

An open notebook with a blank, cream-colored page. A black pen with a silver band lies horizontally across the page. A green ribbon bookmark is visible on the right side, partially tucked under the page. The notebook's dark brown cover is visible at the bottom and right edges.

Empty Mind, Blank Page

***50 Ways to Unblock
Or
Unleash Your Creativity***

John C. Panepinto, PsyD

Empty Mind, Blank Page:

50 Ways to Unblock or Unleash Your Creativity

By

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INTRODUCTION

I have always been interested in creativity. I have always been interested in communicating with the written word—and I have always been interested in relationships. But it was only recently that I considered a deeper look into writing as a means of expressing our relationship between our self as we are right now and our deepest Self.

This work is not intended to make you a better writer. That will be a natural outcome of the process of creating, writing and reflecting. In the pages to follow we will look at what helps creativity to flow and what causes it to back up and stagnate. We are all born with the amazing gift of imagination, as well as the ability to reflect. We are self-aware beings and as we expand our consciousness we expand our ability to meet and develop new ideas. It is this very process of life, the richness with which we interact with our environment and self-reflect, that fuels originality. It does not matter whether you are writing fiction or non-fiction; the question is always whether you have let the reader hear your voice, your unique take on whatever the content may be.

In the beginning we all feel the mechanical process of getting words to paper. Just as any developing skill, there are many milestones to reach before we get to the place where we meet thoughts and ideas on a truly creative level, a level that allows the space of Empty Mind to weave a web onto the canvas of Blank Page.

Unblock *and* Unleash

In the title of this work, I state 50 ways to unblock *or* unleash your creativity. Perhaps you are having difficulty getting your creativity to flow. Or, perhaps, you want to simply be more creative. Creativity is truly a “letting go.” The process is more one of letting things happen than making things happen. To make a leap in creativity, you must be in flow, which means being truly present as a witness to the process. To get to this point, your imagination has asked the right questions, your intuition has had hunches or inklings, and you have allowed the process to bubble below the surface of manifestation. In other words, you have allowed the conditions of creativity to dynamically intermingle in your subconscious. Now, it is time to unleash into the structured form that allows you to communicate to others, that which existed first as something ineffable.

Some may have come to this work to unleash their creativity. Some may have come to unblock... The process looks very similar once we get below the surface. But for those who have become “blocked,” the content will have you examine four levels that you can reflect on to unblock what already exists beyond the obstacles. Ideas are already out there in the web of wisdom. Where else would they be? We only need to connect with the idea at that deep dynamic level.

These four levels will ask you specific questions, and the principles within these questions are strewn throughout the work. Here are four levels that may require some reflection and attention in order for you to become unblocked:

- Physical: What is the state of your physical being?

- Emotional: What is the state of your connection with others? Are you being true to self?
- Mental: What are you aware of, what are you learning? Do you need to change your “mind?”
- Spiritual: Are you connected to meaning? Purpose? Is what you are involved with highest and best right now?

Simply put, when you are aligned you will unleash. This is not to say that all will be perfect within the four levels. Awareness is the key. Often adversity within the four levels inspires creativity and it is the awareness of this challenge that allows us to be free to create. If we are unaware or immersed in the adversity, it may be more difficult to tap into the full creative process.

The When and Where

When I was very young, I remember reading an article about when one should write. I don't remember who wrote it, but the rigidity of the creative process stuck in my naïve mind. Later on, I realized that the rigidity was the person and not the process. It was that author's subjective experience of what worked for her. Since that realization, I have written in the morning, in the evening, after a meal, on an empty stomach, after too much champagne, too much coffee or not enough water.

Once my sons were born, the luxury of time and place shrunk into tiny capsules. I wrote when and where I could. The process was no less enjoyable and I didn't "feel" any different.

The one thing I have noticed about writing is that creativity follows the "Law of Rhythm." This law explains the ebb and flow of natural processes: We sleep, we wake. We work, we rejuvenate. Given this, creativity can hit you out of nowhere and often the words that transcend your present state do not come in your time, but in its own time. It reminds me of the difference between small and big goals. The bigger the goal, the less control you have in how long it takes and even what it may look like. So many other lives and goals and dreams intertwine with your own....

Writing is its own reward, but we may experience the reward more deeply when we allow the process of creativity to become a part of our process of living fully.

The Why

We are all born with an exquisite mind and brainpower that thrives on achieving goals, seeking patterns and thrilling at the novelty of life. The *why* of creativity speaks to our motivation to create, solve problems, communicate and express. We are born storytellers. We share attention and talk about life. We write about that which moves us or that which moves us to help others.

We must also be responsible with the motivation. When we identify with the product then we are in the trap of the ego. Anything that follows “I am...” or “I believe...” is part of the structure called the Ego. The Ego has its etymological roots in the Latin word “I”. While the ego is a necessary structure for identity, it can often reach beyond its boundaries and limit the evolution of identity. For example consider these two statements:

1) I am a writer.

2) I am someone who writes.

While they may appear similar these statements really are from different classes. We will often defend what defines us.

Follow this with words of Vivekananda that are over a century old:

“Words are only a mode of mind acting on mind,” and, “I am not the mind, I see that I am thinking, I am watching my mind act.”

We are not what we create. Never is this more obvious than the abuse of the First Amendment. Freedom of speech was never intended to mean that I can

say whatever I please. The time and place that gave rise to the First Amendment was very different—the context was one of oppressor and oppressed. We are motivated to create, but we must also be responsible for what we create. This is a principle that exists on the each level of life.

Motivation becomes a key source of flow, and a non-integrative source of motivation can equally lead to stagnation.