

Creativity, the gift that keeps us growing

 By [Gareth Leck](#)

9 Dec 2020

Theories abound about how organisations can keep growing in the face of a fast-evolving consumer, rapidly changing technology and agile global competition...

While some see this as a form of survival of the fittest, I like to see it as the story of human adaptation and a triumph of human creativity. When all things are said and done, I believe it is creativity that propels us forward as a species, and it is the primal force behind the sustained growth of any human organisation.

Here are four reasons why I believe creativity is the gift that keeps us growing:

1. Creativity is the journey of discovering human possibilities

The process of creativity is like embarking on a journey whose destination is not always known. As humans seek out particular solutions to the problems they face and use their creativity to do so, their journey often leads them to unexpected and unimagined places.

When Apple developed the iPhone, who would have imagined how smart a smartphone could be? How smart a connected watch would become? Not even Apple surely. And yet there we have it: an Apple Watch with its ECG feature that notifies its user when he or she is getting an irregular heartbeat, and by doing so we have discovered that a smart watch is so smart it may just save lives.

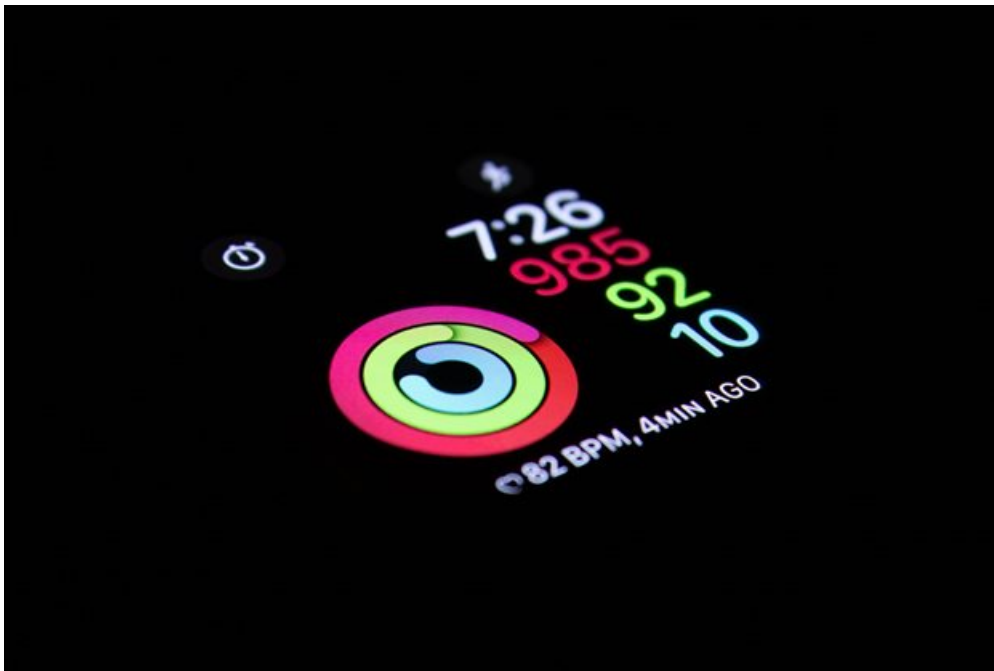


Photo by [Ryan Stone](#) on [Unsplash](#)

In other words, creativity is the journey of discovering human possibilities.

2. Creativity not only accepts failure as part of the journey, it harnesses it

Wieden+Kennedy's (arguably one of America's most successful independent advertising agencies) founding mantra is "fail harder". Wieden+Kennedy is famous for encouraging its teams to come to work and do their utmost every day to fail as hard as they possibly can, and have as much fun as possible along the way.

The relationship between failure and creativity is a fascinating one. It not only accepts failure as part of the journey, it makes it an integral part of it. The illuminating solution arises from hours spent in the dark. The breakthrough idea that stands tall among others is born from repeatedly falling and stumbling to the ground. The idea that shines brightest almost always comes as result of taking many side roads, and many dead ends.

In this regard, it could be said that creativity's best friend is failure.

3. Creativity uses criticism as a driver of growth

Likewise, creativity has a different relationship to criticism. It not only welcomes criticism, it actively seeks it.

Elon Musk is one of the world's most prolific creators. In observing Musk in numerous interviews and in reading many articles about him, the thing that most stands out about him is his belief in the power of criticism. In fact, Musk has been famously quoted as saying:

“ Constantly seek criticism. A well-thought-out critique of whatever you're doing is as valuable as gold. ”

Musk is an example of a world-changing creative leader who has taken the notion of learning from criticism to its ultimate level, and used it as one of his main driving forces in growing his businesses.

4. Creativity harnesses the power of collaboration

David Droga, the founder of Droga5, once said: “If you have to do it all yourself, it will all take much longer, and perhaps too long.”



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Droga5 bases their approach on solving problems with creativity and collaboration, but more profoundly, it acknowledges that collaboration is an integral part of the creative process itself. Different ways of thinking enrich the creative process as opposed to creating tension or weakening the process. Creativity in fact connects the dots between different realms, experiences and ideas. That indeed is perhaps the very definition of creativity.

To conclude, I like to think there is something almost revolutionary about creativity: it accepts the power of wandering, it harnesses the power of failure and criticism, and it welcomes different ways of thinking.

ABOUT GARETH LECK

Gareth Leck completed his B.Com. degree at the University of Cape Town in 1994 and in 1995 he completed a postgraduate in Marketing at AAA School of Advertising.

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