

From:

Abraham Maslow, *The Maslow Business Reader*. Pages 21-30.



Creativity in Self-Actualizing People

The consequence was that I found it necessary to distinguish “special talent creativeness” from “self-actualizing (SA) creativeness” which sprang much more directly from the personality, and which showed itself widely in the ordinary affairs of life, for instance, in a certain kind of humor. It looked like a tendency to do *anything* creatively: for example, housekeeping, teaching, and so forth. Frequently, it appeared that an essential aspect of SA creativeness was a special kind of perceptiveness that is exemplified by the child in the fable who saw that the king had no clothes on (this too contradicts the notion of creativity as products). Such people can see the fresh, the raw, the concrete, the idiographic, as well as the generic, the abstract, the rubricized, the categorized and the classified. Consequently, they live far more in the real world of nature than in the verbalized world of concepts, abstractions, expectations, beliefs and stereotypes that most people confuse with the real world. This is well expressed in Rogers’ phrase “openness to experience.”

All my subjects were relatively more spontaneous and expressive than average people. They were more “natural” and less controlled and inhibited in their behavior, which seemed to flow out more easily and

work. A peak-experience happens *to* a person, but the person *makes* the great product.

Strictly speaking, I have investigated this first phase only, that which comes easily and without effort as a spontaneous expression of an integrated person, or of a transient unifying within the person. It can come only if a person's depths are available to him, only if he is not afraid of his primary thought processes.

I shall call "primary creativity" that which proceeds from and uses the primary process much more than the secondary processes. The creativity which is based mostly on the secondary thought processes I shall call "secondary creativity." This latter type includes a large proportion of production-in-the-world, the bridges, the houses, the new automobiles, even many scientific experiments and much literary work. All of these are essentially the consolidation and development of other people's ideas. It parallels the difference between the commando and the military policeman behind the lines, between the pioneer and the settler. That creativity which uses *both* types of process easily and well, in good fusion or in good succession, I shall call "integrated creativity." It is from this kind that comes the great work of art, or philosophy, or science.