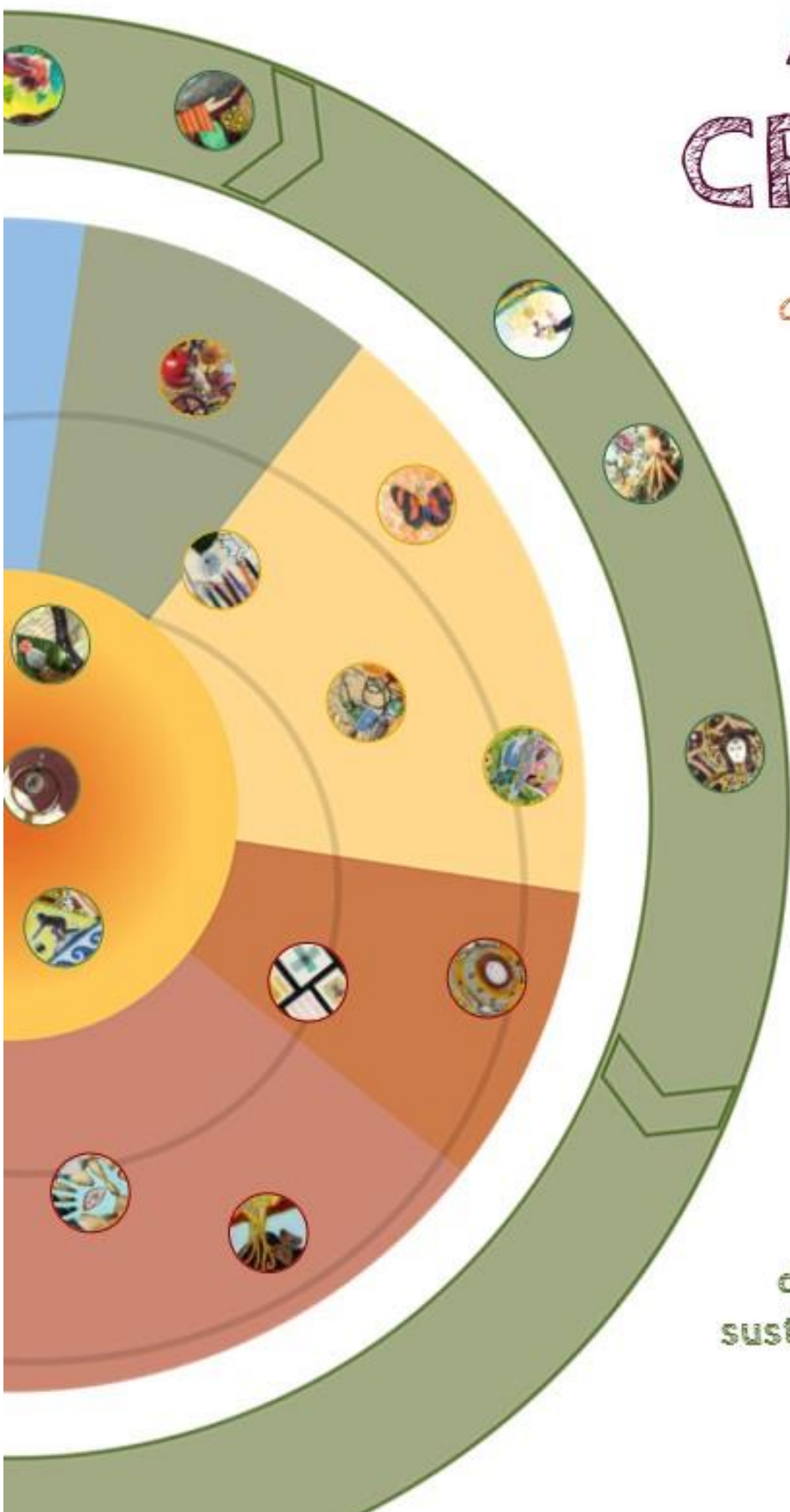


HOW ARE YOU CREATIVE?

*Introducing the
Creative Constellation Framework*

SARA SALTEE



discover your creative identity
sustain your creative momentum
expand your creative impact

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Second Edition, 2018

Visit the author's website at www.sarasaltee.com

Email Sara Saltee at sara@sarasaltee.com

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1. THE QUESTION WE FORGET TO ASK

HOW ARE YOU CREATIVE?

Think about it for a moment. Has anyone ever asked you that question? (and would you know how to answer them if they did?)

Don't you think that's kind of weird? I mean, creativity is clearly a HUGE subject of our collective fascination, as a kind of magical portal to both personal liberation and business innovation. I guarantee your local bookstore has a growing section devoted to the "Creative Self Help" genre, and we're living through a time of profound change toward what many Big Thinkers are calling a "Creativity Economy."

So, why haven't we had a way to talk about the *kinds* of creators we are?

Don't get me wrong, I have read *way* more than my share of the "Creative Self Help" literature, and part of me craves and collects reminders that I have *permission* to create, that creating takes *courage*, and that *my voice matters*. I'm always up for a good inspirational prompt to help me get my creativity 'unblocked' or 'unlocked' or 'sparked' or 'unleashed.' And, as a creativity coach, I've

had the joy of receiving expressions of gratitude and delight from clients and friends who've gotten "unstuck" because of our conversations.

It's just that over the years I've noticed that, while creative inspiration is always welcome, it isn't actually what we most need, most of the time.

When I really look at the challenges that most preoccupy my life and the lives of my friends and clients, it occurs to me that, while some of us surely experience "creating-a-work problems" some of the time – like the challenges of getting inspired, getting unstuck, facing our fears and resistance, finishing what we start, etc. – these difficulties are often nestled inside of another gnarly set of problems, the ones that fall under the heading of "creating-a-life problems." Problems like "what the hell should I do now?" "why doesn't what I'm doing feel like enough?" "how do I choose between my desires to heal the world, my desires to express myself, and my desires to make a living?" "how do I figure out the difference between what I *can* do and what I *want* to do?" "how do I organize myself to put my time and energies into things that feel most meaningful to me?"

To find some guidance to *these* kinds of questions – the ones that fall at the **juicy intersection where creativity and life purpose meet** – it seems to me that it would be super-helpful to be able to ground ourselves in a sense of **creative identity**, a deeper understanding of who we are as creators. After all, our creating is the action that bridges who we are and what we offer to the world, right? So, it stands to reason that if we could

name the kinds of creators we are, we would be well on our way to describing the kind of impact we aim to have, the kind of output we want to produce, the kind of contribution we are designed to make.

But for any of this to happen, we need some way of answering that foundational question we skipped right over in our rush to inspire each other to “get more creative:” **How are you creative?**

There is a model for this

In 1983, Harvard psychologist Howard Gardner introduced the radical idea that perhaps, just maybe, not everyone learns in the same way. (Crazy, right?) With his theory of multiple intelligences, he suggested that intelligence was not a single ability that you either have or don't have (Are you smart?) or that you have more or less than your neighbor (How smart are you?). Gardner thought it might be more accurate and helpful to instead think of intelligence as a set of eight distinct “modalities” that each of us has the potential to access to a greater or lesser degree (How are you smart?).

And suddenly - just by shifting the foundational question about intelligence from “How smart are you?” to “How are you smart?” - the stage was set for an empowering new set of conversations between educators and students. We could finally move beyond the categories of “smart or dumb” that for generations had been used to penalize and diminish the abilities of learners whose intelligences didn't happen to be visible or valued within a traditional school setting. Teachers could start from a presumption of strength and an appreciation for the human realities of

diversity and complexity, and learners could feel honored and validated for the ways they learn best. Huzzah!

Our thinking about creativity is lagging behind

Back in the arena of creativity, though, we have still been stuck in the same kind of old thinking that brought us the questions “Are you smart?” and “How smart are you?” We’ve implicitly been asking ourselves and our children, “Are you creative?” as if creativity was a trait like left-handedness or blond hair, something you either have or you don’t. Or, we’ve been asking “How creative *are* you?” as if creativity is a single ability that we could (and should!) all be dialing up to 11, if only we had the right “experts” to train us.

And, as with intelligence, the answers to these outdated questions end up missing the most vital and magnificent realities of our humanity. When we can only see ourselves as being “creative or uncreative” or “less creative or more creative” we aren’t even close to having an accurate or helpful picture of who we really are, how creativity works through us, and what we are capable of creating next.

Five ways we’re screwed if we don’t have a way to talk about the range of ways we are creative:

There are a range of different painful consequences that can happen when we lack an understanding of our complex creative drives. Here are five of the biggies... **do any of them sound familiar to you?**

Without a concept of multiple creativities, we can find ourselves:

1. Holding the painful belief that we are “not creative.” This is especially true if our major creative modalities don’t happen to be centered in what we think of as “the arts.”
2. Feeling “wrong” or “too much” because we think we are supposed to commit to a single passion or follow a single “bliss.” Those of us who access many different creativities are doomed to a life of confusion and self-condemnation if we buy into the notion that our job as a “mature adult” (ack!) is to pick one and run with it to the end of time. Once we know that we’re allowed to have complex creative drives, we can stop trying to chop off parts of ourselves or shove ourselves into too-small cubicles and start looking for projects and ways of living that allow our disparate creativities to do their thing.
3. Feeling depressed, frustrated, grumpy, or unfulfilled for reasons that we don’t understand or can’t really articulate. Turns out, when we don’t create in the ways we are built for, our creative selves get really cranky and do anything they can think of to call for our attention – from timid twinges that say “uh, hello? excuse me? did you maybe, perhaps forget about me?” to full-on raging Fatal Attraction-style self-sabotage “I’m not going to be ignored Dan!” Knowing what kind of creator you are can help you trace your mysterious

longings back to those parts of you that you have disavowed or simply not yet recognized...BEFORE the bunnies get boiled.

4. Feeling trapped in one way of creating to the exclusion of others. The career-preparation pathways for many professions involve long and arduous study and a narrowed focus on the development of one particular set of creative strengths. Even when the strengths needed in your field match some major modes within your creative constellation, by mid-career many people feel a bit straightjacketed by the confinements of their mono-focused creating, and find themselves asking “what the hell happened to the rest of me?”
5. Buying into other people’s view of what kinds of creating are valuable or important, rather than paying attention to our inner signals. When we’re raised by - or surrounded by - people with strong opinions about certain kinds of creating that are “safe” or “worthwhile” and other kinds that aren’t, discovering that ALL creating modes are valuable and necessary can feel like finding a secret oxygen mask in an airless room. These days, we are all pretty much responsible for creating our own lives, which means we’ve got to learn to know and trust the kinds of creators we are. If we’re going to find our way to those holy grail places where creative satisfaction and creative contribution intersect, we need to learn to listen for the inner signals that alert us to the activities and experiences that bring us a sense of both aliveness and meaning.

It's time to bring diversity and complexity into our thinking about ourselves as creators!

A great place to start is by acknowledging a couple basic truths:

Basic truth #1: Not everyone is creative in the same way

For example, take a look at this list of a dozen famous people, and consider these three questions: Would you describe each of them as creative? Are any of them creative in the same way? Who the hell is Boyon Slat?

The List

- | | |
|------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. Lady Gaga | 7. Frida Khalo |
| 2. Chris Rock | 8. Oprah Winfrey |
| 3. Coco Chanel | 9. Martin Luther King Jr. |
| 4. George Takei | 10. Steve Jobs |
| 5. Anne Lamott | 11. Alice Waters |
| 6. Neil DeGrasse Tyson | 12. Boyon Slat |

Just at a glance, it seems clear that we've got some different kinds of creatives here, right?

- | | |
|-----------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. performance artist | 7. painter |
| 2. comedian | 8. television producer |
| 3. fashion designer | 9. social justice activist |
| 4. actor | 10. technology designer |
| 5. writer | 11. chef |
| 6. astrophysicist | 12. inventor |

If we could assemble all these powerful culture-shifters in a room (can you imagine?) and we asked them our new question "How Are You Creative?" each of them would

have a rather different answer to that question. Because each of them is most drawn to, and most adept at solving, different sorts of problems.

Two kinds of problems

I think of it this way: the world is full of different kinds of problems, and each of us are wired to think of most of those problems somewhere on a spectrum ranging from invisible to uninteresting to downright repulsive. Let's call these the "not-with-a-10-foot-pole" problems, the kind our particular little brains want little or nothing to do with. (My 10-foot-pole problems include those involving keeping plants alive; remembering numbers; knowing how computers or cars work; being in the presence of moths, rats or bats; and dealing with open wounds...what are yours?)

And then there are the other kind of problems, the ones I call the "problems-that-perk-us-up." These are the problems we find enticing and intriguing; the problems that our creativity is shaped around; the kind of problems call forth our concentration, our commitment, and even, sometimes, our constructive obsession – even if we don't understand why. The problems-that-perk-us-up often don't even register with us as "problems," we may think of them as puzzles, projects, worthy preoccupations, enjoyable past-times, or simply our "life's work." We come alive in the presence of these kinds of problems because the process of solving them feels like play, like meaning, like joy.

Now don't get me wrong, I'm NOT saying that solving the problems-that-perk-us-up should feel effortless or free of

challenge. (I mention this because there's a lovely-sounding myth out there about 'effortless' creativity which I think is insidious and harmful to any of us who are trying to improve our relationship to the creating process.) The difference between a 10-foot-pole problem and a perks-you-up problem is *not* that one is hard and the other is easy. The difference is that one kind of challenge drains and depletes us, while the other feels enlivening and rewarding, even when it is really really hard. *There are challenges that we are built to grapple with, and some we just aren't.*

Looking back at our list of famous people, we can see that each of them is "perked up" by a different kind of problem; their creative sensitivities are activated in the presence of a different kind of challenge. For example:

- Boyon Slat's creativity is activated by the problem of generating technical solutions to big complicated environmental problems,
- Martin Luther King's creativity was activated by the problem of generating cultural, spiritual, and political solutions to big complicated social problems, and
- Lady Gaga's creativity is activated by the challenge of engineering captivating emotional experiences for an audience.

While all of them generate distinctly new cultural material and successfully bring it into form in the world, *they create in different modalities.*

And that's not all.

Because as we keep digging into the ways our celebrity group of differently-creative people are creative, things start to get more and more interesting. Closer inspection reveals that many – if not all – of them are actually creative in multiple different ways.

Basic truth #2: Most people are creative in multiple different ways

Sure, there are creative specialists who operate almost exclusively within a single creative modality, but I've come to believe that most of us marshal an array of different creative modes in service of our life and work. (I call such people "multi-modal creators.")

If this is true, then what makes us who we are as creators is not *whether or not* we are creative, or even the single specific way we are creative. What makes us who we are as creators is the *signature cluster of ways we are creative*. It is the grouping of creativities we express that shapes the unique contributions we are designed to offer the world.

So how many possible combinations of creativities are there? Well, remember Gardner's Multiple Intelligences theory that describes eight distinct intelligences? Turns out creativities are slightly more abundant than intelligences. (Which kind of makes sense, right, given the generative nature of creativity?) Indeed, the Creative Constellation framework identifies 25 distinct modalities of creativity. This set of 25 creative modes serves as a set of "stars" that, in some combination, make up each of our creative constellations. The possible combinations are... given the absence of key computational skills in my

personal toolkit, I'm just going to go with "vast in number."

And, of course, naming the stars that are somewhere in the constellation of your creativity is only a first step. Because a constellation is always more than just a set of dots; it is the set of *relationships between those dots* that gives the constellation its shape and form and meaning. In this way, claiming your creative constellation is part discovery and part pattern-making. Playing around with the shapes your cluster of creativities can make is a dynamic process that is about sensing who you are becoming and what is being called forth from you by the worlds in which you find yourself. The process of discerning what picture your creative constellation is forming at any given moment requires you to explore *both* the relationships between multiple parts of yourself *and* the relationship you are crafting between you and the world. It is truly the work of a lifetime.

Take Alice Waters for example

Let's put the spotlight on Alice Waters for a moment, and you'll see what I mean. Alice Waters is the California chef who is regarded as the mother of the organic food movement. As I talk about her, I'll introduce some of the 25 different creative modes I've identified, so you can begin to see how the creative constellation idea works. (The images that go with each mode are small details of the illustrations I've created to help you work with your modes...but more on that later.)

Waters started her career as a chef (Maker mode),



MAKER

and her interest in making tasty, healthy food which would attract and nurture community led her to begin growing an organic garden outside her restaurant, Chez Panisse. (Cultivator mode)

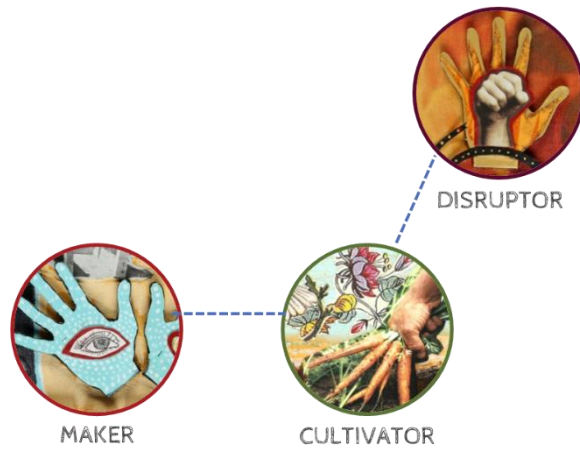


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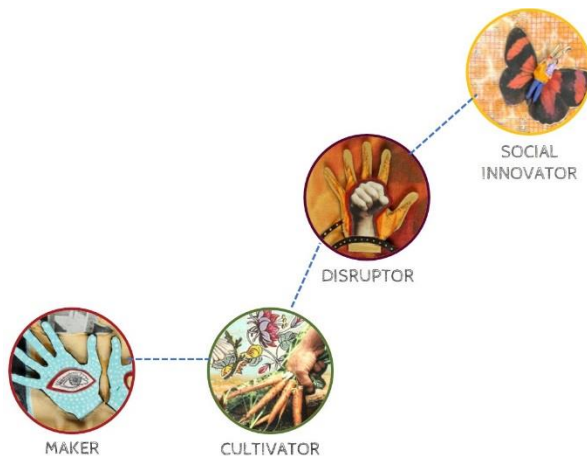


CULTIVATOR

As Alice started to get more and more convinced that fresh, organic foods were a key element in a larger vision for healthy, vibrant people and healthy communities, she couldn't help but notice that this simple idea seemed radical in the face of large power structures invested in packaged, less-healthy foods. She felt compelled to do what she could to end outdated beliefs and practices around food production and consumption, and she tapped into an activist streak (Disruptor mode) that had been with her since her college days in Berkeley.

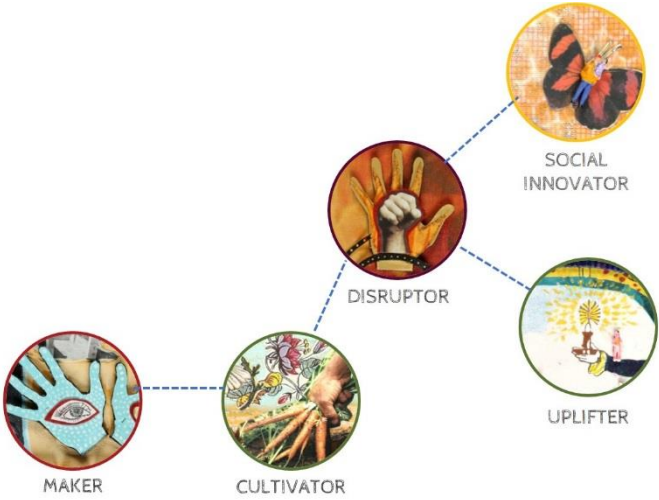


Waters thought if she was going to try to effect a profound change our underlying culture of food (Social Innovator mode), it made sense to start by introducing young children to the joys of growing and cooking fresh healthy ingredients. She set out to develop the Edible Schoolyards Project to build gardening and cooking into public school curricula.

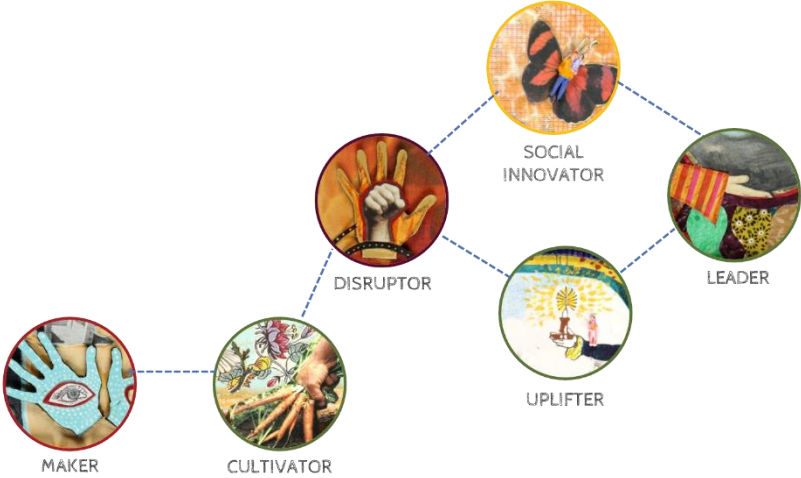


In the process, she expressed her creativity as a teacher, training teachers and students how to create their own school gardens. Over time, she also taught her ideas and techniques by writing a series of cookbooks that

expressed her beliefs about food and community (Uplifter mode).



Over time, Walker came to be increasingly in demand as a speaker and was called to step up as a leader (Leader mode) to inspire and support what ultimately has become a massive, mainstream movement to return locally grown, organic foods to our tables, the heart and hearth of our communities.



Like many of us, the full richness and power of Waters' constellation was revealed only over time, with one

creative project leading to and informing the next until the scope of her potentials and contributions became visible.

And Alice Waters isn't the only one from our dozen famous creators who has a complex creative constellation.

If you only know George Takai as Star Trek's Sulu, you may not know that he has also been a politician, a civil rights activist, a playwright, and a social media community-builder and humorist...

Boyon Slat is an inventor, yes, (but as you now know, having diligently Googled him), he is also an entrepreneur and an environmentalist and a leader and a diver...

Neil DeGrasse Tyson is a scientist, and he is also a teacher and an interpreter - a popularizer who helps non-scientists get excited about what science reveals and takes a stand for the value of the scientific world view...

And where do we even start with Oprah Winfrey? She is a television producer/media mogul, and she is also a teacher and a host and a spiritual seeker and a curator and cultivator of other people and an actress and a leader and an editor, and probably a bunch of other things...

What we see through the Creative Constellation lens is that the particular genius of each of our celebrity creators doesn't come from one way of being creative that is different from other people's way of being creative; their particular genius emerges from the interplay between their different creative modes. Their genius is in the

intricacies of their Creative Constellation, and in the way they follow the flow of the different potentials that arise and emerge over time. Their contributions are the result of living into the many possibilities that their gifts make available to them. Their impact results from the choices each made to evolve their work and their identity in a sort of dance between the material of their creating selves and the material presented to them by the realities of the world.

I think this is true of just about all of us. Including you.

Enter the Creative Constellation Framework

I designed the coaching tools that make up the Creative Constellation Framework to help you name and claim your creative genius (no matter how complex and evolving it might be), spark and sustain your creative momentum (no matter how stuck you feel), and expand your creative impact (no matter what kind of creator you are).

There are two interlocking layers to the Creative Constellation Framework:

1. The “Stars” layer is all about creative identity and mapping your genius. This is where you learn about the 25 creative modalities, and discover the collection of them which make up your personal creative constellation.
2. The “Galaxy” layer is a model of the creating process that puts your constellation in a broader context, allowing you to visualize your patterns of

strength and challenge as a creator. The Galaxy tools also go further to support your ongoing creative momentum and, ultimately, your ability to realize the full potential of your constellation.

Read on to learn a bit more about how this all fits together!

2. THE STARS & THE GALAXY

A poetic metaphor



The mystic in me just loves the poetry of the Creative Constellation metaphor; I love the paradox that a constellation is just a set of purely imaginary lines we draw among the stars, and yet these patterns are so meaningful that travelers can use them to navigate their way home. I like that envisioning our personal set of creating modalities as “stars” in our personal skies makes clear that our creative gifts need not be singular, nor thought of as randomly disconnected from each other.

We can intentionally seek out the patterns that our stars form, we can make meaning of the ways in which they seem to connect, and we can use those patterns to guide our way forward. I also love the notion that as we grow and evolve, our aspect to the stars can change, and we can draw new connections, notice previously faint stars suddenly burning brighter, and discover new patterns that become visible from new vantage points in our lives.

... and a bitch of a puzzle

So, that’s all very lovely. But, in practice, the project of developing a solid starter list of twinkling “stars” – or distinct creative modalities – was also fricking challenging! Fortunately for me, it happened to be one of those “problems that perk me up” – a puzzle that was so exhilarating to work on that I confess I was truly sad when I felt I had cracked it.

As I started my “star search,” I knew I didn’t want to replicate the existing way we’re used to dividing creative people up, like by different artistic mediums (Painter, Writer, Sculptor) or particular job titles (Marketing Professional, Doctor, Landscaper, Scientist). I wanted to get under the hood of those categories and figure out “what are the underlying ways of being creative that go into any one of those jobs or pursuits?”

I found a significant jumping off point for my quest in Carol Lloyd’s fantastic book, *Creating a Life Worth Living*. In a chapter called “Kaleidoscope of Creativity,” she described 10 different “creative profiles” (which she also refers to as “creative types” or “creative temperaments.”) In the introduction to her 10 profiles, Lloyd offered a delightfully frank description of their origins and extended an invitation for which I will always be grateful. Right there on page 64, she says:

“The creative profiles in this chapter are derived neither from ancient mysticism nor modern psychology. I just made them up. They are tools for probing and exploring. Batter them, hybridize them, take issue with them. Use them as a miner’s pick to dig into the uncharted territory of your creative self.”

Bless you Carol Lloyd!

I took her at her word and did exactly what she suggested. For about 18 months, I walked through the world looking at everyone a bit sideways, asking myself again and again: how is this person creative? what

creative modes is she or he using? I mentally tried out the questions on my friends and family members, I brought them to every profile of a “person of note” in magazines and newspapers, I even scoured the obituaries, testing and re-testing the categories I was forming against people’s real-life stories. I read books about creators and innovators from all kinds of different fields, I probed and explored, I took issue with some of Lloyd’s 10 types, I hybridized some, and absorbed others almost whole. But none of that can convey my excitement at what I was seeing through the “how are you creative?” lens.

With my “star goggles” on, I noticed a Japanese rock musician who is collaborating with scientists to see if he can literally encode his songs into DNA; the doctor who travels all over the world and cooks like a professional; the fiction writer who is also a technology freak and a climate change activist; the app inventor who teaches energy healing on weekends; the gardener who organizes her whole community around urban horticulture; the professional violinist who fixes cars and does his own plumbing...

By the time I was done, I had identified a set of 25 distinct creative modes, some borrowed from Carol Lloyd’s list, others “inspired by” that list but now unrecognizably tinkered with, and a bunch of additional ones that my research and thinking had turned up.



Yup, that's a lot of modes, but don't freak out!

Now perhaps at this point you're thinking "Golly Sara, 25 is a LOT of modes...Is this going to be a thing where I have to memorize them all? Because frankly a grocery list of more than two items falls out of my head before I get from my kitchen to my car."

And to you I say: NOT TO WORRY! First of all, it turns out that the 25 modes fall rather nicely into just 5 clusters (which I'll explain in just a minute), and second, I've named them all and then, just to make it all more tangible, I illustrated them and turned the images into a card deck to make it all that much easier to grab hold of (literally). The cards are illustrated with mixed-media collages on one side and have key self-evaluation questions on the other, so you can sort them and spread them out and play with them to your hearts content. Used in combination with the Finding Your Creative Constellation Workbook, these cards offer a beautiful and

flexible way to explore how your creative modes work together.

How do you find your constellation?

The first step to finding *your* creative constellation is to sort through the 25 creative modes, asking yourself which ones are the brightest, most energizing 'stars' in your constellation. I call these your "major modes" - the ways of creating that feel totally YOU - a significant, defining aspect of who you are as a creator.

As you learn about the different modes, you might also identify ways of creating that are part of your constellation, but not in quite as energetic a way. These "minor modes" are creative strengths you recognize in yourself, but which you feel less strongly drawn to or feel less familiar with than your major modes, at least at this time. Some people also identify "glimmer modes" which are somewhere in the distant sky for you - potentially accessible but currently quite faint - and most people also have a stack of "nope modes" which simply leave them cold.

Once you have a sense of the brightest modes in your constellation, the next step is to set them against the backdrop of the Spiral Galaxy O' Creating. At this stage, you discover how the modes cluster into 5 groups and you'll be able to visualize what your constellation can tell you about your areas of greatest strength within the creating process.

Zooming out and seeing spirals

In the Galaxy layer of the Creative Constellation framework, we begin to see that our personal collection of “stars” take on additional meaning when plotted within a bigger space – the space we can think of as the “spiral galaxy” of the creating process.



Embedded in the spiral galaxy metaphor is the notion that creating is a dynamic process which is both cyclical and expanding. In an essay from her book *Upstream*, the poet Mary Oliver describes beautifully why we should envision the creating process as a spiral, rather than something more static, like a wheel.

Oliver says:

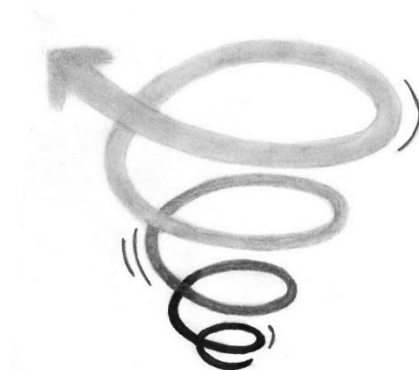
“In creative work – creative work of *all kinds* – those who are the world’s working artists are not trying to help the world go around, but forward.”

Now, don’t get hung up on Oliver’s use of the word “artists” here! (Yes, you.) By italicizing the words “all kinds,” she’s signaling that she is speaking about all creators. She is saying that when we are engaged in the creating process in any combination of modalities, we join

with all other creators in advancing and improving the world.

Even when it feels like our creating work is taking us around and around again, if we are truly engaging with all of its challenges – the need to push in the direction of our fear; the need to marshal and sustain our concentration; the need to persevere in the absence of guarantees or evidence of likely success; the need to endure times of utter groundlessness (how's that for starters?) - the creating process is also moving us outward and upward both individually and collectively. Our creating both stretches us and evolves our culture, expanding the possibilities for everyone.

From another angle, in fact, we can sense that the spiral is growing, widening, and strengthening over time. We can visualize the accrual of increasing energy and power. From this angle, it is very evident that we are not just going around at one level, we are gaining elevation, travelling farther and moving beyond where we have been before. From this side angle, the spiral looks something more like this:



Side view

25 modes, 5 clusters

In the Creative Constellation system, the 25 different creative modes are grouped into five clusters, which correspond to different facets of the spiral galaxy of creating model.

Now, I'm not going to go into full detail here about the four phases of the creating process, and the seven core practices of creating. You'll learn much more about it in the *Finding Your Creative Constellation Workbook*, and I go into even MORE depth about the implications of the spiral in the *Wholehearted Creator's Guide to the Spiral Galaxy 'O Creating* – so if you want to learn more, check those resources out!

For now, this graphic will give you an overview of how the creating modalities are clustered:

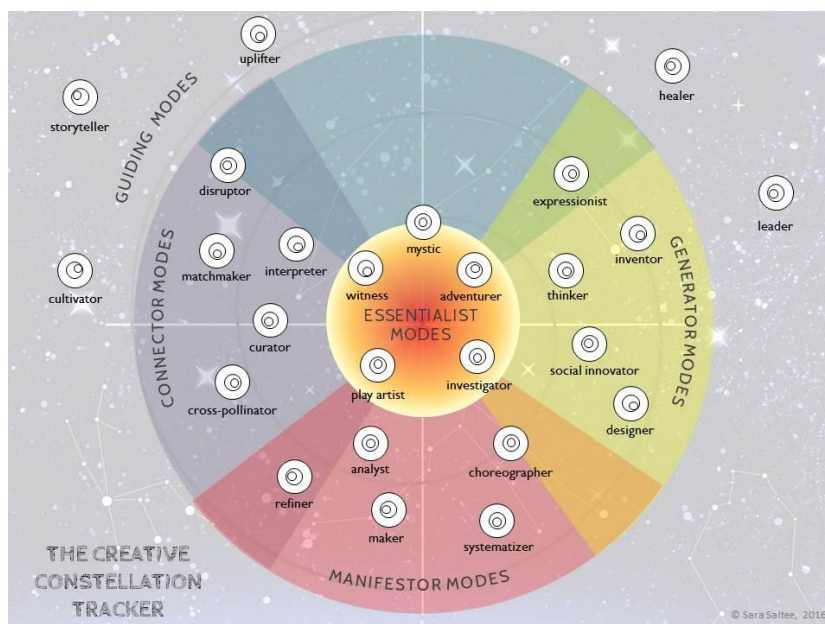


- There are five Generator modes, which specialize in the generation phase of creating, a time when all possibilities are open and new ideas are born.

- The five Manifestor modes all function to support the realization of new ideas into form.
- The Connector modes specialize in the phase of creating that involves releasing new things into the bloodstream of the culture, and evaluating them.
- The Essentialist modes specialize in one or more of the core practices of creating that keep the whole Galaxy spinning, and
- the Guidance modes are oriented to supporting the health, growth, and expansion of other creators as we move around the cycle of creating.

Put it all together and what have you got?

Here's what it looks like when you map your creative constellation onto the spiral galaxy of creating using the "Constellation Tracker" tool:



When you map your stars onto the galaxy, you can immediately see whether your creative gifts are evenly distributed across the different sectors of creating, or whether you are more of a specialist in just one or two areas, happiest when working with collaborators who fill in other key gifts and talents.

If you squint, you might also start to visualize your constellation as a kind of musical chord – a combination of notes that is not random, but has both an intrinsic harmony and an important element to add to the larger symphony of creation.

I am now going to demonstrate great restraint

Anyone who has taken a workshop with me knows that once I get talking about the spiral of creating, you might as well get your comfy pants on and settle in because we're going to be here for a while. I can't help it! I love the way the Spiral Galaxy model

- integrates key wisdom about creativity and makes it visible,
- illuminates the core practices which drive and sustain creating,
- reveals four universal crisis points that all creators must pass through,
- describes the deep importance of the Void space,
- offers a clear picture of how we can sustain our momentum in the direction of what we love and avoid the dreaded "backward-spiral-of-un-creating" that we can so easily flip into when fear takes over...

But I'm going to sit on my hands now, and save all that for another time.

For now, I hope you are eager to find YOUR creative constellation and discover how it can lead you to new insights about the kind of projects you will find most satisfying, and the kind of life-design that will best support the kind of creator you are.

Here are some ways you can get started...

3. NEXT STEPS FOR YOU

If you are excited about the idea of being able to claim your Creative Constellation and use it as a tool for designing a big-enough life, I have some suggestions for things you might do next.

1. **Get yourself a Creative Constellation Card Deck**

Deck. A great jumping off place is the Creative



Constellation Card Deck, a 56 card set that functions as a “workshop in a box” with cards for each of the creating modes so you can find out which ‘stars’ are in your own creative constellation, five different activities to walk you

through the discovery process, and 20 deep dive coaching questions to guide inquiry into your creative self. You can order the deck at

www.sarasaltee.com/constellationshop/cards.

2. For more background and worksheets galore, you will also want **Book One: Discover Your Creative Constellation**, the e-book companion to the card deck. This workbook walks you step by step through the process of discovering your creative constellation and making meaning of it. In addition to the exercises you can print and write on, Book One also comes with a set of **Digital Worksheets** you can use on your computer to

manipulate your constellation. You'll also find graphic examples of real people's constellations with descriptions of the incredible insights that have arisen from their interactions with the Creative Constellation Framework. You can order Book One at:

www.sarasaltee.com/constellationshop/bookonebeta

3. **Watch for upcoming webinars and workshops.**

The interactive social setting of my interactive online classes really brings the Creative Constellation material to life. You get to ask your questions, hear how others are using the insights they gain, and tune into more of the nuances of the model as I riff and embellish in real-time. Find out about upcoming classes at

www.sarasaltee.com/classes.

4. **Work with me one-on one.** If you want some more intimate, personalized counsel to help you make meaning of your creative constellation and support your discernment around where it is steering you next, I offer private sessions via zoom or phone. Learn more about working with Sara at www.sarasaltee.com/work-with-sara

5. **Mentorship for coaches.** If you are a coach or consultant who wants to learn to use the Creative Constellation tools in your practice and connect with other practitioners, please be in touch! I'm currently designing trainings and supports specifically for coaches and would love to know

about your interests and needs. Read more about supports for practitioners at

www.sarasaltee.com/forcoaches

The best way to stay in the loop on all things Creative Constellation is to stay tuned to the **Saltee Goodness Newsletter**. That's where you'll find announcements about new tools and resources, upcoming classes, and all the rest. I also want to invite you to join the incredible community of people who are engaging with this work and helping to evolve it as it gets refined through use.

At every stage, as you test out the Creative Constellation tools and resources, please share your thoughts and ideas with me. I want this work to be as useful and easy to work with as possible, and I need your insights to help me get there!

4. WHO IS SARA SALTEE?

A multi-modal creator

You may have guessed by now that I'm a multi-modal creator myself (surprise!). Now that I have the Creative Constellation lens to look through, I can look back and see that much of my



adult life has been spent in a series of experiments to figure out how to put the stars in my own constellation together in a way that feels authentic and "enough."

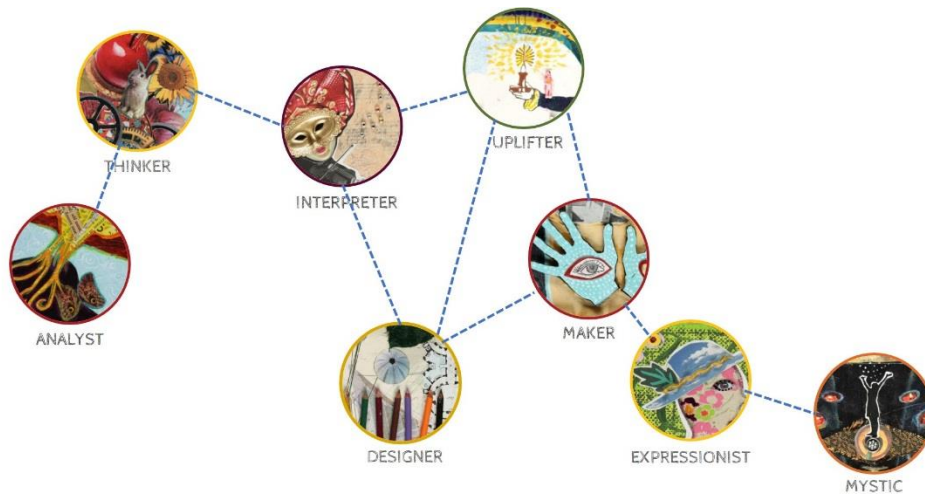
Like many multi-modal creators, I've spent loads of time feeling completely confused by the paradoxes and complexities of my own creative drives; I've wrestled with the sense that I should "pick a lane" and commit to one mode above all others; I've tested out the difference between my major and minor modes (without having that language for it); and as I've matured, I'm delighted to say that I've gotten better and better at discerning the difference between what I CAN do, and what I actually WANT to do.

My explorations have brought me into work as a college instructor, academic advisor to adult undergraduates, qualitative data analyst, presentation designer, freelance writer, writing instructor, organization development consultant, curriculum designer, facilitator, creativity coach, and assemblage artist. Since 2009, I've had the honor of developing and delivering online leadership and

learning programs for Riane Eisler, the internationally-renowned author and feminist macro-historian best known for her books *The Chalice and the Blade*, *The Power of Partnership* and *The Real Wealth of Nations*.

My current constellation

In this chapter of my life, the constellation I'm guided by looks something like this:



My greatest places of creative satisfaction + contribution are in classrooms guiding engagement with content that has the potential to inspire both personal and cultural transformation; in one-on-one settings where I can engage deeply with a client's questions and partner with them to seek clarity, courage and direction; in behind-the-scenes hours spent designing learning experiences and learning tools that help people engage with complex concepts in a simple way; in open-ended reading and thinking time in my favorite chair drinking Awake tea; and in my art studio, where I can tune into sources of deeper wisdom and intuitive knowing.

More simply put, the places where my creating modes are most happily in harmony are in my work as a creativity coach, learning designer, teacher, and artist.

Today, clients and students work with me to claim their creative identity, orchestrate a life that honors and supports the creator they are, and practice navigating the emotional and spiritual challenges of the creating process, so that they can fully express their power as creators and make the contributions they are here to make to the healing and evolution of our world. I also train other coaches and consultants to use the Creative Constellation tools with their clients.

And, I make assemblages – little worlds in boxes - that allow me to explore layers of meaning within themes of identity, direction, nurturance, and freedom in a more poetic register. Fittingly, the challenge of assemblage-making is to find a way to bring disparate elements together into a harmonious whole... I guess that's kind of my jam.

The beliefs that animate my work

I believe that the quality of our relationship to our creative selves and our creative process has a decisive impact on the quality of our lives. When we don't understand or value our own complex creative drives, and when we don't have strategies for moving through the built-in crises of the creating process, we will never feel like our lives are our own, or that they are worth living.

But as we come to honor our ever-evolving creative spirits, as we learn to follow where they lead without getting derailed by our natural fears and doubts, as we

engage the paradoxes and complexities of our natures and desires in a spirit of curiosity and playfulness, as we start to intentionally organize our lives so that our creative selves have the supports and challenges we need, we discover that we have an inner guidance system that unfailingly leads us to experiences of meaningful contribution and soul-level satisfaction.

And, finally, I believe that in these particularly difficult times, our world is calling us, all of us, to rise up out of our inner battles and confusion and join one another in creating the better world we know is possible. In *Why the World Doesn't End*, Michael Meade says

“The old knowers say...that each soul is threaded with inner qualities intended to be woven into the world and added to the garment of creation. They say that the creative energies of each soul become more important when the dark times come round again.”

I believe that our willingness to take responsibility for our creative gifts and bring them to bear on the problems of our world will determine whether we are someday able to look back at these dark times as the chaos that preceded a major leap in our evolution, or whether we allow the dark patterns to move us further backward and downward.

Of course, none of us has to do it all. We need Generators, we need Manifestors, we need Connectors and Guides and Essentialists and we need human beings prepared to bring forward every possible combination of these gifts. The truth is that whatever problems perk you up are problems worth solving, and all of who you really

are is exactly what is needed to move this world not just around, and certainly not backward, but *forward* into a future you can be proud to have co-created.