

American Bar Association Young Lawyers Division
The Young Lawyer

Creativity—You're Full of It!

By Kevin E. Houchin

You're full of it! You really are. There's no way that I'm the first person to tell you. You can't deny it. You're full of it up to your eyebrows.

Full of creativity. You were born with it. You are made of wonderful, delicious, colorful, smelly, heaping globs of creativity!

As a child, your humanity burned with the divine spirit of creativity. You imagined games. You imagined friends. And, you even created vivid experiences that existed only in your mind but existed nonetheless.

Then, you went to school.

You learned to live by other peoples' rules and *their* ideas of how and what you "should" be. Walls grew that blocked your view of those wonderful places in your imagination. Those walls grew until finally the creativity of your heart, spirit, and right brain were all but abandoned in favor of subjects that could be objectively tested with multiple-choice exams and computer-graded bubble sheets.

Then, you went to law school.

Your walls were adorned with thorns and you were not even allowed to *have* ideas of your own. Any creativity you were allowed to display was carefully disguised as nuanced synthesis of precedent (other people's ideas—the older and less original the better).

It felt like you had suddenly become unworthy of being the source of an idea or thought. You felt like a slave to a footnote or maybe like a footnote yourself.

But, you're not in law school anymore. Now, you're the only "source" that really matters. Your senior partner may determine your job status and salary, but you get to decide how much credibility to give those things.

If you're feeling trapped in a job that doesn't allow you to express your creativity, you have the power to change that. You don't have to leave your job to feel more fulfilled. Rather, start chopping through the thorns and breaking down the walls that decades of education have placed around your creative spirit. Trust me, you can do this and still be an effective lawyer. It may even be the secret prerequisite to a happy and satisfied life in the law.

There's no simple seven-step process to recovering your creative spirit. The journey is different for each of us. A simple start is to look for creative opportunities that already surround you. You happen to be holding one of them in your hand. This issue of *The Young Lawyer* is dedicated to helping lawyers recognize opportunities for expressing creativity in their lives and work. Use it to jumpstart ideas for creative outlets that you would enjoy. Paint, play music, sail, climb, write, spend time with family, do community service, sing—do *something* other than work.

It's time to start living a more creative life. Read these articles. Fuel your spark of creativity, and then share your flame. You're full of it!

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