

The Most Successful Process for Accomplishment

# *Create What Matters* Monthly Newsletter



## The Most Successful Process for Accomplishment in History

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How many ways are there to do things? There is problem solving in which the organizing principle is the problem or conflict you want to eradicate. There are various models to follow like a paint-by-numbers approach to life, in which you follow a formula that someone else has designed. This is a process-focused notion that assumes that if you find the right method, you'll be okay. There is the free-bag, fly by the seat of your pants, take whatever comes, go with the flow, see what the gods have in store for you approach. Some take that even further: don't want anything and give up attachments. On the other side of the coin is will power, exaggerated intention, and obsessive drive manipulation.

Then there is the "you need to deserve success" mentality in which you have to have high self-esteem and really, really love yourself enough to earn achievement. Other thoughts are implement the philosophy of selfishness, adopt the right beliefs, fight evil, assume a Machiavellian strategy, develop self-confidence, rid yourself of your repressed areas of consciousness, overcome barriers, confront your demons, positive thinking, pay for your ticket in life by doing good deeds, avoid risk and danger by setting up controls, feel guilty and then overcome guilt, and on it goes.

All of these approaches have a goal; even those that advocate detachment have spiritual aspirations that advocates want to achieve. Yet, all of these various and sundry methodologies do not have the track record that the creative process does. If you look to history, you will see that just about every important advancement in civilization has been an outcome of the creative process. In ancient times, the great pyramids of both the Egyptians and the Aztecs, the Chinese technique of row planting crops (that allowed stronger and faster harvests), the compass, ship's rudder, the great technological, mathematical, philosophical, and artistic brilliance of the Greeks, and throughout the next number of ages, the best of humanity, bursting forth, all able to reach fruition because of one thing and one thing alone: the ability to create.

From this obvious success story, you'd think that *learning the creative process* would be as fundamental to a proper education as learning science, literature, and math. But the creative process is misunderstood chronically in most societies. It is thought of as something the artists do. And the artists are not seen as central to society. Yes, they entertain, they inspire, they move an audience, but then you leave the museum or concert hall or theater or movie complex, go home, and worry about how to make a living, or raise a family, or plan for your old age.

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Even the subject of the creative process has been confused with the subject of creativity. The field of creativity is filled with “experts” who think in terms of idea generation, and, somehow, by that focus, completely miss the point. So, out of that arena, we have some of the most bizarre techniques that range from brainstorming, to lateral thinking, to brute-think, to concept fans, to morphological analysis to... Well, you get the point. There are a lot of crazy ideas in the creativity industry because of two critical factors: it's a lucrative business, and it thinks that if you create a lot of crazy ideas, you are proving how very creative you are. Hardly anyone in the arts works the ways that creativity people talk about.

Now, in the real creative process, there are moments that are creative. But that is not the usual way things go. If you thought that creativity and the creative process were the same thing, and you didn't know much about creating in the first place, you wouldn't be teaching it in schools as a major part of the curriculum. You would think that a few gifted people are creative, and they are the ones who did all of those wonderful things that are the best part of history, but for the rest of us poor slobs . . .

On one side I have *the* most successful process in history for accomplishment, and on the other side, I think that only a few people are capable of it. Why should I even try to teach it to children? Why should I learn it myself as an adult? I'm not making buildings, or painting masterpieces, or inventing technology. I'm just trying to pay the bills. So, two general myths are that the creative process is the same thing as creativity, and that only a few people have it. Maybe a third myth is that it can't be learned.

If you take the very same process an artist uses to paint a great masterpiece, and apply that to your own life, you would have the advantage of the creative process. Even in those things that are not lofty and high brow, even in those things that are common everyday concerns and interests, the creative process would prove to be the best approach you could ever take in your own life-building process. What could be better? Human beings, are, by nature, builders, designers, and creators. It is a primal instinct that everyone has. But that instinct is not the same as knowing how to create. In fact, there is so much in our society that takes us away from creating: see the list in the beginning of this article.

The other day I was talking with a friend who is in the middle of taking our online course Structures—Creating Your Life which, of course, is about using the creative process in creating the life you want to create. He was telling me about his golf game. Now, you might think, well golf is not an area where the creative process is at all relevant. You would be wrong. My friend told me about an important tournament he was in. He said, “I was two strokes behind. Normally, I would give myself a pep-talk, or try to warn myself about being sloppy, or a million other ways I would try to manipulate myself. But instead, I used the principle of structural tension (the basic structure of the creative process.) I thought about the outcome I wanted, which was to win the game. I pictured that outcome by envisioning my opponent shaking my hand and congratulating me for a great game that I won. That was the outcome I wanted to create. Then I focused on current reality, which was that I was two strokes down. I played throughout the game holding structural tension. At one point I was two strokes ahead. Later, I was even. At the end of the game, my opponent was shaking my hand and congratulating me for a great game. In fact, it was my second personal best I had ever played.”

This is one of countless stories, big and small, about how the creative process has enabled people to accomplish what they wanted to. This isn't magical thinking, it is practical thinking. But, there is something more than just thinking in terms of structural tension, and then taking the strategic actions on behalf of the outcome. There is you as creator. The mechanics of the process are rather simple to learn and apply. What is not so simple is all the concepts you might bring to the table. As creator, there is a particular orientation that needs to be learned and practiced. Sort of “getting yourself” out of the way. (More info about this in my books)

Yet, with all the other ways to attempt to create the life you want, to my mind and experience, there is only one that is the best by far, and that is the creative process in which there are no tricks, but techniques; no rules, but principles; nothing against the human spirit, but instead total alignment with the highest in humanity. There is nothing as effective, as elegant, or as involving.