

# The History of Creativity

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It's very interesting to study the history of creativity, because it isn't something we were always aware of. I mentioned earlier that the study of creativity is a fairly new concept. But, even the idea of creativity is a new concept.

Before the period of Enlightenment, imagination, creativity, and inspiration were thought to come from above—from God or from whichever higher being the person believed in. The word “inspiration” itself means “breathed upon.” The concept being that it was given as a gift, and at the higher being's discretion. People thought that creativity came from outside of them and was handed to them by an outside force.

They were better off than most of us today who don't pay any attention to creativity and inspiration at all. But, some possibly also held back because they expected creativity to strike whenever God deemed it so.

You can compare the thought that creativity is in our DNA to the thought that some are more gifted athletically. Some are able to “run like the wind” because of their physical makeup, others plod along at a much slower pace. For example, the tortoise vs. the hare story.

The ability to innovate and create is different though, as we'll see.

These days, we don't think creativity comes from outside of us, we believe it comes from within. Unfortunately, many people believe that creativity is a gift given to a select few. They believe that if you were born without it, you're stuck in a box for good.

I'll say it again a different way, because I think it's really sad. There is a large group of people, especially in business, who believe that not only does creativity *not* fall from the sky, but it's not even possible to have unless you're naturally gifted with it.

That's not the right point of view to take at all. Creativity is a skill you absolutely have inside of you—everyone does. I hope by now, you believe that.



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