Chapter 018, Leadership of Creativity: Entity-Based, Relational, and Complexity Perspectives

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NOTE: This is a single chapter excerpted from the book *Handbook of Organizational Creativity*, made available for individual purchase. Additional chapters, as well as the entire book, may be purchased separately.

A large body of research examines creativity as an act performed by individual persons; hence, they are called entity-based approaches. These approaches focus on the attributes of individuals acting independently or while engaged in-group activities, and on the conditions that foster creativity. The conditions that foster individual creativity include contexts (such as autonomy or heterogeneity) and appropriate leadership behaviors. Creative people possess a high degree of achievement motivation, and they have an adaptive style of relating to problems in their environment. Collective creativity emerges from an environment in which ideas can flow and interact. Creativity is fostered by interaction, interdependency, heterogeneity, pressure, task-related conflict, and adaptive rules. Leaders who champion creative ideas, foster sense making in self and others, and who provide psychologically safe environments enable it. Complexity dynamics allow ideas to converge and diverge; to conflict and elaborate; to spontaneously emerge when people try to reconcile differences, when they discover opportunities to merge various ideas into a uniquely different idea, or when ideas complement the usefulness of one another. Complexity isn't just a one-on-one environment, it is a networked environment in which different ideas influence and re-influence each other, in which ideas affect one another at a distance through indirect pathways of relationships, and in which higher-order ideas influence the development of lower level ideas.

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