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a MESSAGE from SYLVIA

CREATIVITY: How to Make the Ordinary Extraordinary

It's common for people to tell me they aren't creative. I assume clients and business acquaintances are referring to their lack of talent for painting, writing, decorating, or thinking outside the box. The truth is creativity can be learned, and infusing it at work can be simple. In my feature article below I'm going to show you how. But first I want to share a story.

While I don't recall many details about most of my public educational path, I do cherish vivid memories about sixth grade. Through his steady use of creativity my thirty-something teacher took *going to school* to the next level. Within minutes he cut cartoon characters from construction paper without an outline. He designed three dimensional bulletin boards long before his peers attempted it. He made dramatic mobiles and hung them from the classroom ceiling. Every week he rearranged our desks in a different configuration. He let us read grown up books, introduced us to avant garde poetry, and immersed us in projects about exotic countries. Frequently he asked why we felt what we felt, thought what we thought, and did what we did. Life with Fred Goudy was a real adventure!

Decades later I realized what made all of it so special: it was the strategic

interjection of creativity into the routine: his artsy handwriting with colored chalk on the black board, his pet names for each of us, his use of words I'd never heard. It was the "forbidden" motorcycle rides after play practice and his funny letters the following summer. For me sixth grade wasn't just another academic challenge; it was **an extraordinary experience**. Fred's creativity made a difference for a room full of kids, and YOUR creative efforts can make a difference for you and your staff.

Sylvia

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FEATURE ARTICLE

21 Creative Ideas for Altering the Routine

So you're not creative? You can choose to change that. A dash of creativity often adds just the spice you need to inspire staff and boost results. It's like putting a drop of food coloring into a glass of clear water. Voila! Ordinary H₂O—now red or blue or green—has acquired some pizzazz. Of course the water is still water, but in a lot of ways it's better. Even an ounce of creativity at work can accomplish the same thing.

Creativity is about "switching it up", stirring the pot, or hitting the "refresh" button. It's about purposely upsetting routine to keep people engaged, reduce negative stress, and improve the bottom line. Consider the following suggestions for infusing a little or a lot of creativity in your daily activities, understanding that not all of these ideas may be appropriate for your workplace.



Pick a few and see what happens.

1. Enhance the physical environment with plants, artwork, or a fresh coat of paint.
2. Tell a true story that illustrates a point.
3. Do something you've never tried before.
4. Figure out what it would take for each employee to use his/her strengths at least 70% of the time.
5. Play upbeat music as people arrive in the morning.
6. Appoint a "boss" for the day.
7. Sprinkle a few high level vocabulary words into your conversations.
8. Ask people what they would change about their jobs.
9. Rearrange conference room chairs.
10. Incorporate objects, toys, or collectibles into a group discussion.
11. Record an attractive message on your answering machine or voice mail.
12. Create a collage of photographs from several organizational events.
13. Ask open ended questions when you are tempted to tell...tell...tell.
14. Speak softly when folks expect you to be loud.
15. Doodle on a tablet.
16. Visualize a desired outcome to a nagging problem.
17. Initiate a solution focused conversation instead of dishing out harsh criticism when someone makes a mistake or fails.
18. Plan a talent recognition luncheon.
19. Hold a contest.
20. Solicit people's opinions about how they think a group conflict can be resolved.
21. Schedule fifteen minutes a day just for fun.

Did you see a couple of ideas you like? A few that are possible in your current environment? I'm giving you full permission to try them!

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What Clients Say

I truly value Sylvia's insights and feedback. I can honestly say that I look forward to our calls each month. She really helps me think things through and to look at difficult situations from various perspectives. She also challenges me to assess myself and to find ways to improve my skill set. Always encouraging me to build upon the positive, Sylvia works with me to strengthen the areas that need improvement. She is certainly a significant contributor to my success.

Jennifer Fetterhoff
Associated Wholesalers, Inc.

Offers and Opportunities

BRAND NEW! VIP DAYS

Launching Lives is excited to announce VIP Days as a new addition to the company's support packages. Conducted virtually or face to face, these single packed days consist of three to four structured hours (including breaks) of focused, private time with Sylvia. The big benefit? FAST RESULTS when you need them most. Are you wrestling with a particular job related problem now? Do you have a specific career goal you want to achieve? Is time an important factor in the equation? If time matters, a VIP intensive may be right for you. Learn more by contacting Sylvia directly at 717-761-5457 or Sylvia@launchinglives.biz

RESOURCES

Sylvia's Simple Guide for a Consciously Creative Day

Before beginning your day, take five minutes to ask yourself (and answer) the following questions:

- How can I BE more creative today?
- What must I BELIEVE in order to function more creatively today?
- How can I MOTIVATE others to be more creative today?
- How can I EXPRESS myself more creatively today?
- What can I DO that is creative today?

Note: You may want to print these questions on a 3 x 5 card and carry it with you or strategically position it in a location you view often.

PLUS--two books for creativity conscious managers to consider:

- *The Manager's Guide to Fostering Innovation and Creativity in Teams* by Dr. Charles Prather (2009); available on Amazon.com for \$13.00.
- *The Creative Manager: Finding Inner Vision and Wisdom in Uncertain Times* by Peter Russell and Rodger Evans (1992); hardback available on Amazon.com for \$33.00.

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Dare to Do It Differently

Think about something you do regularly: facilitate meetings, provide instructions, plan projects, raise funds, make phone calls, respond to emails, lead brainstorming sessions, or write reports. Claim it as part of your work. Then walk yourself through the approach you take, the words you use, the process you follow, and the style you apply. Determine how long you've been doing it exactly this way. Weeks? Months? Years? This tip invites you to alter just one aspect of how you do that task or activity and track results over ninety days.

For example, maybe over the last year you've been convening general

staff meetings on the first Monday of each month for two hours. During those meetings you do most of the talking and folks seem bored. How could you interject a bit of creativity? Change the meeting day? Reduce the time from two hours to one? Give other people opportunities to share information and successes? Start a provocative discussion? Serve a snack? Decide how you can switch it up to spice it up. You won't be sorry.

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Where in the World is SYLVIA?

During the month of July Sylvia and her company are proud to be featured in the Central Penn Business Journal's special color edition titled "2013 Business Profiles". This full page piece includes the story of Launching Lives, LLC as well as a beautiful outdoor photograph. Be sure to take a peek. It's an example of traditional marketing at its best.



Join Sylvia on these social networks!

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About This Ezine

This Ezine is 1) to provide readers with valuable FREE content which contributes to both personal and professional growth and 2) to invite them to take next steps toward working directly with Sylvia.

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Launching Lives Ezine is dedicated, above all, to "building people ... building businesses." ©2010, 2011, 2012, 2013

About SYLVIA

Sylvia Hepler, Owner and President of Launching Lives, LLC, specializes in career development for both corporate and nonprofit executives and managers. Based in South Central PA, she specifically supports clients as they upgrade their current job performance, seek a promotion, or plan/navigate a career transition. What makes her services unique is that Sylvia helps people to cope with change, loss, and grief as they work on developing their careers. Her professional background includes: nonprofit executive management/leadership, nonprofit community health program start-up, program evaluation, public speaking, business and freelance writing, teaching, and retail sales.

A certified executive coach through The Rescue Institute in Colorado and a participant in extensive continuing education opportunities with several executive coaches of national notoriety, Sylvia offers individual and group coaching, assessments, teleseminars, workshops, keynote speeches, and retreats. She has also created products that augment her coaching services. For more information contact:

[Launching Lives Website](#)

[Click to contact Sylvia by Email](#)

Reach Sylvia by phone at 717-761-5457

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Launching Lives SERVICES

Launching Lives, LLC is a full service career development company for executives located in South Central PA. Utilizing a holistic approach to service provision, Launching Lives focuses on supporting clients as they create the platinum level career they desire by upgrading their job performance, seeking a promotion, or planning/navigating a career transition

Often people don't really know HOW they might benefit from coaching. Quite simply, ask yourself these questions: "What can't I seem to resolve on my own? What is keeping me awake at night? What am I missing when I look at a certain situation? How can I get to the next professional level? How can I learn certain skills quickly? How can I narrow my professional gaps? How can I motivate my staff? How can I communicate more effectively so I serve myself and others better? How can I reduce my work-related frustration? How can I develop a viable plan of action for myself and/or my

organization? How can I obtain greater job satisfaction? Coaching is the **SOLUTION** to any of these issues.

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