Creativity and Progress: 
**Ethics, Disruption and Change**

Presented July 2018 to  
The University of Texas at Austin  
McCombs School of Business Alumni
Nina Pickell – MBA 1997

• **Formal education:** BBA, MBA from UT - Austin

• **Business education:** 20+ years of leadership in global companies and entrepreneurial ventures

• Strategy, branding, marketing, product development, training, talent acquisition/management, sales, tech leadership

• Entrepreneur; executive; advisor; board member; owner of Internet businesses and music ventures; marketing and branding expert; speaker; executive and entrepreneur coach; strategic consultant; charity ambassador; producer

• **My passions:** Growing companies and brands; helping people achieve success; teaching; keeping music alive – and, through all I do, adding value to the world
It's up to us to create the world we want to live in, and we all have the power to do so if we SET OUR MINDS TO IT.

Richard Branson

Creativity Powers Progress

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What is Progress, Really?

The Oxford Dictionary says...

1. Forward or onward movement towards a destination.
   ‘the darkness did not stop my progress’
   ‘they failed to make any progress up the estuary’

2. Development towards an improved or more advanced condition.
   ‘we are making progress towards equal rights’
What is Progress, to You?

Definition of *progress*

1. *a* (1) : a royal journey marked by pomp and pageant (2) : a state procession  
   b : a tour or circuit made by an official (such as a judge)  
   c : an expedition, journey, or march through a region

2. *: a forward or onward movement (as to an objective or to a goal) : advance*

3. *: gradual betterment; especially : the *progressive* development of humankind*

*What is your definition and life application?*

*Do you have biases for or against “progress”?*
Creativity is…

• Important for progress but can stand alone
• A part of every relationship and every job whether we think about it or not
• Takes on many forms (e.g. negotiation, the arts)
• Can be cultivated
• Varies in importance to individuals

Even if you’re on the right track, you’ll get run over if you just sit there.

Will Rogers
Are You A Creator?

Every block of stone has a statue inside it and it is the task of the sculptor to discover it.

Michelangelo

creator

/nkrēˈædər/

noun
noun: creator; plural noun: creators

a person or thing that brings something into existence.

synonyms: author, writer, designer, de viser, maker, producer; originator, inventor, architect, mastermind, prime mover; literary begetter

"the creator of the series"
Creativity and Progress at Work

• How does creativity fit into what you do? How driven are you by the need to create?

• Whose job is progress in your workplace? In society?

• What ethical or value-based considerations arise?

• Are you a transformational/change agent? Do you have a disruptor mindset?

Art of Business

What business leaders deliver...
• Strategy
• Vision
• Leadership
• Innovation

What do others see?
• The company’s potential
• Possibilities, a new way
• Transformative power of a product; solutions
• Their own strengths or potential

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What Do You Think?

• Does change have to be massive or transformative to be progress?

• How do societal change and “movements” fit in?

• What is disruptive innovation? Is Uber an example? The telephone?

“Human progress is neither automatic nor inevitable... every step toward the goal of justice requires sacrifice, suffering, and struggle; the tireless exertions and passionate concern of dedicated individuals.”

Martin Luther King Jr.

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Some Considerations

Will what you create or change…

• Improve lives?
• Save lives?
• Improve processes — with a net positive?
• Create lasting change? What kind?
• Support positive societal change?
  How do you determine this?
• Create or happen with a known risk?
• Break regulations, rules, laws, etc.?
• Cause harm to people, business, society, etc.?

“All great changes are preceded by chaos.”

- Deepak Chopra
Is This True?

“Every risk is worth taking as long as it’s for a good cause, and contributes to a good life.”

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Examples

• Editing genes, DNA testing, homekits
• Medical advancements - devices, surgery methods, knowledge (“Boil ye hair of…”)
• Marketing – remarketing (jobs, retail), influencers, AI
• In building locations and GPS (fleets/workforce mobility)
• Biometrics
• Uber/Ride sharing
• New work models and the gig economy
• Robotics (surgeries, etc.)
• Self-driving cars
Examples (2)

• Space travel
• Temporary staffing
• Societal change, healthcare, human services, workplace regulations, etc.
  • Examples: safety, regulations, wages, hours, discrimination, harassment
• Facebook - then and now
• Video
And the Arts...

“Art is not what you see, but what you make others see.” – Degas

• May reflect society, what’s happening in the world
• Often a catalyst for change
• Often result in controversy
TIP: In The Zone - *Rituals, Habits*

- Focus, solitude - Jazzmyn RED ("Positive Vibes Only")
- Nina’s tips from art, business
- Commit. Do the work!
- Entertain yourself!

"Without great solitude no serious work is possible."

- Pablo Picasso

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Progress and Creativity…

Start with a single step!

• A word
• An idea
• A frustration
• A social issue or disconnect
• An accident or mistake (e.g. inventions)

They are best with patience, commitment, resilience, a strong why, and more!

"The man who moves a mountain begins by carrying away small stones."

- Confucius

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Timing is *Everything*…

“There is nothing so powerful as an idea whose time has come.”

– *Victor Hugo*

*But don’t wait, unless there’s a good reason.*
TIP: Stay Alert and Be Proactive

• Question everything.
• Stay true to your values. Avoid situational ethics.
• Tune into societal trends, data.
• Challenge, improve your product development and creativity!
• Be proactive. Seek out new ideas everywhere!
• Monitor potential regulatory, legal, financial shifts.
• Monitor the competition, watching for substitutes, supplier chain entrants, etc.

“The best way to predict the future is to create it.”
Peter Drucker
How Much Is Too Much?

- How do you know when you’ve crossed a line?
- There is no one right answer to questions about progress – in most cases.
- It is often personal (e.g. values, risk aversion).
- Barriers or failures do not mean it’s the wrong path.
TIP: Ask “Are You Prepared?”

• Controversy
• Time, energy required
• Legal implications
• Financial risks
• Business risks
• Personal implications (e.g. loss of friends, family issues, stress)
• Doing it alone
• Success
• Future limitations

People think you’re crazy if you talk about things they don’t understand.

Elvis Presley

"ENTREPRENEURS must be willing to be MISUNDERSTOOD for LONG periods of TIME."

–Jeff Bezos
Self Assessment: Disruptor?

• “I am the most excited when I…”
• ”When I hit resistance, I…”
• “I feel my best when I…”
• “I feel so much better when I…”
• “I feel inspired by…”
• “I’m bored when I…”

How often do you find yourself…

• Challenging and/or frustrated by the status quo?
• Thinking of new ways, designs, plans, future
• Driving change either informally or formally
A Few Thoughts

No matter how many mistakes you make or how slow you progress, you are still way ahead of everyone who isn’t trying.

Tony Robbins

Negativity is the enemy of creativity.

David Lynch

Progress is a nice word. But change is its motivator. And change has its enemies.

-Robert Kennedy
What if You Feel Stifled?

• Assess: Are you in alignment?
• Are you doing what excites you?
• Are you afraid of taking risks?
• Are there ethical concerns or value disconnects?
• **Send me an email** – I’ll get you a tip sheet that’ll help!

“I can’t not make music.”
- **Lady Gaga**

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Being The Inspiration

- Can you inspire if your own mindset or passion is out of alignment?

- Leadership Passion Check™
  - What’s motivating you?
  - Do you feel inspired?
  - Are you walking the talk?
  - What is your language?
  - Are you authentic?
  - How do you feel when you wake up in the morning and think about your day?
  - How do you feel on Sunday nights?

- Strategies to stay energized, inspired

"Each of us has a fire in our hearts for something. It's our goal in life to find it and keep it lit."
- Mary Lou Retton
Tip: Get in Alignment

Check for barriers or areas where you are out of alignment. *Take action!* You’ll be the most creative when you’re doing what nourishes you!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Do you have it?</th>
<th>What if you don’t</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Passion for something!</td>
<td>Explore &amp; self assess; Get a coach OR hands-off venture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Love of operations and/or knowledge</td>
<td>Education, advisor, hire/delegate, partner, OR hands-off venture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership skills and desire to lead</td>
<td>Education, advisor, hire/delegate, partner, OR hands-off venture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunity or time to do what you love</td>
<td>Hire/delegate, partner; volunteer, board seats, new directions, realign/reinvent yourself!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Tip: Vision, Belief and Mindset!

"CREATE THE HIGHEST, GRANDEST VISION POSSIBLE FOR YOUR LIFE, BECAUSE YOU BECOME WHAT YOU BELIEVE."

OPRAH WINFREY

"ONCE YOU MAKE A DECISION, THE UNIVERSE CONSPIRES TO MAKE IT HAPPEN."

RALPH WALDO EMERSON

Applies to big picture and daily decisions!
Tip: Face, Move Past Fears!

“Everything you want is on the other side of fear.”

Jack Canfield

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2 books in the works...
Ideas To Live By

You miss 100% of the shots you never take.

-Wayne Gretzky

If today were the last day of your life, would you want to do what you are about to do today?

Be the energy you want to attract.

Steve Jobs
1955 - 2011
Keep Learning!

- My webinars and offline/online workshops, such as
  - “Entrepreneurship: Is It For You?”
  - “Reinventing Yourself: You Can Do What You Love”
  - “Power Branding: Build YOUR Brand for Life”
  - “An Entrepreneur’s Getting Started Guide”
- Digital transformation, content marketing, thought leadership, my new online series, and more!
  - Sign up for event notices by email or at ninapickell.com.

- Consulting and advisory sessions, outsourcing
  - Speaking at your next event or training!
  - Recording artists – sponsorships, events
  - Strategy, marketing, branding, new products, messaging
  - Determining your next career or venture
  - Effective content marketing, digital marketing, thought leadership
  - Multiple income streams, business models, options, systems

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In The Zone: Rituals, Habits

• Morning rituals – Tony Robbins
• An outlet – Art Pappas, CEO of Bullhorn
• 5 ideas a day – CEOs/leaders
• Ideas, accomplishments, goals – Nina Pickell
• Capture ideas when they come
• Involve others – creative brainstorming, fireside chats
• Dedicate time to think/create
• Do what worked before! - ninapickell.com/blog*

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