



## On Being More Creative

**Dan Beck**

- ◇ **Accept limitations** as a blessing. Our limits allow us to be unique and individual - the limit of standing inside our own perspective is itself a part of what gives our individual stamp to a work. Though we need enough vocabulary in any field to allow us the range of communication, our limits provide us with our uniqueness. In some cases, our physical limitations are what play a big roll in our creative work. Relish these differences, they are specific to each of us.
- **Make do with what you have-** it is a very creative process - “necessity is the mother of invention”. Take for instance the meals we are forced to come up with when we are pretty much out of food in the house. Whether they come out or not, they are creative. The lack of choices can force us into ways of combining things which we would not consider otherwise. This can be a valuable ally in creating new works.
- **Don't worry about mistakes** - you don't have to keep what you create and you might well learn to like that very mistake. One of my favorite parts in one of the songs I recorded, made me cringe the first time I heard it; but after a couple of listens, it became brilliant. Just like life - what comes after can make the mistake the right choice. So don't dwell on a mistake or get caught up in its drama, just keep working on your creative endeavor until the total piece feels right.
- **Approach your work like a child.** As trite and overworked as the expression is, it is important to not be judging while one is creating and enjoy the play of sound or color, etc. When a child sits down at the piano, he is enamored with the sound he can make; or if painting - the colors he can impart. Therefore, don't critique any more than absolutely necessary, but be entertained by the creative process itself and relish the color, relish the sound, relish the movement, or relish the words.
- ◇ **Do things in new ways** - be it for efficiency or for change of pace, it will help keep the juices flowing. Find places to be creative in whatever you do - how you choose to say things, how you put food on a plate, how you even wash your hands can be new, different, and creative. Being mindful or aesthetic in all we do is considered a form of meditation. It is certainly a way to keep life fresh and helpful in keeping us from becoming complacent.



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- **Keep Moving** - If you find yourself stuck in a certain area, try not to languish over it. Move on to an area you can work on and come back to it. There is a flow to creating and one needs to stay inside that flow, or the process and the creativity bog down. Those trouble spots tend to get solved easier as the other parts come into being. Sometimes they even gracefully eliminate themselves.
- ◇ **Savor the creative process** - for it is the process which is reflected in the final work anyway. If you enjoy the process it comes through, if it is tedious and tired, that also comes through. Not all creative endeavors will come out to be something you want to keep - but the process will stay with you no matter how the outcome is. There are many folks who feel that this is the principal in life - that it is the path and the growth which matter; the rewards are simply gratuitous.
- **Realize that we are all creative beings** - by virtue of our ability to talk with each other and express even the most simple things, we all possess an element of creativity not generally recognized. Just as reading a book requires creativity so does appreciating a work of art. Everyone has a part in creativity whether they are aware of it or not. Moreover, it is our obligation as creative people to allow others their creativity and encourage it.
- ◇ **Be accepting of finished or unfinished piece** - it is a microcosm of the world you inhabit - no matter what it reflects, it is part of you and is illuminating. One never likes everything one creates and even if one did, it would not be with equal admiration. The key here is to accept the whole gamut of one's work - not necessarily show it all, but not quickly discard because you see a flaw. I don't know anyone who doesn't see ways in which even the best of pieces could be better, but it is an advantage to be comfortable enough to get beyond one's own prejudices.
- **Acknowledge fear and ignore it.** Fear may come on many different levels - fear of uncovering something you don't want to see; fear of having your work seen, heard or read and not received well; fear of producing something really exceptional. Who cares? - just do it - it will be fine. Easier said than done, but then again the fear is almost always much worse than the task or event we are dreading - I know I am not the only one who has experienced this.