

The background features a textured, brownish-gold surface. In the center, a man in a dark suit and tie is depicted from the chest up, with his hands on his temples in a contemplative pose. Above his head is a large, dark thought bubble. Inside the thought bubble is a glowing lightbulb, which is filled with a vibrant, multi-colored paint splatter in shades of blue, green, yellow, orange, and red. The overall composition suggests a connection between the man's thoughts and creative ideas.

The Anatomy of Your Creativity

Chris Grady

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CHRIS GRADY

THE ANATOMY OF YOUR CREATIVITY

The Anatomy of Your Creativity

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THE AUTHOR



Chris Grady divides his current life between leading an MA in Creative Producing for Mountview Academy of Theatre accredited by University of East Anglia, and working as a creative business life coach.

Over 40 years he has built, created, run, marketed, and developed festivals and theatres across the UK. These SMEs ranged from £1m–£6m projects with, as often happens with the creative sector, the narrowest of margins. They say you can make a killing, but not a living, in the arts. His experience is in developing and supporting the teams of creatives, business managers, assistants, trainees, and volunteers who support each endeavor. He has been based with organisations in Bristol, Plymouth, Edinburgh, Inverness, Buxton, London, Keswick, Cardiff, Bury St Edmunds and back to London.

For five years he was head of international licensing for Cameron Mackintosh Ltd, project managing works in Brazil, South Korea, Moscow, Prague, Berlin, and Japan, with the opportunity to make contracts and business arrangements with companies in another 20 countries. This has led to a continuing strand of his coaching business, helping emerging international creatives to make the connections they need with the UK business world. From traditional sweet manufacturers, to virtual reality software specialists, his world has extended across many sectors.

For the last eight years Chris, through his company CGO, has offered one-on-one surgeries to new business start-up creatives. This has covered filmmakers, poets, building project managers, visual artists, composers, theatremakers, and academics. These monthly workshop days complement his coaching business. They say every coach needs a niche – and Chris's two areas of main work cover the fields of creative business and wellness practitioners.

For the arts he has written a book of career guidance: “*Your Life in Theatre*”. He has led marketing and development training for universities and colleges.

His wife, Kath Burlinson, is a theatre director and workshop leader specializing in developing the authentic presence of creative practitioners and business leaders. She works across the corporate and the arts sectors. He has two children, a professional actor and a charity management specialist.

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1 INTRODUCTION

They talk of “thinking outside the box” but there is no box. Any box that exists has been made to be a container in which thinking and doing are meant to happen. This short book aims to offer some very practical ways to peer, climb or leap out of the box and make unexpected ideas flow. If you want to “prepare to be surprised” then please read on.

It can be lonely at the top. It can be frustrating at the bottom. It can be stifling in the middle. But if you could think, and breathe, outside the box – wouldn't that help?

This book offers different ways to run meetings; new tools to feel powerful in your role; ideas to handle work/life balance which might free up space for new thinking; suggestions to inspire your colleagues and those who look up to you for leadership; and even a few possibilities to crack that seemingly impossible problem.

This book is designed as a fast read. It has some quick fixes which you may find helpful. It suggests some practices which, if given time, could change the way you think, and how your business operates in the future. It will also point you to further reading, and pay tribute to some great writing by fellow creatives and business travellers.

Are you ready to put your “best foot forward”, “go with your gut instinct”, “put your shoulder into it”, “expand your thinking”, and “get to the heart of the issues”? All these common phrases are rooted in our *bodies*. This book aims to awaken a few more parts of your psycho-physical system to give you a head start, and a good feeling in your heart about your life and work.

This book is designed for anyone in business, but I have in mind four phases in a business life:

- 1) You have an idea, and you are about to startup (from solo to massive corporation).
- 2) You have a business and it is static, safe, steady – but may benefit from some stretch.
- 3) You are “worried well” – somewhere between “stretch” and “panic” & need some help.
- 4) You have a problem project (or you have just had enough) and you are either thinking of walking, baling out, or closing down.

Personal Thoughts:

“If you have downloaded or picked up this book then I presume you wish to explore creativity, and you are in some form of business – it could be the business of life or the life of your business. I’m taking comfort in the likelihood that you would like some new ideas, new ways to think about things, a few new tools to use in life, and that you don’t have much time. There are excellent bigger books on creativity, and I am delighted to have been invited to draw on some of them to pepper this book with their ideas as well as mine.

I have been asked to write this book because I work in the creative industries (theatre mostly). I teach business to emerging entrepreneurs and SMEs. I have been a formal, and very informal, coach for sole traders and small businesses for 30 years. I have tackled some big projects which started from blank sheets of paper, or a box of unsorted jigsaw pieces with no clear pattern, and together with teams of colleagues we have reached successful public launches and peer praise.

I am writing this introduction in the foyer of a hotel in Tokyo waiting to meet a CEO who wants to introduce her product to the UK. There is no word for “no” in Japanese – and so when I was asked to visit I said “yes”. Next we have to puzzle out the “how” and the “what”. I’m excited. And that helps when seeking to be creative. I hope you will share my excitement through this book.”

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1.1 THE FIVE READERS

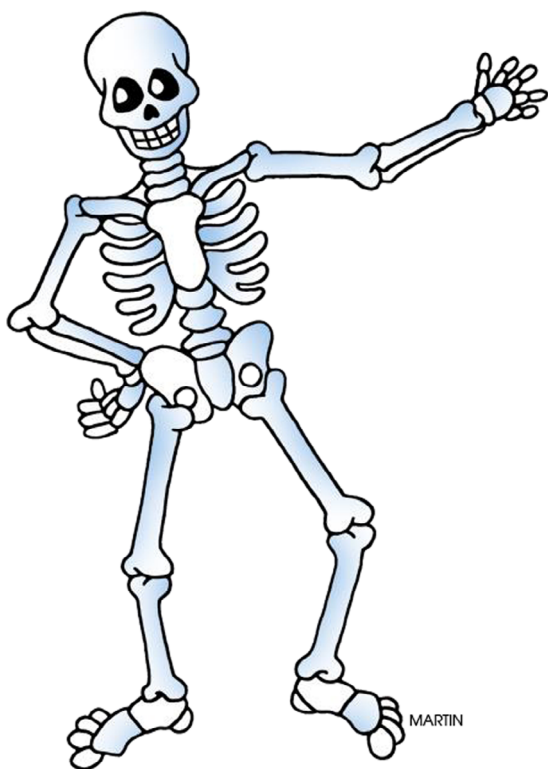
In preparing this book I have used my own marketing tool/question “Who do you want on the front row?” Whilst I would love everyone in the world to find this an essential read, the focus of my writing became much clearer when I invented five customers who might buy or download this book.

- a) **Andrew:** Sole trader, business-man, gets free downloads and reads on the train. 40 and a bit jaded. Goes to the theatre and so was interested in my biog. Used to write poetry as a young man, but no time for any of that now. Business is in finance (not sure what). *Wants to re-awaken creative side.*
- b) **Barbara:** Middle manager in a local authority. The series is recommended reading for all staff, and they can then spend some money on their own self-development. Mid 30s female, one small child and now back at work, probably expecting to stay with authority till retirement – except for the fear of cuts and redundancies. Goes to the odd gig with friends, not thinking of herself as creative. *Wants to gain self-respect and presence.*
- c) **Chris:** Consultant interested in assessing what’s out there about creativity in business, because s/he may be wanting to run some courses for large employers, and is looking for new people to deliver work. *Wants to find deliverers.*

- d) **Danny:** Arts manager, heard about the book through Facebook or arts promotion, and interested in what arts managers are writing about. Doesn't really make the connection, before reading the book, between what happens in the rehearsal room and what happens in his body/office. *Makes him get up and try a few things.*
- e) **Evelyn:** Trainee manager in a big office, been there a couple of years, and wants to find his/her wings and move on, or move up. 24 years old and did a bit of travelling in a gap year, and now treats office/day and life/evening as two very different things. Great time with friends and politically engaged, but comes to work to pay the rent. *Wants to see a bigger picture and gain promotion.*

1.2 STRUCTURE

The one thing we all have in common is a body. From this skeleton I have built a book which explores some of the tools of creativity. It's a dip in book; one that is designed to allow you to practice creativity, not just study it.



1. Introduction and Structure
2. Toe in the water & finding your balance
3. The Law of Two Feet & best foot forward
4. Dodgy Knees – reading the signals
5. Thighs – “powerful beyond measure”
6. The Pelvis – birthing your business
7. Abdomen – gut reactions -
8. And Breathe...
9. Solar Plexus – focus and direction
10. Heartfelt connection
11. Hands – creative play
12. Shoulders or “should-ers”
13. Throat – finding your voice and listening
14. Vision – seeing is believing
15. Allowing the brain to play – there is no box
16. Crown – authority, trust uplifted
17. Inspiration – remembering your child

Each section seeks to connect a part of the body to creativity, business and your life. There is then an exercise or the introduction of a tool for future use, and additional reflections and ideas that occurred to me as I was writing. These final ideas will often be linked to an invitation to more reading.

There is growing research and understanding of the connectedness between what your body is telling you, in its aches and pains, and what is happening in the world of your mind. Some signals are obvious, such as feeling butterflies in your stomach and realising you are nervous. Some may need a little more investigation. If this journey through the body is of interest then there are many fascinating experts exploring the connection between self and body, from self-help gurus such as [Louise Hay](#) to neuro-scientific researchers such as António Damásio.

1.3 EXERCISES

Throughout the book there are exercises. It may help to record them onto your phone so you can play them back when you need them. Some invite you to stand and use your body, gently. The exercises are relatively short (an indication of the time they take is given). You can of course take more time if you wish. The exercises benefit from repeated attention and practise. Neuroscience suggests that an action repeated 3 times will open up a new neural pathway, and that this can lead to a process of “getting into the habit” of doing something new. So try some of the exercises a good few times, if you want to feel real change.

2 TOE IN THE WATER & FINDING YOUR BALANCE

If you have picked this book up then you are, already, “dipping your toe in the water”. This is an English language phrase which literally means to test the water temperature of your bath (or the sea). More often it is used to express the idea that you are trying out a new idea, testing your ability to undertake a new task, or testing out how others judge you as you try something new.

We can stretch out to reach something new, but we retain our balance through our feet and our toes. You can gauge how far you can go. In business we can reach out but we must keep a safe base/balance to ensure the long-term viability of our business.

One of the wonderful things about being on your toes is that you are flexible and ready for change. No-one wants to be caught on the back foot. There’s a reason runners prepare to burst forward on their journey from a strong base, poised on their toes. Anyone who does yoga or dance will know the essential role for toes in the overall balance.

Part of the challenge for a creative business leader is to check in to your own poise and balance in a particular situation, and the balance and readiness to leap for your own business.

2.1 EXERCISE ONE – BALANCE:

Part One: Your Own Balance:

Time: 2 minutes

Stand up from where you are, without thinking, without preparing. And when you are upright observe how your weight is distributed, without changing anything. Is more weight on one hip or the other? Are your knees “locked” (ie pushed back)? How are your feet positioned?

Now take a moment and bring all your focus to your feet and your toes. Stand with your feet directly under your hips. Soften your kneecaps. Close your eyes. Is your weight balanced? What does it feel like to bring your weight very slightly forward? What happens if you rock back a little, or move to one side? How far can you go before your toes grip and remind you to keep balanced?

Just notice what you notice. How might you describe the change between the first standing, without preparation, and the move to a more focussed balanced standing?

[If standing is not an option for any reason – you can do this exercise by thinking about the process without moving, or by adapting the exercise to sitting with your weight on your sitting bones, feet on the floor, spine upright. And then adjust your balance from this position]

Now move to Part Two of the exercise:

Part two: Your business balance:

Time: 5–15 minutes

Choose now to think about your own business, a current or future one, and put a toe in the water to wonder how “in balance” that enterprise is, and whether it too could stretch or tilt a bit before getting out of balance.

Here are three ways to explore this:

Time: Allow 5 minutes each

- (1) Stand and believe for a moment that you are your business. Every aspect of the business is standing there represented in your body, and you can observe it. Is it weighed down? Is it poised for movement forward. Is it tensed to “flight or fight”? What does it feel like to adjust your business body, through your toes, so it is more balanced? Could you physicalize a change? What words might flow if you describe it? Eg: my business is on the back foot, out of balance, wavering.
- (2) If you are a writer, or someone who enjoys words, you could do this exercise from the comfort of your chair using your imagination. Allow words to flow. Focus on the toes, the balance, and any wonderful phrases/old wives tales/allusions or alliterations that blending balance, toes and your business might create. E.g.: you might write a limerick, or explore the toehold that your business has in the market, or the luxury of painted toes.
- (3) If you have ever drawn, then grab a pencil and some paper and see what your business looks like in a human form. Focus for the moment just on the balance and the feet. Perhaps begin to explore the toes in more detail. Eg: The amazingly open toes of a balanced yoga business, the long powerful big toe of a climbing business, the even, balanced toes of a business that needs to go “en pointe” to extend almost beyond imagination.

By using unexpected media of expression – your body, creative words, and drawing you may notice something about your business and its challenges and opportunities that pops up unexpectedly. Keep a note of this, even if you don’t know how to use it yet.

3 THE LAW OF TWO FEET & BEST FOOT FORWARD

Continuing our journey, we are now in the foot-hills. I assume that you do not want to stay still, or you wouldn't be reading this book. But if you are feeling timid or uncertain, you may be staying put when it would be advantageous to make a move and put your best foot forward.

Introducing "The Law of Two Feet".

The Law of Two Feet, or the law of mobility, is simply "if at any time you find yourself in any situation where you are neither learning nor contributing – use your two feet and move to some place more to your liking. Such a place might be another group, or even outside into the sunshine. No matter what, don't sit there feeling miserable. The law, as stated, may sound like rank hedonism, but even hedonism has its place, reminding us that unhappy people are unlikely to be productive people"

Harrison Owen

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This is part of a rich exploration of the way to conduct creatively effective meetings encapsulated by Harrison Owen in [Open Space Technology](#). Over 20 years meetings, peace accords, conferences and Broadway musicals have been conceived using the basic tools of Open Space. For the purposes of this book I will only focus on one element. You can then explore the whole process, which I love.

Where can you be most creative?

I worked for a few years in a venerable British organisation which used to set meeting times between people and departments on the hour, seemingly every hour. I would settle down to a 10am meeting knowing it would last till 11am, and then move to another meeting for another hour. The content of the meeting might need 15 minutes to complete, or days to achieve results, but the meetings always seemed to be scheduled for an hour. If the item was dealt with, there were still plenty of things to fill the time. And if the item needed more than an hour, everyone went away vowing to have another meeting in a month or whenever.

What would have happened if the right people had been in the room to solve the problem in 15 minutes, and we'd ended early and gone out into the sunshine, or back to our desks? What would have happened if the main item needed more time and we had agreed to carry on to get the answer sorted, however long it took?

The Law of Mobility empowers you to use your feet to do the walking.

There's a glorious Irish saying – "*If you want to get **there**, I wouldn't start from **here***". But we do start from here. We have our two feet below us, and we wish to take a journey.

Exercise Two – Step Change

Time: Allow 15 minutes

Part One: Take a moment to look back over your diary for the last week and explore what might have happened if you had used the Law of Two Feet in hosting, setting, attending meetings or events. Could you have used your time more wisely? Could you have used the time of others more effectively? If someone bored you with their endless exposition (presuming that wasn't you), could you have used the law of two feet?

Part Two: Look forward next week or next month, and just wonder whether you could do something differently. How might you use the Law of Two Feet to empower yourself and your colleagues? If you are a sole-trader, working alone for much of the time, could you allow yourself to say, for the moment, "it's over" and walk out into the sunshine? What would that do to your spirit, energy and future creativity?

In the next week, what could you do differently? Be very specific. Think when and what. Mark it in your diary and then, reflect afterwards the effect of this "step change".

You may feel that this creative solution is not possible in all contexts. But try it selectively and see what effect it has. If you are not "present", alive and kicking on all fronts, is there somewhere else you would be more effective at this moment?

The Law of Two Feet is just one of a set of very powerful principles used in Open Space Technology. The system and principles are free, easy to download, and great to explore – although for bigger conferences or meetings an experienced facilitator is useful.

3.1 AND THERE'S MORE

There is a beautiful poem by the poet and inspirational public speaker, [David Whyte](#), which starts: *"Start close in, don't take the second step or the third, start with the first thing close in, the step you don't want to take."*

So what would happen if you think of your two feet as powerful tools that you may use consciously in a business context. Later, we will explore the power of your brain, your voice, your shoulders and your gut, but for now, just take a moment to think of your feet.

I am a coach, and I was working with a young creative with a young son who is wonderful but naturally demanding. We were exploring how she could find the time to write, and to re-engage with her creativity. I asked her when was the last time she had gone for a walk by herself. She reckoned it might be 5 years ago (and even then she was already carrying the bump which would become her son). She had previously told me of her need to get back to nature, but the sheer challenge of using her feet to make the move was too much. By my asking the question she noticed what she noticed. As I type this I have just had a lovely email telling me that she had just been up on the heath, for the first time in many years. OK, she had her son with her, but she had at least used the law of *four* feet, and in time she will again be able to achieve it with two feet.

You can't change things overnight, but you can "notice what you notice" and even benefit from just being aware that your two feet want to use the law of mobility, even if you feel uncomfortable walking out of the village-bore's weekly briefing meeting.

4 DODGY KNEES – READING THE SIGNALS

Knees have variously been described as a tool for foretelling the weather (see research below) and as a representation of a level of inflexibility, indicating ego and pride. If you lock your knees when you stand, then you are more rigid and less stable. This instability can be reflected in your ability to take the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune.

So as we move up the creative business body, take a moment to find your balance, plant your feet firmly on the ground and soften your knees/relax your kneecaps. Life, business and sports coaches all recommend the gentle art of softening your knees. It sounds simple, but as Amy Cuddy puts it in her Ted talk on Power Posing, “tiny tweaks can lead to big changes”

Thinking of us in business, I suggest that being in balance, strong but flexible is the best way to cultivate resilience and withstand the knocks and shocks when change is in the air. You will appear to be a stronger leader if you can take a bit of a knock without reeling.

I’ve just taken a moment from writing. I have opened an email from one of my clients who had got the wrong end of the stick from a colleague and, rather than quietly asking for clarification, put two and two together and made nine. For him, nine would have massive ramifications on other areas of his business. So with the choice of fight, flight, or quiet enquiry he chose fight. Within moments, I could have had a quick email fisty-cuffs and upset us both. Alternatively I chose to take a moment, breathe (more in future chapters), rock with the punch, and then go back to him with the same email I would have sent in the case of a quiet enquiry. Hopefully two and two will now make four, which is the answer we all needed.

There are times to choose to stand and fight. There are times to absorb the punch, re-align our shared reality, and move on. In my case, a day or two of heated email exchanges have, hopefully, been avoided. They tell me, even were it to become a fight, soft knees will still be advantageous to me as a middle weight (middle management) boxer.

Exercise Three – Are you a Push Over?

Time: 2–3 minutes

You could try this with someone else or test it on your own. A great place to try it is standing solo in a train or bus, or any unexpected moving floor (but please avoid falling on your fellow passengers).

Stand upright. Feet a little apart, and lock your knees (ie carefully push your knees back until they can move no further). Then invite someone to push you gently in any direction by making shoulder or hip contact, not to hurt, but just to dislodge you. Alternatively, the bus or tube driver will do this for you without asking. Just release your hand from the support rail and, with locked knees, try to balance. I suspect you will feel unstable.

Now do exactly the same but with your knees unlocked. Just slightly relaxed kneecaps will allow a connection between your body and the floor. You will find it easier to balance on a moving train, and you will feel more secure when you are pushed around (gently) by your co-travellers.

What might relaxed knees mean for your business? Notice what you notice.

4.1 KNEES ANY MORE?

If you want to see research to show that changes in the weather can cause a physical sensation in people, especially in joints such as knees, then explore the recent research undertaken in Barcelona on [atmospheric pressure change](#).

I've just realised one of my favourite poems offers us a reminder not to over-use the knees:

*You do not have to be good.
 You do not have to walk on your knees
 for a hundred miles through the desert repenting.
 You only have to let the soft animal of your body
 love what it loves.
 Tell me about despair, yours, and I will tell you mine.
 Meanwhile the world goes on.
 Meanwhile the sun and the clear pebbles of the rain
 are moving across the landscapes,
 over the prairies and the deep trees,
 the mountains and the rivers.
 Meanwhile the wild geese, high in the clean blue air,
 are heading home again.
 Whoever you are, no matter how lonely,
 the world offers itself to your imagination,
 calls to you like the wild geese, harsh and exciting
 over and over announcing your place
 in the family of things.*

[Mary Oliver](#) – always a source of inspiration. Many of her poems are available on line if you want to take a contemplative minute or two.

5 THIGHS – “POWERFUL BEYOND MEASURE”

You and your business have poise through your toes, a willingness to use your two feet to make change, flexibility to take a few knocks whilst keeping your balance. Now I would like to explore power and presence at this moment in your body and the business.

Wherever the seat of physical power is within you, and however physically strong you are (even without being a bodybuilder), you have more power about you than you, probably, care to admit. And there are times that you need to show it.

On the other hand, if power radiates through your sheer presence, then becoming aware of this and using it wisely is also very important.

I would like to introduce to you to a tool taught to actors and to business leaders the world over. It is called the Circles of Energy and was developed by voice and leadership coach [Patsy Rodenburg](#).

Rodenburg discusses three types of energy that we can use. As we develop as creative business leaders we benefit from being able to morph between all three.

Picture the person at the board table or meeting that no-one notices. They appear small. They can walk unnoticed into a room. In this guise they appear to lack charisma, and if we do notice them we are not drawn to talk with them. They are demonstrating what Rodenburg describes as First Circle Energy. It is inward energy. At its least helpful it can actually suck a room of energy. But if we choose to quietly settle in the introspective stance of First Circle, then we can be a quiet observer. Celebrities sometimes harness it so that they appear invisible as they walk down the road.

Now jump with me to the arrival of the Third Circle person that everyone notices. They are larger than life, powerful and take control of the space. People certainly notice them, but can feel overpowered by this person and their over-amplified speech or persona. If you are rallying the troops it is a great skill to have. If you are sharing a discussion with others of equal weight then a Third Circle manner can be seen as domineering, egocentric, and a great reason for us, as audience, to use the Law of Two Feet and walk away.

Consider the Second Circle. This person is neither drawing all the energy in to themselves, nor are they pushing their personality all over the room. They are rather reading the room and the meeting correctly. They are balancing their energy with the person/people to whom they are speaking. They are listening to the room, and gauging their own volume in response. Their calmness and attention attracts notice in the right way. Their handshake is not limp or bone crushing, but appropriate – because they are reading our energy. They can morph and harness Third Circle energy for a passionate moment of oratory when needed. Similarly they can use First Circle to be observant and quiet, or to allow other energies and voices in the room to be heard.

Exercise Four – Getting Served in a bar

Time: one round

Next time you go into a crowded bar and want to get served, think of the Circles of Energy. If you are anything like me, then there are times you can be standing as the sole customer looking at 3 bar staff behind the bar, and none of them notice you. Maybe you are unintentionally in First Circle.

Try standing very quietly, take a moment to observe and respect the work of one of the bar staff, breathe quietly and allow your energy to calmly hold your space whilst all around you are waving their fivers. See what happens. See whether s/he notices you and comes over to you for your order. Maybe they acknowledge you and indicate with their eyes that you are next, or very soon. A good bar person will pick up on your Second Circle calm. [I admit that there are bar staff that seem not to notice a sole thirsty person tap dancing an SOS signal in an empty bar – but let's hope you avoid that particular bar].

Or you may choose to try Third Circle (but better just observe someone else doing it). Take your money out. Wave your money around, click your fingers, stamp your feet, puff your chest out, push forward. And then see what happens. If you explain this choice of behavior to any bar people you know, I suspect you will get the same reaction I get – they will avoid that Third Circle customer like the plague.

Having got served, please raise your glass to Second Circle Energy and Creativity in Business.

To explore the Circles of Energy more fully, complete with many suggestions for exercises, see Rodenburg's Rodenburg's *Presence* (Publ Michael Joseph 2007) or *Power Presentations*. (2009).

5.1 A LITTLE MORE ON POWER

Within a book of words, most of the creative examples I am giving are poems and writings, but we each gain inspiration from different media – visual, aural, tactile. I will explore some of these throughout the book. But the words that follow are, to me, extremely inspiring in relation to power and our right to claim it as our own. You may recognise the text from Nelson Mandela's inaugural speech, but the original author is Marianne Williamson.

*Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate.
Our deepest fear is **that we are powerful beyond measure.**
It is our light not our darkness that most frightens us.
We ask ourselves, who am I to be brilliant, gorgeous,
talented and fabulous?*

*Actually, who are you not to be?
You are a child of God.
Your playing small does not serve the world.
There's nothing enlightened about shrinking so that other
people won't feel insecure around you.*

*We were born to make manifest the glory of
God that is within us.*

*It's not just in some of us; it's in everyone.
And as we let our own light shine,
we unconsciously give other people
permission to do the same.*

*As we are liberated from our own fear,
Our presence automatically liberates others.*

6 THE PELVIS: BIRTHING YOUR BUSINESS

At the absolute root of our existence we have all arrived as an inspired idea (and/or unexpected surprise) from the body of another being. Like every business idea, we were born somewhere and we have some roots going back in time. Some of us are unsure of our roots, and for me that can feel unsettling. I only met my father once, and know I have half-brothers and sisters that I have never seen and probably never will. As a business manager, you may join an organisation where you do not know all the branches, or all the roots of its creation. Here I think early research is helpful. The more you can learn about the business past, the easier you can assimilate yourself into the present, and move forward with your new business family into the future.

If you are birthing a new idea, then focus on what it is and make sure all those who may help to nurture it and live with it in the future, know how it is rooted in your own creativity. You need a business plan, and a mission statement, but go deeper to help root it by knowing why, and for whom, the idea was created.

I am reminded of the work of one acclaimed theatre director who creates the most amazing visual presentations that often glean 5* reviews and awards. But some of that pizzazz comes at a cost of rooted-ness. I have heard from a few actors who talk of a level of uncertainty after they have been performing the show for some weeks. They begin to lose touch with why they are crossing the stage at a particular point, or speaking a line in that form. It looks great, has great public appeal but the actors begin to realise it is not rooted in their core. Their work is becoming less satisfying.

As you develop new ideas, root them personally in why they exist; Who they are for; And what the journey for them could be.

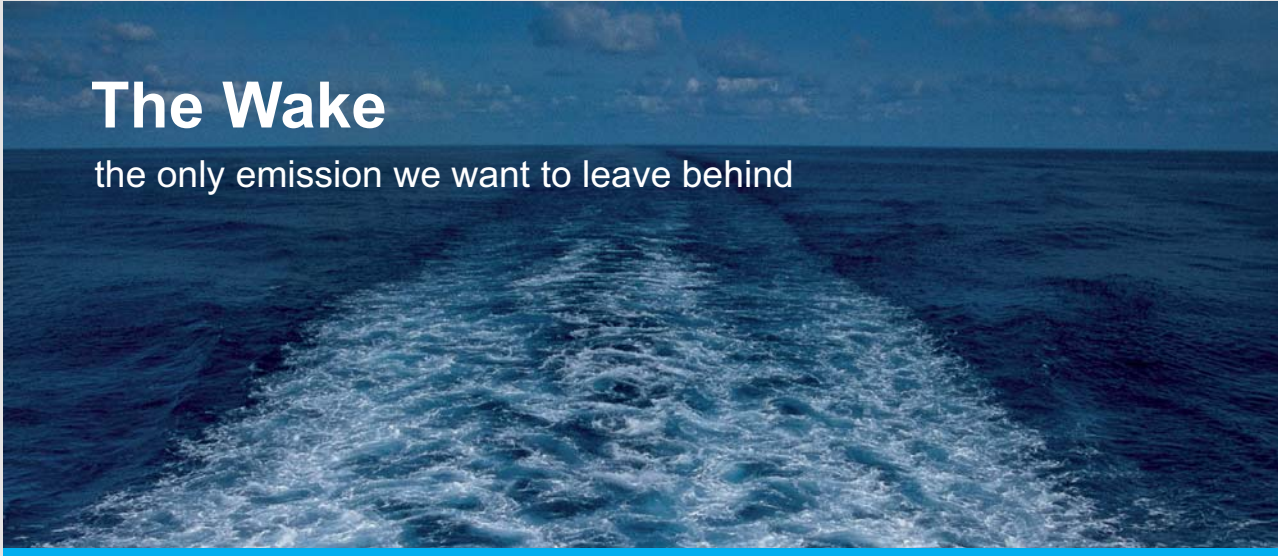
Why not take a moment away from the desk. Stand calm, breathe, soften the knees and think about yourself as a rooted creation. The pelvis is a core centre for you. It helps to give you your centre and your inner power. You can think of it as your anchor into the earth. Feel how powerful you can be. Now for a moment think of your business, and the organisation you have created or joined. If that were to be represented by your body, for a moment, would it feel as rooted, as strong, and as anchored to the earth? Is your organisational body ready to move forward with great ideas, ready to birth a business project, knowing that it has come from the core of your being.

In marketing terms, I always ask producers in theatre or business about their customers. Before getting to the 4Ps (product, price, place, publicity), I invite them to think of the 5 consumers/customers they would like on the front row of their audience, or first in the queue to buy the product. This is partly connected to Good Habit 2 from [Stephen Covey's](#) Seven Habits of Highly Effective People – *Start with the End in Mind*.

Go back to your roots. Why are you making or delivering your business/service, and for whom it is ideally suited? How can you reach the successful “end in mind”?

For example, if you have a new product then you may want one of the first people to buy it to be an influential champion of the product or service. You might also want some wonderful comments from your family, so one of them could be on “the front row”. You might want your patron/investor to be delighted by the product, and the praise that it is getting. In which case they should be on the front row to feel part of the birthing process. And of course you might want your ideal customer to be there to enjoy the product you have invented. Each of these “front row” people may require a different 4P marketing strategy.

I undertook this exercise before writing the book, so I could focus the book for Andrew, Barbara, Chris, Danny and Evelyn (see section 1 – Introduction)



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Exercise Five – The customer character map

Time: 10 minutes

Think of a product, a business area of your life or a new customer that you would like to reach with your next marketing drive. Create a “character map”:

Think of that customer who is going to buy/experience your new product. How old are they? Where do they live? How do they shop for relevant products? What might they “need” that your product will “supply”? What more do you know about them in terms of their roots and experiences that might help you focus your marketing? Do they make buying decisions solo, or are they influenced by others? Most importantly, what is their name? Name them, and maybe even find a stock photo, cartoon or image which encapsulates that one customer for your front row.

You can continue this for four other very different customers.

I was with someone who works for a major charity last week, and she was telling me about the characters who are at the heart of their fundraising push. They are never publicised by name, but they have full character maps. It is clear that the charity focuses very directly on particular segments to raise the money necessary to do its good work. The excitement for me was hearing my colleague identify a new target, with a name and a picture and a character description. She was suggesting this new target to her bosses as part of their overall strategy. She immediately inspired me: I felt the potential in the birthing of this new character for the charity “front row”, rooted in a clear understanding of the world in which that person lives. It was in line with the very core of why the charity was established. Without my colleague revisiting the original charitable mission, this new character might have been missed.

It is a powerful creative birthing tool. I recommend it.

7 ABDOMEN – GUT REACTIONS

You have a balanced business (or self). You know you are anchored and “powerful beyond measure” And you know the 5 customers you are going to target first. Now comes the time to believe in yourself and allow your passion to shine through.

Ken Robinson wrote an inspiring report for the government on creativity in young people. His recommendations made complete sense to me, and I sense the sheer fact you are reading this book will make you someone who would get his eloquent challenges.

He warns: *“Imagination is the source of every form of human achievement. And it’s the one thing that I believe we are systematically jeopardizing in the way we educate our children and ourselves. You cannot predict the outcome of human development. All you can do is, like a farmer, create the conditions under which it will begin to flourish. We are all born with extraordinary powers of imagination, intelligence, feeling, intuition, spirituality, and of physical and sensory awareness.”*

I recommend him to you, and in the meantime please explore your own creativity to unlock your gut intuition.

We have introduced poetic inspiration and you have been encouraged to do some creative writing. You have been served a drink, in Second Circle, at a bar – now “feels” a good time for some music.

I have been told that no people or tribe on the planet has yet been found that did not have music. Whether we like it or not we live with music in the fabric of our lives – from the radio to the elevator. I hope it is reasonable to suggest that there is some kind of music which has the power to awaken you. It triggers something in your brain which can cause a gut reaction. For the next section, have that type of music in your mind, even if you are not in a place where you could play it immediately.

There is an immense amount of research on the power of music to change our moods, enhance our ability to think and work, and to reach into our emotional gut. In the words of [Mairi Campbell](#) and David Francis (aka The Cast) in their song [Smile or Cry](#):

*“I guess it’s all in the mind,
whether we choose to smile or cry.”*

Creative Business Consultant David Cox summarises:

"Music is the only creative activity that engages all major regions of the brain. Music engages both the right and left hemispheres, and it uses both the new part (the cortex) and the ancient brain that tops the spine (the limbic system). Different styles of music affect different regions of your brain. For example dissonant or atonal music (the kind played in films like Psycho) can trigger the 'fight or flight' responses in the amygdala...Music that violates expectations (like unexpected changes in tempo or key, as in jazz) can stimulate high states of alertness in the parts of the brain concerned with consciousness"

If you don't play a musical instrument, then you could choose to begin this as part of your own creative business development. If you used to play something, or sang when you were at school – maybe now is the time to re-engage with this area. Join a choir or other singing group? Or simply commit to listening to recorded or live music on a regular basis.

Exercise Six – Creative Sweet Spots

Suggestion: 10 minutes a day

My thanks to David Cox for three great suggestions:

- (a) Discover, or re-discover the music that hits your creative sweet spot. Notice how you work when different kinds of music are playing. What seems to help, or hinder, your creative process? And don't forget to ditch the music that doesn't work when you're working.
- (b) Now go one step further and really listen to what you're listening to. Monitor the individual sounds that make up the music.
- (c) Notice where changes occur and the effect they have on you – repeating the experience several times, tracking different aspects of the music each time.

There is much research on the value of "gut instinct" in business. And so exploring what you feel as you develop your business life is not only good for health, life and music. It is also good for business.

"What we construct as wisdom over time is actually the result of cultivating that knowledge of how our emotions behaved...a hunch is a somatic marker: a physiological clue of what to do next."

Antonio Damasio, a neuroscientist at the University of Southern California and head of the Brain and Creativity Institute.

How can we recognise “a hunch” or an intuitive response? In a review of Damasio’s *The Feeling of What Happens*, British psychologist Bruce Charlton gives us a visceral example: “Imagine that you’re walking alone down a street one night when you see somebody that looks like they might mug you. When you spot them, your brain quickly makes predictions using perceptual information from the outside world (the identity of the scary dude) and internal emotional information (the fear you feel in response). That combination of information then gets served up to you in a physical sensation: that feeling in your gut that you need to get the hell outta there.”

Developing trust in the signals that come from the body – your “gut instinct” – increases your emotional intelligence. In turn, this may help your creative thinking. Music is a tool that can encourage emotional connection, so try to find ways to bring more into your life.

“Human resources are like natural resources; they’re often buried deep. You have to go looking for them, they’re not just lying around on the surface. You have to create the circumstances where they show themselves.”

Ken Robinson

8 AND BREATHE

Breathing is essential. We know that. We do it from the moment we are born until the moment we die. In, out, in, out. But how often are we aware that this process is happening? How consciously do we breathe? Taking deep full breaths, low into the abdomen feeds creativity – bringing oxygen to the pre-frontal cortex and helping us to think clearly. The level of oxygen reaching the brain is tied, among other factors, to the level of the neurotransmitter serotonin.

The location of where you breathe can also greatly affect your creativity – the more negative ions in the air the richer the experience. Just think how you feel standing in a forest, or in the clear atmosphere overlooking a beautiful raging sea. Your brain waves amplitude increases and reaches the frontal lobes, creating a clear and calming effect, promoting better concentration. Even someone sitting at their City desk will benefit from knowing this to be true, and then finding some space, when appropriate, to breathe.

You may already do some form of physical exercise that brings greater awareness of the breath: Pilates, yoga, martial arts, swimming, jogging or gym routines. Often, however, we forget to bring this awareness of our breath into the workplace. Using techniques developed in the training of actors and singers, and sport specialists, can be hugely beneficial to our day-to-day breath patterns.

Your life force, thoughts, feelings, and expressions are completely reliant on oxygen and your ability to breathe. The calmer, deeper, and more regular your breath, the more chance you have of staying centred and in contact with your feelings and thoughts. Breath patterns are infectious! My thanks to Ms Rodenburg for much of this inspiration.

In an article called [Creative Breath](#), JL Read highlights the benefits of interspersing a pause between the inhale and exhale. Suspending your breath increases the carbon dioxide in the system. Between slow deep breaths, holding momentarily maximises the oxygenation of the brain to facilitate clarity, but also raises carbon dioxide and nitrogen levels which improve clear thought. JL Read sights a Japanese inventor, Yoshiro Nakamatsu who is said to have more patents than Thomas Edison, and made most of his discoveries thinking at the base of a swimming pool – cool contemplation and clarity of mind.

Exercise Set 7a – Breath

Time: 3 x 5 minutes

- (i) **Relaxation:** To understand difference between tension and relaxation: Tense your entire body, your face, buttocks, feet, shoulders, fists, everything! Now Relax. Did you notice what happened to your breath? Now try tensing specific areas, e.g. shoulders, knees, back. Try to speak while tensing. Is it easy? Take a relaxing breath, deep into your abdomen, without letting shoulders/chest rise up – keep them relaxed.



- (ii) **Deeper breath:** An easy exercise to connect more deeply with the lower breath: Walk over to a wall and standing about 2ft away lean forward with straight back and gently but firmly push against it. You will have an angled straight back and body about 30% to the vertical. Breathe in this position, bringing the breath as low as you can – aim for the pubic bone! – pushing gently with strong, efficient energy. Push away from the wall back into a standing position. This exercise will help you to feel your full physical presence when you are standing again.
- (iii) **Back breath:** An exercise to open the back of the ribcage and deepen the breath – this can be done anywhere! Sit on a chair with your feet fully connected on the floor, and your spine naturally up. Lean forward and place your elbows on your knees. Breathe in this position and you will open the back and place the breath low in the body.

Exercise 7b – Constructive Rest

Time: 5–10 minutes

This is probably best done at home, or in your private office. Unless you choose to introduce it as a brilliant, office-wide, completely accepted, practice.



Take a chair (dining or office chair, you will gauge the right height by trying it). To really connect with your breath, lie in the 'constructive rest' position. Lie down on the floor, on your back with your legs facing the seat of the chair. Lift your legs so that your calves and feet are resting on the chair. The height of the chair should allow your thigh muscles to be at right angles to the floor. Your thighs run up the leg of the chair, your knees are at the front of the chair, and your calves are comfortably resting on the seat. You may need a small firm cushion or pad under your head. Get comfortable, and remember this position. You may want to place one hand over your navel and the other just below the breastbone. This way you can feel the natural rise and fall of the breath. Alternatively, place your arms by your side. Relax your shoulders, buttocks, legs, abdomen, jaw, thighs. Let the muscles around the spine spread and sink into the floor. Breathe in and out through your nose for as long as it takes to release tension. Scan your body – as you encounter tension, let it go. Spending 10 minutes relaxing and breathing in this position is extremely rejuvenating and highly beneficial for the parasympathetic nervous system which is in charge of renewal and repair. It's up to you.

8.1 A FEW MORE THOUGHTS ON BREATH

As you begin to understand the relaxing power of deep breathing, and the energising power of re-oxygenating, you will also find useful points in your business life when 'remembering to breathe' could greatly enhance your position. Here are a few example/alternative narratives:

Situation 1: "I'm late, I'm late for a very important date", as you rush with your papers to the next meeting. You rush in breathless and just in time. You are tense and still thinking about the last meeting, or the troubled journey.

What If – just before you enter the meeting room, you stop and take 30 seconds for yourself, for your breath, for you to calm yourself. Just stop. Allow your pulse and breathe to calm. Take two or three deep breathes. Do a quick diagnostic check over your body to see where the tension lies. Breathe thinking about releasing that tension. Straighten your tie, think of the reason you are a few moments late, walk in calmly and settle down. That has made you 30 seconds later than barging in through the door, but it has brought you time to be more conscious and more energised for the meeting ahead. Just try it sometime.

Situation 2: “Ladies and gentlemen, I welcome xx to the stage” (xx – That’s you), and you grab your papers or your PowerPoint stick and head to the centre, thanking the chairman as you walk, and pressing go on the first slide as you arrive centre stage. And you’re off.

What If – just before you expect to hear the welcome on stage from your host, you re-connect with your breath, take a moment to calm your butterflies or rushed self. Again check the tension in your self, and breathe to release it. You might want to offer yourself calming breaths. You might want to pump yourself up with some extra energy. All it takes is 30 seconds, or less, but it can make all the difference to the next 10,20,30 minutes of your presentation.

Situation 3: “Thanks for coming in to meet us, here’s the latest figures, how are you going to make the business better?” (That’s the boss and committee, addressing you, the creative business leader who is meant to come up with a great idea instantly). So you open your mouth and rapidly talk about the situation and what you could do, and don’t stop until you have got your brain in synch with your mouth, and delivered something to keep the bosses happy.

What If – you took your time. You took a deep breath. You found the best calm position to be with a relaxed body. You used some of the Second Circle techniques and looked around the room. You give your mind time to think about the challenging question, and the challenging figures. Calmly you say thank you, and begin to address the issue. You keep breathing, and respond from a centred, authoritative stance.

This third situation takes a lifetime of practice (well it does for me). The faster the questioner, and the more agitated the meeting, the more I am likely to forget to breathe. Keep practicing.

An actor entering any one of these situations in a play would take a breath, think of their lines, and assess the audience, before delivering the right tone of voice for the right situation, If it were in a Hollywood movie, they would win the day with a wonderful idea and massive applause from the audience. In business we may not have the scene written for us with quite such an effusive ending, but remembering to breathe really helps.

9 SOLAR PLEXUS – FOCUS AND DIRECTION

*But what is passion, what are emotions?
There is the source of fire, there is the fullness of energy.
A man who is not on fire is nothing:
he is ridiculous, he is two-dimensional.*

Carl Jung

Let's say you have birthed an idea, you have taken time to breathe, you know how to stay centred and balanced. Now is the time to harness the passion, willpower, and deep desire necessary to drive forward the business.

To repeat the old Irish story: One man wanting to know the way, turns to a local and asks. The local very calmly says “*Well, if you want to get to **there**, I wouldn't start from **here**.*” But we do all start from here. We can't start from anywhere else. We respect the desire to “Start with the End in Mind” (Stephen Covey), but then we still have to start from here. So first you can explore the journey from here to there. It was Walt Disney who introduced the term storyboarding, the visual tool for showing a plot journey. This is one of the ways you can look at the journey/story arc for your business and project.

Starting from the reality of now, life coach [Tash Mitch](#) asks: “*What do we think of ourselves? Who do we think we are? What do we want to do in our life? What do we think is possible for us?... When you are balanced here you feel fearless, peaceful, stable and centred. You have a sense of being guided and led to the things that are right for you. You have a will to live and a passion to succeed in your life. You do not feel the need to play emotional games or hide who you truly are, because you are willing to show yourself completely even if this makes you vulnerable.... From here we know that what we decide with complete certainty we create with complete certainty.*”

David Cox in Creative Thinking explores the Disney model introducing the mouse maestro's ability to inhabit different persona to gain different perspectives on a plan. This was his model/tool to look at a plan from every angle: His three core persona were “the dreamer”, “the realist” and “the critic”. He chose to inhabit each character whilst he looked at a plan.

As a business leader you may already be familiar with the different personality modelling systems used in both private and public sectors. I'm an INFJ according to Myers Briggs, and enjoy being a Plant and a Chair within Belbin. In [Bolton & Bolton's](#) People Styles at Work, I'm an Expressive/Amiable. This short book is not seeking to re-invent the wheel on self-exploration, but just to recommend that the better you know yourself at the start, the better you can be creative in business.

Surrounding yourself with the right people is one of the most important skills of a creative business leader, and now is the time to know your own strengths and explore who else you need on the journey. Dorothy in the Wizard of Oz needed the Lion, the Tin Man and the Scarecrow to complete her team. Each would play their part along the way. If you are "the dreamer" then you may need a companion realist, and even a supportive critic. If you are brilliant at the broad brush strokes of running a business, then now is the time to gather at least one "completer finisher" to support you. At times, like Walt Disney, you may have to multiple-role play, but where possible find real Lions, Tin Men and Scarecrows to join you on the journey.

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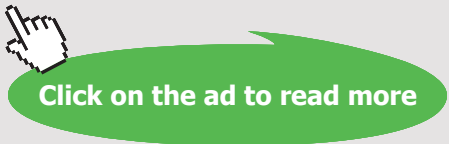
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If you are finding that you are so busy looking after the nuts and bolts of making the business work, and yet you are also the visionary creative, now is the time to re-think your team and practice the art of delegation. It is also the time to find space and time to focus on your core skills with all your willpower. The Japanese inventor may choose to use the bottom of a swimming pool, but you may choose a quiet focussed corner of the office, or take time when travelling as a passenger (commuting, flying, waiting for the bus) – times when it is possible to be incommunicado and have your mobile turned to silent.

With a big idea, it is good to think of the key milestones that need to be achieved, and which will give you a sense of satisfaction when they are reached.

If you are about to enter a phase of the project that is going to sap your energy, or be deeply boring, then make sure you offer yourself a prize at the end.

You have to keep the passion alive, the energy flowing, and the focus firing out from your solar plexus. Maybe think of an invisible energy line from your centre going forward to your goal; your own yellow brick road to Oz.

Exercise 8 – Walk the Line

Time – allow 20–30 minutes

You have a starting point (the time is now). You have a destination (a goal) that you wish to achieve. It should be a goal that fills you with energy for achieving it. It may be a long haul. It may be a stretch. But the idea is worth the challenge of travelling along your own “yellow brick road”.

Before you start the Gantt charts, or project planning tools; before the detailed budgets and business plans, I suggest you try this exercise to help embody the journey, and to explore the highs and the lows.

Read this page through first, so you get an idea of how it works. Then either have a voice recorder, or a friend with you, so that you can talk as you step forward. You need to have a record of what you said.

Pre Step 1: Stand still for a moment. You are in the present now, point towards your past. Then point towards your future. This should give you two points in the space – the present “here” and the goal “there”, between which you can draw an imaginary timeline. Imagine that line where you are at the moment in some mid-point of the present.

Step 2: Write your end Goal on a blank sheet of paper, and then look forward along your timeline to choose a place in the future, along your imaginary line on the floor, where you have achieved your goal. Don't think how, or worry about the challenges ahead. Move forward to the goal point and place a sheet of paper on the ground to mark the goal. Now stand on it.

Step 3: For this moment **You have achieved your goal – congratulations.** Talk about this to your colleague (or into your voice recorder). Answer these questions and write/record what you say. How does it feel?, What do you see?, What has happened?, How is your world different?, What are people saying? What's the date?, Who is celebrating with you?, What else?

Step 4: Now take a step back – one step back towards the other end of the line which represents the present. Once again feel yourself at this time. Stand there and decide when it is. What have you achieved at this time? Who is involved at this point? What do you see around you? How does it feel to have achieved what you have achieved to this point? Write/record your answers and reflections.

Step 5: Take a further step back. You are getting closer to the present now. Again stand there. Think of your environment at this time. When is it? What have you got in place at this point to help you towards the goal? Who is ready to help? What does it feel like to be here? Get these reactions written down.

You may take a few more steps back to the present and repeat the process. These are your milestones along the way. In a moment you will review them, and you may shift them. For the moment just trust yourself to have taken a set of steps back from the achieved goal moment (in Step 3).

Step 6: It is now time to take the last step back to arrive at the present time. Today. Look around you and reflect to your colleague/voice recorder how you are feeling. Any resources you already have in place to move forward toward your goal. What this moment looks like in relation to the goal. What success and skill you may bring from your past to be present with you today.

Step 7: Step off the timeline. Take a moment to return to the immediate space with your colleague. Observe how you are feeling about the Goal, and about the Reality of where you are. Check in with your colleague and prepare yourself for the next step.

Stand by your timeline with your colleague/voice recorder. At this point it may be helpful for you to have a piece of paper and a pen.

Step 8: Now – from beside the timeline, just look at the start of the line. The point of the present. And listen to your colleague or your voice recorder deliver back to you what you said you were feeling, thinking, doing at this point when you were in Step 6. If anything comes to you as you hear your own words played back to you, then make some notes yourself.

Step 9: Take your first steps to the first milestone along the timeline – allow your colleague again to read back to you what you said as you were stepping back in time. Notice what you Notice. As to travel ask yourself on a scale of 1–10 how realistic do I feel this milestone is to achieve. If less than 7 then you may find it useful to adjust it. Jot all this down.

You are now going to walk along the timeline towards the date/time of the achieved goal. You will be moving from now into your future. Be aware of the challenges you have overcome at each point along the way. If the space between one milestone step and the next one in the future feels too much of a stretch, then make a note and come back to this. You may need an extra stepping stone along the way to be a new milestone. If the time available to achieve what you have set out to achieve seems too short, then you may have to adjust the line.

My thanks to The Coaching Academy for teaching this to all their trainee coaches.

This is a big exercise, and it is designed to help you embody the journey that you are about to go on with your creative business. It may be that you invent new projects and new ideas as you walk the path – just notice what you notice, and enjoy the journey.

Remember that the solar plexus is the centre for your own self-belief, and your own energy to drive forward. There may be times along the path where that energy seems to drop away. Notice that, and explore it with a Coach or in the quiet of your planning process. If you know now that in 3,6,9 months time you are going to hit a creative phase in your business which feels anything but energising and fun, then you have time to call for help. And remember, when you pass that low point successfully, give yourself a reward.

10 HEARTFELT CONNECTION

Let us presume for the moment that you, like most of us, are working in a business or leading a life where you need to make money. You need to achieve a positive bottom line. You may have shareholders to satisfy or a bank to keep happy. Even without these pressures you have to feed yourself.

In the arts business there are two types of organisation: the “for profit distribution” and the “not for profit distribution” – the latter may be a charity or a sole trader or small business. The thing that all businesses, arts and commerce, share is the need to make money so that the bills are paid, whether or not profits are distributed.

We live in a fragile world. I for one would like a planet to pass on to my children which is sustainable, as peaceful as is possible, and safe for them to bring their children into the world. The balance between profit and planet is possible – it just takes a bit of thinking about, and a lot of political will.

“We don’t need more high achievers, we need more people who care.”

– Dalai Lama

Whilst I understand this statement completely, I believe people in business, and the businesses they run, can be caring and have/be high achievers. Too often though, one stamps on the other.

Business is about connections. Too often those connections are by e-mail and anonymous. The success of growing a creatively rich business depends upon the relationships that you can forge with real people, who either need what you offer, or wish to work with you to make what you offer. So many business advisors say, quite rightly, get off the email and make real human connections.

If your connections just remain email addresses or phone numbers, how can you touch their heart and demonstrate your passion, your heartfelt desire to make a difference, and your energy for creating a successful business? Business, especially a new business, is about sharing your passion and touching the hearts, and minds, of others.

Each Christmas businesses spend millions to try and touch the heart of the customer with their advertising. Sometimes they share some of the profits that these generate with a charity. Major corporations have CSR (corporate social responsibility) budgets designed to give something back and be seen to be heartfelt supporters of a cause or a community.

If you are a sole trader, or a tiny cog in a massive machine, you can still bring your heart to touch your work.

What gives you pleasure at work? Maybe something like praise for a job well done. Could you offer some praise in a genuine, heartfelt way to someone else?

What might connect you to a colleague or customer beyond email? Maybe walking across to their desk and talking to them, or picking up the phone to a customer and seeing whether you could visit them in person.

What do you know which could allow a more personal connection with your assistant or a contact? Maybe remembering their birthday, or a cause they feel passionate about.

There are so many questions and challenges to offer which use your heart and your goodness to make a difference to colleagues or customers. Going that little bit extra to make a richer connection, is good for you, for them, and for the business.

I was told of a research project to test the level of positive experience customers had when visiting a supermarket. I'm sorry I can't find the reference. Customers were questioned as they completed going through one of two checkout lines. Checkout assistants were trained carefully to offer the same level of customer care as they swiped the items and rang up the till. The two lines however generated very different levels of experience. One line rated customer care significantly higher than the other. Afterwards it was revealed to the management that one checkout assistant had been given one extra instruction. As they handed the change back to the customer, they were to ensure that their hand touched the hand of the customer. That simple human connection reached the heart and mind of the customers in that checkout line and generated a higher level of positive experience for the whole store.

We are humans who deserve and need human contact. E-mail and auto checkouts are just two ways that can reduce our contact with real people.

So engage your heart with your colleagues and customers, and see the difference.

One physical tip for engaging more fully is to understand the difference between turning towards another person with only a rotation in the neck, as opposed to turning from the spine, keeping the head aligned so that the breastbone turns to face the other person. Your hearts now have the possibility of connection. You are not restricting the communication just to your head and voice. Try it and see the difference. Observe the way people who are comfortable and open with each other stand and talk together, compared to just business colleagues. Bring some of that heart-opening to your communication.

Exercise 9 – Home Heart / Work Heart

Time: Three places, 10 minutes each

In each phase of this, take a moment to breathe deeply into the abdomen and become calm. Try to engage with your heart and a feeling of peace and warmth about life. This is an exercise that seeks out the positive about two different places in your life. The brain likes positives – and hopefully the heart will too.

1st Place – non-work: Next time you are at home, or in a non-work environment that you enjoy, especially if there are children around. Take a moment and write down 5 emotions that you feel when you are in the most loving company. What values are important to you in this environment that make you enjoy the place or company? What does it mean for you to love a group of friends, or a relative, a place, or a heartfelt richly enjoyed activity? If you wish keep writing some values and feelings that flow as you enjoy that company.

2nd Place – work: Next time you have a moment at your place of work, make a list of the values which are important to you in doing the job. What do you bring to the business? What gets you motivated to get up and go to work? What inspires you? Again make a list of at least 5 things – it may be 50, just see what flows.

3rd Place – somewhere quiet, alone or with a coach/supporter: Read through the two lists, and see where there are common items. Those can be marked as common threads running through your life. Now look at the non-work list and pay particular attention to the values and phrases which give you an emotional/heartfelt kick. Could any of these values be morphed for use in your place of work?

Just notice what you notice, and if your brain starts suggesting “but”, “should”, “if only” or other negative things, take a deep breath, release that thought, and return to your heart and the positive values which you live and work by.

There’s a coaching exercise which you may find a good addition to this. Picture yourself as the 80 year-old you, rocking quietly in a lovely chair, in good health and looking back to today. Think back to the combined list of values across work and non-work, and allow the 80 year-old self to wonder whether there are things you could do now, to ensure there are no regrets in old age.

10.1 MORE HEARTS

In searching for more on Heart and Business I came across a new London-based organisation, [Heart in Business](#) that offers a very clear, and open-access inspiration for re-aligning and re-exciting a business. One of their tools is Heart Resuscitation, and I quote:

“The objective of Heart Resuscitation is two fold: to align an organisation to its mission and to align the individuals within the organisation with their true purpose in life. Enormous synergy is achieved when both the individuals that make up the organisation and the organisation itself are flowing smoothly together in the same optimal direction. Heart Resuscitation gets everyone in an organisation doing what they love doing, to be clear on what is motivating and driving the team, and to align everyone around a common optimal purpose for the organisation.”

Have a look, see whether their mission and practice is useful. Click on the link above.

11 HANDS – CREATIVE PLAY

“The painter has the Universe in his mind and hands.”

– Leonardo da Vinci

As a child you were endlessly at play, or at least I hope you were. My special games were Lego, digging holes to live in around the woods, and making imaginary trains and places out of the furniture in our living room (with the eternal acceptance of my grandmother). As we grow older many of us become less playful. We may still paint, or write as a hobby, but our brains are focussed on business and keyboards and ‘important’ life.

In Open Space Technology there is a lovely phrase: ‘prepare to be surprised’. And in creative business it is wonderful to put yourself in the right state where surprise (good surprise) can happen.

There are four primary learning styles: visual, auditory, read-write, and kinaesthetic. People learn using a variety of these methods, but one method is usually predominant. Familiarity with the characteristics of each person’s individual learning style, and associated strategies, allows you to address the needs of each type of employee or creative colleague. This can also help with your own children or those you may teach. Even more importantly, learning your own predominant style allows you to be surprised by playing with the other learning styles to unlock creativity.

For example, if you are a very visual person, and you appreciate very clear images in a presentation, and graphs to support an argument, then you might experiment with exploring auditory learning. Or, if you are someone who is best reading a clear document, laying out an argument then maybe, just maybe, grabbing a box of Lego (or Meccano if that’s your choice) and seeing how these could be used to tackle a problem, might provide new ways to look at a business challenge.

Exploring the kinaesthetic learning and play potential, when tackling a very serious new business idea, might just unlock something. So might a box of paints and some paper, or a heap of wet sand on the beach. In each case you are allowing your brain to channel its power in a slightly surprising way. You may crack a problem and unlock a creative opportunity.

From experience, I know something unexpected happens when you get a group of business colleagues in a circle, preferably on the floor with a pile of giant sheets of paper and some pens. The problems may be very cerebral ones, but the sheer engagement of the kinaesthetic, visual, and physical senses can help to unlock unexpected solutions. And the sense of being free to play, if comfortably facilitated, can be liberating. Try it, maybe best engaging a facilitator who can encourage you to go further than you may by yourselves.

Exercise 10 – Left and Right brain

Time: Allow 10 minutes

Whether or not you are an artist, or have ever drawn since childhood, you can also explore your creativity, and your brain, with another simple experiment. Grab a piece of paper and a pencil and draw something you see using your normally dominant hand (for many of us that is the right hand). This isn't meant to be a work of art, just a quick sketch, which only you will see. Now take another piece of paper and change your pencil to the other hand, the hand you don't normally write/draw with, and draw the same object again. Then notice what you notice. What is different in terms of shape and texture? What did it feel like to use the other hand? Are there elements of the images that are different? Maybe you saw something in your object with one hand more than the other. Notice what you notice.

As you do this more, if the mood takes you, you are unlocking the skills of the different sides of your brain to do things differently. You might try a bit of writing with the other hand too – just to see what happens.

Here is an extra exercise, adapted by Kath Burlinson from a group exercise she uses as part of a much bigger management of change workshop. Here all you need is your own hands, to explore your business, or a moment of change in your life.

Exercise 11 – Three-dimensional change

Time: Allow 15 minutes

There are four parts to this exercise. Two preparatory, one three-dimensional change, and the final part is to write up and reflect/reframe. [If you are doing this with someone then they can also write notes, or you can choose to take an audio track of your thoughts as you go]

- (i) Prep 1: Find some quiet space, and relax quietly for a moment. Breathe deeply. Check in with your gut feeling and choose an aspect of your business, life or idea that needs to change. Now take your hands and move them to a position that represents to you the way the business, life or idea is looking/feeling like now. There's no right position, it is just a three dimensional representation of the business as it is at the moment –a 'hand sculpture'. Is it a closed fist position? One hand open, one closed? Both hands with raised palms? Fingers spread, curled, clasped? Once you have found the position, *remember it*. [If with someone else, they could photograph the 'hand sculpture' and you could talk through some thoughts/associations.]

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- (ii) **Prep 2:** Having remembered your first hand position, release your hands and relax. Now think forward to a time and situation where your business, life or idea is exactly as you would like it. You are at 10 out of 10 and feeling good. Now move your hands to a sculptural position that represents this 10/10 moment in time. It is very likely that the hands will be in a different position. There is no right place – it is your sculpture. Once again remember and capture the position if possible. Note down any feelings that you have.
- (iii) **Transition:** Release your hands, relax a moment, and return your hands to the 1st position- the “now” sculpture. Very slowly, over a count of 10, you are going to move your hands from the “now” position to the “future’s great” 2nd position. As you move you are going to try and become very aware of the minute changes that you are making to move from position 1 to position 2. If you have the voice recorder going, or a friend with you, then record your thoughts as this happens – describing with precision what you have to do to effect the transition, e.g., “I am opening the fingers of the left hand, I am reaching my fingers forwards, I am turning my palms to face out, etc.”
- (iv) **Reflect/Reframe:** Relax your hands. If you are by yourself now is the time to write down the movement changes that you made to develop from position 1 to position 2. The more detail the better. Take special notice of the *verbs*: “opening, reaching, turning” etc. The reframing will now follow as you consider that this exercise was about changing your life, business or idea from now to a 10 out of 10 future place. If you go into work tomorrow and say “I’ve got it, we need to lift our right fingers” then people may look at you without comprehension. However the “lifting” might apply to energising a particular department, the “reaching” into a new business territory, the “opening” indicating a possible new idea or direction.

These are your own hands, your own imagination, your own creative ideas, your own associations.

12 SHOULDERS OR “SHOULD-ERS”

In business, as in life, there are times when we get tense and stressed. We are at our least creative when we are at our most tense. The challenge is to work-ease not to work-hard. The shoulders are a great part of the body for reminding us that we should be taking care. We can, as the phrase goes, carry the weight of the world on our shoulders, and they are often called the “should-ers” in personal development, because they are the place where we can hold the burden of things undone, or things we should have completed.

The body is an amazing creative instrument. It is vital to keep it well tuned and open for ideas to flow from your feet or hands to your brain, and from your brain to your core. The shoulders, if too tense, can really stop the flow.

I will briefly divert with a true story. Some years ago I was working hard on a big job, and began to get breathless. I began to worry that my heart felt as though it was missing the odd beat. It didn't seem to get better. I popped to the doctor and she thought there was something wrong. She sent me straight to a heart specialist, for which I was most grateful. He did some tests and had me on a treadmill and tested loads of stuff. Nothing seemed to show up, but he did agree that there was some sort of problem. I went to stay with some friends and, sitting around the fire after dinner we were talking about massage and how relaxing it was. The master of the house leaned over and gave my shoulders a quick massage. Ow. They were incredibly tense. 30 minutes later everyone had had a go and I was sore, but more relaxed. These good friends recommended a proper massage specialist, and a few days later I was seen by this alternative therapist who discovered that it was just the most massively tense shoulders, holding the weight of “should-ers” from my work. Within a few sessions, I felt so much better, and shortly after I realised that life was too short and that I should complete that job and move on to another project. Since then, no dodgy heart or breathing. If you feel unwell, of course see a doctor first. But you may find other treatments can offer profound relief as well.

If the cares of the world ever settle on your shoulders, there are some simple exercises, some of which can be done anywhere, even at the desk. I hope they help lighten your load.

Exercise 12 – Releasing Tension

Timing 10 minutes, often

The following exercises will make a significant impact on your ability to think and work creatively, and need not take very long! **All exercises should be done without strain – do not push.**

Releasing the neck and shoulders.



- i) Experience the weight of your head by letting it drop gently onto your chest (don't force it). Keep breathing! Swing head gently, side to side in a pendulum motion, left ear to left shoulder, right ear to right shoulder. Feel the stretch in the muscles that connect the skull, neck and shoulder carriage.
- ii) Lift shoulders to your ears, scrunch them up and breathe in, then allow them to drop, on an out-breath, to where they fall naturally.
- iii) Gently circle shoulders in all directions.
- iv) At your desk, twist to look at someone behind you, keeping your hips facing forwards. A simple way to do a mini-detox as you refresh the hormones carried in the spinal cord.
- v) Swing arms gently, underarm, to release shoulders.

Most of these gentle exercises can be done whilst you are sitting at your desk. Try to make sure you are sitting upright, with your feet placed firmly on the ground.



If you have time and can find somewhere private, then the following additional stretches can continue the process of freeing tension in your body. By freeing tension, you are releasing cortisol, the hormone known to be linked to stress. Refresh your body and help your creativity fire on all cylinders.

Stretches – Whilst standing upright and balanced, stretch one arm up to the side and over your head (don't collapse) – breathe into the side of your ribcage. Repeat on the other side.

Then you could slowly relax/bend your knees and roll your spine down, let yourself flop forward, relax your arms, and relax your head and neck so that they can move freely. Breathe into the back of your ribcage. Slowly uncurl and re-stack the spine, coming up slowly and gently, shoulders relaxed, head and neck last. Be very careful and do not strain anything. You need to be aware of your own body and any reasons for not doing these exercises.



To expand your back and free up even more of your spine, stretch your arms out in front and clasp your fingers. Then turn your hands 'inside out' so your palms are pushing away from you. Use your hands at the front to create a stretch between the shoulder blades and breathe into your back.

If you do any sports, or yoga, or swim, then some of this gentle workout will be part of your life anyway. It may not be something you are used to doing whilst wearing the costume of a business manager, but regular stretches and releases can easily become part of your daily desk-life.

13 THROAT – FINDING YOUR VOICE & LISTENING CAREFULLY

As a creative being in business you will, hopefully, have great ideas. The chapters so far aim to help you find the space to discover them, explore them in physical activity, balance yourself, and show your strength. Now people need to hear the ideas, and listen to your proposals. Even a sole-trader has to communicate their message effectively. Many of us have teams, clients, board members or volunteers to inspire.

As with the Circles of Energy work explored in chapter 5, the voice can also be considered as a source of power that can be swallowed (1st circle), pushed out (3rd circle) or delivered in a way that it is not only spoken but heard clearly. Much of the work that actors do in order to prepare their voices for performance involves breathing and vocal exercises. The throat is a series of muscles that deserve attention. Exploring more of Patsy Rodenburg's books *Presence* or *Power Presentation* could prove very useful.

"We are not striving for a 'beautiful' voice but one rid of doubt and insecurity, a voice that is sincere. A voice that is naturally yours, free of habitual tensions. If it matters to you it will matter to us.... A great orator is clear, defined and infused with energy. He or she hits points squarely on the head and is wholesomely direct. Communication only deals with the essential."

– Patsy Rodenburg

Simple voice exercises

- i) Centering the voice. Your voice should sound as though it comes from the centre of your body, not your throat. Place one hand over your navel. Stand in a centred position. Breathe into your hand. Try saying "I am speaking through an open, relaxed throat" and then try saying "I am speaking through a tight, constricted throat" and see if you can hear and feel the difference.
- ii) To help find a connection to your centred voice, try saying "Hah", with your hand over your navel. "Hah, hah, hah". Can you feel the movement? Your abdomen should contract as you sound "Hah."
- iii) Yawn. The yawn is a natural way for the body to open the throat and receive more oxygen. You can use it as a reliable technique to open your throat and free your voice.

- iv) To understand more of the mechanics of your breath and voice, say out loud, “1”, then “1,2, and breathe” then “1,2,3, and breathe” and so on, up to 10 on one breathe. Can you count 1–10, slowly, in a single breath?
- v) Stick your tongue out. Say the 12 months of the year. You will look and sound ridiculous, but you will give the muscles of your mouth and tongue a great warm up!

Every actor preparing to address a group of people will do some vocal preparation, and any business leader wishing to be at their creative best will find it useful to try some of these exercises. It will improve your vocal delivery and projection. It will help give you a 2nd Circle presence in a presentation or meeting.

Time to think, and time to listen, are also vital parts of the creative process. Not only must our voice be heard, but we need to listen to the opinions and ideas of our fellows. Listening can sometimes be even harder than speaking.

For a creative idea to have resonance in the world, it needs to be shared. It needs to be accepted and honoured by others. In an ideal world it is also championed by others. To get to that stage there is a need to hear criticism openly, then you can consider whether it is useful or not to your own creative process.

In the theatre business we show plays and new pieces in what are called “scratch nights.” A work in progress is offered to an audience of peers and the public. Afterwards there are feedback forms or a question and answer session to gain feedback. This can be immensely helpful. It can also be hard to hear. And sometimes it can be completely unhelpful – things like “How did you learn all those lines?” and “If I were doing it then I would do it this way” are examples of unhelpful. The vital task is to take time to hear what is needed.

Setting up a Q&A session, or a feedback form, is a key to getting useful responses. Three questions which I find useful are: “What did you experience?”, “What would you like to see more of?”, and “Is there anything which we didn’t explore which you’d like to have seen?” These questions are examples of ‘open questions’ which seek to garner very specific reactions, positive or negative, to help the process. These questions were for a theatre show. As I type them I realise they would work just as well for me to ask of you as a reader of this text.

Exercise 13 – The Feedback Seat

Time: 40 minutes

In order that you can listen to the voices that could help you with useful feedback, here is a simple group exercise. It allows you to listen/hear, and then filter what is useful. For the purposes of this exercise, let me set a scene (although it can be used in myriad ways): you have presented an idea to a group of 3–4 colleagues, and would like feedback.

Set yourselves down on chairs, close together, so that it is easy to have a conversation. I suggest moving away from the conference table. Now **TURN YOUR CHAIR SO YOU HAVE YOUR BACK TO THE OTHERS**, and take up a notebook and pen. Now ask the group a question which will get them talking. It should be an 'open question', and could be one of the ones above. Allow a fixed amount of time for this question, maybe 10 minutes, during which time they talk and you listen. As you listen, just write down what you are hearing that is useful. You are not allowed to interrupt them. By being a silent witness you will, hopefully, hear more and they will be free to talk more openly. They may also enter into more of a debate, almost forgetting you are there, which you could find useful.

After 10 minutes. Ask a 2nd question and go through the same process. And then a 3rd. That should be sufficient for you to have all the juice that you need. You may feel the need to ask one more clarifying or enlightening question, inspired by what you have heard. But don't enter into debate. Just walk away from the process, and breathe. Take time to look at what you have written, and reflect.

One extra useful tool:

The Talking Stick (or talking biro)

The use of the talking stick is a Native American tradition to allow open discussion and democratic debate in a circle of elders or colleagues. A piece of wood (or maybe in the contemporary world, the chair person's biro) is passed from one person to the next. When you hold the talking stick you can speak, and will be heard without interruption from the others in the circle (or around the board table). As you receive the talking stick you do not need to speak, and can pass the stick to the next person. From right to left, one after another, everyone around the circle will receive the stick, and is free to comment. No-one else in the circle speaks, or comments on the statement just made, unless they have the stick. Eventually the stick returns to the chair. Everyone however shy or bombastic has had the same invitation to speak, and the same respect of silence.

It is used in Open Space events, and I use it in classrooms and workshops. It is rather extraordinary to feel the importance of a mere biro. It does take on the mantle of the respected holder of power.

Once again voices are heard.

You can extend the use of the stick, if you do not need to worry about unheard voices or dominating voices. You can place it in the centre of the circle/table. Then the order is random in which people speak. Each person who wishes can pick up the stick, speak, be heard, and then return it to the centre. Again there is no interruption of cross-talking. Everyone who speaks is heard.

14 VISION – SEEING IS BELIEVING

Have you ever played “yellow car”. It’s a car-game for children. It is annoyingly simple. Every time someone in the car sees a yellow vehicle, they shout “yellow car” or in Australia “spotto”. That’s it. You can keep scores if you like. It can keep a family delighted for many hours. It has another effect (apart from annoying the heck out of the adults in your car if you play it without the excuse of children). You will find that you notice many more yellow things than you do normally. You become aware of the colour as you drive along, in posters, in signs. The colour appears to be brighter. You are bringing your awareness to yellow-ness. This awareness stays with you as you walk around later too.

The Creative business leader needs new ideas, and new ways to solve old problems. Bringing your awareness to the unexpected is part of a life-long training programme. “Yellow car” just hints at what is possible.

The wonders of technology have offered us the chance to achieve so much from sitting at the laptop. Almost without moving we can manage business opportunities all over the world, manage a workforce without ever meeting them, and look after our finances without meeting the bank manager. But the more we do this, the narrower our vision and focus becomes (quite apart from an increasing level of sedentary decay).

We know that non-verbal communication is vital to help us pick up the signs of people’s feelings or attitudes. It is often taught that 7% of meaning is verbal, and the rest of meaning is vocal and facial. In fact Professor Albert Mehrabian’s experiments in 1967, which led to this summary, quoted on his website.

“Total Liking = 7% Verbal Liking + 38% Vocal Liking + 55% Facial Liking. Please note that this and other equations regarding relative importance of verbal and nonverbal messages were derived from experiments dealing with communications of feelings and attitudes (i.e., like–dislike). Unless a communicator is talking about their feelings or attitudes, these equations are not applicable.”

You need the mix of sound, visuals, and language to get full liking and understanding. It is the shared use of all three which ensure the best communication. As someone so rightly said in a discussion around this work – try listening to a TED talk with the sound down and see how much you understand without the verbal – it isn’t 93%.

How does this relate to the business person at their laptop? If you sit at your desk and email someone then the reply you receive will only be showing their verbal attitude. If you phone someone, at least you have the chance to listen to their words and hear their vocal attitude. But you are still missing so much if you cannot see them. Thanks to skype and other tools we can improve that, but I still urge you to meet people when you can, especially when sharing a creative business idea. You can inspire them with your very presence and enthusiasm, and you can see, listen to, and hear their reaction. You are aiming to have 100% of the communication tools at your disposal.

There has been a great deal of research in “non verbal communication”. Body language, facial expression, eye contact, gestures which show falsehood or fear, tone of voice, physical touch (hugs and handshakes), the physical space that someone takes up when they meet with you: all of this has an impact. Non-verbal information is gathered by our eyes and ears and processed with our brains, often at lightning speed and not always consciously. Cultural and personal expectations play significant roles. Again the challenge is not to jump to conclusions, but to see what you see, and notice what you notice. [For light relief you might have a look at the Tim Roth US series “Lie To Me”]

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In meditation and mindfulness you are often invited to “visualize” some time or place, some object or sensation. It is not in front of you, but you can train yourself to see and experience it. If you have trouble with virtual visualization you may have to get out of your seat, or off your yoga mat, and go there. I was coaching a business entrepreneur recently who wanted to move her life and her business to Edinburgh. She told me that she would take a train to the city, walk the streets she would like to work in, and find a door that she could hold as a picture in her mind as she prepares her budgets and plans for the business move. She was excited to be bringing into reality a new front door in a new location.

Exercise 14 – 20.20 Vision

Time: 10 minutes

For the next exercise, I am presuming that you may spend too much time sitting by the laptop, or in your office. Here is a way (whilst still sitting) to expand your visual horizon, and notice what’s “at the end of your nose”.

Grab a piece of paper and pen (or a laptop if you must) and sit calmly where you often/ normally spend most time running your business or your life. You are going to make two lists, in two parts.

First make a list of just 10 things which are very close to you as you look around.

Now take your eyes to the furthest point on the horizons around you – which may be a wall a few feet away, or a wide vista through the window, and make a list of 10 things that are furthest away. Take a moment to notice what you notice. Bring yourself back to a quiet neutral place, and then be ready to make the second half of the lists.

Second pair of lists coming up. If you spend most of your time looking in one direction, then you may like to try to restrict your movement to be facing, only, the way you normally look. But you are allowed to move your eyes. So this time the 10 things you notice close to you will be those immediately in front of you, in your normal “work” vision.

Now relax your eyes, keep your head still looking forward, and expand your vision. Look far away in front, see how wide your vision can go. Don’t strain your eyes, but whilst looking to the side (without moving your head) just see how much you can see in your peripheral vision (so in a 180 degree or more sweep with your eyes). Again the furthest objects get jotted down on a list.

You now have 20 close and 20 far objects on your list. Take the last few moments to notice what you notice about the list. You will know the best questions to ask yourself, but a few which might spark your thoughts: Is there anything on the list you have never noticed before? Is there anything in your 20 close-up objects that is not necessary for you in your work? Is there anything in the far distance list of 20 which give you joy, or makes you want to see it more often?

There may be two outcomes from this exercise. The first is that you may make changes to the objects or positioning of your space. The second is that you may, by experimenting with distant vision, begin to see more things around you. You may choose to repeat this part of the exercise, and many people say that they begin to see more, notice more, enjoy more of the world as they pass through it.

(My thanks to theatre-maker Gemma Wilcox of Boulder Colorado for this exercise.)

15 ALLOWING THE BRAIN TO PLAY

"I never made one of my discoveries through the process of rational thinking."

– Albert Einstein

As we reach the top of the body we reach the organ that we can develop and enhance throughout our lives, and hopefully energise through the creative use of every other part of the body. Allowing the brain to rule our creativity suggests that we are drawing on our wealth of logic and rationality. To be an Einstein we need to use, but not rely on these facilities of the brain.

In coaching I work with clients who might have a dream or a topic of their life or business that they wish to change, but they immediately see all the reasons why it cannot happen. By starting with the present challenges we make it very hard for the brain to be allowed, and indeed encouraged, to think up innovative solutions. We have to give it some help. The questions I ask are tried and tested tools for generating new ways of thinking, new options and new directions in which you “might” travel.

Think of a Goal you would like to achieve (The Stephen Covey 2nd Habit – “start with the end in mind.”) and then ask yourself: “What might you do if you had unlimited budget?” “What might you do if you had unlimited time?” “What might you do if you knew you could not fail?” “What might you do if you had unlimited skills and resources in yourself?” There are dozens of open questions to ask yourself. Maybe reviewing this book will generate some questions which are unique to your situation. The important thing is using “might” question which invite the brain to by-pass the problems, just for a moment.

The brain loves to work with positives, and so believing and visualising a future place to be, where you have achieved a suitable goal, helps the brain to find the path to travel, to get from here to there.

Tash Mitch talks of the brain’s power highlighting one area we can harness: *“Having a strong sense of intuition is a human gift, the more we exercise the muscle of observing what we are picking up from our environment and our internal reaction to external circumstances, the better we get at using this gift.”*

I would like to suggest an exercise which adapts one of the coaching tools of the trade – the Wheel of Life – you could try using it to review your personal response to the contents of this book.

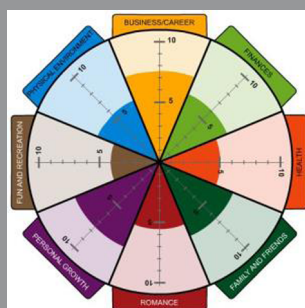
Exercise 15 – The Wheel of Life Body

Time: Allow 10 minutes

Take a piece of paper and draw a large circle, then a slightly smaller circle inside, allowing enough of an outer band to write words within the space between. The circle does not have to be beautiful, just useful. Now segment the circle into 8 segments. (Quickest way is to draw a vertical and horizontal line to cut it into 4 pie slices, then split each of these to get 8 slices of pie, or segments).

The 8 segments, for this exercise, represent the areas of the body that you feel are most useful to your creativity in business. If you feel that your power is really useful, then for this exercise you will write Thigh or Power in the space between the two circles at the edge of one segment. If you feel your hands, making things, give you a spatial skill to explore creativity, then use another segment to write hands. And so on until you have 8 segments filled. (If you get to 6 and run out of steam, no problem. Leave the last 2 blank, and see whether you suddenly need one later).

Now think of the wheel as a dart board where the centre spot is zero and the outer ring is 10, where 10/10 is the best, everything is perfect, you could not improve anything. And zero is wow, I've only just thought of this and have absolutely no skill/confidence/knowledge in this area whatsoever.



Now for each segment answer a simple question: “Without thinking too hard, on a scale of 0 to 10, where are you in terms of being the best you can be in that area of your creative portion of your body?” And then either write a number in each segment, or colour the segment so that you shade in half-way out if you are 5/10 skilled in that area.

For example, maybe, you know that communication with your voice is really important, and so you need the Throat segment in your wheel. But you can get tongue tied and nervous when you speak in public. This might lead you to say you are 4/10 or 6/10 in terms of skill now. There is room for improvement.

Do this exercise, quite quickly, for each segment, and see what it looks like when you have filled in the 8 segments. Does it surprise you? Is there an obvious segment with a score which is much lower or higher than the others? Is there one segment which makes you think, I could make that better with a bit of creative effort?

This completes the Exercise. You could then take this to a coach or colleague and explore it with them. You could think about it quietly yourself. You can't make everything 10/10 overnight. Maybe you might choose one segment and consider what you could do, relatively quickly and without too much change of life/business, to take that one step closer to 10/10 in that segment. What might take it from a 4 to a 5/10 or a 7 to an 8/10.

The aim in the long-term is to take action which gets each of the tools that you have within your creative body to be the fittest for creative life and business that they can be, and then to keep them toned and used – fit for purpose.

The Wheel is used more often as The Wheel of Life, where you populate the 8 segments with the things that are most important to you in life (or business) – money, children, faith, pets, love etc. Then you explore where you are in terms of full achievement where 10/10 is all perfect, complete. And 0/10 is where you have just realised it might be important. Then you reflect on the amount of completeness that you currently have in each area. And finally you look at the whole chart and begin a process of coaching exploration in one segment. It is a powerful and very simple tool.

16 CROWN – AUTHORITY, TRUST UPLIFTED

As we reach the top of the body and the summit of our creative journey, I hope you have one or more great ideas ready to go, you have identified who you might need to be with you on the journey and you are poised to move forward. Now you need the authority pledged in you, and a shared trust across the team to make a success.

“It is important that students bring a certain ragamuffin, barefoot irreverence to their studies; they are not here to worship what is known, but to question it.” Jacob Bronowski, *The Ascent of Man*. And so as you share your creative journey, you can expect some “ragamuffin, barefoot irreverence.” Indeed I suggest it is best to demand it of your fellows.

I was once taught by a wise business trainer, Richard Jackson, that we are all selfish.

He used an example by telling his class that *“I have never bought a bunch of flowers for my wife”*. Now we knew this man to be long married, with children, and a generally good man. We may all miss some occasions, but “never bought”? Then he explained that the important word was not “never” but “for.” He has bought flowers and given them to his wife, many times. But in each case he did it selfishly for himself. Either it was to see the joy on her face, or to feel comforted by a job well done, or maybe even to say sorry. Everything we do, he stressed, was always bound to be selfish.

With that lesson in mind, and with a great creative business fizzing and ready for lift-off, we need to remember that everyone with whom we are going to work is selfish. That’s not a negative thing. It is a human characteristic which, once understood, makes doing business with authority a whole lot easier.

Turning to David Cox’s book *Creative Thinking*, he references the work of Robert Cialdini on influencing influential people. In brief, he offers 6 categorizations for our fellow travellers. Each person may have a different “selfish” reason for engaging with you and your business:

- i) Liking – people who like you. We often choose to purchase from someone we like.
- ii) Authority – an expert in the field. You reassure that this is true.
- iii) Commitment and consistency – People trust reliability and promises kept.
- iv) Reciprocity – scratch my back and I’ll scratch yours,
- v) Social proof – testimonials from people we trust.
- vi) Scarcity – sale ends Wednesday.

Take a moment to think of how you might best frame your own creative ideas for different people.

The Killing Game

Just thinking about the team around you, at this moment, there is a quick exercise I have used often to see whether they are all in the right place to be the most effective that they can be for the task ahead (and maybe to remind myself of problem-children). If you have an organizational chart then take it out. If you are a sole trader then make a picture or list of the people who have influence over you, over whom you have influence with regards to this project, and those that you need to be attached to the project. In my world of theatre, that would be the creative team of director, designer etc. Some of whom may be my choice, some of whom may be imposed on me.

Now, quietly in private, mentally kill each one off. It's a painless, quick death. But the effect is that today they are at their desk being as effective/ineffective as usual, and tomorrow they are not. You may grieve for a moment, but this is an exercise, so get through that part quickly.

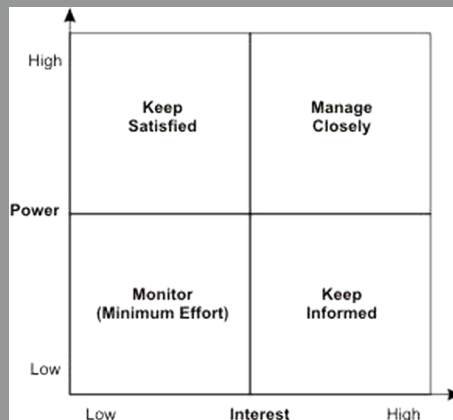
I find when I do this that I have one of three reactions:

- (a) "Oh help, how are we going to find someone as brilliant to do what they do, there must be someone but where?" – that tends to signify that they are the right person in the right place, and so you can revive them and put them back on the organizational chart.
- (b) "Wow we will miss them, there is no way anyone else can do all that they achieved, we will have to find two or more people and re-think a bit of the responsibilities to make it flow smoothly". That tends to suggest that you are vesting too much in one person, and if they were to walk out or genuinely fall ill, their absence could seriously affect your business. Maybe time for a bit of re-distribution, or getting them an assistant.
- (c) "Sad, but almost a relief actually, now we can make that re-organising of roles we've always wanted to do. They were a rock and wonderful, but we won't replace them, we can just free up some of the process now." Here you have hit your problem-child and it needs attention now, whilst they are still around. The sense is that they may be holding the business or the creative idea back. Maybe they are there because you feel they "should" be with you. Have a think again, before you slow your creativity and ability to deliver.

Exercise 16 – Selfish Team Building

Time: 20+ minutes

In PR and communications there is a simple matrix. It is used to plan how to communicate with all “stakeholders” by placing them in one of four categories. The bottom/x axis is “interest” from low to high, and the side/y axis is “influence” from little to great. Within this you create four segments (like a Boston Matrix). The bottom left hand box is low interest, low influence – for example the wider general public. This is labeled “Monitor.” Above that the top left box is for those with high influence, but not necessarily a great interest – for example your funding bodies or landlord. This is labeled “Keep satisfied.” Back to the bottom right which represents high interest, but low/medium influence – for example your junior staff, volunteers, and Aunty Flo. Label this box “Keep Informed.” And the final box top right is the high interest and high influence sector. Here are your major players, senior managers, closest investors. This box is normally called “Key Players.”



My suggestion for Selfish Team building is to create a communication matrix and place within it each person you need on your side to make the project work. Before inking them in to the chart, just “kill them off” for a moment (see directly above this exercise) to check they are where they should be. And then consider what is their “selfish” reason for being there. Below the chart, offer a quick thumbnail set of notes for each person on their selfish traits, and needs for communication, and how you might develop your personal strategy to maximize their useful involvement.

17 INSPIRATION – REMEMBERING YOUR CHILD

“The thing is to become a master, and in your old age to acquire the courage to do what children did when they knew nothing.”

– Ernest Hemingway

Thank you for reaching the final chapter in this set of introductions and exercises to Creativity in Business. If you've started with this chapter, then enjoy it, have a rant and then go back to the beginning and see what you have missed. If you are reaching the end of this journey then you should have experimented a little with poise and balance, calmness, opening your heart to allow ideas to flow, using more than your mind to shape ideas, and then exploring how to gather the teams, and influence the people necessary to bring the idea from gestation to fruition.

Along the way, with any project, you will get stuck and you may find yourself falling back into old patterns and practices. They may be safe and comforting patterns, but are they best for the creation? They may be known, but are they as exciting as the unknown? As a child you went exploring. As an adult you may have become fearful of getting lost. Well you wouldn't be a very good explorer if you didn't, from time to time, get lost.

The most important thing is to get creating. A Chinese proverb supports this: “*The person who says that it cannot be done, should not interrupt the person doing it.*” However if you begin to get lost, or stale, or stuck, you may need a little more inspiration, and maybe a little more challenge.

In Coaching there are questions which can open up new options to take you forward. They involve calling on the wisdom of real and imagined others, to reframe your thinking. At its most direct, you might ask yourself “What would my 80 year old aunt recommend?” – seeking out your ideas of how a real wise person might help you. Or you could take yourself in another direction “What would my 9 year old self recommend I did?” Remembering how to play, and how to unlock unexpected and maybe illogical ideas, may help solve a problem.

Depending on the person I am coaching, I have been heard to ask, “What would your cat recommend?” or even “What would your spirit guide suggest to you?” The questions are there to help you think “outside the box”, and as we explored on the first page of this book – there is no box, except that which you (and society) choose to construct around you. A frame is useful, a box can be restricting.

At times you will feel backed into a corner, and it may all seem to be about to go wrong. Your mind may get filled with “I Can’t”, “They won’t let me?”, “It won’t work!”, “I haven’t got time” and other annoying little voices stopping you from being creative.

Here I would like to introduce you to The Work by Byron Katie. She is an inspirational American coach and guide, who created The Work from the need to bring herself back from the edge of a very tough life. The process of The Work is available on line, as a 2 page sheet, downloadable free with full instructions. Yes you can buy her books, and go to her amazing events when she travels near you, but the core process is free on these sheets.

Exercise 17 – Download The Work

Time: 5 minutes

The exercise I leave you with is the shortest of the lot. It is designed to give you a tool in the file, or on the computer, for when times get tough. Download the sheet, read it through so you are familiar with it. And then file it away for a rainy day. Maybe you will never need it.

At its core it asks one key question – which I use without The Work sheets throughout my life. When an unhelpful thought crosses my mind, Byron Katie just asks: “Where would you be without that thought?” And the follow-on question: “Do you know that to be true?”

Next time someone (including you) says – creativity is all very well, “but it can’t be done”, just ask yourself where you would be without that thought? Can you be certain that it can’t be done?

<http://thework.com/en/do-work>

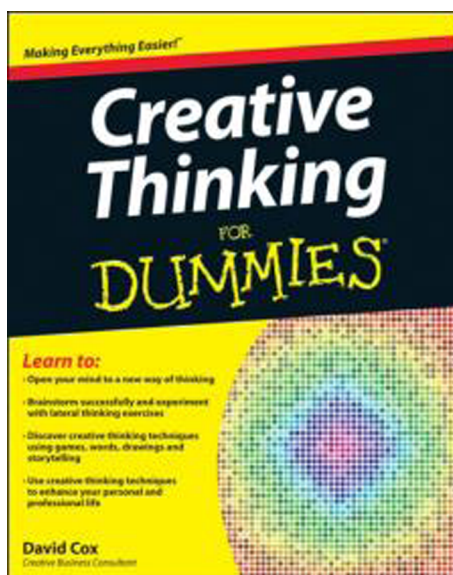
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Immense thanks to David Cox who has offered me the opportunity to draw from his richly researched work. To purchase a copy go to Hive, the independent booksellers online system <http://www.hive.co.uk/Product/David-Cox/Creative-Thinking-For-Dummies/12837144>



My own book, *Your Life in Theatre*, is a careers and self-help guide for anyone making their own work or starting their own business. It was written for those in the theatre industry, but it is proving popular across many business sectors. To purchase a copy go to any independent bookseller, the RSC, National Theatre or online <http://www.samuelyfrench-london.co.uk/p/56426/your-life-in-theatre>



"Making theatre that is inspiring and accessible is hard. Writing a book that is inspiring and accessible is hard. Luckily Chris Grady has done the latter so we can do the former. Grady's book is about being an artist and about being human and about how, ideally, our humanity feeds our art and our art feeds humanity. (And it's way more practical than that sounds.) Theatre, money, art, penury, love, marketing, passion, audiences, success, failure, mistakes, lucky breaks, despair, and joy. A full artistic life has them all – Chris Grady's book tell us what to do with them."

Stella Duffy / author and theatremaker

And finally, thanks to Kath Burlinson who has taught me so much about creativity in the 16 years we have been together. For more information on her Authentic Artist Collective, her directing projects, and her work in corporate training go to <http://www.authenticartist.co.uk>

