

Peace Within

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Resort/leisure ministers (both lay leaders and vocational ministers) are expected to be creative. Often their choice of lifestyle and of a non-traditional ministry is influenced by their creative personality. These choices may allow for the expression of their creativity, but they can also foster other pressures and problems.

Creative people are different. This difference is more than the perception of being strange and in a world of their own. Creative thinking involves a way of understanding and reacting to the world. They do not experience the world in the same way others do. They prefer to act on their curiosity and to learn by exploring. Indeed, they often feel compelled to explore, to push the horizons to their limits and beyond. They cannot accept the status quo without question, without feeling forced to restrict their creativity.

Creative people share a host of personality traits. Among these traits are:

1. An obsession for change and growth.
2. Tolerance for ambiguity and chaos.
3. Ability to see patterns and relationships easily.
4. Explores potentialities, ideas, and concepts.
5. Low tolerance for details and problems.
6. Tendency to be enthusiastic over novel ideas.
7. Little tolerance for boredom and routine.
8. Resistance to pressure to conform to tradition.
9. Challenging the status quo.

"Since creativity involves independence of mind, nonconformity to group pressures, or breaking out of the mold, it is inevitable that highly creative individuals experience some unusual problems of adjustment. Thus, the highly creative child [minister] must either repress his creativity or learn to cope with the tensions which arise from being so frequently the minority of one. Repression of creative needs may lead to actual personality breakdown. Their expression leads to loneliness, conflicts, and other problems of adjustment."¹

Sometimes, creative people internalize this conflict and carry within them a hidden sense of shame for being so different. They cannot accept the affirmation of others because they cannot affirm and accept themselves. Peace alludes them.

Creative people have the same spiritual need to grow and develop as do other people. They struggle spiritually to understand and accept their creative minds as a gift from God, and how to use it effectively for the kingdom.

How can creative people gain peace with themselves? Here are four suggestions:

1. Celebrate your creative personality as a gift from God.

Many creative people grow up with an inadequate image of themselves, perhaps thinking of themselves as strange, or "not quite right." After all, if they were "okay," why were they different from other "normal" people? Creativity may not be a spiritual gift, but it is a gift from God. Thank God for it, and surrender it to Him.

2. Affirm your creative endeavors, and give yourself permission to be creative.

Idea journals or notebooks are great ways of recording ideas for future use. Obviously, not every idea is a good one, but the journal will provide a means of affirming the creative process, and a means of evaluating the creative products.

3. Set realistic goals and action plans for your work.

The greatest affirmation is seeing the finished product of the creative process. Realistic goals and planning may not be easy for the creative person to develop, but the discipline channels creativity and reduces frustration.

4. Recognize your contributions as being unique and valuable.

Everyone wants to feel that they are making a contribution to life, especially through their work. The creative person who acknowledges his or her own contribution will not feel so compelled to obtain the approval of others.

Peace with self is essentially a spiritual problem. First, one must make peace with God regarding their creative gift. Celebrating this gift of God puts creativity into the right perspective. Affirming creative endeavors, setting goals and action plans, and recognizing our own contributions are practical ways of using and enhancing the gift of creativity and living out the peace of God.

Endnote:

E. Paul Jorrance, *Guiding Creative Talent*, Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1962, p. 104.

Adapted from an article by Wayne Taylor in the 1993 National Resort Ministries Conference notebook. Used by permission.