

The Immense Power of Human Creativity

Steven Shepard

Steve@ShepardComm.com

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I had a conversation this morning that warmed my heart. It was with one of my oldest and dearest friends, someone who has worked in the halls of technology for his entire career. He's a senior leader, a well-known person in his industry, someone who is respected and trusted by peers, clients and competitors. He is professionally credentialed, is required to recertify in his field every year, and works very hard to stay on top of all the minutiae that characterizes his industry. I mean, *this guy is into his field in a big way.*

Our conversation this morning rocked me back on my heels – but in a good way. He and I are both extremely busy and only have the time to chat on a personal basis about twice or three times a year or so, so it had been a while since we chatted. Here's what he told me: "It's all your fault. You've always bugged me about reading more and writing down some of my ideas, and about going with my interests even if they're outside of my field. Well, I finally did. And once I got started I couldn't stop. I've become a voracious reader – I love books about astronomy and physics and chemistry. I bought a big telescope and I've gotten into astrophotography."

He then launched into a detailed (and fascinating) discussion about dark field imaging and image stacking and whether Helicon Focus is the best software for multiple image arrays and the issues associated with thermal noise emanating from digital sensors during long exposures.

"But here's the really cool thing. I've really gotten into writing. I've already written one novel and I'm working on the second of three. This is the most creative thing I've ever done in my life. And here's the weird thing: It's making me better at my "real" job because it's given me balance, which was obviously missing. Every spare moment I have now I'm writing, and loving every minute of it. And I don't resent my work because I know that I have my novel waiting patiently for me when I get home."

I'm sharing this story of my friend with you because his experience is rather important and there's a lesson in it that we can all benefit from. **Never underestimate the extraordinary value and impact of individual human creativity.** I would never in a million years see this guy as a novelist. Don't get me wrong: he's over-the-top creative and inordinately capable, but I never saw fiction as part of his DNA. Yet when he spoke to me about it and described the stories to me I heard a level of excitement in his voice that I've never heard before. It wasn't that he wanted to tell me his story; he was compelled to tell me his story.

Those of you who have been through one of the Storytelling workshops know that one characteristic of a good story is that it WANTS to be told, and telling it is a requirement for the storyteller. My friend demonstrated this to me in his compulsion to ensure that I knew the story and that I knew how important it was.

This is the message. Storytelling is like an itch that needs to be scratched. Once it sinks its teeth into you it doesn't let go, and as one story leads to the next you realize that this is not an optional activity. Storytelling isn't something you do; it's something you are. And that makes all the difference.

Thanks for reading.