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The Book of Life - Guided Exercises in Building Your Big, Bold, Beautiful Life

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Buffalo State College
State University of New York
Department of Creative Studies

The Book of Life - Guided Exercises in Building Your Big, Bold, Beautiful Life

A Project in Creative Studies
by
Murray Altman-Kaough

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements
for the Degree of
Master of Science

December 2014

Abstract

The purpose of this project was to develop a series of guided visualizations through a workbook titled, *Book of Life*. This workbook was designed to impart CPS skills through hands' on art projects. Its focus is to cultivate creativity in underserved populations defined by both gender and age. Designed in a story book format for adult learners ages forty years and up, the activities are intended to support radical goal setting in the second half of life. In reimagining their futures from the broadest possible perspective, participants will be encouraged both to cultivate daily creativity and to consider the importance of continuing to develop a body of work.

Key words:

Women and creativity, creativity beyond midlife, adult learners, visual journal

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Contents

Copyright Notice.....	i
Abstract.....	ii
Acknowledgements.....	iii
Table of Contents.....	iv
Table of Figures.....	v
Title of the Paper.....	vi
Section One: Purpose and Description of the Project.....	1
Section Two: Pertinent Literature.....	8
Section Three: Process Plan.....	24
Section Four: Outcomes.....	36
Section Five: Key Learning.....	47
Section Six: Conclusion.....	56
References.....	60

Table of Figures

Figure 1. Book of Life Cover.....	44
Figure 2. Illustration #1.....	44
Figure 3. Illustration #2.....	44
Figure 4. Illustration #3.....	44
Figure 5. Illustration #4.....	45
Figure 6. Illustration #5.....	45
Figure 5. Redacted Word Poetry.....	50
Figure 6. Mind Map.....	50
Figure 7. Animal warm up exercise sample.....	53
Figure 8. Collage exercise sample #1.....	54
Figure 9. Collage exercise sample #2.....	54

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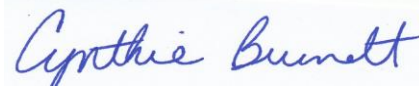
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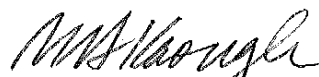
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December 1, 2014



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Section One: Purpose and Description of Project

"Storytelling is bringing up, hauling up; it is not an idle practice" (Pinkola-Estes, 2001, p. 462). The purpose of this project is to design and build a workbook – I prefer the term ‘playbook’ - for use in my transformational coaching practice called the Book of Life. It is the first of several hands-on, guided visualization activities I plan to develop for use in small group workshops. In the Book of Life activity, I will guide participants in creating a tangible project representing the stages of their lives as chapters in their personal story or book. In taking a broader and ultimately more divergent view of their personal narrative, participants will become more mindful and deliberate about the lives they are effectively creating. By recognizing common life milestones in chapter form, I hope to encourage individuals in the following ways:

- To inspire their belief in their own inherent creative potential
- To question their attitudes and cultural assumptions about aging and life/time perspectives
- To notice patterns across the years in what delights and inspires them in order to increase awareness about their personal strengths and passions
- To re-imagine a bigger, bolder and better future in order to motivate them to undertake productive and meaningful actions.

Rationale:

During the two and a half years in the Creative Studies program, I have, in the words of singer Ray LeMontaine, "learned a few things worth telling." I can honestly state that I have acquired the necessary framework of knowledge capable of fully

supporting my driving purpose to inspire others to their best work, and to thereby further human potential across disciplines. I sincerely believe that each of us enters the world with soul work to complete. In meeting this purpose we not only embody our richest possible selves individually, but we also enhance the collective good through the sharing of gifts that are uniquely ours to bestow.

Far from being an esoteric pursuit, it is only in enlarging our individual and collective perspectives that we have any chance of addressing the fundamental human and ecological problems plaguing us today. Why do individuals fail to reach their innate potential? Why do we individually and collectively cling to processes and beliefs which fail to produce the results we claim to desire? Why is opportunity seemingly limited for so many? How do our institutions and cultures either hinder or support our collective potential? Our individual beliefs are necessarily impacted by our cultural milieu. In order to challenge cultural assumptions, we must first become aware of them. Mel Rhodes' (1961) "Four P's" model clearly points to the importance of climate in supporting or inhibiting creativity. Ken Robinson also noted that "cultural conditions can kindle or kill creativity" (2001, p. 11).

I've been pondering for some time the dearth of culturally recognized positive milestones beyond approximately age 30. While our culture celebrates the first third of life, it fails to offer little in the way of positive prospects for the second two-thirds, and diminishment in creative output may be assumed. In fact, young people may greet their 30th birthdays with some dismay, dreading inevitable aging and the supposed decline in youthfulness, personal attractiveness, and productivity. Any milestones beyond year 30

that we might commonly think of seem to carry some negative freight. Rather than celebrate new-found freedom to pursue one's important work as demands taper off, for many this is a time of converging expectations and limiting of the scope of possibility. The primary goal of the Book of Life is to lead participants in enlarging their own self-conceptions to facilitate radical goal-setting beyond midlife. It may be that subversion of culturally recognized limits regarding gender and age is required in order to assist participants in re-imagining the scope of possibility. I hope to create a conducive and supportive environment in which students can experiment artistically, engage in deep play, and expand their opportunities for applied creativity in daily life.

Freundlich and Shively (2006) asserted that creativity decrements after mid-life are correlated with age and are valid across cultures, at least among artistic individuals. Some research has pointed to the fact that creativity inexorably declines between the ages of 30 and 40 (Lehman 1960; Simonton, 2006). To what degree might the expectation that adult creativity necessarily declines be a self-fulfilling prophesy reinforced by cultural beliefs? Fortunately, not all creativity researchers agree (Merzenich, 2013; Tsai, 2012), particularly where 'little C', or 'practical C' creativity, as I like to think of it, is concerned. The concept of 'Big C' creativity (Kaufman, J.C. & Beghetto, R.A., 2009) includes what would be considered preeminent accomplishments or contributions of a scientific, artistic or political nature as judged by experts in the field. Mark Twain and Georgia O'Keefe are two examples. 'Little C' creativity refers to less ascendant demonstrations of creativity made by everyday people in the course of their lives. Amateur painters, hobbyists and project managers who create novel innovations or process adaptations and who are less well-known are examples of the latter.

While I plan to adapt this guided activity for other age groups, for the purpose of this project the intended audience is women from the ages of approximately 40 to 65 years old. Women are, generally speaking a historically underserved population, both in terms of maximizing individual creative potential and in cultural valuations for this age group (Keller-Mathers, 2004; Reis, 1999; Stoltzfus, Nibbelink, Thyrum & Vredenberg, 2011). Western culture is not especially kind to women at midlife and beyond, and only comparatively recently have women beyond the age of 40 years become as a group more visible in the public realm. Exceptions still seem to prove the rule in the arts, business, politics and academia: Meryl Streep, Janet Yellen, Oprah Winfrey, Angela Merkle, Theresa Amabile are examples.

Many mature women, and this certainly applies to a number of men in the second half to one-third of their lives as well, fail to envision much beyond retirement. This strikes me as a human tragedy and a huge cultural loss and an area of inquiry that could benefit greatly from applied CPS tools - the injunction to question assumptions and avoid premature closure foremost among them. If youth is characterized as a time of high divergence and great possibility, mid-life onward represents convergence and narrowing of opportunity. By addressing this issue we may attend to several enduring questions in creativity research; the underrepresentation of women in 'Big C' creativity (Helson, 1971; Piirto, 2000) and the assumed decline in individual creativity with age. Clearly there is abundant need for creativity training to better cultivate possibility thinking, and for supportive environments in which to explore and ideate.

We must first believe that we are creative and next that our creative work is valuable for its own sake. Pinkola-Estes (1992) wrote that:

In many cases, what is required to aright the situation is that we take ourselves, our ideas, our art, far more seriously than we have done before. Due to wide breaks in matrilineal succor over many generations, this business of valuing one's creative life...has become a perennial issue for women. (p.70)

Not only is this a matter of living up to one's individual potential, it is also a matter of increasing the common good. I would argue that one is in fact obligated to pay forward for the greater collective benefit. Were these underserved populations to be sufficiently motivated and effectively mobilized, a tsunami of social, artistic and technological innovation would surely be unleashed. As the wonderful creativity formula created by Ruth Noller (1994) postulated, $C=f_a(K,I,E)$: creativity is a function of attitude applied to knowledge, imagination and evaluation. While the debate may be still ongoing regarding the potential for imaginative output beyond early middle age, it seems clear that both knowledge and evaluative functions would be expected to increase with time.

I have given a great deal of thought to developing my individual perspective and to identifying the perfect vehicle for disseminating the body of creativity knowledge I have acquired. My challenge has been in determining how best to showcase my innate love of the arts while also delivering practical and immediately applicable skills to others. As a painter and highly visual thinker, fully employing my esthetic sensibility is essential in engaging deep passion in my work. Employing the arts seems a natural way to reach the luminous unconscious depths while also instructing the rational mind.

Robinson stated (2001):

Creative processes draw from all areas of human consciousness. They are not strictly logical nor are they wholly emotional. The reason why creativity often

proceeds by intuitive leaps is precisely that it draws from areas of mind and consciousness that are not wholly regulated by rational thought. (p. 154)

And thus I arrived at the concept of a guided activity in creating a book of one's life. Intended as an imagery rich activity, I plan to incorporate tenants of accelerated learning proposed by Meier (2000), including playfulness, open-endedness, multisensory exploration, collaboration and whole-brained, rational-emotive expression. Participants will be encouraged to illustrate their own lives by varied and colorful means, using collage, photographs, doodles and personal illustrations, with an emphasis on fleshing out the *second half* of their life's story. Meier (2000) told us that "the part of the brain used to process words is tiny compared with the part of the brain used to process images of all kinds (visual, auditory, olfactory, gustatory, kinesthetic, emotional, etc.)" (p. 158), and boldly stated that "the brain *prefers* images over words" (p. 158).

Culturally recognized milestones occur within chapters in the Book of Life. Infancy, childhood, adolescence, young adulthood and parenthood are fairly well developed signposts, but, as previously noted, there are few positive markers of note past this point. In helping workshop participants visualize the periods of their lives in chapter form, I hope to guide them in enlarging their expectations toward more productive and vital contributions in later life. In resuscitating dreams long ago deferred, participants may enlarge their conceptions of what it is possible to achieve and therefore increase their odds of demonstrating 'Big C' creativity.

I don't think that one should consider one's contribution to society done at midlife; young adulthood and childrearing years were profound and lovely chapters and sources of recurring pleasure and meaningfulness, certainly, but not by any means the end of the

story. As the demands imposed by nature and society have perhaps eased, time and resources may be brought more fully to bear upon one's necessary work. We can cultivate the expectation that creativity should occur beyond midlife, and encourage, in the words of Guillebeau (2010) "radical goal setting" (p. 32). Markman (2014) urged forward thinking in order to align oneself with one's passions, suggesting that one should ask what one will regret having left undone. The Book of Life guided activity is intended to be an exhilarating, beautiful and tangible demonstration of individual creative potential.

In leading participants in questioning assumptions and ultimately in enlarging their expectations I will rely heavily on CPS and creativity training. In examining recurring themes across their lifespan, participants will be empowered to recognize recurring patterns and perhaps be inspired to pick up the thread of inquiry or be spurred onward in following an enduring passion or interest. Not only will a hands-on art project be enjoyable for me personally, it will help participants in questioning their assumptions, as well as the larger cultural assumptions, which may be limiting possibility. "The arts provide new perspectives on the lived world" (Green, 1995, p. 4). Hugely indebted to Howard Gardner (1983), I endeavor to prove unequivocally to participants their innate creative potential and to awaken an appreciation of their many-splendored intelligence. In this way, I can assist them in reframing their habitual assumptions about their own abilities.

Section Two: Pertinent Literature

My research for the Book of Life project topic is comprised of sources from several distinct areas. These areas include general creativity studies, works related

specifically to women's creativity, inquiries regarding motivation and future time perspectives, and supportive material from an artistic perspective. General creativity studies works include popular press books on the creative process and materials instructive in CPS. Sources grounded in the arts include information about experiential art activities and processes, as well as purely inspirational literature. Some included works are a little more difficult to quantify, and I group them loosely into a psychological/symbolic – almost numinous - category. Such works include *Women Who Run with Wolves* and others exploring shamanistic and Jungian practices. While hard to classify they are nonetheless entirely relevant in considering how the metaphorical and nonlinear processes of the unconscious may be applied to creative work.

1. Davis, G.A. (1999). *Creativity is forever*. Dubuque, IA: Kendall/Hunt.

This resource is a virtual encyclopedia of creativity principles and research, and frequently provides a good place to start when I am trying to correctly recall or refer to concepts I haven't recently cited. A review of Chapter 12 on 'Creative Dramatics' was helpful in conceptualizing ways I might engender conducive states of mind for divergent thinking in Book of Life workshop participants prior to having them begin their personal explorations. I also reviewed Chapter 13 'Teaching for Creative Growth' with an eye toward cultivating transformational abilities in workshop participants.

2. Ealy, D.C. (1995). *The woman's book creativity*. Berkeley, CA: Beyond Words Publishing.

Part one of the book focused on the underrepresentation of women in the arts and the lack of female models to emulate. Ealy proposed a new scenario in which the hero is

a 'she.' The discussion of perfectionism as saboteur and discussion of creativity blockers were

particularly relevant, as was the instruction to women on valuing their own creative expression.

3. Eisner, E. (2002). *The arts and the creation of mind*. New Haven, CT: University Press.

Eisner is a Stanford educator who, like Ken Robinson, champions the necessity of arts-based school curricula in order to enhance diversity of experience and to develop rich mental connections and cognitive growth in young minds. Eisner proposed that imaginative qualities stimulated by visual arts exploration are requisite for the development of cognitive subtlety and complexity to emerge in developing minds, as artistic inquiry has transformative power. Image creation is therefore central to education, including the entire array of visual, musical and literary arts, as well as dance. His concept of perception as a cognitive event and his belief in the centrality of the arts in discerning meaning are relevant to my current inquiry. While Eisner's book focused on the centrality of artistic process in children's education, I nonetheless interpreted his work as providing corroboration of my own intuitive understanding that narrative and visual exercises were central to the Book of Life. Artistic exploration is intended to actively support participants in developing divergent skills and possibility thinking.

4. Freundlich, A.L. and Shively, J.A. (2006). Creativity and the exceptional aging artist. *Clinical Interventions in Aging*. 1(2), (pp. 197-200).

This paper by Freundlich and Shively examined creativity in male visual artists between 65 and 90 years of age. The artists included were considered to have

demonstrated success through the continued production of marketable works as evidenced by continued gallery shows and acquisition by museum collections. The authors noted a steady increase in the number of older cohorts as life expectancy has increased and asked if there are particular attributes of this age group that may enable them to continue to productively contribute to society. A common attribute found among those artists whose work continues to be recognized with advancing age was having acquiring disciplined habits early in life. A number of quotes from various painters refuted Simonton's conclusions regarding declining creativity after age forty (1998), as well as the widespread cultural belief that creativity necessarily declines with age. The authors noted that while the work of some artists may have become formulaic over time, others continued to produce evolving styles with advancing age.

5. Gardner, H. (1983). *Frames of mind: Theories of multiple intelligence*. New York, NY: Basic Books.

I am personally very thankful for having encountered Gardner's work on the theory of multiple intelligences. I would go so far as to say that we are *all* indebted to him. Gardner's work may aid in the healing of psychological wounds endured as a result of spending our formative years in the often rigid, binary environment of the typical public school system. I encountered Gardner's theory while enrolled in the ICSC program and found the concept profoundly exhilarating and validating. I plan to reference the Theory of Multiple Intelligences in my creative training because I believe it is almost indispensable in helping explain why so many people simply do not think of themselves as possessing creative potential. Not only may they doubt their creative potential, but their innate intelligence as well. It also helps explain why children entering

the school system typically test high on creativity and why creativity assessments for student cohorts have precipitously declined by the time students graduate from high school. I think that Gardner's theory is also relevant in helping explain why intrinsic love of learning also declines with progression through the educational system. If what you loved as a child – your innate cognitive strength - were consistently undervalued or marginalized, you would ultimately internalize that critical devaluation of the attribute. The skill or attribute represented by that affinity will then in many cases wither away until it is completely forgotten. Gardner asserted that individuals exhibit intelligence across the entire spectrum, which includes musical, visual, verbal, logical, bodily, interpersonal, intrapersonal intelligence.

6. Greer, C. (2014). *Change your story change your life: Using shamanism and Jungian tools to achieve personal transformation*. Scotland: Findhorn Press.

An eclectic mix of Jungian depth psychology and the shamanistic perspective, Greer's book provided an explanation and instructions on a variety of exercises for self-guided visualization. I had previously encountered a few of the exercises, for example, the Jungian tool of questioning one's unconscious using the language of symbols and metaphors. This tool can be applied to investigate the meaning of dreams or to engage in wakeful dialog with the subconscious mind. Other exercises were explicitly shamanistic in nature, with instructions for journeying through several realms in order to bring back insights and knowledge from outside the rational mind. I discovered this book, and Grisanti's book by a similar title, after I had decided on my concept and title. Reading both seemed required given the overlap in concepts.

7. Grisanti, J. (2013). *Change your story, change your life: A path to success*. Studio City, CA: Divine Arts.

In this book of a remarkable similar title as Greer's, Grisanti drew upon her experience as a Hollywood script analyst to help her readers discover how their own unexamined personal narratives drive their life outcomes. Using personal examples from her life, as well as illustrations from a number of movies and TV show plots, Grisanti made a strong case for proactivity and self-determination in achieving one's life goals. The tools she used are designed around writing concepts, life-changing events as story drivers, antagonists and protagonists and thematic issues. She recommended using three foundational steps. First, developing clear intention (the central character's motivation for doing what they do). Second, changing your perception of conflict (referring here to the protagonist's not-uncommon 'all is lost' moment). And third, creating a narrative that supports success (a summary line as a synopsis of your life's story arc). While definitely a self-help, popular press book, Grisanti's ideas provided corroboration for my Book of Life concept; the power of personal narrative is key for both, as is the belief that the individual must assume control of their evolving life story.

8. Helson, R. (1971). Women mathematicians and the creative personality. *Journal of Consulting & Clinical Psychology*, 36, (210-220).

In this paper, Helson examined the realization of women's creative potential through the results of the Mills Longitudinal Study, which tested 141 Mills College seniors in 1957 and 1958 and again in 1959 and 1960. Faculty were surveyed for their nominations of graduates considered to demonstrate above average potential for creative contributions in the arts, sciences or humanities, and 32 were nominated. Decades later

the productive output of the nominees, now in their fifties, was compared with the others tested. Helson found a significant correlation between earlier creative traits measured at age 21 and later assessment at 52 using the Occupational Creativity Scale, and noted relative consistency in creative personality attributes from youth to middle age. She also found that the creative output of the women sampled varied greatly with life changes and in the amount of support received from their respective occupational environments. Her research did not demonstrate a decline in creativity with age.

9. Keller-Mathers, S. (2005). *A qualitative study of women of extraordinary creative accomplishment*. Ann Arbor, MI: The author. Retrieved from <https://www.buffalostate.edu/orgs/cbir/Readingroom/theses/Kellesd.pdf>.

In this study Keller-Mathers examined the lives of eminently creative women, their creative experiences and what influences supported or blocked them in making life choices. Referencing numerous creativity researchers, Keller-Mathers clearly demonstrated that the creative lives of women have been poorly represented both in terms of the historical record and also in the lack of recognition and valuation of their creative contributions. Sixty women responded to Keller-Mathers' invitation to participate in the study and 26 who were qualified (participants were required to be fifty or older) returned the questionnaire. Eleven were ultimately selected and interviewed, and their responses were included.

10. Kleon, A. (2012). *Steal like an artist: 10 things nobody told you about being an artist*. New York, NY: Workman Publishing Company.

This fun little book is short on text and big on illustrations. Perhaps its greatest strength is that it stresses the importance of adaptation in the production of creative work.

Fortunately, Kleon also valued correct attribution when building on other's work. He urges readers to start now, wherever they are, in beginning to make their own works.

11. Larson, E. (2010). *Text and texture: An arts-based exploration of transformation in adult learning*. Cambridge, MA: The author. Retrieved from <https://archive.org/stream/TextAndTextureAnArtsBasedExplorationOfTransformationInAdultLearning/Larson-2010#page/n1/mode/2up>.

I feel very fortunate in having discovered Larson's wonderful dissertation on applied art exploration to adult learning as it is so apropos to my project. Like Larson, I too feel called to employ the arts in support of transformational learning. Larson worked with ten female undergraduates in a qualitative research study using creative art processes to assist participants in accessing affective states as a vehicle for furthering their personal transformation. Larson led participants in exploration in the following ways:

- exploration of ethnographic artifacts (found objects)
- group mural making, assemblage
- two projects in collage over a series of five classes

Larson also included photographs of some of her own products created from cardboard and metal during the course of writing her dissertation. The work of each of the ten participants was photographed, their personal interpretation of their process and product cataloged and later analyzed by Larson. In addressing what transformation is, exactly, Larson stated that it may be known more by its effects, i.e., artistic products, rather than its definition. Referring to the Jungian concept of prima materia, Larson proposed that the most potent source of inspiration is within, and found that collage was a highly effective medium in helping students access their own subconscious. In searching the shadows in

order to access this material one must expect to encounter impediments to creativity, even negativity, discouragement and frustration. She suggested that the intellect is more engaged by definitions, and the imagination is more engaged by effects. She also noted that new methods in educational research are needed in light of the evolving interconnections between disciplines (esthetics, spirituality and technology among them) and called for a reintegration of ethos and logos.

12. Lehman, H.C. (1960). The age decrement in outstanding scientific creativity. *The American Psychologist*, 15(2), (pp. 128-134).

This brief article published in 1960 was written in response to criticisms of Lehman's earlier results on the decrement in creativity with age made by Wayne Dennis. Judging by Lehman's refutation of Dennis' premise, Dennis appeared to argue that achievements of older chemists were underrepresented due to historical slights, rather than a decrease in actual output. Lehman presented data from a study on 57 (now deceased) chemists, which showed the relativity of chronological age respective to maximum production of creative output. He also referenced his own prior book *Age and Achievement* (1953) in which major (Big C) research contributions - 44 histories, as he referred to them - were indexed to the age of the scientist. Results demonstrated that the majority of contributions were made between the ages of 30 and 35 years old, with a marked declination from age 35 to 55, the oldest age included. He quoted several scholars whose research supports his premise that exceptional scientific contributions are the province of younger, rather than older men.

13. Markman, A. B. (2014). *Smart change: Five tools to create new and sustainable habits in yourself and others*. New York, NY: Penguin Group.

This text is primarily an accessible inquiry into the cognitive patterns underlying habit formation. Knowledge of these psychological mechanisms are helpful in working with, rather than against, mental defaults in setting personal goals. The brain tends to resort to short cuts and pre-processed conclusions, which means that thinking tends to fall into particular ruts. Of particular relevance was the concept of ‘future thinking’ in helping one’s self achieve difficult behavioral changes by looking forward for long term benefits rather than short term payoffs.

14. Meier, D. (2000). *The accelerated learning handbook*. New York, NY: McGraw-hill. (pp. 223-240).

A review of Chapter 23, 'The 7-Step Rapid Design Process' was helpful in reminding me about the stages of preparation and delivery, including before and after the primary presentation. Meier used the analogy of preparing a meal to discuss phases of curriculum design. Planning the 'Appetizers' was particularly relevant to my planning of the Book of Life workshop, as I have felt concern about how I might best cultivate a receptive attitude among participants prior to beginning the session. It was also very helpful to consider post-session learning and incubation in encouraging participants to continue building on their insights following the workshop.

15. Miller, B., Vehar, J., Firestien, R., Thurber, S., & Nielsen, D. (2011). *Creativity unbound: An introduction to creative process*. Evanston, IL: FourSight.

Perhaps deceptively simple in appearance, this small volume is still a treasured resource for creative problem solving tools and concepts. I found myself turning to it repeatedly as I developed the Book of Life playbook and companion workshop. *Creativity Unbound's* treatment of the diverging and converging processes was very

useful as I considered how to best encourage a non-judgmental mind among participants whose exposure to the Book of Life playbook might also be their first experience of creativity concepts such as CPS.

16. Miller, B., Vehar, J., Firestien, R., Thurber, S. & Nielsen, D. (2011). *Facilitation: A door to creative leadership*. Evanston, IL: FourSight.

The companion volume to *Creativity Unbound*, *Facilitation* was definitely worth reviewing as I planned the workshop activity around the Book of Life playbook. There are clear parallels between running a workshop and a group facilitation, particularly the stages of opening the session, jumpstarting the session, group development and considerations of group size.

17. Nuttin, J. (2014). *Future time perspective and motivation*. New York, NY: Psychology Press.

This scholarly article examined how individuals conceptualize of future time and how this impacts intrinsic motivation. The psychological, or imagined future, has a direct effect on present efforts. While the author did not discount the impact of past occurrences on individuals, he maintained that the subject's attitudes toward present and future time will directly impact present behavior. He distinguishes between fantasies of the future (wishful thinking) and "real goal objects" (p.31).

18. Pinkola-Estes, C. (1992). *Women who run with wolves: Myths and stories of the wild woman archetype*. New York, NY: Random House.

Depth psychologist, poet and curandera, Pinkola Estes is an unparalleled storyteller and guide for the dark paths of the psyche. In this book Pinkola Estes mined the rich wild woman archetype through her spellbinding analysis of multicultural myths

and stories in both written and oral form. She introduced readers to, among others, Baba Yaga, wise old crone; Spider Woman, clever healer; La Que Saba, the one who knows; and Skeleton Woman, instructive in both life and death. Cumulatively the stories addressed such concepts passed down in folk tales such as initiation, loss, spiritual guidance and crucial information about the luminous life of the soul. *Women who run with wolves* is relevant because Pinkola Estes was able to directly bypass the rational and very critical mind by speaking the language of archetypes and symbols. As such her work provided an excellent and restorative excursion through the subconscious and a welcome counterbalance to academic research articles. She lead her reader beyond the confines of what is known by one's culture, what is real, what is possible. These stories cannot be hurried and must, figuratively speaking, be read by moonlight, if their meaning is to be absorbed.

19. Piirto, J. (1991). Why are there so few? (Creative women: visual artists, mathematicians, musicians). *Roepers Review*, 13(3), (pp.142-147).

This 1991 landmark article reexamined conclusions the author made with Sharon Higham (now Lynch) in a 1984 article investigating the dearth of successful women in creative fields. In that article Piirto (then Navarre) and Higham addressed the issue of differential education for adolescent girls. I note with irony at this juncture that the custom of changing women's names with marriage may undermine the easy cataloguing of one's work. Piirto commented on a study by Barron (1972) examining results on male and female art students from both the Minnesota Multiphasic Inventory and the California Psychological Inventory. Female students reported less confidence in their work and also tended to regard their work with detachment, whereas the male students

regarded their work with much greater self-confidence and intensity of commitment. Piirto cited studies by Getzels and Csikszentmihali (1976) (on male and female art students); Sloan and Slosniak (1985) (male and female sculptors); Foley (1986) (female producing artists); Brody (1989) (gifted female graduate math students) and Helson (1983) (female mathematicians and male and female writers); Shuter-Dyson (1985) and Kemp (1982) (female composers). Piirto reported that studies do not point to significant cognitive attributes between male and female creatives. While Piirto noted that Reis (1989) proposed that girls may develop later in terms of creative productivity on a different timeframe than do boys, she questioned if it was possible for women to gain prominence later in life. Piirto also implicated the lack of environmental support in helping sustain women's focus and passion for their creative work and asked how educators might encourage sustained effort in both boys and girls.

20. Pressfield, S. (2011). *Do the work: Overcome resistance and get out of your own way*. Seattle, WA: The Domino Project.

While this short book can be read in just a few hours, it addresses an obstacle to productivity not generally recognized or discussed in creativity circles. That is, the profound resistance one will necessarily encounter when engaging or attempting to engage, in meaningful and creative work. Generally we may tend to think of hindrances to creativity as arising externally, i.e., restrictive or unsupportive environments, lack of necessary inputs for creative work to occur, etc. It's worth remembering that internal resistance will arise when work is underway. Pressfield provides a great kick in the seat of the pants to keep going.

21. Reed, I.C. (2005). Creativity: self-perceptions over time. *Journal of Aging and Human Development*, 60 (pp. 1-18).

This qualitative study examines self-perceived changes in creativity in the second half of life among 21 visual artists aged 53 to 75. An adaptation of the Creative Life-Line Curve was used for the assessment. The author noted that many studies have been done which seem to show a decline in terms of both quantity and quality of work produced (i.e., significant works as judged by experts in the field), but that few studies have focused on the artists' self-perceptions. Reed highlighted a selective optimization with compensation metatheory of human development postulated by Sasser-Coen (1993), which supposes a dynamic balance in which life experience may offset losses due to age. Creativity in older artists was examined in terms of social-psychological, cultural and aesthetic perspectives, which is reminiscent of the '4 P' (Rhodes, 1961) person/process/product/field framework familiar to current creativity students and researchers. Study participants were asked a number of questions and consensual validation was used to analyze results. Findings demonstrated that the majority of study participants felt that their creativity rose with age and most reported that they had been creative early in life and continued to be throughout. Optimization of experience was deemed significant by many in the increasing quality of both the creative process. Other commonalities included strong intrinsic motivation and acknowledgment of the need to make adaptations over time as physical abilities changed with age. Anecdotally, the author reported that most participants laughed when informed that many assessments seem to indicate that creativity declines with age.

22. Reis, S.M. (2002). Toward a theory of creativity in diverse creative women.

Creativity Research Journal, 14 (3), (pp. 305-316).

Reis should, in my opinion, be recognized as one of the godmothers of creativity research. Along with Helson, Piirto and just a handful of others, Reis has shown a bright light upon the gaps in research regarding women's creativity and has attempted to answer the tiresome question of the shortage of eminent female creatives. In this article Reis suggested three basic themes. First, personality characteristics (such as internal blocks) and a lack of support for women's creative work. Second, societal factors and external barriers such as lack of education and the underrepresentation or diminishment of women's accomplishments, lack of role models and gender role expectations. Third, and perhaps most controversial, the possibility of innate gender differences in women's creative process and product. Reis noted that women's creative products may be deemed less significant, even by some women. She also questioned whether women's expressions of creativity may simply be more diffused (Diversification Theory of Female Creativity) over a wider range of concerns, as opposed to the assumed single-minded focus of eminent men. Women may simply express their creativity in different ways across multiple tasks. The question may then be asked, is this in fact innate, or is it an adaptation to external constraints? Reis concluded that environmental factors and gender roles still limit women's creative expression and development and that encouragement of women and girls in order to achieve their full creative potential is still needed.

24. Robinson, K. (2001). *Out of our minds: Learning to be creative*. West Sussex,

England: Capstone Publishing Limited.

If I were to begin chronologically, *Out of our Minds* would be the first source I should summarize. I owe a huge debt of gratitude to Sir Ken Robinson, for in reading this, his 2001 popular press book, I was first introduced to the concept of creativity as anything other than a purely artistic pursuit. In fact, it was through Robinson's work that I began investigating the field of creativity and ultimately discovered the ICSC program. A former arts educator, Robinson is now a well-known headliner speaker in creativity circles and frequent Ted Talks contributor. *Out of our Minds* is in my opinion one of the seminal works in the field. In it Robinson examined the role of modern education from an organizational perspective, and chronicled its inhibiting effects upon children's creativity. Robinson implicated the western educational system in cultivating conformity, loss of diversity and intrinsic interest in learning. While the book focused primarily on primary and secondary education, and therefore upon cultivating creativity among young learners, rereading it was nonetheless helpful as I developed the Book of Life playbook concept. For the purposes of this project I have elected to focus upon women's creativity at mid-life and beyond, and in order to cultivate fertile ground in which imagination can take hold, I believe that Robinson's work is supportive in my attempt to provide playbook participants with some brief historical background and explanation of cultural and educational inhibitors upon individual and collective creativity.

25. Sasswer-Coen, J.R. (1993). Qualitative changes in creativity in the second half of life:

A life span developmental perspective. *Journal of Creative Behavior*, 27 (pp. 18-27).

This author of this paper advanced the idea that creative ability and productivity are not the same, and that any seemingly age-related declines in creativity may stem from changes in the underlying process.

26. Stoltzfus, M.A. Nibbelink, B.L., Vredenberg, D., & Thyurus, E. (2011). Gender, gender role and creativity. *Social Behavior and personality*: 39(3), 425 – 432. 13.

This article reported results of a study of 136 undergraduates designed to examine the link between gender and creativity as assessed by three creative measures and one gender measure. Men with high cross-gender identification ranked highest in creativity, followed by women who identified with male gender role characteristics. Both men and women with strongest same-sex gender role identification scored lowest. The implications were that androgynous women and feminine-identified men assess higher in creativity and that gender roles are more relevant than gender itself. The authors noted that these results corroborate earlier conclusions reached by Torrance in 1963 and Getzels and Csikszentmihalyi in 1976. They also suggested that additional research in personal characteristics, rather than gender roles per se, is needed to develop learning experiences capable of enhancing creativity in both genders.

27. Tsai, K.C. (2012). The necessity of creativity development in adult learners for lifelong learning. *International Journal of Learning and Development*, 2(4), (pp.170-176).

In this paper Tsai provided a brief literature review, examined adult creativity development and proposed suggestions for adult educators. Citing Guilford (1950), Tsai linked learning to creative action; lifelong creativity is therefore necessarily dependent upon lifelong learning. Tsai stated that, rather than a "one-shot affair" (p. 170) creativity

should span one's entire life. Tsai mentioned the evolving debate over whether creative product or process should be emphasized but did not take an identifiable stand. He recommended incorporating creativity training into adult pedagogy (I note here that it is generally not well-known that pedagogy refers specifically to childhood education, while the term andragogy refers to adult education). Tsai concluded that with creativity training, adults could off-set or accommodate any unavoidable losses related to the aging process.

Future Reading

If only there were time to keep up with the prodigious outpouring of works in the creativity field! Try as I might I will never catch up. Filmmaker John Waters once said that “Nothing is more important than an unread library,” and if that’s the case I should be standing in good stead. A partial list of titles awaiting my attention include the following:

Catmull, E. (2014). *Creativity, Inc.: Overcoming the unseen forces that stand in the way of true inspiration*. Kindle edition.

De Bono, E. (2008). *Creativity workout: 62 exercises to unlock your most creative ideas*. Berkeley, CA: Ulysses Press.

Kelley, T. & Kelley, D. (2013). *Creative confidence: Unleashing the creative potential within us all*. New York, NY: Random House.

Merzenich, M. (2013). *Soft-wired: How the new science of brain plasticity can change your life*. San Francisco, CA: Parnassus Publishing.

Pinkola-Estes, C. (2011). *Untie the strong woman: Blessed mother’s immaculate love for the wild soul*. Boulder, CO: Sounds True, Inc.

Sawyer, K. (2013). *Zig zag: The surprising path to greater creativity*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Tharp, T. (2003). *The creative habit: Learn it and use it for life*. New York, NY: Simon & Shuster.

Thomson-Salo, F. (2014). *Women's creativity: A psychoanalytic glimpse through art*. London, England: Karnac Books Ltd.

Section Three: Process Plan

One of the frequently quoted hallmarks of creativity is the ability to tolerate ambiguity. With that directive in mind, I don't doubt that design and development of this project will, over its course, take me places I could not have originally anticipated. I feel certain at this point that a framework or template will be required by many participants, particularly those with limited artistic experience. I will strive to design a format that is open concept enough to allow free range for those who feel confident undertaking symbolic exploration, while still providing clear parameters for others who might find such freedom utterly intimidating.

The process I envision necessitates that the playbook be used in coordination with a guided activity leading participants through visualization and development of their storybook. Explanatory narrative must be included to inform participants of CPS principles and provide basic creativity training necessary to illustrate the relevance and practical application to this project. Originally I had planned to include between five and ten new artworks created as illustration for the playbook, but realized under the guidance of my project supervisor that, rather than creating my personal story, what I really intend to do is to create a space for others to engage in their own discovery. I have not yet

determined how I will integrate creativity training text with the open formatting designed to invite artistic exploration, or which medium of production will prove to be optimal for the finished playbook.

My intention was to build an easy-to-use instructional format in playbook form, particularly for use in guided sessions with small groups of approximately six to ten women. As previously noted, my emphasis for this project was women between the ages of 40 and 65 years of age. I anticipated that sessions should run from four to eight hours in length, typically in two to three hour segments. I determined that, in many cases, interested participants simply may not have up to eight hours to contribute to the project, even in discrete segments. Therefore, the playbook must also be designed to afford its users the flexibility to return to individual exercises as the opportunity allowed.

I would prefer to guide the sessions so that I would be present to answer questions and assist as needed. However, it is possible that some people may, due to distance or time limits work through the playbook entirely on their own. I needed to include clear instructions on how to utilize the exercises or prompts, and what the expectations were for the project. I would also need to include sufficient background in creativity concepts to prepare participants for ideation if they were to work through the playbook on their own.

Establishing an environment conducive to deeply introspective work, and equipping participants to successfully achieve non-judgmental attitudes toward their ideation process and artistic output were of particular concern. It occurred to me that in cases where participants utilized the playbook remotely, it might be even more instructive if I were to tape an audio recording or record a video session for review prior to starting

the exercises. For onsite participants, I planned to set the stage for each session with carefully selected ambient (instrumental) music to help everyone loosen up and get out of their left-brains, so to speak. In addition to explaining the rules of play, I planned to spend some time delving into the power of metaphor, narrative and visual engagement in inviting dialog with the subconscious mind. In order for the sessions to be successful, it was imperative that participants approach exercises in open, relaxed and receptive states of mind.

Regardless of whether people attended a guided session or worked on their own, it was my hope that they would continue to enrich and add to their own personal Book of Life over time. As students engaged the subconscious mind, I anticipated that insights may surface sometime after the sessions; in states of reverie or dreaming, or even arising spontaneously while reading or in conversation with others. It might take weeks or months for long-buried memories and dreams to rise to conscious awareness.

My primary goals were to:

- to synthesize from among a vast amount of creativity research the key tenants required to equip participants with sufficient background in CPS to embark upon the playbook activities
- to create an environment in which participants could verbally and visually explore in a playful and non-judgmental way
- to achieve an open and playful state of mind free of self-judgment
- to find a balance in providing parameters for activity and examples for those participants who may be discomforted by open-ended assignments, while also

maintaining enough ‘free play’ for participants with inherently more well-developed abilities to tolerate ambiguity

- to develop individual prompts, or exercises, which lend themselves to either narrative or artful exploration

Additionally, the esthetic design of the playbook was also very important to me.

It must be pleasing to the eye and tacitly appealing in order to invite participants to spend the necessary time with it that the exercises required. Clearly a photocopied, stapled sheaf of papers would not suffice. Practical design questions immediately arose: how could I best provide CPS background and instruction? Should the participant’s Book of Life essentially be included as a “book within a book”? Should books be bound or presented in the fashion of loose leaf binders? While perhaps less appealing, this option would at least allow each person to add or remove pages as desired. My thought was that the ability to add paper or to start afresh could free participants to explore with less self-censoring. If attempts were found wanting, they could easily be removed. Additionally, more blank pages could be added if additional space were required. Pages would need to be large enough to invite collage and sketching, but, hopefully not so large as to lose the intimate feel of a diary or journal. My unwavering concern centered on how best to allow participants the freedom to determine the look and feel of their own personal Book of Life, while presenting them with succinct CPS training wrapped up in an aesthetically appealing package.

Synthesis of key creativity tenants

As I began designing the playbook in earnest, I first needed to select which key concepts to share from among the vast wealth of creativity research and applied tools

available. What did participants need to know and when did they need to know it? Was it crucial that we spend precious session time delving into the attributes of creativity? Was it important to provide information regarding the many types of assessments? I elected against including this information due to space and time constraints. I was wary of providing so much information that participants felt overwhelmed, or that the experiential nature of the playbook would be eclipsed by a formal training segment.

Those concepts I deemed crucial for inclusion were: deferring judgment, the process of divergence, adaptive vs. innovative creativity and a brief mention of convergence. Given the target population for this project, it was also necessary to briefly address factors inhibiting creativity and productivity related to gender and age.

Divergence

It seemed obvious to me that first and foremost among CPS tools was the importance of the concept of divergence. Participants must have some understanding of the necessity of deferring judgment in order to cultivate an open-minded approach to ideation and visualization. Without it, true possibility thinking could not occur, and the project had no hope of success. If I wanted people to "let loose" in imagining the best possible outcomes, I would need to lead them through what was essentially brainstorming.

Deferring Judgment

Simply helping participants learn to defer judgment and engage in successful ideation was my top priority. The inner critic is a formidable foe for even an accomplished artist. How much more perilous it may appear to an adult attempting artistic expression and radical goal-setting for perhaps the first time.

Tolerating ambiguity and resisting premature closure

Other crucial CPS concepts for inclusion included tolerating ambiguity and resisting premature closure. Assisting participants in resisting premature closure was immensely important, given that I was asking them to imagine outcomes and personal milestones beyond what may be conceived by some as likely or even possible. Essentially I was asking adults to re-experience a child-like mind, with all of the attendant openness, playfulness and imaginative ability one would expect.

Innovative vs. Adaptive Creativity

I consider this a key concept in assisting participants to understand their innate potential. Absent this understanding, I feared that many would simply write off creativity – both in terms of artistic ability as well as raw ideational ability – as something they did not possess. I had the impression that, where some participants were concerned, I might need to use all of the TNT at my disposal in order to free the logjam of creativity built up over a number of decades.

Convergence

I made the decision that I would only briefly explain the process of convergence. I did not anticipate that most participants would be sufficiently prepared to move through development or implementation in the course of the Book of Life session. For any who might achieve this stage of discovery, I planned to include some basic information in playbook appendices. Another option would be for students to work with me individually post-session in facilitating next steps.

Additional CPS tools

I intended to include some specific tools for immediate use, such as brainstorming, 'SCAMPER' and "What's stopping you?" (Miller, Vehar, Firestien, Thurber & Nielson; 2011), including some exposure to the concept of using stem starters in phrasing questions. I also wanted to provide some explanation of the impacts of the Western educational system. Additionally I wished to at least briefly mention systemic issues surrounding cultural perceptions and expectations related to gender and mature adults. And of course, citing Gardner's Theory of Multiple Intelligence seemed de rigueur in order to support participants' perceptions of themselves as inherently intelligent and capable beings. I had personally found the theory revelatory and immensely validating when I first encountered it, and I wanted to share the concept with others.

Facilitating a supportive environment

I intended to create a relaxed and inviting environment in which participants could feel safe to engage in deeply introspective work. I planned to set the stage in the following ways: by playing ambient music, creating a welcoming atmosphere in order to put arriving participants at ease, and by clearly explaining my expectations for the session. My only expectations were, essentially, that participants relax and enjoy the process of discovery and achieve some measure of success at noncritical ideation in order to arrive at a greater sense of possibility in their lives.

It was very important to me that they understood that my role was simply to facilitate the process and that they were effectively the drivers of their experience. If they also took pleasure in the artistic process or produced products they could take pride in,

that would be icing on the cake. There was no requirement that they reach any particular stage or complete any specific number of exercises. I genuinely wanted participants to feel validated and supported in engaging in a process of deep discovery. I hoped that, building on insights acquired and tools learned during the sessions, participants would be encouraged in undertaking future explorations. I also wanted them to leave the session with some tangible evidence of their own creative ability. Following a successful session, participants should have a basic understanding of the most crucial CPS concepts, would have completed one or several of the exercises to their satisfaction, and leave feeling empowered to continue to developing their Book of Life independently. The single most important aim of the process was to support divergent thinking about meaningful future work and the most expansive potential outcomes.

Facilitating artistic expression

For those participants who do not regard themselves as possessing artistic ability, the visual expressiveness of the Book of Life playbook may be intimidating. A light and playful touch seemed essential in cultivating an environment supportive of relaxed and fun exploration in which participants might flex their creative muscles. I sought to combine rudiments of CPS training with easy and accessible guided explorations in a variety of mediums. In facilitating artistic expression, I also intended to engage students' whole minds in developing their own visual journals of creative self-discovery.

Functional considerations

I gave a great deal of thought to how I might design the playbook for maximum utility and esthetic appeal. While some participants might feel perfectly comfortable with experimentation in open parameters, it seemed logical that others would require greater

delineation and prompts of a more specific nature. Therefore I would need to balance the needs of participants across a range of abilities. I solved this challenge by creating a number of free-standing prompts, from among which participants could select the most personally relevant and appealing. Each prompt was intended to be explored in a mix or match fashion with any or several of the suggested mediums.

I had toyed with the idea of a bound book, much more like a true storybook format in keeping with my theme for the playbook, but ruled in favor of the functionality of a binder. I wanted people to be ultimately able to remove all instructional material and unselected prompts from their personal Book of Life should they so choose. Determining how to include the requisite instructional materials and background information while simultaneously preserving the storybook theme was my greatest esthetic challenge. Originally I had considered completing what would essentially be two separate books, one purely instructional and one a blank book, but decided instead to include instruction in Part one and the actual playbook in Part two.

Designing for esthetic appeal

I was determined to incorporate appealing color and design in the playbook's construction. I elected to print the instructional Part one of the playbook on multi-colored paper, each page a different color. I used a neutral color paper for Part two. The quality of the paper was also a consideration. It seemed unlikely that mere copy paper could evoke inspiration on the part of the artist; nor could it be expected to stand up to the rigors of watercolors or bear the weight of collage. If production costs were not a primary consideration, ideally a higher-quality blend should be included.

During the planning phase of this project, I had intended to create five to ten original artworks for inclusion. Over the course of development, however, I elected against inclusion because I wanted the focus to be on the creation of participants' own works. I had also determined that my goal was to create a playbook for others' use, not to produce my own Book of Life. Nonetheless I still felt torn between producing an actual adult story book, which seemed like great fun, and developing what was essentially a sort of curriculum for use in my training and coaching.

I still planned, however, to include very basic mixed media pieces for inclusion by way of illustration and example. A continuing challenge throughout the project was finding a balance between preserving the storybook theme and sliding into kitsch. Typesetting was another consideration. Initially, I began typing the entire playbook in Bradley Hand, but ultimately found this too cloying. I settled instead on Calibri for the bulk of the text with occasional and judiciously applied Lucinda Handwriting and Segoe UI for poetic emphasis.

Following the Torrance Incubation Model (1979), I planned to heighten anticipation prior to the session by requesting that participants complete some pre-work before they arrived. I would give them some information about what the Book of Life session would entail, and ask them to review some suggestive prompts I provided. I would also ask that they give some thought to what they enjoyed doing, as well as what they pictured themselves doing in the future. Upon arrival, I would deepen their expectations for the session, and of their potential for deeply creative work, by reviewing information about the creative process and basic CPS concepts. I would lead the group through a couple of warm up exercises before we began the playbook exercises in

earnest. Before concluding, I would talk to participants about how they could continue their work following the session. I would also invite participants to stay in touch; letting me know if questions arose and if they wished to share any insights or updates on their progress.

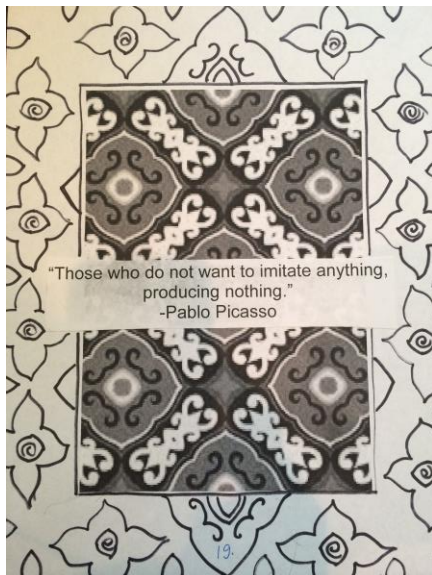
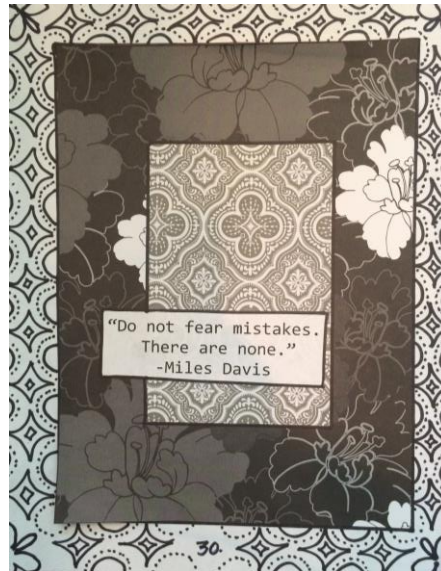
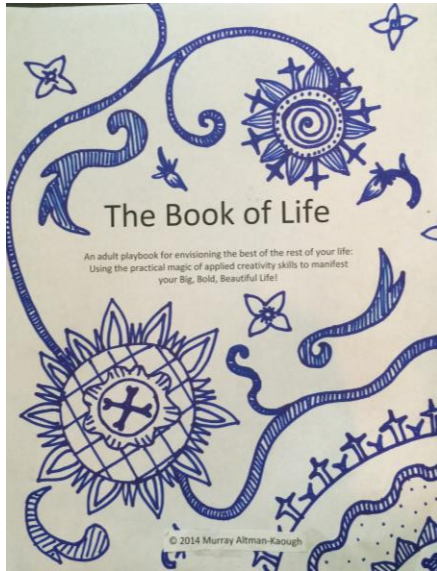
Timeframe	Item	Estimated hours
August 1- September 5	Seek initial approval on basic Book of Life idea. Research pertinent literature, distil concept. Draft concept paper.	25-30 hours total
September 6 - 19	Revise and complete concept paper. Formally begin project: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Synthesize applied art research, tenants of Jungian depth psychology with creativity principles and relevant ideas of current works in modern press • Consult as needed with project supervisor in order to further converge on concept tone and scope (applied practical coaching vs. guided poetic exploration) • Determine extent and parameters of guided art project (template vs. free-form) • Decide how much narrative to include in Book of Life vs. formal paper 	55 hours total (30 hours) (3 hours) (15 hours) (9 hours)
September 20 - October 3	Begin production of 'book' prototype: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft chapter headings • Select project name • Select appropriate medium for production • Determine format - CPS principles + inspirational quote + narrative + artwork 	40 hours total (5 hours) (Ongoing) (5 hours) (30 hours)

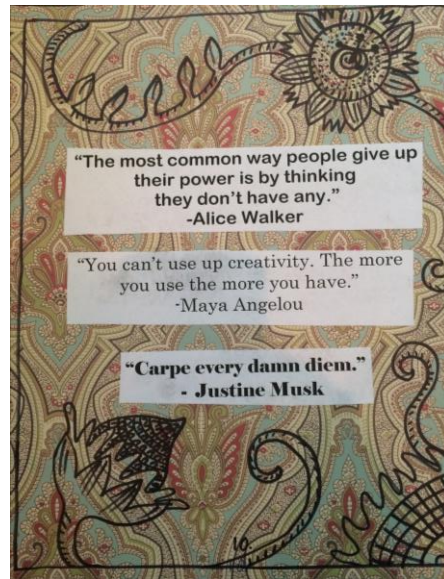
	by chapter	
October 4 - 17	Converge on key CPS principles for inclusion. Begin production of 'book' prototype: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Layout of individual chapters Submit drafts of sections 1, 2 & 3	50 hours, total (between 2 and 10 hours per piece) (10 hours)
October 18 - 31	Continue production of prototype. Submit drafts of sections 4, 5 & 6	30 hours
November 1 - 14	Revisions of paper. Complete project and formal paper.	20 hours
November 15 - December 1	Submit final project.	12 hours
December 1 - 12	Prepare project presentation for class review	10 hours
Estimated total		Approximately 160 hours

Section Four: Outcomes

Description of the final product

The completed Book of Life consisted of 56 total pages, not counting blank pages included for individual exploration: a contents page; a three-page forward; and parts one, two and three. The theme followed a storybook format from the protagonist's perspective. Part One provided explanatory information and CPS instruction, and consisted of 7 separate chapters totaling 32 pages. Part Two was comprised of hands' on exercises and consisted of 4 chapters consisting of 18 pages. Part Three consisted of 6 pages, consisting of a brief CPS tools summary, suggested reading and suggested future actions, as well as a note to readers and information about the author. I included ten full-page illustrations with creativity quotes, along with six, two-to-three inch embedded illustrations. I presented the black and white, duplex copies in colorful (violet, red or yellow) one inch, flexible vinyl, three-holed binders.





The foreword follows in its entirety:

Foreword

Once upon a time you were a genius, although you may not have realized it then. You were curious, irrepressible and a gifted artist, a believer in possibility, a super hero, an adventurer and athlete, an imagineer. You could do anything.

Regrettably the local townspeople - and perhaps even your own family - may not have actually been aware of your incredible gifts and immense potential. They didn't realize that you were descended from royalty and so they lovingly

raised you among a family of honorable and hardworking goat herders. It wasn't that they intended to be unkind; rather, they like their ancestors before them understood the world as a certain kind of place where things were just so and people lived out their lives according to familiar customs. People who seemed different, or had outlandish ideas just stirred things up. For your own good they thought it important that you conform to the customs of your kind.

Time passed. You did a lot of significant things, like going to school and absorbing the truths of the kingdom in which you lived. Gradually you set aside childish things like playfulness and imagining things that didn't exist and listening to your own heart. You began to forget that you could see things that weren't there. And so you buried your treasure deep away for safekeeping.

Later you did things like marrying and making a home, raising a family and working in support of your livelihood. These were all wonderful and necessary. And so at last you had succeeded in living up to the expectations of the realm. This was all that had been imagined for you; beyond this

point, there was little lore to guide you. For all anyone knew, beyond this point might be dragons.

And so you have lived according to the best that you knew. But what of the rest of your life? Perhaps at times you are troubled that you have misplaced an incredible treasure in forgetting what you once loved. Maybe you feel shut down, as if your desires have been locked away. Maybe you feel incapable of remembering anymore what excites your passions and quickens your interest. Maybe you feel as if you have lost your mojo, your brilliance and your power to create.

It is time now to take up your noble quest and travel beyond the known signposts of the realm. Time to recover your lost treasure and follow the call of your own wild heart. There is rewarding and profoundly important work now to be done.

Description of Part One

Chapters in Part One included the following:

1. Concept (We meet the heroine of our story): This chapter focused on the power of self-narrative in framing conceptions of reality. I provided explanation of the value of visual (artistic) exploration in accessing deep content, and summarized my intention that the Book of Life inspire participants to visualize and pursue their creative body of work.

2. About our Protagonist (How she came to forget she possessed super powers):

Addressed individual creative potential and how individual self-actualization furthers the greater good.

3. Playbook format (About the story in which she finds herself): Briefly summarized the intent of the playbook format in encouraging playful experimentation and personal exploration.

4. Some background (How, figuratively speaking, our heroine finds herself lost in the forest): This, the lengthiest of the chapters, addressed the reasons why many people don't think of themselves as creative. These included a too-narrow definition of creativity, a lack of training, and the inhibiting effects of the modern Western educational system. I briefly discussed creativity research demonstrating declines in creative assessments in school age children (Land, G. & Jarman, B., 1993; and Luzer, D., 2013) and presented the Theory of Multiple Intelligence (Gardner, 1983). I addressed the lack of female role models and sited several studies examining implicit biases undermining female representation in creative fields (Goldin, C. & Rouse, C. 1997; and Moss-Racusin, C., Dovidio, J., Brescoll, V., Graham, M. & Handelsman, J., 2012). I also explored Western cultural pro-youth biases and suggested a parallel between youthfulness and divergence and maturity and convergence. I recommended that readers avoid stagnation by resisting premature closure through the cultivation of curiosity and lifelong learning. And I suggested that the "age of finesse" (my term for "mature" adulthood) should be characterized by goal-setting and substantial creative contributions.

5. Your creative power (Our heroine reawakens to destiny and recovers her magical powers): In this chapter I discussed definitions of creativity, how it is both adaptive and innovative, and that it is a skill that can be learned.

6. Flora and fauna (Things our heroine must remember to look out for): Here I discussed the triune mind and the innate preference of the limbic brain to fear the unknown and to anticipate the worst. I encouraged participants to exercise the power of the neocortex to tolerate ambiguity and to visualize the most expansive and gratifying future possible.

7. Rules of play (The things our heroine must never under any circumstances forget): In this chapter I discussed the necessity of deferring judgment and described the processes of divergence and convergence.

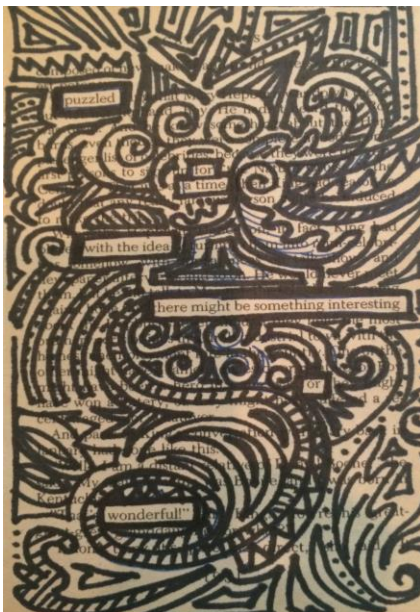
Description of Part Two - And so we begin! (The book within the book)

I led participants through a timed warm-up exercise in which they were to free-associate attributes around the photo of themselves as a child. I suggested that they glue the photo in the center of the page and quickly write the likes and strengths of their childhood selves. They were instructed to let loving kindness toward this child fill their hearts and not to over-think, just gently brainstorm for ten minutes. For the second exercise, I asked them to follow the same process with the photo of themselves as an adult. They were to notice any patterns in what they had loved as a child and what they still valued as an adult. I asked them to remember an expansive feeling of opportunity and to consider what they would want for this child in her life.

Following the warm-ups, I asked participants to select from among three groups of prompts, titled, "looking for patterns", "ideating", and "visualization". Prompts were

designed to be open-ended and to stimulate ideation. The "looking for patterns" prompts included sentence starters such as: "I have always loved....", "What really energizes me is....." and "I really lose track of time when I'm....." Ideating prompts included some of the following: "If I could do anything I would.....", "What I'd love to be when I grow up...." and "People whose jobs I'd love to have....." Visualization prompts included "What I'd like my legacy to be.....", "What is imperative for me to lead my big, bold beautiful life is....." and "My future milestones include....."

After selecting a prompt that energized their imaginations, they were next encouraged to select a medium for self-exploration. Mediums included the following: collage, redacted word poetry, mind-mapping, doodling, enhanced photographs, mandalas, narrative, word associations and treasure mapping. Part two included examples of mind-mapping, collage and redacted word poetry (selecting random words from a printed page to form a thought or phrase, and then obscuring all other words on the page with doodled designs).



Part two also included suggestive pages such as: "**My timeline**". This page is virtually blank except for a timeline arrow filling the length of a landscape-oriented page with the prompt: "Imagine your most amazing future! What milestones will you include?". Next was "**The word**". The prompt invited participants to provide a word that captures the essence of their life's work, and to free-associate around that word. "**A letter to myself**" was a blank page with a piece of notebook paper super-imposed upon it. The intent is to elicit a letter to one's self about what quality or attribute is most important in the individual's life. **Mandala designs** - Four separate pages with mandalas for coloring.

Description of Part Three - Appendices

Part three was originally planned to provide some suggestions on how participants might continue their exploration beyond the parameters of the session. I encouraged them to continue developing their visual journals or personal books of life. It included the following:

"Tools" - This section provided a brief recap of key CPS tools used in the playbook. It included guidelines for divergent thinking, statement starter samples, a description of SCAMPER, and directions on exploring the ladder of abstraction ("Why? What's Stopping You?"). **"A personal note to my readers"** - an inspirational message to participants encouraging them to continue their personal exploration and goal setting. Finally, a list of materials for recommended reading was included.

Administering the first session

I was able to administer the first session using the Book of Life to three participants on November 15th in one five-hour session. Prior to the session I had

requested that participants read the instructional material included in Part One. They were instructed to bring one or more photocopies of photos of themselves as a young child, as well as a current photo; and to think about what they might wish for in their futures. I set the stage with ambient music and light refreshments. I provided a variety of papers, metallic and colored Sharpie markers, colored pencils, crayons, water colors, water color pencils, glue, scissors and magazines for collage.

I began the session by reviewing the instructional material in Part one and answering questions regarding the creativity concepts. I reminded everyone that we were engaging in ideation and that we wanted to avoid judgment or evaluation of any ideas that came up. I explained that we were engaging in a form of visual journaling in order to explore deeply held desires that would inform timeline development and goal setting. I told them that no one had to show their work unless they felt comfortable doing so.

Warm ups went very well until we reached step two, in which participants were to free-associate around a photo of themselves as an adult. Participant #1 was using a photo of herself as a teenager, rather than an adult as had been suggested. After working independently for a few minutes, she announced that she was having trouble seeing anything positive and had lost the focus of the exercise. We were all sitting around a table together, and the other two participants stopped their work at this point. I talked with all three about the purpose of the exercise in finding persistent patterns in ability or preferences and attempting to bring forward from childhood a feeling of possibility and expansiveness. I sensed that we had touched upon a difficult topic for Participant #1, and that I had perhaps naively assumed that participants would have positive associations

with childhood. The energy of the group had declined, so I suggested at that point that we set the photo free association exercise aside for the time being.

I asked participants to take out a blank piece of paper and draw a picture of an animal or creature that represented some aspect of themselves. I allowed five minutes for this exercise, and then had each person talk about their drawing and what attributes of themselves the animal represented. The group's energy definitely took an upturn as they talked about their drawings. Next, I asked the participants to draw a self-portrait using their non-dominant hand. Five minutes later we had several amusing illustrations and a noticeably lighter and more playful atmosphere. Slightly more than two hours had elapsed.



I explained that we were ready to move on with our discovery process and asked participants to select from among the prompts provided and to begin a collage based on that prompt. One of the participants had brought along several pieces of foam board and participants elected to begin their collages on these, rather than on the 8x10 paper I had provided. While I did not mind, I noted to myself following the session that an 8x10 format would likely help narrow the scope of the collage to one topic or specific prompt

only. Greater space in which to collage led to the development of more general ideas. I cleared away many of the drawing materials in order to make room to work.

For the next two hours, participants cut and pasted photos. I allowed periods of silence for concentration and now and then offered reminders about our purpose and intention to allow ideas without judgment. The entire session took five hours. Each participant allowed me to photograph a copy of their collage-in-progress and submitted an evaluation of the session. All participants were eager to share their work with the group and to discuss the significance of their selections.



Section Five - Key Learnings

I learned a great deal over the course of planning and developing the Master's project. At times the process was excruciating as I confronted my internal resistance, faced my fears and labored to unite my thematic vision for the project with formal

creativity concepts. I was reminded of the biblical story in which Jacob wrestled with the angel until finally it bestowed a blessing upon him.

I encountered familiar feelings, similar to those I've met before when grappling with a painting in progress, some exhilarating and some merely frustrating. Sometimes the urge to paint is inchoate, unformed, and arises perhaps from a vague need to express something. Simply applying raw color to canvas is a relief, and driven by the restless desire to create I may just start painting without knowing where I hope to end up. Sometimes I must first search for inspiration through my collection of photos and notes, a treasure trove of texture and design. At other times a vision of the completed painting springs to my mind's eye fully formed and titled, and I am eager to begin. Such bliss is fleeting.

Regardless of how ripe the idea when I begin, each painting precipitates a cascade of peaks and plateaus to be scaled. The beginning is frequently the most difficult part. Sometimes I will apply a base coat, just to overcome the daunting glare of a totally white canvas. Soon, the painting takes form, and I begin to think my goal is achievable. Inevitably at some point, I hit a seemingly insurmountable wall. For a while I am convinced that the work is doomed, hopeless, beyond repair. Sometimes the painting must even be left upon the easel or turned against the wall (I call this being put in "time out") until my disgust subsides and vital energy returns. There are inevitably problems and challenges to be worked out. Painting may look like peaceful work to the uninformed observer, but there is quite a dialog going on inside the head of the painter. Finally, if I have solved the problems that have inevitably arisen, the painting nears completion. Knowing when to quit takes some finesse.

So too, undertaking the Book of Life led me through a similar gauntlet of challenges. Sitting down the first time and trying to create a basic storyboard was at first extremely difficult. But wait. I had a general theme, the Book of Life. I was convinced that the concept was relevant and substantial enough of an idea to carry me through. I had a target audience in mind and I truly believed in the truths I wished to share. I would find my voice by keeping their faces before me and speaking to each as if they were people I knew, sitting in front of me and eager to hear what I had to say. I felt deeply empathetic toward them as I imagined the difficulties they would likely encounter. And I had a wealth of research and many great sources to consult. I would string the concepts together, one by one, like a necklace of pearls. There was nothing left but to begin. I would take solace in the fact, that, as someone once so wisely said, "Success is iterative".

I would categorize my key learning in the following areas:

- conclusions drawn from research; pedagogical concerns related to how best to share creativity concepts with mature adults
- how best to assist participants in undertaking their visual journaling
- personal learning

Conclusions drawn from research

My first conclusion is that, while there is a wealth of creativity research in existence, a vast amount of it concerns creativity in children and young adults. For example, the work by Eisner (2002), Gardner (1983), and Robinson (2001) added enormously to our understanding of creativity in these age groups. Anecdotally, I note that, judging by the number of studies that have examined them, college undergraduates in particular are apparently a constant captive source of research subject fodder. I did not

feel that the relative dearth of research on mature adults was necessarily an insurmountable hardship since much about the creative process and environment can be extrapolated across age groups. I was fortunate to find several studies that focused specifically on creativity in older (shall we perhaps say wiser, instead?) adults.

While somewhat mixed, results pointed to the conclusion that definitive conclusions on the correlation between age and creativity are still out. Like research on gender and creativity, we still have not successfully teased apart the threads of cultural expectation from among the true biological imperatives. The bottom line is that there are plenty of examples of mature adults who continue to live rich and creative lives if only you will look to find them. Larson's (2010) dissertation on the arts and adult learning and Tsai's (2012) paper on adult learners offered confirmation in this regard.

I understand that there is some cultural variability among nations in the way advancing age is viewed, and I can only speak from my familiarity with the Western perspective. Descriptors for youth are overwhelmingly positive, while those for mature adults seem fraught with negative connotations: middle-aged, aging, older. In fact, we don't even have an appropriately diverse vocabulary to examine these issues as my struggles to find neutral language throughout my discussion of this issue clearly demonstrate. Better branding is needed. Recently I have begun seeing the phrase "growing bolder", which I certainly applaud. How might we enlarge our perspectives in adopting more expansive language? Instead of referring to middle age, what if we referenced the age of fruition, fulfillment, attainment or realization? How does the "age of acumen" sound? What if we conceived of advancing age as "unfolding", "evolving" or "enlarging"?

I am left to wonder if there is an unexamined psychological complex surrounding aging itself: does it seem innately negative simply because we unconsciously equate aging with death? How is it that, as life spans increase, our conceptions of youthfulness have not been recalibrated? Is it because humans have focused overwhelmingly on our physical bodies as the quintessence of our very selves? Is this unrelenting biological obsession but a vestigial expression of the famed reptile mind?

We live longer but still seem to make our calculations based on milestones set in previous generations; it seems as though our expectations of advancing age have not kept pace with our evolving life spans. We still for the most part conceive of one's key social and professional contributions as clustering in the first half of life. It almost seems as if we have made tacit social and cultural agreements that life will continue to diverge until one crosses an invisible line. Immediately on the other side, life for most people seems to converge rapidly toward a distant narrow point where little creative opportunity or ability is assumed. The exceptions again prove the rule in popular culture and the arts and sciences. In fact, politics and religion alone are the only fields I can think of with a preponderance of elder statesmen (stress on the word *statesmen*).

Creativity and gender

Thankfully, the total of research on gender continues to increase as well, although I am of the opinion that this issue still receives far less attention than it warrants. Only now, in the 21st century are we beginning to accord gender role issues the significance they deserve. I argue that gender role conceptions in themselves represent a form of institutionalized premature closure. Unfortunately, because our attitudes about gender - as well as our beliefs about aging - are so intractably systemic, we can hardly see the

forest for the trees. So entrenched are our assumptions that we can scarcely conceive of a different reality in which, for example, older women are commonly regarded as empowered cultural creatives.

Education is still needed on the difference between gender and culturally-defined gender roles. Lingering stereotypes about appropriate behavior for adults of both genders remain. For example, attributes assumed to support eminent achievements in men - single-mindedness, self-confidence, forcefulness - may not be considered apropos in women. Such attributes are still judged by a different rubric when embodied by women, those attributes may in many cases be commonly described using different adjectives! So too, behavior that may be applauded in the young - risk taking, experimentation or personal expressiveness in attire - may be regarded as unseemly in a person of a certain age.

I don't disagree that we have made a great deal of progress, at least in the western world, where opportunities for women are concerned. Nonetheless, while she may foray into a "man's world", she should still exhibit ladylike behavior while doing it. Should she fail to conform to unspoken taboos, she may still be harshly judged regardless of whether or not she accomplishes her aims. A quote by Ann Richards comes to mind: "After all, Ginger Rogers did everything that Fred Astaire did. She just did it backwards in high heels". It is clear that women may suffer a double-whammy in terms of cultural expectations of for both gender and age. My work is intended to provide encouragement, validation and creativity training to these historically underserved.

Building the playbook - pedagogical considerations

While I have long desired to incorporate art enrichment into my creativity training, this is the first time I have endeavored to actually create explicit exercises to facilitate the development of CPS skills. Linking discrete CPS skills and concepts to specific journaling exercises was not in itself particularly difficult. The challenge arose in trying to select which key concepts and skills should be included from among the wealth of information available. Were I to include everything of value that could be included, the playbook would have rapidly approached book length. Given the parameters of the Master's project, a book was definitely beyond the scope of work to be completed within one semester. I was also concerned about the overall length and number of sessions required to work through the playbook, and therefore made the decision to put the greatest focus on teaching divergent skills. It seems logical that as participants build their books over the course of several sessions, they may likely require some assistance and facilitation with other CPS steps such as convergence and goal setting.

Throughout the project development phase I was concerned that, in not spending more time on convergent skills, I would in effect fail to close the learning loop. I believe that this fear to some extent been validated. In Part Three I provided a brief synopsis of CPS tools used during the session. While I hope that participants would remember to use them later, I don't think that it's reasonable to expect someone with just a few hours training to fully internalize and reliably employ these concepts.

After presenting the first session, I realized that I need to define further the individual exercises provided. I think that the mix and match format is too open-ended

for many participants, who seem lost in deciding where to start. Valuable session time may be lost as individuals choose from among options, and I believe that I overestimated the ability of some participants to quickly make selections. I plan to revise Part Two extensively before running the next session, linking specific prompts to specific mediums, rather than leaving it up to individual choice.

I also realized, in discussion with my project supervisor regarding results of the first session, the need to add more cognitive training to the materials. Originally I had thought that the needs of the target group may require that emphasis be given to the exploration and development of divergent skills. It was only in retrospect that I considered the possibility that this emphasis had as much to do with *my* cognitive preferences, as the supposed needs of my clientele! This revelation shocked and humbled me. In addition to the other changes mentioned, I plan to add supplementary tools and training in order to balance sensory and intuitive preferences in future sessions using the Book of Life. I just have to keep telling myself that success is iterative, success is iterative!

Survey feedback following the first session was helpful, if limited (due to the small number of participants) and somewhat inconsistent across participants. Some indicated that they would like clearer parameters, and others requested more time to do the exercises. One participant noted that one of the things she most enjoyed about the playbook was working within a supportive group. This was in reference to the difficulty with Participant #1 during the photo warm up exercise detailed previously. One participant did specifically cite the need for information on implementing insights gleaned from personal discovery. This corroborated my suspicions that, in order to well

serve my clients I need to build in enough session time to provide at least some direction on clarification and development of the goals selected as a result of the ideation process.

I spoke at length in section four of the esthetic considerations involved in building a visually appealing playbook and will not repeat them here. I will, however, happily report that I was very pleased to observe how readily the visual arts lend themselves to training in CPS. The preponderance of course work in the ICSC Master's program, while in many regards esthetically appealing in its delivery and certainly open to various forms of creative expression, does not in itself specifically address the arts. I think it can be fairly said that the fields of education, marketing and product design, as well as creative facilitation, are most well-represented in the program curriculum. I am not suggesting there that there are not a number of deeply artistic people in the field, just that this is not the focus of the curriculum per se. It was, therefore, gratifying to add in the course of developing the playbook, in some small way to the growing body of work linking the visual arts with applied creative studies.

I think that there is a bias in Western education and business communities toward viewing creativity as an ends to a means, rather than as an end in itself. While many people understand the value of pursuing artistic expression as innately valuable, I think that U.S. society in general is overwhelmingly concerned with exploiting innovations for commercial reasons. For at least the past decade in education, the cry for STEM education (science, technology, education and math) has reached a crescendo. Technological education is regarded as a prerequisite for maintaining national dominance in a global economy.

There has also been a trend away from stressing the arts in public schools, and artistic products in the public domain have been frequently regarded primarily in terms of their commercial value. Here in the West, at least, we tend to place much more value on the exertions of the rational mind over the meanderings of the poetic deep. Given our prejudice toward linear processes and our national preoccupation with production in the service of a market economy, we have little patience with the slow cultivation of the fruits of the soul. The value of the arts as a medium of personal expression is simply not promoted by society as a necessary individual pursuit.

I think that artistic expression is in itself a hallmark of what it innately means to be human, and that we sell ourselves short if we do not value artistic expression for its own sake. Our feats of engineering are stunning, but they cannot speak to what drives human endeavor and moves the human heart. How many times have the arts, themselves driven scientific achievements? Not infrequently scientific accomplishment is predicted in a futurists' writings or an artists' renderings. It is through the arts that we may try to reveal what beauty moves us to tears or urges us to fly among the stars.

When civilizations collapse, vestiges of engineered artifacts may survive, for example aqueducts, hand tools, and machinery. But I would argue that the true enduring marvels are the artifacts that point to what humans felt, believed and wondered, essentially to what moved them. Cave art, burial mounds, jewelry and adornments, textiles, pottery, and paintings are just some examples. I applaud recent attempts to expand the discourse on what type of education is valuable to society; i.e., STEAM education (The arts have been factored into STEM). I would advocate that we should go still further, making public art accessible for all to enjoy and also in encouraging

individuals to personally explore their own artistic potential. I believe that CPS tenants are immediately useful in beginning dialogue about creative potential across the arts.

Personal observations and learning

Culling from among the huge amount of research and creativity concepts in order to distil the essential ideas to include in the playbook was a challenge. Ever the ideator, converging required enormous self-discipline. I kept reminding myself that if I included everything I thought helpful or relevant, I would have written an entire book, rather than the synopsis the scope of this Master's project required. I learned that I have amassed quite a body of knowledge surrounding creativity concepts and training, and that I have a voracious appetite for absorbing still more. While researching sources, I continually came across additional works to include in my continually growing reading list. It's exciting to see how many new books in the field are being introduced each year.

Part of my challenge throughout my studies (I am clearly an intractable ideator to the end) has been selecting a point to begin making my contributions to the field. So many areas are ripe for application that converging has taken concerted effort. Roughly clustered, the primary areas I have considered for contribution included education, the arts and ecological/social innovation. There is truly a whole world of interesting and worthwhile issues that absorb my attention. I could not have anticipated how effectively this Master's project would assist in narrowing my focus and in helping determine my next steps.

Part Six - Conclusion

My purpose in developing the Book of Life playbook was three-fold. First, to inspire participants to imagine a life of greater possibility and productivity through

guided exploration using applied CPS skills. Second, to develop a curriculum for use with individuals and small groups. And third, to deliver CPS training in the form of hands-on art discovery exercises. The Book of Life playbook is essentially a CPS primer delivered through a visual journal format. As a visual artist, I find instructional materials and learning activities much more engaging when narrative is combined with other forms of expression, and I believe that my intended audience will as well.

I am excited at the prospect of offering the Book of Life playbook to small groups in the very near future. Currently 56 pages long, I do expect to make changes in response to the feedback I receive once I am able to offer the playbook in several sessions. I am planning to run two practice sessions, the first in November and the second as yet unscheduled, prior to running a formal session built around the playbook in February. I have two main concerns at this point. The first is working out the average length of sessions - whether substantive progress be made in the space of a single, 4-5 hours long session. I believe it will be necessary to run longer consecutive sessions in order for key concepts to be adequately conveyed to participants. It may be that shorter sessions will be effective if participants are sufficiently inspired to continue work on their Book of Life on their own. Periods of incubation are required in order for individuals to become consciously aware of life patterns, remember dreams deferred and sufficiently hone their motivations which will drive them to action.

As I mentioned elsewhere, I decided to focus on exercises to cultivate divergent skills because I anticipate that this may be where participants need the most help and encouragement. I elected to focus on women between the ages of 45 and 60 as my pilot

group. I anticipate that most participants will have little prior to exposure to any creativity training and that many will have limited artistic background.

For the majority of participants, the playbook concepts and exercises may well represent the first opportunity both to practice basic CPS skills and to attempt personal expression through art. It was crucial therefore, that I offer a range of exercises suitable for all levels of ability. My second concern is the fact that the playbook as currently designed does not lead participants through any type of convergence per se. In terms of a formal facilitation, this is, as we know, really only half of the CPS process. I question how effectively group members may individually work through convergence and determine their own timeline and next steps. I suspect that progress may best be made working in sequential sessions, with individual follow up after the sessions end.

I worked diligently throughout the process to keep the scope congruent with requirements for the Master's project. The Book of Life is essentially a brief synopsis of creativity concepts, and I can easily see how it could be expanded into book length. It was frequently tempting to add more information, particularly about the process of convergence, as well as additional background in creativity training and use of CPS tools.

My next steps are to test the playbook in at least two pilot sessions prior to making it formally available early next year. I plan to offer sessions to individuals and small groups as part of my transformational coaching practice. Ultimately I plan to include the Book of Life training in full-length book form with a number of other training and discovery exercises.

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