

# THE THREE SOURCES OF CREATIVITY:

**Breakthroughs from Your Head, Heart and Gut**

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**Breakthroughs from Your Head, Heart and Gut**

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# DEDICATION

This book is dedicated firstly to my husband, Wolfgang and my mom, Mary. Thank you for being long suffering and for your loving encouragement and prayers in writing this book. Angel dad thank you for your guardianship always.

Secondly, I dedicate this to all first book writers. I know your joy, pain and determination and say: Never, never, never give up. You've got three sources to draw upon; each is deeper than any of us know.



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# **PART ONE**

# CONCEPTS



## INTRODUCTION

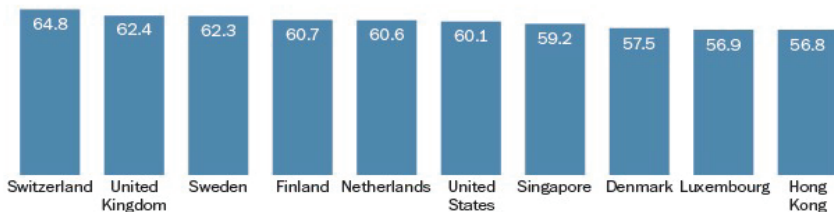
# WHY ANOTHER BOOK ON CREATIVITY?

*“The worst enemy to creativity is self-doubt.”*  
*Sylvia Plath*

America loves competition, effectiveness and efficiency. The coffee drinks we suck down are extra hot and foamy signs of a culture demanding instant gratification. We’ve become multitasking maniacs to achieve the impacts we want from our lives and work. Unfortunately, efficiency and multitasking are powerful enemies of creativity.

Nonetheless, we crave creativity in ourselves to make meaning in our lives. Many of our workplaces demand it from us, now. We are told to “just do it.” However, studies show America’s innovation is significantly declining relative to other countries worldwide; the U.S. ranks #6 in innovation and we desire to do better.<sup>1</sup>

### Scores in 2014 for the top 10



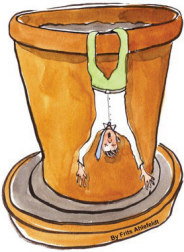
Global Innovation Index 2014, [www.globalinnovationindex.org](http://www.globalinnovationindex.org)

There is also the disturbing fact of the world's data doubling every two years. To put this in perspective, the entire human genome (810 megabytes worth of data) can be put on a one-gigabyte flash drive.<sup>2</sup> The BIG data explosion is driving monumental transformational change. But what is it doing to our ability to be creative? It is eroding our self-confidence in our creative selves.

### Why do we Crave to be Creative?

Author Hermann Vaske questioned creative professionals, from actors, artists, musicians and filmmakers to writers and politicians, asking them why they are

creative?<sup>3</sup> Their responses included: I discover my identity and my heart's song; as a way to survive an (\*\*#!#\*) average world; out of fear I might end up as a dentist; as a chance to defeat fear and ultimately death, because the creation can outlive the creator; because it is a compulsion; I was born this way; because it is a gift to me; because I can be naïve again; to be relevant; to birth something. These reasons can be traced back to our three centers of intelligence, our head, heart and gut.



Frits Ahlefeldt.  
Out of Energy

We want to be creative, but we often feel uncreative. We might feel like the screenwriter (Nicholas Cage) in the movie *Adaptation*,<sup>4</sup> frantic and lost, seeking inspiration and hoping caffeine will help. Or maybe something crunchy or fattening? Nagging, self-mocking thoughts echo in our heads. We are untalented, or frauds. We are getting old and stupid. No one is minutely interested in our brand of creativity. We may as well quit, the voice tells us. We can't seem to shake our own lack of confidence about being creative.

My research confirms we aren't confident about our own creativity. Furthermore, having the right tools and/or processes scored dead last as a "way to promote creativity" factor. As an organizational consultant, I was surprised by this... and wanted to know what does help spark creativity?

## Confident Creativity

It's no secret self-confidence has a snowball affect in our lives. It can snowball us in either a positive or a negative direction. This book is about how to fully leverage your creative sources, which naturally results in greater confidence. *To be confidently creative is the goal.*

Finding your creative strengths leads to big impacts on self-esteem and achievement by increasing your confidence. Does confidence lead to creativity or vice-versa? It is a continuous, virtuous cycle of creativity→ confidence→ more creativity→ more confidence→ even more creativity. Capitalizing on our resources to be more fully creative will build our confidence.

A virtuous cycle is a condition where favorable circumstances or results give rise to another, which subsequently supports and builds upon the former. These cycles tend to be self-reinforcing loops. This is how I view the relationship between creativity and confidence.

We can use many excuses for not being creative: The "permanent white water," aspect of our lives, "Information overload," or "social overload" erodes our capabilities. *We can choose creative growth.* What if you had the single-minded purpose of being more creative?

## What is Creativity Good For?

An extensive educational study found, “when individuals find their creative strengths, it can have an enormous impact on self-esteem and on overall achievement.”<sup>5</sup> Such activities as dance, music, drama, and visual arts are basic to the human experience and necessary for survival. If they weren’t, why would they have been part of every civilization from the Cro-Magnon cave dwellers to the urban citizens of the 21st century?<sup>6</sup> Being creative has a lasting and transforming effect on individuals, neighborhoods, communities, and entire generations. Our sense of identity and purpose changes through creative acts.<sup>3</sup>

Creative ideas are necessary to thrive. This is proven by the human race’s problem-solving history of invention, from creating fire to artificial light to storing ice and energy efficiently. Remarkable ideas made modern life possible. Brain research confirms the plasticity and enrichment coming from music, dance, and visual arts are on equal standing with science, languages, and math. “Arts can no longer be called a cultural add on.”<sup>7</sup> Creativity has played a crucial role in the brain’s evolutionary development.

We deeply connect with our three intelligence centers when we are creative. Creativity requires “stretching” ourselves: It uses imagination (head source), exploration (gut doing source), and connects us to problems/opportunities we care about (heart source). Creativity is shrouded in mystery. When the “a-hah” moment emerges, so does sheer joy. We use all of our selves in an intriguing way. Sometimes it’s a fearless union of our intelligence sources and other times it’s the “disunion” creating the new idea. This keeps us alive (in a problem-solving way) and we flourish.

By enlarging our lives through creative acts we see and feel life more powerfully. Creativity reinvigorates and re-contextualizes our lives. This makes our reality larger, more vivid, and intensely felt.

## What is the Answer to Being More Creative?



We don’t hit targets that we don’t aim for; it takes intention and attention (and humor helps). I have spent many years in creative industries, creating something from nothing. My learning model is we have three distinct sources of creativity, our head, heart and gut intelligence centers. *One of these centers of intelligence, whether it’s thinking, feeling, or doing, dominates our pattern of creativity.* We begin by understanding what

our distinct pattern of creativity is from the three centers. Then we begin to further develop our lesser-used centers in our creative process. I guide you with tailored approaches to build your confidence in the three centers' abilities to be creative. You'll learn how to be *intentionally* creative about things you care about.

Finding a four-leafed clover is supposed to bring us fame, health, wealth, and happiness. They are not found often because a four-leafed clover is actually a mutation of the common shamrock, which is a three-leafed clover. This mutation occurs to only one in approximately 10,000 shamrocks.<sup>8</sup> I much prefer the common shamrock to the lucky four-leafed clover. The regular shamrock is a symbol of creativity for me. Unabashed and unapologetic, the shamrock grows everywhere. Just give it open space and fertile ground and watch it spread.

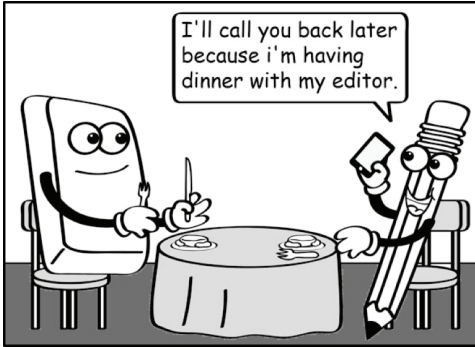
The shamrock is like us. We don't need a mutation or luck to be creative! We all have creativity within us; however we aren't confident about it. We doubt it and think it's only for the special few. We seek creativity outside of ourselves, in the lucky .01%. Creativity takes practice and work, failing, and then more practice and work, and more failing. Creativity is the 99.99% contained within us – no mutation required. We don't need to imitate some genius or expert, or follow someone else's prescription, or find some special tool for it. Yes, the Leonardo da Vinci's and Van Gogh's represent the .01% four-leafed clovers of creativity. But this is no excuse not to practice our own three-leafed brand of creativity.

*We need to fully embrace the truth that we are all creative – yes, even you! We don't need to be slightly crazy, or to be struck by a bolt of lightning to be creative. We need to change our thinking and feelings about it. Creativity does not exist only for the special few. Our creativity flows through our three intelligence centers, available to be tapped 24/7/365. It need not lay dormant within us.*

In the early 1900's, the Austrian neurologist Sigmund Freud argued man's primary motivation was the desire for pleasure. But a famous psychiatrist, Dr. Viktor Frankl, differed with Freud by saying man's primary desire wasn't for pleasure but for a deep sense of meaning. Frankl explained that when a man can't find a deep sense of meaning, he distracts himself with pleasure. We can find deep meaning through our innate and distinctive inner creativity.

For example, as a writer, what deep meaning can I find through writing? Besides serving as a creative outlet, writing is a journey that facilitates making sense of my diverse experiences, how they may tie together (good and bad) into an integrated tapestry. I want to share my unique learning. It allows me to leave a mark in our universe. I was more than a consumer bystander.





What about you? Can you find meaning in your creativity? It has been estimated that about eighty percent of Americans feel they have a book in them. They think about writing it. Coincidentally, there has never been an easier time in history to write and publish a book. Yes, we are easily distracted, especially by our digital connectedness. The act of

the creative process is clearly challenging. Sometimes I hate writing! However, the finished product usually brings feelings of solid accomplishment. The same applies to a visualized picture when finally painted onto the canvas, or when a musical score is written, or an elusive dance movement is nailed, or a mathematical formula is completed.

## Not a Typical Self-Help Book

This book offers a different way of viewing and approaching creativity. It is not a typical self-help book with one, two, three, and “do this” steps. Instead it takes a long view of your creative life and the iconic characters’ lives I’ve chosen to showcase. By studying their breakthroughs, you learn about your own creative evolution. This evolutionary view will open new windows for building revolutionary creative change in your life.

This is a practical book of observations and experiments using your three sources of creativity to generate new ideas applicable for both personal and business purposes. *In Part 1, I explore three distinct ways to tap into creativity: Your head, heart and gut.* Three conduits of intelligence for this purpose are far better than one. Confidence is generally described as: A state of being certain; it is a situational expectation—an expectation of a positive outcome.<sup>9</sup> Self-confidence is having confidence in oneself. To gain self-confidence we need sources of creativity—we have three we can readily rely on. I ask you: *What do you really care about (from the heart)? What are curious about (from the head)? What do you have a hunch about (from the gut)?* Are you ready to solve it creatively? We will use five probing questions for each intelligence center to explore how we use it to fuel or to block our creativity. And you will consider many novel exercises for a problem/opportunity you most want to solve creatively (you’ll find a summary for these in the References).

*In Part 2, we apply the concepts of the “three sources of creativity” to your life and our exemplars’ lives.* We learn about the six creative patterns naturally flowing from the three sources. We observe the intersections between the three intelligence centers (synergistic and contradictory) and how these impact

creativity. Our exemplary characters demonstrate how they dealt/deal with their creative sources. We connect with these icons' deep center struggles and triumphs. Likewise, we learn about our own.

When these distinct sources (or paths) intersect and dance together, the result is often a surprise. In the last chapter, we consider applications of the three sources of creativity for the workplace and organizations.

## Triple-Resilient Creativity

***“Blessed is he who has learned to laugh at himself, for he shall never cease to be entertained.”***

***John Powell***

You have creativity in a triple-resilient dose. These three indisputable and unique resources, our head, heart, and gut, *equate to thinking, feeling and doing*. They are three ways of “knowing” and equal in capacity to serve as sources of creativity within us. Known since the time of Plato, we hardly think about them as resources—or even as an entertaining trio.

I researched creative individuals in different environments, both modern and ancient. These characters are exemplars of gut, head and heart-based creativity. Each icon is a mini-story of inspiration. We observe how their sources of creativity evolved over time and the resultant impact for each. These characters include: Darwin’s head-based fear, King Solomon’s supreme wisdom, Thomas Edison’s gut in overdrive, Craig Venter’s genome mud wrestling match, Steve Job’s getting fired over “beauty,” Mother Teresa’s anguished heart... and many more. You will marvel over the integrity, evolution, and revolution of their three creative sources. And you will be enlightened about your own. We can depend on these distinct sources, period. Their unique offerings may be lying dormant within you, but now is the time to change this. You already have all you need. You are enough already!

## Special Features Distinguishing this Book

- Why creativity is a mystery and not the same as innovation.
- A new learning model includes why our three centers of intelligence are equal in capacity to serve as sources for our creativity, and how to leverage them in your own creative process.
- A three-center self-assessment helps you discover: Your most dominant center, your supporting center, and your underused or “hidden” center. This is key to understanding how your intelligence centers serve as sources for your creativity.

## Three Sources Of Creativity: Breakthroughs from Your Head, Heart and Gut

- The creative mystery is honored in five stages and how the three centers of intelligence are involved in each stage.
- Targeted and practical exercises for a chosen problem/opportunity you want to solve.
- Diverse exemplars (contemporary and ancient) enlighten *the three sources of creativity* including: breakthrough artists, scientists, athletes, business people and personal “oil stories.”
- Six natural creativity patterns defined with iconic exemplars.

## What You Will and Won't Get

### Will Get:

- ✓ New discovery of *your own* unique creative process.
- ✓ Strength-based appreciation of your three sources of creativity inspires more risk taking.
- ✓ Proven approaches, self-assessments, and exercises tailored to you with follow-up available at: [www.threesourcesofcreativity.com](http://www.threesourcesofcreativity.com).
- ✓ Neurobiology supports and builds confidence in your creativity.
- ✓ Strategically leverage your creativity in your life, workplace, and community.

### Won't Get:

- ✗ A typical one, two, and three-step “one size fits all” self-help book
- ✗ Lack of scientific studies/facts or case studies
- ✗ Not using proven approaches & latest neurobiology
- ✗ How to play it safe and be complacent
- ✗ Undervaluing your creative strengths by using “one size fits all” prescriptions
- ✗ Keeping your creative sources’ blind spots blind

## Symbols Facilitate Your Journey:



Key Concept



Center "Muscle" building exercise



Reflection question



Something cool on the internet to check out  
**(paperback readers see links at website: [www.threesourcesofcreativity.com](http://www.threesourcesofcreativity.com).)**

### Did you Know?

In 2006 Pollock's "No. 5, 1948" painting sold for 140 Million dollars, setting a new record; top sales continue.



Fun Facts

# CHAPTER 1

## YOUR THREE SOURCES OF CREATIVITY

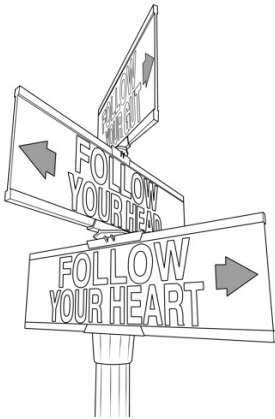
***“It turns out that creativity isn’t some rare gift to be enjoyed by the lucky few... In too many of us it gets blocked. But it can be unblocked. And unblocking that creative spark can have far-reaching implications...”***

***Tom Kelley***



Lets begin with a reflection exercise. This is the “*Three Ways of Knowing*” Exercise.

Think about a time when your three intelligence centers were experiencing conflict. For example, I recently interviewed a job candidate whose references, work, and credentials on paper were excellent. The person was likeable enough, but my gut was apprehensive. My instinct had a different take on this candidate. Think of a situation where you had a difficult time making a decision due to this kind of felt conflict. Then complete the summary below.



Which centers were in conflict and how so? Which center(s) did you ultimately listen to/act on?

What are the natural resources of the: Head/thinking? Heart/feeling? Gut/doing? What are the highest purposes of each intelligence center?

Can you give an example of how you might misuse one of these centers?


There have been three centers of intelligence observed in humans dating back to Ancient Greece. All three centers are active in each person, and are necessary for survival. However, we don't access each of them equally because this is part of our brain's conditioning. For example, I'm primarily a gut-based person. This means I operate mostly out of my gut reactions first, with support from my heart and/or head. Others describe themselves as primarily heart based, with support from their gut intuition and/or head. We all know thinkers

who predominantly operate from the head center because their internal thinking is deeply valuable to them.

Clearly, our centers need each other. They independently and interdependently bring out our creativity. The slow hunch from our gut needs to be nourished. Even if it's a flash of insight from the gut, we need the head center to prove it and the heart center to nourish it. To befriend our total experience is to accept all of our responses. To allow information to flow without judgment from all three centers and experience events, good or bad, painfully or joyfully, is to be truly alive. Our task is to consider every moment, and our reaction to it, as potentially interesting, challenging, and revealing to our creative process. *To be fully creative we need an open heart, open head, and open gut willingly befriending each other. We need to be aware when any of our centers are closed or blocked. We need self-confidence to solve problems or exploit ideas creatively. You absolutely can develop the self-belief and confidence in your own creativity by experimenting with and trusting in your three intelligence centers as THE sources of your creativity.*

Lets build an awareness of where your fire comes from regarding your ideas or problems. Does it originate from your heart, head, or gut intelligence center? In what proportion is the fire burning to solve problems from each center? From your heart/head/gut's perspective is it 80/10/10 or 34/65/1 or 33/33/33? To facilitate this awareness, you'll complete a three-center self-assessment.

**Which FUELS your creativity?**



Creativity is fueled by three intelligence centers  
**all equal**  
in capacity  
**to create**

Why a self-assessment and not some kind of creativity test? The answer is because creativity is not simply a set of personality traits or skills. It's not familiarity with a set of behaviors that facilitate pre-fabricated strategies. Creative people are inventors; they invent both problems and solutions. Creativity happens when a person with the right set of skills and

knowledge (from the head, heart, and gut) invents or finds a meaningful problem that cannot be solved using any existing approach. The problem is solved creatively only by the person uniquely executing their own set of experiences (from the head, heart, and gut). Who knows who is going to hit the jackpot? Only people who have chosen to embark on this quest. I can't "teach" creativity because it is a very personal quest. My quest is to facilitate your creative quest.

## The Three Centers Self Assessment

The self-assessment will get you in touch with the three centers and how often you use each during your creative process. It will build your awareness of different aspects of each intelligence center you are currently using (or not). By

 On the Net

developing this self-awareness, you are on the worthy quest of developing an Open Mind, Open Heart, and Open Gut. There is an online version of this assessment you can complete at <http://www.threesourcesofcreativity.com>. It will automatically tabulate your scores.

Three Centers Self Assessment is not a test but a reflective inventory for you to consider:

- ✓ With each statement, please avoid rushing. Listen to your head, heart, and gut specifically for honest answers based on your current experience, not what you think it “should” be.
- ✓ There are no right or wrong answers.
- ✓ Respond to each statement with a number as shown below:

**Responses: 1 = Never 2 = Seldom 3 = Occasionally 4 = Frequently 5 = Always**