

Creativity Explained by David Priilaid

Since my last giant eland hunt in Cameroon last year, a number of you have asked me what I am doing with my time now that I have stopped hunting and writing books and magazine articles about hunting and conservation. So I thought I would take a chance and tell you. One of the main things that has occupied a lot of my time has been the publication of a book by Peter Flack Productions, namely, Creativity Explained by Professor David Priilaid. David is the convenor of the one year, post graduate diploma course in entrepreneurship offered by the University of Cape Town. In essence, he teaches young graduates to create businesses and manage them properly. As a few of his past students have told me, this has been the most important course they have ever taken and understandably so.

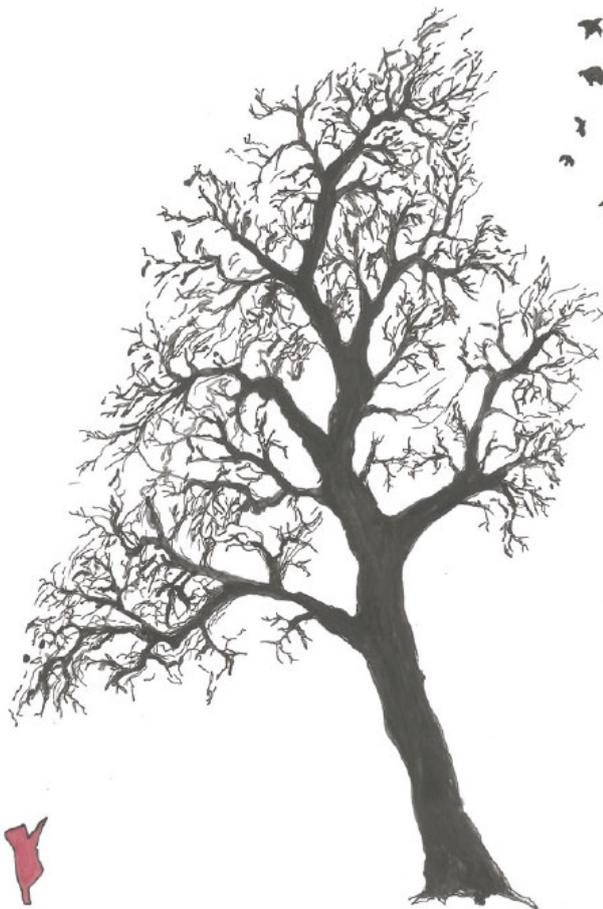
Employment in South Africa is hard to find especially as a young, white person and, if they do, promotion is even harder to come by. To make matters worse, the economy is in dire straights given the gross mismanagement by the government and the egregious corruption, debilitating nepotism and serial incompetence entrenched under the Zuma regime, which has embedded itself in the very fabric of our society to such an extent that virtually everyone in government – national, provincial or local – who can steal does so with gay abandon secure in the knowledge that, even if caught with their snouts in the trough, the likelihood of them being punished is so remote that pigs are likely to fly first.

I have been fascinated by creativity for most of my life and have enormously admired those who have the ability to use six inches – from one ear to the other – to conjure up new and valuable things from their imagination, whether it is a piece of music, a poem, an invention, a painting, a bronze and so on.

It has enriched my life to have been involved in the debates with David over the last four years and see the book come to life as it is the closest I think a man can come to giving birth. The book was officially launched on Wednesday 18 April and is about to hit the shelves of a bookstore near you or from our secure online shopping site at Peter Flack Productions Africa – peterflackproductions.co.za. Of course, I am biased but, if you are at all interested in the creative process, then this is the book for you. It is a wonderfully well-written, entertaining, fascinating, powerful and important book, which is easy to read and full of illustrative anecdotes from the fields of popular music, art, sculpture, writing and business. The anecdotes alone make the book an inspiration and worth a read, let alone the lessons that are there for those more interested in the creative process itself.

CREATIVITY EXPLAINED

*From Music and Art to
Innovation in Business*



by David
Priilaid

I particularly enjoyed the story of Keith Richards of the Rolling Stones waking in the middle of the night with four notes reverberating in his brain. He immediately got up, wrote

them down and, three days later, produced one of the most iconic Stones' songs, Satisfaction. One of the books has currently been bought for him by a friend and is on its way to him as I write.

David Kramer, the world famous, South African singer, songwriter and playwright put it in a nutshell when he wrote, "David Priilaid pulls back the curtain on the process, the passion, the pain and ultimately the pleasure of creating. An insightful read with references to artists such as Springsteen, Dylan, Cohen, Hemingway, Matisse and many more."

Mark Bristow, South Africa's most successful mining executive of the past century and CEO of Randgold Resources Limited, wrote, "Creativity is a vital part of any successful business venture. Priilaid's explanation of creativity is a deep dive into a subject we all believe is core to business leadership, but which is little understood. This book is an intellectual challenge that is a must-read for any serious business person."

The book is 238 pages long and retails for R299.00. Hopefully, Creativity Explained is not the last book I will publish as I have another in the pipeline set in the Great Karoo and, possibly, a cookbook as well.

Order now: www.peterflackproductions.co.za

Book Review by Josh Hawkes

If you ask the great songwriters how they actually engage with the creative process, none of them seems to know. Most allude to being a conduit to a mysterious and unexplained force. In his book Creativity Explained, David Priilaid, addresses this apparent "black box" by unpacking and dissecting important artistic mindsets and behavioural themes and processes. This he does using some of the greatest songsmiths, writers, painters and a handful of current heavyweight entrepreneurs as his source.

There are so many insights and anecdotes tumbling off every page that my copy of Creativity Explained has become dog-eared and riddled with scribbled notes and exclamations. Needless to say, this is a book to which I will return, repeatedly as a future source of reference; serving not just as a treatise on creativity but also a philosophical meditation on the meaning and importance of the life of the artist. Scarily it became a mirror for my own aspirations and choices.

In today's world with its ongoing millions of pressing problems, this book serves as a timely discourse on creativity, the role of the artist, what lessons they have to offer, and the parallels you can draw in any industry – especially business.

As a creative, I found this book illuminating and a reminder that the Universe demands our creativity and that the world needs it now!

Josh Hawks

Songwriter for Freshly Ground.

Creative commentator with Barry Van Zyl – Slaves to the Rhythm.

BOOK REVIEW: What business leaders can learn from musicians, poets and artists

By Fin24's ace book reviewer Ian Mann

This book is truly different. The premise is that there is much to be learned from the extraordinary creativity of musicians, poets and visual artists, because the creative process is the same.

Author Professor David Priilaid, a business teacher at the University of Cape Town, has assembled an intriguing array of

insights into creativity for use by people in business. This is a fresh and different angle, drawn from artists of all kinds from the latter half of the 20th century.

It is easy to accept that the traditional manner of conducting business will not yield creative ideas that can be turned into, or adapted to enhance profitability. “The most constant and irritating thing about creativity in business is its fixation on methods and procedures, and its consequent negation of the importance of heart,” he explains.

Creativity requires “artistic mindsets” and “artistic disciplines”.

Grit and innocence

The artistic mindset takes “grit”; that is, the fighter that knows what is right and keeps at it in the face of both temptation and adversity. Many artists refuse to allow their work to be licenced for commercial endorsements – with American singer-songwriter, and actor Tom Waits (for example) condemning the practice, and Neil Young asserting: “[It] makes me look like a joke.”

Passion is a well-recognised catalyst for good art. Bruce Springsteen is quoted as saying: “When you came to work with me, I had to be assured that you’d bring your heart... That’s why the E Street Band plays steamroller strong and undiminished, forty years in, night after night.”

Further, there is the “child” mindset, which refers to innocence and simplicity, and a willingness to make mistakes. But the child is also authentic. Actor Dustin Hoffman complains, “The minute we get into school, whatever it is that makes us into individuals is knocked out of us.”

The power of fragility

Artists are often associated with depression, madness and

addiction. T.S. Eliot thought this affliction to be the “handmaiden of creativity”.

Of these four mindsets, the one that sits least comfortably with the creative spirit we would like in the workplace is clearly this one! But it would be fair to say that mental fragility is acknowledged as strongly connected to creativity, and it does enable the individual to experience what others overlook. Google recruiters look for the ‘odd’ in their candidates, knowing that it often comes with a creative streak.

The disciplines of the artist begin with “proactivity”, the belief that he or she can make a difference. Great art comes from action – with the determination to make do with what you have on hand to address problems and opportunities. It is the creative spirit that separates the artist from the worker.

It is propelled by the need to make it happen, and not lose what may be one’s only chance.

Obsessive practice

The imperative of practice, obsessive practice has been popularised, but more important for the artist rather than the golfer, is the practice of deliberate refining and revision. Leonard Cohen’s “Hallelujah” was refined out of 80 potential verses, over five years!

He, like so many others, attributes his success more to extremely hard work at perfecting his art, rather than talent.

Art takes a different perspective. Doing things as they have always been done never produces great art – almost by definition. This imperative is a critical discipline in the artistic process, which is why art is always surprising in its freshness.

The myth of brilliance

The most interesting ideas often come in the light-bulb moments, or in dreams. Artists ranging from Bob Dylan to Jackson Pollock and the Beatles report this experience.

However, the experience is often misunderstood, blown out of context, leading many to believe that creativity is nothing more than a flash of brilliance. So many artists covered in the book attribute their success to obsessive work on the flash of inspiration rather than the flash of inspiration itself.

Many report that withdrawing from the turbulence of daily life into “still water” aids their creativity, and withdraw as a deliberate practice.

Creativity in business

So why should this carefully crafted account of the creative process of musicians, poets, and painters be relevant to business leaders? Firstly, because as Priilaid explains, “[t]here is a lot of creativity in business – much more than is commonly imagined”.

Secondly, because today survival will not be of the fittest, as Darwin explained. Survival will only be possible for the most innovative: and the creative impulse is at the heart of innovation.

Companies that do not innovate their processes, products, organisational format, route to market and so on, will rapidly become irrelevant to clients and customers.

It is only relevancy that keeps the order book full. Many of the companies that I consult to have placed forming a creative environment front and centre of their functional strategy, but with little insight into how to actualise this imperative.

This book is a call to revisit the importance of art to the promotion of creativity in business. This sounds rather obvious, but is nevertheless rarely implemented. Read this book slowly: you will be entertained by its stories and enlightened by its insights.