



The Deliberate Creative Podcast with Amy Climer

Transcript for Episode #049: 3 Ways to Build and Nurture Ideas

May 12, 2016

Amy Climer: Welcome to The Deliberate Creative podcast [Episode 49](#). How are you all doing? I hope you are having a wonderful, creative week. Today, I am going to talk about three ways to build and nurture ideas. First, I want to share with you two exciting things. This episode is going live on May 12th, and on May 12th I am defending my doctoral dissertation, which I am so excited for. For those of you who do not know, the defense of a doctoral dissertation is the very end of a PhD.

At least in my school, the way it works is that when you defend, it is about a 40-minute process and there is some Q&A and then your committee gets together -- in our case, out in the hallway -- they literally go out in the hallway, they talk about you for a few minutes and they come back in and they announce that you are now a doctor. So that is what is happening for me on Thursday, probably either while you are listening to this or maybe it already would have happened by the time you listen to this, so I am really excited about that. My dissertation is called [The Development of the Creative Synergy Scale](#). I am going to go into depth and share that research with you on [Episode 50](#), the next episode, so stay tuned for that next week.

The other thing I want to share with you is a new review. This review came in on [iTunes](#). It is from TNicolita and it is titled Patient and Insightful, five stars. TNicolita says, "The few episodes I've listened to have been great. I appreciate Amy's calmness and ability to convey a sense of patience as she guides you through the beautiful world of creativity. Thanks for pouring your heart into this." Thank you so much for the review. I really appreciate it.

If you would like to leave a review, please go over to [iTunes](#) and share your thoughts. Let me know what you think. Give an honest, insightful review. That would be awesome. It does not have to be long, it can just be a sentence or two and I will share it on the show. You can also leave a review on Stitcher. If you have no idea how to leave a review, you have never done it before and you want step-by-step instructions, you can go to my website. You can go to www.climerconsulting.com/review. That will give you detailed instructions. And if you want that



direct link to [iTunes](#), just go to www.climerconsulting.com/itunes and it will take you right to The Deliberate Creative podcast. Thank you again to TNicolita as well as everyone who has written a review. It is awesome to see your feedback.

Shall we talk about three ways to build and nurture ideas? I am really excited to share these thoughts with you. These have come from my own experiences, they have come from me reflecting on ideas that I have implemented and how I got them going and how I took them from an idea to an actual product or a result or something. In [Episode 45](#) and [Episode 46](#), I talked about how to say no to your inner critic and how to take action against your inner critic. In those episodes, I share this analogy of an idea being like a sunflower and that it takes some time for it to grow and develop and you have to take care of it. You have to nurture it.

After that, a listener emailed me and commented about that sunflower metaphor and that he really liked that metaphor. It got me thinking more about it. To be honest, it kind of just came to me as I was recording the podcast, but since then, I have been thinking about that metaphor and I think it is so fitting. First of all, I love sunflowers. I think they are kind of an amazing flower. I do not know if you all have seen them live in the ground, but they can get up to be like eight to ten feet tall, which is amazing. I live in the Midwest and they get planted just the same time as every other flower, sometime in say May, in the spring and by June, July -- I might have these dates wrong -- but a few months later it is this gigantic flower, this huge plant. The flower itself is rather complex. There is a lot to it if you really look at it and you get up close to the actual flower head.

The more I started thinking about sunflowers, I thought this is really fitting for this concept of how to build and nurture ideas. So I want to think of a brand new idea as a sunflower seed. When you have a sunflower seed, you have a lot of options of what you can do with it. You can chew on it and spit it out, you can eat it, which either of those things if you do that to an idea, it is like, "Okay, whatever. It came into my head and now it is gone." Or you could plant it and potentially grow a sunflower. I want to talk about how I have grown my ideas into being big sunflowers. There are three things that I think are important: 1) incubate, 2) share, and 3) start.

1. Incubate [06:09]

The first is, incubate. By that I mean, the idea comes to you, I think it is important to just think about the idea and spend time on it. My favorite way to incubate is using that time in the morning before I am fully awake. Here is what I do; sometimes the night before, I might think I have this idea I want to kind of figure it out a little bit more, and then I let it go. I go to sleep and



for me this works best in the summer because it gets light early and so 5:00, 5:30, maybe 6:00, the light starts filtering into my bedroom. I am not a super early riser, maybe I get up at 6:45 or 7:00 so for an hour, give or take, I might be kind of wake, like kind of semi-conscious because of that light coming into my room and I might be somewhat aware of it.

During that time, I have had great success with that idea popping into my head and just letting my unconscious, my subconscious work on it. I have gotten to where I can kind of do this sort of intentionally and that is where sometimes thinking about it before I go to bed helps me bring it up at that point. If I do not think about it before I go to bed, sometimes I will get just conscious enough that I can bring the idea into my consciousness and then sort of fall back to sleep or kind of half asleep.

For me, that time of kind of being in and out of sleep is a time where I have come up with some great ideas or pushed ideas much further. Sometimes by the time I fully wake up I am like, "Oh, okay. Yeah, I know what I need to do next to make this idea a reality." I might have figured out the next step, I might have thought of somebody I needed to talk to, I might have figured out kind of a tough part of the issue, but whatever it is, I wake up and I have a lot of energy around working on that idea.

Now, that is one way to do that incubation. Another way is to do it as you are falling asleep. I have not had as much success with that, maybe because usually when I go to bed I am tired and so I go sleep fairly quickly, or if I start thinking about it too much I keep myself awake. But if you are able to balance that and let the idea get into your subconscious but not keep you awake, that is a great time to incubate as well. I like to think of the three Bs, which are Bed, Bath and Bus. So in the bed, which we just talked about, another time is bath. So when you are taking a bath or taking a shower, there is something about being in that process of doing a fairly routine task, you do not really have to think about it, and it allows your mind to wander into other places. Getting ideas in the shower, super common and working through ideas is super common.

The third B is bus. So thinking about like whether you are commuting via bus or train or just driving, something about, again, being in a vehicle moving. Especially, I think, if you are driving where, again, you are doing a fairly routine task, you know how to do this well. You still need to pay attention but you do not have to have undivided 100 percent attention. Your body and your brain knows how to do that well enough that you can be thinking of other things, and I think it is



a great time to incubate around ideas. For me, one of the first things to build and nurture ideas is to spend some time incubating and further develop the idea that way.

2. Share [09:54]

Once I get my idea a little further developed, I start sharing the idea with select people. I say select people because you want to share the idea with people that can either help you think through it, who are good listeners or who can push you further with the idea. I would say at this stage, avoid sharing it with people who are just like, “Oh, that is stupid. That is never going to work.” However, sometimes it can be helpful to share the idea with somebody who you know is going to push back, because that might push your thinking even more, and they might bring up things that you had not thought about. It kind of depends on where you are at in that sharing process and essentially how fragile you feel.

I have talked with people before who had ideas that they had come up with and they were so afraid to share them because they were afraid other people were going to steal their idea. I remember one time talking to somebody that I met at a networking event and he was telling me that he had this business that he was starting that was going to be so amazing and was going to change the world. And I was like, “Oh, cool! What is it?” And he would not tell me. He was like, “I cannot tell you. It is proprietary. It is a secret. I cannot share it with anyone yet.” And as I talked to him more, he was fairly well along in his business development process and I am thinking, “Okay, I do not care what your idea is. I am not going to take it. I do not care that much. I am not in that position that I am going to take your idea and run with it.”

Even so, to me, the most valuable part of an idea is not the idea itself but it is the implementation. Ten people could have the exact same idea and it could be implemented in ten different ways that if you were to look at the results you might not even realize they started out with the same idea. And that is what I think is so amazing. It is also why I think ideas are a dime a dozen, as the saying goes. It is not the idea; it is what you do with it. Do not be so afraid to share your idea because you think somebody else is going to steal it. It is probably not going to happen, and even if it does, it does not matter. You can still do something with it, and you can still do something better and different than they did. So incubate your idea, then share your idea.



3. Start [12:19]

The third thing is start. Get started. I know I am somebody that has lots of ideas that I have not started on yet. Probably you are one of those people too. Starting and taking action is, for most people, the most difficult part. Figure out what are the first things you need to do to get started. After you have shared your idea, what do you need to do next? Likely, what will happen is in the process of sharing your idea you will start figuring out what are those very first steps, what do I need to do. Let's say you have an idea for a new book. As you start sharing it, you are getting more and more ideas, it is getting developed further, perhaps your first step is to write an outline. Or maybe your first step is just to have a note in Evernote or a little notebook in your pocket where you are just writing down ideas that you would add to that book. It does not have to be in outline format, it can be a complete mess, and maybe that is your first step. Maybe there is some research you need to do to get that book started. Great, do some of that research. Whatever you do make some progress towards implementing that idea. To me, that is huge.

Those are three ways that I build and nurture ideas. In some ways, breaking it down to those three things I am like, "Wow, that is super simple," and certainly oversimplified, especially that last part. I think the starting part is much more difficult than I am making it out to be, but you already know that. If you are interested in a couple of episodes from the archives that are focused on that starting, [Episode 07](#) is about implementation in the Creative Problem Solving Process. That might be a good episode to listen to. [Episode 13](#) is an interview with Vicky Cassidy, where she talks about Moving Creative Ideas into Reality. Those are two that I would recommend.

If you are feeling doubtful about your idea or about like, "Oh, I do not know, I am not the right person to implement this," or if you are having a lot of doubts, I definitely would recommend [Episode 26](#) which focuses on the imposter syndrome, as well as [Episode 45](#) and [Episode 46](#) which I just talked about, where I talk about the inner critic. Anyway, those are some great resources, I think, to help you figure out how to move past getting stuck here.

The Weekly Challenge [14:49]

Your weekly challenge is to take one of your ideas and build and nurture it for a full week. Wherever you are at, do you need to do a little more incubation, do you need to do a little more sharing, do you need to do a little more starting, do you need to take a step? What do you need to do to take one of your ideas a little bit further? And I am going to give you one action step to



do, and this is part of that sharing phase, I want you to go to this episode's shownotes page, which is www.climerconsulting.com/049. I want you to go that page and enter in the comments what is your idea. What is it you are working on? Put it out there for the world to see. If you put a note in there of your idea, I promise I will respond. In some way, I will respond back to you in a comment.

I hope this is helpful, you all. Three ways to build your ideas: 1) incubate, 2) share and 3) start. So get going. I will talk to you next time. Bye.