

SPIRIT, MIND & BODY

Transformations

The Birth of Creativity

On a recent weekend getaway to Wilbur Hot Springs (great place if you've never been), I struck up a conversation with a woman on the nature of motivation. What is it, we asked, that propels someone to act? What are the required conditions that must exist in order to motivate someone to: finally leave their home (as in an adult child just finishing high school or college), leave a unhealthy relationship (or even a healthy one if it is in favor of greater personal exploration), or leave a unfulfilling or stagnant job?

We agreed that a certain amount of anxiety -- pressure or conflict, inner or outer -- had to exist to move us forward on our journey toward becoming -- whether it's becoming an adult, a husband or wife, a mother or father, a home owner, a business owner, a specialist of any kind, or especially a conscious creator of our own experiences. This we referred to as "necessary conflict".

That's interesting. Many of us spend a great deal of

time trying to avoid conflict at all cost, yet it is conflict that creates change and forces us onto new (and almost always better) pathways. Wouldn't you think, then, that we should welcome and perhaps even celebrate conflict? It is the very job of conflict to awaken us to the reality that our values somewhere and somehow - are not being met. (See desertmoonrising.com for column on values.) This doesn't always mean that something is wrong. It could also mean that something just isn't "right" enough -- or that you're just not at the place in your life you want to be.

The woman and I agreed that "necessary conflict" -- even when created within ourselves -- was the key to creating change. We also agreed that the degree of this conflict required to create change for any one individual was, indeed, individual. The necessary degree of conflict would be based on each individual's life experiences, inner drive or threshold for dealing with pain, suffering and -- well -- conflict. Some people thrive on suffering and never

change a thing. These people obviously have a high threshold to pain and suffering, and perhaps misery too. Which brings me to the real topic of this column: Creativity.

Is creativity born of misery?

This sounds like a ludicrous question but think about it for a minute and you may rethink your first response. Consider this. Where in you is creativity born? What criteria or conditioning is required for you to access your most creative self?

I know the idea that creativity comes from misery might seem silly to you, but for many people it's true. Using the word "misery", though, might not quite be fair. We could just as easily use one or more of THESE words: angst, rage, loss, depression, melancholy, anger, anxiety, desperation. And those are just a few. If any of these sound familiar, that's OK, don't worry. You're in good company. Think of Van Gogh, Goya, Pollock, Okeeffe, Rothko, Rilke, Poe, Rachmaninoff. All were well-known artists who expressed themselves through their pain. I say, thank God they had an outlet. The idea that we might have lived without ever knowing their work is unimaginable. And these are only eight. Think of all the other painters,

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sculptures, inventors, writers, musicians, philosophers, poets and spiritual leaders that in their suffering, have created remarkable works.

As you search your mind for your most creative "time" or "period", ask yourself, "Was the degree of pressure so great that if I didn't create I might not have survived? Was there something in me that had to be expressed no matter what?"

They say that necessity is the mother of invention. What then, I wonder, is the mother of creativity?

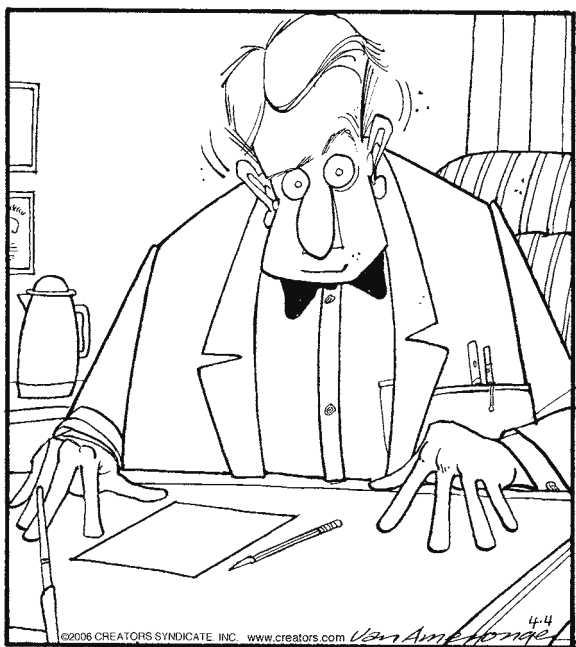
The idea that creativity is born of suffering is just

a theory -- the product of an afternoon conversation. Yes, I also know of many fabulous "creators" who created from a different place -- a place of beauty and inspiration, a place of connection with God or Source. But where does creativity live in YOU? Aren't you curious about that?

"I do believe it is possible to create, even without ever writing a word or painting a picture, by simply molding one's inner life. And that too is a deed."

-----Etty Hillesum

BALLARD STREET by Jerry Van Amerongen



Suddenly, a semblance of an idea breaks into the clearing!

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