



The Problem with “Unleashing” Creativity

A guest article by Jim Link

A recent IBM poll of 1,500 global CEOs named creativity as the #1 leadership competency of the future. Yet, for all the books written and seminars attended, most employees have no realistic plan for becoming more creative. Why? We’ve been thinking about creativity the wrong way.

Many creativity articles feature titles like “Unleash Your Creativity” or “Unlock Your Creative Genius Overnight.” Who can argue with unleashing or immediate results, right? But, what if all this focus on unleashing is part of the problem?

Pretend you have an employee with atrocious interpersonal skills (if you need pretending). Would you pay good money to send them to a seminar called “Unleash Your Interpersonal Skills?” Crazy, right? You recognize that while every employee holds potential to improve, they only do so by learning, then practicing certain skills. Yet, we don’t hesitate to shell over that same money for “Unleashing Your Creativity.” Consider this: Can we realistically get better at something if there is no skill to learn?

Now pretend you’re at a seminar called “Unleash Your Creativity.” Whose responsibility is it to make you more creative? Not yours. You’re sitting there, passively waiting for the presenter to deliver their magic: “Okay, I’m ready to be unleashed!” You listen, you laugh, you play silly games. But the magic never arrives because no speech, no parlor trick can create that miracle. How can we get better at something when we relinquish the responsibility to someone else?

The notion of unleashing also presumes we're born with a predetermined level of creativity. And that over time, it gets squelched, stolen or locked up. We see it not as something we add to, only something to restore. How can we get better at creativity if we've reached our peak in the delivery room?

Finally, the notion of unleashing leads to ridiculous suggestions to get more creativity. My favorite involves a client who held 16 patents by the age of 33. "Rob" moved to a new company and at his first performance review, his new boss informed Rob that despite 16 patents, he needed to be more creative. Astounded, Rob asked his boss for a recommendation. His boss's suggestion: Put a barber chair in your office, like the wacky, creative guy down the hall. How can we get better at creativity if every cubicle requires a barber chair?

Now I don't want to fully dismiss the value of unleashing. I don't want the word to go away. We've all worked on teams where creativity was encouraged, and on teams where it wasn't. We absolutely should do things that encourage (and not discourage) others to use their creativity. Culture matters. But we need to make a critical distinction between that which unleashes existing creativity and that which builds more creativity. Unleashing is about what happens around you to encourage you to use your current creative ability—it's maximizing what you have, and it is largely controlled by others. Building is about the work and skill required to increase your creative capacity—it is additive, and it is controlled by you.

So, here's the hard truth: building your own or your team's creativity takes work and the results don't come about overnight. But there's good news, too: Once you realize what the "work" is to make yourself more creative, anybody can get more of it. Over the past thirty years, I've worked with thousands of individuals across hundreds of innovation projects. I've found highly-creative people share a similar process to make themselves more creative. It's the same process used by "creative stars" I've studied, too: Steve Jobs, DaVinci, Edison, Paul Simon, Steve Martin, Larry David, Quentin Tarantino, Wynton Marsalis. Even Lady Gaga.

What's most interesting is when you ask the highly-creative what makes them creative, this process comes so naturally they won't think to tell you.

I look forward to teaching you this skill on May 15th!

Jim Link is an international speaker, trainer and innovation consultant who founded one of the world's first idea companies in 1994 (Idea-Link.com). His book, *Idea-Links: The New Creativity*, received four book awards and was named "one of 2012's groundbreaking business books" by Independent Publisher Magazine. All **mhca** members attending the May conference in New Orleans will receive of complimentary copy of Jim's book after his keynote presentation.

mend

Telehealth,
Appointment Reminders,
Self-Scheduling,
& Digital Forms

**3-8% Patient
No-Show Rates**

[DEMO NOW](#)

Don't Miss Out on Tuesday's Pre-Conference Sessions!



Leadership Incubator

Bring your leadership team to our all-new Leadership Incubator session on Tuesday morning where Consultant and Executive Coach Paul Duck will provide an overview of value-based payment/value-based reimbursement (VBP), followed by a panel discussion with four **mhca** member organizations that have already engaged in VBP arrangements: Terros Health, Emergence Health Network, Tri-County Mental Health Services and Chestnut Health Systems. Each will share their experience with the contracting process, cultural changes, organizational and individual performance, and the related metrics and KPIs.

[See the Full Agenda](#)



Innovation Incubator

Our Spring Innovation Incubator facilitated by Mark de L. Thompson will focus on how to escape the commodity trap and unlock hidden value in your community. You'll leave with a community problem-solver mindset and a better understanding of how to craft a powerful value proposition that will resonate in the new behavioral healthcare marketplace.

[Register Now!](#)

Help Us Celebrate mhca's 35th Anniversary!



Winter Conference 2020

We hope you'll plan to join us at **mhca's 2020 Winter Conference** to help us celebrate our 35th Anniversary. Throughout the conference, we will have special activities and events to honor our past, celebrate our successes and prepare for the challenges and opportunities of the

future. This exciting event will be held March 3-5, 2020 at the Sandpearl Resort in Clearwater Beach, Florida, and will include a special celebratory reception and casual beach-front buffet dinner on Wednesday evening. The conference agenda and additional event details will follow in November.

[Book Your Room!](#)



Have Something to Say?

mhca is looking for original articles, podcasts, videos and interviews with behavioral healthcare thought leaders. Submitting guest posts is a great way to share your perspective and start conversations with your peers. If you're interested in seeing your work in this newsletter or online at mhca.com, email your ideas to Lonnie Parizek at lparizek@mhca.com.

Unsubscribe from Monthly Minute Newsletter



1876 Eider Court, Suite A
Tallahassee, FL 32308

mhca
1876 Eider Court, Suite A
Tallahassee, FL 32308

TEL: (850) 942-4900

*If you don't want to get similar messages from us in the future, you can **Unsubscribe here:***

<https://mhca.com/index.php?>

[option=com_civicrm&task=civicrm/mailing/unsubscribe&reset=1&jid=&qid=&h=](https://mhca.com/index.php?option=com_civicrm&task=civicrm/mailing/unsubscribe&reset=1&jid=&qid=&h=)