

YES! AND... CREATIVE GORILLA # 43

Creative people tend to have certain traits or characteristics. You can seek to emulate these...

Become a Creative Leader ...

“This led me to reflect on the pictures (from a Camera Obscura). It was during these thoughts that the idea occurred to me...how charming it would be if it were possible to cause these natural images to imprint themselves durably and remain fixed upon the paper! And why should it not be possible I asked myself?” William Henry Fox Talbot (inventor of modern photography) Please click [here](#) for link.



“Fox Talbot statuette”

Can you develop the characteristics of a creative person?

This week we had a few days on a farm in Wiltshire and visited Lacock Abbey. My children were keen to see the cloisters where several Harry Potter scenes were filmed and I spent some time looking at the Fox-Talbot Museum of Photography.

Fox-Talbot invented the positive / negative photographic system in 1840 at Lacock Abbey, his family home. Here we have a wealthy Member of Parliament, an eminent mathematician, a translator of ancient texts with a keen interest in physics and other sciences. He had so many abilities but could not draw.

Thus he found himself on honeymoon in 1835, on Lake Como in Italy, experimenting, as you do on honeymoon, using tracing paper with a portable Camera Obscura to draw pictures. [Please click [here](#) to understand the Camera

Obscura]. This led to him recording the quotation above in his journal.

His invention arose due to developments in two areas of science in which Fox Talbot was interested:

- Optics, which led to the portable Camera Obscura and
- Photochemistry, in which researchers had discovered that silver nitrate darkens when exposed to light

Successful and failed experiments over five years led to him discovering how to make and fix a negative (a process he patented) and he continued to refine his process of developing, fixing and printing photographs for many years.

SO

Fox Talbot’s curiosity and dedication set me thinking about what makes a creative person.

My view is that Fox Talbot had:

- A powerful curiosity, able to identify a challenge and be curious enough to seek the solution
- Sufficient knowledge of different disciplines
- A love of his subject area which could explain his resolve and positive attitude to keep trying even when experiments failed
- Synergistic thinking with which to link ideas from different disciplines, creating new concepts and creative thinking to generate fresh ideas.

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When I got home I looked up what the researchers say about creative people.

[Teresa Amabile](#) in an article in "[Creative Management](#)" [editor Jane Henry] states that the characteristics of a creative person are:

- Motivation
- Expertise
- Creative Thinking Skills

Jane Henry herself identifies four characteristics of the creative person in "[Creativity and Perception in Management](#)".

These are:

- Positivity (an attitude of mind)
- Playfulness (an ability to be flexible)
- Passionate (a passionate interest in the subject)
- Persistence (sufficient experience and ability not to give up)

(We also consider Persuasion as a potential other characteristic)

All of these characteristics appear similar and we should be able to develop them ourselves or encourage their development to some extent, so making us more creative.

[Please click [here](#) for an interview with Amabile, which discusses this].

ACTION

Think about how you might be a more creative person. Could you model yourself on their characteristics?

Which people in your organisation shows characteristics of being a creative person? What might you do to encourage them further?

Just for fun, think about digital audio (e.g. the iPod) and digital photography – what might you create by bringing together these two ideas (go beyond storing audio on your camera and vice versa)?

TO CLOSE

Doing some further research on Fox Talbot, I discovered that although he patented his process, it was never a commercial success, as he demanded too much money for the commercial rights for others to use the process. Patents by others, using a different process, were more successful.

This seems to suggest that there is a tension between protecting an idea to ensure we benefit from it and sharing it so that others can take it up and help us make a commercial success of it. We need to get the balance right.

May you be photogenic all week

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