PROVOCATION ON CREATIVITY

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Firstly, for me 'health and care' is a universal issue, and not only about contexts of deficit categorisation, such as illness or disorder at the individualised level. So, creativity for/in health and care, to borrow a phrase, is a 'cradle to grave' concern in all contexts of human experience, including education, work, leisure, etc. If creativity (embracing the arts as much as technology and innovation) was a more widely shared social concern, I believe we would have a less reductive way of seeing the world, particularly as seen through instrumental public policy (with my particular interest being in the field of culture and the arts).

My contention is that creativity requires, or is, 'open space' - to extend Peter Brook's metaphor that all you require for theatre is an empty space. Like Brook's space, I mean this 'open space' metaphorically; and in the realm of public policy it is as much about a philosophical premise as it is about technological modes of knowledge. In a simplistic sense, it is about the two spheres of the arts and science coming together in a way that does not always subjugate the arts in a hierarchical sense – where the arts frequently have to measure up to science.

To expand or question further, what is this creativity or 'open space'? To view creativity as 'open space' is to potentially (hopefully? ironically?) subvert definition. To define creativity might seem logical but should it be defined, and effectively reified? By referring to 'open space' then, and this is what I mean by a philosophical premise, is to question the very demand for a fixed definition or outcome, process or product. Is creativity not as much about the open-ness of process and product, perhaps more process than product? Should we even categorically differentiate? Viewed as 'open space', then, is creativity actually an ethos for process? Is it a permission culture? Is it to be flexible, to improvise, to make mistakes (because mistakes are not necessarily wrong)? Is it therefore to be iterative as much as innovative? Is it o be freely cyclical as much as linear?

If I must be reductive at all, then I think creativity is very much related to improvisation, and accepting offers and opportunities (as opposed to blocking) - a balanced 'yes and…' philosophy to life, health and care.