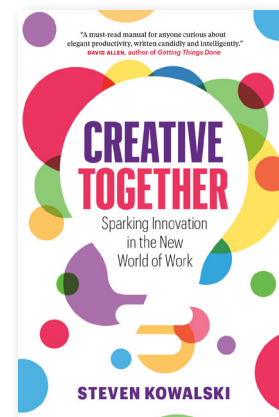


Creative Together

Sparking Innovation in the New World of Work

by **Steven Kowalski**



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THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

The world changes quickly, often right before our eyes. In the vast landscape, our creativity is what sets us apart from all the rest. Venturing into the unknown is often a foreign concept for most of us, especially in life and business – we aren't too keen on moving out of our comfort zones. In *Creative Together: Sparking Innovation in the New World of Work*, Steven Kowalski talks about how connecting more deeply with creativity can help us navigate the opportunities and challenges that are right in front of us.

Through the GIFTED methodology (Greet the unknown with passion, Ignite your creative potential, Flex your superpowers, Thrive in co-creation, Experiment in the swamp, and Dare to dream big), Steven explains how to overcome Creativity Disruption Disorder (CDD), a disorder of our mindset that comes from believing an old story about what creativity is and who we are as creators. By using this guide, you can begin navigating the new world of work.

IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- That your creativity is always with you – it never left.
- How to intentionally use your creativity to achieve more.
- Implementing creativity into your leadership.
- Working together to use creativity to achieve greater things.
- How you can use creativity for the future.

Introduction

All of us have creativity inside us, although some of us have not unlocked the true potential of this power. If we want to spark innovation and bring the full power of our creativity to the table in the new working world, we have to be willing to expand and co-create as we embark on new journeys of discovery and adventure.

Using the GIFTED methodology, you can learn how to embrace what others are already embracing – a new story using this very methodology to invent, innovate, and transform their work and their lives. By learning to work with your creativity, you can spark innovation, even in collective pursuits. Once you claim the potential locked within yourself, there is no turning back because the possibilities will be endless and opportunities will open up.

Adventure One: Claiming Your Gift

Overcoming CDD starts within. We must explore our relationship with our creativity, challenging the old story we tell ourselves about what it is and how it should function. The process is a foundation for a fuller expression of creativity in our work and life. Once you claim your gift, you learn to greet the unknown with passion, ignite your creative potential, and flex your superpowers to navigate the tests that show up on creative quests.

1. Discovering Your Creative Potential

Our creativity is with us, but for some it is locked deep inside. Approaching creativity as a potential instead of an ability transforms who we are as creators and how we show up in the world. When you understand your creativity as potential, important shifts take place in your life (and work).

The first – your purpose becomes more critical. When your “why” is weak, so is the creative potential. The importance of your purpose is what fuels the intensity in which your creativity shapes and guides what is needed in any specific circumstance.

The second – letting go of comparison and judgment. We have been brought up to compare creativity, but when we let go of this preconceived notion, we begin to see the true potential our creativity brings to the table at any scale.

The third – gain greater access by choosing to activate creativity more often. The more you engage creativity openly, the more opportunity you have to access its power. Instead of

narrowing the definitions of creativity, we can expand upon them, drawing from other creative forces within our circle.

The fourth – giving up elitism and gaining connection. The ability-based approach is unequal, whereas a potential-based approach identifies everyone as creative without the need to compare. Connecting with others out of genuine curiosity for who you are, who they are, and what everyone brings to the table unlocks the true potential of creative expression.

The fifth – giving up victimhood and gaining responsibility. Accountability becomes a critical factor in how you actively engage, ensuring you have meaningful and compelling purposes to drive creativity. You begin to cherish the diversity of how people activate their creativity and the uniqueness each one brings to the overall creative contribution.

2. Activating Creativity

There are three powerful forces behind the decisions and choices that are made – purpose, possibility, and constraint. Purpose is the most powerful force of all, giving rise to conditions that call for creativity and generates the gravitational pull that gets things going. Possibility opens us up to imagine and is essential when taking a leap of faith, especially in a world you haven't been to. The further you venture into the unknown, the more possibility thinking you will need. Constraints shape the landscape of our discovery, forming guardrails, limiting the flow of action, influencing sequencing, and impacting the time horizons that shape our possibility. Not all constraints are non-negotiable, but it is best not to change the ones that play a significant role within the new work structure.

3. Greeting The Unknown

The unknown can be intimidating, depending on how you approach it. To meet it with maximum potential, you must cultivate a mindset of experimentation instead of one of achievement. Try viewing your efforts as an experiment, this allows you the freedom to find new allies, pause when necessary, reflect, and assess the progress as you push out from the boundaries of the known frontier. When you combine discovery with conscious creativity and learning, the results are often remarkable – innovation and the generation of the new value that follows. You become better positioned to learn more quickly from mistakes and shape where you are headed.

4. Flexing Your Superpowers

Once activated, your creativity gives you four superpowers

– creative license, questions, seeing beyond, and learning. These gifts animate and amplify your creativity in life. They are crucial to navigating the tests you face in any quest, teaching you how to flex and strengthen them, transforming you and the new world within your sights. Not all of these superpowers will be easy to engage and requires a great deal of practice to really get the most from each one.

5. Navigating Tests

Your creativity doesn't come without its own set of tests and trials you must overcome and learn from. Whether it be the blank canvas, mistakes and failures, time and timing, obstacles, or the swamp – each one brings its own set of lessons in which you can learn from and achieve more. These tests are vital steppingstones you encounter on your journey toward a more conscious, fulfilling, and creative life. You can't avoid these tests, they are inevitable, especially when aiming for innovative results that depart from the status quo. When these tests appear, you can be prepared to greet them, allowing you to cross the threshold and become anew.

6. Stepping Across The Threshold

No matter the circumstances in your life, you are in control of creating the outcome. You are making choices, gestures, succeeding, failing, and finding new paths that gather experiences and learning from them. Your creativity is a gift, and you get to take your gift out into the world. When you do take this gift out into the world, it opens the door for more effective co-creation, which sparks innovation and increases success on your next adventure.

Adventure Two: Getting Creative Together

Once you identify the inner work you need to do, you can begin to realize the benefits. You can begin taking your gift out into the world to create more effectively within social systems. You have to let go of the idea that you can create alone – you must go out and share the gift of creativity. Strength, especially when faced with true upheaval and uncertainty, comes from creating together. This requires you to thrive in co-creation, experiment in the swamp, and dare to dream big when working to bring conscious creativity into collective pursuits.

1. Identifying Your Creative Style

Coming to understand the patterns, habits, and behaviors of your style, you gain access to new choices and new possi-

bilities. Instead of adapting your creative style, you can get to know it better and adapt to what it means for you.

2. Co-Creating

When incorporating co-creating, it requires developing a shared dream. Having a meaningful purpose activates your creative potential. While this seem like an easy feat, it can be a journey trying to explore the unknown together. When being co-creative, it requires that everyone stand together and bring all creative forces together – but you have to check your ego at the door. The more collective your creativity, the further the efforts will go, bringing about different outcomes.

3. Adapting Your Style

Your creative style is more than just how you bring your ideas into the world, they are also a driving force for you. In order to use your style to your advantage, you have to learn the best ways to adapt. The best way that really adapt is to practice – use your style to your advantage by creating a practice plan. The plan should help you focus on how you can let go of control and co-create the work, ease the sense of righteousness which can end up pushing people away, quiet the judgment that forms within the psyche, and allows you to formulate the ideas that allow for successful collaboration to bring about success.

4. Sharing Leadership

When sharing leadership, there is no place for hierarchical control, the power of position, or giving up our powers to others. Every part of the company ecosystem becomes a part of a web of support, guidance, and care focused on developing innovation and bringing shared dreams and goals to life. There has to be openness to letting the circumstances guide you on how you lead, support, and develop yourself and one another.

5. Leading Co-Creation From Any Seat

Leading from any position can be uncomfortable due to the new kinds of tests and places you might end up during the journey. There are various swamps that you will be required to navigate, but the goal is to approach from a survival standpoint in both work and life. From any point within the dynamic, the creative approach should be adaptable with the mindset that it can take you forward instead of keeping you in a standstill position. You must take charge and dance between the me and we factors that will implement themselves while working as a catalyst for one another. The more you focus on becoming a mentor or coach will help in

defining where you are as you approach goals from a more creatively (and co-creative) standpoint.

6. Crossing The Swamp

The swamp throws several obstacles in the path of a creative looking to increase success in new world work. From encountering resistance and protectiveness to organizational sludge that builds up over a lifetime of doing things the same way – there is a way to navigate and learn from each experience, building a more creative component to co-create together. Hurdles are not something you can avoid in any experience, life or work, so being able to come at them with the right approach and adapting the approach to get around or over them becomes crucial. Co-creative styles can work together in most instances to create the path of least resistance – bringing together a team and bringing the innovative new plans that set course for success no matter what curveball is thrown.

7. Coming Together Anew

Once you are on the path that fosters working together and using each other's creativity as potential, the next steps can either be met with optimism or with resistance. A collective that is working together creatively and harmoniously can elevate the impact on any project they encounter, using the proper skills to navigate the swamp and provide maximum results. Instead of becoming objective in times where the swamp seems to have won, simply collaborating and enjoying the ride (versus stressing the small stuff) can bring about a new perspective and enhance the overall experience geared toward maximum return and success. When work-

ing like this, it is possible to not only unleash your superpowers for the good, but unleash the potential of others working alongside you.

Conclusion

Navigating the advances within the new world of work requires innovation and a collective of creativity that pushes forward to meet and exceed organizational goals. While creativity is most often used in ability form, shifting to potential-based creativity can change the entire outlook of how projects (in work and life) are approached. By learning to unlock the creative potential in every person, there is more that can be accomplished – especially when leadership takes on the process of co-creation and works closely to create the web of support and care necessary to navigate through the objections and hurdles that will present themselves. By following the GIFTED methodology, CDD can be overcome with an emphasis on enhancing relationships, work experiences, and driving overall potential within both work and life experiences.



Steven Kowalski, PhD, is a leading voice in the global movement for conscious creativity with more than 25 years of experience as an organizational development expert. Through his firm, Creative License(TM) Consulting Services, he works with clients to shape organizational cultures and reinvigorate how teams co-create new value. As a coach, speaker, and consultant-partner, he facilitates the creativity of scientists, engineers, business leaders, and professionals across industries.

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