



Brain Storm: Unleashing Your Creative Self

Don Hahn

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Whether you're writing a novel, painting with watercolors, composing a symphony, or baking peanut butter cookies, creativity plays a crucial role in achieving satisfaction and excellence. But, for many of us, accessing our creative core is difficult, if not impossible. Now, acclaimed film producer Don Hahn offers his own unorthodox, yet highly effective methods for reawakening the creative spirit. Blending personal and often hilarious anecdotes with prescriptive advice for rediscovering your creative self, Hahn explores the emotions that accompany creativity and discusses the important of constructing a creative environment. Hahn describes the creative process in stages and lists the forces that drive creativity: balance, chaos, persistence, truth--plus chocolate and coffee. Best of all, he demonstrates how his theories can be put into practice, using his own highly successful career as an example. Filled with humor and empathy, along with some good old-fashioned practical advice, *Brain Storm* takes readers on an exciting journey to creative greatness.

Brain Storm: Unleashing Your Creative Self Details

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Author : Don Hahn

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Bri says

The book from cover to back was phenomenally written. Each chapter described a moral in a simplistic way about the creative self. From each moral, led to a personal experience which was quite moving and inspirational. The beauty behind the personal experiences is that he not only stated his successes but his constant struggles. In this book it describes that everyone has a creative self, but many people listen to their logical (lizard brain) rather than taking that risk. The reason that people are afraid to take that risk is that people look for acceptance and permission rather than going out and doing what they love. This is the heartbreaking truth, but the only way to truly overcome this obstacle is by collaborating. The title itself speaks volumes about brainstorming not just by oneself, but with multiple people to reach a common goal. To reach that common goal a safe environment and lack of criticism needs to be established. Although criticism is a necessity at times for feedback, people need to trust the individuals around them in order for an idea to spring up. Even though it may be a struggle with working in a large group of people with different perspectives, it can be beneficial to making an idea come to life. By letting different individuals express their creativity, it opens up the doors for them to contribute to the project with open arms. It may be hard to get people to express their creative self, but creativity takes courage. Some abstract ideas may seem crazy to the world, but the individual must have the courage to go out there and pursue that idea no matter what the outcome.

Jeffrey Falk says

I rarely stop reading a book somewhere in the middle, but this is beyond disappointing (and spending the time writing--under any circumstances-- would be much more likely to achieve the subtitle's stated purpose). This rambling, intermittently (mildly) interesting book is more psuedo-philosophy primer, personal memoir, and trivia collection than anything else. The occasional fascinating factoid and specious idea (e.g., shortening the length of your "hour" to increase the amount in the day) are not worth the time. I'd say that I want my time and money back, but I suppose the author bought it from me with his work on "Beauty and the Beast" and "The Lion King".

Baron Huang says

I give this book five stars and I do recommend it to my peers. This is because i very much do enjoy this book, and love to see how Hahn expresses his ideas and opinions. I like how he most of the time started off with the natural origins of that materials, and went future in time, and to discuss that matter. I like how he included quotes from important people in order to start of his writings, and used very good "hooks". This book tells Hahn's life and his opinions and ideas towards the human mind and philosophies. This book was well written and is very creative.

Carrie says

I feel I can't judge this one too harshly because there were points I thought funny, poignant, or tear-worthy (the last was surprising), and because the author has an affinity for dark chocolate (that he mentions frequently, and that I love). That being said, there is no formula for creativity, or even for feeling more creative (a point Hahn makes a few times over) and this book felt really...anecdotal. I found some of the Imagineering books on creativity a bit more inspiring than this; but it *did* make me laugh.

Shawn Deal says

A great book at looking at creativity as a whole. This wonderful book examines the creativity in each person, no matter what they are creative in, (ie. a painter, musician, writer) and discusses how to bring out that creativity and to maximize it. Told with experience and a fair amount of wit and humor, this book is easily readable and everyone is bound to get something out of it.

Hugely recommended.

Nikki says

I've seen this book often when I visit Disneyland so I decided to check it out because it must have some substance if Disney is pushing it. Overall not that enlightening. It had a few insightful tips and guidance but a lot of filler. Read if you think you need a push but really there are more inspiring books out there.

Erin says

I picked up this book in downtown Disney a few months ago. It sat on my bed waiting to be read, taunting me daily as the thoughts and dreams in my head do. A couple days ago I finally picked up the book and read.

The encouragement and advice in this book was just the boost I needed. Personally my biggest problem is procrastination, which leads to the stresses of needing to do something till I just about burst! In the book there are tips for dealing with this along with things like fear, criticism, and feeling like a copy-cat.

I wouldn't say this is just a book for those who wish to pursue arts. As Don says, creativity in general can lead to a happier more balanced life. Whether you are a budding musician, painter, photographer, etc, or a 9 to 5 worker, this book is worth the read.

Tyler says

This book was a very fluffy (philosophy heavy) approach to creativity. It's easy to see that Mr. Hahn is a very right brained person and that is how he approaches the creative process. I enjoyed the lighthearted humor of this book and I found a few nuggets of useful advice, but generally I found this book saying a lot more about one person's creative views than offering advice in helping me improve my personal creativity.

4/10

Louis Prosperi says

An engaging and thought-provoking look into our creative selves. I was expecting more of a "how to", but I still enjoyed this, though it did take me a few chapters to really get into it. Once I got there, however, I was hooked, and really looked forward to reading a new chapter or section each day. As I got to the end, I wanted to go back and re-read the entire thing again (and will likely do just that at some point).

Don Hahn is the producer of The Lion King and Beauty and the Beast, and has written other books about animation (The Alchemy of Animation is a great book for those interested), and offers lots of insights into the creative process, and our creative faculties.

One thing I would have liked is a bibliography. It's clear the author did a lot of research in writing this, and a list of his sources would be nice as a pointer to other sources. I noticed this mostly because I recognized some of the anecdotes and examples he used, including a few that I think came from the writings and speeches of Sir Ken Robinson (an expert on creativity). The lack of bibliography, however, is a minor point to be sure, and the book stands on its own quite well.

I recommend this to anyone interested in the creative process, or who considers themselves to be "creative" (hint: that means *everyone*).

Noha says

This is a book by Don Hahn, the man who produced Lion King and Beauty&the Beast. This is a book about creativity and the creative process. When you combine those two sentences, your expectations can't help but skyrocket.

When I picked this book up, I was expecting to read something interesting and life changing. I didn't. I read what I already knew. But I guess that that is precisely his point. Creativity cannot be expected to come in sudden bursts, or 'aha' moments. It is the result of years of hard work, information gathering, learning, practice, cooperation, and failures combined with a lot of emotional and personal insight, an openness to constructive criticism, and a willingness to keep on trying. The encouraging part is that as he relates anecdotes (and he does mention a lot) from the making of some of the Disney favorites we all love, you realize that they did not start out great; that it was the process that made them what they are.

What I did not like about this book is the way it was constructed. It was a series of anecdotes from his personal journey and his experience with creativity, that all revolved around the same idea I mentioned

earlier. And so halfway through, it felt a bit repetitive. Other books that tackle the ideas of creativity and success, for example the *Outliers* (which Hahn does quote) were a more useful read I think and served as a source of knowledge rather than the life experience of the author. It would really depend on your reading preferences and what you were looking for in a book I guess.

Gina says

Real Rating: 3.8

I really enjoyed this book! There were so many beautiful, useful gems of wisdom and inspiration strewn throughout these pages. I'm definitely planning on re-reading and meditating on a lot of the advice that he gave as well as inserting it into my daily practice as an artist.

This book loses stars for the random (and very minor) sexist things Hahn says - I mean, I understand that he's going for a congenial Heyyy I'm a guy! kinda tone, but I found myself rolling my eyes whenever I ran across something like that. Nothing bad but he does say things like "Men are obsessed with appliances in a way women aren't" and "A man's first car is incredibly important", like, why are you even making the comment, dude, just find a better analogy! He also undermines some of his most poignant thoughts with a silly, offhand comment or joke. It's the literary equivalent of somebody saying something great and then making a huge farting noise right after.

All in all, if you can ignore the stupid little comments and odd, out of place sexism, this book will change your life.

Andy Fletcher says

I was hoping for so much more out of this book. It is heavy on anecdotes and cute stories. I guess I was looking for way more inspiration, but found essentially a lot of what I already knew, based on the writer's personal life.

In many ways, this book would have been a better powerpoint discussion. I think the material and his coverage would have been better in person, but didn't quite make the jump to a book

That being said, I think this would be a great book for a younger reader (upper high school), who has not had as much life experience.

Mike says

A review from my free e-magazine:

PopFam.com - Pop Culture for Families

<http://www.popfam.com>

Brain Storm: Unleashing Your Creative Self
(Disney Editions)

by Don Hahn

Reader Appeal: Adults

Genre: Self-Help

PopFam Rating: B+

Brain Storm is a great source of inspiration for those who want to dive into the creative aspects of work, play, and life.

In this self-help/memoir, Hahn (the director of Disney's The Lion King and Beauty and the Beast), discusses the experiences which led to his creative visions. He uses both funny and sad stories beginning from his childhood and stretching into his adult life and forces the reader to apply these stories and experiences to their own lives.

In one tale, Hahn talks about how, as a child, he used a colander or tin foil with poked holes placed over a flashlight to make stars on his ceiling. In another he talks about his first apartment and deciding to move out of his parents house. In both of these stories, he shares vision and meaning, letting the reader see the early stages of creativity and helping the reader decide on the best possible place to go to maintain the right balance in life.

Hahn's stories and insight are far different than most self-help books in that he tells a story even when giving a lesson. His tales travel from the very beginning of the creative process all the way through the means to channel your inspired flow.

Hahn discusses the (mostly generic) spiritual side of creativity as well as feelings, pain, pressure and talent to name a few topics. Brain Storm is easily recommended for anyone who needs a boost in their creative self.

Let's Talk About It

If your family members are interested in this book, then encourage discussion about it afterward. You can use these questions to get started:

- What inspired you during childhood?
- How do you think the different aspects of life can affect your creativity?
- What steps can you take to begin the creative process?

--RM

Ben Cohen says

I really enjoyed this book and every thing it taught me about approaching situations and thinking different on the spot. This is the first kind of book like this I have ever read. Its not in story form which is also interesting. I would recommend this book to anyone who is interested in branching out to try a new kind of genre. I don't know if I can label this fiction, non-fiction, or realistic fiction. Overall this was a very eye opening book.

Sherry Philippus says

Maybe it's because it's "Disney", maybe because I bought it on vacation and I will always associate it with happy memories, but I found this to be an engaging, funny, and thought-provoking read on creativity. Although I have always considered myself "creative", I have been stuck in a (deep) rut for a couple of years and bought this book hoping for inspiration. I was not disappointed! Hahn provides a comprehensive look at creativity, from an exploration of what it is (and isn't) to be "creative", to explanations and descriptions of the process itself and the many ways it unfolds, to tips on how to make the most of the creativity within yourself -- something we ALL possess as human beings. I spent many hours on the road home from Disney staring out the window, considering one question or another that Hahn threw at me (fortunately, I wasn't driving).

Hahn produced "Beauty and the Beast" and "The Lion King", as other reviewers have noted, and as a Disney fan, I enjoyed the occasional anecdotes he includes about the back-stories in making films. We-the-audience forget, or don't ever consider, that the folks that make movies are just regular people that happen to work in artistic fields. Hahn's writing is engaging and funny; I enjoyed his dry wit as well as a couple of very moving recollections that I re-read several times.

I'm not going to run out and start making movies, but this book gave me some lasting points to think about and remember when my ideas aren't flowing, and was an entertaining read to boot.
