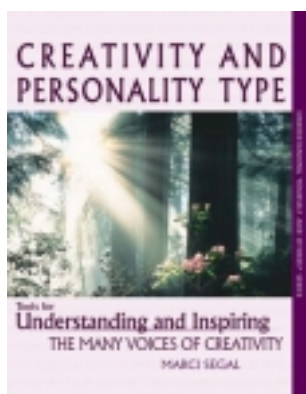


The wonders of creation



Marci Segal: *Creativity and Personality Type*

Reviewed by
Helmine Kemp

Marci Segal is a Canadian-based MBTI qualifying instructor with strong ties to APT and the Creative Education Foundation. Marci is a senior faculty member at the Creative Problem Solving Institute (Buffalo, NY and San Diego).

I was excited at the opportunity to review this book, since I have a strong interest in using and inspiring creative approaches with groups. I have been using a variety of techniques to do this. As an ENFJ, I am mostly interested in the impact the tools have on people and how they can be applied to help groups. I also enjoy applying creativity to my own problem solving, and I am always looking for new and interesting approaches or different perspectives.

One interesting observation, for me, about creativity is the tendency for it to be equated with being 'arty'. I myself took a long time to discover that I could be creative, and was initially quite surprised when people would respond with 'how creative of you!' when I made suggestions or had an idea. I started to realise that creativity is about a whole lot of things, not just 'art' or having artistic flair.

Marci points out that this is also an issue in Canada and the USA. Creativity is teachable and transferable, and her book provides a range of methods, tools and insights into attitudes to inspire creativity.

The book has two goals: to help the reader recognise their own creative capacities, incorporating a temperament/MBTI perspective; and to demystify the notion of creativity. I think it achieves both.

I followed the recommendation and worked through the book from start to finish. It has six sections:

1. Exploring creativity
2. Discovering your creative voice
3. Jung's theory of psychological type
4. Idea-generating setup
5. Tools for inspiring the many voices of creativity
6. Appendices (glossary and type descriptions).

All tie together well and help the reader to build a picture of their own creativity through exercises and exploratory questions.

The introductory section explains creativity as tied to creation: 'the spark of life, the vitality that stirs the desire to improve and change the status quo—meaningfully, responsibly, wisely and with impact'. This connection provides an image of creative activity as cyclical, and establishes a good basis for exploring the topic. The section has a number of worksheets and tables to help the reader identify the stages that make up the cycle of creating and to help the reader build the strengths to move their thinking through those stages.

As in the rest of the book, the personal exploration tables and exercises have potential to be used with groups. I didn't initially do the exercises myself, but as I progressed through the section I found myself intrigued enough to use them. The exercises in the first section provide a good foundation and introduction to the topic, and they certainly helped to establish understanding.

Marci identifies the components of creativity as *product*, *person*, *process* and the *environment*. I liked this approach, as it helps to identify the full range of issues that need to be addressed when using creativity by yourself or with groups.

The four components highlight the areas facilitators need to work with to establish optimal conditions for creative thinking to succeed. There are practical ideas under each component, and a range of tools for evaluating creative *products*; motivating and stimulating creative thinking in *people*; *processes* to encourage creativity; and identifying the features and supports required to establish an *environment* to encourage creative activity.

I particularly liked the focus on establishing the right environment. This section will form a checklist for my own thinking when I next facilitate a creative exercise. It is also a useful guide for teams and organisations that want to establish an environment that encourages innovation and creativity in the workplace.

My experience with groups has highlighted the different reactions that people have to the use of creative processes and approaches. This appears to be linked to the MBTI dimensions: some people seem to really struggle with creative processes, some find it difficult to suspend their logic, while others seem to flourish and work easily with those same processes.

I was therefore particularly interested in section 2, which looks at the connection between creativity and temperament. This section contains a practical demonstration of how the different temperaments relate to creativity.

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Along with the MBTI section, I gained a useful basis for understanding the reactions of individuals during creative exercises. The sections highlight the different needs of individuals and the different contributions each brings to the process. Again, the quick tips and checklists are a great resource and can be used for self-awareness, as a one on one, or with groups.

The MBTI section is also a good resource. Even after many years of using and presenting the MBTI, I found this section to provide a different and interesting way of explaining the concepts of type. Marci explains the type dynamics and extraverted/introverted functions, and connects these to 'ways' of being creative. This provided me with a basis for planning future activities.

The concept of 'discovering your creative voice' is an affirming one, and I believe it helps to encourage us all to see our own special creative abilities. As a practitioner of both MBTI and creative techniques I found this section particularly useful and interesting. Not only does it explain the different attitudes, approaches and expressions of creativity you see in others, it also provides a useful insight into the environment required for all types to be able to express their 'creative voices'.

The fifth section will appeal to the practitioners among us, with explanations and descriptions of specific tools and exercises which will help to inspire divergent and convergent processes. Marci gives very clear instructions.

I recognised some of the elements in the exercises, but they were often being used slightly differently or had a different context. This gave me ideas about how else I could use the techniques and tools. It also helped with understanding why you might use a particular tool over another, by drawing on the connection to MBTI.

Another issue which has intrigued me over the years is the way groups sometimes play with creative ideas to develop innovative options, but then draw back during the decision-making stage to the less 'different' solutions/ideas. I was therefore pleased to see the tools encouraging decision making which incorporated creativity included in the book. This is also connected to the MBTI type preferences.

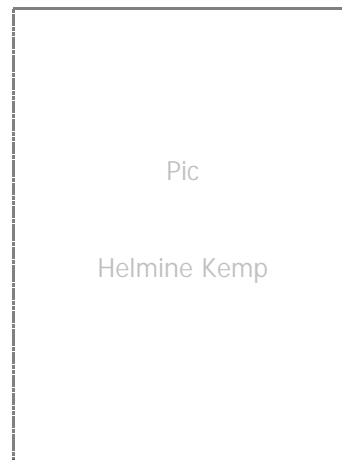
Overall, I thoroughly enjoyed the ideas and concepts in the book. It inspired my thinking and exploration of the topic, and it provided the connections I was seeking to the MBTI preferences. I gained some insights into the reactions of the participants when I facilitate groups through creative processes.

The workbook also encouraged me to explore my own creativity in more depth. I feel these exercises and questions are a valuable resource to use either in one-on-one processes or with groups.

Many will like the tools Marci includes in the book. I particularly liked the 'ICE' tool which incorporates emotion into the decision-making process. Being an ENFJ, this is particularly important, especially when working with largely 'T-preference' groups.

I thoroughly recommend this book to anyone who wants to use creative processes with groups, or to incorporate creativity into their own problem-solving. I'm looking forward to using a few of the tools in my next workshop. ❖

Marci Segal, *Creativity and Personality Type: Tools for Understanding and Inspiring the Many Voices of Creativity*, Telos, 2001.



HELMINE KEMP (ENFJ) is a learning and development consultant who works with government agencies and runs a consultancy, Creative Training and Development, with her husband John. MBTI forms an integral part of her work with groups and individual coaching, providing a basis of self-awareness and understanding of style, perspective and difference.

Helmine also applies creative techniques to applications including problem-solving, developing marketing plans, work design and planning. She is an AusAPT member and a South Australian council member with AITD.

The more deeply the vision of the creative mind penetrates, the stranger it becomes to mankind in the mass, and the greater is the resistance to the man who in any way stands out from the mass.

C G Jung, *Psychological Types*

'I am a genius', he suddenly told me ...

'What are you a genius at? Painting?'

'That is part of it, but it is more my creative intuition.'

'You have a superior insight? A greater understanding?'

'I am very receptive.'

Salvador Dali, interviewed by Peter Lennon
Foreign Correspondent: Paris in the Sixties, 1994