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Innovation, Creativity, and Freeing the Duck from the Bottle

Strategies for Unleashing Your Creativity and
Supporting Innovation in the Workplace

Salt Pond Bay, St. John
U.S. Virgin Islands

We are continually faced with a series of
great opportunities brilliantly disguised as
insoluble problems.

— John W. Gardner

American political thinker,
Founder of Common Cause
b. 1912, d. 2002

Creativity Is . . .



(cognitive and emotional)

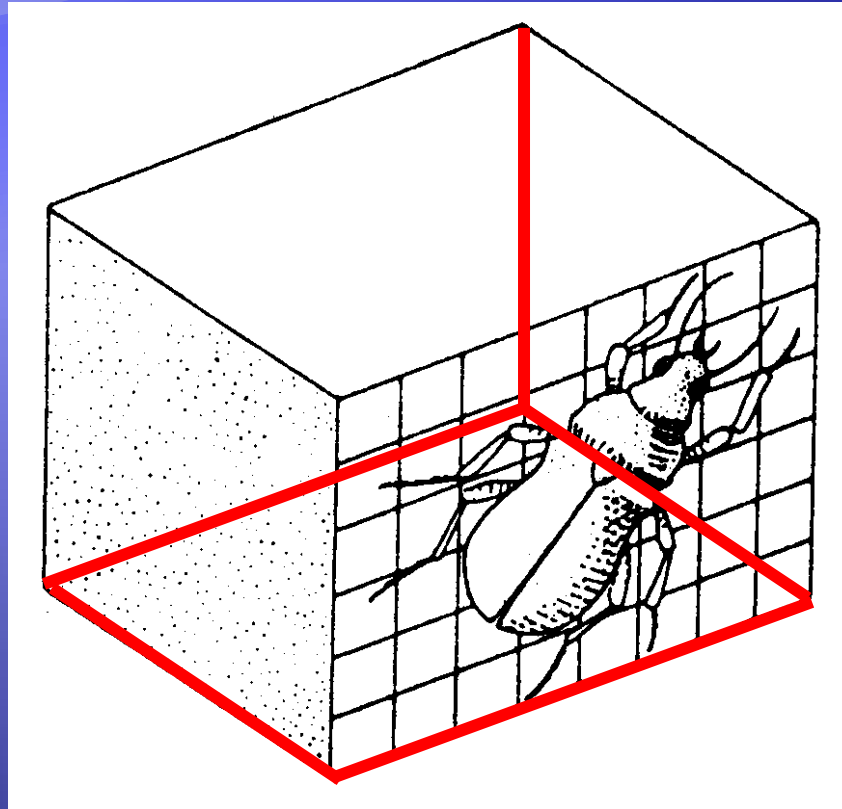
Creativity is a mental process involving the discovery of new ideas or concepts, or new associations of the existing ideas or concepts, fueled by the process of either conscious or unconscious insight.



To invent, you need a good
imagination and a pile of junk.

— Thomas Edison

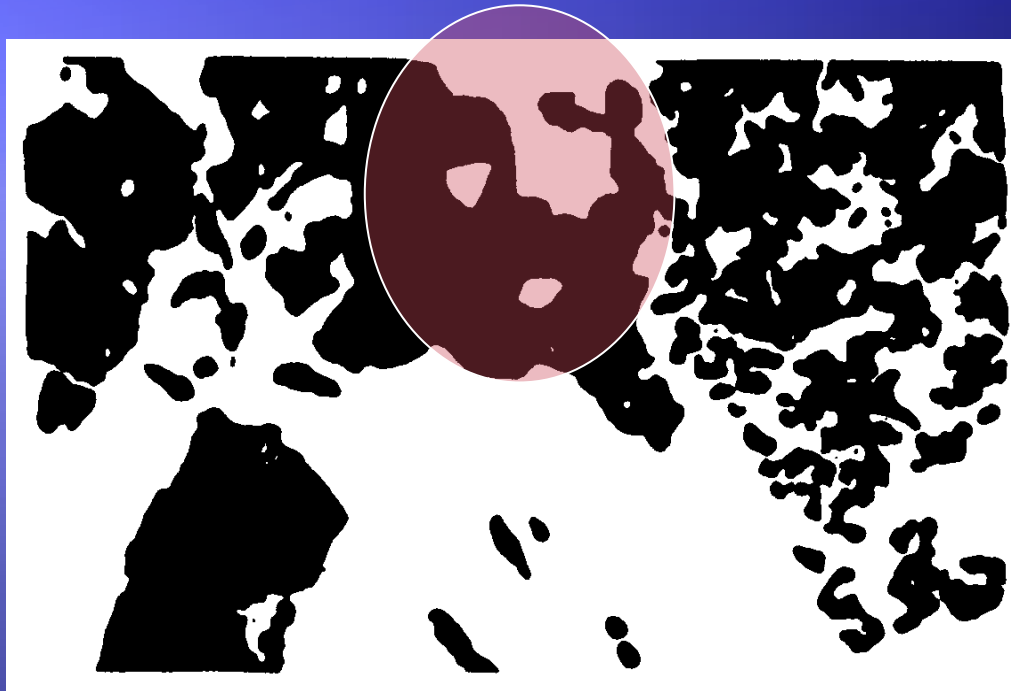
Inside or Outside?



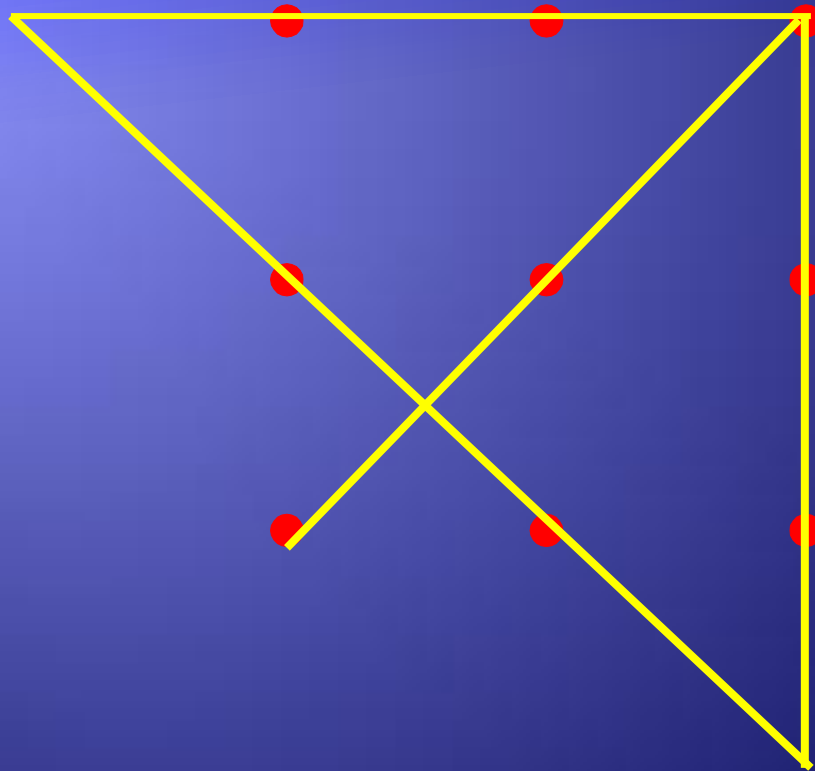
Elegant or Seasoned?



In the Shadows



Connecting the Dots . . .

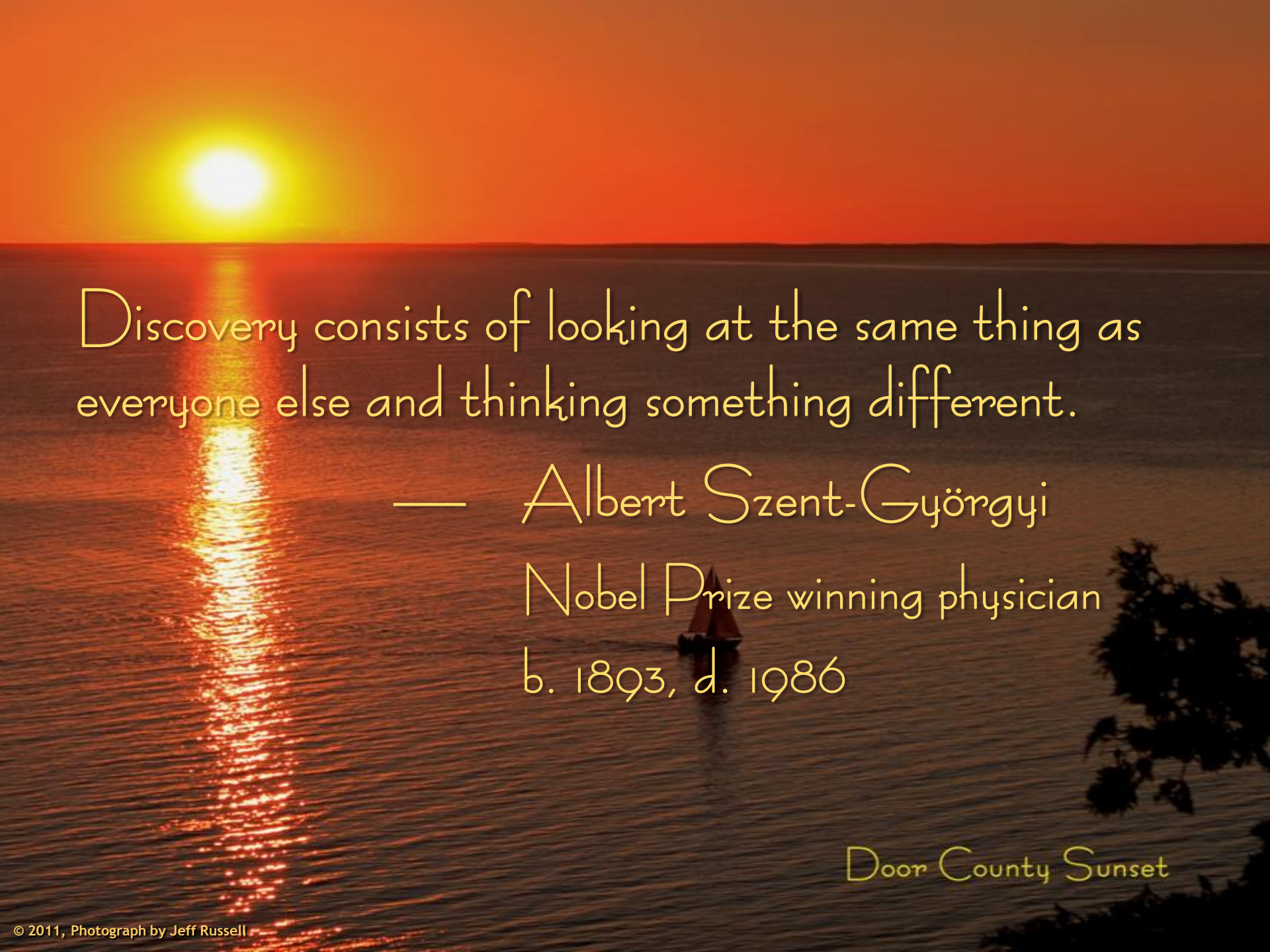


An Active Woman . . .

A woman has married twenty men in a small Wisconsin town. All of the men are still alive and none of them are divorced. The woman has broken no laws. Who is this woman?

The Man in Black . . .

A man is wearing black. Black shoes, socks, trousers, coat, gloves and ski mask. He is walking down a back street with all the street lamps off. A black car is coming towards him with its light off but somehow manages to stop in time. How did the driver see the man?

A photograph of a sunset over a body of water. The sun is a bright yellow circle in the upper left, casting a long, shimmering reflection down the center of the water. The sky is a gradient of orange and red. A small sailboat with a red sail is visible on the water in the lower right. The text is overlaid on the image in a yellow, serif font.

Discovery consists of looking at the same thing as everyone else and thinking something different.

— Albert Szent-Györgyi
Nobel Prize winning physician
b. 1893, d. 1986

Door County Sunset

Creativity – Not Step-by-Step

- ❑ Develop a relaxed state of mind.
- ❑ Don't focus too hard on the problem.
- ❑ Get moving!
- ❑ Change your routine.
- ❑ Expose yourself to different disciplines, perspectives, and ways of thinking about a problem.

Creativity – Not Step-by-Step

- ❑ Know and follow your passion!
- ❑ Paint your cubical **BLUE!**
- ❑ Think like a 7 year old.
- ❑ Devote your undivided attention . . .





Nothing is more dangerous than an idea when
it is the only one you have!

— Emile Chartier
French philosopher
b. 1868, d. 1951



It's so much easier to suggest solutions when you
don't know too much about the problem.

— Malcolm Forbes

American publisher

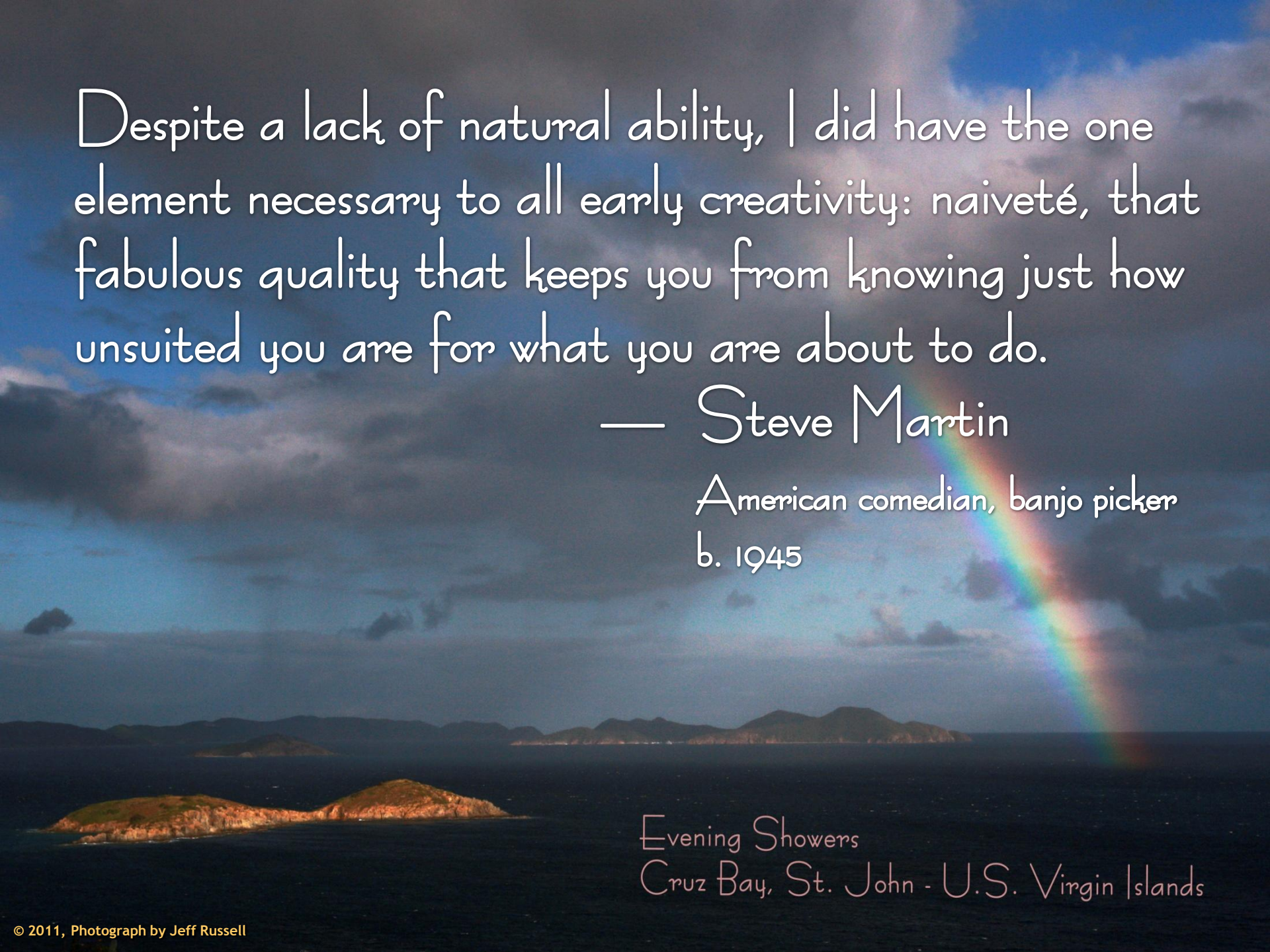
b. 1919, d. 1990

Fostering Personal Creativity

1. Set aside preconceived notions of the way the world works.
2. Observe and listen to others.
3. Constructively challenge the status quo and the “way we do things here.”
4. Listen to their “inner voice” — their intuition — that reflects their collective experience/wisdom.
5. Question conventional “wisdom” and accepted “truths.”

Fostering Personal Creativity

6. Challenge the assumptions and inferences they make as they make sense of the world.
7. Suspend judgments and avoid rushing toward solutions.
8. Bring curiosity to every situation, new and old.
9. Ask questions!
10. Be open to different viewpoints and perspectives.
11. See the world with the eyes of a child.

A photograph of a tropical coastline at dusk. The sky is a deep blue with scattered white clouds. A vibrant rainbow arches across the sky from the right side towards the center. In the foreground, the dark blue ocean stretches across the frame. In the middle ground, several small, rocky islands with green vegetation are visible. The background shows a range of low mountains or hills under the twilight sky.

Despite a lack of natural ability, I did have the one element necessary to all early creativity: naiveté, that fabulous quality that keeps you from knowing just how unsuited you are for what you are about to do.

— Steve Martin

American comedian, banjo picker
b. 1945

Evening Showers
Cruz Bay, St. John - U.S. Virgin Islands

Organizational Requirements

1. Leads to highly engaged employees.
2. Supports, values, recognizes, and celebrates new ideas — even those that challenge the status quo.
3. Places no time, budget, or performance pressure on people to create something new.
4. Actively pushes fear, anger, and anxiety into the background.
5. Encourages a high degree of collaboration, idea sharing, and dialogue within and among teams.

Organizational Requirements

6. Taps into people's depth of knowledge and past experience.
7. Provides novel stimuli that lead to flashes of insight.
8. Establishes "Safe Spaces" where speaking honestly and directly is actively encouraged.
9. Celebrates failure — as long as *learning* has occurred.
10. Embraces diversity — of thought, ideas, perspective, insight, experience, culture, and so forth.



A wise man's questions contain
half the answer.

— Ibn Gabirol

Jewish philosopher and poet
(c. 1021-58)

Sometimes I lie awake at night, and I ask
myself: "Where have I gone wrong?"

Then a voice says to me . . .

"This is going to take more than one night!"

— Charles M. Schulz
Charlie Brown in "Peanuts"

Boglands and Clouds
Connemara National Park

Thank You!!

Good luck with unleashing your creativity – and freeing your own duck from the bottle!

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