

In second grade I started a new school. That was the year I started to learn cursive. That was also the year I found out I did not have good penmanship - and as an aside how many 7 year olds have good penmanship. I also got an F in art. I wasn't happy about it at the time but it also did not leave me psychically scarred either. However it did take a long time for me to come to understand that even though drawing is not my medium it does not mean I am not creative.

In what would be an ironic twist when I was practicing as a family therapist and working with children we would often draw. It was a great way to connect with children and work with them. I was lucky enough to have a supervisor who thought it was a great thing that my level of artistry did not intimidate my clients.

Pablo Picasso said "All children are artists. The problem is how to remain an artist once he grows up."

I would like to broaden that to "All children are creative. The problem is how to remain creative once they grow up."

I run into a lot of people who unintentionally, I think, equate creativity with artistry or artwork. And then that artwork is very narrowly defined. Creative people write, draw, sculpt, paint or make music. But that is so narrow so restrictive.

Creative can be all sorts of things. When I was getting my MSW I remember being in a class where we were discussing case management and given the scenario that an aging client would need to be moved to a different facility and this would not be a good change for the person. What would we do? I said I would lose the paperwork. That's creative don't you think?

Depak Chopra wrote "There are three forces pervading all of life: creation, maintenance, and destruction". We can't be creative all the time. For everything there is a time – right - a time to create and a time to destroy

and a time to just maintain what is. Taking care of details making sure life is cleaned up after, adulting is necessary. But we can't just maintain all the time either. We can't adult all the time.

So how How we find our creativity?

First I want to emphasize that the very very first step is to find that little judgey voice inside of you. Yes, that one that just now said judgey! I'm not judgey how dare Rev. Jennifer accuse me of having a judgey voice. Or the one who said of course I have a judgey voice who wouldn't I mean if I had just gone to the grocery store yesterday I could have had a healthy breakfast this morning instead of sitting here thinking about cookies at coffee hour.

We all have that judgey voice. And we should to a certain extent. That judgey voice is what helped our ancestors figure out friend from foe - right before they ran to safety or approached in friendship. But we may have in our modern day western society gone a little overboard in the judgey voice.

Try to let it go. Because to find your creativity you need to be able to let go of the assumptions and judgements about what is "good enough" to be creative. And I think nascent creativity, the kind that is just beginning to form is like a skittish elusive forest animal. It pokes its nose out gently at first seeing if it is safe, if there is room for it, if there is time for it. Like that little animal it is looking to see if it has found the right spot. And if it hasn't it will go away.

The judgey voice may keep you safe from predators and get the bills paid on time but it won't make room for creativity.

This is why I had us all participate, as we were comfortable, with that drawing activity earlier. It didn't take much to make something to spark a little creativity and we got to do it together. Did you make a piece that should be in an art museum No of course not but that is the wrong measuring tape to use. Because this is not an art museum. Was it

affirming to do that? Did you have fun with one another? Did some of you smile? Were some of you a little uncomfortable, were some of you a little stretched? If you answered yes to any **one** of those questions then it was a wonderfully creative activity.

Deepak Chopra listed "The Seven Traits of Creative People (reflection)  
[Full reflection here: <http://www.awakin.org/read/view.php?tid=426> ]

*Excerpt:*

As long as creation dominates your existence, you will keep growing and evolving. Evolution thwarts entropy, decay, and aging. The most creative people in any field intuitively draw on this understanding. They grow with the full consciousness that they are the source of their own power, and whatever their field, certain traits are generally shared by them.

1. They are able to contact and enjoy silence.
2. They connect with and enjoy Nature.
3. They trust their feelings.
4. They can remain centered and function amid confusion and chaos.
5. They are childlike - they enjoy fantasy and play.
6. They self-refer: They place the highest trust in their own consciousness
7. They are not rigidly attached to any point of view: Although passionately committed to their creativity, they remain open to new possibilities. "

These seven things are ways of making room for you to find your creativity. Silence - is so necessary and yet it can make us nervous. Perhaps we get nervous about what will bubble up. But silence is so necessary for creativity. I often will say when faced with a new idea huh I am going to have to let that percolate - meaning I need time and space and silence to let the new idea roll around in my head. In that way I can make new connections which is a form creativity.

Connecting with nature again this is making space for creativity. I met up with an old friend the other day. She had recently retired. Every time she said she was retired she smiled big and broad. She said she loved not having every minute of her day planned out. She had the time to take walks in the park near her house and it was feeding her soul. She was getting back to things she had not been able to do for a long time - cooking for fun, and quilting.

And of course you have to trust your feelings! Creativity is not solely a logical left-brain kind of thing. When you give yourself time and silence when you spend some of that time and silence in nature, when you trust your feelings the creativity will start to bubble up.

In Deepak Chopra's list I particularly liked the idea of play. We don't do that as adults much do we? I can remember as a child hours and hours of imaginary play. And for kids that is how they learn. The pretend at something as a way of learning things. So when a group of kids are playing pirates its not just about running around and making lots of noise. It's about learning how to be part of a social group. How does one win or lose, how does one cooperate, how does a group come together and make a set of rules.

I think that we adults are still capable of imaginary play but more often than not our play looks different than kids play. Some folks call it deep play or flow. But have you ever been doing something - playing a piece of music, gardening, hiking and you get to this place where time kind of slips away - your energy and your focus are all pointed in the same direction. I'll talk more about deep play and the sacred in two weeks but this kind of play is creative and nurturing and oftentimes sacred.

So say you have made time and space for creativity what are some examples?

I Know of someone who does not have his computer save his email logon Each time he wants to look at his email he has to enter his password. He creates a password each day to remind him of something he wants to focus

on - so his password one day might be kindness and the next day might be timeliness. He found a creative way to make passwords part of his spiritual practice.

Catarina Fake, the co-founder of Flickr, suggested that before a meeting, everyone had to down a 16oz glass of water. When somebody had to go to the bathroom, the meeting was over. I maintain that is creative – and useful.

But this little hack is useful in any number of situations where time can get away from you if you're not careful. Don't want to waste time in Wegmans shopping for groceries drink a LARGE glass of water before you go in.

There are all sorts of articles on the internet dedicated to Life Hacks - finding solutions and work arounds is a form of creativity. So just because you don't draw or sing does not mean you are not creative. Any of you who saw the movie Apollo a ways back. Do you remember the scene where after the Apollo capsule was in trouble and it was unclear how they would get Apollo home? The engineers had to figure out a way to design a solution? One of them brought a big box to a table and dumped out all the contents and said Here is everything they have at their disposal in that capsule lets find a solution using just these materials. And they did. Those engineers were able to create a solution.

Creativity may be traditional art, or it may be story telling, or cooking, gardening, or problem solving, or knitting disparate ideas together in a way that works.

How do you know you have found your creativity.

It will make you smile - creating something - it adds something positive to your life to the world around you and that is reason to smile.

You will want to do it again - because it was pleasing to do you will want to do it again. It will feed your soul and you will want to be fed over and over.

You will feel like more when you have found your creativity All of this adds to you. Makes you feel better, stronger.

Most likely eventually you will want to share it. It is such human nature to want to share with others what brings us joy.

You could hear what I am saying and think Oh well only people who have enough money can be creative, or time, or even physical ability. Recently Dorothy Riester passed away at the age of 100. She had been an artist out in Cazenovia, and a long time member of May Memorial. Toward the end of her life she moved to the Nottingham, an assisted living community near here. I got to know her because she would come to the Tuesday afternoon worship services that happen there. She was a sculptor when she was younger and would often sculpt large heavy metal pieces. She was not able to do that in Nottingham - she was very annoyed that they would not allow her tools to come with here. But she continued to sculpt with what there was around her - with cereal boxes, paper, envelopes cans anything she could get her hands on. She told me she just did not want to stop - she simply had to change her medium.

Each of us has this wonderful world inside of us this creativity inside of us just waiting to find its way out. Take the time, take a walk, be in the silence and see what bubbles up. It will feed you I promise and it will feed the world.

Amen and Blessed Be