

Where does creativity come from?

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Published in the *Christian Science Sentinel*. Apr 26, 1999, pp 6-10

He'd grown up in the huge, desolate emptiness of Outback Australia and had spent all his life working there on the immense cattle stations (ranches). Nearing retirement age, he was asked to take a group of well-known landscape artists into the rugged countryside on a painting trip. To pass the hours while they worked, the man decided to pick up a paintbrush for the very first time. Sitting alone in the bushland that day, he discovered to his delight and the utter astonishment of the others that he could paint. Now he has become an internationally acclaimed landscape artist.

This man's true life story raises the question "Where does such creativity come from?" During a radio interview he explained that his artistic ability was not the result of schooling. He'd had very little formal education. His talent was not inherited either, he said. No one in his family had ever displayed any interest in or aptitude for fine art. His creativity was not prompted by exposure to the beauty of sculpture, painting, architecture, music, poetry, or classical writing. Before he took up painting, he'd lived in a cultural wasteland, so to speak.

While this man's achievement is truly inspiring, it isn't as uncommon as it might seem. Over the years many people have found that they possess all kinds of hidden talents and skills. Their experiences reveal that such creativity is also possible for you and me. Inventive capability is innate in everyone. Often talents lie dormant, waiting for us to recognize them. I recently heard of a woman who up until a few years ago was working as a waitress in a factory lunchroom. Now she travels the country presenting her own highly original motivational seminars and workshops. Then there is the person I know of who in midlife found an ability to write that was formerly unknown.

In speaking of their newly discovered creativity these people and others like them say that they didn't have to go out and "get" it. The capacity to be creative was already within them. Perhaps they didn't know it at first. But it was there, all the same. Where do they think such competence actually comes from? While some honestly say that they don't know, many feel that their creative ability comes from a higher source – from God. Creativity is a spiritual quality. And spirituality, they believe, is at the heart of all creative activity.

Is such spirituality possessed by every individual? Yes it is. The conscious ability to be innovative and artistic is within each one of us. It's our actual, God-derived nature. The Bible confirms this. It says that God made us in His likeness. As God is divine Mind, each of us expresses His unlimited wisdom. As the image of His infinite intelligence, you and I can prove this in many different ways.

Yet what if we, or other individuals we know, appear drab, tongue-tied, or simply incapable of spontaneous thought? How can we each unlock our rich potential? This can be done by viewing creative capacities from a spiritual standpoint. What we believe about ourselves determines what we are. For example, if you or I believe that we are dull or inept, that's what we experience. If, on the other hand, we accept that creativity has its source in God, and that we possess God-given originality, we will express this in our various pursuits.

Turning away from discouragement or limitation, and instead affirming that we are God's creative children takes practice. The good news is that we don't have to accomplish this on our own. We have an aid.

We have the ever-present Christ, Truth, that enabled Jesus to speak, teach, and heal with inspiration and great authority. Similarly, the Christ, which is always voicing good, is continuously speaking to us of our unlimited, God-bestowed capabilities. When we pay attention to this divine message, we find it lifting our thinking away from "I can't think, speak, or write skilfully" to "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me" (Phil. 4:13).

This Biblical declaration is more than mere positive thinking. It is the very truth of our being – yours, mine, and every person we know. None of God's children have to acquire aptitude in literary and artistic work. You and I already have it, as does everyone else. It needs only to be put into practice. God has endowed us with His intelligence. Everyone is constantly supplied with original, productive ideas, as well as the competence to carry them out. That's why Mary Baker Eddy gives this reassuring promise: "We are all capable of more than we do" (*Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*, p. 89).

It's good to know that as the likeness of divine Mind we can be ingenious. We don't necessarily need to attend classes in creativity. While training can be useful in honing talents, it isn't always requisite. *Science and Health* explains why: "Eloquence re-echoes the strains of Truth and Love. It is due to inspiration rather than to erudition" (p. 88). On the next page it continues, "Mind is not necessarily dependent upon educational processes. It possesses of itself all beauty and poetry, and the power of expressing them."

It's natural for us to recognize God's loveliness in man and the universe, which is hinted at through the arts, in fine furniture, attractive textures, exquisite flowers, and in the colors of a brilliant sunset. It's also natural for us to express God's goodness individually in artistry, good conversation, and fresh ideas. God is the source of such creativity. He conceives ideas and brings them into being. *Science and Health* states that "the spiritual creation was the outgrowth, the emanation, of His infinite self-containment, and immortal wisdom" (p. 519). We don't have to "come up with" ideas. That's God's job. So if you have a stirring within you, and inkling that you would like to do something creative, start now to listen to God for His ideas. Nurture your creativity into expression. I've found it helpful to affirm: "I am God's child. I am capable because this is how God made me. I do not lack ideas. I am filled with His inspiration, and I can express this in creative ways. Whatever is possible to God, is possible for me to accomplish with His help."

Remember, it's God's talent, ability, and originality that we express. God, the great I AM, thinks and does. This makes us His creative "I can do" sons and daughters.