

Forbes



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I write on the best way to prepare for the future -- by creating it.

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How To Discover Your Inner Genius: Unthink

Part of my day job is reviewing books.

And while the publishing industry remains in a remarkable state of flux, one thing remains constant: If an idea becomes hot, you can be sure everyone will rush out to copy it. (That's the reason you see all those **Fifty Shades of Grey** wannabes laying about your local bookstores.)

This trend is not limited to mass market books. It also extends to business ones.

And the trend there—for which I, someone who runs a microbusiness and who can use all the help I can get, am grateful—is books that can spur your creativity.

[Unthink](#) by Erik Wahl, who is described as a “graffiti artist and corporate thought leader” is the latest.

It's Wahl's subtitle that got me excited: “rediscover your creative genius.” And the reason it did was because the way he says you can find your inner inventiveness is just a different way of describing how the best entrepreneurs think.

Dealing with the unknown

If you had to boil down what we have been talking about in this blog from the beginning to a single word, it would be “uncertainty.” How do you navigate your way toward making a living when:

- a) Things are changing radically;
- b) You aren't sure where you should be going and

c) You don't even have a map.

In this kind of situation, it helps to have a role model. And you and I have found one. The people who are best at dealing with uncertainty are serial entrepreneurs, those who have created two or more successful companies.

There is nothing more uncertain than starting a business and these people are masters at it.

To reduce it to a single formula, they:

- * Determine their desire, i.e. they begin by figuring out what really gets them excited about working.
- * Take a small step toward finding or creating something that will allow them to capitalize on that desire
- * Learn from taking that small step.
- * Build off that learning and take another step. Then they
- * Learn from that one...and so on. It is an approach that I call Act. Learn. Build. Repeat.

And this brings us back to Wahl, who like me, believes this approach to creativity is already within us.

The approach the best entrepreneurs follow is something that we all did before we were introduced to more formal ways of reasoning.

As an infant/toddler/preschooler, everything you confronted for the first time was an unknown. Because it was, you tried certain things. You attempted to walk. You put your finger in a light socket.

And as a result of your actions, certain things happened. Some good. (Walking.) Some bad. (That shocking light socket.) But that is how you dealt with what, for you at the time, was an unpredictable universe. You took small steps to learn about it.

This way of approaching life has become unfamiliar to us over time, because it has been replaced by the prediction reasoning—a pattern of thinking and acting that is based on the assumption that the future is going to behave in a way that is similar to the present and the immediate past; it involves inferring and extrapolating, often using (sometimes very complex) analytic methods.

But, our natural way of learning—the approach we had as children—has remained within you.

And it remains the best way to deal with the increasing level of uncertainty that we all face.