



# The Column

## Why Creativity Matters Now

By Rosanne Bane

**W**ith all the trouble in the world—all the talk of war, a stalled economy, the tragic crash of the Columbia—taking time for our creative interests sometimes seems trivial and irrelevant. What possible difference does it make when we make time for creative practice?

Brenda Ueland answered that question when she published *If You Want to Write* back in 1938. Her response is just as valid today: "Why should we all use our creative power and write or paint or play music, or whatever it tells us to do? Because there is nothing that makes people so generous, joyful, lively, bold and compassionate, so indifferent to fighting and the accumulation of objects and money."

Practicing our creativity makes us generous and joyful because it empowers us. It makes us bold and lively because it liberates us. And it makes us compassionate because creativity lures us on a spiritual journey that challenges us to become who we are meant to be. When we begin to realize the depths of our soul, we learn compassion for ourselves, which in turn allows us to feel compassion for others. Before creativity teaches us these things, we want to project our own imperfections—the warts and pimples of our incomplete and inadequate personalities—onto others, make them the evil ones. In other words, we want to perpetuate the problems.

Albert Einstein observed, "Problems cannot be solved at the same level of awareness that created them." We have to go to a higher or deeper level of awareness, which is what creativity is all about—shifting our consciousness and our awareness. This is not to limit creativity to problem-solving, but those who practice creativity on a regular basis are far more likely to have the agile minds that can recognize an innovative solution. And, oh my, the world does so need innovative solutions right now!

But we're not famous physicists. We don't have the political clout to make a difference. How much difference can our puny practice make? There is no real answer to that except that it is certainly much bigger than we imagine. You never know how far a tiny ripple will travel.

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And I know that if we abandon what brings our hearts joy and makes our spirits soar, if we forsake our responsibility to act on the personal challenges that call us to be who we are truly meant to be, then we have let the Enemy (however you define that) win!

Nelson Mandela quoted Marianne Williamson to remind us:

*Your playing small doesn't serve the world. There is nothing enlightening about shrinking so that other people won't feel insecure around you. We are*

*born to make manifest the glory of God that is within us. It's not just in some of us; it's in everyone. As we let our own light shine, we unconsciously give other people permission to do the same. As we are liberated from our own fear, our presence automatically liberates others.*

Creativity is never trivial. We cannot adequately judge our own creativity because we cannot see how far the ripples of our small contribution will go.

Marianne Williamson had a reasonable audience for her book, *Return to Love*. But it wasn't until Nelson Mandela quoted her in his Inaugural Address that her words were heard round the world to inspire untold millions of people to take meaningful action.

Anne Frank didn't think anyone would read her diary. Yet she kept writing in it faithfully. Because Anne told the simple truths of her heart, her words became a powerful reflection and response to what happened when the Nazis came to tear her world apart.

It is important to let our creativity, in whatever forms we express it, respond to what is happening now. Write. Sing. Dance. Sculpt. Paint. Perform. Take a stand. We need to put our creativity, our small personal truths, our fears and our courage, our anger and our joy, our compassion and our reverence for life into everything we do. We need to let our life and our light shine. It is in every one of us! **!**

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