

Creative Research: Is there a Recipe?

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How do I know ?

I am not really creative ...

But here are some thoughts gathered from observing creative people ...

1. Be a sucker for elegance & beauty in everything around you

How would you design the next generation refrigerator?

How would you do an ad for a karate school?

What would have been a good title for this paper?





2. Power of analogies

Look outside research papers ... into real life.
The problem and the solution both exist in a different form.

Example: I got inspired to solve wireless problems by thinking about RedBox



3. Don't work too hard ...

Laziness, in moderation, can lead you to elegant solutions

4. Not elegant enough if its not easy to convey

Will Steve Jobs pick your project for the WWDC talk?

Will a VC get moved by your pitch?

Run it by others ... pay attention to everyone's reaction

5. Don't close your office doors to focus on research

You will not realize when the world
has changed outside ...

[See Richard Hamming's "You and Your Research"]

6. Read less papers ...

And among those that you read, distill it down to the one important idea ... the real take away

Do the same with start-up ideas, apps, movies ...

Once you are in the habit, do the same to your own papers.

7. You are not needed if you said $2+2=4$

Try to say $2+2 = 1$ in modulo 3 arithmetic ...

Constantly ask yourself, in every aspect of life ... are you being able to say something different?

To sum up ...

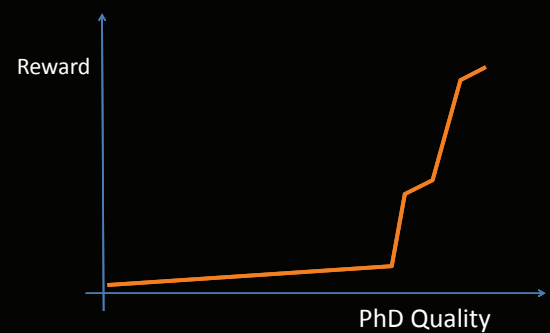
If you are inherently creative, you are truly lucky.

For the rest of us:

All we need to do is **acquire a taste for creativity** ... and then keep generating ideas until we meet that taste.

Analogy: Digital photography for the common man
(keep taking until one of the photos is brilliant)

A final thought ...



Enjoy grad school
to the fullest ...

Cheers!