



Permission to Daydream

Discovering Your Unlimited Resources
for Inspiration and Creativity

Tony Buzan and **Christine Miller**
discuss the power of dreams

**“Will you stop daydreaming
- you won’t find any
answers by gazing out of
the window!”**

How often did you hear those words as a child at school or a student at college? And how often are our children, even now, sharply divorced from their reveries and inner ponderings by carers and teachers who neither believe in nor understand the value of daydreams and fantasies?

The *real* truth is that gazing out of the window, looking up at the ceiling, being off in another world, are precisely the places where answers, derived from the magic of creative thought, may be discovered; the curtailment of dreams as inappropriate is something which can firmly squelch imagination, innovation and inspiration into submission.

This applies to all of us; as adults, if we can allow ourselves the joy of dreaming – daydreams, night-dreams, imaginary journeys – we can unleash creative impulses which lead to highly original solutions for our day-to-day concerns. In addition we can become prolific creators of fresh ideas, surprising our selves by producing works of art, and using our insights to band together and facilitate positive change in our world.

One of the most prolifically creative people I know is Tony Buzan. Best known as the inventor of Mind Maps®, and the author of over 90 books, he is also a poet with an astonishing body

of work created consistently since he awakened to the power of poetry in his teenage years. Two volumes taken from his vast collection will be published by Cellar Press in the Christmas 2006 season, in the form of a boxed duet, as a limited edition of 500. This will consist of “Concordea”, a tribute to Concorde which Tony describes as “*a love story between a Man and a Machine.... For me she was Magical and Inspirational; as soon as I was in her presence and seated in her, it was as if a ‘Creativity Switch’ had been turned on, and thoughts and poems gushed out like a geyser.....when Concorde waved her magic wand, she inspired me to write 388 poems on her while on her in 130 hours. Concordea is a selection of those Love Poems designed to take you on that three-hour-fifteen-minute trip, on which some people spent their life savings and said it was well worth it.*”

“Requiem for Ted” is a powerful collection of poems dedicated to the memory of former Poet Laureate Ted Hughes, described by Tony as “*an exercise, using Ted’s own language, poetry, dealing with the abiding grief of the loss of a Friend, a Mentor, an*

Essence. A loss deeper than Organ Tones.” A departure from the Mind Mapping and self-development books with which he is more commonly associated, the publication of the poems starts an exciting new adventure.

Tony’s great passion and mission is to liberate minds and create awareness of the rich seams of inspiration and imagination which dwell within each individual. That is an aim which we share, and our conversations frequently explore the *essence* of creativity - our own and others. This conversation offers a new perspective, a broader view of Tony’s work, expressing our mutual belief that everyone is



constantly creative – it’s simply that we have forgotten, often because of societal pressures and constraints, how to express fully this amazing part of ourselves. As children, we entertain vivid dreams and imaginings of what we will be when we are older...which

Awakening to the Power of Poetry

I was a teenage lout, hating poetry. One hated it because it was the thing to hate, and if you hated the sappy, foppish, weakish, wimpish - then you were the opposite. You were strong and tough and mean and masculine and all those things. Our English teacher made it even worse because she was little, she was a spinster, she was lank-haired, she was not particularly clean, and she had a very small voice. Basically we never paid any attention to her at all. We would ostentatiously be talking to each other, whilst she was talking about whatever she was talking about, which we never knew.

One day she came in and she said, "Children..." - and we groaned, because you don't call 15 year old heroes children any more! She said, "Today I'm going to read you a poem," and we went "Oh! No!", "And it's about a bird", and we cringed and groaned even more loudly. "And it's by a man called Alfred", and we went "What!!" The classroom was in a riot before she even started. Then she said "It's about *The Eagle*". Now it just happened that my main love at that time, as it is now, was Nature, and my favourite bird was the eagle. So I put half an ear to hear about my favourite bird.

THE EAGLE

By Alfred, Lord Tennyson

He clasped the crag with crooked hands;
Close to the sun in lonely lands,
Ringed with the azure world, he stands.

The wrinkled sea beneath him crawls;
He watches from his mountain walls,
And like a thunderbolt he falls.

I was pinioned, stunned. The image was so magnificent; I'd never heard anything like it. It electrified my entire brain. From that instant, I was transformed from a poetry-hater - to one who wanted to be a poet; I wanted to be able to create magnificent images like that.

often wither into obscurity and are lost to us as we grow up. **Just imagine what life might be like if we were all meant to do the heroic deeds of which we daydreamed in class!**

I invited Tony to talk about the power of daydreaming.

Tony: Daydreaming is an excellent tool for unleashing creativity; we all do it. I often conduct a survey in my lectures where I ask "How many of you daydream?" *Every hand shoots up - instantaneously.* Despite differences in race and age, different educational backgrounds, both sexes, we all do it; it is common to every human being. Then I ask "How many enjoy your daydreams?" *Everyone!* "How many of you daydream every day, and nearly all the time every day?" *Everyone!*

So we are all daydreamers; in terms of creativity, it is simply a matter of *guiding* those daydreams into some form of reality. That's what all the great creators did. They had a dream, "*I had a dream*"; and they organised their diurnal and nocturnal activities to make sure that their dreams came true. If you look around wherever you are right now, and let your eyes alight sequentially on everything around you, I will *guarantee* that most of what you are looking at is nothing other than the realisation of dreams.

Christine: Yes, you are absolutely right. There's my grand piano. That's something I dreamed of having as a little girl.

Tony: And that grand piano was also the dream of a grand piano maker. What else is there?

Christine: I'm surrounded by bookcases, filled with wonderful books, books going back to my childhood and university days, and there is a beautiful carpet.

Tony: That is all dreams; each one of those books was a dream in someone's mind, before the pen even got to the paper; and the paper was a dream in someone's mind, who sent someone else to go and get the sawdust. The carpet in your room was a dream in the carpet-maker's mind. ***Everything is the product of a dream.*** When you look at

it that way, it's rather wonderful; we are living in a dream, and the dream is true.

Christine: As a child, I always dreamed of having my own magazine. I loved - and still do love - writing, paper, pens, ink, typewriters - the whole paraphernalia. ReSource is actually the expression and manifestation of that particular dream.

Tony: Let me tell you about an experiment done at the University of British Columbia in Canada, where a psychology professor was giving a course on creative thinking. In the first lesson he asked "*How many of you in here remember your dreams?*" Only a few did. He said "*Tell me about your dreams.*" The few who had a recent dream they could remember told the class their dreams, then time ran out.

At the next lesson he said "*That was a really interesting lesson last time, has anyone else had a dream?*" He kept on doing this, and of course the kids were happy because it meant they didn't have to study! He also asked them "*By the way, have any of you written any poems, or short stories, or done any drawings, or doodles?*" Over the year, as he continued to ask these questions, more and more of the students could *remember* their dreams, and more began to *tell* their dreams. They were also being tested psychometrically. The creative output of the class rocketed exponentially, and although they were never instructed to - they just began to write poetry, with the dreams the basis of it all. Psychometrically they all became much happier, much more stable, far less



From Concordea

EARTH BALLET

At this Altitude
Land's Limbs
Become Dancing Etheries:

Rorschach's Gargantuan
Dance-Troupe,
Performing the Slow Pirouettes
Of Imagination's
Solid-Transforming
Liquid
Dance

ARCHER

Curvature
Tends to Do It.

Tends to Bend the Mind
To Truth;

Tends to Show the Earth
As a Bow

For the Arrow
Of Intelligence.

JETRAIL

Jetrail
Knits,
As Grandma Used to Do,
Stitches;

Cloud Trails of Imagination
In the Child's

Mind-Sky.

From Requiem for Ted

VAST SPIRITUS MUNDI

Sun-Blasted
In the Cerulean Blue
His Beaked-Talons
Grasp
The Prey
Of Meaning.

Mountains;
Atmosphere;
Support.

Crawling Oceans
Subserve

Thunderbolts Inform His Energy;

Earth His Aerie

As He Broods,
Gigantically
Over the Fragile Egg Shells
Of a Planet's Minds

stressed, and it was simply because they paid attention to their dreams and daydreams, *a massive wellspring of creativity*.

Christine: In contrast, we more often find that people's daydreams and dreams have been ridiculed, and beaten out of them.

Tony: Yes, and in many cases *literally* beaten out. Until now when they are all being fed back in. It is important to realise that the actual daydream itself is the first stage in creative thinking. Many people are disillusioned because they have these wonderful, beautiful, original ideas and for some reason nothing happens; they *know* this idea is wonderful, it would save the planet! That may well be true, but it remains as an internal dream, and when it is not externalised, that's all it remains. True creativity *demand*s, not requests, it *demand*s the expression of itself, and that requires application, persistence, hard play. Not hard work, hard *play*.

Christine: What are other key factors you would assess as essential for creativity to happen?

Tony: If we look at the history of creativity on this planet, we will find that there are a number of factors which give rise to it. Creativity is a natural, inborn human function.

Creativity on one level is the ability to solve problems. You have to create a solution, and every second of your life is a potential problem – how do I become successful in my profession, in communication – the brain is always searching for solutions, and no matter where you look, you will see every single human individual searching for solutions. How do I drive my car, how do I cross the road, how do I improve my relationships, how do I make myself more beautiful: look, for example, at all the advertisements on television, they say 'we are helping you with a solution'. What they are *really* saying is - *we are creative* – we are helping *you* with *our* creative solutions – we are helping you solve your problems, we are helping you become more creative.

Christine: In terms of your own creative inspiration, how, where and when might inspiration strike you?

Tony: *Inspiration comes from making connections, from seeing beautiful new things. Inspiration really is, for me, a constant state. Inspiration comes from being alive.*

Creativity can be described as the ability to see new relationships between things and to express them in a different way: to align your brain to being innocent again, as William Blake said, to see with the eyes of a child. Everything is thus new; if everything is new then it's automatically exciting and therefore, what you see is new, exciting, fresh, stimulating, you haven't "seen it before". You've seen something that in normal reality terms is similar, but you haven't *seen* it, thinking the thoughts you are thinking at the time you are seeing it afresh. You have not seen it from that angle, in that light, at that particular moment in universal time. One doesn't "wait" for inspiration; for me there's no such thing as writer's block, other than the block of having so much to write that they are all - all the poems and the books and the ideas - jamming the portal, trying to get out. What I am trying to do is *let* them all out.

Inspiration is in everything, and in seeing connections between everything. Simple little things, like "seeing" a little bird flying near the ground, and then you suddenly realise that actually you are seeing a leaf which is being blown in the wind, but the first *impression* was of a little bird, like a wren, and there you have a poem. You make it up:

*From the corner of my eye,
small bird visiting;
no,
breeze-blown
alighting
leaf.*

Christine: Are there any particular events or stimuli that you would count amongst the most memorable experiences that have inspired you?

Tony: Yes, many. There was my first realisation when listening to Tennyson's Eagle that poetry was not a wimpy, flaky, pathetic thing; that it was exactly the opposite. [see box "Awakening"] The opposite of what everybody was telling me it was. It was incredibly powerful; it was incredibly

emotional; it was incredibly strong. It was metaphoric, it was brilliant. It communicated directly with my soul. That poem first inspired me to become a poet. Shortly after, when I was on a little pier, there was a fisherman at the end of the pier who had caught a fish, which was lying dying on the ground. The hook had been taken out and it was, as fish do in such situations, dying horribly. The scene inspired me to write my first poem when I was a young teenager, based on The Eagle, with the same metre, and simply called "The Catch". Seeing it inspired feelings of wonder at how things would die in such ways, and wondering why one would kill such a thing. Having written it, the poem in itself inspired me to write more poetry, because I thought: "I can do this!" That little poem *does* bring back for me that moment on the pier with that fish and I wish I could now speak to that fish and tell it, "Thank you for starting my poetic life."

THE CATCH

It stares through me with glazing eyes;
The blood, congealing on them, dries;
As gasping one last breath, it dies.

The fish that once looked so divine
Lies smashed and dead, with broken spine.
I leave. The angler sorts his line.

Things that regularly inspire me include nature. I am constantly inspired, stimulated and happy to be with *any* living form; the things they do, their behaviours, and their intelligences often inspire my poetry. Another thing that inspires me regularly is dreams. That other giant *me* at night can't wait to have the stage and entertain me - so my dreams are for me the most extraordinary theatre. I have not seen any film that approaches my dreams. They are holographic. I travel through them. I am in the central role or I am in the front seat or I am a minor character or I am an animal or I am a monster. Dreams are an infinite theatre with infinite props, infinite colours, infinite textures, and infinite space. In them, "I", "the Big I", entertain the smaller "I" at night. I am in this wonderful, incredibly inspirational theatre.

It's not going around looking for inspiration; it is inspiration being itself, being me. So I **am** inspiration at those times. I don't **find** it; you **are** it, and then **you** allow **it** to express itself. It is not external; it's an **internal** thing.

Other things that inspire me are humorous things. You suddenly get these little realisations that make you literally laugh aloud and they often go out as a little poem. An episode of things will inspire me; for example, one day I was driving in the English countryside and it was a very, very windy day. It was autumn, it was a beautiful day and the air was filled with windblown leaves. They were doing all kinds of different things, so I wrote on that journey twelve short poems about these leaves taking different forms. That kind of single event, which contains many elements, inspires me to write a multiplicity around a particular subject.

Other things that inspire me are, obviously the traditional ones of love, beauty, spirituality. I am inspired by quite a lot!

Christine: I'm fascinated by your prolific output - are there specific times when you are most prolific?

Tony: Yes. In terms of prolific, it comes back again to the fact that inspiration is for me a constant. It's like a well, like a spring that is constantly flowing out of its source and there's much more underneath, trying to get out of the actual exit. I wrote a poem about the almost horror of being a poet, because at any instant there may be seven poems trying to get out and you can only let one out. By the time you have done that, something else is happening or another inspiration has happened, so I am constantly on one level condemning to death tens of thousands of poems that wanted to get out but another one got out before and then they disappear into the great Heaven of Unwritten Poems.

So for me I am not prolific in that sense, I am way behind! I am really slow because there is so much that still wants to come out and there are so many poems that I have written very quickly, and haven't yet gone back to, to sculpt into their final form.

Skylarks

David Hindley is a musician, composer and former Professor of Music at Cambridge University. Some years ago, he was recording bird song with high quality equipment. He had recorded a Skylark, and when he was subsequently listening to the recordings through his headphones, he could not work out why the sound of the Skylark was fuzzy, because he had captured the other birdsongs accurately. He went out the following day and recorded only Skylarks; all the recordings were fuzzy. He was frustrated by this, so obtained some better equipment; with the higher quality equipment, the sound was even fuzzier. Then he suddenly had this mind boggling thought. He went back to back to his recordings, played the Skylark's song again, slowing it down until it was half speed, then quarter speed. To his amazement, **each note that had been recorded was in fact four notes.** The Skylark delivers 230 notes per second, far too rapid for the human ear to discern the notes, or the musical complexity inherent in its performance. David Hindley then transcribed the Skylark's songs into musical form, and he found, again to his awe, that this bird sings a full classical symphony in four movements. When it finishes the symphony there is a pause - and then it begins another one. On average the normal Skylark sings **ten symphonies in a day.** Each is based on the previous one, but each is different, with many variations. The average Skylark composes 10 symphonies a day, yet we are impressed that Mozart composed forty in his lifetime; it seems rather slow in comparison to the prolifically creative Skylark!

In fact, it surprised me when John Betjeman, when he was Poet Laureate, said that he felt really fortunate if he wrote five good poems in a year. I think you are very unfortunate if you cannot write five good poems in a **day**. Because if you are surrounded by inspiration and poetry, all you do is allow them to express themselves. It is very often that one is not writing a poem, **one is releasing it**. So in terms of creativity and prolific, for me it comes back again to the birds. We don't think of birds, those little Skylarks as prolific, but they are singing eight, ten symphonies a day which are composed in the moment and that too is what creativity should be.

So yes, prolific. Every human being should be prolific. Times when I am particularly inspired are at night, at dream time, regularly. I will write a poem, a fairly long poem, four or five or six or seven pages a day, when I'm in good dreaming states. Whenever I am alone, I find it inspirational because then the mind can think without any other kind of stimulation than that from its own playground. When I am in nature, again alone, I will suddenly get an inspiration from the moon, from mountains, from the sound of a dog barking in the distance. As soon as the trigger is there, then everything radiates out and around that trigger as the brain is searching for these wonderful connections and associations.

If more people were trained in poetry and metaphor (and by the way it was Aristotle who said the highest form of thinking is metaphor – which is simply image and association – back to the basics again) If everybody were trained in that, then the speaking and communication in the corporate world would be at a much higher level, and therefore business would be more creative which is what everyone is screaming for.

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