

Book title: Out of Our Minds: Learning To Be Creative.

Author: Ken Robinson

Publication date: 2011 (2nd edition)

1. What is your overall impression of the book?

I really enjoyed reading this book. Ken Robinson has a style that is at once astute, informative and often humorous. He manages to blend together an array of theories and viewpoints with an intelligent commentary about creativity in all fields, and how we are all innately imaginative and creative yet somehow seem to lose sight of this fact as we 'grow up'. He focuses on the benefits of thinking and acting in creative ways, whilst taking into account the scientific and historical influences that have shaped the world of work to become sadly, less creative than it could be. The themes covered include, but are not limited to, self-development, leadership, the rapid rate of global change and, acting as something of a thread throughout all these, education. It is this field he returns to time and again, to iterate his re-occurring thesis: that education is both the foundation for changing the way we live, as well as the key to unlocking and unleashing creativity in everything we do.

2. Who do you think would benefit most from reading the book? What will they learn?

I would recommend this book to anyone who might want to challenge their perception of how they currently see the world. Ken Robinson's writing has an inclusive style that makes you feel part of the story he is telling and his proposals inspire you toward action. He asks probing questions and makes statements that catch you off guard in a good way, often subverting the expectations you may have of someone who has spent time as part of the academic establishment. I would certainly recommend this book to teachers who perhaps consider themselves to work in a subject that would not normally be thought of as 'creative'. As Robinson puts it "creativity is not confined to the Arts" and also that "a culture of creativity has to include everybody, not just a select few". This sentiment opens up the gates to everybody, in whatever field of work they may find themselves, whether you consider yourself to be creative or not.

3. What did you think about the quality of the writing? Please consider the tone, structure and ideas. Does it suit the audience?

The tone of the writing is accessible and easy to read whilst covering a range of complex ideas, theories and systems. Robinson's skill appears to be his ability to make some of the current world's more complicated notions, somehow more clear and concise. It is this that makes Robinson an appealing writer in my eyes. If you are looking for an analytical, informative and encouraging read, this fits the bill.

4. Please discuss the research used to underpin the ideas. What evidence does the author use? Is it robust and up-to-date?

The edition of this book that I read is somewhat older now, having been released in 2011. That said the original was released in 2001 and much of this first edition has been carried forward and updated in the second. Therefore, whilst the research may be in need of updating, the ideas and concerns Robinson explores are still as pertinent, if not more so today, given the precipitous amount of change we have witnessed internationally in recent years. I believe a third edition of this book is due this year. It would be interesting to read that version and see which sections have been influenced by the events of the past 6 years.

Addendum... The 3rd edition entitled *Out of Our Minds: The Power of Being Creative* was released on 13th October 2017. The main themes and thrust of the book remain intact:

- Understand the importance of actively promoting creativity and innovation
- Discover why creativity stagnates somewhere between childhood and adulthood
- Learn how to re-awaken dormant creativity to help you achieve more
- Explore ways in which we can work together to keep creativity alive for everyone.

5. What did you learn from reading the book? What ideas/approaches/practice will you change or adopt as a result of reading this book?

Robinson suggests we must recognise multiple types of intelligences, not purely the traditionally accepted hierarchy of the academic kind and look to cultivate creativity and creative thinking skills in our children. He proposes that we are in need of a 'transformation' in the education sector, in order to meet the challenges the world faces in the coming decades. He cites that creativity, innovation and entrepreneurship are of equal importance as the longstanding '3 Rs' of reading, writing and arithmetic. Having worked in a secondary school this past decade, and as I now begin my formal teacher training, I would have to concur with this point of view.

6. Could you share a quote from the book that particularly resonated with you?

"Many people succeed only *after* they have recovered from their education"

Ken Robinson – *Out Of Our Minds: Learning to Be Creative*