

Creativity for Everybody

Kathryn P. Haydon and Jane Harvey, Sparkitivity LLC, 2015.

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Creative thinking is necessary for any business, and it is essential in the insights industry. But how to incorporate “creativity” in business has been a challenge. *Creativity for Everybody* is the best resource I have found to do just that. It synthesizes advanced creativity and innovation concepts as simple, beautifully illustrated ideas to unlock creativity in anyone and lead to more innovative business practices. I have given this book to many of my clients and recommended it to others.

I first met the authors, Kathryn Haydon and Jane Harvey, when we were classmates during my recently completed Master of Science in Creativity, Creative Problem Solving, and Change Leadership at the International Center for Studies in Creativity—the first and oldest creativity degree-granting institution in the world, which has close ties to the Creative Education Foundation that sponsors the Creative Problem Solving Institute (CPSI) conference that many of us have attended. During my studies, the authors and I were classmates in this creativity journey. This 24-month program required us to turn creativity on its head, looking at it inside-out, backward and forward. As we studied creativity theory, models, and tools, we experientially learned how the power of understanding creativity can aid individuals, teams, organizations, and even families.

The authors have taken the insights from this program and, in *Creativity for Everybody*, convey this knowledge to others, simply and easily but with the same depth and substance that we experienced.

Creativity for Everybody combines the talents of Kathryn, a writer-poet-educator, and Jane, a designer-artist-simplifier, into

a fun and engaging reading experience. It is a quick read on high-level creativity concepts that also outlines what insights require from us: original thinking, seeing connections, and emotional intelligence, which are all elements of creative thinking. As qualitative professionals, we need to connect the dots and find what may not be obvious. Taking an extensive journey into the study of creativity has allowed me to provide clients more options to dig deeper. I have witnessed the important role creative thinking plays in advancing service offerings for insights.

Qualitative research and creative thinking complement each other. It begins with nurturing your creative potential—and recognizing the barriers that get in the way. People get stuck in routine thinking. Without a roadmap to provide direction, you may not know you are already creative (everyone is). When you are leading innovation and creativity workshops, I highly suggest reading *Creativity for Everybody* beforehand. It sets the foundation for the rigor that can happen in these sessions when we, as the facilitators, are in touch with our creative thinking so that we may support it in others.

Practicing creativity makes us more adept at using it. Developing a creative mindset can open up the possibilities both for qualitative researchers who want creativity to impact their insights practice as well as for strategy and innovation experts. *Creativity for Everybody* outlines creativity as a framework, starting with creative behaviors we can recognize in others and ourselves. It defines and explains forces that positively and negatively influence creativity in organizations, teams, or even a single meeting. The book includes mini case studies that

illustrate how principles of creativity have been successfully employed to transform a small business department or initiate a deeper culture of innovation in a consumer products company.

Creativity for Everybody debunks the myth that creativity is for a select few. It empowers everyone to activate their creativity and that of others. Creative ideas don’t just appear as a matter of good luck. The book explains how we need to practice creativity for those times you need a new idea overnight or when your boss tells you to “think outside the box.”

This book has a remarkable ability to resonate with a broad range of people. Its varied design elements and creative components (simple prose, poetry, sidelines, and delightful endnotes) invite you into an engaging reading experience. *Creativity for Everybody* starts as a friendly warm-up to considering yourself creative, even if you haven’t identified as creative before. By page 55, you might believe creative insight is available to all of us. For those who already identify as creative, the book refreshingly describes what you have intuitively known but may not have articulated. The end section is a “bonus” that documents and further explains the research behind the concepts.

Organizations strive for people and processes to be efficient, but habits and routines won’t deliver innovation on demand. “Telling” anyone to “be creative” won’t guarantee the result. *Creativity for Everybody* is a friendly, fast introduction to the new thinking you need for your workshops and insights work.

Internalizing the concepts in this gem of a book has the potential to transform someone into a more creative individual, empowering you to make creativity part of your DNA, too. 