



TRANSCRIPT FOR MODULE 6

CREATIVITY & INNOVATION

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Introduction

Welcome to the module on Creativity and Innovation. Drawing on expertise and insight from some of the world's greatest thinkers, artists, business leaders and spiritual guides, this one-hour tutorial will demystify the creative process and explore its relevance to thriving in business and leading a fulfilling life.

Creativity is fast-becoming the most desirable leadership trait for coping in a complex global economy and adapting to rapid technological, political and environmental changes.

We will explore what creativity is and how to tap into your personal creativity; we will look at the relevance of creativity to leadership, the difference between creativity and innovation, and how to manage creative teams and innovation processes.

You can watch each session at your own pace, and use the journaling prompts to reflect and capture your learning.

Resources, additional reading and links to the full videos featured in this module can be found in the final section.

Ready to dive in? Let's get started!

Lesson 1: Introduction to Creativity and Leadership

Session A: What is Creativity?

Creativity is in demand as one of the most important leadership traits for the 21st Century. In surveys worldwide, CEOs regularly rate creativity and idea generation as the most crucial factor of long-term success.

As the global economy becomes more complex and interconnected, and the pace of industrial change gets faster, leaders are faced with more uncertainty and risk than ever before.

Coping with this reality requires not only creativity, but the interpersonal-awareness and commitment to invest in innovation as a necessity for competition and growth.

Creative leaders are comfortable with ambiguity and adapt well to change; they invite and lead disruptive innovation, invent new business models and seek to alter the status quo.

Session B: Creativity Matters

Erik Wahl is an ex-corporate manager turned graffiti artist. At Pendulum 2019 he shared his perspective on why creativity matters. Take a look at this video (available in your library).

Session C: Adapting To Change

As Erik Wahl mentions, the complexity of the global economy presents challenges but also significant opportunities, and to grasp these we have to embrace ways of thinking and acting that can disrupt 'business as usual' and imagine new possibilities.

We need to balance our logical and rational thinking with the vulnerability and risk that's involved with creativity and innovation.

Session D: The Value of Creativity

As we transition to an information economy, the value of creativity – and creative people – is being felt more acutely. Jo Malone, perfumer and founder of Jo Malone London sees creativity as the most important investment today's leaders can make in their business (video available in your library).

Lesson 2: Creativity Explained

Session A: The Myth of the 'Creative Genius'

Creativity is core to our ability to live a full life and thrive in businesses, but what is it exactly? Where does it come from, and how can we 'invest' in it?

Many people tend to think of creativity as talent, usually an artistic talent like drawing or performance, which some people have and others do not.

This myth of the 'creative genius' is firmly embedded in Western culture, but both research and practice show that creativity is something we all have access to.

Put simply, creativity is the act of using your imagination to create original or 'novel' ideas, and most people do this on a regular basis without calling it 'creativity'. We might call it 'problem solving' or 'brainstorming', and the outcomes of it range from practical solutions to imaginative stories depending on the context and need.

Here's a video of Erik Wahl again talking about a lack of creativity 'misdiagnosis' (available in your library).

Session B: Where Does Creativity Come From?

So, if we all have access to creativity, where does it come from and how can we access it? Here is the famous comedian, John Cleese, with his insight into creativity (available in your library).

Session C: Strengthening Your Creative Muscle

This idea of the subconscious and the way that it functions might seem a bit mysterious, and this is because the specific mental processes that give rise to creativity are hard to pin down.

The latest neuroscience explains creativity as a complex psychological phenomenon taking place across the brain and consisting of many interacting cognitive processes such as memory, emotion and senses.

But despite the complexity of how creativity happens in the brain, the stages of the creative process have been mapped, and the process of strengthening your creative 'muscle' can be relatively straight-forward.

Lesson 3: The Creative Process

Session A: The Art of Thought

The experience of receiving insight from the subconscious that John Cleese described is known as the 'illumination' stage of the creative process.

London School of Economics co-founder, Graham Wallas, identified four stages overall: Preparation, Incubation, Illumination and Verification.

Preparation is a period of dedicated research of the problem you're trying to solve from different perspectives. The goal here is to immerse yourself in the task and absorb as much information as possible into the subconscious. It's like preparing the soil for new seeds to be sown.

Incubation is when the seeds of information you've absorbed are left to take root in your subconscious while you focus your attention elsewhere.

Illumination is when the subconscious offers up an idea, sometimes when you're least expecting it and often in a form that doesn't always immediately make sense.

It's important to allow this sapling insight to develop before moving on to stage four, Verification, where analysis and critical thinking are applied to determine if an idea is worth pursuing.

The most important part of the process is the combination of different bits of knowledge, experience and inspiration to produce new ideas. This happens in the subconscious, but can be aided by activities like play.

John Cleese shares his experience of the creative process and play as the wellspring of creativity (available in your library).

Session B: Enabling The Creative Process

In this clip, we touch on certain conditions which enable the creative process. These include creating time boundaries and removing distractions to focus the mind.

It sounds like a paradox to say that discipline creates freedom but leadership coach Robin Sharma explains how it makes sense to dedicate time to being creative (video available in your library).

Session C: State of Flow

This state of 'genius' as Robin Sharma calls it, is also known as being in a state of 'flow'.

Flow is a state of intense concentration and mental clarity, a loss of self-consciousness and perspective of time, and a balance between skill and challenge.

Curiosity can induce a state of flow, and being in a state of flow is associated with greater creativity.

Lesson 4: Awakening Curiosity

Session A: The Importance of Curiosity

We've heard how play can release us from the control of the logical mind and habitual thinking, to allow freedom for new and unexpected ideas to emerge from the subconscious.

Artist Erik Wahl tells us about the importance of curiosity and how he encourages playful behaviour in the workplace...(video available in your library)

Session B: Cutting Through The Status Quo

This experience shows that disrupting everyday habits and expectations cuts through the status quo to create the space to think differently.

This can be as simple as daydreaming or using a new writing implement that will evoke new emotions or stimulate new kinds of conversations. It can be a simple commitment to seek out diversity and inspiration.

Through these activities we awaken curiosity. Curiosity is the desire to know. It motivates us to explore and seek out knowledge for the joy of it, and higher curiosity is linked with creativity.

Entrepreneur Jo Malone recommends spending 20 minutes a day dedicated to being curious and connecting with your passions (video available in your library)

Session C: Self-Knowledge

This self-knowledge is important for creativity. Teresa Amabile, a creativity expert at the Harvard Business School, writes about how creativity is highest when you are intrinsically motivated to work on a problem or task.

Getting curious about what inspires you, will lead you to problems and ideas which you are motivated to solve, and to ways of applying your creativity that feel most relevant to your knowledge and skills.

Lesson 5: Reframing Failure

Session A: Cultivating The Right Mindset

By awakening our curiosity, seeking out inspiration, daydreaming, disrupting habitual ways of thinking and doing things, and deepening self-awareness, we create the stimulus for new ideas to form. But to do this, we also need to cultivate the right mindset.

The number one enemy of creativity is fear of failure, which is really the fear of embarrassment, shame and judgement that can be felt when we make mistakes. “What if I fail?” is a common thought that prevents people from even starting out on the creative process. So how can we look at failure differently? John Cleese explains in this next video (video available in your library).

Session B: Fail early and often

Seeing mistakes as opportunities for learning opens up the possibility for risk taking and experimentation, and frees people from the pressure of perfectionism and fear of judgement.

Of course, this is provided that any learning is acted on so that any mistakes aren't repeated. A popular refrain in the start-up world is "fail early and often" because, like learning to ride a bike, trying out something new will involve falling down a few times.

Lesson 6: Creativity and Innovation

Session A: From Idea To Outcome

So far, we've looked at creativity as a process of unleashing the potential of the mind to generate new and original ideas.

Innovation, on the other hand, is the process of implementing new ideas that make changes to products, processes and services with the purpose of adding value to customers and contributing to knowledge generation.

Invention, is the creation of something that has never existed before, and creativity is the foundation for both innovation and invention.

Innovation happens by applying tools and approaches that can translate an idea into an outcome that's fit for market. To explore what this looks like in practice, here's Randi Zuckerberg, Broadway Producer and serial entrepreneur.

Randi Zuckerberg shares her experience of how a combination of curiosity, creative freedom and knowledge can be channelled into purposeful innovation through the structured process of a hackathon (video available in your library).

Session B: Key Stages of Innovation Process

There are many different ways of innovating but they share common stages:

- Discovery, the process of identifying customer needs and generating new ideas;
- Advocacy and Screening, where the best ideas are filtered out;
- Experimentation, where ideas are made into prototypes and tested;
- Commercialisation, where investment is brought in to take a new product or process to market; and Diffusion, where the final product is widely adopted,

Until, customer feedback and innovation continues the cycle of improvement. Randi Zuckerberg outlines two different kinds of creativity at work in an innovation process.

The first is the unbridled play and freedom of the Facebook hackathon where anything goes! This releases people from the status quo and allows for radical free thinking.

The second is creativity applied to a specific question or problem which responds to a specific need – in Randi’s case, the desire to inspire more young women and girls to enter the tech sector, and her commitment to universal access to technology.

This is called sustainable creativity, and it’s important to make sure innovation is not only meeting the perceived business or consumer needs that support economic growth, but doing so in a way that positively contributes to society and the environment too.

Lesson 7: Managing Creative and Innovative Teams

Session A: What Do Creative and Innovative Teams Have In Common?

Creative and innovative teams have one major trait in common - their leaders create environments of psychological safety where people have the courage to share ideas, take risks and learn from mistakes.

Here’s a video of Psychologist, Dr Martyn Newman (video available in your library).

Session B: The Impact of Psychological Safety on Organisational Culture

Amy Edmondson has pioneered research into the impact of psychological safety on organisational culture. Her research reveals that people feel more able to take risks and innovate in teams where they believe they will be heard and accepted.

These teams will typically include a diverse range of perspectives, and are led by leaders who avoid shaming and criticising people. They invite contributions and participation through open questions. They create a culture of shared values and ethics. They set transparent expectations. They provide structured feedback. They facilitate learning by using mistakes as opportunities for learning and growth.

They work based on the assumption, that adaptability and innovation thrive on diversity and distributed leadership, and they welcome collaborative processes. In these environments, people are less afraid of failure and social shame, and more willing to apply their unique skills and experiences to build a more creative and collaborative environment.

Imagine what would be possible if we could create the conditions for not only ourselves, but everyone around us to be more creative?

Lesson 8: Module Conclusion

Session A: Let's Recap

Thank you for completing this module on Creativity, Innovation and Leadership. We have got through a lot in the last hour, so let's recap.

The creative process focuses our minds, induces joy and connection to others, and deepens our self-awareness.

It is the lifeblood of a meaningful life and success in business, and helps us cope with uncertainty.

The creative process is driven by curiosity, and is heightened by the state of 'flow' that can be achieved when you become immersed in a task, much like the childhood experience of play.

Creativity is available to everyone, but it needs investment and time to be nurtured.

It happens on both an individual level and collectively through more structured approaches to innovation, and is unencumbered by fear of failure.

So embrace your creativity.

Use the survey and journaling prompts at the end (available in your library) to recap what you've learned.