The ‘Why’ framework: the creative pathways matrix

In this final part of Creativities, we make a distinction between two types of Why. The first of these fits with the imaginary identity of the artist or entrepreneur, as described by Sinek, providing a foundational purpose behind the creative enterprise or creative career. Creativity is inevitably uncertain with a high risk of failure, making a strong sense of purpose especially salient. Because value and purpose connect to values and ethics, we call this ‘the personal why’. For example, creativity might be driven by ‘dark’ purposes (the creativity of terrorist acts, the creative discoveries behind nuclear weapons or climate destruction). It might be inspired by idealism or by greed and self-interest. It will be personal to the individual and it forms the starting point for all that follows.

If the personal why is the start of the journey, the next set of questions comes later, as the product of our creativity (outcome, enterprise, career) evolves in sometimes unexpected ways. At this point we find ourselves asking, ‘Why are we still doing this? What is this for? Why should we change?’ These questions are not only personal; they must take account of how the product we created has changed, changed us and changed the world around us. Over time our personal why is challenged and reframed by the Why of our process or product.

For example, the personal why for a painter may be to develop a new hobby, but as the product of the painter evolves, that Why could become building a new form of the craft, or using it as a therapy, or something else. You may accept a management position – the personal why being because you want to move into something different or you feel it is your turn or duty. But then you may be very good at it, and enjoy it, so your why might evolve into something different. You may start out wanting to be an actor in order to make this a profession, but come to see it more fulfilling as a social enterprise.

Confronting this new reality, our sense of purpose and value must adapt to the purposes and values of others as well as to the consequences of our product’s evolution and reception. We might have to concede some control, or accept a change in direction. Our ‘personal why’ has to adapt to a new set of purposes and possibilities unleashed by the product, enterprise or career we have set in train. Because these questions revolve around the products or outcomes of our creative act (and where it’s taking us), we call this ‘the productional why’.

5.1 THE PERSONAL WHY

The Why of creativity is built into the definition of creativity as ‘novelty + value’. Much of the creativity research agenda, especially in organizations and business, assumes that creativity is built on a solid foundation of purpose and value, and that individual creative processes are
driven by intrinsic motivation or a sense of satisfaction in a job well done (‘task fulfilment’). In turn, creative work is often expected to be ‘good work’ – autonomous, fulfilling, ethical.

We will argue that these motivations might be more complicated and compromised than these assumptions allow. Certainly our motivations to create remain highly personal and individualized, based on our beliefs, values and needs. But intrinsic motivation is not necessarily intrinsically positive. Nor can our inner ‘personal’ why be entirely divorced from external realities (resources, rewards, opportunities) – even at the beginning of the journey, these extrinsic motivations may have become internalized to the point where it’s hard to tell the difference.

Creativity is iterative – as we search for novel solutions and ideas, our personal why provides both a sounding board (values or criteria for success) and a continuity of purpose (motivation and self-belief). We can visualize the ‘why’ of creativity as the opposable thumb against which our other questions (the What, How, Where and Who) are fingers, allowing them to grasp the problem in hand.

Just as the Why of value and purpose helps to direct and evaluate the products, processes and people of creativity, so too the changing patterns of What, How, Where, Who inevitably challenge the value and purpose of creativity. In other words, the Why of creativity is not set in stone – it moves against the other questions, it grips, releases, stretches. Our values, and the value we produce, are relative and contextual to our changing experiences, outcomes and associations.

Our first recipe considers how purpose can be redefined or refined among a group. As Sinek has emphasized, a sense of purpose is an essential starting point – not least in the unpredictable environment of creativity, where outcomes are by definition uncertain or unknown. Having an inner purpose, our ‘personal why’, allows us to navigate this uncertainty, giving us a reservoir of self-belief and a sense of direction. But that inner compass will periodically need to be reoriented, and the reservoir refilled – and in a group, the personal beliefs and values will not always be aligned.

RECIPE 25. THE BEATLES: SEPARATE WHYS (UK)

INGREDIENTS:

- A chance meeting between two lads who liked writing songs more than football
- One unrecognized song-writing talent
- One charismatic, heavy-sounding, drummer
- The most prolific song-writing team since Mozart and Bach

Perhaps one of the most traumatic times in modern cultural history was The Beatles break-up. How could this band, whom so many had taken to heart and were perhaps the first celebrities that people felt they ‘knew’ (and whose creative volume was probably only matched by Mozart or Schubert) fall apart? In 1969 and 1970, many fans and observers were consumed by the world’s most famous ‘divorce’ – as John Lennon called it.

Even now, the four characters that made up the group exert a strong pull on people’s emotions, and there are many online surveys that you can take to determine ‘which Beatle – John, Paul, George or Ringo – you are most like’ So their demise, then and now, seems

Chris Bilton, Stephen Cummings, and dt ogilvie - 9781788979481
Downloaded from PubFactory at 09/17/2023 04:21:18PM via free access
sad and bewildering.

The chronological debris of their break-up has been well picked over: In 1966, Beatlemania got to the point where it was becoming too difficult and too dangerous to continue to tour and play live. The group, famously democratic, took a vote as to whether they should continue. Lennon, Harrison and Starr had had enough, only McCartney wasn’t adamant that their touring days were over, but it was a clear majority. The treadmill of touring that kept them together as a family of friends taking on the world stopped abruptly, and the four were free to pursue their own creative interests.

John, feeling depressed and guilty about his (actual rather than metaphorical) failing marriage, isolated himself and ‘experimented’ further with drugs. His relationship with Yoko Ono, whom he met late in 1966, became something of a lifeline in this context.

Paul, by contrast, lived the life of a single cultural dilettante in London, wrote prolifically and more on his own rather than in close collaboration with Lennon as he had done previously. John (whose relationship with Paul was fruitfully collaborative and competitive) would complain that he simply couldn’t match Paul’s creative output in this period.

George explored spirituality and became deeply engaged in Indian culture and musicianship. He also emerged as a songwriter with a distinctive creative identity, a development that nobody had foreseen in the shyest and youngest Beatle.

Ringo, whom Peter Asher described as having two great strengths – being an incredible and unique drummer and being naturally charming on camera – got more interested in acting in movies. Ringo also began writing music that reflected his own distinctive identity.

When they came back together to record, the group dynamic had changed too. The unofficial leader of the ‘one-person one-vote democracy’ had always been John. He was a couple of years older than George and Paul and was the most extrovert of the four. To begin with, Lennon was also the main song-writing protagonist. But Sgt. Pepper’s Lonely Hearts Club Band was Paul’s concept, and in 1967, he led the group in rehearsing and recording most of the material on what many regard as the finest Beatles album. In 2003, Rolling Stone magazine ranked it as the number 1 album of all time.

But this new creative dynamic, which took them to another level musically, was also sowing the seeds of The Beatles’ demise.

The Beatles output was previously powered by the close-knit Lennon–McCartney song-writing unit and their shared love of American rock and roll. Their individual creative development meant that their collective output was increasingly varied, and beyond the conceit of SPLHCB (where The Beatles assumed the personality of a fictional band), it became difficult to fit all of their emerging material into one coherent album.

The Beatles worked around the widening individual tangents and creative riches in the next ‘proper’ album that followed (Magical Mystery Tour was more of a multimedia project even more driven by another of McCartney’s ideas containing only a few new songs). This was called The Beatles, but is known as The White Album on account of the fact the cover is a blank white canvas, as if to signify that the songs on it were not joined by a unifying vision as SPLHCB had been. The White Album was a rambling and disparate double LP.

At its core was a collection of songs that a rejuvenated Lennon–McCartney had penned while on a spiritual retreat that Harrison had arranged in India, early in 1968. (Harrison was apparently annoyed that the two had spent more energy writing songs than meditating.) But beyond this were songs written individually by Harrison, twee as well as heavier
that McCartney had written independently, some experimental material that Lennon had developed with Yoko Ono, and even the first Ringo-penned song on a Beatles album. A total of 30 songs of varying quality added up to a collection often referred to as ‘sprawling’.

That the best song on The White Album was considered by many to be Harrison’s ‘While my Guitar Gently Weeps’ further questioned whether The Beatles was John and Paul’s band. And other cracks in the status quo started to widen over the next year.

Ringo was the first to leave, albeit temporarily, claiming that his musical efforts weren’t respected enough by the others (although his departure was kept quiet and he returned to the fold a few weeks later).

John put increasing energy into a variety of projects with Yoko. And as they became inseparable, or ‘one person’, in John’s words, when the group came back to the studio there were five creative presences, a factor that led to tension among the original ‘fab four’ (although the other three appreciated that Yoko was a positive force for John). John also later admitted that he was finding it difficult to come to terms with the fact that The Beatles might not be ‘his’ band anymore.

George, reflecting on the positive response to his songs on The White Album, increasingly began to wonder why his ‘allocation’ of songs per Beatles LP was so low. He mused that his ‘output of songs [wa]s too much to just sit around waiting to put two songs out on an album – I’ve got to get ’em out’, explaining his decision to prepare a solo album.

Paul had started a serious relationship with Linda Eastman and was becoming more of a ‘home-body’ as a result, but as the other three continued to withdraw their creative energy (or at least gave McCartney the impression they were withdrawing it), it was McCartney who took on the responsibility to pull the group together. However, as he became more and more directive, the other three stepped back or further away.

A further complicating factor was the financial problems The Beatles now faced. Brian Epstein – the manager who had shaped The Beatles – had died in late 1967. Epstein was a much-needed professional when it came to image management, and as he was only a few years older than The Beatles, he became something of an older/wiser brother figure that the four all respected and listened to. They felt the loss of his stewardship deeply. But Epstein’s strengths were more marketing and human relations than financial management, and by 1968, The Beatles’ fiduciary affairs were a mess, and tax and other unpaid bills were mounting.

The band’s attempts, led by McCartney, to right the ship by creating a company called Apple to manage their affairs only partly stopped the rot, and soon that company, described as a new kind of hippy-capitalist enterprise, was bleeding more money than it was consolidating. Professional management was required fast, and McCartney thought he had a solution: his new in-laws the Eastmans had a company that could step in.

The other three Beatles, fearing that this was tilting the ship too far toward McCartney’s new family, met with the Rolling Stones’ manager Allan Klein, who was more than happy to become an alternative. McCartney didn’t trust Klein, so it came to a vote. McCartney lost 3–1, and while The Beatles could work around their creative tangents in the studio, the financial differences were more intractable, particularly as lawyers became involved, and the press subsequently prodded John and Paul for comment on legal proceedings.

Despite this, The Beatles regrouped for their final LP, Abbey Road, in 1969, another album that regularly tops the best-of-all-time lists. And despite the gnashing of teeth and the mourning that took place as The Beatles split, beyond a difficult few years where the
gloves came off between Lennon and McCartney, the four either stayed in contact and collaborated with each other, or at least reconciled.

Creatively too, the break-up was fruitful. Who could have foreseen that Harrison would have so much good solo material stored up that it would fill the world’s first triple LP: the acclaimed *All Things Must Pass* was released in 1970. Or that Starr would have a run of hit singles (‘It Don’t Come Easy’, ‘You’re Sixteen’, ‘Photograph’).

While McCartney’s output was deemed too middle-of-the-road by many, he was the one who went on to fill the stadiums The Beatles once played to with his band Wings. And John’s partnership with Yoko produced work far more interesting and challenging than what would have been possible within The Beatles, and in addition gave us perhaps the most-loved pop song of all time: ‘Imagine’.

So, on balance, The Beatles break-up was sad – in the sense that it brought to a close the run of the world’s most creative popular group, one that the Baby Boomer generation had, quite literally according to Malcolm Gladwell, ‘grown up with’ – but it was also a good and inevitable thing if the forces involved were to continue to grow creatively. So, that having been said, what did cause the break-up, and what can we learn from it?

Yoko Ono became the glib shorthand answer to the ‘what caused the break-up?’ question (and a convenient scapegoat for those who mourned The Beatles). But as she explained, ‘I don’t think you could have broken up four very strong people like them even if you tried. So there must have been something that happened with them – not an outside force at all.’

While all of the external elements described above (including Yoko) played some role in the split, perhaps the biggest force was internal. Simply put, it was that The Beatles’ Whys diverged.

As Paul McCartney noted in a recent podcast, when they started out, they were just four working-class lads from Liverpool and their motivations were the same. They all wanted to play rock’n’roll, they all wanted to make some money, and they all dreamed of maybe buying a car, or even a house! This point was consistently reinforced by John Lennon in a variety of interviews in the 1960s when asked about what his aim for the group was, ‘We’re just trying to enjoy ourselves, having a laugh’, he said. But that stock answer became increasingly strained as the pressure mounted and years went by.

What brought McCartney and Lennon together, via a chance meeting, was their being different from other young working-class lads in Liverpool. As McCartney reflected in the *Eight Days a Week* film by Ron Howard, ‘When I talked to other people who asked what I was into and I said “writing songs,” they looked blank and changed the subject to football or something… When I met John, he said, “Really? So do I!” That’s how The Beatles started.’

As fellow musician Ian Hunter put it, ‘It’s amazing those two wound up in a band. It was only a matter of time before they got fed up, because they weren’t the same. Paul was always middle, John was very left.’

So, while in their youth all four were united in their love of the fun of writing and playing American-inspired rock’n’roll and touring, they operated as a kind of O-form organization (see Part III), an all-for-one democracy. As their Whys grew, and those four personalities each had the strength of character to strive to stay true to them, they had to continue their creative ways as four separate Star-forms. And while people were (and are) sad they split, in this way we were spared the sight of The Beatles as another nostalgia act regrouping each decade to churn out ‘all their best-loved hits, one last time’ in paler
stadium tours around the world. We should probably be grateful the four Beatles had the strength to follow their Whys.

What holds together the personal whys in your own creative group? Is there a tipping point when your own and others’ personal whys might drift out of alignment – either now or in the future? And if you did have to ‘break up the band’, however painful this might be, what new creativities might emerge from the wreckage?

RESOURCES


5.2 THE PRODUCTIONAL WHY (OR HOW CREATIVE PRODUCTS TAKE ON A LIFE OF THEIR OWN)

In the first section of Part V, we considered the personal motivations which drive individuals and groups in the creative act, especially in the early, formative stages of a creative career. The focus was on the creative act or the creative individual. In this second part, we turn our attention outwards to the extended possibilities and repercussions beyond that singular act of creation. The project, products and processes described in this book have a life beyond the moment of conception, and extend beyond the person or people who originated them. In deciding what happens next, where to take our idea, our product, our market, we encounter a new set of questions: why are our purposes and values changing? Have our original intentions been distorted or betrayed? Has a new intention or possibility emerged and how can we adapt to it?

Whereas the ‘personal why’ came from within, the ‘productional why’ is inflected by what is happening outside – markets, reactions, audience behaviours, competitors. As the outcome or product opens up new possibilities, we may need to rethink our choices and make changes. Our inner sense of purpose must adapt to external circumstances which cause us to reorient our internal sense of ourselves, our beliefs and values. That ‘personal why’ which was so clear and purposeful at the beginning gives way to a more complicated, messier ‘productional why’. The product has moved beyond our original intention and may even boomerang back onto its creator, challenging the singular purpose we began with and forcing us to compromise, rethink, redirect.

We believe this process can be approached from two angles. First, do we continue to follow the same path, or do we try something different? Along this pathway, the productional why becomes stronger, either reinforcing our current direction or pulling us onto a different course. Second, do we try to retain control, or do we accept a looser, more adaptive mindset? Do we let go, like Florian Caps, for our own good and perhaps for the good of the product too? On this pathway, the personal why becomes less dominant, and more flexible.

We have summarized this in the creative pathways matrix in Figure 5.1, with the ‘same or different’ options mapped on the vertical axis and the ‘tight or loose’ options mapped horizon-
tally. Appropriately enough, this model is itself a repurposing of an earlier model, and readers may notice that the figure is inspired by Ansoff’s innovation matrix.

As with Ansoff’s matrix, the model is less concerned with discrete either/or choices between the four positions, hard and fast, than with the dynamic processes of movement across them and reflecting on the different pathways that could and should be taken to satisfy your (and your collaborators’) Why. And the last recipe in Part V, and in the Creativities book – the operational hijab – will demonstrate how a venture can be developed across the matrix to enable different Whys to be satisfied at once.

In the creative pathways matrix, this movement comes from a combination or tension between the ‘productional’ and ‘personal’ why; sometimes the product and its components lead us to do something different, sometimes our personalities pull us in the opposite direction. If we are unable to reconcile these forces, we are likely to become frustrated or blocked, both at a personal level and in the business process. By evolving a new Why, we can start to map a pathway into a new stage for the creative product and for the creative personality behind it.

The starting point for all of these pathways is at the top left of the matrix – our initial venture starts from our personal why (our motivation or purpose) directed into a product or enter-
prise which fulfils that purpose. That product or enterprise combines all the other elements described in this book – the What, the How, the Where, the Who.

Over time, these other elements evolve as the business grows – and we change with it, finding new interests or directions (or in some cases, we fail to adapt – a problem we will return to later). We will begin by describing the more gradual, incremental of these evolutionary pathways – ‘exit ramp’ and ‘launch pad’ – before describing the more radical and transformative pathway – ‘sell-out/sell-off’. We will then go back to the beginning to look at two possible outcomes if we decide to ‘stick to the knitting’. First of all, what happens when the person or the product becomes locked into the original purpose and identity with no possibility of evolutionary change (‘no exit’)? Second, what happens when the personal and productional whys are dynamically aligned, and it is possible to grow and change from within the same product/person (‘scale up’)?

5.3 STEPPING OFF: TAKING THE EXIT RAMP

Some of the greatest creative innovations were not driven by a clear purpose but emerged unexpectedly from a more random process. From that moment of discovery, a more purposeful approach may take over. We describe this emergent purpose as ‘the productional why’. The ‘exit ramp’ describes the point at which these two pathways diverge and the creative individual steps away from what they created. From here, creator and creation pursue their separate journeys. On the creative pathways matrix, the combination of a strong productional why and a loose personal why means that the entrepreneur is happy to ‘let go’ of the enterprise, while the enterprise takes on a life of its own and continues to progress independent of its founder.

In this scenario, it is not necessary for the creative individual to have a strong sense of purpose or direction. The ‘personal why’ is more like curiosity (what happens if I do this?) than purpose (what do I need to do to make this happen?). In management studies, this mindset would be described as ‘emergent strategy’ – businesses like Honda or Lego have been celebrated for adapting to emerging consumer behaviours rather than attempting to predict or predetermine a ‘deliberate’ strategy. In creativity studies, we might describe such thinking as ‘intuitive’ or ‘spontaneous’. In terms of our model, the personal why is loose or even absent – the creator doesn’t really know what they are doing or why, but out of this apparently random process a gathering purpose takes shape.

As the venture takes off, the other four elements of creativity – the What, the How, the Where, the Who – combine to map out a path. This ‘productional why’ drives the venture forward. The personal beliefs and values of the inventor or founder may happily coincide with this direction, or they may gradually diverge. At this point, the personal why is secondary to the productional why – the creator or entrepreneur finds purpose in the active process of doing, not in the creative process of envisioning.

How this works out will depend on a range of external factors, but above all on an internal attitude. Somebody who likes to be in control will very likely find such a random, incremental path frustrating. Somebody who is happy to ‘go with the flow’ will adapt to unexpected
changes and growth relatively easily. This becomes especially apparent when the productional why and the personal why start to diverge.

When Robert Oppenheimer saw in the aftermath of Hiroshima the implications of the atomic weapons he had helped to create, his ‘personal why’ sharply diverged from the ‘productional why’ of a nuclear arms race. In the post-war period, he used his position on the Atomic Energy Council to argue against the proliferation of more powerful thermonuclear weapons. Oppenheimer’s arguments were controversial as the Cold War intensified. He was accused of harbouring communist and pro-Soviet sympathies (the first charge partially true, the second demonstrably false). Oppenheimer was a complex, contradictory figure – there was no easy ‘exit ramp’ for him. He was able to continue his academic work, notably his research into black holes, and he was partially rehabilitated by Presidents Kennedy and Johnson a few years before his death in 1967. But his pioneering role bridging between the worlds of scientific creativity and political power was no longer tenable. Oppenheimer cared too much about the politics of war to live comfortably with his own legacy (the productional why) and cared too much about science to walk away from it quietly (his personal why). His creative abilities as a scientist were never able to take flight and his career remained unfulfilled while others pursuing different priorities and visions were promoted above him.

Our next recipe offers a very different outcome. In the case of Ben & Jerry’s ice cream, the personal why was secondary to the productional why. To begin with at least, neither Ben Cohen nor Jerry Greenfield had a strong sense of purpose or mission. This is not to say that they were unprincipled or unmotivated. They put long hours into setting up the business and making it work. But this was never their ‘raison de faire’. Consequently, when ‘Ben & Jerry’s’ became something bigger than ‘Ben’ and ‘Jerry’, they were able to walk away in relative equanimity, in a way that Oppenheimer could not. Fans of Ben & Jerry’s have been far more vocal in criticizing the corporate takeover by Unilever than the founders.

The exit ramp is the first of our pathways, showing how a ‘productional why’ can drive the business forward without the direct involvement of the founders. The essential purpose remains the same, but the direction is set by the creative enterprise, not by the creative entrepreneur. This allows the creative individual to step back and the thing they have created to thrive. As the following recipe illustrates, in this creative journey the ‘personal why’ is not always what really matters.

**RECIPE 26. BEN & JERRY’S: THE ACCIDENTAL ENTREPRENEURS (VERMONT)**

**INGREDIENTS:**

- Two childhood friends who like food
- Some simple rules for running a business (most of which you ignore)
- Second-hand equipment and the search for ‘big chunks’
- A generous scoop of hard work and a sprinkle of happy accidents

Ben Cohen and Jerry Greenfield always seemed like unlikely entrepreneurs. Ben had dropped out of college, and when he moved to New York he was pursuing the idea of
becoming a potter. His childhood friend Jerry had dropped out of medical school and moved into the apartment. They decided to open a shop together. Their first idea was to sell bagels, but the bagel-making equipment was too expensive. So they decided to make ice cream instead. This set a pattern of happy accidents driving the business forward. Asked whether they had ever planned on running a successful business on the 'How We Built This' podcast, both men laughed. They imagined doing ice cream for a couple of years before taking up something else. Maybe long-distance truck driving.

Their next decision was to open an ice cream parlour in Saratoga Springs. But when they got there, they found another ice cream parlour had just opened, so they decided to set up shop somewhere else. Eventually they settled on Burlington, Vermont, chosen because it met their two criteria – a population of college students, and no other competitors. The absence of ice cream shops may also have reflected the fact that Vermont gets extremely cold in winter.

Neither had any experience in business – they relied on leaflets mailed out by the Small Business Administration in New York to learn about budgets and cash flow. Nor had they any experience in making ice cream. They sent off for a correspondence course and taught themselves the basics. Jerry, with his medical training, was in charge of production. Ben was chief taster but suffered from a condition which meant he had no sense of smell, so instead of tasting the ice cream, he relied on ‘mouth feel’.

One of Ben’s preferences was for ‘big chunks’ in the ice cream. This was easier to achieve with the home-style equipment in their first shop – it would prove much harder when the business expanded and they began to use larger, industrial-style machines. But Ben insisted it was better to have the possibility of ‘one big chunk’ than trying to achieve a uniform distribution of smaller pieces.

They opened their shop in 1978 in a former gas station on the edge of town. In the summer, groups of college kids would queue up for a scoop, and to enjoy the laid-back vibe of the shop where Ben and Jerry were genial hosts. In winter, business was slow. The pair were making just about enough money to get by, but the business didn’t seem to have much future. The Small Business Administration came to the rescue. They got hold of a business plan from a pizza parlour which they copied, substituting ‘scoop’ for ‘slice’ in the sales forecasts. The cash flow projections showed that the business was going to go bust. Like many entrepreneurs, Ben and Jerry responded by making up some new numbers (and asking the bank to defer repayments on their loan).

One of the reasons they didn’t make much of a profit in the shop was portion control – they liked to make their customers happy, and trying to control the size of the scoop would upset people. So in 1980, they hit on another idea – if they sold the ice cream in one pint containers, there would be de facto portion control.

So they began selling ice cream in pint-size cartons, featuring the soon-to-be-iconic dairy cows which were designed by a local artist. At around this time, they also had their first stroke of luck when a 1981 Time magazine feature on local ice cream parlours described Ben & Jerry’s as ‘the best ice cream in the world’.

The business continued to grow. Ben and Jerry found themselves responsible for managing staff, finance and strategy – none of which they much enjoyed. At the same time, they seemed to have a talent for it. Ben in particular had an intuitive gift for marketing. Yet they continued to behave as if this was not a real business, just something they had drifted into.

That idea of not being a real business, or at least not ‘business as usual’, became part of
the Ben & Jerry’s brand. In 1984, Häagen-Dazs tried to prevent distributors from shipping Ben & Jerry’s. Ben and Jerry ran a successful campaign against Pillsbury, Häagen-Dazs’ parent company, asking, ‘What’s the Doughboy afraid of?’ (the Pillsbury Doughboy being the beloved icon of the Pillsbury brand, a pudgy cartoon baker). It was a classic David and Goliath stand-off, and even if they could not afford to challenge Pillsbury in the courts, Ben and Jerry won the PR battle.

At around the same time, both Ben and Jerry became disillusioned with the daily grind of managing the business and decided to sell up. They had never intended to be a corporate organization and did not want to be a capitalist enterprise. It felt like the business had taken on a life of its own and they were no longer in charge of their own destiny.

A friend persuaded them to stay on. If they didn’t like big business, why not try to run the business in a different way? So Ben and Jerry introduced benefits for their workers and placed a salary cap on senior managers. They set up a charitable foundation funded out of pre-tax projects to support community projects. They began campaigning on progressive issues. They partnered with a social enterprise employing ex-offenders to make the chocolate brownies in their ice cream.

This anti-corporate, progressive approach only served to make the brand even more successful. Having never really intended to run a business in the first place, Ben and Jerry were now heading up a global brand. Their association with progressive politics, their maverick, outsider status, and their image as hippy dropouts all drove the brand forward; the launch of the ‘Cherry Garcia’ flavour ice cream in 1987, dedicated to Grateful Dead singer and leader Jerry Garcia, perfectly encapsulated their identity as hippy capitalists. In 1988, they received the title of ‘US Small Business Persons of the Year’, awarded by President Ronald Reagan.

The foundation of Ben & Jerry’s was not inspired by a burning sense of purpose. Their entrepreneurial drive, like their creative innovations in the ice cream business, seemed to result from a series of happy accidents. Even their progressive political beliefs, which became integral to the brand through the 1990s, seemed to have been gradually added as the business grew; indeed, their ‘progressive’ attitudes probably seemed more like common sense for people from their background and lifestyle.

Without ever planning to, they not only became successful, they were innovators in their field. They invented new flavours. Cookie dough ice cream, one of the most popular flavours today, was a Ben & Jerry’s invention. Their jokey, informal approach to branding and marketing has influenced other ‘progressive’ businesses, from Innocent Smoothies to Oatly oat milk.

In 2000, Ben & Jerry’s was acquired by Unilever. Ben and Jerry opposed the sale but were overruled by the board. They withdrew from the business. Despite the change of ownership, Unilever allowed Ben & Jerry’s to support a range of progressive movements, from Occupy Wall Street to Black Lives Matter. In politics, the company campaigned against Trump and for the left-wing Democrat Bernie Sanders. Even without Ben and Jerry, Ben & Jerry’s appears to have evolved its own Why in a progressive, liberal corporate culture. With many activists serving on an independent advisory board, Ben & Jerry’s support for social justice still carries greater credibility and conviction than comparable corporate social responsibility efforts by other brands, which often come across as opportunistic posturing.

Creativity theory makes a distinction between ‘creation’ and ‘discovery’. Ben Cohen and Jerry Greenfield can be said to have discovered their identity and purpose as innovators.
and entrepreneurs. They found their Why through a process of trial and error – the classic ‘ready, fire, aim’ mantra of entrepreneurship theory. Their creativity was not something they set out to realize; it just seemed to happen as they worked.

This is perhaps the missing piece in the puzzle – for all their bonhomie and apparent disinterest in management, Ben and Jerry describe themselves as both having a very strong ‘worker mentality’. The early days of working long hours just to make their loan payments informed their approach to business – which Jerry explains they perceived simply as ‘busy-ness’, or in a less controlled metaphor, like falling down a cliff and grabbing hold of whatever they could to survive.

There is an echo here of Picasso’s famous quote about creative inspiration – none of us knows when the muses will come, but when they do, ‘let them find me working’. In other words, passion, purpose and intrinsic motivation are not always the starting point – you might find your Why, when you least expect it, at the bottom of the tub, in a chunk of cookie dough.

When you start working on a creative project, do you know where you are going or do you just see where the journey takes you? Do you need to feel personally invested in a creative purpose for that purpose to be effective? What is your version of ‘busy-ness’ and has this resulted in unexpected creative outcomes? And if you walked away from your business or project tomorrow, would it continue its journey without you? How does the answer make you feel?

RESOURCES

Ben & Jerry’s, How I Built This podcast: https://podcasts.apple.com/gb/podcast/ben-jerrys-ben- -cohen-and-jerry-greenfield/id1150510297?i=1000395020996

5.4 HOPPING ON: THE CREATIVE PRODUCT AS A LAUNCH PAD

Our second pathway is like the first, a case of ‘letting go’. But this time the ‘personal why’ takes precedence. The personality and energy of the creative individual outgrow the ‘productional why’ and seek a fresh outlet. From the outside, it can look a lot like the ‘exit ramp’ – but in this case the journey continues with the individual creator, not with the business they left behind. This is the mentality of the serial entrepreneur or inventor, somebody who can jump from one opportunity to the next, relying on their own ‘personal why’ to drive them forwards.

This is not to say that ‘letting go’ is easy. Unlike the relaxed, easy-going personality of the ‘exit ramp’, the launch-pad personality has a strong inner sense of purpose. This internal drive can become entangled in the productional why of the enterprise or creation, making it difficult to detach oneself. Precisely because the enterprise or creation is so strongly dependent on its creator, it is likely that the original venture will collapse as soon as the founder leaves. So switching loyalties to launch a new product might be a painful process, albeit a necessary one.
Jack Conte, the co-founder of the crowdfunding platform Patreon, never intended to become a platform entrepreneur. He began his career as a musician, enjoying financial and artistic success as one half of the band Pomplamoose, together with his wife Natalie. He got the idea for setting up Patreon when he saw a friend successfully raise money from a crowdfunding appeal on the Kickstarter platform. At the time, Conte was struggling with the economics of music streaming, where thousands of plays result in a trickle of revenues, compared with the steady income he had enjoyed from downloads on iTunes. If he was to survive as a musician, he would need to find another source of income. Patreon was designed for artists like Pomplamoose, with a moderate level of success and a community of supportive fans, fans who would be happy to contribute a regular donation to support the artists they loved. Together with his business partner, Conte set out to build the platform, raise capital, attract artists and their fans.

As Patreon became more successful, it was no longer a side project. Conte realized that if he wanted Patreon to fulfil its potential, he was going to have to choose between this new venture and the band. In effect he had to adapt to a new ‘productional why’ which demanded more of his time and energy than he could spare as a budding musician. At this point, according to his interview with Guy Raz on the ‘How I Built This’ podcast, Conte became what he had always promised himself he would not – that guy who used to be an artist in their 20s and becomes a business entrepreneur in their 30s. Painful as it may have been to give up on his musical career (at the same time forcing his wife to move on from Pomplamoose), Conte had a clear enough sense of his own strengths and direction to make that difficult decision and commit to the new venture. It is also possible that, despite his early success, Conte was not wedded to the dream of musicianship. He enjoyed it, but it was an eclectic lifestyle – crafting music videos, playing with different genres, performing live, running a YouTube channel – perhaps this diversity reflected a certain restlessness.

The switch from one project to another is what characterizes the ‘launch pad’ pathway. This requires a strong sense of self and inner confidence. The personal why is strong enough to override the pull of the productional why and move forward to a new challenge. The productional why is also important because the external changes and opportunities of the production process offer new directions and pathways. Unlike the ‘exit ramp’ walking away from the old venture, the ‘launch pad’ leaps onto the next one. The productional why provides a framework for self-actualizing the ‘personal why’.

Steve Jobs exemplifies some of the traits associated with ‘launch pad’ – a very confident sense of personal destiny which imposes itself on others in the business, and a dominant personality which moulds the business in its own image. At Apple, Jobs’ attention to detail led to accusations of bullying and control-freakery – his personal why shaped the productional why of whichever business he was in. His personal charisma was at the core of Apple’s innovative model. In 1985, Jobs was forced out of the company by former Pepsi CEO John Scully (whom Jobs had personally persuaded to join the company two years earlier). Jobs went on to launch NeXT Computers and then co-founded Pixar. While NeXT was not commercially successful, its technological innovations would eventually feed back into Apple. Pixar, meanwhile, transformed film animation much as Apple had transformed personal computing. Jobs’ personal why continued undiminished, launching new products and businesses. Apple’s productional
why was meanwhile floundering. Apple’s customers behave more like fans than rational con-
sumers, and it became clear that part of that fandom was tied into the mythology Jobs had built
around himself, the visionary entrepreneur and CEO, the polo-necked impresario presiding
over product launches and keynotes.

The productional why of Apple was built from the personal why of Steve Jobs and the two
turned out to be inseparable. While Steve Jobs proved he could survive without Apple, Apple
could not thrive without Steve Jobs. Brought back to Apple in 1997, Jobs’ ‘second coming’
confirmed that his personal identity and mission were written into the company’s DNA. With
the launch of the iPod, iTunes and the iPhone, Jobs continued to introduce new products
even after being diagnosed with terminal cancer. It was only after his death that a new CEO,
Tim Cook, could take the company forward. Through successive product launches and design
innovations, the productional why of Apple was continually evolving and changing, yet the
personal why of Jobs remained stubbornly immovable. Like his uniform of Issey Miyake
polo-neck and Levi’s 501s, the personal brand was constant and so was the inexorable pursuit
of the next innovation – the product consumers didn’t yet know they wanted. According to
at least one of his several biographers, this driving will undoubtedly made Jobs difficult to
work with. But his personal why was responsible for launching a steady stream of innovations,
creating a legacy his successors will always struggle to live up to.

Launch pad describes a combination of strong personal motivation and a pursuit of novelty,
alongside a dismissive attitude to ‘business as usual’. This combination is especially evident in
‘self-media’, where young ‘entrepreneurs of the self’ use their personality as the online launch
pad for a range of products and brands across social media. In order to sustain a successful
career as an online micro-celebrity or influencer, it is necessary to maintain a consistent,
‘authentic’ self-image, even while playing multiple roles and launching different ventures.
Unlike Steve Jobs, the new generation of YouTubers and TikTokers do not obsess over the
products they either create or promote, nor do they need to be especially charismatic. The
construction of a commercially viable ‘ordinary’ persona, adaptable to different purposes but
recognizably consistent and relatable, becomes the primary goal. Our next recipe illustrates
this paradoxical authenticity, in which a recognizable and accessible everyday personality
becomes the launch pad for multiple brands and business ventures.

RECIPE 27. PAPI JIANG: HYPER-ORDINARY CREATIVITY (CHINA)

INGREDIENTS:

- ‘A woman possessing beauty and talent’
- An appetite for the ordinary
- 44 million followers
- Everyday authenticity

China has seen a rising tide of online ‘micro-celebrities’ on popular platforms like Weibo,
WeChat and Douyin (TikTok). The phenomenon of ‘self-media’ describes ordinary
people projecting their everyday lives and experiences to their followers. The more
successful among them are able to earn a living through product endorsements or spon-
If the brands are well chosen, they will further enhance the celebrity’s reach and reputation.

This is not a uniquely Chinese phenomenon. Online KOLs (key opinion leaders) are common across the world, often providing advice on make-up and cosmetics, or (like PewDiePie) live-streaming videogames. But this content is especially popular in China, providing a more authentic, intimate form of communication than traditional broadcast media. Even though China’s online media have become more heavily regulated, platforms like Bilibili, Youkou and Weibo still offer a more diverse, irreverent alternative to traditional programming.

Papi Jiang (real name Yilei Jiang, a mature student at the Central School of Drama in Beijing) emerged in 2016 as one of China’s biggest online celebrities. She had previously dabbled in acting, directing and fashion blogging before launching her comic videos in September 2015. Within a year she had 28 million followers on Weibo alone, with 44 million followers across all platforms. By 2018, she had acquired around 120 million fans across all platforms. Some of her videos had racked up 100 million views.

Like many Chinese micro-celebrities, Papi was not tackling overtly political subjects. Her videos describe the everyday experiences of urban living, topics with which her audience of mostly urban educated young women could readily identify. She pokes fun at regional accents, pretentious use of English words to signal sophistication, public displays of affection, the obsession with appearance among her contemporaries, male inability to understand female conversation. What makes her videos stand out is their style. Papi uses her experience and training as an actress to play different characters, and uses jump cutting, speeded up footage and a digitally rendered, cartoonish high-pitched voice to provide an exaggerated, satirical commentary on everyday life for a young, educated woman in China.

In Part IV we noted the term ‘everyday creativity’ to refer to the democratizing of creativity to encompass ordinary users and everyday activities. During lockdown, broadcasters noticed a trend in ‘comfort viewing’ towards programmes which show somebody engaging in everyday tasks. For example, in the UK, a surprise hit was the BBC show Repair Shop, where skilled craftspeople repair loved objects, using traditional skills such as upholstery, carpentry and metalwork. The stories attached to these objects and their owners seem ordinary and familiar. The programme showed craftspeople working, handling everyday objects, using their hands. This ordinary, everyday quality carried a powerful emotional charge at a time when everyday life was so disrupted.

Self-media can be seen as an extension of this trend. From the perspective of the viewer, the ordinary, everyday aspect of creativity is part of the appeal. Papi Jiang makes much of her ordinariness and ‘girl next door’ persona. While the videos are artfully constructed, Papi herself does not project any special abilities or celebrity persona. Viewers like to spend time with her. They also like the fact that she is working hard. There are echoes here of Jerry Greenfield of Ben & Jerry’s, and his definition of business as ‘busy-ness’. Papi always seemed busy – like so many of her viewers, a young woman living an energetic, fast-paced life in the buzz of a big city.

Self-media places an emphasis on authenticity – intimacy, self-expression, honesty. In some respects, Papi’s videos deliver on this promise – the videos are not highly produced (she used widely available apps to shoot and edit the material herself), they are filmed in her messy apartment, not in a studio, she appears with little or no make-up (many of her contemporaries project an idealized feminine appearance, often using cosmetics provided...
by their sponsors, a style Papi gleefully mocks in her videos). At the age of 29 in 2016, she was older than many of the fashion influencers who dominated Chinese social media at the time, and she sometimes referred to herself self-deprecatingly as a ‘leftover woman’. When she signs off each video with the words ‘I am Papi Jiang, a woman possessing beauty and talent’, there is something defiant and mocking in her tone. Of course, there is beauty and talent here, but it is also ordinary and unforced.

Another key to Papi’s success may be the impression she gives of not trying too hard. Unlike many influencers, Papi makes little effort to engage with her many fans in conversation during or after the video. While this is ‘self-media’, there is no confessional or personal revelation.

What was Papi Jiang’s Why? She certainly made a great deal of money, but this does not appear to have been her primary motivation. On 22 April 2016, she auctioned an advertising slot to precede her next video, receiving the unprecedented sum of approximately $3.15 million from a Shanghai cosmetics firm. She promptly donated the money to her old drama college. In March 2016, she secured the equivalent of a $1.8 million investment. But her sarcastic, satirical style was not an obvious choice for celebrity endorsements, and one of the investors withdrew funding later that year. At around the same time, she was warned by the state regulator for using offensive language and had most of her content taken down. Undeterred, she continued to produce videos and, despite her spiky reputation, to attract advertising from brands including Jaeger-LeCoultre watches and Max Factor lipsticks. Her personal why as a storyteller took precedence before the productional why of the media brand.

The paradox of social media is that an ambition to succeed may precipitate failure. Fans are alert to any signs of inauthenticity or ‘selling out’ – Papi Jiang managed to attract sponsors and investors while remaining resolutely grounded in her everyday experience of urban living. As with Ben & Jerry’s ice cream, what appeared to be an anti-commercial, subversive attitude became a valuable asset. The sponsors and fans who stayed with her recognized this quality of ordinariness. Papi’s winning quality was to reflect a ‘normal’ existence, not to project star quality.

In 2016, Papi established PapiTube – a platform for others wanting to upload online videos. The popularity of self-media has led to increasing numbers of bloggers and online influencers. The platforms which host them are sometimes referred to as micro-celebrity networks (MCN). PapiTube stood out by providing support and advice to users on promotion and commercialization as well as access to Papi’s network and reputation. By 2018, she had a staff of 70 and had transmuted from online celebrity to online entrepreneur. Yet, repeating the pattern of her earlier career, Papi did not attempt to grow the business (for example by branching out into live-streaming or by imposing her personal brand on other users on the platform). This was just another creative outlet, not a media empire.

At the same time as heading up PapiTube, Papi has reverted to her original vocation as an actress, appearing in roles which build upon her Papi Jiang persona (a failed screenwriter, a quirky internet star). In April 2021, she starred in Tomorrow Will be Fine, a romantic comedy which took $3.5 million in its opening weekend at the Chinese box office. Without appearing to commit to a career or compromising her own identity and values, Papi Jiang has been able to bridge between different roles and systems. Her seeming ‘ordinariness’ and work ethic endear her to fans and affiliated vloggers, as well as appealing to brands and investors. And she has been able to transition professionally
without (apparently) changing or compromising personally.

Papi Jiang remains something of a dilettante. While not falling into the category of Florian Caps at the start of Part V (‘From a business perspective, you’re a failure, right?’), Papi Jiang was (according to most Chinese observers) only moderately and briefly successful. Ever the actress, she seems to have enjoyed trying out multiple roles. Similar to Caps, her personal why (her own self-fulfilment) took precedence over the productional why of the business. This allowed her to launch multiple careers and enterprises without compromising her own integrity and autonomy.

‘Self-media’ attracts those hungry for fame, jostling for that scarcest of commodities on the internet, attention. Here, perhaps Papi’s apparent insouciance was her biggest advantage. She seems not to have cared who watched her, how much money she made, what people thought of her, what constituted her personal brand. She gave no press interviews. She was simply amusing herself. Like YouTube’s biggest star, PewDiePie, she gives the appearance of performing for herself rather than for an audience. And as with PewDiePie, we have the impression of being secret observers of a young person who is simply having fun. Her fans saw somebody like themselves – an ordinary young woman from Shanghai, making her way in the world and expressing her opinions. And that’s why they love her.

Is your personal fulfilment more important to you than the material success of a project? And might ‘not caring’ (or not appearing to care) about business success be the key to a successful creative business? Could you apply your personal creativity to a new or unfamiliar field? And could moving out of the comfort zone of your productional why help you to satisfy your personal creative why?

RESOURCES

5.5 SELLING OUT: CREATIVE NEW DIRECTIONS

Thus far we have considered incremental changes in the purpose and direction of a creative person or product. Exit ramp described the productional why taking the enterprise forward while the personal why drops away – the creator withdraws and the creation takes centre stage. There is a change of personnel but there is a continuity in product and production. From the outside it looks as if nothing has changed – but inside the enterprise, different people with different motivations have replaced the originator (or originators in the case of Ben & Jerry’s).

Launch pad described the personal why taking the lead and abandoning one product in order to launch the next one. This is the path of the serial entrepreneur. It is also the path most travelled in the media and entertainment industries, where project-based enterprise is the dominant mode of production; a series of prototypes are launched, but the creator is already moving on to the next idea. Here, continuity comes from the personal brand or charisma of the creator. Even if the products are different and must stand as self-contained projects, there is continuity in the vision and personality of the founder of each of these enterprises.
We now move to a more radical transformation in the direction and purpose of a creative idea, where both the personal and the productional whys are open to change. The personal why is not fixed – the creator is not locked into a particular purpose or vision. The productional why is similarly open to new possibilities, not attempting to preserve or repeat a successful formula or model. This allows the creative process to evolve in unexpected ways – not without purpose, but with many purposes.

One of the most mythologized versions of this radical transformation might be an artist like David Bowie, who reinvented himself with the launch of each album and tour. But actually, there is a continuity across all of these iterations. Despite the many identities and roles he played, Bowie remained Bowie – he could recreate his old personae and still play his greatest hits. In the following recipe, the transformation is more extreme – both the person and the product seem to have been discarded and reinvented several times over in ways that seem unrecognizable.

The sell-out is often considered to be a dilettante or even a failure – somebody who is not sufficiently committed or serious to continue down one path. Their personal motivation appears weak, their ideas and products not substantial enough to sustain attention or impetus. Selling out implies a lack of integrity or authenticity. This is the antithesis of Sinek’s ‘find your why’ – instead the sell-out is interested in finding a new What or a new How, continually experimenting with novel ideas and identities. The subject of our sell-out recipe does not enjoy the reputation of a Bowie or a Madonna or a Gaga – all considered to be serious artists with a clear sense of direction, in control of themselves and their work, despite their bold artistic changes. By contrast, MC Hammer is dismissed by most music journalists as a minor figure, somebody more concerned with short-term commercial success than the art form. Hammer’s cultural identity is also problematic – like the protagonist in Paul Beatty’s novel The Sellout, Hammer subverts our expectations of what black artists should look like and how they should behave. Yet Hammer was undeniably a very creative person, pioneering many innovations in his industry. He also seems to have managed the rollercoaster of success and fame better than many of his more ‘credible’ contemporaries, perhaps because he learned early in life to roll with the punches and ride his luck rather than committing to a singular vision.

**RECIPE 28. STANLEY KIRK BURRELL: HAMMER TIME AFTER TIME**

**(OAKLAND, CA)**

**INGREDIENTS:**

- One youthfully eclectic entrepreneurial spirit
- One odd-ball mentor
- An acute understanding of the market
- A desire not to be pigeonholed
- A curiosity about new technology and trends

MC Hammer divided opinion at the height of his powers. In 1990, when his song ‘Can’t Touch This’ and the album *Please Hammer, Don’t Hurt ‘Em* were released, he quickly became one of the world’s most recognizable celebrities. Some toasted him for becoming
‘the first mainstream rapper’. Others roasted him for being a ‘gimmicky sell-out’.

But dismissing him as a musical sell-out is less easy to do if you take account of the backstory. Music was in many respects a vehicle for Hammer for taking his creative why and two first creative loves (dance and entrepreneurship) to the next level.

MC Hammer (real name Stanley Kirk Burrell) describes himself as being a dancer from the age of three, and an entrepreneur from the age of nine. These two creative impulses first came together at a shrine to his third love: sports – in his hometown of Oakland, CA.

Stanley’s two older brothers worked for the Oakland Athletics (As) baseball club as bat boys gathering up the players’ discarded bats, and they would bring their younger sibling with them at the weekends. The Burrell boys would mingle with the players before games, and the great Reggie Jackson gave Stanley the name Hammer because he thought he looked like Hank ‘The Hammer’ Aaron – one of baseball’s biggest hitters.

The players were given allocations of tickets, which they often sought to sell to make some extra cash, and they began to give them to Stanley to peddle outside the stadium for a share of the profits. Because Stanley loved to dance, and because he had an entrepreneurial eye for a business opportunity, he worked his dancing into his sales shtick, drawing particularly on his dance heroes like James Brown.

Stanley’s act/business was incredibly successful and, a few years later, he came to the attention of the As owner and one of professional sports’ great entrepreneurial oddballs, Charles O Finley – known affectionately as Charlie-O.

Finley had owned the club since it was based in Kansas City, moving the team to Oakland in 1968. He is most famous for having talked Brian Epstein into getting The Beatles to add an unscheduled date during a US tour and playing Kansas during what was supposed to be a day off, and for being the only owner in professional sports to have developed a mascot based on himself: Charlie-O the Mule.

The quirky Finley spotted the talent and told Stanley that he’d rather have him working inside the tent with him than outside the stadium, and offered him a back-office position. According to Burrell, as a teenager he became the world’s youngest sports executive. His ‘job’ was to mix with the team and be Finley’s eyes, and keep the owner informed of any interesting developments. Gradually, Hammer became a more integral part of the club’s operations and would often speak to the team, particularly when they travelled, which is how the MC (Master of Ceremonies) came to be added to his name by the players.

After a stint in the army, another integral piece of Hammer’s development, Burrell returned to Oakland and started to involve himself in the fledgling hip-hop scene. As the documentary series Hip-Hop Evolution explains, the Oakland culture was a different breeding ground than the rest of the US. Oakland was a dance town. Even the Black Panthers, founded in Oakland, had a street dance troupe that was deployed to attract kids to community events. So, as Hammer began to embrace and develop his music, dance was not a gimmick added on, it was integral to the act, and his act – as he saw it – was to entertain as many people as possible.

Burrell was not young (in hip-hop terms) when this happened. He did not start to rap until his early 20s, and when his act started to gel he was mature enough to see the dangers and the possibilities, so he was relatively well placed to deal with the fame when it hit.

And when it did, it scaled up fast. ‘Can’t Touch This’ was not only Best Rap Solo Performance at the Grammys in 1991, it won Best R&B Song and was the first hip-hop song to be nominated for Record of the Year. It and the album went to number 1 in mul-
Multiple countries and became probably the most ubiquitous song of the early 1990s.

Rather than being overwhelmed by this success or rest on his laurels, Hammer just raised the bar. He wasn’t limited by the boundaries of hip-hop. He claimed that his idols were entertainers like James Brown and The Jacksons. And while he was comfortable hanging out with Tupac, Snoop and other rappers, he saw himself as competing with the likes of Prince, Madonna, Cindy Lauper and Michael Jackson. And that led him into further entrepreneurial avenues.

He sought sponsorship from big companies, not just from shoe makers, but from brands like Pepsi, figuring that if the sports stars he used to work with were profiting in this way, why shouldn’t musicians too? Having won Best Rap Video and Best Dance Video against his rivals at the newly established MTV Music Awards, he wanted to be the best multimedia musician. A cartoon for kids called Hammerman had been developed, and he could see that video was the future, but also that the technology needed to evolve to enable the data necessary to be streamed effectively. So he entered partnerships in the tech world of Silicon Valley to see if he could be the first to solve the problem and exploit the resulting opportunities.

Hammer’s pathway since has been rocky, a lot of successes but also many failures. But it has always been varied and interesting and he has emerged as a senior sage in music, in business and in culture, particularly as a supporter of young musicians and entrepreneurs in his hometown of Oakland. He is now at once a preacher, a business/music mentor, town-booster, and Twitter sensation and influencer, where his statements about philosophy and science are followed widely.

Hammer’s Why? As the son of a professional card player, he claims he’s always understood and been about the hustle. But he says that he could see the dangers of being sucked in to believing that the hustle is the point. The hustle should only be a means to other ends: to entertain, to share the wealth, help one’s community, to share the knowledge or the consciousness. And so for MC Hammer, the point of perfecting a particular hustle or game is to use that as a platform for launching into the next thing and sharing the results.

Hammer helped make hip-hop mainstream and connected it to other elements of culture and business that it was once cut off from. In so doing, his creative journey trod a path to be followed by the kind of artists who may have once sneered at his pop sensibilities. 50 Cent, Queen Latifah, LL Cool J, Jay-Z and Ice-T, among others, have been able to continue to expand their creative personas, rather than being trapped by them, by following Stanley Burrell’s creative model.

Is your creativity bound by rules and expectations of what is ‘authentic’ and what is ‘mainstream’? What would happen if you tried to cross those boundaries? Do you have a mentor figure like Charlie-O encouraging you to ‘work inside the tent’ instead of on the outside? Would selling out to commercial partnerships and opportunities break your creative spirit? Or could it ignite opportunities and set it free?

RESOURCES


Interview with MC Hammer, Revolt TV, 9 September 2017: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=IEGaq4igCzE](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IEGaq4igCzE)

‘MC Hammer’s Philosophical Tweet Goes Viral and Sparks Memes’, *The Independent*, 23 February 2021.
5.6 NO EXIT: CREATIVITY TRAPPED

Previous recipes in Part V have shown how motivations, both intrinsic and extrinsic, can change over time. The personal why and the productional why evolve and lead the individual and their products down a new path. But what happens if both the personal why and the productional why remain constant? The personal why is strong, and so is the productional why.

On the surface this looks like an ideal situation. The creative individual is committed to a product which resonates with their personal motivation. The individual is fulfilled, the product is consistent.

But this kind of alignment is usually short-lived. The other pathways we have described all started here, but over time they evolved. The perfect alignment of the personal why and the productional why starts to pull apart. These changes might be painful (like the break-up of The Beatles), but the alternative is standing still, which carries its own risks. When personal why and productional why are locked together, where does change come from?

There are two possibilities here. On one hand, the productional why and the personal why continue to be mutually reinforcing and mutually fulfilling. Rather than changing, the enterprise can expand or extend within these parameters. The core purpose of the enterprise and of the entrepreneur remain the same, just operating at a different scale. We call this ‘scaling up’.

The other possibility is that the personal why and productional why remain constant, but they fall out of alignment. The personal motivation remains strong, but without some external change in the productional model the creative individual becomes trapped in a repetitive cycle, attempting to relive a golden moment of fulfilment and achievement which cannot be repeated.

This is a common problem in media and entertainment industries. The star personality becomes a trap, the person behind the personality is locked into repeating the same roles, aligning with a productional why over which they have little control. This can lead to self-destruction as the creative energies turn inwards, unable to move forward. The personal price of success plays out as tragedy – a story charted in the experience of Amy Winehouse, a talented singer and songwriter from north London who found it impossible to escape from her celebrity persona as Amy. Her decline into alcoholism, drug abuse and early death followed a similar pattern to that of Billie Holiday, one of Amy’s influences and idols. The difference was that Holiday’s death at 44 was not quite as early as that of Winehouse, aged just 27.

Amy’s story is the subject of an award-winning documentary by the film-maker Asif Kapadia. Kapadia would make a later documentary about another doomed genius, Diego Maradona. Like Amy, Maradona’s personal why was beguilingly simple; she was a girl who wanted to sing, he was a boy who wanted to play football. And while it seemed that the personal dream and the professional career were perfectly aligned, it proved impossible for Amy or Diego to grow and evolve in the ways possible for the other subjects in this part of Creativities. The productional why of professional success enforced repetition rather than growth, squeezing out the personal why. No longer in control of their own careers, Diego and Amy were expected to perform the same part, in a role that no longer fulfilled them. For those watching, the performance remains beguiling – but for the performer, the journey becomes increasingly meaningless. And perhaps the memory of a strong intrinsic motivation, a personal why, makes the disappointment, alien-
ation and frustration even harder to bear – a reminder of what could have been, now thwarted by processes the individual can no longer control: no exit.

### RECIPE 29. DIEGO MARADONA: CREATIVITY CORNERED (BUENOS AIRES AND NAPLES)

**INGREDIENTS:**

- One irresistible talent on the rise
- An underdog club
- An ‘us against the world’ mentality
- A dark web of selfish interests

Like The Beatles, Diego Maradona’s journey is a rags-to-riches story of creativity, but Maradona came up from lower – quite literally the ghetto – and he, unlike each of The Beatles, lost his way and fell hard. Film of him in his prime compared with the state he was in by the 2000s is difficult to watch.

Diego was born and grew up in Villa Fiorito, a shantytown on the outskirts of Buenos Aires. When his talent was spotted by Argentinos Juniors in 1975, their contract provided him with an apartment that became his family’s first proper home. Maradona’s Why when he started out was similar to many who grow up in poor circumstances: he wanted to buy a house for his parents.

Maradona became a staple of the club’s youth team *Los Cebollitas* (The Little Onions), and the charismatic and hugely talented junior was already nicknamed ‘The Golden Boy’ when he was transferred to Boca Juniors (one of Latin America’s biggest clubs) in 1980. In 1982, his transfer from Boca to Barcelona was for a then world record fee of £5 million ($7.6 million).

Diego never settled in Barcelona. He didn’t feel wanted, believed the Spanish looked down on people like him from Latin America, was scrappy with and hassled by the Spanish media, got into fights on the field, was suspended, then got injured and then struggled to get back into the top team. Talk that Barca would look to sell Maradona on and recoup their losses began after his first season, but none of the top-flight international clubs were interested.

Then a surprise buyer emerged – one of Europe’s poorest top division football clubs: Napoli in southern Italy. The move caused many to speculate that both the world’s best footballer and one of the world’s most indebted football teams had lost their marbles. But, over the next five years, Maradona would lead the club on an unprecedented and unrepeatable run, taking the perennial cellar-dwellers to their only La Liga titles in the 1986–87 and 1989–90 seasons and making them the best team in Italy and one of the best in Europe.

A mainland southern Italian team had never enjoyed such success before, and as Maradona rallied his new home to believe that they could take on and be better than their richer northern countrymen, the football champion became a cultural, social and quasi-religious icon for the region too. Just how much the team’s success and Maradona’s leadership meant to the people of Napoli can be best grasped by understanding how the rest of Italy goaded them: fans of wealthy clubs like Juventus and Inter Milan would
humiliate them by chanting of Napoli as the scum/filth/sewer of Italy and sing that the team’s ‘cholera infested’ supporters were unclean, calling upon ‘Vesuvius to wash them with fire’.

In hindsight, perhaps Napoli’s move to acquire Diego, and the success that subsequently ensued for the club and for Maradona, was not so irrational. Film-maker Asif Kapadia, whose previous films included Amy and Senna, completed a documentary on the footballer in 2019. He reflected that ‘Diego didn’t fit in at Barcelona [and he wouldn’t have fitted in at other] old-school, respected clubs… their players had to act and train a certain way. He would never have felt comfortable there, but he felt comfortable in Naples because it was built like him.’

Like the retreat to the studio after the chaos of touring for The Beatles, Diego’s retreat from Barcelona seemed to offer an opportunity for rejuvenation and a relaunch. When asked in 1984 what he wanted from the people of Napoli, Diego said he wanted ‘respect for his football and peace’.

The respect came, particularly as the team improved beyond anyone’s wildest imagination. But Maradona worked hard to earn it. He found the initial transition to the Italian game tough. The football was harder and faster than what he was accustomed to in Argentina or Spain, and the defenders were bigger and rougher and they targeted him. So he took his creative ‘ingredients’ and sought to blend them in a different way.

Maradona formed a tight-knit team within the Napoli organization of himself and the one thing he had wanted to bring with him from his days at Barca: personal trainer Fernando Signorini. After team training, Diego and Signorini would work separately. Signorini did not want to lose what made Maradona great: his explosive speed, his footwork, his ball control; but he sought to improve his fitness (so that he could outrun opponents for longer) and his strength (so that his small frame could hold its own and he could stay on his feet when jostled). In this way, Signorini and the environment in Napoli, where Maradona was free to train independently, took his creativity to another level.

However, the peace that Diego sought was harder to manage. The energy in Naples was exuberant and chaotic, something captured well in Kapadia’s film. 65,000 fans crammed Napoli’s stadium just to witness Maradona’s arrival from Spain. The ensuing press conference descended into farce as the first question implied that The Camorra (mafia) may have played a role in bringing Maradona to the club. President Corrado Ferlaino called the journalist a disgrace and sought to have him expelled amid much pushing, shoving and name-calling.

But initially, Maradona responded to a culture that energized him. He became inspired by a sense he and his team were fighting against the richer, more privileged teams and cities who looked down on him and ‘his people’.

Perhaps this context helps us comprehend Maradona’s response to his most infamous act. Argentina defeated England 2–1 in a World Cup quarterfinal in 1986. Maradona scored both of Argentina’s goals. One was probably the most sublime ever scored (where Maradona took the ball 70 yards out from goal and ran through what seemed to be the entire English side), the other the most ridiculous (where the 5-foot, 5-inch Maradona rose above the 6-foot England goalkeeper to tap the ball in with his fist). The referee awarded the goal and Maradona said nothing. But, as with Napoli, part of Maradona’s creative mix was a sense of fighting against injustice. He, like many Argentinians, felt embarrassed as the Argentinian army was easily dismissed as British forces re-took the Falkland Islands a few years previous. In his mind, the goal from his fist was scored by the
‘hand of God’. God’s will was acting through him. So be it.

However, after Diego returned from the World Cup and Napoli won their first championship, the city that rejuvenated him developed into a trap. As Napoli became more and more successful, more and more Neapolitans wanted a piece of Diego. They crowded the fences around his house to get signatures and photos, cheered and sang his name whenever they saw him around town, and sought to kiss and hug a man who was fearful of being touched. Diego felt increasingly claustrophobic, but there was nothing anybody in Naples could do about that. Except The Camorra.

Members of the criminal Giuliano family offered to protect Maradona and his family. Over time the Giulianos and Diego became closer and they were able to provide him with whatever he wanted. Under the family’s protection, Maradona was able to go out and be left alone. He stayed out later and later and lived an increasingly unhealthy lifestyle. For a time, his natural talents and willpower enabled him to party from Sunday night to Thursday and then train hard to be ready for the next Sunday match.

By 1989, however, things were catching up with him. His increased body weight was more obvious, his fitness was poor as he was visibly puffed on the pitch, and he was addicted to cocaine. But remarkably, he was able to lead Napoli to a second championship. Unfortunately, the controversy that followed the championship, in the 1990 World Cup in Italy, hastened Maradona’s demise. A combination of bad luck and bad management led to Italy playing Argentina in a semi-final in Naples. Diego, thinking that because he was for Napoli then they would be for him, urged fans to support Argentina. Encouraging Italians to go against their own country worked out badly, particularly after Maradona ran around the stadium celebrating Argentina’s victory on penalties.

And so Maradona got stuck. He begged to be released from his contract and traded to another club, but Ferlaino wouldn’t budge. Maradona was the goose laying the golden eggs that made Ferlaino the most successful club president in Napoli’s history. Unable to leave, Maradona sought solace in drugs supplied by The Camorra and became beholden to them for the drugs to feed his addiction. The fans began to hate him because they believed that he sought to turn them against their national team and because he had the temerity to beat their team in 1991. Maradona went from being feted to haunted and hunted. That Napoli wasn’t winning so often didn’t help matters either. All the while, Maradona’s football prowess declined and his value plummeted.

The final straw was being set up in a drug sting by the Italian authorities and banned from the game for six months. By the time he emerged again, he was broken. Not unlike the tale of one of his heroes, George Best (whose alcoholism blocked the development of creative exit ramps), for the equally mercurial Maradona his passion and addictions eventually made him vulnerable to forces that he could not control and they destroyed his creative potential.

Diego Maradona’s story is a lesson in how even the brightest creative force can self-destruct unless there is a development pathway, or a way to exit the arena with dignity. Despite all their conflicts, each of The Beatles – the greatest popular musicians of the 20th century – were able to do that; probably the greatest footballer of the 20th century was not.

What are the traps which could lock down your creativity and how might you avoid them? Thinking about these, can you plan an escape route through one of the other pathways described in this part of the book (an exit ramp, a launch pad, a sell-out)? Who are the coaches helping you grow your creativity, and who are the gangsters dragging you back down – and how do you spot the difference?
5.7 SCALING UP: DOUBLING DOWN AND GOING FOR GROWTH

It doesn’t have to be any of the ways we’ve outlined. You don’t have to step away from your creative enterprise, hop on to something else, sell out or feel trapped by your creative output. Instead, your creative Why might lead you to double down and ride the product of your creativity as far as you can. Despite the Whys we’ve already covered, it’s possible for the founders or originators to remain closely involved and strongly motivated. It’s possible to reiterate the same essential business idea and take the scale to another level. The key difference is that this time, as opposed to the earlier Why combinations in the creative pathway matrix, the productional why and the personal why remain tightly aligned (as they were for The Beatles, until around 1967). And actually, taking this path does not preclude stepping on to one of the other pathways should the personal and productional diverge at a later stage.

In fact, the ‘double down and scale up’ is the move most commonly associated with an entrepreneurial spirit at this stage in the creative process. Hence, there are literally hundreds of books written on how to scale a business and be a successful entrepreneur. And rather than seek to reinvent the wheel in this regard, we thought we’d cut to the chase and provide you with four useful and well-regarded lists of scale-up steps in Figure 5.2.

As you’ll see, there are many commonalities, from the importance of being focused and clear about your commitment and goals at the start, to planning and preparing for growth, learning from others and building your team and networks, and having clear processes for proceeding while being prepared to innovate and adapt these as you travel. The real choice is whether you prefer a shorter list or a longer one. Or you may want to create your own through blending the ideas to suit you, so long as you have a plan, determine your endgame, and are flexible with regard to how you get there as things unfold. As for recipes, you’ll find many in any entrepreneurship or business magazine, or just by searching ‘successful start-ups’.

If doubling down on your creativity and scaling up is the only thing that’s going to scratch the itch of your Why, then armed with a clear approach, some inspiration from others who have travelled that road before, and the support that almost every regional government will provide entrepreneurs (as was the case with Ben & Jerry’s, just search ‘entrepreneur help advice’), you need to go for it.

The final recipe that we focus on is a little different, though. It could have been a scale-up, but that didn’t really fit the Whys of the two protagonists, so thinking through what they really wanted to get from their and their community’s creative endeavours led them in a different, hybrid direction: part local scale-up and launch pad on to other creative projects locally; part sell-off – or at least lease-out – and exit internationally. As such, it is a good place to end Part V. And, as it allows us to express their thinking on the creativity canvas, it’s a good place to end.
the book and hand it on to you to reflect on your creative endeavours. We’ve included a few empty canvases for you to use to record your creative Whys, Whats, Hows, Wheres and Whos.

**Table 5.2** Three, six, ten and eleven steps to scale up

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tim Ferris in Entrepreneur.com 3 steps</th>
<th>Forbes 6 steps</th>
<th>StartUpDonut.uk 10 steps</th>
<th>Tony Robbins 11 steps</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2. Learn from others about how to grow, e.g., by bootstrapping, hiring advisors, or building relationships.</td>
<td>2. Build broad management skillset.</td>
<td>2. Make sure you’re ready and prepared for growth</td>
<td>2. Develop a business map.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Get creative with financing to raise cash.</td>
<td>3. Build collaborations.</td>
<td>3. Learn from competitors who’ve successfully grown.</td>
<td>3. Perfect your product or service.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Establish standardized processes.</td>
<td>4. Protect your business values.</td>
<td>4. Create thoughtful processes and operations.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Identify core competence.</td>
<td>5. Build a great team of employees.</td>
<td>5. Establish your team.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Articulate competitive strengths.</td>
<td>6. Have rules for your staff to follow.</td>
<td>6. Learn when to delegate.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Access outside expertise when required.</td>
<td>7. Build your brand.</td>
<td>7.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Never compromise on quality or consistency.</td>
<td>8. Connect with your customer.</td>
<td>8.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Identify your barriers to growth.</td>
<td>9. Work on your networking skills.</td>
<td>9.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Try to predict the future.</td>
<td>10. Prioritize sustainability.</td>
<td>10.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Continue adapting and innovating.</td>
<td>11. Continue adapting and innovating.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**RECIPE 30. A CREATIVE GOOD: THE OPERATIONAL HIJAB (NEW ZEALAND/ THE WORLD)**

**INGREDIENTS:**

- A community need
- A barrier for Muslim women
- Substantial desire to make a difference through creativity × 2
- Embracing the concept of user- and co-design
- An understanding of sportswear fabrics blended with pattern-making skills in functional performance apparel

In 2019, a new community design project brief put forward by the New Zealand Police crossed the desks of Deb Cumming and Nina Weaver. They were intrigued. In an effort to seek recruits that better represented the country’s ethnic and cultural diversity, a barrier
had been identified that was making it difficult for many Muslim women to join the police. Officers could not wear a hijab as part of their uniform: the uniform was standard issue, and that standard issue catalogue did not include a hijab. The wearing and visual identification of the hijab was considered important to reflect inclusivity and community diversity while providing a safe operational piece of uniform. This issue was brought into sharper focus after the Mosque attacks on the Muslim community in Christchurch, New Zealand on 15 March 2019.

The police had sought to find a solution by contacting other forces around the world, only to find that they also did not have an operational hijab that fitted all their safety requirements as part of their uniform. So, they brought the problem to Massey University’s School of Fashion and Design, New Zealand’s leading fashion school, and Deb, who was developing an interdisciplinary course in Accessible and Inclusive Fashion Design, saw ‘the operational hijab’ as a perfect case study to highlight user-led accessible design to her students. Accessible design was part of an initiative to broaden views of fashion, to see how design skills could be applied to create innovative clothing for people that the fashion market generally overlooked or undervalued.

The operational hijab was the kind of creative challenge that excited Deb. Her academic specialization was cutting and draping one-piece one-dimensional patterns that could be sewn into complex three-dimensional products. Using creative approaches to fashion to break down barriers, achieve social goods, and make a positive difference in the world was something that inspired her and, she believed, could explain the concept of accessible design and inspire her students in the new course.

Deb started to explore the idea with Nina, and they both became more engaged in thinking about what might be possible. Nina’s expertise in contoured knit apparel and previous background working for a world-leading swimwear company was also uniquely well suited to the problem, and her experience complemented Deb’s perfectly. Their combination of skills met and went beyond what the police had initially thought might be useful to meet the brief.

But the NZ Police brief added further complexity to what, on the surface, may have seemed a simple garment. It would require ‘twisting’ the traditional look and cultural significance of the hijab to meet the police’s operational and technical requirements.

The prototype design by Deb and Nina, with help from NZ Police and members of the broader Muslim community, combined modern technology and material with the operational needs of the police uniform alongside the cultural needs of the Muslim community. It was robust and stable, yet contoured to enable maximum head movement, optimal vision and minimal grab, and shaped to allow tucking into a shirt collar without interference with body armour and outer garments. It was made from a hi-tech material enabling long-wear comfort, robust stability, moisture wicking and temperature control. It was easy-care and it could be worn under regulation cap and other operational headwear. It integrated seamlessly into the existing uniform with facility for operational communication devices, and the design incorporated quick-release fastening for greater safety. Plus, and importantly, despite all this, it looked like a hijab.

As Deb recalled, ‘The Police were great to collaborate with: they had clear expectations and user requirements, thorough ethical processes, wear and safety testing, and were serious about developing something that would make a positive change.’ Also a key part of the community mix designing the operational hijab was Constable Zeena Ali, who was to become New Zealand’s first hijab-wearing policewoman. Constable Ali would also
become a key advocate in the community promoting the project. ‘It felt great to be able to go out and show the New Zealand Police uniform hijab,’ she explained, ‘because I was able to take part in the design process.’

![Image](Photo by Jillian Reid, New Zealand Police. Reproduced with permission from NZ Police Media)

**Figure 5.3** Constable Zeena Ali (centre) wearing the Operational Hijab with her graduating class

The finished prototype (and now product) has been well received and has proven extremely popular. It is being manufactured for New Zealand and international organizations. Local New Zealand orders are sewn by a small local Wellington firm run by an alumnus of the Massey fashion programme. And the New Zealand Police and the Massey University team are also sending the solution abroad, with the UK Police force having sought out the design and many other interested agencies around the world making inquiries as to how they can incorporate the hijab into their uniforms.

The model adopted for enabling the spread of the operational hijab is to lease the design to users, who can then arrange for the product to be manufactured locally. Explaining why they were happy to lease out the intellectual property (IP) rather than expand their own manufacturing from New Zealand, Deb says they never set out to grow a business. ‘I know it sounds corny, but we were in it to make a difference. And this way the idea can spread to create the maximum good. And we can continue to focus on what’s really important to us.’

With regard to that, the earnings from leasing the design now feed back in to fund further accessible and inclusive design projects for students and faculty at Massey. And as that good floats back in, the impact of the operational hijab continues to ripple out. Nina explains that ‘the operational hijab is not just a solution for the police. Because it’s a great product it can be applied in other areas, breaking down barriers in a whole range...
of occupations for Muslim women and opening up new career pathways.’

‘A further circular thing the police hijab project has done’, Deb explained, ‘is that it proved the Why that drove us to create the Accessible and Inclusive Design course in the first place. It was a proof of concept in the best possible way. Now when we teach the course, we start with this as a real example of what’s possible, to explain that creativity in fashion can be aimed toward social as well as economic and environmental goods.’

Indeed, one of the most important things that New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern did when visiting and mourning with those affected after the Christchurch Mosque attacks, and a clear signal that the rest of the community stood in solidarity with those targeted, was to wear a hijab.

Has a brief to create something new helped to invigorate or vindicate your creative purpose? Could pursuing a wider ‘creative good’ (making a difference) inspire your personal creative Why? Could leasing or giving away IP allow creativities to spread out from your initial idea (like the ‘expanding circles’ in Part IV), sparking a new set of creative enterprises beyond your own?

This recipe was written by Deb Cumming, Nina Weaver, Chris Bilton and Stephen Cummings.

RESOURCES


5.8 WHY NEXT?

As with many of the other questions relating to creativities in this book, there is no single Why to creativity. In Part V we have outlined different pathways to a creative purpose. It’s up to you which recipe you will choose to follow (or whether to combine insights from them or make up your own).

For most of us, purpose and direction are not set in stone. What we wanted to do, how we wanted to go about it, where we positioned ourselves, who we wanted to become and why we wanted to achieve it, will inevitably draw out different answers as we grow older and as the world turns. Rather than seeking out a singular why, it may make more sense for some creatives to understand how their motivations and goals change over time – to look forward to the next Why rather than persist with their original goal.

Strong intrinsic motivation is often assumed to be the key to unlock creativity – but as illustrated by some of the earlier recipes, single-minded pursuit of a goal can be destructive of the individual (Diego Maradona) or of those around them (Steve Jobs). If we are not able to rethink our purpose and change direction, we risk trapping ourselves in a shrinking circle of possibilities. Finding a new Why allows us to find new answers to the other creative questions as well.
Like the business model canvas, the creativities canvas invites you to answer some fundamental questions about your own creative practice – whether as an artist, an entrepreneur, a leader, or as an everyday creative person. The answer to one question will inflect the others – the What, the How, the Where, the Who, the Why. Changing the Why, as Simon Sinek intimated, will change all the other questions as well – and will be changed by them in turn. By understanding our own creativities (and how they are changing, changing the products of our creativity, and changing us), we are more likely to align them – to produce a recipe for our own creativity, rather than a ‘dog’s breakfast’ (no offence to any dogs) of incompatible ingredients.

Figure 5.4 Creativities canvas example 5: the police hijab and the Why, What, How, Where and Who of Creativity.
We have concluded previous parts of Creativities by addressing one of four questions – the What, the How, the Where and the Who of the creative process – and shown one set of possible answers to these questions on the creativities canvas. The Why of creativity is the bridge or link-road that connects these parts together and provides a way to check that you are on track and in sync with why you are seeking to create. In Figure 5.4, we have taken the final recipe in the book, the operational hijab, and filled in all five boxes of the canvas in consultation with the people engaged in that creative project, to illustrate how you can think through a creative process in terms of the What, How, Where, Who and Why of creativity.

The final pages of this book are blank creativities canvases. We invite you and the people you create with to fill them with questions and answers relating to your own creative ventures. And we encourage you to repeat the process periodically, as often as you need to – to change your recipes and change direction, to respond to changes and to make change happen. Like those old family recipe books passed down the generations, the best recipe is the one that you, having been inspired, have scribbled out yourself at the back of the book.

Sources and Further Reading for Part V

In the final part of the book we consider creative purpose and motivation. Motivation is placed at the core of entrepreneurship, where Simon Sinek’s advice to start with the Why (before proceeding to the What and the How) is the starting point for this chapter. In creativity theory, ‘intrinsic motivation’ is recognized as the necessary basis for creative thinking – in this field Teresa Amabile’s influential work has drawn on both experimental research and organizational settings. While the primacy of intrinsic motivation remains a dominant assumption in creativity research, many (including Amabile herself) have questioned this, noting that variations in motivation might be necessary according to different stages in the creative process, different people or different settings (Dew 2009). A further complication is that extrinsic motivations are themselves sometimes internalized, making it harder to distinguish between internal drive and external rewards and endorsements (Kasof et al. 2007, Gagné and Deci 2005). This latter point leads to our discussion of ‘the productional why’ in which inner purpose is inflected by external events and opportunities.

A selection of the literature on motivation and creativity follows below. We have also included references to some theories of entrepreneurial action (Sarasvathy 2001, Alvarez and Barney 2007), and the influential idea of ‘good work’ in the creative industries as an idealized form of self-fulfilled, autonomous labour (Oakley 2014). This ideal connects to the idea of being in the zone or ‘flow’, pioneered by Csikszentmihalyi (1997) – something which we have criticized as an oversimplification of the lived experience of many artists (Bilton et al. 2021) and criticize again in this part of the book.


Figure 5.5 Your blank (creativities) canvas
Figure 5.5  Your blank (creativities) canvas
Figure 5.5  Your blank (creativities) canvas
Figure 5.5  Your blank (creativities) canvas