



Cameron Rose

Monash University
Art Design and Architecture
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[Runco, M., ScienceDirect, & Elsevier Science. \(2007\).
Creativity : Theories and themes, research, devel-
opment and practice. Amsterdam ; Sydney: Elsevier
Academic Press.](#)



PERSONALITY AND MOTIVATION

Do creative individuals have particular traits and tendencies?

The following traits have been recognised as being common amongst creative types (e.g. designers, artists, performers), but it does not necessarily follow that people with these traits are creative. Environmental factors are also important.

Consider [Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs](#) that may diminish or enhance creativity.



AUTONOMY, INDEPENDENCE AND NON- CONFORMITY

Originality implies that the person is doing something that is different from what others are doing, and that is probably easiest if he or she is independent and autonomous.

Indicative traits such as autonomy are positively related to creativity. Contra-indicative traits such as conformity are negatively related to creativity.

It also explains why creative individuals are not always universally admired.



SELF-CONTROL

However you must also follow a schedule or stick to a routine, *conforming* your behaviour.

It is motivated by passion, self-confidence and a sense of self-worth.

Personality theory describes this as a *Trait x State* interaction. The non-conforming trait needs to be productive in a controlled state.

This might also explain why the traits on their own are not indicative of creativity. The creative personality requires direction to be effective.



CONTROLLED WEIRDNESS

"Dare to be radical, but don't be a damn fool."

Frank Barron (1922-2002)
Pioneer in the Psychology of Creativity.

The creative individual is aware of their weirdness and uses it for good instead of evil!

On another level, the weirdness becomes a rule or defines a style. Think Cubism or punk rock.



DEVIANCE

Creativity is deviant because it involves statistically infrequent behaviour. An original solution necessarily deviates from the norm. Strange beliefs, drug taking and deviant sexual practices are frequently observed amongst creative individuals.

Deviance may not be inherently negative but merely regarded as such due to social norms. The more conservative the society or culture the easier it is to be regarded as deviant.

Studies have shown that conservatives tend to be less creative - https://www.psychologytoday.com/files/u81/Dollinger__2007_.pdf



IMPULSIVITY AND ADVENTUROUSNESS

The ability to take risks.

Studies have shown that when art students are encouraged to be impulsive they produce more creative works. There is a sense of freedom, a lack of rules, a world where mistakes are expected and encouraged.

All the great stories are a call to adventure in the land of the unknown.

See Joseph Campbell's [Monomyth](#)



CONTRARIANISM

A questioning of authority is often a feature of creativity. There is a long list of those who thumb their noses at authority.

Artists have often been radical, interested in revolution against the hegemony (the dominant state).

Think Frida Kahlo, Bob Dylan, John Lennon, Steve Jobs, Patti Smith, Vivienne Westwood, Jane Fonda, Tracey Emin, Johnny Cash, David Carson, Andy Warhol and Ai Weiwei.

This deviance from the norm may have resulted in arrest and incarceration (like Schiele).



PLAYFULNESS AND DAYDREAMING

Creative persons have a tendency towards playfulness. This may be a reflection of their spontaneity and self-actualisation.

Recommendations for enhancing creativity include a suggestion to "be more playful". Play is often frowned upon. Children are naturally creative but as they get older they are encouraged to be more serious and to "stop being silly".

Daydreaming is where one inhabits a fantasy life, and demonstrates the ability to not only imagine but to maintain a complex array of thoughts and 'rules' that the imaginary world conforms to.



PERSEVERANCE AND PERSISTANCE (RESILIENCE?)

This trait is very common amongst artists. It might be viewed as a prerequisite for creative accomplishment simply because important insights often demand a large investment of time. Insights may seem to be sudden and quick, but actually there is likely to be a protracted journey to each discovery. They feel sudden because they appear magically in our consciousness, but have been germinating in the subconscious for some time.

This germination usually involves searches and perhaps the restructuring of one's knowledge base (unlearning what you assume to be true). Persistence would explain why creative individuals can battle with adversity. They keep at it until they adjust or cope.

Inversely creativity may make you more [resilient](#).



OPENNESS TO EXPERIENCE

Openness to experience is one of the most significant traits tied to creativity. Openness to experience involves a sensitivity to fantasy, feelings, aesthetics, ideas, actions and [values](#).

It implies curiosity, an acceptance of the unknown and a thirst for new experiences and adventures.

Openness to experience may be directed inward or outward. One may be keen to have new external experiences where other people and places excite and arouse. Or they may be conscious of experimenting with their own personal response to things, challenging prejudices and assumptions.



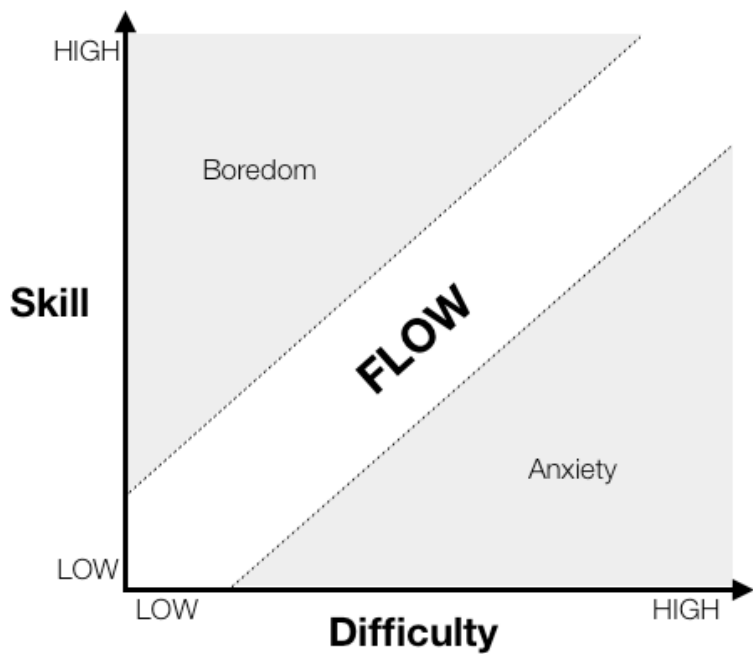
BOREDOM AND ANXIETY

Both can diminish or motivate creativity. The creative act is one that strives to escape boredom, or to design an effective solution to an anxiety-creating problem.

Psychologist [Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi](#) has written extensively on flow state and creativity. Flow state is a state of optimal experience where athletes, artists, performers and others find themselves "in the zone", where time seems to stand still and actions become intuitive and automatic.

See [Csikszentmihalyi, M. \(1990\). Flow : The psychology of optimal experience \(1st ed.\). New York: Harper & Row.](#)

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TOLERANCE OF AMBIGUITY

Tolerance of ambiguity may allow the person to deal with the ill-defined nature of problems that have creative potential. It may also allow them to tolerate the range of options that should be considered. Some are uncomfortable with uncertainty that is a part of not having a solution ready to hand. But the creative individual can deal with the anxiety, postponing judgements and considering a wider range of options. It is particularly useful when working on problems with groups.

The tolerance of creative individuals allows them to tolerate their own paradoxical personalities, one that deviates from the social validation that comes with being "normal".



SENSITIVITY

Studies show that artists have a biological tendency towards unusual levels of sensitivity. It correlates to openness or empathy. Sensitivity may direct our attention and exemplifies a greater awareness to surroundings.

"Creativity is an attitude towards living....The creative person is driven by an urge to look deeper than the surface of everyday living, to find the historical roots of his or her existence, and to let this insight form one's future prospects."

Smith and van der Meer (1997)



CONFIDENCE

Talent without confidence could mean the individual may not even try to maximise their skills. There must be some confidence involved to develop the perseverance needed for creative pursuits.

SELF-PROMOTION

Many creative individuals are happy to promote themselves. Think Picasso, Madonna, Warhol, Damien Hirst, Jeff Koons, Lady Gaga.

Of course there are also many humble artists who avoid attention and also flagrant self-promoters who show little talent or insight.

Donald Trump? Kanye? No he's a genius (is he?)



INTROVERSION

It may appear that introversion is contradictory to self-promotion. But even the most avid self-promoter can display introvert capacity when, for example, they are committed to a task.

Often the artist locks themselves away and departs on an internal journey of the mind. This is part of getting into the "zone".

Some studies show that the more you can vividly recreate an activity or experience in your mind the more effective you are in actuality.

[Brann, A., & Ebooks Corporation. \(2013\). Make your brain work how to maximize your efficiency, productivity and effectiveness. London : Philadelphia: Kogan Page.](#)



VALUES

Values play a significant role in creative behaviour and have been tied to creativity for a long time.

Values can be subtle, implicit, or tacit rather than obvious and explicit, but they still underlie our motives and behaviour. Studies show that individuals who prefer artistic occupations value the universality of the human experience. "[Openness](#)", for example, could also be considered a value.

Values play a significant role in problem finding. They serve as a filter to identify what is important in a creative challenge. Without values there is no motivation to change.

Check out the talk by [Dan Pink](#) on motivation and while you're at it [Dan Gilbert](#) on happiness.



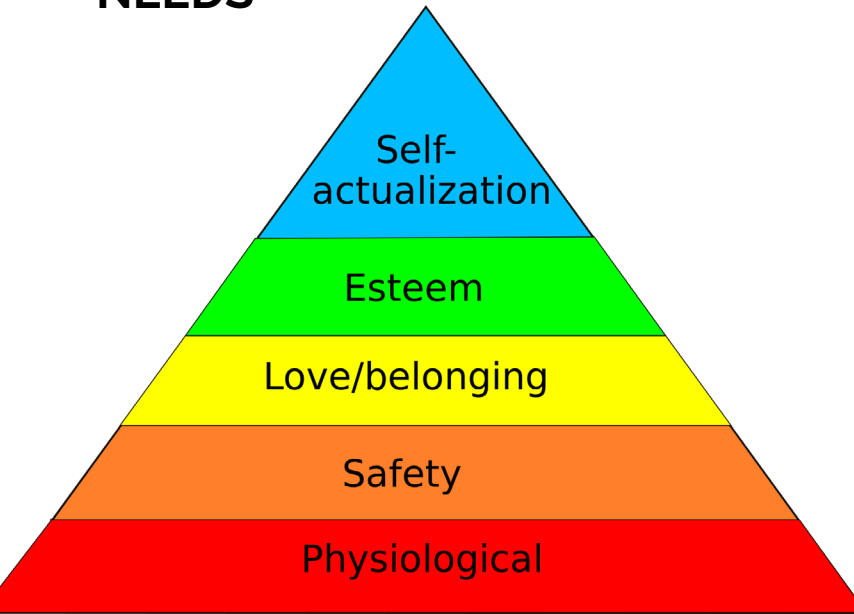
PARADOXICAL PERSONALITIES

It is best to describe the creativity personality as a constellation or a complex. No one trait leads directly to creativity - they interact.

Many creative individuals have unusual combinations of personality and intelligence. They can be both logical and naive, disciplined yet playful, introverted and extraverted, realistic but imaginative, objective but passionate, feminine and masculine.

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MASLOW'S HIERARCHY OF NEEDS





SELF-ACTUALISATION

Maslow believed that self-actualisation is innate in all humans and will seek to unfold naturally as long as a person lives. Self-actualisation is a reflection of an individual's character and personality. It is therefore apparent in everything the person does. It exemplifies everyday creativity and the creative process.

"Self-actualised creativeness is 'emitted,' or radiated, and hits all of life, regardless of problems, just as a cheerful person emits cheerfulness without purpose or design or even consciousness."

Creativity is not just a state of mind
it's a way of life.