

The Creative Advantage

How the intersection of science and creativity
reveals life's ultimate advantage

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Other books by this author

Sweet Spot Careers: A Practical and Creative Guide to a Successful Midlife Career Transition (2013)

The Creative Advantage Life Cycle: Enhance your creativity throughout all stages of your life (2020)

The Creative Advantage: Activity Guide (2021)

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Preface and Dedication

I undertook the writing phase of *The Creative Advantage* in very turbulent times. After six years of research I was able to secure time to write this book in 2020. Over this period, I spent each day writing, reading and editing through the worst fire-filled summer Australia had ever experienced, resulting in a devastating loss of human and non-human lives, homes and communities. This was followed by the arrival of a worldwide pandemic to be known as COVID-19.

I was grateful every day to have this project, having established a daily routine, writing during my most productive periods of the day. I'd created a physical space filled with inspiration that enabled me to focus as I stood at my stand-up desk to remind me to move.

I took a break every ninety minutes to wander into the garden and just stare at the sky. Then I'd undertake a walk along a nearby beach, enabling me to restore my energy and even indulge in daydreaming.

I slept every night for eight hours, and if I woke during the night I would meditate to quiet and calm the chatter in my mind. I practised yoga and stretching daily and discovered the joy of deep-water running, until the COVID-19 caused the closure of the leisure centre.

I spent many evenings with my watercolours, playing with visual imagery with no particular objective other than to use my hands, get into a flow and be distracted by the beauty that blended watercolours can create.

I acknowledged the anxiety of this time, wrote in my journal to give voice to the insecurities.

I reflected on Maslow's theory, grateful that my physiological and psychological needs were being fulfilled, recognising at the peak of the hierarchy that self-fulfilment can only be truly met by extending out of the comfort zone, in my case through a writing project that in every way reflected who I am.

Foremost I reflected on the value of curiosity to follow trails wherever they might lead, and with routine I can create a habit of discipline required to take this exploration to a conclusion.

It confirmed that in times of uncertainty I rely on creative problem-solving skills to get to the other side, visualising where the completion of this book and subsequent program would lead me.

I reflected that on the creative elements of motivation, domain expertise, skills and environment, knowing I have these all working in my favour to ensure I would complete the manuscript.

I was confident that my neural networks were sparking off each other, pushing me forward and reinforcing every time I completed a sentence, that both my analytical and insightful creative processes were firing.

I knew that the advice provided, that I myself tap into every day in every way, would benefit and assist others in all aspects of life.

It was while writing this preface that the clarity of the dedication came to me. I decided to dedicate this book to what I saw around me during this challenging time. To the tenacity of the human spirit and the creativity in each of us that became evident as I watched family and friends, but mostly strangers, support each other during this dangerous pandemic.

So, I have dedicated this book to the strangers I have not met.

The medical professionals who went beyond to keep us safe and alive; the politicians and bureaucrats who found leadership that many may not have expected; to the manufacturers and tinkerers who, for example, swapped car manufacture for ventilators, distilled sanitiser instead of beer, and to the crafty seamstresses who sewed face masks.

To the people who offered to buy groceries, cook meals, walk dogs for the elderly.

To those who kept their distance, did not hoard and kept me laughing with delightfully silly self-isolation clips on social media.

Every day reinforced what we have evolved to be, creative and collaborative problem solvers rising to a challenge when a worldwide test was underway. That we can be kind, minimalist and adaptive.

So, I thank the challenges of 2020 for showing us what our creative spirit can achieve, in the moments of deep fear and duress.

As I finalise this manuscript, we are slowly emerging from the unprecedented period of our lifetimes.

I hope that together we can use this time to focus on the bigger challenge of this century, to flatten the curve of climate change. Let's use the power that happens at the intersection of science and creativity to create a sustainable and equitable earth for all.

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