

CREATIVITY THE GREAT MYSTERY

By Andrea Adler

What is this great mystery? We know what it feels like when we are in the midst of it—when we are flying high and feeling indestructible. But how can we bring forth this great power when we want it, when we need it? How can we be patient when it doesn't seem to exist? Before we dive into its consistencies and inconsistencies, let us define the word.

The dictionary tells us, creativity is the ability to use the imagination to develop new and original ideas or things . . . Creativity has been attributed to chance, accident, and serendipity. It has been associated with genius, mental illness, and humor. Some say it is a trait we are born with; others say it can be taught with the application of simple techniques.

Is creativity an accident? Is it serendipitous? Is it a stroke of genius that we stumble upon from time to time? Or is it something intrinsic to our very nature?

We watch a great dancer pivot from one pirouette to another and wonder how in heaven's name she can make it look so easy. We see an actor move seamlessly from one emotion to another, take on another person's persona and lose himself totally in the character. We see artists, musicians, and businesspeople prosper exponentially in their chosen fields, excelling without seeming to exert an ounce of struggle, as if their innate gift had surfaced from lifetimes of practice.

We know what this power feels like when it is present, because there is a sense of deep peace, boundlessness. The ego disappears, and we become one with an unwavering firmness and flexibility. We are "in the zone."

Everything flows. In perfect balance, we become the steady flame in a windless space.

The Yearning

The first glimpse of the creative process is the yearning: the desire to create. We bath in the yearning, feel that yearning deep inside, and express that yearning in every move we make. Every move then becomes the catalyst for our yearning to grow. We know it wants to flourish and express itself, because we feel it. There is a tangible, physical push.

For instance, we may long to play the piano. We don't even know if we have a talent for it, but every day we sit and practice. We study the scales, and we learn the notes. Day after day, we practice. We are immersed in the practice. So much so, that even our repetitive actions express the longing, and give us the experience of our desire. One baby step at a time, we continue our practice.

The creative process unfolds in many dimensions. Emotions, realizations, and insights come up. We ride them, surf them, feel them fully. At the same time, our practice becomes an exploration. We follow our thoughts, feelings, and impulses where they lead us. In the same way that the scientist follows where the data takes him, in the same way the White Rabbit scurries down the rabbit hole, it is that exploring, that open-ended quality, that moves us into a deeper space.

And then we begin to shape it.

We shape it by dancing with it, swimming with it, by seeing where the current takes us. We learn to feel the moment, trust the throb of the impulse—without judgment or manipulation. The more sensitive we become to the “flavor” of each impulse, the more we can differentiate one impulse from another. Becoming one with the object of our awareness, we open to the point of being vulnerable, and then, we let go, and become the witness to the shape, the creation itself.

Dancing with the Great Power

Our entire life is a creative venture. Every second creation is whirling and dancing in front of us. One only need the eyes in which to see it, the sensitivity to feel it. Why become frustrated if your desire does not come when you want it? Even your pauses, your standstills, and your abrupt stops, are in perfect step with your spirit and your creation. Even when you think you have made a mistake, the “mistake” can lead you to a place you never would have come to—without experiencing it.

To truly flow with the great power, we start by being mindful, by being aware of everything around us. We start by looking for clues, by being vigilant, and on the lookout. Clues and signs are everywhere. They may come in forms that we may not think are creative. There may be a license plate that triggers a change of heart. The mailman, the store clerk, or your brother-in-law may lead you to your next great idea. A chance encounter with your old boss that you could never stand, a neighbor’s need that you’d rather not respond to, may lead you to your next treasure.

I will never forget this story, as it epitomizes the need we all have to listen and be mindful of the signs. There was a client who called me for a consultation not too long ago. He was very frustrated. He had just broken up with his wife; he had no job, very little money, and no idea what his next step should be. Listening to him, I knew what he needed to hear, as the answer welled up inside me: If he could just be open to living in the present moment with the eyes of a child, in wonder and exploration—if he could just sit for a few minutes in meditation and touch the great power inside himself and listen, he would be led to his next step.

The client followed the instructions. A few weeks went by, and then he called me. He was ecstatic, and shared the following story:

I started meditating a few minutes every day, just like you suggested. I had a really hard time, at first. But after the third day, I was able to sit for fifteen minutes. As I sat there, I could feel my hands burning. I didn't know what the burning was about. There was no rash, no swelling, nothing I could see. It seemed to be coming from the inside. The funny thing was, I couldn't feel the burning during the day, while I was busy—only when I got quiet and sat in meditation.

And then, about a week later, I had an impulse to call an old friend. He told me he had just opened a training center for hair designers. The minute he told me that, my whole body filled with an incredible rush of energy. It had been an early childhood desire of mine to work with people's hair. I had forgotten about it.

As I sat there, listening to him tell me about this training school, my hands started to burn again. Two days later, I packed my bags, got in my car, and drove to North Carolina, where I am now training to be a hair stylist. I am so happy doing what I love, and my hands no longer burn. They are doing what they love.

Not everything gets revealed to us through the intellect. There are those subtle feelings, intuitions and impulses that we want to listen for and trust. We know that if we ignore them, we may miss an opportunity.

If you have an impulse to pick up the phone, pick up the phone. If you have an impulse to walk into an art gallery, walk into an art gallery. You never know where that impulse will take you. Synchronicity happens when you trust that little voice, those internal signals, as they will connect you with the external answer to your needs. It is this match that you want to manifest.

Touching the Great Power

So, how can we experience this power more often? How can we merge with this space more expediently?

We can meditate. Yes, meditate.

Whatever our spiritual path or tradition, meditation is the fundamental technology for experiencing the depth of reality—and the great power. For it is only when we have learned to quiet the mind, to settle into stillness, and allow this stillness to expand, that we can begin to feel this power, its presence and aliveness. Meditation reveals the spanda, the primordial pulsation that lies deep within every human being. And then, it is up to us to have the courage to trust the spanda and act upon it.

Those that do not trust this pulsation have a tendency to blame others. They conjure up excuses as to why they didn't act on their instinct when it was blatantly clear that they should have. Negativity rises, depression sets in. When these tendencies reveal themselves. It is the time to STOP the cycle! Dive into the practice of meditation, and bring that negation of the spanda to the surface. Keep asking yourself, over and over, why? Why, am I not allowing myself to take this action? Listen. Keep listening and the answer will be revealed to you.

Stay Flexible, Stay Real

Whether we come into this world with an innate gift, or have a burning desire to create something significant while we are here, there inevitably comes a point in time where we need to pause, review, dig deeper into the crevices of our own passion—see if it's time to refresh our creation or change directions entirely, reinvent ourselves.

Often times we are startled by this revelation and ask ourselves: Why do we even want to create? What is pushing us forward? Is there something asking to be born, or reborn? And if so, what is it? What is Real for us?

For Michelangelo, there was a shape that wanted to emerge from the stone; his job was to see the form that was already there, and set it free.

For Virginia Woolf, writing was an urgent response to the reality of each fragile moment. “I net them under with a single phrase,” she said; “I rescue them from formlessness with words.” Virginia Woolf was always going for the real—that split second of heightened reality.

What is the Real for you?

The great power of creativity that we long for is Real. It is the soul, calling for us to pay attention. It is the longing to create that spurs us on, provoking us to explore our desires, our gifts. Do not be afraid to dive into this longing.

In fact, I urge you to welcome it and embrace it.

Kabir, the thirteenth-century mystic poet, said,
It is the intensity of the longing
that does all the work.

Look at me, and you will see a slave to that intensity.

About the author:

Andrea Adler is an international speaker and workshop presenter. She is the founder of HolisticPR.com, the author of *The Science of Spiritual Marketing: Initiation into Magnetism, Creating an Abundant Practice* and her breakout novel, *Pushing Upward*, published by Hay House. Andrea travels the world offering workshops and consults with business owners, demonstrating how to integrate spiritual practice and psychological self-inquiry into a fundamental transformation of people’s lives and their marketing approaches.