



IN SEARCH OF CREATIVITY AND MEANINGFULNESS – AN INNER PERSPECTIVE OF LEADERSHIP

“Every human being creates as he/she breathes”, André Malraux once said. A drawing of a child, a sonata of Mozart, a new car... they all are hallmarked by creativity. But what does it mean to be creative? Is creativity a gift, a genetic or cultural endowment, or a conditioning of an environment?

For societies as well as for each one of us to be creative means first of all to have that ardent desire to live. Creating in everyday life is inventing a world which one feels happy to live in, together with others.

To create means "to bring into existence". Creativity is essentially an internal, ongoing process within each of us. As *Carl Rogers* pointed out so accurately in "*On Becoming a Person*": "The creative process is the emergence in action of a novel relational product, growing out of the uniqueness of the individual on the one hand, and the materials, events, people, or circumstances of this life on the other. The mainspring of creativity appears to be man's tendency to actualize himself, to become his potentialities". I shall explore this idea of actualization and existentionation of potentialities more indepthly further on.

In the 3rd millennium the necessity for the transformation of our goals, perceptions, feelings, attitudes, behaviours, communication patterns and values behind our judgments and decisions intensifies.

Today's economic, social, cultural and ecological challenges can only be met powerfully and effectively through a shift in consciousness and awareness which in fact is already well under way today. The good news is that more and more people today are becoming aware that we have fundamental challenges to overcome - in our families, our emotional systems, our cities, our governments, our economic systems, our international relations and our planetary environment - and that we must find new ways to confront these problems.

Marcel Proust once said: "The real act of discovery consists not in finding new lands but in seeing with new eyes."

The key to this change in perspective and to inner leadership is to ***turn within.***

Millions of people the world over are trying to transform and improve their lives. More and more become aware that the answers for a changed world are not coming from sources outside of themselves. The answer comes from within: to discover the whole world outside of us as part of us, to awaken to the myriad of potentialities latent in us and waiting to be activated and come through in our personnalities.

In confronting oneself, taking responsibility for one's own thoughts, feelings, emotions and actions, one touches upon a level of awareness where one experiences unity with all the living through love and compassion and the power of creativity.

Turning within, thus, means a shift in attunement, in perspective.

Withdrawing your awareness from the physical and mental planes and focusing it on the inner depth of your being. As you go deep within yourself, you discover a whole new mode, a whole new dimension of thinking which you never encompass in your ordinary way of thinking. You also discover dimensions of your being entirely different from the ones with which you normally identify. To look inside yourself means to reach beyond the limits and limitations of your own self-image. It is an internal way of looking at things, thoughts, emotions, opinions, people, problems and situations. By practising it, one has the chance to see connections between things which did not seem to be connected. One can see the interrelatedness of all people and things, the interdependence rather than the independence and the separateness of events/individuals – which is the way you normally think when you are considering the world as it appears from outside.

The inside is governed by resonance, affinity, and a very fine attunement: everything is interspersed with everything else. Everything is delicately interwoven, like a net, an *inner-net*.

As a good illustration of this interplay outside-inside, you could consider the difference between swimming at the surface of a lake and seeing the separate lotus flowers, or, swimming under the surface and seeing that the flowers are interconnected, all part of a large network.

In the deeper, more impersonal mode of thinking you experience receptiveness, openness to all possibilities and qualities waiting and wanting to come through, and enrich our personalities. Reaching out from inside removes the obstacles standing in the way of our unfolding the potentialities that are lying in wait in our being, and touches upon more vast and subtle levels of our being.

The self-organizing creativity emerging from within and interfacing with the environment makes all the difference. *This is inner leadership.*

In this mode of thinking and awareness: experience has become self-discovery. It is exploring through your creative imagination what you would have been if you could have been what you might have been.

Creativity is a birthright of each of us. We all are born with the unlimited potential to be creative, to display this potential, and by doing so to contribute to the development of the unlimited potential of our universe in ongoing transformation.

With each creative act one has the impression that suddenly one's horizon has been broadened. Limits have disappeared, fears have been transmuted in new possibilities: another frame of reference has emerged, which goes with an increased sense of autonomy, confidence and marvel. *This is inner leadership.*

To create and to be a (n inner) leader means to call upon the best in oneself, with love, compassion, sensitivity, imagination and inspiration. Constantly being alert and open to that which presents itself, transpires through that which appears and wants to emerge, the creative being and leader is always ready to transgress, to go beyond that which confines in order to awaken that which lifts up. Obstacles are viewed as challenges, errors as precious information, setbacks as opportunities to break through.

Yet, more than ever more and more people find themselves willy-nilly enrolled in the inexorable machinery constructed generation after generation conditioning them and robbing them of their creativity and (inner) leadership.

At what cost our modern efficiency?!

People suffer from the total lack of opportunity to harness their creative urge, unlike before arts and crafts were replaced by machined standardization – now computerized. Our experiments with political institutions have proven how crucial freedom is to promote progress.

In fact, freedom from conformity generates creativity and leadership. On the other hand there is nothing in the world more abused than creativity. We see its consequences in the decadence, vulgarity, carelessness and permissiveness of our modern societies.

There is no accounting for taste!

“One could define creativity as the act of exploring uncharted regions of the mind while grasping a correspondence between the mental constructs thus gleaned and a form of configurations or scenarios in the fabric of matter. Creativity is then a congruent conjunction between the timeless and the transient, the heavenly

and the earthly. It is a sudden sense of meaningfulness that sparks our innovative faculty. What is meant by our sense of meaningfulness is our mind's ability to click when it grasps a correspondence between two thoughts which had hitherto appeared unrelated. To be creative rather than just fanciful, one's vision needs to click with the possibility of its actual realization at the existential level." (*Pir Vilayat Inayat Khan*).

Creativity and inner leadership in everyday life?

How to create in everyday life that radiant ability for renewal, that liberty called creativity? Is it not, first and foremost, a revolution of one's perception and attunement?

To see and to resonate without purpose, without preconceived ideas, without desires and feelings distorting the reflexion in the mirror of the eye. To really see, that is: to unveil.

How can we create the necessary conditions for creativity and leadership to emerge in an inner openness and silence?

It has everything to do with broadening, uplifting our consciousness, focusing it on the way we live, behave and act in everyday life. First of all, it requires an alert attention of every instant so that deep in us creativity can burst

forth as freedom enabling us to welcome any change with a complete inner receptiveness.

To create and be a leader, then, means: to be able to meet any situation in an original and fresh way. And the spectacular thing in such a moment is to discover that boundless receptiveness in the glance of another person.

Creativity (and leadership) is not reacting to the environment, or processing it, nor has it been promoted, or even catalyzed by anything from outside.

We do not know what the system of the process of association is that led to it; it may have been catalyzed by a situation, a thought or a feeling, but it is not a reaction.

In fact, creativity and inner leadership is the capability of the human being to tap in to the thinking of the universe which is the greatest miracle. The exploratory drive in human beings is crucial, because it is, exactly, creativity.

It is trying out new ways of doing things and new combinations.

Meaningfulness is the true criterion of creativity and inner leadership.

It is meaningfulness that makes us choose between fantasy and imagination. The question of meaningfulness is very important for intuition, and when we are creating, it is our sense of authenticity that is at work.

What makes somebody creative? The incredible amount of energy, the flexibility, the curiosity, the sensitivity as well as the willingness of constantly challenging and questioning him/herself. Creativity brings the whole person into play. For the artist – and aren't we all to some extent and at different levels artists at a moment or another of our lives? – the creative act means total commitment of his/her whole being.

The experience of omnivalence is a cornerstone of creativity and inner leadership.

Yet, is there a form of creativity and leadership which would enable us to confront in a better way the challenging problems of today's societies? If so, are certain forms of creativity possible or even necessary to help us to survive, or – what is still more important – help the diversity of life to survive?

What kind of creativity and inner leadership is needed for young people to regain the conviction that they all *are* and *can be* creative? How to prevent culture from becoming more and more a product-inflated issue? Which role creativity and inner leadership has to play in the changing approach to the concept and environment of work as well as in utilizing the ever increasing leisure time that will be at our disposal? How to rekindle in young people the self-confidence and true joy of fully participating in creative activity?

Does part of the answer lie in catalyzing social creativity? Drawing on the deepest and most potent of its sources at our disposal: science, art, religion and education?

Certainly a cornerstone and pivotal part of the answer can be found in the shift in perspective, the turning within as I tried to describe above.

Let me end by a poem of *Lao-tze* (sixth century B.C.) and a quote of wisdom by the Hungarian Uomo Universalis *Sándor Weöres*:

"There is no need to run outside
For better seeing,
Nor to peer from a window. Rather abide
At the center of your being;
For the moment you leave it, the less you learn.
Search your heart and see
If he is wise who takes each turn:
The way to do is to be".

"The human being does not become a real human being unless he/she transilluminates him/herself to his/her deepest core and radiates from that inner source illuminating his/her environment."

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