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The Elements of Creativity: What-ifs?

By Dr. Alvin Chan

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What if there is no toilet paper and I am halfway through doing the "do"?

What if one of my team members decides to leave the project halfway and he happens to be the most knowledgeable guy there?

What if I turn colour blind, how should I adapt to the environment?

What-if, what-if and more what-ifs...

The technique of asking What-ifs provokes an individual to think and to produce something new. At times, in order to find original solutions to old problems, one must take the leap of faith and ask 'crazy' and imaginative questions to get us out of the rut of stale, conformist routine.

So, when you are walking, relaxing and or plain daydreaming, practice the techniques of What-ifs and have a ball of a time stimulating your brain juices!

You never know when your What-ifs Questions and Answers (Q&A) practice sessions could come in handy in sprouting innovative solutions to everyday problems.

I was just wondering about the invention of the mobile phone (or cellphone). Could it be the result of several fun and crazy What-ifs sessions among some guys in a restaurant, just talking off-the-cuff? What kind of questions could lead them into the invention of our beloved mobile phone? Hmm..

The questions asked could be the following:

What if I go out and I cannot receive an urgent phone call from my wife? (Especially when I am out so late and so often)

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What if I have to make an emergency call and there is no public phone around? (Where's the fire truck when you need one?)

What if I cut the wires of my home telephone and bring the phone along with me? (That could be COOL! No more getting entangled!)

One must remember that the What-ifs techniques are often used more to excite your imagination, not to develop a real solution to your problem. Though it happens!

The next step in the What-if process is to weigh up the responses and see if there lies a connection that may be used to solve the problem at hand.

Here are the steps of the What-ifs technique:

1. Write out specifically the nature of your challenge/problem. (How can I stop losing my car keys?)

2. Ask as many WHAT-IF scenarios as you can. Any crazy what-ifs will do. Don't be too pre-occupied with facts of the problems you want to solve. Imagine. Be a non-realist!
(What if I put my car keys within my body?)

3. Try to answer the what-if questions.
(I could develop a system whereby my thumb-print/ voice could be used to open the car's door- yes; it's been done already! The bio-metric technology)

Putting Your Elements to Work:

Get cracking and develop your own original responses to the following questions. Have FUN!

What if my pet dogs starts talking to me?

What if the Internet service is shut down for a week and I am in the online business selling my products?

What if the book I am reading now is laughing at me for not being able to understand the meanings of certain word?

What if my friend turns out to be alien from Mars?

What if I have a Television that tells me to stop watching too much T.V?

Crack your Head and have FUN!

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Creativity And The Jack Of All Trades

By Angie Dixon

You may be familiar with the saying, "Jack of all trades and master of none."

Well, I say, "Hooey." That's right. In fact, let me say it again. "Hooey."

It is perfectly possible to be a multipassionate person and do several things well. Many, even. I'm a writer, a mother, a photographer, a friend, an entrepreneur. Sometimes not all at the same time, but I do them all, and do them all well.

But I think one reason many people can't do many things well, or think other people can't, is a lack of creativity.

It takes a lot of gumption to juggle two small kids, a deadline on an article, a pan of spaghetti, and a friend who wants to talk about a problem at work.

It takes even more gumption, and creativity, to juggle five projects, and those same two kids and that same friend.

Sometimes the creativity is required to figure out how you can manage one thing later. "Jack, I know you want to show your new game to me right now, but actually, I've been asleep for about an hour. Could we do it in the morning?"

Sometimes the creativity is figuring out how to handle two projects at once. "Hmmm. If I write an article on creativity AND writing, I could use it in my writing ezine AND my creativity ezine.

Sometimes the creativity is in finding a sensitive way to say, "I can't right now." "Samantha, I know you want to play badminton. I have an abscessed tooth and can't move my head. How about Old Maid on the bed instead?"

And sometimes the creativity is just in remembering that these are people, things and situations you love and want to enjoy, and then going and enjoying them.

Angie Dixon is a writer and webmaster of The Leonardo Trait. Get a free report on failing successfully and sign up for free teleseminars at

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