

Chapter Nine — Creativity, Innovation, and Aesthetic

Instincts Can Enhance Peace

We have prospered as a nation because we have allowed our creative instincts to flourish.

We are stronger economically at multiple levels because we have encouraged invention, innovation, and creativity at multiple levels.

Some countries with restrictive cultures have banned innovation and restricted creativity in a wide range of areas.

We are stronger at multiple functional levels because we take delight as a culture in figuring out how to do things better than we have done them before. That is not an insignificant blessing to us as a country — and it is an aspect of our culture that we should embrace and encourage for the years that lie ahead.

This would also actually be a very good time for us to channel our creativity and our instinctive innovation skills into creating, reinforcing, strengthening, and selling Peace.

To give ourselves the best opportunity to create true Peace, we need our best artists — our musicians and filmmakers and our visual art creators — to create art that celebrates our common humanity and helps us all both understand and achieve Peace.

Creativity is clearly an instinctive behavior.

We have instincts to be creative in a wide variety of ways. We will be well served at this point in our history if we very intentionally use our instincts to be creative and even to be decorative as support tools to both create and maintain Peace.

We very clearly have a very powerful and universal set of instincts to be aesthetic — to decorate and visually enhance our dwellings, our environments, our apparel and even ourselves — our own person.

The very earliest human artifacts that have been uncovered by archaeologists tend to be a mixture of stone tools and shell or stone beads. The tools that existed were clearly functional. The beads that existed were clearly decorative.

Some anthropologists believe the beads may actually have also had some economic use and value as trading tools. If that was true, it says something important about the power and the impact on us of our aesthetic instinct that our very earliest ancestors in a wide variety of settings chose to define property and to create an economic system in very primitive and primal settings by using as the working currency for those settings a product that clearly had primarily aesthetic value instead of functional value.

We invent jewelry everywhere.

We also, in all settings, produce music. A number of our earliest artifacts were musical instruments. Every historical and legacy culture has its music and its musical traditions and approaches.

So the basic patterns have been that every society has decorated itself and every society has decorated its abodes. Every culture has also produced some levels of music and specific types of performance art that have met the musical and performance needs of the culture and as well as developing various forms of pure art that met the artistic needs for each culture.

Cultures tend to be relevant to art. Cultures all create their own aesthetic guidelines and develop their own rules for music, apparel, and decorative features. Our clothing often reflects our culture.

Each culture tends to take pride in the art and music it produces and each culture tends to identify with its own visual aesthetic values — including the aesthetic approaches that are embedded in the clothes we wear.

Cultures use those rules and those consistent apparel approaches to help create a visual sense of group identity — a visual category of “us.”

Military groups and religious groups both often use uniform apparel of some kind to help create or communicate a visual sense of collective “us.”

Our Apparel Reflects Both Creativity And Status

The processes used to create apparel are often very creative. The uniforms and the costumes of people in various cultures over the course of history have given us a rich array of visual pleasures and aesthetic satisfaction. Some cultures have achieved very high creativity levels in the design and construction of their apparel.

Our basic Alpha instincts can overlap directly with our ability to be aesthetic and decorative. Our apparel approaches are often used by cultures to communicate status and rank as well as to indicate group membership and group alignment.

The wealthiest and the most powerful people in many settings tended to have the richest array of visual beauty in their apparel and their living settings. The costumes of kings and emperors and the robes and the ornamental jewelry of tribal chiefs for many cultures have tended to be elaborate, complex, and beautiful — using high levels of skills at multiple levels to create things of self-centered and obvious beauty for the people who hold Alpha and other elevated status levels in many settings.

In military settings, the uniforms of the Generals and the Admirals tend to be the uniforms with the most elaborate decorative elements. Private soldiers and ordinary seamen in most military settings don't wear gold braid.

Our apparel often helps identify which group we are in and it often helps signal our relative status in that group.

Each culture tends to have its own very clear set of apparel guidelines and tendencies. The differences between the traditional apparel of a city in India and a city in China and a city in Europe are obvious to any observer.

Inside each culture, the various relevant rules for culturally accepted apparel tend to be clear to everyone in the culture.

Some Cultures Use Apparel As A Control Tool

Each society sets its own overall cultural patterns for desirable and acceptable apparel. People within each society tend to be very creative in the context of those cultural rule sets.

A few cultures who have not wanted to encourage creativity in those areas have very intentionally and very deliberately shunned and banned obvious and visible variations in apparel. Those cultures who ban variation create a sense of group solidarity by having every group member dress alike.

Uniforms of many kinds exist in many settings. Highly consistent apparel for any group of people makes an easy visual statement about each person's commitment to the uniform-wearing group.

Military uniforms tend to be rigidly designed and very carefully defined in the context of each military group. Military people can be

punished in some settings for wearing any non-standard items on their uniform.

One reason for a culture to strictly mandate apparel is that it can help reduce the extent that any person might act in ways that are outside the behavioral constraints that are imposed consciously and intentionally on the group members by the leadership of the group.

But even in those particular settings where specific cultures directly impose uniformity — when we look closely at people inside those restrictive cultures — we generally see that many people in those cultures who still manage to express significant levels of personal aesthetic creativity even within those narrow constraints.

In schools that mandate uniforms, for example, some students express creativity in their choice of belt — or even belt fabric. It is very hard to entirely suppress our instincts to be creative in our appearance.

The cultures that mandate absolute and rigid uniformity are the exception — but all cultures do create overall expectations about the level of apparel that is the norm for that culture and setting.

Our cultures each find their ways of allowing our instincts to be aesthetic to blossom and all cultures do that in an overall context that sets parameters on variation for members of their group.

We See Works Of Art In Our Earliest Settings

Our cultures have produced statues, paintings, and multiple examples of art that go back as far as we have records of people living together in specific locations that lent themselves to decoration. Some cave walls in several settings where our earliest ancestors lived have some amazingly lovely art painted on them.

We are actually not alone in having some level of aesthetic instinct.

Some species of birds also decorate their nests. Some mammals — like raccoons — that build their own versions of dens or nests — have been known to very carefully and deliberately add various and sundry items to their living settings that clearly seem to be more aesthetic and decorative than functional.

But no other species comes anywhere near close to the overwhelming human instinct that we have to be aesthetic in very creative and innovative ways.

Various cultures have placed a high priority in creating levels of influence or direct control over the creative behaviors of their culture members. The cultures of ancient imperial China and the culture of Elizabethan England each created their own apparel, building designs, and works of art. Each culture was very creative and each was also very rigid.

Anyone in China who would have attempted to work the British or French model of sword or knife carriers into the official military gowns of the emperor or his general might easily have been executed for aesthetic heresy.

Any culture-defying variation in one of the beautiful tea ceremonies or in the design elements of the ornamental gardens in some settings ran the risk of aesthetic exile or punishment for the person attempting to create the variation.

Cultural Values Can Be Enforced By Disapproval

Each culture tends to set its own aesthetic values. Many cultures literally have punished anyone who varies from those rules in any significant way. We do that today to some degree.

The punishment for violating some aesthetic rules in our country today can be as simple as disapproval. Peer influence and a sense of approval or disapproval within a culture is often sufficient to get people to act in ways that fit each cultures current aesthetic rules.

We find it easy to create those kinds of expectations for our various relevant groups. The Hip Hop Culture and the Beat Culture each had their own internal aesthetic rule sets.

People in each culture in each setting tended to know their internal rules very well. Various styles of music everywhere in the world tend to create their own internal expectations and rule sets, and people who believe in those expectations often reject and even ban variations in those approaches.

Likewise, each setting and each group of people tends to bring with them their own array of culturally linked apparel. Staying current on fashion can be extremely important to many people in various ways at different times in our lives. Working to fit in to our relevant and situational cultural expectations is clearly one of our instinct-linked behaviors.

Thomas Jefferson once said, “In matters of principal — stand like a rock. On matters of fashion — flow with the stream.”

Jefferson understood that fashion at any given point in time tended to evolve — and his point was that people should be true to their core beliefs on key issues, but people should also enjoy the evolution of culture and people should flow with the stream of current fashion.

The American Dream Is Enhanced And Strengthened

Creativity

That particular set of instincts to decorate, to innovate, and to create various forms of art is relevant to this book about intergroup interactions and relevant to the task of getting people from multiple groups to achieve a state of Peace at several levels.

At one level, this topic is important because creativity is a human value that we should all cherish, enjoy and protect. Protection for our creativity is relevant as a legitimate and relevant goal for us as a people. We should not forget that there are some belief systems and some cultures that make creativity at some levels or all levels illegal.

We have had a magnificent blossoming of our arts and sciences and fashion in our country and we should not take that blossoming and its fruits for granted. That freedom to be creative has given us great benefit and value. We should both cherish and protect that freedom and that value.

We should protect our diversity in those areas. We can all benefit from other groups best practices. We should celebrate how much benefit we all receive from having access to the best foods and the best music of other groups of people.

Our Aesthetic Diversity Creates Value And Benefit

A key part of the American Dream is our ability to be inclusive and accepting of other people's cultures — including the food, music, apparel, and art of other cultures.

We need to celebrate our collective creativity and we simultaneously need to enjoy our aesthetic variety rather than allowing those differences to divide us in any way.

We need to celebrate and embrace our diversity in all of those areas, rather than either constraining our creativity or channeling it into narrow approaches.

We should each celebrate our own cultures and we should all utilize the best factors and the best features created by other groups and cultures.

Our clear goal should be continuous cultural improvement — making our cultures continuously better rather than having our cultures constrain who we are and limit what we do when we want to do things to make our lives better.

Instead of having our apparel divide us, we need to both learn to appreciate and enjoy the diversity of apparel that springs from all of our diverse sets of people. We should look collectively to find ways of using our creativity to aesthetically support and celebrate diversity, humanity, and collective Peace.

We Need Our Creative People to Foster Peace

A major and very intentional goal for us all right now should be to use our aesthetic instincts at multiple levels to build and create works of music and art that support Peace. We need art that reflects the beauty and joy of Peace.

We need to channel some of our very powerful creativity into the cause of Peace.

Art and music have great power to help people understand and appreciate very basic and very human realities. Music, poetry, books, theater and films that can help us understand and appreciate each other and that support the goals and the agendas we collectively agree on are all very good tools that we can and should use to help us collectively achieve intergroup understanding, intergroup appreciation, intergroup personalization, and Intergroup Peace.

Music Can Bring People Together

Music is a very powerful tool that can be used to bring people together. That happens very intentionally now.

Nations everywhere have their National anthems. All countries all tend to have their National patriotic songs.

Singing an anthem together can be a unifying, bonding, and group strengthening experience. People from multiple settings can feel a proud sense of “us” when their anthem is played.

We have an anthem for our country and we have a couple of patriotic songs that serve the same purpose. *God Bless America* and *America the Beautiful* can trigger the same kinds of shared and mutually reinforcing positive feelings as our anthem.

There are a number of other lovely and powerful songs that celebrate us as a people and a country.

There are even team songs that serve a similar unifying purpose. Athletic teams and schools often have a team song that people sometimes sing in team settings to create a sense of group alignment.

It would be a good thing for us to add some lovely and inclusive songs to that set of unifying musical experiences that celebrate us in our entirety and that celebrate the enlightened values we all need to share.

We are compulsively and instinctively aesthetic. Our world is better because we have that package of instincts. We should enjoy that instinct for its own inherent qualities and we should also utilize that creative instinct package more effectively in our common cause and our common purpose to create collective sharing and intergroup Peace.

We Need to Use Our Inventive Instincts for Peace

We should very intentionally also use our basic instincts to be functionally inventive in the cause of intergroup understanding and Intergroup Peace.

We also need to invent ways of enhancing Peace.

It is clear that we not only have instincts to be creative in our aesthetics — we have related instincts to be creative in our functionality.

Functional creativity is also a blessing that can make lives better. We have instincts to be functionally inventive — to create tools and processes and approaches that functionally improve our individual and collective lives.

Our tool building innovation is extensive. The pace of change that we are experiencing today for our tool building is increasing the reach and scope of our various creativity and connectivity tools almost exponentially. We use a wide range of new tools extensively in our country today and we are continually improving the tools we use.

Other species use tools as well. The instinct to use tools is not limited to us. Ants use tools to perform very specific structural functions. Raccoons, chimpanzees, and other primates often use sticks and rocks and sharp objects to do tool like things.

We humans, of course, go far beyond those simple, basic, and primitive uses of tools in a wide variety of ways.

We have invented carpentry, architecture, construction, and engineering. We have even created and use physics to expand our set of available tools. Physics is both a paradigm in itself and a very practical and effective tool kit builder.

Our instinct to create paradigms for all key aspects of our lives helps us with our innovation and invention instincts in many ways — but our innovation instincts go past simple paradigms to create functional tools for our use.

Our paradigms explain why things happen. Innovation, invention, and our tool building talents often actually make new things happen.

Innovation Strengthens The American Dream

We tend to delight in innovation. Many inventors deeply enjoy inventing. Many people enjoy seeing invention happen and celebrate the products of invention.

We can be obsessed with the need to innovate and we can be delighted when our innovation creates new and better ways of doing things — both important things and minor changes in our everyday lives.

We need to live in a country where the American Dream — in a very inclusive way — supports those levels of creativity and innovation for all of us — because we will be even more effective when more of us are exercising those talents and abilities.

In the most repressive and restrictive settings that exist in the world today, innovation is illegal. In many settings, change is forbidden. Change is outlawed by people in power in some settings who fear that change might impair their personal Alpha status or undermine the situational dominance of their group in their belief system.

Change is forbidden in other places by people who believe that we already know all things that need to be known and that any additional change in what we know is wrong and is even a sin.

Continuous Improvement Needs To Be Our Clear Goal

Governance restrictions on creativity in those repressive countries and settings cripple innovation.

We need to be at the extreme other end of that continuum — using innovation to help us all succeed and using invention and innovation very well to help the world to continuously improve.

Our functional goal as a country and as a people should literally be continuous improvement.

That approach isn't the one that has existed historically for much of the world. In many settings, key areas of innovation have been deliberately constrained by various societies, by various cultures, and by various hierarchies.

People who have held power and who had preferential economic status in many settings have deliberately and intentionally forced everyone to exclusively use the tools, the infrastructures, and the very specific economic systems that kept their current hierarchies in power and that have maintained and reinforced their current infrastructure and their current cultures.

The American Dream Protects Innovation and Creativity

One of the major contributions that America has made to the economy and functional status of the world and to the human race has been a combination of support for innovation compiled with functional economic protection under the law for innovators.

A key component of the American Dream — one that needs to be protected — is to enable and protect innovation. Humans everywhere have innovation instincts and innovation abilities.

Those innovation instincts do not, however, actually flower and bear fruit in very many settings. Some cultures create various laws and rules that

make some kinds of innovation illegal. Some settings explicitly ban innovation.

In too many settings, a lack of intellectual property protection can keep the local inventors who do invent or design something from being able to benefit from their inventions and designs.

Strict cultural and economic constraints and rule sets in many settings have kept many innovations from being used. Those cultural constraints have been applied to science in many settings as well as to other key aspects of society and art in those settings.

Innovation Is One Of Our Great Strengths

In America, invention and innovation is allowed, encouraged, and celebrated. It is one of our great strengths.

In this country, invention is both allowed and protected. We allow freedom of speech, freedom of invention, and we have the freedom to figure out businesses, products, and various services that people can set up to create a livelihood or even create wealth for themselves by creating the explicit services and the products that other people actually want to buy and use.

It isn't accidental that so many of the key innovations in a number of areas like music, computerization, computer connectivity, and paradigm adjusting product innovations come from American entrepreneurs.

Both our culture and our legal infrastructure allow real innovation to happen and allow that innovation to be realized and actualized in functional ways. We have encouraged both innovation and multi-cultural sharing for our food, our music, our art, and our apparel. People from all groups benefit from all groups now in multiple ways.

That diversity of food, art, and apparel makes us a better and more interesting place to live and it makes us the envy of the world.

We are far from perfect, but we do not create barriers to perfection in any key areas of our lives.

Keeping American Strong And Prosperous Strengthens Peace

That level of creative diversity, sharing, and creativity all needs to be utilized and protected to achieve and sustain intergroup Peace. We should not undervalue the goal of keeping America economically strong — because intergroup harmony is far more likely to happen in any setting when resources for everyone are sufficient for everyone.

Intergroup conflict is far more likely to happen in a setting when resources are scarce and when people are fighting both individually and collectively for their inadequate piece of an inadequate economic pie.

Chapter Twelve explains the six primary motivation triggers that can help create intergroup alignment. Those alignment triggers are also explained in more detail in *The Art of Intergroup Peace*.

One of the functional alignment triggers is collective gain — the ability to bring us together because we all do better economically when we are aligned.

For us to achieve intergroup Peace in this country and in order for us to sustain Peace over time, our success levels will be enhanced if we continue to collectively lead the world in innovation, invention, and entire areas of artistic and musical creativity — and fostering our innovation instincts needs to be part of that strategy.

We also need to make an effort to use our art at multiple levels to support, explain, defend, and extend intergroup understanding and a celebrative sense of our diverse common humanity. When artists take lead roles on those topics, we all benefit.

We need a next generation of poetic, artistic, and musical anthems and shared experiences and learning that all help bring us together and help us

appreciate our collective humanity and to appreciate and understand the value of Peace.

We do also need a strong economy — so that everyone in the economy can benefit and Peace can be sustained and supported and not starved in real settings because of insufficient resources for those settings.

Chapter Nine of this book explains those issues in more detail.

Our Instincts Structure Our Lives

We need to use our creative instincts to teach people the value, benefits, and beauty of Peace. We need to use our art, our cinema, and our music to celebrate our common humanity and the beauty of people doing loving, supportive, and caring things for people.

We need to use our creativity and our art to show the evil embedded in evil — and show the wonder of people doing the right things in a loving way for other people.

We truly need The Art of Peace to include art that supports Peace.

Our creativity makes us stronger, safer, and gives us the right tools to continuously improve our lives. We need to continue to make our creativity a key part of who we are and what we do.

This is the time for us to fully pursue and achieve The Art of Peace.

To do that well, we need to understand both how our instincts affect those issues and we need to know what tools our instincts use to influence or thoughts and behaviors.

The next chapter of this book deals with that set of issues.