

Imagine: How Creativity Works
by Jonah Lehrer

In *Imagine: How Creativity Works*, Lehrer reveals that creativity is not a specific ability possessed by just the fortunate few, but rather an array of distinguishable thought processes that anyone can acquire. Throughout a few stories of history's most creative innovations, he explains how those "eureka" moments occurred. Exploring these creative individuals, organizations, cities and cultures, Lehrer introduces us with an interesting theory of how creativity works.

In the first part of his book, Lehrer suggests that the act of being stumped is a crucial part of the creative process. Before we can find the solution, one must be convinced that it is beyond our capabilities. We must have struggled and lost, and it is most often at this time, when we have given up all hope, that the "Aha" moment arrives. Lehrer relates this idea from successful individuals such as Bob Dylan writing "Like a Rolling Stone," after stepping down from his singing career, to companies like 3M (not Google), starting an "attention shifting" system for their employees to dedicate a proportion of their work hours relaxing.

After this breakthrough stage of creativity comes a stage of persistence and hard work. Lehrer mentions the use amphetamines to help increase our attention, also can shift our internal focus away from the right hemisphere, limiting the creation of greater ideas.

Another way Lehrer suggests to embrace more creativity is by shutting down one's prefrontal cortex. The prefrontal cortex is the last part of the brain to develop, which is probably why children are often referred as the most creative.

In the second part of his book, Lehrer discusses how creativity works together. He proposes research that can explain how to enhance the pre-inspiration ("perspiration") stage of creativity within companies. The simple answer is to increase information sharing between the employees. The more information is shared, the more creative the employees will be. Sharing information with one another will allow ideas to combine and transform, offering building blocks for solutions.

According to Lehrer, context is key; creativity is most expected when there is a high density and high diversity of individuals that share information. He proposes this idea by

referring to Silicon Valley, where most people continue to meet face to face (instead of electronically) and 52% of the companies have been co-founded by immigrants.

After doing more research, I found Lehrer lost his job and his publisher pulled this book after being exposed of fabricating quotes. Although Lehrer may have fabricated a few parts of the book, it is disappointing to read that so many people are unwilling to give it a chance because it is one of the most unique pop-science books about creativity.