

Praise for *The Creator Mindset*

“Bashan is one of our smartest thinkers out there today at the intersection of work, creativity, and society.”

—**Michael Morsberger**, Vice President of
Advancement at University of Central Florida,
and CEO of the UCF Foundation

“I’d long assumed that creativity is a rare gift that only a handful of lucky people are born with. Boy was I wrong! As Nir will show you, creativity is a tool anyone can learn, deploy, and benefit from. In a commoditized world where businesses blindly rely on analytics to determine potential outcomes, the value of *The Creator Mindset*—and rethinking traditional ways of doing things—has never been greater. Great rewards await those willing to shake things up. Unleash *The Creator Mindset* before your competitors do! It’s easier than you think!”

—**Ken Schmidt**, author of *Make Some Noise* and
former Director of Communications at
Harley-Davidson Motor Company

“Nir Bashan is the first author I know to write about creativity and to lead the reader through a truly effective way of developing it. As a leader, I always encouraged my teammates to be creative but didn’t really know what I was asking. Now I do. This book helps us all do more than encourage creativity—it puts us in the position of knowing what that means and how to help our people get there. My grasp of creativity and how to leverage it has more than doubled after reading this book. I’m a much better leader as a result. In times when so many businesses and organizations have to adapt, creativity is the coin of the realm. Nir Bashan has banked it for us in this book.”

—**Brig. Gen Thomas Kolditz, PhD**,
Director of Rice University’s Doerr Institute
for New Leaders

“From business schools to boardrooms, the prevailing wisdom is that value is generated through efficiency and productivity. Both are quantifiable; they show up on a spreadsheet. Bashan encourages us to think beyond the spreadsheet. He makes the case for value generation through creativity, and then provides a step-by-step guide for anyone to unleash it.”

—**Jae Goodman**, CEO of Observatory (a Stagwell and CAA Company), four-time Emmy and Cannes Lions Grand Prix winner, and one of *Fast Company*’s “World’s Most Innovative Companies”

“Nir Bashan’s *The Creator Mindset* is one of the first books I have read that takes people who believe they have little, or no creativity, and guides them through the ups and downs of becoming creative. This book will be shared rapidly throughout companies and organizations.”

—**Anthony Reeves**, global creative leader,
keynote speaker, and business change consultant

“Bashan argues passionately in *The Creator Mindset* about creativity being something we are all born with. And he has made a convert of me. This is one book you do not want to miss this year.”

—Dr. John Whyte, MD, MPH,
Chief Medical Officer at WebMD

“Nir Bashan has written an inspiring book on the importance of creativity in all aspects of life and business, one filled with helpful exercises on how to be an innovative thinker. It will make the world a more creative place.”

—AJ Jacobs, author of *Thanks a Thousand*

“A timely provocation with easily applicable tools to enable people—particularly those who don’t consider themselves ‘creative’—to put new ideas in the world. Yes, thank you, more please.”

—Marcus Collins, lecturer of Marketing and
Co-Director of the Yaffe Digital Media Initiative
Ross School of Business at University of Michigan

“Here’s an inspiring and informed how-to guide for tapping into a largely overlooked tool for innovation—ourselves! Nir Bashan seamlessly weaves historical accounts of the rise of titans of business with charming tales of his childhood entrepreneurial endeavors to complement the concrete and effective techniques he offers for ingeniously unlocking our own creative potential.”

—Emily Balcetis, author of *Clearer, Closer, Better*
and Associate Professor of Psychology at
New York University

“*The Creator Mindset* contains research, storytelling, and humor that guides the reader to thinking creatively in all they do.”

—Mark C. Thompson, bestselling author, Venture
Investor and Founder Stanford University Realtime
Venture Design Lab, and Board of Directors for Smule

“*The Creator Mindset* will inspire you to act! Bashan makes a strong case for the importance of creativity in every business and the potential to unlock the creative side in every person. He provides tools that are easy to follow and allow you to develop The Creator Mindset in yourself.”

—Kerstin Emhoff, CEO of Prettybird / Ventureland

“Fun and delightful! Creativity is essential for success in geopolitics as well as business, and *The Creator Mindset* reminds us how to tap and unleash the natural creativity we all possess.”

—Douglas P. Wickert, Colonel, USAF, Permanent Professor, and Head of the Department of Aeronautics at US Air Force Academy

“I loved how *The Creator Mindset* gave me a concrete framework to approach business challenges with the same ingenuity that I used throughout military career. *The Creator Mindset* will teach you with the same ‘adapt and overcome’ mentality that I developed during my years flying in an F/A-18 flying at Mach 1, just with less studying and more relatable stories!”

—Caroline Johnson, author of *JetGirl*

“In *The Creator Mindset*, Nir Bashan compellingly and charmingly argues that creativity is more than afterthought in business—it’s the centerpiece of any successful venture, and even entrepreneurs who don’t consider themselves creative naturals can master the science and art of creativity by adopting Bashan’s Creator Mindset. An important, convincing, and enjoyable book that should be required reading for entrepreneurs everywhere.”

—Adam Alter, Professor of Marketing and Psychology at New York University and *New York Times* bestselling author of *Irresistible* and *Drunk Tank Pink*

“This delightful book explains how anyone in business can adopt The Creator Mindset, helping themselves and their companies to thrive. Emphasizing character, listening, and using mistakes to learn fast, Nir Bashan offers timeless insights in an approachable, engaging style.”

—Amy C. Edmondson, Professor of Leadership and Management at Harvard Business School and author of *The Fearless Organization*

“An action-oriented guide for unlocking creativity. Nir’s argument, that all of us must become more creative is forceful and convincing. But more importantly, he explains how organizations and individual creators can rise to the occasion.”

—Allen Gannett, author of *The Creative Curve*

“Better than the classic *Who Moved My Cheese?*, *The Creator Mindset* brings creativity in business to life through storytelling at its best.”

—Lorraine Justice, PhD, author of *The Future of Design*

“Creativity is something we all have, now there is finally a book that can help you harness this ‘superpower.’ For far too long a myth has been perpetuated that creativity is limited to a special few. Nir busts this myth wide open. His book presents a clear and well-researched step-by-step approach that allows you to tap into your Creator Mindset.”

—Richard Turrin, author of *Innovation Lab Excellence* and former head of IBM Cognitive Studios Singapore

“Love this book. Easy to read. Informative with some simple pragmatic steps which will help boost creativity. Everyone should read this book!”

—Gordon Tredgold, Global Gurus Top 10 Leadership expert and speaker

“A creative mind sees what can be rather than what is. In a world of crises and opportunities, the ability to see what can be is priceless. Yet, many of us invest heavily in developing our analytical minds, but underinvest in our creative minds. Nir’s path to a Creator Mindset restores the balance. That’s probably never been more important than now.”

—**Ajay Agrawal**, University of Toronto professor,
founder of the Creative Destruction Lab, and author
of *Prediction Machines*

“Guys like Nir can read the zeitgeist and share amazing insights that are actionable and interesting. Read this book as soon as you can.”

—**John Biggs**, writer, entrepreneur, and bestselling author

“Nir Bashan teaches us how to cultivate our creativity by learning and living The Creator Mindset. Written in an engaging, readable style, this book is filled with memorable examples, vivid stories, and practical tools that will inspire you and enable you to unleash your creativity and fulfill your potential.”

—**Wayne Baker**, The Robert P. Thome Professor of
Business Administration and Faculty Director of the
Center for Positive Organizations at the University
of Michigan Ross School of Business and author of
All You Have to Do Is Ask

“This book is a firm reminder that being creative isn’t just for artists; we use creativity to give us a competitive edge in all parts of life, whether it be in business or sports. Finding that success means recognizing that we aren’t machines; we are a species BUILD machines and solve problems in unique ways. *The Creator Mindset* is a guide to maximize your creativity for moments in life that require fundamental change, all with the ultimate goal of living a stronger and happier life.”

—**J.F. Musial**, President & CEO of TangentVector

“It has been said that management is ‘doing things right’ and leadership is ‘doing the right things.’ Nir Bashan has added another crucial element to great leadership: ‘having a creator mindset,’ which means getting amazing things to happen that would not have happened anyway.”

—**Dr. John Scherer**, founder of Scherer Leadership Center, author of *Facing the Tiger*, and Co-Creator of The Adventus Initiative: From Lock-Down to Learning and from Re-Set to Renewal

“Reading *The Creator Mindset* was a powerful reminder that fear can either suppress one’s ingenuity, or it can fuel it. And that choosing the latter is the key to success. As Nir writes, ‘The power of an idea to forever change the outlook of the market you are in is far more powerful than the limitations that you have in front of you.’ As both a business owner and a creative director, those words couldn’t ring more true. Whether you’re just starting out in your career, or you’re a veteran in your industry, *The Creator Mindset* will supportively guide you on a journey of introspection that will transform the way you approach problem solving.”

—**Mike Wolfsohn**, Founder & Chief Creative Officer of High, Wide & Handsome

“Fresh insights and tools around innovation are hard to find, but Bashan brings them by the bucketful. Clear and engaging, *The Creator Mindset* shows leaders the importance of embracing change, being open to the ‘new,’ and making space for bold thinking to happen. Being creative is no longer optional—it’s imperative—and this book gets you started.”

—**Lisa Bodell**, bestselling author of *Why Simple Wins* and *Kill the Company*

“Nir’s approach to creativity is exactly what the world needs right now. It’s the key to innovation, introducing new value to the world beyond building on the iterations of the past. Plus, creativity is literally the fountain of youth!”

—**Brian Solis**, world-renowned digital analyst/
anthropologist and author of *Lifescape*

“Whether you are an entrepreneur or a corporate player, Nir Bashan makes it easy to boost your career, build your brand, and take your product to the next level. Easy and fun to read and impeccably researched, run don’t walk, to get this book.”

—**Alina Wheeler**, author of *Designing Brand Identity*
and founder of Alina Wheeler Consulting

“While disarming and humorous in style, Bashan demystifies the realm of creative thinking and insists we each harness it as our human birthright. This book goes beyond theory by enlisting readers with provocative exercises and anecdotes so that a creative advantage can be built by anyone interested in improving problem-solving and strategic thinking.”

—**Mike Covert**, Co-Founder and CEO of Ignite
Partnership and Co-Founder and Co-CEO of
Capo Commerce

“Nir Bashan’s *The Creator Mindset* gives you the tools and inspiration to achieve success through innovation. It’s an enjoyable read, packed with engaging stories and practical advice. You’ll take away from it a renewed sense of confidence in your own creative potential and ability to flourish in business.”

—**Donald Robertson**, author of *How to Think*
Like a Roman Emperor

“Nir Bashan provides an enjoyable and inspirational insight into the power of creative thinking and how we all have the ability to incorporate creativity into our lives and work. Providing an accessible and encouraging approach, this is a must-read for anyone interested in exploring their creative mindset.”

—Chris Griffiths, bestselling author and
CEO of OpenGenius

“There’s only one difference between people who are creative those who are not: mindset. This book will teach you how to become the first type of person.”

—Srinivas Rao, Chief Creative Instigator and Founder of
Unmistakable Media

“As human beings we are both highly adaptive and driven to explore, create, improvise, and improve the conditions around us. Much of our world today from the paper or tablet upon which you are reading this to, likely, the environment or artifacts around you while you consume this gem are all products of human creativity and imagination. Nir reminds us of that fact and reconnects us with our childhood sense of wonder where nearly anything is possible. *The Creator Mindset* does not only offer why we should all re-engage and develop our innate creativity but, more importantly, simple and approachable means as to how we can unlock our creative potential. In a world of rising technological capabilities with a hyperconnected and interdependent global economy meeting an unprecedented global pandemic, we have never needed human creativity more than we do in this moment to imagine a new and better world for all of us.”

—Heather E. McGowan, Future of Work strategist and
coauthor of *The Adaptation Advantage*

“Nir’s book provides readers with different points of view to unlock their Creator Mindset. It is a valuable piece to help readers relearn how to be creative.”

—David J. Bland, coauthor of *Testing Business Ideas*

“Creativity is our most valuable asset. I would go so far to say creativity is the currency of our future, especial in unusual and challenging times. Nir Bashan’s book and methods will help you to unleash your creative potential in very easy and doable steps. *The Creator Mindset* is especially designed for people who have been out of contact and reach with their inner creative potential. I can highly recommend it.”

—Nicole Srock Stanley, CEO and Partner at dan pearlman

“*The Creator Mindset* is a practical, wise, and warm approach that blasts away all the mystique and obfuscation that so often surrounds creativity. Filled with engaging practical anecdotes and exercises. I loved the emphasis on positivity and the view that humour is a key element to unlocking creativity. It’s something that’s not spoken about enough.”

—Fran Luckin, Chief Creative Officer of Grey, Africa

“In a world of grey, Nir’s insight and approach in his book *The Creator Mindset* is a brilliant flash of colour. Thought-provoking and captivating. A true accomplishment.”

—Sean Buckley, CEO and Founder of Buck Productions

“*The Creator Mindset* is a series of tips and tricks designed to help anyone become more creative. It’s friendly and accessible and filled with fodder to help improve creativity no matter the business or career.”

—Jason Sperling, SVP, Chief of Creative Development, RPA Advertising and author of *Creative Directions*

“Reading *The Creator Mindset* is a journey of self-reflection. The book highlights the fact that better answers exist if you think about things differently. Others will recognize the change in your leadership style when your response to problems is to ask questions and to seek understanding versus providing an answer.”

—Norm Brady, President & CEO of Associated Builders & Contractors, Inc. Western Michigan Chapter

“What a powerhouse of a book of creative intelligence! Engaging, funny, and perfectly irreverent with plenty of real-world case studies and examples. We are all born creative, and with this book we can capture that long-lost creativity we so deeply desire!”

—Kimberly Friedmutter, celebrity hypnotist

“Nir Bashan offers us some powerful and practical tools to bring the force of creativity to what we do. It was wonderful to see how creative he was with a book on creativity. I appreciate his honest disclosure of struggling with most of the tools in his past and the use of excellent stories and examples to bring his tools to life. I encourage you to buy the book to be ready and set with *The Creator Mindset*.”

—David Zinger, founder of the Employee Experience & Engagement Network and author of four books on work

“Outstanding, easy, and enjoyable read with invaluable information and strategies to increase your productivity the right way—creatively! Anyone that wants to become more successful and enjoy work more should read this wonderful book. I will be purchasing copies for my staff!”

—Barry Brockway, CDR, USN (ret), Innovation Center
Director of Operations

“*The Creator Mindset* provides a rich description of creativity and how we all can develop it to create value for us as individuals and businesses. The book provides illustrative stories that underscore the importance of creativity to solving our challenges, taking advantage of opportunities, and staying competitive.”

—Dale Moore, Founder and President of
The Moore Group LLC and former director of
Naval Air Systems Command (NAVAIR)

“Bashan’s book instills a Creator Mindset in anyone who wishes to seek its power. There is no fluff here; just cold, hard accessibility to creativity for all. If you are looking for a no-nonsense guide to improving your creativity for any business or career, this is the book to get.”

—Toby Daniels, CEO of Crowdcentric

“Bashan’s take on creativity and its true power to influence is fantastic. He hits the nail on the head, focusing on the ‘how’ and ‘why’ of creativity. It’s a fun, factual, and well-researched journey through real-life case studies. It’s a great guide to get us back the fundamental value that creativity brings to each of us.”

—Don McNeill, CEO of DM Inc.

“Bashan is one of those rare thought leaders who offers practical case study advice and does it backed up with loads of careful and meticulous research. I am grateful this book is out there for all to relearn how to be creative.”

—Scott Goodson, founder and CEO of
StrawberryFrog

“Human beings are designed to create, so businesses that don’t welcome creativity lack humanity. *The Creator Mindset* provides an excellent and timely framework to embrace creative thinking and unite the analytical and creative worlds, unlocking human creative potential. We must embrace cognitive diversity across our society and we need not choose between either an analytical or a creative mindset when both are essential to human flourishing.”

—**Scott Saunders**, CEO and founder of
HappyMoney Inc.

“Bashan wrote a funny yet poignant book on creativity. And there has never been a better time for this subject. Written in a loving, passionate way, *The Creator Mindset* offers a step-by-step guide on how to improve sales, grow your business, and ultimately become as successful as you wish.”

—**Stephen Shapiro**, author of *Invisible Solutions*

“There is a crisis of creativity in business today, but Nir Bashan shows us how to reignite the creator inside all of us.”

—**Tim Maleeny**, bestselling author and Chief Strategy
Officer for Havas North America

THE
CREA
TOR
MINDSET



THE GREAT 100 MINDSET

92 TOOLS TO UNLOCK THE
SECRETS TO INNOVATION,
GROWTH, AND SUSTAINABILITY

NIR BASHAN

**Mc
Graw
Hill**

NEW YORK CHICAGO SAN FRANCISCO ATHENS LONDON MADRID
MEXICO CITY MILAN NEW DELHI SINGAPORE SYDNEY TORONTO

Copyright © 2020 by Nir Bashan. All rights reserved. Printed in the United States of America. Except as permitted under the United States Copyright Act of 1976, no part of this publication may be reproduced or distributed in any form or by any means, or stored in a database or retrieval system, without the prior written permission of the publisher.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 LCR 25 24 23 22 21 20

ISBN 978-1-260-46001-8

MHID 1-260-46001-0

e-ISBN 978-1-260-46002-5

e-MHID 1-260-46002-9

Book Design by Lee Fukui and Mauna Eichner

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: Bashan, Nir, author.

Title: The creator mindset : 92 tools to unlock the secrets to innovation, growth, and sustainability / Nir Bashan.

Description: New York : McGraw Hill, [2020] | Includes bibliographical references and index.

Identifiers: LCCN 2020013677 (print) | LCCN 2020013678 (ebook) | ISBN 9781260460032 (hardback) | ISBN 9781260460025 (ebook)

Subjects: LCSH: Creative ability in business. | Creative thinking. | Problem solving.

Classification: LCC HD53 .B376 2020 (print) | LCC HD53 (ebook) | DDC 658.4/063—dc23

LC record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2020013677>

LC ebook record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2020013678>

The Creator Mindset® is a federally-registered trademark of The Creator Mindset, LLC.

Character illustrations and hand-drawn typeface by Meghan Driscoll and Rebecca Berrington. All art in this book was created for *The Creator Mindset* unless explicitly noted.

McGraw Hill Education books are available at special quantity discounts to use as premiums and sales promotions or for use in corporate training programs. To contact a representative, please visit the Contact Us pages at www.mhprofessional.com.

For Jacob

Contents

Introduction: Logic Alone Is Not Enough ix

PART I

WHAT IS THE CREATOR MINDSET?

- 1 Creativity for Noncreative People 3
- 2 Business Leadership Through an Unorthodox Channel: Creativity 11
- 3 Training Your Mind to Think in a Creative Way 17
- 4 The Trinity of Creativity 25

PART II

WHY THE CREATOR MINDSET AND WHY NOW?

- 5 The Brain and Heart on a Collision Course of Prosperity 37
- 6 When Nothing Else Works, Creativity Will 45
- 7 A World That Can Be, Not a World That Is 51

PART III

USING THE CREATOR MINDSET

- 8 Creativity's Unlikely Personality Traits 61
- 9 On the Virtues of Listening 71

10	The Importance of the Little Victory	77
11	The Value of Making Mistakes	83
12	Art and the Ego	91
13	Character Counts	99
14	The Four Ps You Need for Growth	105

PART IV

SUSTAINING YOUR CREATOR MINDSET

15	The Disease of Self-Doubt	117
16	Comfort, Computers, and the Multitasking Myth	127
17	How to Champion the Good Idea	137
18	The Creator Mindset Guide to Crisis	147
19	The Complacency Conundrum	157
20	Starting Anew	169
	A Closing Note from the Author	179
	Acknowledgments	181
	Notes	187
	Index	195



half full

Logic Alone Is Not Enough

THERE IS A crisis occurring in most businesses and careers today, and that crisis is a stark lack of creativity. A vast majority of people today have overdeveloped the analytical part of their thinking and underdeveloped the creative part. It doesn't matter what brainpower-enhancing vitamins you're taking or what new healthy diet you're on. It doesn't matter if you have multiple PhDs or shrewd street smarts. The fact remains that the vast majority of people today are operating at half their potential. It's no wonder that sales are lackluster, careers are stalled, and relationships cannot grow.

Unfortunately, it gets worse. A vast majority of companies are operating at half their potential, and most go out of business within the first five years.¹ It's ludicrous. What drives this failure rate? Why are things so bad? Why do most companies fail? The answer is simple, and it's what inspired me to write this book.

The answer is creativity.

The Creator Mindset will teach anyone, including you, how to solve problems through the lens of creativity. It is a method I created to teach anyone how to solve any problem with a blend of both the analytical part and the creative part of the mind, giving you true optimal performance at 100 percent of your potential capacity.

That sounds great, right? But surely someone is teaching this today. Aren't there colleges and courses to teach people how to be creative in business and, by extension, in life?

The answer is, sadly, no, because to be honest, the vast majority of what they teach in business school is analytics. Sure, it's important to have sound analytics and spreadsheet logic, but focusing only on the analytical is a farce. It's simply not good enough. It's like a pilot going to aviation school but learning only how to land or a dentist going to dental school but learning only how to treat bottom teeth. That's what's going on in business schools today. And it's not just schools. This focus on analytics alone affects just about every business today, and it more than likely affects your business too.

The Creator Mindset is the tool you need to embrace creativity *and* utilize analytical thinking in ways that have never been explored.

This shift in thinking is what will make your company and career thrive, and I'll show you how this works in action through case studies of companies that use creativity to thrive. But I have to tell you that there aren't that many. These companies are few and far between. Therefore, it is up to you to go out and forge a new path with *The Creator Mindset* in your organization or career.

THIS BOOK IS FOR YOU, YES, YOU.

I know you must be thinking, I'm not a creative person, Nir. I don't draw portraits, dance ballet, or play the saxophone. That's just not me. I'm a lawyer or an accountant. I'm an engineer or a nurse. I'm a schoolteacher or a corporate events planner. I'm not a singer or an actor or artist or someone in a creative field. So how will this book help me?

I'll tell you exactly how. *The Creator Mindset* contains insight into the creative mind for those who don't necessarily know they have one. I will teach you how to be creative, but not in the traditional artistic way—in the business way. I find that many people in business don't realize the true power that creativity and creative thought can have in their world. This is what I see with my own eyes over and over while I am out consulting or speaking. People and companies are hungry for a different way, a new way, a creative way.

That is what *The Creator Mindset* is about: bringing out the inner creativity in you to help you solve problems that are unsolvable without a Creator Mindset. Don't worry. I won't teach you how to play an instrument or dance the hula. But I will teach you how to be creative in business because at the end of the day, you have it in you. We all do. It's the spark we are all born with, the spark most of us have extinguished as we've grown older. That spark must be relearned because as adults we are told that creativity is not part and parcel of maturity. It's not serious business acumen. It's frivolous because it cannot be measured and quantified.

But nothing can be further from the truth.

Creativity is in fact essential in *all* you do. This is why we need a fresh perspective. You already have the creative spark

in you; you just need to relearn how to use it, and *The Creator Mindset* will show you how.

HOW THIS BOOK WILL HELP YOU

These are the 12 principles we will return to throughout the book:

Creativity's Unlikely Personality Traits. This principle explains how humor, empathy, and courage are the unlikely cornerstones of creativity in business.

On the Virtues of Listening. This principle highlights three time-management skills that can be learned only in the context of a creative outlook.

The Importance of the Little Victory. Often, we are led to believe that big victories are the only ones that matter. But our attention should be focused instead on how to envision our goals creatively in small chunks.

The Value of Making Mistakes. Mistake utility is a view found only in creativity in which a mistake becomes lucrative. Here we look at how mistakes can benefit your company and career.

Art and the Ego. The gap between creativity and art is huge, and so are our egos from time to time. We must learn the difference to keep ego from taking over.

Character Counts. Three creative tools will help your career or business when times get tough, which they always do.

The Four Ps You Need for Growth. My four Ps of business will help anyone embrace creativity collectively at every step of my program.

The Disease of Self-Doubt. This principle shows us how to use creativity to fight one of humanity's most destructive behaviors.

Comfort, Computers, and the Multitasking Myth. Technology and comfort work in concert to decrease creativity. This principle helps you understand how to resist comfort and limit technology so that creativity can bloom.

How to Champion the Good Idea. This principle highlights five ways to find what is trapping and limiting creativity in your career or organization and then how to free it.

The Creator Mindset Guide to Crisis. In the face of a terrible tragedy in 1982 came an accidental road map to creativity that we can use today.

The Complacency Conundrum. This principle is illustrated by case studies about companies that were creative but then got complacent. It shows what we can learn from their mistakes about how to keep from getting complacent in our careers or businesses.

Through these simple principles you will learn to reference each day, you will begin to awaken your own Creator Mindset. And as you gain comfort with thinking creatively, you will see a new approach to a genuine authenticity that most professionals and businesses want but few know how to achieve. This authenticity is revealed through the lens of creativity.

You will learn in these pages how to achieve the holy grail of innovation. It's not those lightbulb moments of inspiration or secret sorcery that create innovation. Instead, innovation is something you can learn to create. It's something that can be taught. I will show you how.

THE COST OF CREATIVITY

I know what else you might be thinking: Ah! But this is going to be expensive. I bet most of The Creator Mindset tools aren't cheap.

But the truth is that every tool in this book—every single one—costs you nothing. Absolutely nothing. They are all free to use: no licensing, no royalties, nothing. Just free. Other than the cost of the book (and maybe a workshop or keynote that I give at your company or convention), implementing these creative principles will cost you nothing. How cool is that? But like anything in life, there is a catch. Here's the thing: not using these tools and techniques can cost you everything.

You see, the stakes are high today. In an ultracompetitive global economy, there is only one chance to get it right. And as the economy shifts from the industrial economy of yesteryear to the new idea economy of tomorrow, it is imperative that we be armed with the ability to create ideas readily and frequently. The future of your brand, whether it's your personal brand, a start-up, a restaurant, or a Fortune 500 firm, depends on your ability to connect with your audience emotionally and convincingly. No matter what it is that you do, from doctor to banker, from regulator to electrician, from veterinarian to controller, *The Creator Mindset* is a must-read. You will learn to connect emotionally and convincingly with your chosen audience.

I'm going to predict your thinking again. It is something along the lines of this: Come on, Nir. Really? I run a roofing business. Why do I need any of this creative stuff? Am I right? If you are thinking like this, the truth of the matter is that through the lens of creativity you will find your audience. And if you can connect with your audience, you will create business opportunities. And if you create business opportunities, you will increase your bottom line. It really is that simple when you're armed with The Creator Mindset.

Perhaps you are an employee who is trying to get ahead. You're working hard day after day, putting in more hours than the rest, consistently hitting the mark. Yet time and time again you hit a ceiling, unable to climb any higher, unable to achieve your goals, wondering why you can't get ahead. The bottom line is that without creativity you cannot scale new heights and reach your chosen destiny.

You might be tempted to think that creativity is all about an advertisement or your business card or website design. Although that certainly is important, it's necessary to dive much deeper into unfamiliar ways to harness creativity in all you do. I know this different way of looking at things may be scary at first, but it ultimately will open you up to new and exciting opportunities never before seen.

Your life will change forever because you will understand how to use creative principles to solve everyday problems, and not just at work. You literally will learn to change the function of your brain to incorporate creativity, and in doing so you will see the world as you've never seen it before.

We tend to devalue creative solutions in modern life. It's too flimsy. It's something that's too out there. It's artsy-fartsy. We roll our eyes. It's probably for someone else because I'm not that smart or funny or artistic. But the truth is that it's not for someone

else. *It's for you*. This way of thinking will help you and be of service to you and your goals. The brain is divided into two hemispheres—logical and creative—and this book will help you bridge the gap between them so that you can achieve magnificent harmonious success.

The creative mind is one that is not subject to limitations. The creative mind sees what can be rather than what is. How incredibly powerful is that? Just think about it for a second. Take a moment and look at this book closely. I mean it. Stick your finger on this page to hold your place and then look at the front and back covers. Admire them from different angles. Did we do a good job on the cover? Do you like it? Perhaps you can think of another way to lay out the print. Does this typeface look good? Is it hard to read? Simply looking at something as it *can be* rather than *as it is* can change the very nature of the problem you are thinking about right now as you read these words on the page.

Creativity will teach you to see things as they should be, not as they are. A plumber goes to a house and encounters a clogged sink. You see putrid water and a horrible situation, but the plumber sees opportunity and a chance to be of service. On these pages you will learn to see the world as you think it should be, not as it is.

One of the great things about thinking creatively is that it gives you the opportunity to see things in different ways. This is evident because the creative mind cannot see any boundaries to its thinking. It behaves and adapts in such a way that nothing can stop it. Not even reality. Not even a lack of resources. Not even your current crappy cash flow situation or low salary. That is why the creative mind is so important. Imagine a tool in the business world that can uplift you in even the most desolate circumstances by making you believe that there is opportunity in each obstacle.

Forever the optimist, The Creator Mindset will enable you to dream, to fly, to conquer, to solve, to live. Often a third-class citizen compared with other pressing business needs or ignored altogether, The Creator Mindset can supersede all limitations and be more useful than almost anything else.

When your thinking has no barriers, your potential has no barriers.

I wrote this book for you because I'm tired of all these business leaders who are keeping that creativity to themselves. They pretend that it cannot be learned. They say things like "I've got it and you don't." Whatever "it" is. They keep creativity under lock and key away from the general public for fear of revealing their intellectual property. But creativity is far too valuable to humanity to be controlled by just a few people. It is possible to learn it. The pages of this book will show you how. This is a deeply personal undertaking years in the making because the time has come for creativity to be used by anyone who seeks its power.

PART



WHAT IS THE CREATOR MINDSET?

An Overview of the
Creative Revolution About
to Take Place in Business



kid nir

Creativity for Noncreative People

I STARTED MY FIRST company when I was nine years old. I mean calling it a company is probably a very generous description. My friend Richard and I needed money to fund a very serious pursuit: we needed to buy baseball cards and fast food, which when you're nine years old is a big deal. Our families were living paycheck to paycheck and could not afford to hand out any extra money, and so we knew that we had to take action ourselves.

Richard and I started a company with the operating agreement of a handshake. We had stumbled on what we thought was the best idea in the world, something that would bring in limitless amounts of money and make us rich beyond our wildest dreams: we were going to go door-to-door washing cars.

We quickly raided the garage and kitchen for supplies. We used hand soap as car-washing soap. He found a bucket. I had a

ratty old hose that leaked. His mom had thrown out a vacuum cleaner that was putting out more smoke than anything else and barely sucked anything in. But none of that mattered because our plan was perfect. We put our inventory together and found that we had just enough supplies for our first wash. All we needed was that first client.

It wasn't easy because we had no idea what we were doing. How could we get someone to let us wash a car for money? It was a high mountain to climb. Our second hurdle? How much to charge clients. We had no idea what we could get for a car wash. Twenty dollars? Two dollars? What would people pay for this service? We were clueless. Our third hurdle? If they opened the door, what would we say? How would that work? Who would talk first, me or Richard? It was far too much to figure out in advance, and so we did what any kid would have done in our case: we jumped in blind. We would figure it out along the way. We thought, Hey, what can possibly go wrong?

Off we went door-to-door to face countless rejections. Doors slammed. People thought we were nuts. Two kids knocking on a door with a hodgepodge of cleaning supplies saying that they wanted to wash your car? Who could blame people for slamming the door? And we were asking people to hand over their car keys!

Richard and I sat on the sidewalk after an entire day of hearing “no, no, no.” It was a dark moment. All seemed lost. But soon all our thoughts turned to figuring out how we needed *just* one person to say yes, and after that the floodgates to wealth would open. I will never forget it as long as I live. It was a late Saturday afternoon, and my best friend looked at me and asked, “What now?”

It was a defining moment of my youth that set me up to be the man I am today. Life is full of critical “what now” moments, and the way you *react* means far more than what has *happened*.

This was a critical juncture in which a choice had to be made—a creative choice.

It was then and there that I was forced to decide what to do. And those decisions bred the first seeds of a lifetime of developing, tweaking, and tinkering with a formula that today I call The Creator Mindset. It's a way of thinking that I am certain will change your life forever. I know because it has certainly changed mine and those of my clients all over the world: JetBlue, Microsoft, the NFL, EA Sports, American Airlines, AT&T, and many, many others.

The Creator Mindset introduces a new way of thinking that is not taught anywhere else. Some folks already “have it,” and you probably know a few of them. It's that business owner who put out a coupon and got a host of new clients. It's that engineering firm that did a big pro bono job and then secured a host of new accounts. It's the company that gives you points for every dollar you spend and then gives away its product or service for free. All these examples make you think, How did he or she or they think of that? I wish I could do that. Well, the time for wishing and wanting is over. It's time to get serious about training your mind to think creatively, and that's exactly what this book and program will teach you.

The first and most important step in this process is believing one thing: *everything about creativity can be learned.*

Far too many people believe deep down that they're not creative. I see it often when giving keynotes or consulting with clients. It depresses me because folks always think that it is someone else who's creative—never them. Perhaps you are one of those people who believe that they are not creative. But understanding the concept that creativity is a *tool*—a tool like any other—will go a long way. And understanding that creativity can be learned just like anything else will put your mind at ease.

You can learn how to think creatively. It's just that so little time and energy is spent on developing a road map to teach creativity as a tool. We are programmed to develop the analytical mind through the many institutions that exist today to propel analytical agendas. We as a society have shifted away from the creative mind—and at shocking peril.

For instance, we see this as clear as day when it comes to medicine. Modern medicine is so concerned with the physical instead of the mental because it's much easier to mend a broken bone than it is to mend a broken mind.¹ Broken bones and physical injuries are tangible; we can see, feel, and touch them, and that is comfortable, familiar, and apparent. It's simple to prove this and say to others: Look, I fixed the broken arm. But you cannot show someone that you've improved a person's way of thinking. Creativity is the same. It's marginalized simply because quantification of creativity isn't possible.²

I'm here to show you that you *can* see creativity just as clearly as you see sales at the end of the quarter. You just need to train your mind to be able to see in a different way. I know that this is a revolution in thinking, and I think it's fair to say that you're probably starting to doubt this, but I need you to stick with me. Sure, this might represent a departure from where you feel comfortable and from what is familiar, but that's okay. Why? Because as you will learn later in this book, comfort isn't all it's cracked up to be.



OUT OF ALL ANIMALS on earth, we have been bestowed with the most amazing device that has ever been created. Not our sense of sight. Not our sense of smell. Not even our opposable thumbs (although having an opposable thumb is pretty awesome). Instead,

the most impressive device that we have as humans is the brain. And what makes the human brain unique is its ability to be both logical and creative, which really are two ways of thinking that are as different as anything can be. Yet amazingly they live together within our brains! In one place. How incredible.

This power to alternate our thinking between the analytical and the creative³ at will may seem unimpressive at first, but it makes us unique because we are the only animals on earth that can do it. It gives us the ability to move creativity forward⁴ in our thoughts, and this is important to realize because The Creator Mindset really does introduce a revolutionary biological shift in the brain.

In recent decades, scientists have uncovered a phenomenon in the human brain known as neuroplasticity.^{5,6} This amazing discovery has taught us that our brains literally can change. New synapses can connect as we take on new knowledge, neurons throughout the brain can break old connections and make new ones, and brand-new cells are always being created.⁷ This shift to thinking about the brain as a changing organism is revolutionary because until these discoveries were made, most scientists thought that the brain was fixed, meaning that after childhood the brain remained unchanged and was unable to learn something new. But we now know that this is not the case. It turns out that the brain has the ability to change throughout our lives almost on the fly as it learns and interprets new information. Think about that for a moment. How incredibly powerful is that? All it takes to activate this change is the will to learn something new. The declaration that you make today while reading these words on this printed page (or tablet or while listening to audio) can change your life profoundly.

Theodor Herzl said, “If you will it, it is no dream.”⁸ Turns out he was right. You just have to will it. This knowledge you accept

can exercise your brain into new and different levels of fitness. The structure of the brain will change as it ingests new and different ways to learn, to solve problems, and to grow. It turns out that indeed you can teach an old dog new tricks.⁹ And not only that: our brains can physically rearrange themselves according to the input to which we are exposed.

Knowledge that we ingest physically changes the way our brains function. In describing the history of our understanding of neuroplasticity, Nicholas Carr writes, “The brain’s plasticity is not limited to the somatosensory cortex, the area that governs our sense of touch. It’s universal. Virtually all of our neural circuits—whether they’re involved in feeling, seeing, hearing, moving, thinking, learning, perceiving, or remembering—are subject to change.”¹⁰

This is good news on several fronts. It means that we can literally hardwire our brains to accept other ways of thinking,¹¹ including a way of thinking creatively.¹² There is nothing that cannot be learned.

This discovery came at the perfect time in our history. Today, it’s more important than ever because the analytical side of our brains has been on overload for far too long. It has been besotted with the love of quantification, multitasking, technology, data, and more. We are so heavily skewed toward the analytical that the creative part of the brain has been left to wither away like a plant that is not watered. We are not operating in the most optimal way possible. But with this new science, there is hope.



THE CREATOR MINDSET REPRESENTS a correction in the way the brain has been functioning. Like a real estate market that is out of whack and must recalibrate to current trends, our heavily

skewed way of thinking is in dire need of correcting to be able to deal with our realities in the twenty-first century. But to be clear, I am not suggesting that you throw away all that has worked for you thus far and gotten you to where you are today. Analytical skills are important. However, in isolation they are damaging. Without uniting the analytical and the creative, we are operating on a half tank of gas. We're never really using our full potential, always wondering why we are not happy, wondering why we aren't there yet.

But as we begin to unite the analytical and the creative, we learn how to be a more effective leader, how to improve our bottom line, how to get ahead to that next promotion. We begin to create an environment that is ripe for opportunity, growth, and expansion in our market.¹³ On top of all of that, it just might make you a better person.



AS WE WRAP UP this chapter, let's return to where Richard and I left off. We had no customers, but we had determination as we sat on that curb figuring out our next step. We were in search of something—anything—to save our business. In that moment, it occurred to me that we had to get creative in order to survive.

Ultimately, I decided to package our fledgling business as a customer service operation. Sure, we would wash your car, but we also would throw away all the junk on your lawn or porch. We would empty out the trash from your house and put out the cans on the curb. We would clean out and organize your car's trunk. We would top off your windshield wiper fluid with soapy water. We would do extra things that are not necessarily related to car washing. And with that, we found a sales pitch rhythm when going door-to-door. We would sing little rhymes like “Junk

in your trunk, not any more. Nir and Richard will wash your car for sure!” when folks opened the door. Sure, now it’s embarrassing, but at the time it worked.

We discovered that neighbors would purchase a car wash from us for different reasons. Some wanted to help out two kids. Some had a dirty car. Some hated hauling out the trash bins or cleaning off the porch. But ultimately folks were willing to pay a fair price of \$5 a pop for services, some of which included washing a car. Sure, we got stiffed a few times, which was terrible and stung, but our customers and their concerns set up a lifetime of learning how to address problems from a creative perspective for me.

I know what you’re thinking: This creative stuff is neat, but how can it help me in my business? I have real deadlines, real inventory, real customers. And I need a plan for how to grow and improve my business to achieve very specific goals. And none of those goals are “creative” They are real fiscal objectives and thus need to be treated with gravity.

But I am here to argue that no matter what your goals are, without creativity you are merely operating your business like everyone else: set in the analytical without the benefit of the creative. No matter how optimal your thinking is, you are running the business at 50 percent of your available brainpower. Think about that for a minute. You are running your business at best on *only half* of your potential. Would you accept an invoice paid for 50 percent of the full amount? Or a vendor delivering 50 percent of the job? Or half your paycheck? Of course not. I know you wouldn’t, and neither would I. But that’s exactly what you are doing today and every day as you neglect 50 percent of your brain. Now is the time to activate it, so let’s get moving.

**READY TO READ MORE? BUY NOW WHEREVER
GREAT BOOKS ARE SOLD!**

