thinking, which in turn increases the sensation of “flow.” Is this a good way to achieve creative maximum potential?

Should creative ideas be analyzed? If so, how quickly after they are born? Should they be put away someplace on three-by-five cards and organized later? Do the most creative ideas make any sense? Or is there something about incongruity that makes them creative. Consider the joke: What’s green and when you get it stuck between your teeth, you die? A tractor.

What happens to the brain at moments of self-reported creativity? Or when a person is observing another person whom they consider creative?
Are creative people generally considered trustworthy? As trustworthy as the rest of the population? Why or why not?

Do creative people get more or less sex than the rest of us?

Do creative people tend to have addictions or take risks that others would not? Why is that? Is it because we fear failure? Or something else?

Rock musicians take lots of drugs, have lots of sex, and get very little sleep. Is this helping them? What helped the Beatles?

Can we train our working memory to increase the feeling of flow and expectations of creativity?

What part of the brain is most involved in creative work? What is the "seat of creativity" in the brain?

Can perseverance make up for lack of creativity? What about working in teams?

Is the production of novelty in human information processing pretty rare? Or rather pretty common? I ask because novelty is pretty hard to come by in machine intelligence and intelligence in other animals?

What's the role of beginner's luck? Is it true that past thinking about a problem can actually interfere with the long-term ability to solve a problem? Why else would people go back to “first principles” or “square one” in their thinking about difficult problems?

Who are the most creative people in history? What about fictional characters like Sherlock Holmes?

Why do intense emotional experiences often need deliberate creative outlets?

What are the effects of age on creativity? What are the effects of creativity on the aging process?

What is the relationship between intelligence and creativity?

What is the role of deep immersion in the production of creative work later? Does one need to be steeped in all crafts or professions to become gifted in them?

Does emotional self-knowledge count towards creativity in most areas of work? Why or why not?

Is creative productivity a product of chronological age or career age? Why is it that mathematicians peak at mathematicians peak on average at 26.5 years of career age, while historians peak at 38.5? There is a view among historians that eminence in the field does not occur before the age of 40, and indeed, there are no 25-year-old savant historians.

Why are younger scientists more receptive to innovation than older scientists?

Maybe creativity is actually randomly distributed, or stochastic? What if they really do come from outer space, as Edison asserted? Maybe they are the product of cosmic rays interacting with brain cells? Why is it fun to go on treasure hunts or dig up dinosaur bones?

Is there a way to stave off cognitive inflexibility as we age?

Does emotion affect our creative abilities?
Why is it that reading, writing, and arithmetic are encouraged in human education? Do they all tend to make us more creative? What happens in elementary school? Does that make us more creative? Or does it tend to habituate us to the rules of society, which shows us proper creative outlets?

What is the role of natural beauty, simplicity, and aesthetics in creativity?

Who gets to judge what is considered “extraordinary creativity”? Who should judge what is considered extraordinary creativity?

Is there something mystical or spiritual about creativity? Is this something that happens in religious communities on a daily basis?

What is the relationship between peer review and creative expression? Does peer review and professionalism tend to make a community less creative over the long haul? What does the profession and what do other people get in exchange for a reduction in creativity? When should we quit caring what the community thinks is creative?

Are awards given to the most creative people?

Should people change careers or locations periodically to maintain their creative juices?

What would lead people to hide their creative energies? Are they the same reasons a person would hide their intelligence or refuse to identify themselves as honors students?

What is the role of an emergency (like an Ebola outbreak) in the production of creativity? Do wars tend to produce more novelty or less?

Why don’t we expect moments of extraordinary creativity from students before college? Is it something about brain development or social expectation?

Why are both complexity and simplicity admired in creative solutions? Is aesthetic appeal necessary for creative work?

Is there really a role for failure in the creative process? Or does failure just tend to make someone less likely to take a risk that could generate a creative solution?

Is it possible to be creative in a way that does not result in aesthetic appeal or does not solve some problem? Can process alone without product be creative? What’s the difference between creativity and productivity?

Do strong emotions propel creativity? Or do they interfere with creativity?

Is thinking easy for a computer but doing hard? Explore Moravec’s paradox and creativity.

Do alcohol and drugs boost creativity? Which ones? Just marijuana and caffeine? What about other smart drugs? What about ayahuasca?

Do people who are creative tend to have trouble negotiating daily life? Does creativity begin as a sort of affectation that people wear like a suit of clothes? Or is that the wrong way to go about becoming creative?

Can rules actually enable creativity?
Does a collectivist society tend to dampen creativity? Is there such a thing as collective creativity? Are collaborative senior projects more or less creative than individual ones? Why are independent senior projects favored more in the humanities than in the sciences?

Why is emotional expression more subdued in the East than in the West? Why do Westerners tend to think that creativity can be fostered by interdependence, but not by dependence? Explore this concept in the context of Japanese amae.

Why do people in the East say that creative responses to problems and situations need to also be authentic, rather than simply novel? Why is creativity simply for the sake of novelty inappropriate in the East but not nearly as often in the West? Is this sentiment changing?

Is creativity an escape mechanism from reality?

Are creative people more self-aware of themselves? Or less self-aware?

Should the product of creativity persist, like the Eiffel Tower? Or should it be ephemeral like the graffiti of Banksy? (Watch Exit through the Gift Shop)

What can be done to help gifted children understand their giftedness? What can be done to prevent or manage grandiosity and depression?

Is it possible to get to the top of the ladder of success and fail to contribute anything unique or useful? How does this happen?

What is the purpose of creativity? Is it self-actualization?

Why is creativity considered symptomatic of insanity in the West, but supreme sanity in the East?

Does creativity require personal adversity? Does it perish in ease and comfort?

Can creativity be automated? What does the P v. NP question have to do with creativity? Can most problems that demand creative or elegant solutions also be solved with brute force, if given enough time?

Can creativity only flourish in a climate where there is no absolute truth?

Why is it so hard to be creative, but so easy to see a creative solution after it has been implemented?

Is remixing a form of creative expression? Is it a lesser form?

What are the effects of extrinsic rewards on creativity? Can the promise of a reward increase creativity?

What’s the relationship between the difficulty or complexity of a job and the creativity of the person doing that job?

Is necessity the mother of invention?

What does the cognitive style of the employee have to do with their creativity? Are multitaskers more or less creative than batch processors?

Is there really anything original under the sun?
What locations are generally considered most creative? Why is there a sub-reddit on shower thoughts?

What is the relationship between creativity and imagination?

Is inspiration a kind of fever or madness?

Plato said that creativity was divinely inspired. Was he right?

Why does the stereotypical creative personality tend to be such a mixed bag? (Open to new experiences, less conventional and less conscientious, more self-confident, self-accepting, driven, ambitious, dominant, hostile, and impulsive.)

Is creativity always a social phenomenon? Can hermits be creative? What about the mathematician who goes into the closet for years or decades in order to solve an intractable problem? Or the writer who retreats to his or her cabin for inspiration?

What is different about the creativity of people who have lost one of their senses? What does creativity mean to a blind person, or to one who cannot hear?

Can creativity be explained as a naturalistic phenomenon? Can it be turned into a rational science? Are there natural or socio-natural laws of creativity?

Does genius exist in all areas of human endeavor? Does it flourish mostly in the fine arts? Is this because the fine arts don’t have so many rules that would thwart the efforts of the artist-genius?

Are works of genius discovered or created? Do they fall from the sky as platonic forms?

Are human communities generally too quick to toss out useless or worthless originality in favor of those that surprise, horrify, or generate value?

What’s the relationship between creativity for good, and so called “dark” or malevolent creativity? Was Osama bin Laden extremely creative?

Can a tree act creatively? What about other plants and animals?

What is flair?

Does play in childhood contribute to creativity in adulthood? Do adults quit playing? Or do they only fool themselves into thinking that they have quit playing?

Is it just as creative to make disconnections between things as to make connections between things?

Are giftedness and intelligence closely related?

What are the conditions under which giftedness is most likely to blossom? What’s the relationship between high-achieving and high-ability?

What kinds of things destroy intrinsic motivation and creativity?

How does the brain generate creative ideas and solutions? Is it possible to look inside the brain and find evidence of creative thinking?
Can we train people to be more creative?

Is creativity a desirable goal in the elementary grades? The middle school years? In high school? What about in college and beyond?

Is creativity a Darwinian process?

Is creativity portable? Could someone like director J.J. Abrams successfully manage the Yankees?

Who is more creative: Superman or the Fantastic 4?

Is there anything creative about the math or accounting learned from kindergarten straight through college? When do such people actually become creative?

Is there a standard creative methodology for tackling most problems?

When you are about to begin a new topic, do you prefer to assimilate what is known first or do you try your own approach?

Do you concentrate on one problem for a protracted period of time or on several problems at the same time?

Have your best ideas been the result of prolonged deliberate effort or have they occurred when you were engaged in other unrelated tasks?

How do you form an intuition about the truth of a proposition?

Do computers play a role in your creative work?

What types of mental imagery, analogies, or metaphors do you use when thinking problems?

Are creative thinking and logical thinking synonymous? Or are they very different things? Would it be fair to see engineers as logical, uncreative thinkers, and entrepreneurs and creative, non-logical thinkers?

What traits do Honors students have that other students do not? Paradoxical: (Breadth and depth? Focus and ability to relax? Smart and uncertain? Disciplined and playful? Realistic and imaginative? Introverted and extroverted? Humble and proud? Traditional and rebellious? Objective and passionate? Suffer pain and pleasure?

What’s the ratio between ideas and good ideas for successful people?

Can making unusual or unexpected connections be practiced?

Why is it helpful to move away from the normal environment for a problem?

How common is the solitary genius compared to the one who is socialized to a group for criticism and purposes of engagement and inspiration?

What is a small world network and why is it important to creativity?

How do conventions help us collaborate and become more creative?
What is the effect of the university – of JMU – on the creativity of certain majors? What about the geographical location of the place? Do we tend to exchange common or unique perspectives? Do we suffocate ourselves with conventional thinking? Or do we allow diversity to flourish alongside consensus thinking? Are our tastes and skills different enough, given the composition of the student body and the faculty body?

What are the collaborative risks where invention is based on teamwork such that the end product is collaborative handiwork?

How important is randomness to curiosity and creative production?

For the artist, does the pencil work before the brain or after the brain? Is your hand finding something to draw, or is your brain finding something to draw? Would it be different for the architect?

Is there a difference between real and fake creativity? Does an open-ended game like The Sims encourage a fake creativity?

How important are off-site retreats to the flourishing of community and creativity?

How useful are certain tools, like PowerPoint, at the sharing of ideas? How useful are certain tools at making persuasive arguments?

What’s the difference between invention and innovation? Does one demand more collaboration than the other?

What are the roles of purpose, meaning, and identity in creative endeavors?

Do we define people too often by their knowledge, rather than their ability to apply it?

What are common shared spaces for creative play? How should we reconsider them?

Can a whole organization bring creative energies to the individual employee? What is it about “Google” that makes them so creative?

What is iterative development, and how does it work? What does it mean to prototype something? How important is play to all creative endeavors?

Does creative endeavor ever hurt people? Can uncreative people be displaced? Harmed? Can they be made obsolete? Have genocides or environmental degradation ever been perpetrated because of the unleashing of creative energies?

Can creativity be automated? What happens to the human beings who see aspects of their jobs turned over to machines?

Can computer programming hack something as subjective as grading English papers? Why do we try?

At what point do generative algorithms do something really creative, like art? Should art be the gold standard of creativity?

Is creativity the answer to all problems? Or just certain classes of problems?
What is a best practice and how do we know that it’s a creative way of approaching a common problem? Do all problems need to be solved? What about the human condition? Posthumanism and transhumanism attempt to solve the problem called the human condition.

How do you recruit creative people to a particular cause or program? Are the people who begin with the most amount of raw creativity the ones who ultimately produce the most? How can dawning creativity be identified and incubated? Is there anything worse than the creative person whose time has passed?

Do creative people tend to be people pleasers? Or do they tend to reject new ideas from other people?

Look at the world around you, David. What do you see? An endless theme park, with everything turned into entertainment. Science, politics, education – they’re so many fairground rides. Is this what twenty-first century creativity has wrought?

Is urban renewal a creative act? Were the people living in the inner cities prior to their renaissance simply uncreatives?

Does interdisciplinarity or transdisciplinarity boost a person’s creativity?

What happens to creativity when it crosses borders between cultures?

What is insight and epiphany? Can it be helped by such structures as systems theory?

Can creativity be taught?

What is anti-conventional thinking? Can it be cultivated? Can you really trick your brain into doing the opposite of what it tends to do when solving problems? How can you turn a problem on its head? When is a problem really a feature?

Why is creativity such a legitimate topic of interest in Europe, but not in America? Is it because America is so conservative on the international spectrum of politics? Or because creativity is innate in Americans?

Is creativity elusive and fleeting? Or can it be manageable?

How can the corporate world benefit from knowledge, attitudes, and practices from the art world?

Does it seem most corporate brainstorm sessions generate little more than pat phrases comprising the management’s favorite buzz words? What is the purpose of phrases like “the engaged university” and the “eight key questions”?

How do you cultivate creativity? How do you kill it?

Why are clever people so rarely at the top of the corporate ladder? Or are they? Why do top actors behave so stupidly? Or do they? What does it mean to be “crazy like a fox”?

Zweig once told Freud about Vienna: “There was sperm in the air!” What does it take to make a space that creative?

A question that I wish we could put to Robin Williams: What makes people want to go on with the effort required from life? Why does that sometimes go away?
Why do we do things with no discernible extrinsic rewards? Rock climbing, for example. Or reading science fiction short stories.

What has the age of mass amateurization done for creativity? What has happened to professionalism and professionalized forms of creativity?

Can creativity be random or accidental? Can something be considered creative that is not deliberately (or deliberatively) formed?

Does the creative person really have to “create” something? How physical does it have to be? Can it simply be an idea that is applied?

How should creative people be rewarded? Should they be praised? And if so, how?

Have a look at the creative individual who you admire the most. Which creative persons or creative works have influenced her? Do you know your domain? Use the criteria to get a clearer impression of your domain. What is your creative community, your field? What criteria do they have? Why may they decide whether your works are creative or not? What do you get from them and what do they get from you? Whom can or should you ignore?

Is creativity always the result of an interaction? Why is attribution of a creation or work to a field so important to determining creativity? How do we determine who has contributed to the canon and who has not?

Where do ideas come from? What are the most important habits of creative people? How do they organize their lives?

Is hard work necessary for creativity? How much work? What amount of work must be produced? Who determines this? What metrics are available?

How much time does it take to become an expert at something? 10,000 hours seems to be the standard.

Why are there no polymaths anymore?

Why do we waste time on activities unrelated to our work? Is there a point to this? Are there people who are mostly asleep and consumers and others who are mostly aware and producers?

Are all ideas really good ones – but most simply come along at a time where they cannot be used productively?

Ever wanted to do something creative, but you had no idea what to do? Where does boredom come from?

How creative is it to pick up projects again long after you dropped them the first (or second, or third ...) time?

Can lightning strike twice in the same place?

What happens to people when they win the lottery or when their house burns down? Have you ever suffered a misfortune that turned out to be one of the greatest things that ever happened to you?

Is it helpful to the flow of your creative juices to contact experts? At what point is it useful?
How important is visualization to creative productions? How important are mistakes and failures? What is a defensible mistake? An indefensible mistake?

What role does time play in creativity?

What can you do with prolonged demotivation?

Does creativity demand good information management?

What are good reasons to defer to the creativity of other people?

What can you do about creative burnout? When and how should you start afresh or anew?

What motivates us to be creative in the first place?

What makes some creative solutions unpopular? Are there any common themes?

What prevents creative people from finishing projects?

During what portion of their lives are great innovators most creative?

Is the creativity of older people different than the creativity experienced by younger people? What’s the difference between an Old Master and a Young Genius? What does the life cycle of creativity look like?

What is “everyday creativity” and why is it important?

What is the point of school? How much can we ultimately learn from it? Everything? Nothing? Something in between?

Why do creative experiences seem relatable to mystical or spiritual or religious experiences?

How do you know it when you observe a poorly conceived business? Or restaurant? Or project? What is it about it that tells you it will fail? Conversely, what is it about a successful business that tells you it will succeed?

Is success the standard by which we should evaluate creative expression?

Why does creativity seem to get quashed so often in business? What does it mean to “sell-out”? Why build a business around your creative passion?

How do you prepare people for change or make them ready for change?

Ask yourself: What could you be world-class at if only given the time, resources, and opportunity?

Should creativity be customer-focused or product-focused? Or focused on the self?

Are creativity and psychopathology intimately connected? Are genius and madness tantamount to the same thing? Is there a common genetic component? Is there a creativity gene? When does independence and nonconformity become psychosis or mental illness? Is creativity incompatible with mental and emotional health?

What makes a book or idea or person influential?

Why does it seem that rebellion leads to creative output?
Can highly regimented or stylized activities still produce creative flow?

Why is DIY practice derived from watching YouTube clips or reading descriptions problematic? What is the role of the human master or teacher directly interacting with the student?

What is wrong with copyright law in the age of sharing? Does digital culture demand a different set of ethical standards?

Do brighter walls make more creative students?

Is Disney a creative enterprise?

Are you individually creative, or are you a better leader of creative teams?

How important is introspection to ongoing creative success? How important is post-game analysis or post-mortem reflection?

What is lateral thinking and how is it an aid in creative problem solving?

What is the role of provocation in creative problem solving?

How much creativity is beginner’s luck or is born of innocence or ignorance?

What are the most creative sectors of the economy today? What were they in the 1990s or 1980s or 1970s? What are the least creative economic sectors today? Could they be the most creative in the decades to come? How do you know?

Can creativity in product development be reduced to a checklist approach? (See Osborn’s Checklist; Van Gundy’s PICL)

Is creativity an asset or a burden in the classroom? Why do teachers dislike personality traits that correlate with creativity? Why are they considered obnoxious? Do schools kill creativity?

Is it possible to measure creativity in a comparative international manner?

When do we know that a creative process is taking place? What are the signs?

Can creative processes be institutionalized?

To what degree do you agree with the goals of a particular group or institution? What does that mean for your ability to craft and implement a creative response?

How does creativity get sidetracked by yourself, others, or a situation?

Does gender matter where creativity is concerned? What about race or ethnicity?

We often assume that creativity is a liberal value and stands against tradition. Is there such a thing as conservative creativity?

Why are creative thinkers often more dishonest than the rest of us? Does out of the box thinking promote unethical behavior? Do divergent thinkers tend to cheat more often?

Is creativity always beneficial?
Where do new styles and historical periods come from? Why did the Renaissance and Enlightenment happen? Are these real phenomena? Where do cultures come from?

Do centralized, decentralized, or distributed projects produce the most elegance or novelty?

What is the relationship between creativity and intelligence?

Is convergent thinking just as creative as divergent thinking? Why is groupthink derided in our society? Is the East the exception, or the rule, in human history?

What is the relationship between mischievousness and creativity? Crime and creativity?

Does ego produce creative expression, or is it the other way around: that creative expression magnifies ego?

What happens to creative medical students? Are they punished?

Does creativity require free will? Is there a role for blind variation? What about in the case of synesthesia, which some people say helps the creative process?

How are people using digital technologies creatively?

What do creativity, innovation, and quality have in common with one another?

Do people hate change? What type of people do, and what type do not?

How many ideas are really out there? Music and twitter examples.

Does brainstorming work? Is there only one kind of brainstorming?

What exactly is play and what is it good for? Are we meant to quit doing it as adults?

Materialism is generally considered a bad thing. Is it helpful to think through making? In all cases?

Does love make us more creative? Does the mating ritual add creativity to the world? Why are muses predominantly women who inspire men?

Is creativity mostly something that is “unleashed” or “untethered” or “wacky”?

Do creative people tend to be androgynous?

Do creative people tend to be naïve as they approach problems?

What makes one institution a “creativity laboratory” while another is no such thing? What makes an institution motivated and energized?

Is there a role for obedience in creative endeavor?

What do successful directors do to facilitate creativity? How do you facilitate a clear framework for the work from a management perspective? Do you need to start with the box before you can think outside the box? Well-known television producer Quinn Martin is quoted as saying that producing successful entertainment is “75% craft and 25% creativity...you need to know the rules before you can break them.” How do you create a safe container for employees? What’s the best way to share
and repeat your vision? What is phase management? How do effective managers divide work up into phases?

How does an effective manager motivate a prima donna? What about a performance addict? What about a pragmatist? How about a paycheck to paycheck worker?

What effects has globalization and internationalization had on creativity?

Do the non-economic returns on creative labor matter in the United States?

What kinds of tolerances must exist to encourage creativity in a workforce?

Should creativity be dedicated more to the production of private goods or public goods?

Can creativity preserve and protect social stability? If so, how? Can it ward off corruption or undemocratic processes?

Does heritage help or hinder creativity? How do you know?

How can you recognize and manage creative people?

Do creative people tend to gravitate towards certain industries? Are they on the internet and other media a lot?

When Leonardo DaVinci was asked to name his greatest accomplishment, he answered, “Leonardo DaVinci.” What did he mean by that? Was he simply creating a brand out of himself?

People praise those who are devoted to their work. Can homemakers and parents be creative? Why is praise for that sort of creativity so often unsung?

What is constructive discontent? Why are so many creative people unsatisfied? What makes them unsatisfied?

Can videogames make us more creative? What is it about videogame playing that contributes to creativity? Is it the opportunity to experience vastly different visual environments in rapid succession that contributes to creativity? Is there something inherent in the hand-eye coordination required to play videogames that is responsible for its relationship to creativity? Or is the cognitive stimulation produced by playing videogames responsible for this relationship? On the practical side, can videogame designers use this new knowledge to create videogames that increase creativity?

Are art and theater useful or ornamental in nature? Is there something wrong with thinking of these things as frosting on the cake? Cake is necessary for survival, but there must be something more. Is design a luxury we cannot afford?

Is there such a thing as successful aging?

Why do we mostly remember feelings of flow from childhood? Why are those feelings frustrated now? What is a good life? What makes a life worth living?

Is the flow-state experienced in the same manner by all people? To say flow is universal is like saying that all peak sex is everywhere the same, and that “flow” is to play what orgasms is to sex. But who would be innocent enough of all the different contexts and acts that make sex meaningful to say something like that?
Many students go through their university years working only on theoretical problems within one field of study. Imagine what would happen if they tried to apply their skills in a practical cross-educational setting?

It may not be a coincidence that some great creators had hearing problems. Did you know that Beethoven lost his hearing when he was in his twenties? And that Thomas Edison was partially deaf from birth?

Is creativity mostly a way of finding self-expression?

Why do we describe geniuses, creatives, and artists as suffering souls? Are these people self-destructive?

Why are some obsessive geniuses completely colorless, while others are extremely colorful? Does it matter which a person is?

Is it dangerous to enhance creativity by chemical means? Why do so many people try it?

“Experience has shown,” wrote Edgar Allan Poe, “and a true philosophy will always show, that a vast, perhaps the larger, portion of the truth arises from the seemingly irrelevant.” What does Poe mean?

Does artistic creativity decline during elementary school? Mo Willems says we should continue scribbling as adults? Why do most of us quit drawing? Why do we quit caring about farm animals and agriculture?

Is creativity a general trait or is it mostly task-specific?

How many important questions can you ask about a rectangle? Do creative people tend to favor the most complex subjects and solutions? Is that a mistake?

Are collaborative and cooperative learning now overemphasized in education?

Would it be fair to say that academic talent gets you ahead in school, but creative talent gets you ahead in life? Or is that unfair to academic talent?

Do creative people tend to seek out the comfort of life, or are they instead energized by the challenge in life?

How to attain liberation of oneself? To liberate oneself is to set oneself free from traditional, cultural, social, political or self-imposed constraints. How do we actually go about doing those things?

Would it be fair to say that creativity in science is driven by nature? That creativity in business is driven by product development and wealth creation? That creativity in the humanities and fine arts is driven by self-fulfillment and happiness?

Can we use the tools of creativity to interact with the future?

Stewart Brand noticed the paradoxical nature of the internet in the 21st century: “Future historians may note that at the same period that technology acceleration was driving the world to operate on fleeting ‘Internet time’, environmentalists were teaching the world the long-term foresight and
responsibility of biosphere time. Just when technology was busy making us smarter, environmentalists began to make us wiser."

What’s the relationship between flow and mindfulness?

Who owns culture? What does copyright and patent do?

What increases the likelihood that someone will see, hear, or think the world differently in the first place?

Do creative people tend to deal in abstractions or materiality?

How does the notion of surprise in the theory of creativity differ from the notion of surprise in traditional information theory?

Why are some objects, such as works of art, more interesting or aesthetically rewarding than others? Why are humans somehow intrinsically motivated to observe them, even when they seem totally unrelated to solving typical problems such as hunger, and even when the action of observation requires a serious effort, such as spending hours to get to the museum?

What do we know about the source of innovation and creativity in individuals?

What is it about the nature of our culture, our society, and our economy that makes us more creative than other countries?

What contributes to the development of successful entrepreneurs?

Is creativity a form of therapeutic self-discovery?

How do scientists define creativity?

How do we know the experts are good at judging creativity? What if they are thought of as experts only because they’re attached to the old, dead, conventional ways of doing business?

Are you more likely to be creative if you are firstborn, or later born?

What does being an orphan have to do with achievement and creativity and success later in life?

Is creativity a heritable trait?

Do new ideas require purpose and intention?

Think of one of the most creative people that you personally know. Does he or she have any signs of mental illness?

If you have a pet—a dog or a cat—can you recall your pet doing anything that you would call creative?

How would you explain the fact that programs that write poetry have been more successful than programs that write prose? It isn't because poetry is easier to write; it's because human readers are used to reading meaning into ambiguous poems. In other words, when we read a poem, we expect to be doing a lot of interpretive work, providing much of the meaning ourselves. As a result, the program doesn’t have to be so good at writing meaning into the poem.
Does incubation occur by guided analogy or by random combination? Try simulating both.

Can we exclude computers as creative, simply because they behave in algorithmic ways? AI researchers would respond that this definition is unfairly limited; after all, it seems that many creative products result from algorithmic processes. Why shouldn’t we agree that the chemist’s new hydrocarbon complex is creative? And it raises a critical definitional problem: How can we know which mental processes are algorithmic, and which ones are truly creative? After Picasso and Braque painted their first cubist paintings, were all of the cubist paintings they did afterward just algorithmic? After Bach composed his first minuet, were all of his later minuets just algorithmic? If you follow a recipe, are you a cook? Do you become a chef when you break the rules? If an algorithm tells you what to do—if you follow a set of existing rules to create—most of us would agree that’s less creative than if you come up with something without using existing rules, or if you invent a whole new algorithm.

When AARON paints ... is the program really being creative? Much art these days depends as much on the viewer as on the view. Does this make the artist an automaton of sorts?

Computers are great at generating novelty, meaning random variation. Is this what we mean by human novelty? When you use a word processor to write, does that influence the type of writing that you do? In other words, do you write differently than when you write with pencil and paper? Have you ever used a computer program to draw, paint, design a Web site, or compose or produce electronic music? Does the design of the program influence your creative process, or affect the final created product? Would you say that the computer is a collaborator in your creativity? Or is it just a very complicated tool, like a pencil on steroids? Has your personal computer ever done anything that you didn’t expect? Would you say that this unexpected behavior was creative?

Why did the city of Florence experience such a dramatic and sustained burst of creativity during the Renaissance? Creativity is not only a property of individuals, but can also be considered to be a property of societies, cultures, and historical periods.

Thought experiments: A jazz performance, by definition, could not be created by a single solo performer. Think of some other creative activities that require a group. Have you ever worked on a creative project as part of a team? A high school or college play, a rock or jazz band, a dance ensemble? How did the creative process differ from when you work alone? Think of a close group of friends that you spend a lot of time with. Do you have any private jokes, or special slang words that no one else understands? Can you remember who created those inside jokes and terms, or how they were selected by the group for continued use? Have you ever been creative in a domain where you had no training or experience whatsoever? If so, how do you know you were creative—did someone in that domain’s field tell you so? Think of the most creative thing you’ve ever done. How much training and experience had you had in that creative domain? How do you know it was creative? Were there any members of the field that examined your product and evaluated it? Have you ever had a supportive, collaborative relationship with a senior member of a field—an editor, a reviewer, a producer or director, a curator, a college professor? Or if not, do you think of those sorts of people as obstacles, and never as helpers?

Have you ever traveled or lived overseas? If so, you probably realized for the first time how much living in the United States influenced your attitudes and approaches to life. Can you think of any of these differences that might relate to creativity?
Think of a domain that you are particularly creative in. When you meet other people who create in that domain, would you say that your backgrounds are similar? Or does your background stand out somehow?

How can we explain the similarities in creative products within a given time period?

Society can tolerate only a small amount of novelty on a regular basis. However, creativity requires novelty. So what allows society to tolerate or even to encourage novelty, in spite of its general preference for rules and routines?

Are creative domains driven by a few genius creators, or does everyone in the field make a small but important contribution? Are scientists giants or do they stand on the shoulder of giants as Newton surmised?

If I played you a pop song recorded between 1970 and 2000, one that you had never heard before, do you think you could guess the year it was recorded? If so, why is that? When you hear a pop song from the 1920s, does it sound old-fashioned? Do you think it sounded old-fashioned back then? Think about something you've created—a song, a painting or drawing, a poem or short story. Think ahead to 30 years from now. In what ways will your creation seem dated?

We generally think that we can be more creative when our lives are less pressured. But historiometric studies show that people tend to do their most creative, most important work in the years when they're busiest, when they're generating the most output. Has this happened to you? What does this finding tell you about the role of incubation and insight in creativity?

What personality traits back in their art school days best predicted artistic success later in life? The main one was problem finding: the art students who worked in a problem-finding style in art school were those most successful in both 1970 and in 1981.

Film historians point out that many of Lucas’s visuals were taken from past movies: the lightsabers and Jedi Knights were inspired by Kurosawa’s Hidden Fortress; the robot C-3PO was a character straight out of Fritz Lang’s Metropolis; Harrison Ford’s portrayal of Han Solo resembles Butch Cassidy. It’s often said of Lucas that “he didn’t actually invent anything” (Seabrook, 1997, p. 48). So was Lucas truly creative, or did he just get lucky?

Have you used a digital camera? Do you take pictures differently now that you know you can immediately delete a photo that doesn’t look good? If you ever used a Polaroid camera, were you more careful about when you took pictures because you knew that each picture cost more than those taken with an ordinary camera? If you don’t like abstract modern art, then how do you explain why it’s dominated the art world for most of the 20th century? Have you ever said, “I may not know art, but I know what I like”?

Would you agree with the following statement: “It doesn’t matter what those gatekeepers in the field think, those snobby New York ‘experts.’ They don’t get to say what counts as art.” If so, then what alternative would you propose for how to select the best art works? Would it be a democratic system, like that of Komar and Melamid?

Do you think we should do away with all criteria and selection? But if so, then we can no longer have galleries, art markets, and museums because those institutions all require that criteria be applied and choices be made. How do you think such institutions should function?
Are movies art? Are they just as important as fine art painting? Or do you believe that there is something uniquely special about fine art painting?

Why should we place such a high value on authenticity and purity with novels and short stories when we don’t expect it of television sitcoms or Hollywood movies?

After the death of a well-known and respected writer, what factors play a role in the posthumous development of a reputation?

How often do you revise when you write? Do you write better at some times of the day than others? Do you prepare an outline before you start to write? Have you ever edited or been edited? What was it like? Did it improve the final product? Have you ever written poetry or fiction? Why? Did anyone read it?

Our myth would have us believe that every creator originates everything new with every creation. But if that were true, then how can we listen to a recording we’ve never heard before, and almost instantly know the time period in which it was recorded? How could we look at an unfamiliar painting from the last 500 years and be able to tell within 10 years or so when it was painted?

Do you like any of the same music as your parents? Do your friends like the same bands that you do? If not, does this ever cause any problems? Do you prefer to listen to live music or recorded music? Why do you think that is? Do you have any friends who compose music? If so, does it sound completely original, or does it sound something like some other musician? Have you ever been to a symphony concert? Did you feel as if you had trouble understanding the music? What types of people were in the audience? Were they different types of persons from those you might see at a stadium concert? Have you ever been such a fan of a band that you listened to bootleg tapes or studio or rehearsal recordings? What did you learn about the band from those readings?

Have you and your friends ever had a special catchphrase or saying that no one outside your group understood? Do you remember how it originated? Was it one person’s idea, or did it emerge collaboratively? Have you ever seen more than one production of the same play? How were they different? Have you ever seen more than one performance of the same production, with the same actors and stage set? How were they different? The next time you’re in a religious setting, think about the performative elements of the ritual. Don’t focus only on the religious officials; also examine what the audience is doing. The next time you’re at a sports event, think about the performative elements of the event. Don’t focus only on the team players; also examine the coaches, the cheerleaders, and the fans.

Are scientists really creative? After all, you might think that scientists simply discover truths by looking at the world; though of course, by using some very fancy equipment. The astrophysicist Subrahmanyan Chandrasekhar said that when he discovered a new fact, it appeared to him to be something “that had always been there and that I had chanced to pick up” (quoted in Farmelo, 2002a, pp. xi–xii). If a good scientific theory is just an accurate reflection of reality, then a good scientist is one whose theories directly copy reality (Barrow, 2000). And it goes without saying that copying is not creative.

You’ve probably heard of Albert Einstein, but you probably don’t know the details of any of the theories that he’s famous for. Then how do you know he’s so brilliant? Imagine that you’re in charge of government funding of scientific research. What percentage of that money would you devote to the following areas? Physics, biology, the sociology of poverty and schooling, the mental processes studied by psychology. Do you think the government’s current allocation of funds is similar to your own? How is scientific creativity different from artistic creativity? How is it the same? I hope I’ve
convinced you that scientists are creative, after all. But you might still think that artists are more creative than scientists. Do you? Why or why not?

Have you ever been a member of a collaborative team? Why were you working together instead of separately? Can you recall an example of a problem solution or an insight that emerged from the group? Have you worked in a large organization, whether corporate or nonprofit? What procedures and practices were you taught? Do you know where those procedures and practices came from? Of the things you had to know to do your work in this organization, were there some that no one taught you, that you had to learn on your own? Of the things that you were taught, how many of them were written down in an official book of corporate procedures?

Tomorrow, make a note of the creative technological products that you use throughout the day—the washing machine, the computer, the telephone, the automobile. Try to imagine a time before they existed, and see if you can imagine what insights could lead to that product’s invention.

Once a movie is distributed, what group of experts decides which ones are the best, and how do they do it? How do these decisions relate to the box office, the majority vote of the ticketbuying public? And even these decisions are temporally and historically bounded; the movies that won awards 50 years ago often are not the movies that have stood the test of time. What are the historical processes that determine which movies are judged to be the classics that deserve to be shown to each new generation?

It’s hard enough to change our own cognitive processes and personality, but who has any hope of changing the whole society, or redefining cultural values and attitudes? Throughout history, from time to time, a few remarkable people have managed to change an entire society or culture. But the odds are long, and many more have tried and failed. Ask yourself: Does this domain and field, at this point in history, need someone like me?

**Creativity – Activities**

In groups, make students order majors from most creative to least creative. Compare the results.

Draw a caricature of a creative person.

Thought experiment: Think of someone you know that you think is particularly creative. Why do you think so? Is it because of some distinctive behavior, lifestyle, or way of talking or dressing? Is it because you’ve seen one of his or her created works and you thought that it was creative? Do you think this person would be considered creative by people from other countries and other cultures? Or is there something uniquely American about his or her creativity?

Thought experiment: Think of one of your teachers or mentors—someone older than you that you have a lot of respect for. What words first come to mind when you try to describe what this person is like? Would you say that this person is effective and successful in life? Did this person work hard? Was he or she highly motivated? Would you say that this person is creative?
Thought experiment: Think of a time when you made something that you think was particularly creative—a school project, a written report, a mechanical device, a block tower, a painting, or musical performance. What mental process led to its creation? Did you have the idea all at once, fully formed, and then all you had to do was make it? If so, what preceded the insight—what preparation did you do, and was there an incubation period? Or did you begin with only the germ of an idea, having mini-insights throughout the process, so that the final product was not exactly what you started out to make? Would you call this a problem-finding or a problem-solving type of creativity?

Thought experiment: Is your personality similar to one or both of your parents? Is your level of creativity about the same as your parents? According to your parents, did you show a special creative talent very early in childhood? Do you think you were born with that talent? Did your parents do anything while you were growing up to encourage your creative abilities? If your parents hadn’t done those things, would you still be just as creative now? Or, if they had done more, would you be more creative now?

Take the Torrance Tests of Creative Thinking.

Create a Personal Failures Resume.

Be creative. How do we help people like waking up in the morning?

Develop a new system for marking or measuring time.

100 Whats of Creativity.

Is it important for adults to continue to engage in play in order to remain creative?