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## 5 MAIN CHARACTERISTICS OF CREATIVE PEOPLE - SEE IF YOU HAVE ANY OF THOSE



Often we heard, creativity is intelligence having fun (and often too that we heard this being associated to the famous Albert Einstein). Under common perception, we see creative people as gifted children that have been blessed with such talent towards solving grand challenges in life. We dubbed them as game changers and at times, envied by others.

Research has suggested that creativity involves the coming together of a multitude of traits, behaviours and social circle influences in a single person. The Huffington Post, in one of its articles in 2014, highlighted that from the perspective of neuroscience, creativity is thought to involve a number of cognitive processes, neural pathways and emotions of which we still don't have the full picture on how our mind works towards creativity.

Linguistic expert and a passionate writer on creativity, Dr. Munir Shuib said despite all the wonders towards understanding creativity, humans can actually be taught to develop creativity.

"It can be taught, learnt and developed. There have been many studies and findings that have demonstrated that creativity can certainly be cultivated. For instance a study recently reported in the Creativity Research Journal demonstrates that employees from a business organisation in California who attended creativity training seminars were able to increase their rate of new idea generation by 55 per cent which had led to about USD 600,000 in new revenue to their organisation," he said during an interview.

Munir, who has been involved in teaching students on thinking techniques and creativity since 1998, also said that today's university students are well aware of the importance of creativity but are unable to enhance it effectively due to many reasons.

"One of the reasons is because we fail to expose them to a clear method of 'how'. People know what creativity is but many don't know how to become a creative thinker, and worst, how to teach our kids on how to think creatively. If we can bridge them to the how, we would have an exponential situation," he said in excitement.

It is fairly easy, according to Munir, to differentiate those who are creative from those who are not. These are among the five main traits of a creative person according to Munir and you might be surprised that you have all the five:

### **They are risk takers**

Creative thinkers are risk takers. They just love taking risk. In fact they would be very eager and excited to take up a project with high risk potential rather than going through routine tasks they considered as mundane. Risky environments force them to challenge themselves to seek multiple solutions.

### **They have the dare to fail attitude**

Failure for them is a learning curve. They learn from all the mistakes made and all those mistakes actually stimulate a higher sense of curiosity in them. They have an open-mind view of things that there are many other doors that would lead them towards a solution they are looking for in facing current challenges. Elon Musk, known for having to revolutionise every industry he has touched (Paypal in electronic cash, Tesla in automotive and SpaceX in rocket technology) invested over \$100 million of his own money into SpaceX and experienced a series of rocket launch failure. He kept pushing despite all the failures in order to explore the possibilities of building human settlements in Mars by 2060.

### **They are willing to be different**

In fact, they like to be different from the masses. Remember how Mark Zuckerberg has always been noticed wearing the almost identical round neck t-shirt nearly every day? And Steve Jobs with his turtlenecks? Zuckerberg was reported having to explain that clothing is a 'silly' decision that he doesn't want to spend too long making as he wants to dedicate his energy on how best to grow his business and help to serve the community. What people think of them is not really a matter of concern as they have a very clear objective in life.

### **They choose to become a divergent**

They will do things that may challenge the boundary of normal thinking and perspective. They think outside the box (and they really, really do think outside the box) where they see opportunities and solutions from all sorts of angles that remained unnoticed to many others. They are also highly curious and inquisitive. Founder of amazon.com, Jeff Bezos is one great example of a divergent. They see the world as a laboratory and they continually seek to answer the 'what-if' questions as they search for new solutions. This often leads to the birth of many innovators.

### **They are impulsive, fickle and change their mind quite often**

Too often creative thinkers are being exposed to new experiences, leading their minds in constant mode of thinking. They gauge huge amount of thoughts and opinions towards a problem they try to solve. This then resulted into them revising their understanding of a matter in an amazingly fast cycle and often decisions too. They tend to be fickle in many aspects of life as they are deeply engaged in the creative thinking process. Adding to the result, they tend to make impulsive decisions in accordance to their own ways of thinking, which is then misunderstood by many and interpreted as 'not having a stand'.

Defining creativity as the ability to generate new ideas, Munir however said that highly creative people must also learn to create a balance by enhancing their ability in critical thinking which relates to the ability to judge (of which is often misunderstood by us). This will create the necessary balance to avoid excessive creativity. Excessive creativity, according to him, may result in disaster.

"Robots for example, were initially created to increase our efficiency. But now we have sex robots and some humans are married to them! With the rise of the 4th Industrial Revolution, people are facing new challenges each day as the world is anticipating the declining rate of jobs for humans since robots are now becoming far more superior than they were years ago," he said, adding that freedom is a must if we want to allow people to build on their creativity.

About: Munir Shuib was driven towards creativity when he was asked to attend a workshop on creativity by Edward de Bono, a creativity guru, in Kuala Lumpur in the early 1990s. He is now an Associate Professor and the Deputy-Director of the National Higher Education Research Institute (IPPTN), hosted in Universiti Sains Malaysia.

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