



# Let the Elephants Run: Unlock Your Creativity and Change Everything

*David Usher*

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At David Usher's company, CloudID Creativity Labs, there is a sign on the wall that reads: "Dream big, let the elephants run!" The words are a reminder for us to hold a place in our minds for creativity, where big ideas can form and our imagination can run free. Based on his wildly popular speaking engagements, *Let the Elephants Run* shows us how to reignite creativity whether in the head office, the home office or the artist's studio.

Usher believes creativity is in our DNA; it's in everyone, not just the creative class. We all start our lives as creative beings but for many that spark becomes lost over time. How do we jump-start our creative process as adults? What does it mean to be a creative person? How do we follow through with our ideas and turn them into tangible outcomes?

Usher empowers readers to achieve more "aha" moments through two cornerstone principles of creativity: freedom and structure. Using a mix of personal anecdotes and professional examples from the worlds of industry, technology, science, music and art, he shows us that creativity is not magic; it is a learnable skill that any person or business can master. The dynamic full-colour design includes photographs, artwork and illustrations, as well as action pages to help readers start cultivating the habit of documenting their ideas for future execution.

*Let the Elephants Run* is an essential guidebook to reconnecting with our imaginations and nurturing our creativity in accessible and productive ways.

## Let the Elephants Run: Unlock Your Creativity and Change Everything Details

Date : Published March 7th 2015 by House of Anansi Press (first published August 1st 2014)

ISBN : 9781770898684

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Format : Hardcover 256 pages

Genre : Nonfiction, Self Help, Business, Personal Development, Art

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## From Reader Review Let the Elephants Run: Unlock Your Creativity and Change Everything for online ebook

### Samantha Stock says

Ok so this book is beautiful. I'm putting some quotes here so that I have them for when the paper I wrote them on gets lost..

"CREATIVITY IS 95 PERCENT WORK AND DISCIPLINE AND 5 PERCENT INSPIRATION."  
one of the truest statements I've ever read.

"experience breeds confidence."

"you are the costco of creativity."

"artist or entrepreneur, in my mind we are all hustlers and thieves. we are an amalgamation of the ideas that surround us."

"times have changed. these days, ideas are like oxygen - they are everywhere."

"when you learn the language of creativity it alters the lens through which you see the world."

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### Katrina Sark says

p.8 – There is something magical, almost indescribable, that happens in the moment of creation – the moment of bliss, surprise and wonder when all forces of the universe come into focus for just a split second. Suddenly, you can see something that no one else can see.

p.18 – Stop looking at creativity as the lottery that someone else won at birth. Start looking at creative thinking as a skill set that you can master if you invest the time to learn how.

p.24 – Action: When was the last time you used the power of your creativity to influence the course of your life?

p.28 – Creativity isn't elitist. It's not just for "special people." Creativity is a learnable skill, and something that anyone who is willing to invest the time can achieve.

But creativity itself – the ability to think of an innovative idea and then follow through with the steps of the process and deliver something new – is something we can all learn to do.

p.29 – It all begins with freedom of imagination. To think creatively, you first need to get your imagination firing again.

p.46 – It's much easier, faster and "safer" to copy what has been done before rather than to struggle for what is possible.

p.50 – Human beings are creatures of habit. We love patterns, we love predictability, and love routine. We tend to go to the same places, to do the same things in the same ways most of the time. Patterns are an integral part of our lives. It is completely natural for us to want to retreat to the safety of our routines. But to be creative, we need to go against our nature and step outside these patterns. We need to look at the world from different angles.

p.51 – Start messing with your patterns.

p.80 – The reality of the creative life is that there is never enough time and space, and conditions are never perfect. Our lives are always full of a never-ending list of things to do that fill our time and separate us from the work we know we should be doing.

p.99 – Creativity is both risky and emotionally painful, and our instincts will implore us to retreat to safer ground. As we begin to take risks, pushing the limits of our boundaries, and as we attempt to build something outside of our tribe, that little voice of doubt will start to grow. It will whisper all manner of unsavoury things about failure and embarrassment in order to bring us back to “safety.” The creator’s job is to protect the creation at all costs, and to do that we must be victorious over resistance and fear.

p.101 – Getting a new creative project in motion is hard enough without the doubt of others stacked against you. Do yourself a favour and keep your mouth shut. When your ideas are still newborn, treat them as something precious that needs time to grow and develop and change. There will be plenty of time to talk and discuss and defend your ideas later.

p.145 – Remember, creativity is an action sport. We are taking ideas and putting them in motion.

p.147 – Write ideas down so you can call on them when they are needed.

p.151 – At the theoretical creative extremes are two archetypal creators. One is the “artistic creator” who is focused solely on self, with a purely internal vision and no thought for market or audience or sale. This creator is only concerned with getting his or her vision out, intact and “uncorrupted” by external forces. At the other extreme is the “commercial creator” who produces purely for the market with no thought, reason, or care for anything but what will please the audience and sell. For this creator, external feedback is a crucial part of the process. Polling, market research, and focus groups define the path and the final product.

p.162 – Action: Start developing a system for filtering your collected ideas. At the end of each week, go back through your work and review everything. Filter out the best ideas and start a new subsection or file just for them.

p.163 – Experimenting is a key component of creative thinking, and it happens continuously throughout the process. As you start to collect and filter ideas you begin to experiment with them.

p.172 – The ability to dedicate yourself to the work part of creativity is what will differentiate you from most of your peers. Will you stick with it and drive through? Will you ignore detractors and soldier on? Will you push through all obstacles and make it to the finish line?

Successful creatives understand they must invest the time and do the work. And that’s it: Creativity is work. Wonderful work, but still work.

p.174 – “Don’t expect to write a first draft like a book you read and loved. What you don’t see when you read a published book is the twenty or thirty drafts that happened before it got published.” (Walter Mosely, Why We Write)

p.178 – It is important to work hard, but it is more important to work smart.

p.179 – Make sure you let your subconscious breathe.

p.203 – Think of creativity as a long game. In the long game there are always incredible highs and devastating lows. That is the nature of creativity over the long term. Pick yourself up, dust yourself off, and move on to what you are going to make next.

### **Tamara says**

No. Just no. Boo! Thinking about reading this book? Don't. Trust me. There's only so much time to read, save yourself from this drivel.

This book didn't offer any insights great into the creative process. I found it glib, thin, and ultimately annoying.

If you're looking to expand (or jump start) your creativity I suggest looking someplace else.

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### **Luciana Babocci says**

When I was at work, I saw this book & it kind of called to me.

It was a really great read...talking about creativity, stepping outside your comfort zone, how to motivate yourself, etc. I learned that ideas are meant to be built on, that it may take time, that it is important to follow through no matter what. You may need to step away, but you should never totally abandon it.

Great advice whether for your creativity or for your purpose.

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### **Jessica says**

If you have spent any time on the internet reading about creativity, very little of the information stored in this book will be new to you. This is a great book for those who have no previous experience on the topic of creative enterprise, and are not looking for a particularly in-depth report on it. Written in a blog-length format, with an emphasis on graphics, it's a quick and easy read. The most interesting information was from Usher's experience within the music industry, and his perception of his record company's business model as music transitioned into a digitized commodity. These stories, sadly, are few and far between. Though the book is well written, it is not appropriate for someone who has already invested time researching the various insights of creative pursuits. Usher's perspective is not particularly branded, and thankfully he does not employ cringe-worthy phrases or titles for any component of the creative process. But his approach is bland, and clearly modelled off of other "thought leaders" such as Seth Godin. The act of recycling of information in a newly packaged product is an oddly ironic process for a book focused on innovation and creativity. The moral of this journey is that the status quo is the enemy, and Usher's ability to reproduce readily-available information -- not his on experiences working for decades in a creative field -- is somehow going to help you fight that cause. By no means an awful book, but I was thoroughly underwhelmed.

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### **Cait says**

I don't know how to best categorize this book - business? self help? reference? But what I do know is that it's awesome. I just about flew through this book and had to force myself to slow down so that I could take it all

in, and let it ruminate.

Some of the ideas in the book seem pretty obvious, but they were only obvious after I had read them. It was very much a "this should be so obvious to me, why didn't I think of this?"

The book gives suggestions and actions of what you can do to get your creativity flowing, how you can maintain that momentum, and transfer it to other disciplines, and talks about the process of creativity itself and how it takes structure to be creative and to maintain your creativity and be successful with it.

The design of the book is also very creative and something that I really enjoyed.

Overall, a great read, and one that I will be coming back to again and again.

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### **Brooklyn McLean says**

This book is so unique. It really helps explain how to delve into your creative side, especially if you have a more analytical way of thinking.

When I was skimming through it, I expected there to be way more workshop sort of pages to get your creativity moving. Even in the first chapter, he says that he wants you to draw all over every single page and break the rules that most books give you. I found that with most of the pages, it didn't really make me want to do that. For the most part, the first or last page of each chapter gives you a brief essay style page that makes you think. I hope for a lot more of these.

It was a beautifully written and thought out book, I'm so glad to have experienced it. But it wasn't much of what I expected it to be. For those who are more analytical thinkers, this book is absolutely for you.

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### **Matthew says**

Great book that inspired me to think more freely than I had been before reading.

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### **Jessica Croke says**

Write in this book! It's so much fun!

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### **Pamela says**

Somehow my first review disappeared! Gave this a 3, but it's more a 3.5.

What an amazingly quick read! I found some of David Usher's insights really impacted me to the point of aha - "That's so me!" - moments. Other times I couldn't really relate and wondered how many people could (ie. You can cross over your creativity to anything! But somehow I'm sure it's easier to jump from musician to writer when you had a #1 hit in Canada 10 or so years back...)

Still, I appreciated his words and advice. I feel more likely to try the given activities than I have with other such books and his perspectives broadened my mind to some ideas I hadn't considered.

I do wish there was more on how to hang on to creativity than there was in here, though. He touches on those moments when you can get into a lull where it just escapes you. As a creative person who frustratingly tends to have those often, I was hoping for more ideas on how to hone, nurture and hold onto my creativity (but I guess it's my job to figure out how to do that...?). It's all well and good to know you're creative and run with it when you do, but I'm a creative person who is overwhelmed by the vastness of too many choices, so I guess I was just hoping for more direction to help me get more centred and grounded. But I can't expect him to do all my work...

What he has done, though...is get "Black, Black Heart" stuck in my head on a continuous loop these last two days. Well played, David Usher, well played... :P

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### **Krissy says**

I really enjoyed this one. I loved how well the graphic design and writing worked together. David Usher has given me a lot to think about the creative process and I'm looking forward to working through his ideas as well as the workbook included by MPL.

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### **Ietrio says**

A very conventional take on creativity produced by a very conventional and uncreative person.

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### **Nella says**

Amazing.

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### **Kelvin says**

i won this book from goodreads.

it was very interesting. the author encourages everyone to be more creative. he uses various examples, exercises, stories and illustrations to get his point across. he also discusses the creative process. he mentions (and i agree) that creativity belongs to everyone, not just artists. artists do not miraculously put out art. they work hard, revise, edit, etc through a long process that is a lot of actual work. they work hard to get what they want done, and this is something anyone who is willing to work hard can do. they just need a system or a process to get things done. the author likens this to how a scientist hypothesizes and tests and revises. so, creativity can be seen as a science not just an art. he also applies some of his ideas to the business/entepreneur world too.

the book uses pictures, art, and layout design which makes it a pleasure just to read. all in all, the book taught me a lot about the process of creating something (which i dearly wish to do) and, even more important, inspired me to do so. i would encourage anyone who ever wanted to write a book or a poem, or paint a picture or sculpt or anything at all to read this book. if you want to create anything--art or business--then try this book.

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### **Charlene says**

A quick read with good information. Not only does it point you in the right direction for added inspiration but also how you may be able to continue to tap into the process of creativity again and again.

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