

# MercuriMail

THE INDIA JOURNAL OF MERCURI INTERNATIONAL  
JAN-MAR 1999

## Business leadership and a creative society

-Abram T. Collier

One of the perpetual problems that business leaders face is how to influence the attitudes and morale of the employees. Collier maintains in this article that business people ought to engage the creative talents of people and articulate creative ideals.

Business leaders have perhaps put too much of emphasis on systems, economics, products, laws. They have not been greatly successful and the most profitable line of inquiry is to seek the most different approach altogether. The author's simple proposition: Our society is a creative society and its prime objective as well as its genius is its creativeness. Creativity is therefore not just a day to day tool in business but a fundamental business philosophy. People in business or otherwise strive to build, to create, to reach out, to discover, to explore what has not been experienced before. All values, even goodness and truth, are secondary to or a consequence of a new and positive creative ideal. Our so called freedom of thought and action, even our ethical standards of behaviour are not an end in themselves but emerge as important values because they support and make possible a creative society.

It is now recognised that everyone can afford the satisfaction that comes from creative accomplishment. Creative work can be accomplished individually and collectively. What is more, creative genius is for all administrators, workers, as well as specialists. Creative ideals depend on the following concepts:

### V I N T A G E

- Forces in business and other organisations are nurtured by the existence of differences between individuals and groups.
- These forces are controlled and balanced by the process of individuals understanding each other.
- A creative society depends for its survival upon the belief that rights are matched by obligations.
- The directing force in a society is the faith of the members in individual growth.

Men are different, they cherish the differences, the joy and fascination of life stems from these differences and there are social values in these differences. This difference is the cornerstone of a creative society.

What we all want is a chance to increase our usefulness and creativeness, a chance to develop full potential as individuals within our scope of environment and experience. It is therefore a management function to give this chance and articulate the philosophy behind it.

In a broad sense, business is also religion. Most religions have the recurring theme—God is viewed as the Creator and creativity, one of His essential attributes. Another recurring theme is that it is the spirit in man, his conscious self is the essence of God in man. That creativity is a basic attribute in man is thus relating to these ageless insights.

*Extract from Harvard Business Review*

OUR  
THOUGHTS  
Dear Friends,

This issue is built around Creativity. Do some mental gymnastics.

'Must Read' explores Edward De Bono's 'Serious Creativity'

What is the linkage between business leadership and a creative society? Find out in Vintage

Let us think a little bit more on "Integrity"

Some creative ideas for creativity from Roger Von Oech



## A quick look around us reveals --

**E**nhanced Life Styles, a stronger craving for new things, signs of prosperity, a sense of urgency in everything and so on. It is enveloping perhaps every individual and it is not surprising that everyone wants to be successful in double quick time.

Perhaps a deeper look in the world around us reveals something different. Are we losing out on the core value of *Integrity* in the drive towards 'achievement'? Is integrity given a go by? Is lack of integrity more a topic for an intellectual discussion in drawing rooms than a cause and purpose and value to be practised? Does having a sense of integrity, wrongly, show a lack of ambition?

The questions are many more, but the underlined concern is the same.

But, what is Integrity? Is it simply honesty - both commercial honesty and intellectual

honesty? Integrity perhaps even defies description. I read somewhere a very fine way of looking at integrity..... "a fine unison of thought, word and deed."

Integrity is not easy. The unison of thought, word and deed calls for a higher sense of purpose, confidence in own self without being arrogant, a willingness to sacrifice intermediary benefits while in pursuit of a goal, a sense of oneness to stronger and meaningful values.....

Today we talk of lack of integrity at the political level: perhaps we need to re-examine the question of integrity at every individual level.

I cannot change the world, but am I being true to myself, am I being true to the cause and purpose, do I have an approval to talk of integrity looking into my own eyes in front of the mirror.

Until next,

*Nani*

## FOCUS Mental Gymnastics

**C**reativity is a mental exercise and like physical exercise requires movement. For the body, movement is skipping, running, swimming, aerobics, playing cricket, lifting weights--activities that make your mind expand and contract. For your mind, movement is a pattern of thought. An inner travelling from premise to conclusion, from problem to solution, from question to answer, from answer to question, from one state of mind to another state of mind. When we actively use the mind, deliberately manipulate the mental resources, we are moving our mental muscles. Any activity that requires concentration - figuring a cross-word puzzle, working through a business problem, sitting quietly and collecting your thoughts--can be a mental exercise. More important than what you do as a mental exercise is how you do it. Good technique is essential. A gymnast improves his performance by repeating a move over and over again, until it is just right. Similarly, in our mind we can repeat a task until we get our thinking muscles To do what we want them to do.



As Tom Wujec puts it - A good mental exercise is an appointment with yourself. A time to shift focus and turn inward. To challenge your mind towards constructive thought. Good old fashioned mental exercises enhance creativity, give a sense of accomplishment and improve our state of mind.

Thumb rules while exercising the mind-

- Be patient
- Repeat exercises
- Delight in difficulties
- Exercise often
- The destination is the journey

"To exercise one's mind is to sharpen and improve the most human thing a human being possesses".

-Isaac Asimov



## MUST READ



# SERIOUS CREATIVITY

Edward De Bono, Harper Collins Business  
308 pages, Rs.353/-

**L**ateral thinking is a skill. This is what is associated with De Bono and this book is not any different from his earlier books in terms of conceptual and creative thinking. Possibly it is the only aspect which can tire the reader—the exasperating repetition on the need to use the power of lateral thinking to generate new ideas.

Yet the book inspires and will not disappoint De Bono fans. With organisations reaching a plateau, creativity is growing in importance, as valuable as any other function—finance, raw materials or production. As De Bono puts it, “Water is necessary for soup but soup is more than water.” Water is basic competence. But it is creative thinking that will give the competitive edge.

De Bono firmly believes that creativity is not natural talent, not a mystery but is a skill that can be learned and applied. To him lateral thinking is only a special type of information handling and he weaves the arsenal of tools and techniques for serious creativity around three basic approaches: challenge, provocation and alternatives. While all this is not earthshakingly new, the methodology is communicated with the usual meticulous aplomb.

The most interesting and perhaps the most practical tools - random input, creative pause, concept fan and the stratal method will sensitize the most logical mind. It will stimulate a desire to practise - “creativity on demand.” The minute details on various processes and techniques are given at the appropriate points in the book. In each case, a fundamental creative process is put into action in a particular way. There lies the brilliance of the author. For example provocation is a common approach to creativity, the systematic step by step framework to focussed creativity through provocation is De Bono's forte.

The author concludes with a note on the structured application of serious creativity in organisations and sustaining the process is elaborated through training formats and evaluation.

For all those who will be horrified by the title-SERIOUS creativity, because creativity is fun, spontaneous and the domain of ‘rebels’, this book may also be valuable-- You may change your mind--at least attempt--an understanding of the logic in creativity.

*“There is nothing more marvelous than thinking of a new idea.  
There is nothing more magnificent than seeing a new idea work.  
There is nothing more useful than seeing a new idea work.”*

**Happy Reading!!**

## Twelve steps To Success through Service

- Decide on your core business
- Know your customer
- Create your vision
- Define your moments of truth
- Give good service to one another
- Manage the customer's experience
- Profit from complaints
- Stay close to your customer
- Design and market the service programme
- Set service criteria
- Reward and celebrate service excellence
- Develop the service programme

COURTESY: **BARRIE HOPSON AND MIKE SCALLY**

### PRODUCTIVITY COMMON SENSE

“The greatest difficulty in the world is not for people to accept new ideas, but to make them forget about old ones.”

*John Maynard Keynes*

### COMMON SENSE TALK

“We now know where productivity, real and limitless, comes from. It comes from challenged, empowered, excited, rewarded teams of people.”

*Jack Welch -- Chairman of GE*

“Don't talk about how good you are. Prove it with action, over and over.” Remember WACADAD. “Words are cheap and deeds are dear.”

*Jeffrey J. Fox -- Founder & CEO of Fox & Co., Inc.*

“An entrepreneur knows that a start-up needs to focus on little things. Not the global strategy. Not the Big Plan. A start-up needs cash flow, not a corporate infrastructure. A start-up needs sales staff, not fancy office space and computer systems.”

*Jeffrey P. Sudikoff  
-- Founder & CEO of IDB Communications Group*

“I think a lot of senior managers have lost their resolve and their ability to face up to hard work. Change is never easy and there are no special formulas, no quick fixes. You just have to roll up your sleeves and keep working at it without backing down.”

*Arden C. Sims -- CEO OF Global Metallurgical*





"No fax, no e-mail, no Web page! And you expect people to believe in you?"

COURTESY: HARVARD BUSINESS REVIEW

#### Use Your Shield

New ideas can be threatening, and they often provoke a negative reaction. For example, when Stravinsky first presented his rite of Spring ballet with its unusual harmonies and primitive rhythms, he was met with a rioting audience. When Kepler correctly solved the orbital problem of the planets by using ellipses rather than circles, he was denounced. Be prepared for such a reaction and don't let it prevent you from acting on your idea. As German statesman Konrad Adenauer put it, "A thick skin is a gift from God."

**What negative reaction do you expect? How can you deflect it?**

#### Substitute

When you don't have a certain resource available (or want a change from ones you do), you substitute. Indeed, much of human progress is the result of substituting one idea or thing for another: words for grunts, tools for fingers, money for goods. If you've ever used a potato for a radio antenna, or created a knife out of a broken light bulb, you have this ability.

**What can you substitute?**

## NOTES FROM ALL OVER

"Who learns by finding out has seven fold the skill of him who learned by being told".

**Arthur Guiterman**

"Every creative idea is logical in hindsight"

**Edward De Bono**

"Think before you think".

**Isaac Asimov**

"The debt we owe to the play of imagination is incalculable".

**Carl Jung**

"The happiest person is the person who thinks the most interesting thoughts".

**Timothy Dwight**

"If there is one thing worth hoarding it is your attention".

**Bill Harvey**

"I am putting myself to the fullest possible use, which is all I think any conscious entity can ever hope to do".

**HAL 9000 Computer from the movie 2001: A space Odyssey.**

#### Reverse

Reversing how you look at a situation can open up new possibilities and dislodge assumptions. Example: When everyone else is gazing at a glorious sunset, why not turn around to see the blues and violets behind you? What do you notice when you look at a coffee cup? Its design or color? Reverse your focus and look at the space inside - that's what gives it its functional value. Example: spend a minute describing a current problem. If you're a male, describe it from the female view point. If you're a female, do the reverse.

**How can you reverse the way you look at your idea?**

#### Change Its Name

If an architect looks at an opening between two rooms and thinks "door," that's what she'll design. But if she thinks "passage way," she may design something much different like a "half-way," "air curtain," "tunnel," or perhaps a "courtyard." Different words bring in different assumptions and lead your thinking in different directions.

**What else can you call your idea?**

*From Roger Von Oech's 'Creative Whack Pack'*

**EDITOR : MALATHY SETHURAM  
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E mail : mercuri@pn2.vsnl.net.in

**Chennai:** Tel :044-4899852 Fax: 044-4899852

E mail : msethuram@hotmail.com