

Your personal histories set up templates for you that either encouraged or discouraged your creativity or gave you such mixed messages about your creative experience that you've spent years trying to untangle the tumbleweed of beliefs that impeded your strivings. This struggle may be so ferocious that you may have long ago given up, so that when you first caught a glimpse of this booklet you dared not risk one more attempt. Or, you may feel enough hope about your Creativity that you are ready to pick up this booklet and take on that risk. Or, you may be eager to launch! Wherever you are in your experience with creativity, this booklet offers you a purposeful, clear, and effective path to follow on your road to living a creative life.

To succeed, we Start at the Beginning

We need to understand how OUR minds work. More on this in just a bit, but first, some new understanding.

What are States*?

A State of Mind, or what we also call a Self-State, is a *unique blend* of eight aspects of experience:

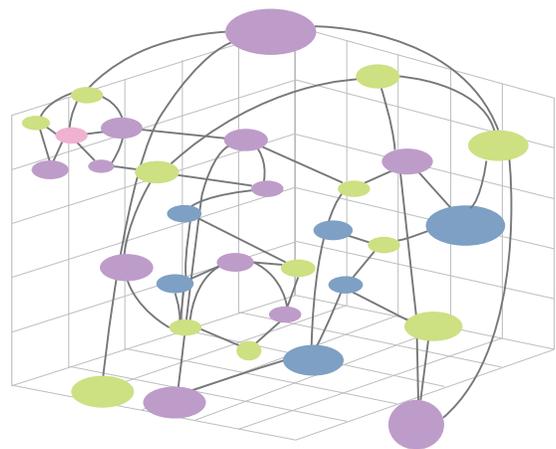
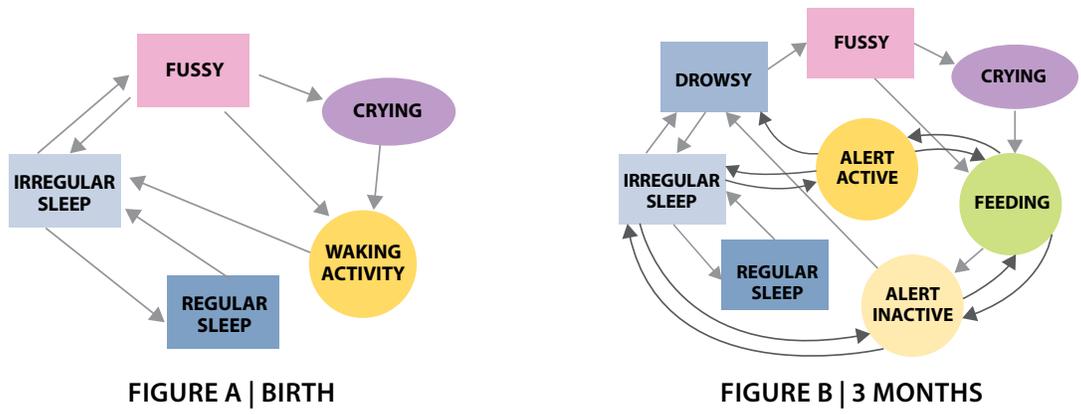
- Attachments patterns
- Memory
- Physiological Sensation
- Emotion
- Belief systems
- Perceptual Bias
- Voice and Language
- Behavior

A State is **NOT** any one of these aspects INDIVIDUALLY.

- A State is NOT ONLY how we attach to people and experience, but our attachment experiences heavily govern our States.
- A State is NOT ONLY what we remember or experience as living memory, but is organized around those early, embedded memory systems.
- A State is NOT ONLY what we feel in our bodies, but our physical sensations are important factors in our States.
- A State is NOT ONLY emotional feeling, or mood, but contains emotional feeling, or mood.
- A State is NOT ONLY what we believe, but incorporates our beliefs.
- A State is NOT ONLY the perceptions, that we bring to new experience, but is influenced deeply by perceptions carved out by our historical experiences.
- A State is NOT ONLY our personal voice and the words we use to express that voice, but our personal voice and language are altered depending upon the State that we are in.
- A State is NOT ONLY determinant of our behavior, but our behavior emerges from the blend of all these factors within any one particular State.

*Order your copy of Digital Product #2, "States of Being," now. See Creativity Tab on my website.

Instead, a State is a Condition of Being, coming from the Latin word *Status* (Putnam, 1997, p. 151), that is, an amalgam to various degrees of all these components. A State is a powerful way of being and although we are born with only five states, (Figure A, after Putnam) we have many thousands of states (Figure B, after Putnam) by the time we are 18 months old: what we call State Architecture, or Personality (Putnam, p. 152), (Figure C, after Putnam, next page).

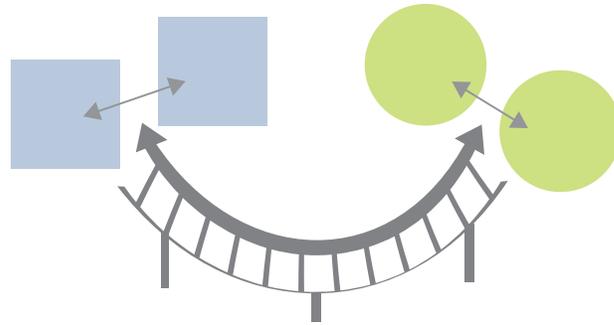


State Clusters

States do something very interesting: our mind can form them into clusters according to their 1) intensity, 2) duration, and 3) frequency.

When a particular State has a great deal of energy (intensity), in it (positive or negative), and when it lasts a noticeable amount of time (duration), and when it repeats (frequency), a neuronal pathway is laid out in the brain that causes the brain in further experience to “fire” in the same way as that original neuronal pathway, now that the neuronal pathway has been provoked by a matching trigger. As time marches on, the same neuronal reaction can be elicited by even a “whiff” of the originating experience. When other States become associated with a specific state through associated experience, or by how other states respond to that experience, they then form a cluster.

Think of a solar system (your brain): in it, some stars are singular, others form constellations. A star is a “luminous sphere of plasma held together by its own gravity” ... while a “galaxy is an interstellar medium of gas and dust and dark matter ... that is a massive, gravitationally bound system (Wikipedia, 2006). Similarly, in our brains, our States are gathered into clusters, like stars. Some States are formed into a dense cluster, other clusters have just a few states, and some States are more singular or split off, what we call dissociated.



Dissociation means that a single state (or a cluster of states) has been psychologically and neuronally split off from access to other states or clusters of states. While communication between state clusters is accomplished through 'bridging', a brain capacity for association in the face of dissociation, an individual cannot purposefully access a desired state or cluster. The dissociation occurs originally because the child's experience has become overwhelming and in order to protect his or her fledgling self, s/he has to "send away" a particular part of themselves for safekeeping. Bridging makes possible the inter-and-cross-hemispheric communication needed to maximize brain function and knowledge. The more chronic trauma a child experiences, the less bridging there is in ways that help the brain communicate productively. The more a child's mind is confined to repetitive, destructive experience, the less emotional repertoire s/he has, and the more narrowly focused available brain energy becomes, making learning, problem-solving, and creativity difficult, if not impossible. The lack of a bridge makes moving from one cluster of states to another a challenging journey. The person may feel as though they have suddenly shown up in Albany, New York and don't know how to get back to Los Angeles. While this is always true of traumatic states, it can be true of Creative ones too, because our experience of living in those Creative States has either not been supported or has been actually discouraged or prohibited.

Let's look at three examples of state development that have to do with creativity.

- In the first, a child is abused, neglected, or deprived. Because of the pressure from the circumstances of the environment, his or her imagination is forced to be used to anticipate what s/he did wrong, to figure out how to make it better by being whatever kind of child is required, and to take care of the parent so that the child's basic needs might be met, not in the service of creative play. Overtime, this child loses the joyous capacity for imagining, through having to use imagination and problem solving to avert yet more harm, by having to develop anticipatory anxiety, and by moving toward catastrophic thinking as a safe guard for finding safety.
- In the second example, a child uses his imagination to "make-up" tall tales, but the parent chastises the child for lying. As time goes by and the child continues to insist on using his imagination for creating, or now defending himself, the child is punished instead, with negative adult motives being attributed to the child. Overtime, a striving state gets linked or clustered to a denying state, and to a giving up state.
- In the third example, a child uses her imagination to "make-up" tall tales, but in this situation, the parent engages in the tale as a form of play, building on it, and helping the child expand the story. They talk about fairy tales, and make-believe, and bring an appreciation for storytelling and imaginative, problem-solving thinking. Overtime, a striving state becomes linked to a state of excitement, fulfillment, and pleasure. In the future, with continued encouragement and partnering, the child becomes an adult capable of finding great satisfaction in the imaginative use of her mind.

State Transitions

Moving or “switching” (Putnam, 1997, p. 156) from State to State or Cluster to Cluster is a State Transition, (**Figure D**, after Putnam) and this activity usually unfolds according to what has been pre-programmed neuronally in our brains. The ability to transition states smoothly is dependent on the bridging that has been encouraged to develop in the brain. Without such bridging, creativity may become severely compromised. Or, it may be that moving into a creative state is quite a challenge, with the individual “waiting for inspiration” to show up, something that may occur capriciously, like when in the shower, or driving on the freeway, or wake up, too tired, at three in the morning, or only on the rare occasion.

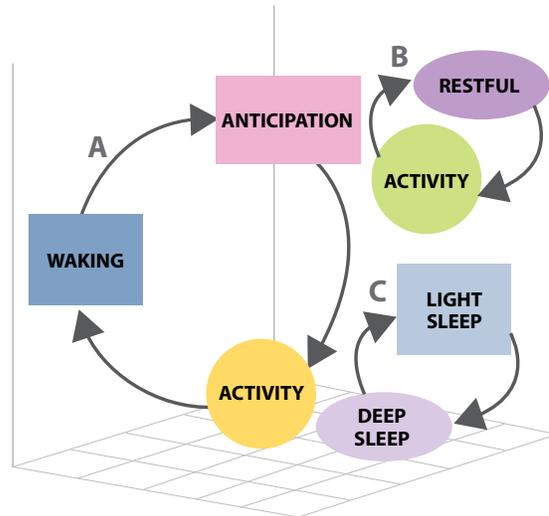
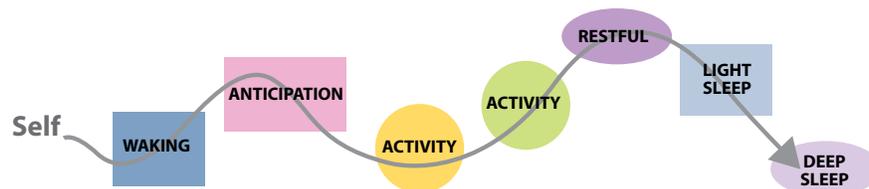


FIGURE D | SWITCHING

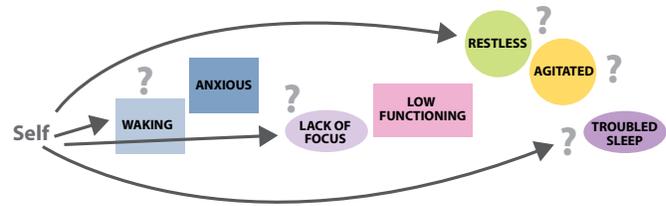
I have discovered a gifted opportunity, which I am going to teach you, as it applies to the Creative Process, especially when you can’t get started, or get stuck, or yearn to launch. We can and need to learn to transition into a creative state purposefully, so that when we have the time and space potential available to us, we can access our creativity and make the fullest use of it. I will show you the way.

Folding Laundry, Writing A Book

As we go through our day, we may feel “in sync” or we may feel “out of sorts.” Unless there are intense experiences going on in our lives, most of us travel by mood and our fundamental temperament: a chronic melancholy or historic sadness, the proverbial glass half empty, or sunny side up, the glass half full. The true power in our lives comes from how we travel through a flow of States of Being, or Self-States, and whether or not we are able to maintain a sense of self-integrity as we travel through these varieties of states. The more stable our sense of self remains in the face of life experience and changing states, the “healthier” we are thought to be psychologically.



The less stable our sense of self is in the face of life experience and changing states, the more compromised we are thought to be.



As we look at the Creative Process, we are going to look close up at how we travel through our Self-States, and what we can do, on purpose, to enhance our Creative nature and process. Let's take a peek at an ordinary day, State-wise:

- We wake up! in a state. Coming out of the state of sleep, because our defenses have been at rest as well, we are vulnerable. We may wake up rested, full of eager anticipation for the day ahead, or we may feeling more tired than when we went to sleep, and now filled with dread.
- We begin to move around, and automatically, our state shifts — we are in transition.
- Breakfast, or not. We organize our kids, get dressed, head toward work, at home or out. Another automatic state shift, depending on what's awaiting us or required of us.
- Morning activities, followed by lunch, then afternoon activities, each beckoning both minor or major state shifts.
- End of the workday and home, or an evening out. More shifts. We may feel on a familiar treadmill, or shocked by the many changes we go through during this day.
- Time for sleep, and a significant shift. Defenses peel away as we drift, or fall, into sleep, deep restorative sleep, or interrupted, troubled sleep. Only to begin again.

Now, let's explore that opportunity we fear or embrace: creative time in an ordinary day. We have time set aside, precious time. We may have a dedicated space: a studio, garage, a corner of the kitchen table, a home office. Our desk, easel, worktable, or supplies are set up and beckoning. Ahhh! Delicious.

The inner dialogue begins:

But wait! I'm thirsty, need something cold to drink.

Get the drink. Pull up my chair or stool.

Gosh, this desk is messy, too many piles. I'll work better if I have a clean, uncluttered desk.

Where is that draft I finished yesterday?

Or, my paint is dried out.

Or some of my tools haven't been put back where they belong. Or worse, they aren't in the right place at all — got to re-arrange the pegboard. My skin feels itchy. Funny, I can hardly sit in my chair. You know, I bet if I cleaned out the linen closet or the pantry I would feel better.

An hour goes by.

I'm wasting time, just like I always do. Cleaning out my closet, I realize the bedroom needs painting.

Or, in that stack of papers I found two monthly bills I hadn't paid, better do that now.

I'm getting tired. Strange, I'm beginning to feel a bit lost. The kids want lunch. Or the game is on. Be right back.

Another hour, feel kinda sleepy after lunch – I'll get a cup of coffee. That'll do the trick. Two o'clock already? Who am I kidding? Who do I think I am? No one leaves me in peace. I don't leave me in peace. My mother was right. (It's always the mother's fault, right?)

We plummet.

I don't have any talent. What's this creative thing, anyway? That's for people like Picasso, or Einstein. Oh, yeah, they're both dead. Well, Stephen King then. Now, there's a guy I bet who bounds out of bed every morning and gets to work, doesn't let anything get in his way. But he's got talent. It's easy for him.

Staring into space suddenly feels like an excellent idea. I'll become inspired.

Twenty minutes later, I'm depressed enough to walk off a cliff.

These state shifts are called "from bad to worse." We know them well. They have history; they are so familiar. Even weirder, they are sort of comfortable. Not that we want them, but we know the territory. And now, *someone* is to blame, if not *them*, us, and the inner tirade heats up, or we give up.