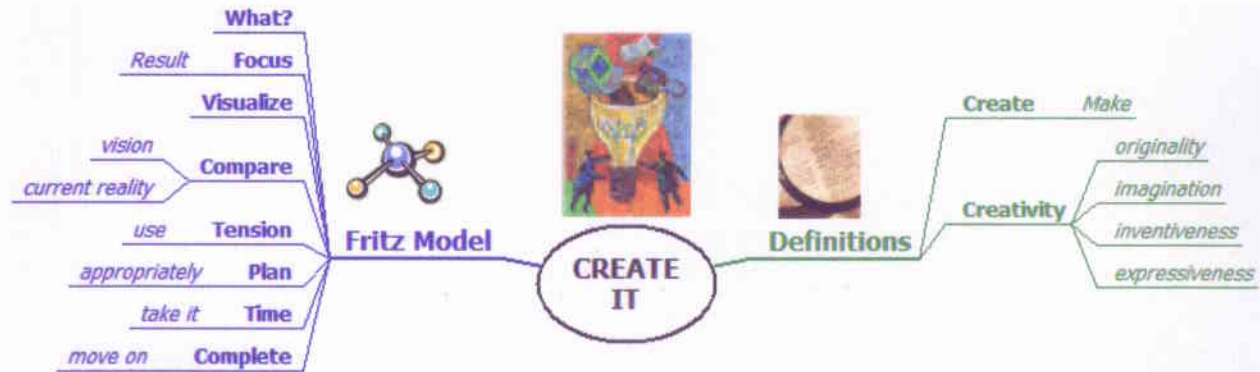


CHAPTER 12

Don't Just Solve it – Create it



Creating What You Want

If the only new thing we have to offer is an improved version of the past, then today can only be inferior to yesterday. Hypnotized by images of the past, we risk losing all capacity for creative change. -Robert Hewison

Today's working environment is a sea of problems. There are problems of communication, problems of interaction, problems of structure, financial problems, marketing problems, sales problems, conflict resolution problems, and problem problems. Problems are endlessly analyzed, often with the help of external consultants, and we've been through Business Process Reengineering, Total Quality Management, Becoming a Learning Organization and the new flavour of the month. Quadrant A analysts and Quadrant B organizers take over. People embark on changes that seem to provide the answers but often lose their enthusiasm along the way. Some problems just don't seem to get solved.

When we try to solve problems, we are trying to make something go away. We would like the mountain of paper on our desks to disappear, we would like our grumpy boss to change his negative outlook, we would like our inefficient colleague to submit the report on time, we would like the committee structure to work better, we would like to lose twenty pounds, we would like to have more hours to spend with the family, we would like - we would like - we would like - .

Another approach

Reality leaves a lot to the imagination - John Lennon.

When we solve problems we are often focused on the present with the hope of returning to some happier simpler past. It may be more productive to look in another direction. The answer that is frequently proposed is creativity. It is useful to make a distinction between the verb *create* and the noun *creativity* because we commonly use them to mean two different things. To

create is to cause to exist or to bring into being. *Create* is a transitive verb. Creators create *something*. When we use the noun, *creativity*, we tend to think of originality, imagination or innovation. The idea people in an advertising firm are even called Creatives.

Creativity is taken seriously these days. A study of Fortune 500 companies sponsored by Porter/Novelli, a national public agency with offices in several American cities, revealed that 59 out of 100 executives thought that creativity was more important than intelligence in ensuring success in business. Three quarters of them also thought that the school system was not doing a good job in fostering creativity.

The survey revealed typical stereotypes about creativity. Many think that creative people are eccentric. Most think that people are born with creativity or without it and can't be changed. The truth is that every human being has the capacity to create. Our education, training and general understanding of the creative process haven't helped us to develop our creative capability because it hasn't been properly identified as a mental process that involves all four quadrants of the brain.

A model for Creating

The business of a seer is to see. -Aldous Huxley

American composer and author Robert Fritz has provided a useful path for creating and leads us away from many blind alleys that are current and confusing. In his book of the same name, he concentrates on *creating*, -- bringing something into being. His basic question is, "What do you want to create?" The answer might be a symphony, a dynamic team, a novel, a garden, a profitable company, a slim body, a well functioning accounting department, -- but it will be a specific accomplished result.

Fritz reminds us that if you are going to create one thing, it will probably eliminate or at least postpone the possibility of creating other things. If you are going to write a symphony, you are not writing a folk song. If you are going to create a garden, you can not spend the same time redecorating the house. If you are concentrating on the accounting department, you may have to ignore marketing for the time being. Creating something involves focusing on a positive result. You have to want a specific outcome. You bring it into being because you love it and can visualize it fully.

Map your Creation

Imagination alone offers me some intimation of what can be. -Andre Breton

Map your vision of your creation. What will it look like? How will it feel? If your vision is a successful department, visualize who will work there. What will be the physical layout? What will be the emotional tone? How will people spend their day? What will be the processes and procedures? What skills and qualifications will people have? What will be the organizational structure? What will be the criteria for success? Imagine your creation fully accomplished and functioning.

Do a Reality Check

The next step is one that we often want to avoid. What is the reality now? What does the present situation look like? Who works here? What is the emotional tone now? How do people actually spend their day? What are current processes and procedures? Answers to these questions often produce an incredible tension that makes us want to give up, because the reality is so far away from what we want. Fritz contends that this tension is absolutely essential to the process. It is the difference between the desired result and the current reality that is the source of the energy and allows you to move forward.

The Dangers in Planning

In preparing for battle I have always found that plans are useless, but planning is indispensable. -Dwight D. Eisenhower

There are many blind alleys on the journey to your creation. One is planning. We either let the Quadrant B organizer in ourselves plan too much, or we succumb to the Quadrant D capability to generate multiple ideas without following through on any of them. Sometimes our Quadrant A analyzer takes over completely or absents itself from the scene entirely. Some companies and some individuals spend all their time developing and refining the most elaborate vision statement possible. The exercise is so comprehensive and so exhausting that they confuse Quadrant B activity with accomplishment. Others let the Quadrant D ability to come up with an innovative direction take over and ride off in all directions immediately without considering whether the direction they take will even come close to where they want to end up.

VisiMap a plan illustrating how you intend to get your desired result. If you are planning by yourself, consider as many alternatives as possible. This is a Quadrant D activity. Don't include Quadrant A analysis at this stage. If you are working as part of a team, allow all the members to develop their individual VisiMaps. Share your results and combine them in the form of a master map with all the ideas included.

Now submit your map to a Quadrant A analysis. In the process of examining your current reality and looking at what you need to do to reach your desired result, you may realize that you don't really want the result after all. If you want to be fluent in Spanish, know no Spanish now, recognize that you may have to go to classes twice a week, and spend an hour daily on lessons, are you still firm about your intended result? If you would rather spend your evenings watching television, now is the time to face the reality. You don't love the vision enough to bring it into being.

Feelings, Affirmations and Paths

Fritz points up a number of delusions about the creative process that many people have. Some of us we may get stuck in Quadrant C and expect that all our feelings will be positive. He reminds us that you don't have to feel good at every point on the journey. Some days you may feel wonderful. Other times you may feel frustrated or depressed. Some days will be very matter of fact. You stay on the path because you want the result. Similarly you don't have to have high self esteem. Many new age thinkers have suggested affirmations like "I am a wonderful speaker