

Lesson 28 Worksheet: Learning from Your Creative Heroes

This worksheet will help you use the example of your creative heroes to unlock your own creative potential.

1. Who are your creative heroes?

Make a list of your creative heroes – past and present, in your own creative discipline and in other fields.

What do you admire about them?

What have you learned from their example so far?

If you could meet them for coffee, what would you ask them?

What do you think they would say in reply?

2. Become an expert on their work

(a)

1. Find or make a list of your hero's complete works.
2. Tick off all the ones you are familiar with
3. Work your way through the unfamiliar ones. Amazon and the internet in general should make this easy in a lot of cases. But also make an effort to see live shows, exhibitions and original works, as far as you can.

(b)

1. Research a list of the main critics who have written about your hero's work.
2. Again, work your way through the list. You don't have to read every single word by every single critic, but make it your business to at least get to know their main opinions and arguments, even if you disagree with them (especially if you disagree with them).

3. Look for clues about their creative process

Read interviews, biographies etc. and make notes, bookmarks or clippings every time you come across a clue about their creative process.

Things to look out for include:

- Their ambitions
- Their motivations
- Their attitudes
- Their thinking patterns
- Their working environment
- Their working habits
- Their communication style

4. Imitate your hero

1. Create a pastiche of your hero's work, just for fun. Don't hold back – tell yourself no one will ever see this, so you can shamelessly copy their style and subject matter.

2. Once you've finished, ask yourself the following questions:
 - What do you like about it?

 - Which parts are obviously borrowed?

 - Which parts are your own original twist?

 - Is there anything from this that you can use in other contexts?

5. Model their creative strategies

Firstly, read my article *The Secret of Walt Disney's Creativity*, to get an idea of how a creative strategy works: <http://lateralaction.com/articles/walt-disney/>

Next, go back over the snippets you collected in section 3, and notice what they tell you about your hero's:

- Ambitions
- Motivations
- Attitudes
- Thinking patterns
- Working environment
- Working habits
- Communication style

Next, ask yourself which of these elements you can start to apply to your own creative process.

If you really want to learn about strategies, read Robert Dilts' books *Strategies of Genius, Volumes 1-3*.

6. Avoid the dark side of hero worship

(a) Have you ever caught yourself using hero worship as a way of avoiding working on your own creative challenges?

If so...

How did it feel?

How did you get yourself out of the rut?

(b) If you really get stuck in 'hero-worship mode', ask yourself:

What did my hero actually DO that led to success?

Then go and do some of that.