

Creating From Within

By Kelli Thomaides

Creativity has been defined as “productive originality”. In our Tao practice, creativity is a powerful tool that helps us create our lives from the inside out. When you practice Tao, you become an artist. The opportunities arise to paint your environment, your attitude and your success with your own brush strokes. We can do this because we have a lot of energy behind us. However, it is our job to dream of different ways we can use that energy to enhance our spiritual growth. Everyone gets stuck in patterns. What we can do is imagine what it would look like to journey outside of these patterns. Scary? Maybe, at first. Worthwhile? Definitely. I certainly had a lot more fun when, after I received Tao and consciously tried to break patterns, I started rollerblading to work instead of taking the bus. I got a lot of quizzical looks, but my mornings were no longer unbearable. I looked forward to getting fresh air and sunshine. I was no longer a slave to my mundane routine. I had taken hold of the reins and began steering my life in a direction that I wanted it to go. I wanted my life to be exciting, fresh, and stimulating, so I began to try to make changes that would bring that positive energy my way.



Creativity extends beyond our physical habits and into the idea realm. We often get stuck in certain perceptions that we have and forget that we can challenge these perceptions. For example, you may firmly believe that you are a “bad writer”. Is this really true? Maybe. Or maybe not. What would happen if you started to refer to yourself as a good writer? Would it help you to develop a more positive self-image? Would you maybe develop a smidge more of confidence, enough to enable you to sit down and write something that you have always wanted to write? Would you eventually discover that your perception was completely wrong, and be grateful that you challenged it? We can be creative in thinking about who we are. Of course, we will always fall short of what we think we “should” be. However, we can actively challenge our notions of who we are and stay open to the possibility of surprising ourselves.

When we are outside the Tao community, it is important that we keep ourselves inspired so that we can cultivate Tao on our own. During those times when we do not have a group around us for support, we can learn how to support ourselves. When we are away from a temple, we can look inside and build our own temple from our hearts. We can teach others about being vegetarian and maintaining clarity: two important aspects of the Tao practice. We can focus on virtues such as humility and openness and work toward achieving them in our daily lives. If we find ourselves becoming bitter and unappreciative, we can turn the situation around and extend ourselves to others. Who does not enjoy having a guest who cooks and cleans for them? As someone famous said, “Never do things others can do and will do, if there are things others cannot do or will not do.”

We have the power to create; we simply forget this sometimes. Falling into a dull routine is like writing with a dull pencil. The more we write with the pencil, the duller it becomes. When we indulge our creativity, we sharpen the pencil and it is like we have a fresh start. As children, we would play for hours, dreaming up other worlds and acting out new scenarios; let us become open and childlike again. Being original in how we approach our lives is indeed productive. We can brainstorm ways to break our patterns and let ourselves dream of the future we want to have. Through this, we find the inspiration to continue the journey.
