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Nurturing Creative Children

By Dr. YKK Yew Kam Keong, PhD

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About The Author

Dr.YKK Unzips Your Mind To Make Your Mind bloom With Creativity

Dr. Yew Kam Keong, (Dr. YKK) is the father of four wonderful and lovely children, two girls and two boys.

He was one of the eight international creativity advisers to the famous toy company Lego, Denmark to spearhead a global non-profit project *The Next Generation Forum* to promote creativity to the children of the world.

Dr. YKK has created many programs for parents, teachers and children to promote creativity and inventions, among which are:

- ☺ Creative Parenting Workshops
- ☺ Students Invention Workshops
- ☺ Young Inventors Camp

He was:

- ✓ The founder president of the Invention and Design Association of Sarawak (IDEAS).
- ✓ Founder member of Malaysian Mensa
- ✓ Founder member of the Malaysian Invention and Design Society (MINDS) and
- ✓ Former adviser to the president of the International Federation of Invention Associations (IFIA) based in Geneva, Switzerland.

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Unesco on Creativity

All human beings have a need and a capacity to create. From weaving to websites, they seek outlets for artistic self-expression and for contributing to the greater community. The encouragement of creativity from an early age is one of the best guarantees of growth in a healthy environment of self-esteem and mutual respect, critical ingredients for building a culture of peace.

But creativity does not occur in a vacuum. It must be nurtured, allowed the freedom to exist and grow legally protected, and it must not be repressed or censored. UNESCO seeks to foster a social and legal environment that is conducive to creative activity and critical thinking in all its forms. It encourages both individual creativity, with its roots in traditional or popular culture, and industrial creativity, which draws its force from social and economic institutions that stimulate market activity and innovation.

UNESCO : United Nations Education , Scientific & Cultural Organization

Source : <http://www.unesco.org/culture/creativity>

Why Nurturing Creative Children is So Important

"The success of early childhood education will depend on whether it can connect the learning environments of home and school. It should be built on the interaction and communication between children, teachers and parents." ***Carla Rinaldi***

"To give a fair chance to potential creativity is a matter of life and death to any society." ***Arnold Toynbee***

"From now on the big fortunes in this world will be made by selling thoughts instead of things." ***George Gilder***

Preface

This book is especially written for parents and teachers who want to nurture their children's potential so that they can live happy and fulfilling lives. It is based on the knowledge and experience that I gained as one of the eight international creativity advisers to the famous toy-maker, *Lego* on its global project *The Next Generation Forum* to promote creativity to the children of the world.

I am also fortunate to have as my mentor, *Prof. Fred Amram*, *Morse Alumni Distinguished Professor of Creativity and Communication at the University of Minnesota, USA*.

Being a father of four children too, helps in gaining the practical experience necessary to write this book.

I certainly owe a debt of gratitude to the parents who attended my *Creative Parenting* seminars as they contributed positively to some of the ideas shared in this book.

Most parents and teachers think that the single most important factor for success in life is getting good grades in school. Consequently they devote a considerable amount of energy and resources to equip their children to achieve academic excellence.

This, in turn, exerts tremendous pressure on their children to obtain good grades in school thereby unwittingly depriving their children of the joy of learning and perhaps even a happy childhood.

But are good grades a reliable indicator for success in life? Not necessarily so because, more than ever before in this technology-based and highly connected world, good thinking skills - particularly creative thinking - is the most prized asset for success.

If your children cannot think well, they can be easily be replaced by computers and machines in their working lives.

Then, of course, there's the question of how to nurture creativity in our children. At a time when standardized examinations demand for prescribed answers, when our children have little time to play, to daydream and to explore the world around them, it's easy for parents who

value creativity to feel at a loss of what to do. It is my intention that this book will act like a compass to provide a sense of purpose and direction to you.

However, unlike a compass, the path is never straight.

You will have to use your own discretion and judgment as a parent or teacher to decide on what to accept and what not to accept, for every child is unique.

My youngest daughter Li Ching who is twelve now, gives me the greatest joy of fatherhood. She constantly challenges me to come out with my own creative stories according to her specifications during bedtime. The stories could be about her adventures with fairy tale characters like Snow White and Cinderella, or how animals became what they are, for example, how do giraffes get their long necks? Or, how do fruits take on their present form? For example, how did the durian fruit get its thorns? The stories that I have told her during the past six years could easily fill an encyclopedia! At times, I would have to invent games to play with her. While traveling in the car, she would insist for me to come out with riddles based on the things that she can see both inside and outside the car.

Bearing the above in mind, this book is divided into four sections:

1.] 30 Tips For Nurturing Creative & Happy Children

Each of these 30 tips provide an explanation on why it nurtures creativity, followed by an activity that you could do with your children to stimulate their creativity. Most the activities do not cost you any money and only a handful may cost you a few dollars. Your biggest investment in nurturing your children is the time that you spend with them.

2.] The Creative Mischief's Of Little Kamal

These are a series of stories about the creative mischief's of a typical little boy named Kamal. The stories are to demonstrate to you that all young children are inherently creative. If you observe your children in their daily dealings with you, I have no doubt that you will find creative mischief's too. Do not get angry with them but smile in satisfaction that you have creative children. It is indeed one of the greatest joys of

parenthood .

3] [In Praise Of Black Sheep](#)

This short article by Johann Christoph Arnold enlightens us on the potential that the so-called problem children possessed. These children are actually unpolished diamonds and it is up to you as parents and teachers to polish them. This article is followed by examples of problem children who went on to become highly successful and prominent individuals. Please treat your so-called problem children with compassion and understanding and nurture them so that their inner diamond will ultimately shine through.

4] [YKK Quotes On Nurturing Creative Children](#)

These quotes were extracted from books and articles written by educators, child psychologists , prominent people and parents. They are not meant just to be read and forgotten but rather to be reflected upon.

They are truly gems of wisdom on nurturing creative and happy children.

Please do not read them all at one reading, and you need not read them in any particular order. Just pick the ones you like (probably two or three), and relate them to your practice of raising your children.

You need not agree with everything that is being quoted. I believe that just reflecting on them will make you a better parent or teacher.

My mentor, Prof. Fred Amram reminded me that the approach is more important than the activity. How an activity is done and taught is more important than what the activity is and more important than the product.

This book is the first in a series of books that I will be writing about creativity for children, parents and teachers.

My next book will be about creative activities for secondary school students that could be carried out in schools.

This will be followed by creative fun at home and creative learning of basic scientific principles.

I value your feedback. If your comments or sharing of ideas or information are incorporated into any of many forthcoming books, you will get a personally autographed copy as a token of my appreciation for your

contribution. You can email me at yewkk@yahoo.com.

You could also write to my company Mindbloom for my personal attention.

Thank you for permitting me to share my ideas with you. May this book have a positive impact on your life and those of your children

Yew Kam Keong

CE & Chief Mind Unzipper

Mindbloom Sdn. Bhd.

29 Feb 2004

Tips for Nurturing Creative and Happy Children

Tip No.1 - Affirmations

"If the right brain abilities are developed between the ages of zero to six, they will be with a child for life. As such, pulling out the brain's natural abilities should take priority over other needs, so that the child need not suffer at all in learning anything in the future." **Makato Shichida**

It is very important to plant positive thoughts and self-confidence into our children's minds. The best time to do this is just before they go to sleep at night and waking them up in the morning.

For example, if your children are going to sit for a math test, whisper to him or her (preferably in their left ear) the following message for several days just when they are drowsy and just about to fall asleep: "You love math and will do very well in your test," or something similar to this.

Repeat this early in the morning just when they are on the verge of waking up.

Question: How can this nurture creativity in my children?

Response: When your child is sleepy or drowsy, his brain is in the theta brain-wave mode. In this state, his right brain or creative brain is dominant. This means that he will be much more receptive to your positive messages. The left ear is a much more effective pathway to the right brain. That's why you should whisper in his left ear.

A word of warning is important here. Negative words have similar effects so be careful in your choice of words.

Mind exercise 1

A set of alphabet cubes is great for learning words. Get a set and ask your child to spell some simple words. Now, deliberately remove the letter "T" and ask your child to spell the word "CAT".



Answer 1: A creative solution would be to use several cubes to construct the letter "T" itself.

Tip No. 2 - Choosing the Right Toys

"Children who are allowed to explore, regard a toy as a toy or tool; a chance to be active, along the lines of 'what can I do with this toy?'. Those children will manipulate the tools to create stories and subsequently something which is meaningful to them." **Maria Montessori**

Apply the following guidelines when choosing the right toys for your children:

- ? • Are they safe for your children's age?
- ? • Does it allow your children to add their imagination when playing with it?
- ? • Is it fun?
- ? • Is it versatile?
- ? • Does it challenge the children?

Frederich Froebel, who created the world's first kindergarten in 1837, used physical objects such as balls, building blocks and sticks to help children explore physical shapes and spark their imagination through open-ended play.

Children attached symbolic meaning to their creations.

Question 2: How can this nurture creativity in my children?

Response 2: Toys are very important for mental development. The toys that a child plays with can unlock the door to creativity and learning. Each new experience helps to turn the key to unlock more creativity and learning.

Choosing the right toys is very important.

In my opinion, the best guide for choosing the right toy is the book by Dr. Stevanne Auerbach (affectionately known as "Dr. Toy") , "Dr. Toy's Smart Play - How to Raise a Child with a High P.Q. (Play Quotient)"

According to Dr. Toy, "Playful people are less stressed, more inquisitive, more open to new experiences, more creative, and more willing to take risks. Children with high P.Q. are willing to share their enthusiasm for play with their siblings, friends and family."

Mind exercise 2

How do you tie a knot on your handkerchief without letting go of the two ends?

Answer 2: Hold the two ends of the handkerchief with your arms folded. Unfold your arms and the knot is tied!



Tip No. 3 - Music

"Music is the super-highway to the learning and memory system." **Terry Wyler Webb**

When our children are studying or doing some deep thinking, switch on Baroque music. The music serves to tune their brainwaves, release tension and has a general effect of producing calm and of relaxing the mind.

This is particularly important in our modern living environment as we are constantly bombarded by all sorts of noise.

Question 3: How can this nurture creativity in my children?

Response 3: Music can be used to enhance our children's creative abilities, improve their health, increase their intelligence and enable them to enjoy good health and emotional stability.

This claim was made by Don Campbell, an internationally known musician, educator and author of the book, "The Mozart Effect: Tapping The Power of Music To Heal The Body, Strengthen The Mind and Unlock The Creative Spirit'.

Music provides nutrition for mind-body development. Learning to play music and developing rhythm is even better than just listening to it.

An earlier book entitled, "Superlearning" by Sheila Ostrader and Lynn

Schroeder describes many experiments that demonstrated the correlation between creativity, learning and music.

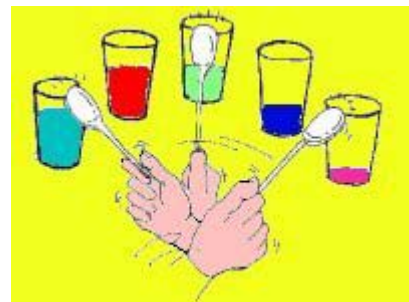
The Bulgarian scientist Georgi Lozanov did the pioneering work in this area. Basically, the right music was able to tune the brainwaves to the desired mode for creativity and learning.

The most effective type of music is Baroque music which includes: Mozart, Vivaldi, Bach and Handel.

Mind exercise 3

How do you produce different musical notes using a set of glasses?

Answer 3: Fill a set of 5 or more glasses (preferably crystal or other thin glasses) with different amounts of water. Strike the glasses' rims gently one by one with a metal spoon. They will each make a different sound, because the frequency of the sound waves depends on the distance from the rim of the glass to the surface of the water.



Tip No. 4 - A Trip to the Supermarket

"When it comes to children, parental involvement is a must. This is because children often won't know they have an interest in something until after their parents bring it to their attention." **John Andersen**



On your next trip to the supermarket, play the following game with your children. Tell them to look at different types of packaging and describe the shapes, sizes, colors and the way they are stacked together.

Question 4: How can this nurture creativity in my children?

Response 4: By asking questions about the interesting nature of packaging materials, you can help to broaden an inquisitive mind in your child. The packages shouting in their vivid colors to shoppers, also aid the child to strengthen his/her familiarity with colors, shapes and sizes.

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