

I Believe in Hope

I believe that we are all creative, but that blocks to our creativity are sometimes so deeply engrained that they take years to be recognized, let alone overcome. One of mine lasted until I was 43, sitting in a Portland State University career counselor's office trying to decide what to do when I grew up. She said, "It sounds like you need an advanced degree in order to legitimize yourself." I burst into tears, denying I had said anything *like* that. She assured me that "legitimate" was indeed the word I had used. I suddenly realized that for all those years I had believed I could not excel in life because I had been illegitimate! "Is that all?!" I responded.

A month after my brief encounter with the PSU career counselor I was on a plane to check out the master's program in creativity at Buffalo State. It happened to be during a weekend course, *Nurturing Creativity*. I came to believe for myself that we are all creative.

Once I cleared away the major, unconscious block preventing me from moving forward with my life, everything seemed to support my new intent. In the three months between my application to Buff State and my arrival to begin the program, I methodically found answers to all the challenges my departure had on the lives of seven other people. My oldest was in college; no problem there. My second daughter, a high school sophomore, wanted to come with me. However, my youngest, in middle school, wanted to stay in her home and familiar school. So I negotiated with my former husband (plus his girlfriend and her two boys) to move in to his former home and resume the mortgage payments. Because my golden retriever needed to stay, I gave my VISA number to the vet so my former husband could take her there without having to pay the bill. Most importantly, I methodically informed my neighbors about my plans and basically, what to think; "I know you'll want to welcome Tom back into the neighborhood."

Then I went back to the bank to get a second mortgage on the house to finance my new adventure. When the banker asked, "What would work for you?" I, of course, replied, "Free money." Her response was, "No problem; that's called an irregular amortization." She made available what I needed for the entire time I was in graduate school, but deferred the increased interest until after I returned. Worked for me!

My Shuffling off to Buffalo story demonstrates why I believe that when blind, unconscious blocks to creative thinking are finally removed, I can do anything. So can you.