



The Script Savant Newsletter

#002

MASTERING CREATIVITY IN STORYTELLING

Albert Einstein

Imagination is more important than knowledge. Knowledge is limited. Imagination encircles the world

Ultimately, **It's All About Story!** The ability to tell an original, compelling story is critical. The techniques needed for mastering writing a screenplay can be accomplished by anyone.

Creativity is the most essential skill needed to produce an original screenplay. It will put your script above the 99.9% of the scripts written. It will get you noticed! Creativity allows one to thrive in an ever-changing world and unlocks a universe of possibilities. With creativity, you see potential instead of problems, instead of obstacles, you see opportunities.

Creativity is characterized by the ability to perceive the world in new ways, to find hidden patterns, to make connections between seemingly unrelated phenomena, and to generate solutions.

Facts About Creativity

- stress and deadlines are creativity killers
- playfulness and relaxation are creativity enhancers
- constraints cultivate creativity - It forces a direction in which creativity can expand into
- paradoxically, if a person is given free rein to solve a problem, their creativity appears to evaporate, with the person focusing on past or standard solutions.
- creativity involves variability - different ways of doing things. Creativity also involves constraints, which can either promote or preclude creativity

Personal Qualities Needed To Maximize Creativity

- Self-assurance in the belief that your opinion has as much or more value as anyone else's.

Why: *Self-assurance allows one to overcome doubts at submitting outrageous solutions to a problem which because of their introduction leads to a solution. A person willing to fly in the face of reason, authority, and common sense must be a person of considerable self-assurance. Also, it's possible they could just be crazy.*

- Always question every belief you have, no matter how strong you hold or express that belief.

Why: *Strongly holding onto a belief as being true narrows the possibility of finding*

original solutions to a problem.

- Embrace the stress and anxiety needed to reach deeper into a story. Creativity can be learned, but by its very nature of rewiring thinking patterns, it causes internal stress/anxiety.

Why: *Most people avoid anxiety and only come up with the obvious and bland solutions to problems. That is why we see scripts with boring dialogue (on-the-nose/chit-chat/cliché) or Action we've seen hundreds of times before.*

- Persistence at working on a problem as long as possible, till the last moment where a solution is needed. Don't give in to taking the first couple of solutions you come up with.

Why: *The most original solutions often come after you've looked at and gone through many obvious solutions. The longer you can delay picking your final solution, the greater the likelihood it will be the most original.*

Read As Much On Diverse Subjects As Possible

Why: *In many ways having knowledge of many subjects is like having multiple collaborators. It allows more cross-connections to form between knowledge bases.*

Creative vs. Regular Thinking

Regular Thinking

Convergent/Closed thinking is the type of thinking that focuses on coming up with a single, well established answer to a problem. It emphasizes speed, accuracy, analysis, and logic and focuses on recognizing the familiar, reapplying techniques, and accumulating stored information. Convergent/Closed thinking leads to a more negative mood. (**seriousness**)

Creative Thinking

Divergent/Open thinking is the process of creating ideas. Divergent/Open thinking leads to a more positive attitude (**playfulness**)

A video showing the importance of TIME for playfulness in creating something imaginative.

['Importance of Time in Creativity'](#)

Words from an original thinker (John Cleese) on elements needed for creativity.

['Creativity by John Cleese'](#)

Neuroscientist on creativity by Beau Lotto ['Deviate'](#)

- creativity **'IS NOT A TALENT'** but **'A WAY OF OPERATING.'** (though each of us has innate potential in the qualities that contribute to creativity)
- creative people can get in a particular mood — **CHILDLIKE PLAYFULNESS**
- people function in two modes: Open (Divergent-Creative) and Closed (Convergent-Regular)
- creativity is not possible in the Closed mode.
- closed mode (Convergent) is the mode a person is generally in when we are

learning — it is accompanied by a feeling that there is a lot to be done and little time to do it. It has a slightly anxious feeling. Tension and impatience usually accompany it. It has little humor. It is purposeful. It's your normal learning mode.

- open mode (Divergent) is relaxed, expansive, looking at the broader view, less purposeful. We are more contemplative and more inclined to humor and, therefore, more playful. It's a mode where curiosity for its own sake, can operate because we are not under pressure to get a specific thing done quickly.
- when the feeling of being pressed or anxious comes about, one should stop, step back, and think of something else unrelated to dissipate the anxiousness. Once relaxed, one may once again return to the playful, Open mode.
- enjoyable music will help facilitate the Open mode.
- one needs to be in the Open mode when pondering a problem, but once a solution is decided on, one must switch to the Closed mode to implement it. For only in the Closed mode are we efficient at implementing an agreed-upon solution.
- once a solution is implemented, we again should enter the Open mode to creatively evaluate the solution. In the Open mode, we now search for a better solution based on our new understanding.

What's Needed To Enter The Creative Mode

- **Space**
you need to create a space where the normal daily pressures won't affect you. You should seal yourself off from regular interruptions.
- **Time**
you need a minimum amount of time in which to allow your mind to relax and wander. (Several hours)
- **Time Working On A Problem**
Don't settle on the first couple of solutions. It's easier to do trivial things we know we can do than complicated things we aren't sure we can do. Anxiety arises when we don't think the solution is the best we can come up with. Learn to handle this anxiety and push through to more in-depth solutions. Slowly enter into the Open mode by doing trivial things that allow your mind to wander until your creativity kicks in. Gently keep bringing your mind back to the problem, then moving off the problem. This allows your powerful subconscious to contemplate a solution.
- **Confidence/Self-assurance**
Must have a feeling that any solution, NO MATTER HOW SILLY, is not the wrong direction. You can't be PLAYFUL if you are worried about making the wrong decision. You cannot be spontaneous within reason. You must allow yourself to be unreasonable in your thoughts. Solutions do not need to make sense. You also must believe in yourself that there are no problems you can't solve, else when you get stuck, your anxiety level will quickly rise and strangle any creative thoughts.
- **Humor**
One is relaxed when one is in a playful mode. This relaxation allows the subconscious to come into play.
*Why: Through humor, the logic which usually constrains one's thinking disappears and helps one think 'out of the box'.
(i.e., when a person is confronted by traumatic events a person often resorts to*

humor to allow themselves to come to grips with the event)

- **Trust Your Subconscious**

Your subconscious is not restricted by prejudices/beliefs about the world that we all have while using our conscious mind. This ignoring of beliefs/prejudices opens up greater pathways to possible solutions and cross-connections that the conscious mind with its prejudices won't make. Trust that your subconscious mind will come up with an answer if you put in enough pondering time on the problem.

Why: When we are awake or conscious, we have assumptions and rules we live by about the world that we take into account. You may have noticed, when asleep (subconscious) we are in the unconscious dream world where there are no restrictions on what is possible. In this world, it seems perfectly reasonable to fly or carry on conversations with talking animals, which makes little sense in the real world when awake.

(i.e., assumptions that most people no longer believe to be true: the world is flat, the sun revolves around the earth, ghosts exist, spontaneous generation microscopic bacteria doesn't cause illness, facilitated communication with autistic children — these beliefs were proven wrong by individuals that didn't believe in the current/logical world view at the time because their subconscious wasn't bound by the prejudices of the day)

The Secret To Becoming Creative

Yes, it is possible to vastly increase your creativity. Not just a sales pitch.

To develop one's creativity involves a concept called 'Human Deep Learning' (HDL).

It's a technique that helps one achieve a deeper understanding of whatever you focus on. In the case of screenwriting, you want a deeper connection to an original story.

HDL is an addition to the scientific method. It's a method of both taking an inventory on personal biases and how those biases can be reduced. It is a key to creative thinking.

HDL is built around asking a hundred probing inquiries about a topic one wishes to understand better. Each query gives one a different perspective which changes the 'Search Space' one can use to explore the item of interest and helps one advance an original solution.

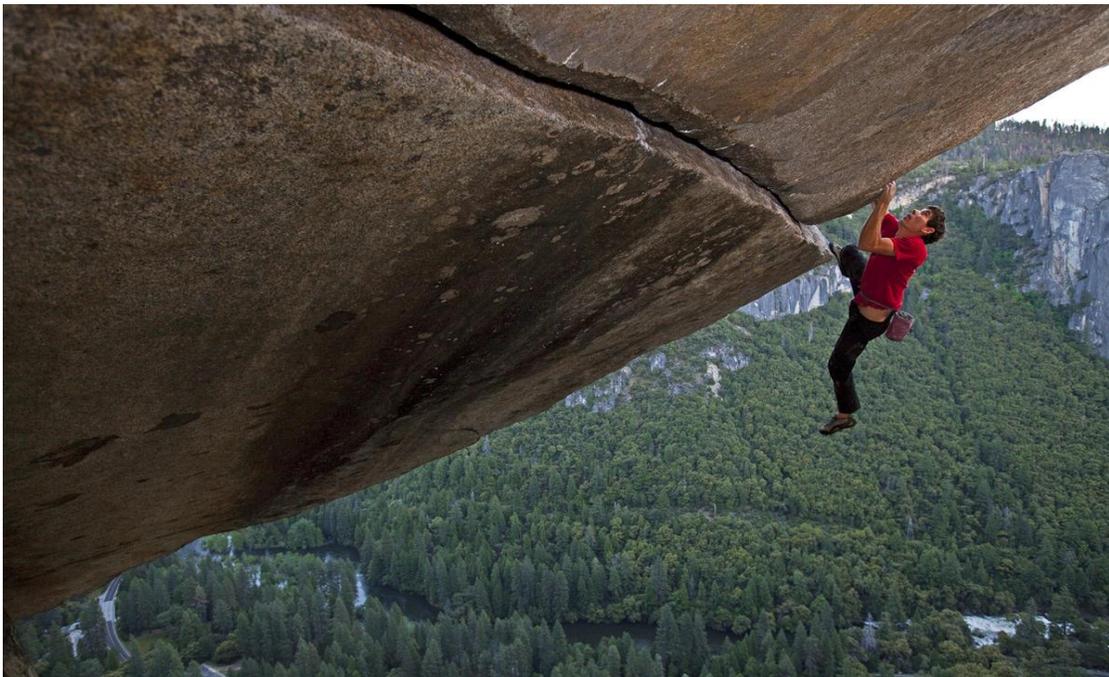
A simple test of Human Deep Learning's value. Say you're a teacher with a classroom of students. Ask them to write down in ten minutes all the things they can do with a business card. After ten minutes, collect their answers. You'll discover many of the answers are shared by most of the students. But down many of their lists, you'll find unique solutions no one else has thought of.

The more one focuses on a problem, the greater the chances of breaking the bonds of the common answers conjured up from memories or experience, and the greater the chances of creating new neural pathways that reveal original solutions.

Unique solutions come about by exploring a question from different PERSPECTIVES. Diverse PERSPECTIVES help negate the natural biases we all have because of insufficient knowledge and personal experiences.



Here's a PERSPECTIVE of the famous Yosemite Valley – In the foreground is the 3000-foot granite face of El Capitan, one of the premier climbing spots on the planet. Looking out over the valley one gets a sense of the awesome majestic beauty of nature.



But here's El Capitan from a different PERSPECTIVE. From the vantage point of a free climber, a thousand feet in the air, struggling to keep a foothold. One's heart races, wondering if the granite flake, he's hanging onto will suddenly break off or his foot will slip sending him to his death. From this perspective, danger is driven home.

Change your PERSPECTIVE, your reference point, and with imagination, you can gain a deeper awareness of the world.

Human Deep Learning consists of taking a topic of interest and by using HDL techniques, different PERSPECTIVES form. These distinct PERSPECTIVES give one a greater breadth of possible knowledge to be mined on a topic. HDL explores potential truths and falsehoods of questions and statements to help cancel out personal biases.

One important aspect of successfully employing HDL is to identify and explore one's own personal biases on a topic. Ask those that do not have your biases to contribute to the inquiries.

Complex answers can be broken into smaller chunks, which can be explained in as simple and clear language as possible as if you're explaining it to a young student. The reason is simple, a clear explanation helps your own understanding and helps others to understand you. It also helps people conclude you've thought deeply about the subject.

Always question your answers. There is always a deeper understanding to be had, so never settle that you have the definitive answer to anything.

What Are The Benefits Of HDL

HDL leads to a broader understanding of the world. It forces a person to see a greater reality. Just being able to ask a hundred questions or supply a hundred answers forces different perspectives on a topic. This mental flexibility leads to greater opportunities - because knowledge is opportunity. HDL breaks a person out of the dangers of the herd mentality and leads to enhanced critical thinking and a more OBJECTIVE analysis of an issue. The more an individual explores a topic, the easier it becomes to assimilate that topic. HDL increases the sheer quantity of information you can uptake because your brain, like a muscle, grows stronger with use. Practicing HDL raises the number of Ideas a person can discuss.

Creativity is characterized by the ability to perceive the world in new ways, to find hidden patterns, to make connections between seemingly unrelated phenomena, and to generate useful solutions. HDL is a means of responding to the environment in new and meaningful ways.

Exercise To Show How Your Thinking Changes With HDL

Let's take a topical subject and examine it through HDL and show your understanding of the subject changes as you employ HDL.

Take the Coronavirus – Covid-19 and come up with a hundred inquiries on the subject. I'll start us off with the first few inquiries and you finish filling out the 100.

Inquiry #1: Is Covid-19 similar to the virus that causes a cold or flu.

Answer: Yes, the flu and common cold are different versions of the Coronavirus

Inquiry #2: What is 'Herd Immunity'

Answer: the resistance to the spread of a contagious disease within a population that results if a sufficiently high proportion of individuals are immune to the disease. Usually, 70% to 90% of the population needs immunity to achieve herd immunity.

Inquiry #3: Will sheltering in place cause the economy to collapse?

Answer: The longer we go without a solution, the greater the number of businesses will go under

Inquiry #4: How does your economic status affect your view of Covid-19.

Answer: People with NO INCOME and having to pay bills have a remarkably different view of stopping the economy.

Inquiry #5: Can the solution of how to fight Covid-19 be worse than the disease

Answer: At some point the economy will shut down to the point that there is no money, people die from increase in crime, people die from suicide, people die from domestic violence, people die from no surgeries, people die from breakdown of supply & distribution chain, people die...

Inquiry #6: Will there be a second wave of Covid-19?

Answer: If Covid-19 is seasonal then we should see it return in the fall.

Inquiry #7: What areas of social life should be allowed to reopen?

Answer: Outdoor activities should be able to resume with the voluntary enforcement of social distancing. Sun light kills the virus. A person is 18.7 times more likely to contract the virus inside than outside.

Inquiry #8: Should business as usual resume with China after the pandemic is over?

Answer: China's proving to be an adversary which if unchecked will eventually be able to put unacceptable leverage on the US.

(now if your going to make a movie related to the Covid-19 pandemic – the hundred inquires offers a platform to start from)

What You'll Discover Employing HDL

(using google.com as an exploratory tool)

- understand more about the topic
- have some ideas of the complexity of the topic
- have an understanding of what might be the short and long term effects

- as you learn more about the topic, you'll back and modify answers because of your greater knowledge
- as you explore a topic more questions will come to mind – this is because you have a deeper grasp of the topic
- you will discover truths and falsehoods that will change as your understanding of the topic increases
- there will be a graying of what is true and what is false – shades of grey will exist depending of what facts are presented
- the subjective viewpoints of people will be revealed because of taking only limited number of FACTS surrounding a topic. A more Objective viewpoint will form as you increase your knowledge base to draw on
- gives you AUTHORITY over the topic which convinces people you are an expert on the subject

How To Apply HDL To Screenwriting

How do I use it to write more powerful and original scripts? I first write a SCENE by SCENE outline of my story. At this point, I'm not looking for anything brilliant. Then in every scene, I write seven things I would change in both Dialogue and Action that would be something different, something I haven't seen or heard before. Like the students in the school that were asked what they could do with a business card, you'll notice that by the seventh idea, you will have crafted something truly original. The downside is that during this process, you'll probably take your story in a different direction. Either way, your original ideas will be noticed by those that read your script.

PDF VERSIONS OF THE NEWSLETTERS

How To Pitch Your Screenplay

https://thescriptsavant.com/newsletters/TheScriptSavant_Newsletter_001.pdf

Mastering Creativity In Storytelling

https://thescriptsavant.com/newsletters/TheScriptSavant_Newsletter_002.pdf

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