



If You Want to Keep the Dream Alive, You Have to Kill the Fantasy!

The Necessity of Destruction

People are always surprised when I tell them that the prescription for greater creativity is more destruction. It is counterintuitive, but then, most significant life lessons are a bit paradoxical.

You don't have to take only my word for it, Pablo Picasso said "Every act of creation is first of all an act of destruction."

Destruction is linked to creation in more ways than just the surface observation that creating a painting destroys the blank canvas or creating music destroys the silence. The deeper truth is that creativity requires not only that we recognize possibilities, but also that we eliminate them.

For example, before I write an article or a scene in my novel, I "write" it in my head. I hear the sentences form, I hear the characters or narrator, I see the action unfold. I have to admit the writing I do in my head is at least ten times better than the writing I can get down on the page. Because when it's in my head, I can make grand leaps from idea to idea or from dialogue bit to dialogue bit. I can hold many slightly different versions in my imagination.

It isn't until I start to physically write that I notice the huge gaps and imperfections. Unlike the mental space that can hold contradictory versions of the same scene, writing actual sentences is a series of choices, each of which further limits the choices that can follow. What I commit to page or computer file is linear. I can't give form to all the slightly different versions in my imagination. So the actual writing requires destroying all those other possibilities.

I imagine it must be pretty much the same for visual artists who can see the idealized painting or drawing in their mind's eye but have to accept the limited and imperfect rendition of it on paper or canvas. Or for performance artists who can run

amazing rehearsals in their heads that are rarely replicated on stage because the mental rehearsals can accommodate divergent possibilities that real-time performances can't.

While we're contemplating a creative notion, it's free, like a butterfly fluttering from possibility flower to possibility flower. When we make our creativity tangible, which is absolutely necessary to complete the creative cycle and gain the satisfaction of completion, we are forced to pin that butterfly to a flat surface.

This is why so many people prefer writing in their heads to capturing their ideas on the page. Or prefer the music in their heads to the music they can perform. Or whatever the mental equivalent is for the form of creativity they practice (or wish they practiced). You see, real creativity requires action. It requires destruction. It requires surrendering the fantasy of what might be to create the reality of what is.

In fact, one of the most significant forms of destruction you can do to enhance your creativity is to kill the fantasy. Yes, fantasy serves a purpose, and there always comes a time when you have to kill the fantasy to keep the dream alive.

Fantasy vs. Dream

How do you know the difference between a fantasy and a dream? Fantasy is when you tell yourself "This is such a great idea, it's going to be



*Possibilities are the gateway.
Sometimes you have to close the
gate and get back to earth.*

easy. Everyone will like it immediately. I won't have to struggle to make this reality. I won't have to improve it or change it because it's so great right now. I'll get all the support I need without even needing to ask because the idea is so obviously good." Or words to that effect.

Fantasy is the comfortable illusion that someday something magical will happen and you'll have what you want without any effort on your part. Fantasy is easy, pleasant, enjoyable. It's just not going to take you anywhere.

A dream is the inspiring motivation to make your own magic through your own effort. A dream is something you challenge yourself with. A fantasy is an illusion you use to comfort yourself. A dream precedes the tangible creation. A fantasy precludes the tangible creation.

When you dream, you imagine an outcome you believe can happen. Your belief makes it possible for you to "act as if." Acting as if brings results because you take action, which brings you closer and closer to what you want. The dream sustains you to keep taking action as you deal with doubts and obstacles. When you believe it, you'll see it.

But when you're in Fantasyland, a part of you knows it. You know it's not really real. You can't "act as if" in the real world because you're too busy playing make-believe in the fantasy world. There isn't anything you can do to make a fantasy reality; you just wait for some magical day when you just happen to arrive on the Island Where It All Works Out.

Imagination creates a dream house and then asks "How can I build it?". Fantasy, on the other hand, builds the dream house out of cotton candy and make-believe and tries to move in when there's no there there.

Fantasy never leads to accomplishment. You don't always have to be accomplishing something, but if you really want to create something, you have to abandon fantasy and work with dreams instead.



Apply action to dreams to make them reality.

Fantasy's Purpose

This doesn't mean that fantasy has no place or

serves no purpose. Fantasy has charisma, loads of charisma. It is that allure that helps you identify your dreams.

The quintessential example of the charisma of fantasy is the stage character Professor Harold Hill in *The Music Man*. If we explore this musical from a Jungian perspective where all the characters are aspects of one person's psyche, Harold Hill represents the flim-flam artist inside each of us whose stock in trade is fantasy. This is the part of ourselves that wants results without effort. Professor Hill promises the citizens of River City that all they have to do to get their sons in the River City Marching Band is to buy a band uniform and an instrument (which he's ready to sell of course).

Professor Hill tells the boys "Don't worry about practicing boys, just think the music." Fantasy tells us we don't have to work or practice, just think about it and someday, some magic day, everything will fall into place.



Just thinking about it won't take you far.

At the beginning of the story, Professor Hill's scam has been working for him for quite awhile. But his fellow traveling salesmen don't believe the straight and narrow people of Iowa will fall for his line. Iowa represents the heartland, or the land of the heart, and when it comes to the heart, Professor Hill does meet his match. He would have been on a train out of town just in time like always except that the music teacher/librarian in River City is not what he's used to. Harold isn't able to deceive Marian the way he's deceived other music teachers. In fact, he falls in love and that's what keeps him around long enough to get trouble.

Marian isn't your average music teacher/librarian. She knows what Professor Hill is up to, she sees the fantasy for what it is. She's about to reveal that the Professor is a fraud until she sees how belief, even in a fantasy, can have a positive effect on her younger brother and the other boys. In Jungian terms, Marian is intellect (the librarian, keeper of the books) tempered by compassion to become true wisdom.

The Music Man shows us that the charismatic allure of fantasy opens us to our dreams. Fantasy reveals our dreams to us. It initiates the search to fulfill our dreams.

When intellect recognizes fantasy and reacts

without judgment, the individual (the whole person) benefits. Professor Hill helps Marian, Marian helps Professor Hill. He gives her the opportunity to recognize and abandon her own fantasy. She's been waiting for her "special someone," an idealized, romantic partner. Who she ends up loving is a flawed man, a low-down, dirty-dog, fast-talking, traveling salesman. When she surrenders to loving that man (in Jungian terms, loving that part of herself) without conditions or demands, she becomes more daring and alive for it.

Marian gives Harold the opportunity to stop running. She sees through his flim-flam and instead of judging him or hating him for that, she sees all the way to the dream at the heart of the fantasy. She challenges him and supports him in sticking around long enough to get to the dream. Harold Hill finally gets the chance to lead his band. The band stinks of course; no collection of boys who've never actually played their instruments could be good at it. But as off key as they are, the tune they play is recognizable. It's good enough for beginners.

This is the challenge we all face. We have to kill the fantasy of perfect results without effort. We have to be willing to be a beginner, make mistakes and maybe even make fools of ourselves. But the only way to ever be any good is to go through the beginner stage and the mediocre stage, to love our mistakes and our flaws and our foibles more than the illusion.

Learn from Your Fantasies

What fantasies do you entertain and what do they reveal about the heart-deep dreams you hold?

Remember there's nothing wrong with fantasy. Fantasy thoughts can be entertaining and comforting. The important thing is to recognize them for what they are and to occasionally take stock of how they get in the way of what you really want.

When you start looking for your fantasies, you may realize that they're subtle and difficult to spot. For example, one of my coaching clients recognized that she had a fantasy about how the process of writing was always interesting and engaging. The fantasy got her started and well into a book project. But when she got to the difficult and not-so-interesting stage of getting a proposal ready to send to publishers, the fantasy that writing would always be interesting and easy stopped her. Because the proposal

wasn't easy and it wasn't interesting for her. Once we identified the fantasy for what it was, we were able to refocus her attention on her commitment to sharing the valuable insights and information in her book with others. Remembering the original dream of the book, she was able to brainstorm ways to keep moving toward her publication goal.

One way to identify your fantasies is to journal about it. Consider what would make your creative life perfect. List all the things you need for an ideal creative experience. Then identify which of those qualities are essential parts of the dream and which are fantasy.



Learn to recognize fantasies for what they are.

Another way to identify your fantasies is to talk with your coach or a trusted friend who knows you and your creative process well. Ask him or her which of your beliefs or ideas might be getting in the way. In other words, where does that person see your fantasies blocking your progress?

Another method to identify fantasy is to pay attention to the conditions you put on your creativity. Complete these sentences in as many ways as you can:

"Someday, I'll have the _____ I need to create."
"If I can't _____, I just won't _____ at all."

Once you identify the fantasy, be on the lookout for how that fantasy interferes with your dream. Sometimes we cling to a fantasy of the ideal because it keeps us safe from the fears that arise when we actually try something, safe from making a blunder. Unfortunately, it also keeps us safe from experiencing our own creativity.

Sometimes we cling to a fantasy because we don't realize that we finally have what we need to take action to make the dream reality. Adult elephants are restrained by chains that they could easily snap because when they were babies they learned that they couldn't break the chain. You are more powerful and more creative than you realize! You don't have to settle for fantasy any longer.

Kill the fantasy of waiting for some perfect day when everything is just right. See what small action you can take today to keep your dream alive!

From Dream to Reality Classes

Dancing in the Dragon's Den!

As you surrender fantasy to follow your dreams, you'll encounter your unconscious shadow. You may be uncomfortable with your shadow, but you will also be surprised and delighted by the creative gifts it holds. In this class, we'll work through the *Dancing in the Dragon's Den* book so you can:

- ⊙ Deepen your creative journey
- ⊙ Break through creative blocks and restore your energy
- ⊙ Understand the connection between creativity and shadow
- ⊙ Walk through fears to a full and satisfying creative life.

Wednesdays, Sept 17 thru Dec 10, 6:45 to 9 pm

Deeper into the Dragon's Den!

When you have a basic understanding of shadow and how vital it is to the full expression of your creativity, this class will show you how to find:

- ⊙ Creative breakthroughs and expansion
- ⊙ Deeper access to your creativity and shadow on many meaningful levels
- ⊙ The willingness to surrender your ego when you need to
- ⊙ Intense joy and creative bliss!

Tuesdays, March 23 thru May 11, 2004, 6:45 to 9 pm

The Enneagram Experience®

Fantasies and other limiting perceptions come from believing we **are** the personality pattern we adopted to survive the misunderstandings of childhood. The Enneagram Experience® will give you the insight and support you need to:

- ⊙ Identify the strengths and limitations of each personality pattern
- ⊙ Improve your ability to creatively solve problems and resolve conflict
- ⊙ Enhance your relationships
- ⊙ Nurture your spirit and accelerate your growth
- ⊙ Surrender false beliefs and follow your true dreams to fulfill your life purpose.

Saturday and Sunday, Nov 8 and 9, 9 am to 5 pm

Become a Change Master!

We will apply the 7 Step Process of Personal Change to give you the tools, skills and support you need to:

- ⊙ Stop fantasizing and start living the life you want
- ⊙ Remove obstacles and take action to make your dreams reality
- ⊙ Discover the source of your resistance and how to move through it to achieve your goals
- ⊙ Honor your promises to yourself and live with integrity, authenticity and power!

Tuesdays, Jan 13 thru March 2, 2004, 6:45 to 9 pm

Register online at www.RosanneBane.com or call 612-722-4139 for more information.



When you need motivation and information to identify and eliminate fantasy, check out Rosanne's coaching and speaking services at www.RosanneBane.com. Or call Rosanne at 612-722-4139!

Loft Classes!

The Writing Habit: Everyone has talent; what really makes a writer is the habit of writing.

Improvational Fiction: Don't wait for inspiration. Use improv techniques to write in the moment.

Mastering the Writing Habit: Apply the 7 Steps of Creative Change to make projects out of dreams and bring those projects to completion.

Classes start in September or October 2003. For more info or to register: call 612-379-8999 or visit www.loft.org.