

Summary of Linked-In discussion:

What is the relationship between our creativity and our wellbeing?

The post was intended to encourage individuals to share their own perspectives. Like personal creativity, personal wellbeing is subjective. These words have both cultural meaning - within a group or discourse they have certain shared meanings but particular meanings and responses are created in the minds and embodiments of individuals.

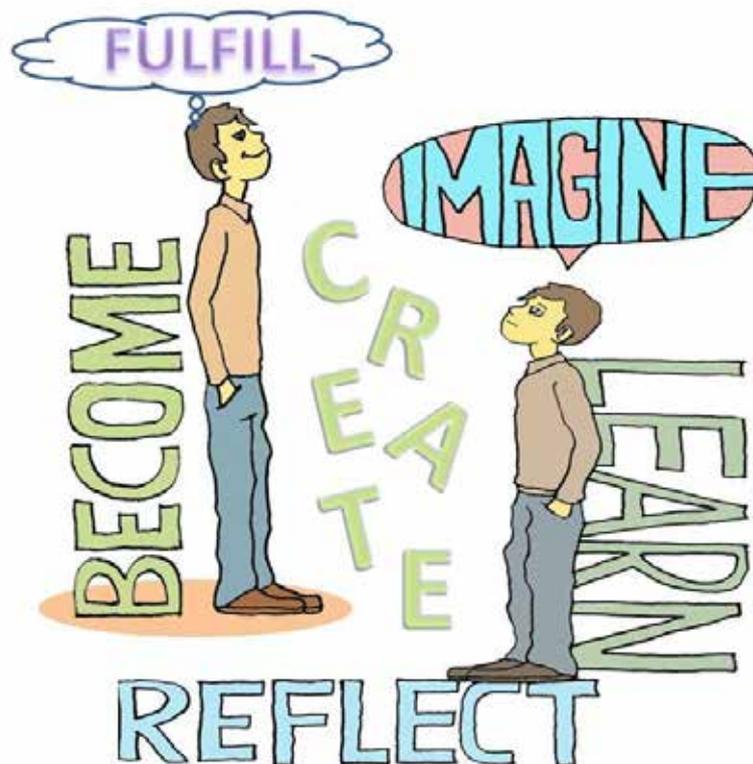
Eighteen people generously shared their views and a transcript is provided in the appendix. As promised I offer a summary which identifies some of the main themes and a commentary with a view to stimulating further discussion and enquiry.

To view the summary visit:

I apologise in advance if I have misrepresented any views and hope that readers will correct or extend my interpretations and the discussion.

Thank you to everyone who contributed to this lively and interesting conversation.

Norman Jackson
Founder Lifewide Education
<http://lifewideeducation.co.uk/>



Perspectives on wellbeing and creativity

- People have subjective and individual definitions of wellbeing. There may be huge differences in the definitions. People with mental health problems may also define wellbeing/happiness differently

Comment: Wellbeing is a subjective idea. It means, what we individually choose to make it mean. It also means that wellbeing means different things to people whose psychology is not positive and it means very different things to people whose contexts are different to our own. For example, people living in a Syrian refugee camp have a very different view of what their wellbeing means to me sitting here in my comfortable and safe home in the UK. For people who value their creativity it is an integral part of their wellbeing because that is how they choose to construct its meaning.

Some examples of understandings of what wellbeing meant to individuals contributing to the discussion are given below.

- wellbeing relates to fulfilling our purposes and the things we value and want to achieve.
- Creativity allows me to flourish mentally. And when I am mentally well...my physical well being also improves
- well-being : a state in which an individual is allowed to carry on his life without suffering.
- From what we know about creativity and what we know about well-being it would seem to make sense that there is some sort of correlation, though I suspect it might be a loosely-coupled one.
- I believe that there are huge links between these two concepts. Creativity helps people see more options in their lives and that in turn brings on more positive well being.
- For many reasons, creativity - in the sense of the individual human activity - helps mediate emotions, both calms and excites, brings moments of ecstasy and mental escape from life circumstances. Would you call that contributing to well-being? I sure would.
- Often times creativity is thought to be artistic, lofty, intelligent, out of the ordinary, and beyond understanding. However, creativity comes in much simpler forms such as formulating a solution to an everyday problem.
- *Implicitly creativity is related to the idea of functioning properly [when depressed] 'the mind is far too busy, not functioning correctly to leave any time to be creative.... Well-being is not only helpful to creativity, but a requirement to reach a truly creative state. At very least in my experience.'*
- There is a direct correlation between creativity and wellbeing. When we are in a higher state of conscious awareness, we have access to infinite possibility. We 'see' the world differently, with more optimism and... Creativity.
- Creative people may have a much more positive outlook and greater sense of wellbeing.
- As creative people, we are different from the run of the mill population, simple fact, nothing we can do about that. This wonderful gift, however, does have it's baggage, we tend to cause great discomfort for management types. We exist in an arena outside of what they consider their comfort zone. This fact is why we tend to be sidelined and not progress within a corporate world. Being comfortable with this fact, has at least for me, added greatly to my feeling of well being.
- wellbeing is peace of mind/body/spirit, while creativity has to do with allowing ourselves to dwell in possibility unfettered by the preconceived limitations that normally direct our thoughts and actions..... the effort toward freedom of personal creativity, not the outward visible stage but the internal, self-accepting/connecting moments, is most definitely a part of wellbeing.
- Maslow discusses creativity and self-actualization. Self-actualization has to do with fullness of life, freedom, and realization of one's potential, rather than a sense of well-being.
- "well-being" is an individual expression for contentment. If the requirements for creativity are satisfied and the emotional and the analytical network of neurons are functioning in the correct rhythm then the outcome is contentment.

Comment: The range of views expressed reveals that those contributing generally felt that there was a relationship between personal creativity and wellbeing in several different ways - between creativity and 'mental flourishing' and 'functioning properly', in the range of emotions being creative engenders, in the personal freedoms to live our life in a certain way, in the opportunities it creates, in the way it contributes to everyday problem working and therefore our ability to deal with the problems we encounter and the role it plays in our achievement of what we value, the internal

creative process nourishes our personal wellbeing. One participants drew attention to the concept of self-actualisation - the realisation of one's potential of which are creative potential is a part. For people who believe that their wellbeing is derived from their sense of fulfilling their purposes, self-actualisation is fundamental to the process of learning and developing in order to achieve their purposes.

Many of the things we value in life which we want or need to accomplish will be challenging and require a great deal of effort, imagination and capability to accomplish and it is very likely that such complex achievements will involve our creativity. In this way our creativity will be linked to our wellbeing through the process of trying to achieve our purposes. If freedom to imagine and turn ideas into new things is an essential part of our wellbeing, which I believe they are, then I can see the link to personal creativity. Perhaps also our sense of wellbeing is closely linked to fulfilling our needs and interests in particular ways and to developing the capability to do so. In this way perhaps we are connecting our learning and development and the blending of this in creative ways with what we already know and can do.

As one participant notes being creative can have its downside when creativity juxtaposes against a world that does not value what is being offered. In such circumstances negative reactions can be damaging to one's wellbeing and this is where resilience and fortitude are important. I've always thought one of the important ways I have used my creativity is to try to overcome or get around such blocks/people. Obstacles and setbacks can be a great motivator for new ventures that promote personal wellbeing.

Are there other connections between creativity and wellbeing?

Several participants drew connections between creativity-wellbeing and happiness

- Creativity is how we become artists of life and fully enjoy every moment. Happiness is living in the present, as if it were the last and only time in our lives. Living creativity and happiness become live be the same things.

But one participant felt that

- There is, however, a problem with the definition of wellbeing. If wellbeing is equal to 'happiness, many creative persons would reject the whole concept!

Comment: The surveys we have conducted suggest that unequivocally wellbeing and happiness are not the same thing. This view expressed by a student I recently interviewed captures a view that many people hold.

'happiness is just like a temporary emotion, so seeking happiness is entirely counter-productive because you are seeking an emotion which is entirely fleeting. Whereas...I think wellbeing is more a kind of, state of being, it's who you are... by doing things which you think matter and doing things which you think have an impact. So you can finish each day and say yeah, I've done something that matters, whatever that is, as long as you think that, I think that takes you closer to that state of wellbeing. So for me, it's not necessarily doing things you enjoy, it's not necessarily doing things that make you happy, it's doing things that you think have meaning and that in turn gives you that sense of wellbeing.

But there was also some deep sadness mixed in with the joy of everyday living

- I appreciate and adore life yet want to end it....how does that fit in? How can I have all the pieces for well being and not be 'well'. I am living an artist's dream...
- Sometimes I notice that is artists who feel sadness most deeply.
- There are enough examples of creative individuals leading what one might describe as 'destructive' lives to be able to claim that there might also be a link between creativity and unhappiness. What might be interesting is to ask what it is about the nature of creativity that makes it such a powerful force for both great happiness and unhappiness.
- I am thinking maybe the most creative types simply feel more deeply and perhaps (and this is only a theory) less creative people just have simpler more pragmatic thoughts thus they are not

mired down by complex ideas which can sometimes cause people to think too much and/or over think things, thus sometimes leading to sadness and feeling overwhelmed...

- Yes indeed well-being does have a major effect on creativity. In fact when the mind is in turmoil, and has slipped into that irrational place also know as depression, creativity is impossible. The person is in such a dark place and so worried about all the wrong things, the mind is far too busy, not functioning correctly to leave any time to be creative.

Comment and question: Although we don't tend to associate sadness with our wellbeing other than in a negative way perhaps for the artist and creatives more generally, it is the blending in a profound and deeply personal way of the extreme emotions of happiness and sadness in their lives that creates their sense of wellbeing. For artists and creative's more generally perhaps who they are and who they are trying to become by fulfilling their purposes, involves them more intimately and with more self-awareness in the emotional and spiritual dimensions of their life, than people who do not value their own creativity so much??

Please add your further thoughts

norman

APPENDIX - TRANSCRIPT OF DISCUSSION

ORIGINAL POST

What is the relationship between our creativity and our wellbeing?

The next issue of Lifewide Magazine is going to examine the idea of wellbeing and I am wondering what are the relationships between our wellbeing and our creativity? My first thoughts are that there must be a positive correlation with aspects of wellbeing that relate to fulfilling our purposes and the things we value and want to achieve. But I welcome lots of different perspectives and suggestions for reading.

[Phyllis Collar](#) • I always have a greater sense of well being and happiness in general when I am allowed unbridled thought and action as opposed to constraining ideas and rules. Creativity allows me to flourish mentally. And when I am mentally well...my physical well being also improves.

[Izrael Lalande](#) • Dear Norman,

This is indeed a hard question. My humble thoughts goes as follow: i think it's good practice to first define those 2 terms. Here my definition of "creativity": expression of an idea/concept that have not been discovered. Here my definition of well-being : a state in which an individual is allowed to carry on his life without suffering.

Given those 2 definitions, which are definitely arguable, I would say that generally creativity tends to manifest itself when thoughts are less distracted, for instance when one needs to think how to carry-on one's life (reaching a well-being state).

Good luck!

[Norman Jackson](#) • Thank you Phyllis and Izrael for your comments. If freedom to imagine and turn ideas into new things is an essential part of our wellbeing then I can see the link to personal creativity. Perhaps also our sense of wellbeing is closely linked to fulfilling our needs and interests - both of which can be sources of motivation for creative action.

[Juan Carlos Rosman](#) • There is a very close relationship between the two concepts. Creativity is how we become artists of life and fully enjoy every moment. Happiness is living in the present, as if it were the last and only time in our lives. Living creativity and happiness become live be the same things.

[Karen Phillips-Curran](#) • I've always been an artist made my living, in various form with my art. Right now I have a lovely new studio which I designed and built myself. I live on the edge of the woods so am fairly isolated. I have been painting some new work that has been incubating for a

while now. I am loving how they are coming along, and I have a small venue set up to show them this summer. So by all rights I should be sooo happy. I am terrible sad even though I enjoy 'the moments' of every day, like when the deer appear in the bush behind my cabin, the turkey who waddle down my road, when the light is just so anywhere I am...I appreciate and adore life yet want to end it...how does that fit in? How can I have all the pieces for well being and not be 'well'. I am living an artist's dream...

Phyllis Collar • Sometimes I notice that is artists who feel sadness most deeply. Maybe because we are almost too deeply in tune with the world and its woes. As well as the good stuff. Whenever I am sad, I just try to ACCEPT that sadness and wait it out. It usually passes. When I dwell and wonder about why I am so sad...it gets worse. I had sad. It is like those waves of depression that wash up on you unexpected, when everything should be fine.

Shan Hargest • Recommend Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi or Ruth Richards on this subject.

Naela Blosh • Creativity is not the finding of a thing, but the making something out of it after it is found. James Russell Lowell I think. Often times creativity is thought to be artistic, lofty, intelligent, out of the ordinary, and beyond understanding. However, creativity comes in much simpler forms such as formulating a solution to an everyday problem.. if someone runs out of fuel on the highway, the person must think of a way to get to his/her destination, and this requires creativity even if it is in its simplest form. Creativity can be observed in the unusual as well. In the more recent past, creativity was thought to stem from unconscious thought processes ... This was probably due in large part to the Freudian approach to psychology which emphasized unconscious thoughts.. so the unconscious would arrive at creative thoughts, and these thoughts would be pushed to the conscious after being formulated... Naturally, since the unconscious thought process can never be known.. there was no way of understanding how this process occurred..!!

Paul Kleiman • Hi Norman, hope you are well. From what we know about creativity and what we know about well-being it would seem to make sense that there is some sort of correlation, though I suspect it might be a loosely-coupled one. There are enough examples of creative individuals leading what one might describe as 'destructive' lives to be able to claim that there might also be a link between creativity and unhappiness. What might be interesting is to ask what it is about the nature of creativity that makes it such a powerful force for both great happiness and unhappiness.

Phyllis Collar • Hmmm. Good point. I am thinking maybe the most creative types simply feel more deeply and perhaps (and this is only a theory) less creative people just have simpler more pragmatic thoughts thus they are not mired down by complex ideas which can sometimes cause people to think too much and/or over think things, thus sometimes leading to sadness and feeling overwhelmed.... Well...food for thought...

Sharon de Korte • This brings to mind the whole body of work of Positive Psychology and the work of Martin Seligman. I believe that there are huge links between these two concepts. Creativity helps people see more options in their lives and that in turn brings on more positive well being.

Nicole Gnezda • The ideating and "flow" parts of the creative process are accompanied by specific brain waves and chemical/energy conditions that are common to meditation, trance, unconscious exploration, day-dreaming, reverie, etc. For many reasons, creativity - in the sense of the individual human activity - helps mediate emotions, both calms and excites, brings moments of ecstasy and mental escape from life circumstances. Would you call that contributing to well-being? I sure would.

Pirjo Niemenmaa • A creative person might be more able to use 'positive psychology' to turn an unfortunate/unpleasant situation around, or at least try to solve the problem than a less creative person.

There is, however, a problem with the definition of wellbeing. If wellbeing is equal to 'happiness, many creative persons would reject the whole concept! Being happy is not necessarily the aim of life for many people, especially for creative people. Happiness may be a state of mind temporarily, but not a 'lifestyle'. And some people prefer to be grumpy.. People have subjective and individual definitions of wellbeing. There may be huge differences in the definitions. People with mental

health problems may also define wellbeing/happiness differently. Depressed persons tend to be dissatisfied with their life although they had relatively good support network (emotional and social). Schizophrenic persons, on the other hand, seem to claim they are happy, even when living in poverty and without support...(there is some research on this).

Well, these were my first thoughts on the subject.

[Kevin Willey](#) • Yes indeed well-being does have a major effect on creativity. In fact when the mind is in turmoil, and has slipped into that irrational place also known as Depression, creativity is impossible. The person is in such a dark place and so worried about all the wrong things, the mind is far too busy, not functioning correctly to leave any time to be creative.

I say this from bitter experience, and two episodes of Clinical Depression, one leading to my almost taking my own life, because the view from that very dark place looked hopeless.

Since I am here to write this the story has a good next chapter. I had enough grip on reality to seek help, and with that help managed to claw myself back to a new and great state. With the help of modern pharmaceuticals, once the correct combination was found.

This was not like throwing a switch, it's a long and twisted path, back to a healthy state of mind. I went from not really caring if I saw the sun rise the next day to gradually noticing my mind clearing, and creative thoughts began to surface. One thing to be able to have creative thought, quite another to execute.

A major issue for me in the past has been finding an outlet for my creative talents, and those talents themselves.

I am either blessed or cursed with the ability to do anything, in the artistic realm, and combine that with the ability to literally visualize, or see process, my mind is a truly strange place to be.

I am now three years into recovery, that will continue for the rest of my life, and because I have found a way to cope and totally ignore those who do not understand, myself worth, and sense of well-being is at a higher place than it ever has been.

No the creative front, ideas, innovation, and creativity flow like a river. What a wonderful thing. I now simply record the ideas, time has not changed, but my ability to focus is improving. Being a Canadian, and living in Canada, but not a fan of winter, I spend a large amount of time indoors, and create. This year being no different, except, I did not beat myself up over the lack of time to follow some of the creativity to execution. Spring is here, and with the warm weather, and longer days, it's time to start the execution of some of the plans I have developed over the winter.

Just in case anyone is curious, Search Google for images of the Land Rover 101.

Yes I am a motor head. gear head, as well as creative. I have always wanted one of these, and since finding a good example of the brand, I am going to build my own, but different, my own interpenetration of what the vehicle can be. I will be building a race spec cage/cab and using a Dodge Ram diesel pickup as a donor vehicle. I will be building this vehicle in my home shop/garage, and I will be driving the finished vehicle. Not only street legal, but also very safe. As I mentioned above, cursed with the ability to do anything, now considered a gift, I have done all the engineering. Quite enjoyed it actually, not a tedious process as it once was, but a real delight.

To wrap up. Well-being is not only helpful to creativity, but a requirement to reach a truly creative state. At very least in my experience.

Thanks for reading, and have a great day.

P.S. if anyone wants to connect, just ask, I am always looking to expand my network, and explore different views and find more friends...

[Pirjo Niemenmaa](#) • Kevin, such a great contribution from you once again. Your creativity doesn't seem to have any limits.. I'm glad you mentioned your depression and how you got out of it. It

should encourage everyone. Perhaps your depression was a 're-charging' period?

[Kevin Willey](#) • Pirjo, thank you very much.

I believe the last period of depression was a 're-changing' period. The greatest thing that came out of that is a change in attitude, now when I see an issue with a policy or procedure, that causes more issues than it solves, I tell those who are running the place. At one time I would get all torn up inside if changes were not implemented, today, I have done my part. I never just point out a difficulty, I always also give them the solution. Use the solution or not, my part is done...

Strangely enough this now feeds my well-being, adds to the learning portion of creativity.

[Sharon de Korte](#) • Your comments about depression remind me of my study of curiosity and the power of curiosity to help engage creativity and overcome depression and trauma. I find that when one focuses on learning something new there is a shift in perspective that encourages more creative thinking.

[Damian Mark Smyth](#) • There is a direct correlation between creativity and wellbeing. When we are in a higher state of conscious awareness, we have access to infinite possibility. We 'see' the world differently, with more optimism and... Creativity.

When we are in a low state of consciousness, our perceptual field narrows. We take things personal, we see only problems. By understanding how the process works: that we are always feeling our thinking, not the outside world, but the 'way' we think about our thinking about it, then we are aware also that when our consciousness is low, it is part of a natural process. No 'positive thinking' required. The clouds of thought will move and shift naturally. Nothing to 'do' but have an understanding of the misperception. So when we are back at the higher state of awareness, creativity comes naturally. Wellbeing is a by product of thought, nothing more.

[Kevin Willey](#) • Sharon. In another thread, we have been discussing the cycle of creativity. Basically comes down to ; play/learn/create, and well-being allows us creative people to be able to play, and not to be worried about the opinions of those around us. Many, unfortunately, do not understand the play portion of the equation, their loss really, I now feel for these people, they are missing out on so much. As my sister-in-law likes to say; Sucks to be them, lol

[Paul Kleiman](#) • Sincere thanks to Kevin for sharing your experiences and insights. But that response and, particularly that of Damian (just above) re: 'higher state of consciousness' leads me back to my earlier comment about the link between unhappiness or 'ill-being' and creativity. If reaching that 'higher state' involves the use of mind-altering substances - legal or illegal - to generate creative thinking/output, do we consider that a sign of well-being? While accepting that for some individuals being in a 'dark, low place' inhibits or blocks creativity, for others it might act as an enabler.

[Jenny Willis](#) • In March 2013, Lifewide Education CIC launched a simple survey on individual perceptions of wellbeing, the means by which we pursue wellbeing, and factors which support or are detrimental to our sense of wellbeing. Most questions were open ended, but one asked respondents to rate 12 issues on the scale 1 = very little, to 10 = very great importance.

It is clear that the issues of greatest significance to respondents are feeling valued by loved ones; having a close relationship with a partner; and having good relationships in general. This perhaps explains why some of the creative respondents to this linked-in discussion lack a sense of wellbeing.

Turning to creativity, 9 of our respondents identify themselves as being highly creative. When we look at their scores for the same 12 questions, they are vastly different. This suggests that creative people may have a much more positive outlook and greater sense of wellbeing. An interesting basis for further research.

Av for creatives Av for all

- 1 Connecting with and having good relationships with people I come into contact with everyday 9.3 4
- 2 Being healthy and fit...physically active - walking, sport, dancing etc 8.1 4.1
- 3 Being involved in the world - being curious and aware of the world – looking/ finding new opportunities 9.0 6.7
- 4 Feeling creative - doing things that give me a chance to be creative, inventive or resourceful 9.0 4.8
- 5 Continually learning and developing myself 8.8 6.3
- 6 Doing new things that interest me 8.6 5
- 7 Making progress in the things I am doing 8.8 5
- 8 Doing things with and for other people 8.9 5
- 9 Having a close relationship with someone I trust and can discuss anything with 9.6 3.8
- 10 Feeling that I am valued by the people that matter to me 9.1 3.5
- 11 Being able to do the things I want or need to do 9.1 5.3
- 12 Achieving something that I think is worthwhile 8.8 4.9

Here are some of the ways in which respondents enhance their wellbeing:

Trying to keep an appropriate work/ life balance; making time for exercise, relaxation, sleep plus friends and family; create pleasant home; cultivate relationships; reading; writing and other forms of creativity; being honest and ethical; being involved in my family's lives; intellectual work; playing in a band; eating well; managing my finances; walking the dog; playing music; dancing; Tai chi; looking after my cat; walking; doing puzzles; helping people; praying; spending time in the countryside; trying out/learning new things; satisfaction from achievements at work; taking break from work; fulfilling hobbies; thinking time; theatre, concerts; collecting documentaries; sport; working with homeless people; organising a national student conference; don't do unhealthy things e.g. smoking; moved school to get better grades; knowing that I've had a good day; looking forward to the next day.

You can complete the questionnaire yourself by going to Lifewide Education's website. The findings of our survey will appear there and be included in a chapter of our ebook.

[Jocelyn Soulet](#) • Hello everyone,

I am new to the group and already feeling creative! For me, wellbeing is peace of mind/body/spirit, while creativity has to do with allowing ourselves to dwell in possibility unfettered by the preconceived limitations that normally direct our thoughts and actions.

From a movement point of view, the most centered (well) mover is the one with the greatest range of possibility; if they want to move this way or that, fast or slow, with this quality or another, they can. They can express any emotion or thought that comes up (even afflictive ones) as they please . Creation can be expressed instantaneously without inhibition or injury. They can go wherever the impetuous to express takes them (or doesn't) without resistance.

With that said, resistance is an incredibly important tool. It can come in many forms, sometimes helping stabilize, clarify and grow our range of possibilities (happiness) and sometimes overcoming us and re-enforcing our preconceived notions (sadness) about the possibilities available to us. We are all wired differently, but when considering these kinds of questions, I always look to the body as a metaphor. Its nature always offers wisdom. Some structural habits support and some restrict, some resistance builds muscle and some breaks bones. It all depends...

One thing I can say is the effort toward freedom of personal creativity, not the outward visible stage but the internal, self-accepting/connecting moments, is most definitely a part of wellbeing.

[Kevin Willey](#) • Jenny

I consider myself to be very creative, and looking at the survey, questions 3 to 6 are very important to me, the rest, take it as it comes. The only really important thing is health. Being healthy is really a basic need, everyone wants, even as we tend to undermine ourselves in all sorts of ways.

I have never been good at relationships, hard to find people who understand the way my mind works. I have people I call friends, more acquaintances, some I have known for years, but do not see often.

Meaningful work, never happened, work has been for survival, have to pay the bills sort of thing. I spend my time away from work, being creative, and most times to the detriment of something else. There was a time that this caused me great discomfort, however I have managed for now to be able to put that aside, and do what I have to do.

In the past, being creative, and able to recognize challenges with whatever, and finding simple solutions, tended to get me very upset. People and management groups hate to hear of problems in their systems or products, and when someone points out issues, well you get the idea. I have shed the upset part, if people listen to me or not, not my problem, I have done my part.

Not all doom and gloom however. Seems that LinkedIn has proven to be a very interesting community. Totally different from the other forms of social media, in that like minds tend to gather in the various forums. In my case, my creativity, and my different view of the world, has brought me two offers of employment. Problem is both are start-ups, neither has any funding. Both have fantastic products, one company I have been working with, and used it as an outlet. Taking a product portfolio from a single focused line, to, how does one say without sounding like bragging??? From +/- 20 million to near a billion in potential value. Simple thing really, but without funding for the company, just a way to exercise my mind. Does this bother me, not at all strangely, at one time defiantly, but not now.

One last point and I will go and ramble on in another thread, lol...

As creative people, we are different from the run of the mill population, simple fact, nothing we can do about that. This wonderful gift, however, does have it's baggage, we tend to cause great discomfort for management types. We exist in an arena outside of what they consider their comfort zone. This fact is why we tend to be sidelined and not progress within a corporate world. Being comfortable with this fact, has at least for me, added greatly to my feeling of well being.

Today, it's sort of fun.

Have a wonderful day everyone, go play, be creative, feel good. The opinions of others really does not matter.

[Pirjo Niemenmaa](#) • great comments all!

Jenny, the only problem with that kind of a survey is that it measures self-perception.

Perhaps people who 'see themselves as creative (but have nothing to show), who see themselves as physically active (but seldom leave the house), who assume they have good relationships (while the friends might have a different opinion of them!), and so on' are those scoring high on well-being!

In other words, if you have a positive view of yourself and your life, you experience well-being!

[Juan Carlos Rosman](#) • Dear Pirjo, maybe you want to say that if anyone experience well-being, it is possible that you have a positive view of yourself and your life?

[Nicole Gnezda](#) • Now I'm thinking about the term "well-being." Maybe "improved-being" is more what I would use. Many people who are ill, handicapped, mentally ill, and emotionally troubled turn to their creative work as an elixir. There is a lot of literature on creativity and grief, for instance. I attribute my engagement in creative work as being essential to me emotionally surviving the loss of my son. I have a t-shirt I love that reads: Art and music are the drug of choice for thousands of kids..." Creative work can be an anti-depressant, a stimulant, a tranquilizer. Maslow discusses creativity and self-actualization. Self-actualization has to do with fullness of life, freedom, and realization of one's potential, rather than a sense of well-being.

WHAT I THINK IS REALLY COOL ABOUT THIS DISCUSSION WE ARE HAVING IS THAT IT IS

NOT ABOUT CREATIVITY AS THE MEAN OF MAKING SOMETHING NEW, BUT AS A PROCESS THAT HUMANS EXPERIENCE. YAY!

Jenny Willis • Thank you all for these great additions to the discussion.

Yes, I agree attitude of mind is an important factor, and yes, we are dealing with individual perceptions, which are difficult to compare objectively. I think the important thing is that we are reflecting constructively, and hopefully learning from the process.

In response to Nicole's reference to Maslow, you might like to look at the Winter/Spring 2012/13 edition of Lifewide Magazine for some related articles www.lifewidemagazine.co.uk. On a personal level, I have always been creative in a wide range of things, from intellectual to manual. When breaking down, I wrote my best poetry. Over the years since I was well, I have lost this form of creativity (and replaced it with others). My question is, is it better to lose hyper-creativity and be well? As we all know, some of the best pieces of art, writing and so on are the product of manic states.

Kevin Willey • Jenny, good point. Creativity takes energy, like any other function. In my case, being as you call it, hyper-creative, I need more sleep now than before. I would not change a thing...

Pirjo Niemenmaa • Juan Carlos, maybe it works both ways...

Sometimes people in surveys 'report' the kind of behaviour/attitude they would like to possess or they assume to be socially desirable answers. (Being fit, having many friends, feeling being loved, etc.)

(For example, the amount of alcohol people reported they had consumed in Britain was far LESS than the amount of alcohol shops had sold... now where did the rest of the alcohol go???)

But back to this discussion. if the result is experiencing well-being, so why not...

Joe Brouwer • Seems like there is a lot of talking about creativity than just going out and creating. Those that can, do. Those that can't, teach. I will guarantee you those that are creating are not worried about their creativity!!

Jenny Willis • Joe, have you considered whether those who are talking are being creative intellectually?

Kevin Willey • Intellectual creativity is an interesting subject.

Is it actually being creative, or is it simply observation and recording those observations?

Joe's comment reflects the amazing amount of self promotion that occurs in many forums by those selling ways to be creative, as if that can be accomplished by reading a book.

All part of the times we live in, the economy is in an interesting place, and the political types call for innovation.

On the other hand, people have always been curious why some people are creative and others not at all. Why some people can find solutions to challenges, seeming totally unrelated to their apparent experience, yet the experts in the field could not.

Makes for great discussion at very least...

Juan Carlos Rosman • Joe Brouwer, Divide people into dualities is uncreative. If anyone is worried about teaching creativity, he is concerned about how to be more creative. Jenny and

Kevin, what are you talking about when you use 'Intellectual Creativity'? There is something like that?

Jenny Willis • Joe's comment made me think that we should maybe begin with defining what creativity means to us, as we clearly have different interpretations of the word. I went back to the data I gathered for a collaborative, HEA funded project on creativity in 2010. I examined the perceptions and experiences of two groups of university students, (a) creative and performing artists, (b) students from any other discipline (Willis, J. (2010a) *Becoming a Creative Professional*. Full report available at: <http://creativeinterventions.pbworks.com/w/page/27822835/Becoming-a-Creative-Professional>).

Here are what the creative artists associated with the term 'creative' in their professional context:

- creativity enhances level of professionalism and amount you can contribute
- creativity makes your work original
- creativity (as teacher) can inspire students to be creative
- being able to cope with range of situations
- think quickly and find solutions
- pick and mix from various perspectives
- curiosity, experimentation; explore 'more than the obvious'; 'thinking outside the box'
- be open-minded
- responsibility
- organised and calculated
- self-confidence
- make bold choices
- sensitivity
- 'get the consumer thinking'
- understanding artists/performers and working with their needs
- moving in an expressive way
- understanding others and other cultures
- express emotion through the instrument
- self-discipline
- self-motivation
- emulate people's feelings and attitudes towards life
- know your technical abilities
- provoking a response from the audience
- despite politics, respect integrity
- manners and courtesy
- dedication, commitment
- flair
- ambition and resilience
- ability to compromise

This comprises a diverse range of personal dispositions, but one or two pick up the idea of commerce.

Kevin asks what I mean by intellectual creativity. This is hard to define as I think the cognitive process is involved in whatever I create, be it analytical research, finding patterns in data, writing a poem, arranging a display of flowers, imagining and fabricating a piece of embroidery, designing a photo album etc etc. They all start with an image in my 'mind', may draw on experience, fantasy, sensations, emotions ...

Perhaps we should share our definitions of creativity in order to understand the diversity of perceptions emerging in this discussion.

Juan Carlos Rosman • Jenny, thanks for your post. One of the most beautiful definitions I ever read is from Nieremberg: Sudden cessation of stupidity.

Jenny Willis • Beautiful definition, Juan. Thank you.

[Nicole Gnezda](#) • Comment to Joe: Good teaching requires intelligence, human-interaction skills, a knowledge of psychology, compassion, and great creativity. Please refrain from putting down teachers. Most adults I have known wouldn't last a month in a typical classroom. Some old adages belong in the past. :)

[Marika Herskovic, PhD](#) • Creativity requires profound knowledge, discipline and hard work. This can be manifested on the intellectual level and/or on the emotional level. In my opinion "well-being" is an individual expression for contentment. If the requirements for creativity are satisfied and the emotional and the analytical network of neurons are functioning in the correct rhythm then the outcome is contentment. Best, Marika

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