

Leadership through Creativity & Synergy 2+2=5

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It was some where in 1992-93 when as editor of a professional magazine, I used the expression of 2+2=5 for an article on synergy. A decade and a half ahead I develop this article for exploring creativity and synergy to lead onto leadership. Do you remember the old Urdu adage one and one makes eleven. Covey found it easy to say,” Whole is greater than the sum of its parts”.

Who are you, a student, a faculty member, a soldier, a lawyer or a policeperson? I do not mind if you are a business executive, a housewife, and a chef in PC or a medical superintendent in a hospital. I am very comfortable in addressing you all. If you are already a leader you will find many of your life long principles and practices being eulogized here. You will find vindication of your convictions. And you may find a tip or two to polish further. You may find a fresh suggestion to yet knock at a new window, or turning one heap of bricks around you into a pavement or a flight of stairs. If you are on a path to grow then; a greater pleasure for both of us. You are on your way to neutralize and defeat your fears; you are on your way to discover and on your way to look for new possibilities. You will find new combinations, new ways to assert and be effective objectively. Through this article I stand with you shoulder to shoulder in your brave pursuit. Sometimes you will find me behind you, pushing you forward on your road to leadership. Sometimes you will find me beneath your feet providing a strong platform to stand upon, providing stronger and wider canvas to explore and reach out farther, deeper and higher. And if you are a student in early twenties to

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early thirties still nagged by huge expectations of father and mother, ever pinching demands of various subject teachers; I welcome you whole heartedly. You need this article to reduce your apprehensions. It will show you the way to be independent and set course for you to be interdependent in due course of time. It will point finger towards your petty prejudices which you might be in love with, as your personal preferences. I may help you wear a smiling face, stand upon confident legs and speak with a brave tongue to say, sorry, let us do it this way or sure here is a way out ; or ‘I have another option’.

I am sure you will be benefited by having greater number of friends in next three months. You will be able to join isolated dots and islands of your life to make greater sense and achieving higher and better results. You will find connections amongst your diversified subjects like sociology and Pakistan studies, like linear algebra and critical thinking. You will enjoy both body building and organizing college debates. You will be able to listen to a road-side beggar and an admin officer with greater interest. You will find commonality in their psyche and diversification in approach. You might lessen your disgust and hate for your mother-in-law. Soon you may find the way how much she actually needed you or how much pun she can create by her winding stories. Soon you may find the added value in the role you were already playing as class-representative or as a chief cashier. And who will need it more than a CEO; if you are one right now. The enhanced ability to relatively discover more than others and the enhanced ability to find relations and connections to get closer to pre-determined goals will help make you a leader. And a better leader, a leader others would envy.

My dear friend let me show you why you are the finest of His products and how easily you can discover to lead your way to new heights.

Translation

“We have indeed created man in the best of moulds”

Quran 95:5, Abdullah Yusuf Ali

“Allah has subjected to you the sea, that ships may sail through it by His command, that ye may seek of His, bounty, and that ye may be grateful. And He has subjected to you, as from him all that is in the heavens and all that is in the earth; it is all as a favor and kindness from Him. Verily, in it are signs for a people who think deeply.”

Quran 45:12-13, Dr. Muhammad Mohsin, Dr. Muhammad Taqi-ud-Din Al-Hilali

Stage is set now to have a precise and deeper peep into creativity then synergy and into the resulting leadership at the end.

Creativity

Some simply describe creativity as ‘capacity to discover’. Yes it is so, but a little more than that. However, let me first present an assorted collection of views and comments on creativity:

1. To live a creative life, we must lose our fear of being wrong.—
Joseph Chilton Pearce
2. Every child is an artist. The problem is how to remain an artist once grown up. – *Pablo Picasso*
3. Creativity comes by breaking the rules, by saying you’re in love with the anarchist. – *Anita Roddick*
4. Creativity can be described as the letting go of certainty. – *Gail Sheehy*

5. The life of a creative person is led, directed and controlled by boredom. Avoiding boredom is one of our most important purposes. – *Saul Stoppard*
6. True creativity often starts where language ends – *Arthur Koestler*
7. Creativity is not far from freedom. To be creative is to know who we are ... – *Garth Aldrich*

How do you conclude, reading through all these explanations of various scholars? Ponder over these.

Now heads down on two sub-topics of creativity. One, how to improve or boost creativity and second what blocks creativity. Then I will move over to synergy.

How to Boost Creativity?

None, including me will be able to give you a hundred percent solution for your individual needs. Yes, my recommendations could be as potent or as useful as eighty or ninety percent. From where to find the rest? You will fill up the gap. Sure, you will do it, after you have finished will this article; have inferred your conclusions and start application of your understanding. Here are some valuable recommendations to ponder and follow.

- a. *Do not be Your Own God:* Sorry to say, you do not know yourself. You are His product. He is flawless, boundless, the Creator, Doer and the Giver. “So God Created man in his (own) image, in the image of.... (Bible 1:27). Please do not underestimate yourself. This is what you do, whenever you do self evaluation. You can do much more than what you think you can do. Let Him know the destination. Let Him unfold results for

you. Your job is to explore, make right selection and then to step out on the chosen path. And to struggle with full faith in Him. So set out and step out with Allah's immeasurable mercy for you. Keep exploring your potentials and possibilities around you. These are endless.

- b. *Keep a Paper and a Pencil:* Always carry some writing material on you. It could be diary or a journal which could serve you, as a record; say for a year or so. Make use of it for anything but give priority to following. Write down what you wish to do, your desires, your goals and objectives. And for defining your problems.
- c. *Define Your Problems:* Correct definition and a right statement of problem is the start point to solve the problem effectively. Many problems simply need a respectful treatment. Find solitude and a safe corner. Open your diary and try to give words to your problems. Make an effort to prioritize; your problems as a first step. If more than one, as these would be almost as a rule; segregate the problems under the subheads of urgent and important ones. Try to define the problems in measurable terms. And it is equally important to lay down goals and objectives in operational terms.
- d. *Put the Brain to Task:* Do not let the brains be idle. Things not used become useless. Doing routine chores, do not put the required stress on the brain. Do a little bit of brain-storming now and then. How? Do one simple exercise today. Write down maximum possible uses of water. Listing fifty different uses in eight to ten minutes would be a good start.

- e. *Read:* Read as much and as varied as you can. Learn to scan and differentiate it from deep reading. Learn speed reading. Undertake comprehension tests as well. Making brief notes at the end of a chapter or a book in your diary would go a long way to enrich and empower you.
- f. *Listen to Original Music:* Both enjoy and ponder on the creativity of composer. How come there are innumerable tunes. What makes some tunes ever green? How wonderful would it be if you can compose a new tune!
- g. *Reduce TV Time:* Be watchful of number of hours you spend in front of the TV. Reduce it. Be selective about the channels and minimize indulgence in channel browsing.
- h. *Drugs:* No drug please. There is no pill on God's earth which can help promote creativity or synergy.

What Blocks Creativity

There have to be a double pincer approach to tie up all loose ends. While you are doing everything to boost the creativity, it would be equally important to know what blocks creativity. It will help you to avoid blocks and not only that, you will learn not to create blocks for others.

- a. *Lack of Recognition:* Recognition, appreciation, a pat or a nod, all helps a great deal to reinforce the desired behaviors. Recognition is in fact a force multiplier, with both positive and negative algebraic signs.
- b. *Mania for Efficiency and Control:* Developing strait jackets for you, your organization and others will dry up creativity. Providing standing operating procedures and laying down strict channels of communication and functioning impede creativity. It

stifles creativity. All such structures which are aimed at zero error help destroy creativity. Use the rules; do not be used by the rules. Do not be the slave of rules. Keep the focus on goals and objectives. See over the fence of dos & do nots. Make a road where there is none. Tracks already used are easiest to trace and tread. Those who want to offer you stepping stones or beaten tracks are not the friends of creativity. Use others experience as one input. Principles, generalizations, adage and idioms are good. Remember they are never the complete solutions. Generate your own solutions, when you are dealing with the new issues and a new problem.

- c. *Roles & Functions*: There are such roles in life where people are bound to lose creativity. Some times roles are forced upon but sometimes people find an escape route in defensive roles. Some roles and functions contained there in are too mechanical for a good vibrant human being to live in and grow. Avoid such roles; if forced upon; try to wriggle out as early as possible lest you become inert mentally. Shake out and follow the dictates of a creative mind.
- d. *The Right Socialization*: A lot can be said and read on socialization and anti-socialization with reference to creativity and initiation of ideas. I will recommend a right kind of socialization. It implies spending time and energies which are focused on exploring and not on repetition. Look at these two simple social practices. A person moves out every Sunday with same friends to eat same food (*Harrisa*) from same shop, sitting on same table next to same window. A person plans to eat different food, prepared by himself or different friends or a

different cook at a new place on every outing. Some people enjoy playing *luddo* whole their life in their spare time. Others may end up knowing thirty different games by the time they are seventy. Initiation or lack of initiation of ideas has to do a lot with the socialization.

- e. *Status Level and New Ideas*: If you are a young man, I am sure you will be least plagued by the ills of status level. Why should social standing, pay scale or the size of car under use should impede your creativity and leadership. If you have all these material signs protect them through creative synergy to lead your way and grow farther. And if you do not have such stilts and artifacts, you can buy, create, manipulate and arrange by learning creativity and synergy.

What is synergy? Syn–ergo (Gr) all it means working together. And putting things together so as to create a total effect which fulfills the desired results. Though St. Paul used it to indicate man's, god and cosmic cooperation, I will unfold it to make five out of two plus two the least and eleven out of simply two ones, if our synergy can strike well. A brief explanation of the term first: -

- a. A mutually advantageous conjunction where the whole is greater than the (mathematical) sum of its parts.
- b. A dynamic state where in combined action is favored over the sum of the actions of its components.
- c. What comes out of the system (team or a group) rather than the potentials of its members?

No more theories let us observe, learn, assimilate, understand and start practicing.

- a. Look at a set of two beggars one is blind and walk behind the one who is deaf and dumb but has good eyes. Deaf and dumb, lead and shows the way to client while blind sings the appeal in most melodious rhyme. Both earn for more than each could do separately.
- b. A hotel owner meets a garage owner. The hotel was mid-way at Sibi between Quetta and Sukkur. Soon the business bloomed for they had set up a Motel. None out of two could have earned separately as a hotel owner and as a garage owner.
- c. Sheikh Inayat Ullah and Sons was a large size departmental store in Anarkali Lahore. They would allow petty hawkers and mobile stalls in front of their store on week days but not on week ends. On week days both were beneficiaries, while on weekends only one.
- d. Sugar mills need considerable amount of energy, especially in the form of heat. Bagasse is burnt to fire the boilers. Boilers produce steam to run the whole of sugar mill. Approximately 33% of total weight of sugar cane crushed turns into bagasse. And it is more than enough to provide for the energy requirements of the mills. One of the Sugar Mill at Badin sold more than 5,000 tons of bagasse, to chip board industry, since it exceeded their energy needs.

One can go on, explaining how brave people create a linkage and a functional bondage to explore for better and superior results. All it is required to interact congruently. And you are likely to do wonderfully well if you were creative as well. And finally look at this yet another kind of synergy. Cement manufacturing plants use colossal energy. It may range from 18 to 25 MW. The heat lost from the pre-heaters and

clinker kiln is recaptured. The process is simple. Exhaust is harnessed to convey the heat to boilers. Boilers produce steam which in turn runs the turbines generating electricity. The heat thus recaptured can produce 5 to 6 MW of power.

I am sure a lot has been unfolded and revealed on synergy. At the same time, there must be scores of questions; especially how to go about. You are not yet satisfied; good. This is what I look forward to; stay dissatisfied. Stay hungry. Remember this is what Steve Jobs, of Apple Computers said.

Sharing some thoughts on Leadership, towards the end. I have a little to wrestle with, after the above exploration, giving all these examples and drawing some lessons on creativity and synergy. Leadership is taking charge of the situation. It is inspiring others to do singularly or collectively, what you want to accomplish. It is the battle for the hearts and minds of the people. One can describe leadership in more than dozen ways. One can also trace the classic sources of leadership but to find creativity and synergy. Creativity and synergy should act as additional sources of leadership for current times. These two disciplines should help you looking at new options, new possibilities, and generating new hopes knowing no bounds.

My efforts would remain deficient and unfinished if I do not seek the help of that great Muslim, great scholar and a great philosopher, Dr. Allama Muhammad Iqbal:

وہی زمانے کی گردش پہ غالب آتا ہے
جو ہر نفس سے کرے عمر جاوداں پیدا

Brief Translation:

Only he can over power and lead the universe, who can generate and produce eternity and everlasting values from every breath and every moment.

پرے ہے چرخِ نیلی فام سے منزل مسلمان کی
ستارے جس کی گردراہ ہوں وہ کارواں تو ہے

Brief Translation:

Beyond the heavens lies the destination of a Muslim. You are a dynamic force par excellence. Go and go beyond all these.....even stars are just the dust on your path way.

The understanding of these two ingredients, followed by the objective application, will catapult you to the position of leadership. Share the vision of Iqbal. Enjoy soaring. I wish you Godspeed.

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