

The 5 P's of the Creative Process

(The 5 Golden Steps to Creative Nirvana)

By Shafali the Caricaturist

Creativity – the stronghold of the right-brained has always invited the envy of the left-brained. Oh, how they'd love to dissect and then logically analyze our brains to understand how they work and what processes they follow.

I am writing this post to tell the world that the mystery is solved and after a great deal of research and observation, it has been concluded that the creative process has been distilled into 5 distinct steps, and miraculously, their names all begin with a P! I think I must be the second person after Philip Kotler to have arrived at such a P-articularly P-eculiar P-rocess.

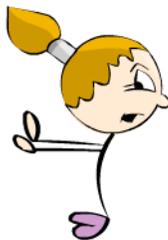
Instead of killing you with anticipation, I'd rather kill you with my mint-fresh P-rocess.

Let me tell you about the 5 P's of Creativity.

Warning: I stand absolved of all responsibility for lost assignments, irate clients, angry audience, whittled remuneration, and any other unhappy fallout of your using this process. However, if this process works for you, I'd appreciate if you pass this document to your friends, colleagues, spouses, children, neighbors, or even your TV-repairman (who might be a struggling artist, for all you know.) Thank you. Now muddle on.

Step 1: Procrastinate

LATER!
RIGHT NOW
I AM BUSY
PROCRASTINATING!



Folks, if you want to be creative, you need to first learn to procrastinate. I find this step extremely useful when I don't experience one of those proverbial flashes of inspiration – and believe me, there seldom are any flashes of inspiration. I am prepared to go back on this statement-o-mine, the day I become famous – because creative flashes (gentlemen, note that these are different from hot flashes!) add an aura to an artist's personality...but then that day mightn't ever dawn. (Sigh!)

Research indicates that the duration of procrastination depends on the urgency of the assignment and is directly proportional to it.

How to Procrastinate Correctly?

In order to procrastinate effectively, you need to:

- Avoid all mention of other people's ideas on the subject in question, especially if they are in the same creative domain (writing for writers, art for artists, cartooning for cartoonists, and so on and so forth.) Such ideas would make you feel lousy and inadequate, which isn't a healthy state of mind to be in.
- Avoid contact with the left-brained, logic-driven, process-hogs – as they'd push you for what they term as "output" and mercilessly murder your creativity.
- Devour news and information on the subject in question, whenever you are hit with a guilty conscience bred by your tardiness. It will make you feel less worthless.

Step 2: Panic

HELP! HELLLPPP!
I AM FLATLINING HERE...



After you've procrastinated enough, and when the deadline looms large enough to cover your entire horizon, you have to panic. This is what I do. After I've procrastinated enough, something begins to nag me to look at the calendar, and when I look at the date I panic.

Now don't panic at the mere mention of this step. Look at it like this. When you panic your body gets into the state of high alert and you begin to look at all possible options to get out of the situation, which means you are now ready to generate ideas. Do you see how Procrastination leads you to Panic and Panic results in ideas? You see it – don't you? Good.

Now the question is...

How to Panic Properly?

If you are to make best use of your panic you need to panic properly. Here are a few tips.

- Email, message, or phone your family members, friends, and, acquaintances, and tell them that you've got to deliver the drawing the next day and that you are experiencing a creative blackout (something similar to what the writers bandy about as the writer's block). Ask them to help you out. I'd call this method: Creativity Mining. Note: this sort of thing has to be done very delicately...I am sure you know what I mean.
- If you stay with your family, darken the room and go on a limited period hunger strike! Though your family won't realize it, you'd be able to emotionally blackmail them into generating ideas for you.
- If and only if the above measures fail – sit down with your notebook in your hand and begin doodling – sometimes great things happen while you are doodling, just the way some great people are born because someone was out...well...doodling (also known as "sowing his wild oats.")

Step 3: Precipitate

OOOOH! I AM SOOO
CREATIVE!



This is the step where you make sense of your doodles. You begin connecting the dots with the topic in question. With the deadline glaring down upon you, ideas begin to flow. Everything begins to come together, and it coalesces into a beautiful workable idea.

This is also the time to have an encyclopedia, your references, and an Internet-enabled computer close by. Why? Because your imagination may end up ruining your life! Recently I did a caricature-cartoon for a magazine, in which in addition to the main character, I had to draw myriad other things, including an evil-looking shark. I got the main character right, I got the TV

and the people in the TV right, but I didn't draw the characteristic dorsal fin of the shark! And you know why I didn't? Because I was too damn sure that I didn't need a reference.

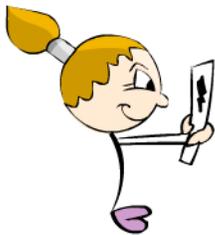
So...

How to Precipitate your Ideas Correctly?

- Make a rough sketch – especially if you are creating a composition. You need to get the proportions right (or deliberately wrong – if you are a caricaturist.)
- If you aren't sure about how something looks, find some good references for it. I mean I couldn't have drawn [Caesar](#), or [Napoleon](#), or even [the Queen](#) - if I didn't use some reference pictures.

Step 4: Produce

I DON'T BELIEVE THIS!
IT'S DONE.



Well. Now get your final worksheet/workbook/paper/canvas...or whichever work-surface you prefer, ready – and draw it – then color it if you must.

This step is easier to handle if you haven't cut corners while "Precipitating" your idea. My personal experience suggests this step is usually the shortest ("Procrastinate" often takes the longest.) It's also important to remember that if you've "Procrastinated" and "Panicked" enough, you should be really short of time by now.

As any artist would tell you, there isn't much to this step.

Yet a How-to is warranted, so...

How to Produce your Creative Heap?

- Sit down, concentrate, focus, and then.... let it all out. (I know...I know – it sounds just like that – and in fact...the relief is commensurate too.) If you are a budding caricaturist, you might find something useful in "[The Evolution of a Caricaturist – A Book on How to Draw Caricatures](#)," other kinds of creative artists would do well to find their own fountains of tips and tricks to help them along this step.
- Scan or Print your artwork.
- Check it out from all angles, gloat over it for as long as possible - and tell everyone around you that creative work drains you and saps you of your energy. If those around you can't draw, they'd deify you - who knows, they might even want to get you stuffed for their living rooms - but take that chance, and enjoy the limelight.

And then...

Step 5: Pray

O' GODDESS OF
CREATIVITY - GRANT
ME THE LOVE OF ART
PATRONS. ART-CRITICS.
VIEWERS. PUBLISHERS...



Before you deliver your painstakingly created artwork to your client – Pray. Believe me, this step is almost if not more important than “Procrastinate” – because it adds that something extra to your work – this is the step where you pray and you resolve that if your client likes this piece of work, then you’d never ever use the 5 P’s Process of Creativity again. This is the time when you tell yourself that when you receive your next assignment, you’ll have it ready before time...etc. etc.

I guess most artists do it already, but if you don’t you’d probably want a quick how-to on this too.

Here you go.

How to Pray and Repent for the Characteristic Artistic Tardiness?

- Kneel, fold your hands, close your eyes, and pray that the client and the audience like your work. In the field of creative arts, prayer is the most creative art of all, so pray in a creative manner – so that your prayer catches the attention of the God or Goddess who’s in-charge of the Creative Department in heaven.
- Write “I shall not use the 5 P’s method literally and will banish tardiness from my life,” on the drawing-sheets that you had used for rough work, at least a 100 times.
- Tear the sheets on which you did the lines into tiny pieces, and flush them into toilet.

Repeat the 5 P’s when your next assignment comes your way.

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