Creativity and You

Creativity is possible for most of us. A person does not have to have a genius level IQ or an artistic bent. One researcher (Jing Zhou) stated "...in the right environment anyone can be creative." If the environment we are in at home, work, or school cultivates and is hospitable to innovation, then persons and groups can be creative. A positive mood often enhances motivation and creativity but does not appear to be necessary in all situations.

Often, the time we need to be most innovative is during the rough times. It is unfortunate that in many situations, the first reaction is to retrench and go by the rules, or if you're a manager, to begin micromanaging people and/or activities. In addition, pressure to finish a project or generate an idea quickly or at the last minute directs energy to completion and the end product and not to the development of a fascinating idea or solution.

So what can be done to enhance creativity, a person or group of people require some degree of control over what they do and especially how they do it. The issue here is autonomy. If people don't have it, then it's a mental shrug and a "why bother."

If you are trying to solve a conundrum, uninterrupted time is important. Ideas need time to germinate, to go from one gray cell to another, to gather up the stray bits that form a new solution. Phone calls, e-mail, people walking in on you, and/or meetings are interruptions that do not create the field for ideas to come together in clever, new solution ways.

Sometimes what is necessary for creativity is adequate and appropriate resources to get the job done. A coordinated collaboration among coworkers and classmates is also a good environment in which to generate creative strategies. It can also be helpful to step back and take a long-term visionary outlook.

Have fun and enjoy implementing some of the notions mentioned above.