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Creativity: The Psychology Of Discovery And Invention



Synopsis

The classic study of the creative process from the national best-selling author of *Flow*, *Creativity* is about capturing those moments that make life worth living. Legendary psychologist Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi reveals what leads to these moments - be it the excitement of the artist at the easel or the scientist in the lab - so that this knowledge can be used to enrich people's lives. Drawing on nearly 100 interviews with exceptional people, from biologists and physicists, to politicians and business leaders, to poets and artists, as well as his 30 years of research on the subject, Csikszentmihalyi uses his famous flow theory to explore the creative process. He discusses such ideas as why creative individuals are often seen as selfish and arrogant, and why the "tortured genius" is largely a myth. Most important, he explains why creativity needs to be cultivated and is necessary for the future of our country, if not the world.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"Creativity" provided an outstanding analysis of how Creativity occurs, and how creative individuals have influenced their respective fields and domains of knowledge and arts through the analysis of over ninety creative individuals of note. This book provides an outline of the process that is useful to any person who is attempting to enhance organizational or personal creativity, and details the components of Creativity (which can influence the overall culture) and creativity (for an individual.) I read my copy twice, and found certain topics so useful, I violated my own rule of never marking in a book. This book is now heavily annotated and underlined, and has been shared with friends.

Following is a very brief summary. The components of creativity include domains, fields, and persons. A domain is defined as, "a set of symbolic rules and procedures," such as mathematics. A field "includes all the individuals who act as gatekeepers to the domain." This can be summarized as, "Creativity occurs when a person, using the symbols of a given domain such as music, engineering, business, or mathematics, has a new idea or sees a new pattern, and when this novelty is selected by the appropriate field for inclusion into the relevant domain." The book presents an analysis of the impact of creativity by taking a systems approach with the following major components: Creative individuals, through understanding of their field, hard work, and inspiration can produce novel work. This work may or may not impact the overall field and domain, depending upon a variety of interrelated factors.

Few activities are misunderstood by the general public as inventing and creativity. Sadly, Hollywood and television often portray the great inventor, scientist or musician as some sort of "mad genius". This book seeks to put the study of creativity on a rational basis. For the purposes of this book, creativity is defined as "... to bring into existence something genuinely new that is valued enough to be added to the culture". Ninety-one noted contemporary people have been systematically interviewed. While only two -- Jacob Rabinow and Frank Offner -- are full-blown inventors, their creative processes have a fascinating similarity to the composers, architects, astronomers, biologists and others interviewed. The book does not just quote the people interviewed, but cites their views regarding various facets of the creativity process. Jacob Rabinow (200 patents in diverse areas) believes most original thinkers share three common traits -- 1) their curiosity, from early childhood, results in acquiring a great deal of information, 2) they enjoy thinking up and combining ideas, and 3) they recognize their "good" ideas and don't hesitate to discard "junk" ideas. Frank Offner (first electronic controls for jet engines and developer of the only successful heat-homing missiles in World War II) notes that while a "solid grounding in physical sciences" is an asset, knowledge from other fields may trigger a creative person's mind to override what is assumed to be true in one field. He also feels the love or joy of solving problems is a key to finding solutions. This fun aspect is so strong that Rabinow is quoted as saying that, given a choice between money-making and fun, he would go for the fun. Creative people are sometimes thought to be arrogant.

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