

Opinion Article

Open Access

Creativity? Why?

Dace Siliņa

Career counselor, Coach, Career center University of Latvia

*Corresponding author

Dace Siliņa, Career counselor, Coach, Career center University of Latvia.

Received: October 23, 2024; **Accepted:** October 28, 2024; **Published:** November 09, 2024

According to the World Economic Forum (weforum.org), the list of required competencies in the 21st century are as follows:

1. **Foundational:** literacy, numeracy, scientific literacy, ICT literacy, financial literacy, cultural and civic literacy.
2. Competencies – how students approach challenges: critical thinking, creativity, communication, and collaboration.
3. **Character Qualities:** curiosity, initiative, persistence, adaptability, leadership, social and cultural awareness.

In this article, I will present my answer to the question: why creativity?

Creativity is usually defined in terms of imagination, as related to the production of art. Yes, an artist could be creative, but so could a software engineer, a mathematician, a salesperson, or a CEO.

When I am preparing my lectures about career counseling, I usually re-read the responsibilities of a career counselor. One of them is the competence to address career uncertainty and offer strategies for developing resilience in the face of challenges. And traditionally, I ask myself again: "Can I really offer this to my clients? Can I find this "superpower" even in myself? What is the creativity resource that is needed to maintain peace in a changing world?"

I would like to share my own experiences from moments when I faced the fear of uncertainty, and the importance of creativity as a competence for a successful life and career - creativity as the ability to see nonconcrete solutions and think in a "new" way.

In 2008, Latvia and the world were hit by a serious economic crisis. I remember very vividly "experts" saying on the television: "Do not worry! We, Latvians, are not in danger! Our bank system is protected!" And in a very short period, life changes affected almost every person living in Latvia because of this global financial crisis: people lost their jobs, their wages were cut, people were drowning in deep financial debts, some even had to leave the country. Fear of uncertainty was definitely there!

The pandemic in 2022 unexpectedly overwhelmed the whole world. People expected answers from the government: "What is happening? What will be next? What needs to be done? How can we protect our lives, our families, our careers?" Infectious disease

experts said: "This is a new virus, unknown to us. We don't know what it's going to do." And again: people lost opportunities to work and earn, people had serious difficulties staying motivated, their wellbeing diminished. Change and fear of uncertainty was there also!

The war in Ukraine shocked the world. The belief that the world is a safe space to live in was tremendously impacted. The future again presented a face of change and uncertainty.

AI is a new "drama" for many people—excitement about AI possibilities goes hand in hand with the fear of change and uncertainty: "Will there be a place for us in the job market? Will people have jobs at all?"

My first education was psychology. I remember one specific task students had to do in the program of Consulting: we had to ask 5 people to draw a picture with a tree, a house and a man. In these drawings, it was possible to analyze a person's personality. Our first step was simply to give this task to 5 people. I do not remember any drawings though. But I was deeply reminded of the phrase uttered by each of my "clients", who I invited to do the task: "I don't know how to draw." And then they drew a picture.

"Why this question?" I was wondering. "If there is no "right" or "wrong" answer. Does it have to do with a person's confidence in their creativity?"

In 2023, I attended an HR conference in Riga (personalskonference.lv). As a speaker, Fredrik Haren was invited. He calls himself "The Creativity Explorer". He shared his experience and results of his research on why people in different countries value their creativity differently.

"Are you creative?" he asked people in the hall. "I have asked this question in 60 countries to different audiences. Here are the results I have found: in Europe 60-80% of people say – I am creative! In Singapore 90%, in North America 95%, in Japan 20%, in China 90%, in South Korea 5%. What does this data tell us? Why data are so different in different countries? Have you noticed: if the country is larger, more people define themselves as creative? What if the sense of creativity is related to self-confidence and subjective self-perception: "I am "big", self-confident and creative", or "I am "small", nothing special, not creative."

As a career consultant, I work with clients, and help them define their strengths, talents and motivations, so that they are able to find the best career that best fits their personality. Career consultants can tell you: there are people who are more creative, and there are people who struggle to deal with tasks that involve being creative. And this has nothing to do with low or high self-esteem. How can you use this to support your own creativity?

If you are interested in exploring your creative strengths more, I invite you to use one of the typologies used in our practice: J.Holland's theory of personality and environmental types (1959.) I want to emphasize that creative potential and competence are inherent in every person, but they are not equally powerful in every individual. There are people who are more "powerful" as a creative entity, if we look at the topic from the point of view of a career specialist.

But...

Have you ever heard a saying of Oskar Wilde: "Be yourself, everyone else is taken!"

Do you relate to this message? Does this resonate with you? What does it mean actually: be yourselves?

Please answer the following questions:

1. What makes you different from other people? Name 3 things.
2. Describe one situation in your life when people accepted your uniqueness.!
3. Describe one situation/problem in your life, when your creativity had a big, or even a crucial, role in solving problems.!

...

What do you think about your creativity now? "Be yourself, everyone else is taken!" Does this quote have a different resonance for you after this exercise? What do you think about it now?

I personally know and see it in my clients: sometimes it is so scary to be yourself and creative at times?

But you know what?

- It is ok if you're afraid of criticism.
- It is ok to want to be loved and accepted, and not to always find the balance between being yourselves and being the one who is loved.
- It's ok to be afraid to take risks.
- It's ok if plans change.
- It's ok if the loss hurts.

Being creative doesn't mean you won't encounter all of the above [1-3]!

So...

What if the highest expression of your creativity is actually being yourself?

References

1. Jack R Rayman, Gary D Gottfredson (2020) My Life with a Theory: John L. Holland's Autobiography and Theory of Careers. National Career Development Association https://www.ncda.org/aws/NCDA/pt/sd/product/16793/_PARENT/layout_products/false.
2. (2015) The skills needed in the 21st century. World Economic Forum <https://widgets.weforum.org/nve-2015/chapter2.html>.
3. Fredrik Haren (2019) The Creativity Explorer. Youtube <https://www.youtube.com/@TheCreativityExplorer/featured>.

Copyright: ©2024 Dace Siliņa. This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License, which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original author and source are credited.