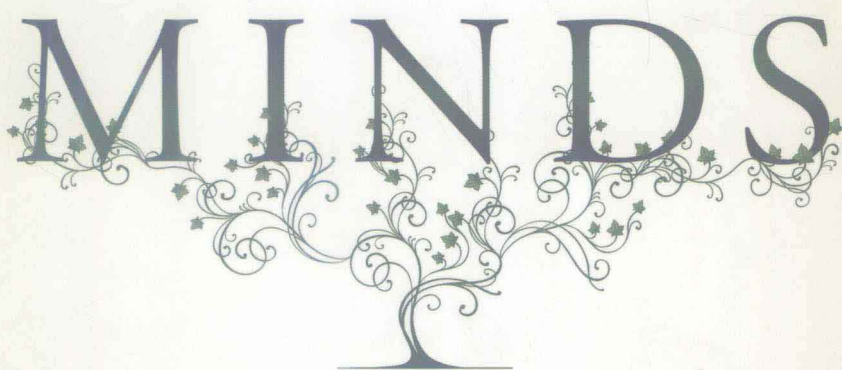


FROM THE *NEW YORK TIMES*
BEST-SELLING AUTHOR OF *THE ELEMENT*

KEN ROBINSON

“BRILLIANT” —JOHN CLEESE

OUT *of* OUR
MINDS

A decorative illustration of a stylized tree or vine with intricate, swirling branches and small green leaves. The illustration is positioned below the word 'MINDS' and extends across its width, with some branches reaching up to touch the letters.

Learning to be Creative

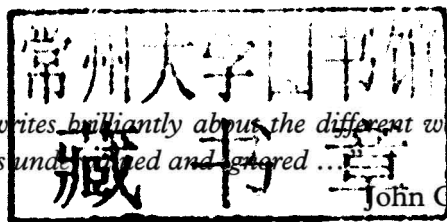
{ NEW EDITION, FULLY UPDATED }

OUT OF OUR MINDS

Learning to be creative

FULLY REVISED AND UPDATED EDITION

SIR KEN ROBINSON



“Ken Robinson writes brilliantly about the different ways in which creativity is undervalued and ignored ...”

John Cleese



CAPSTONE

This edition first published by Capstone Publishing Ltd (a Wiley company), 2011
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First edition published 2001

Revised and updated edition published 2011

Registered office

Capstone Publishing Ltd. (A Wiley Company), The Atrium, Southern Gate,
Chichester, West Sussex, PO19 8SQ, United Kingdom

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Library of Congress Cataloguing-in-Publication Data

is available

ISBN 9781907312472 (cloth), ISBN 9780857081032 (emobi),
ISBN 9780857081049 (epub), ISBN 9780857081490 (ebook)

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

Set in 11/14 pt Plantin by Sparks – www.sparkspublishing.com

Printed in the United States by Courier Westford, Inc., Westford, MA

OUT OF OUR MINDS

For Terry, who makes everything possible.

IN PRAISE OF OUT OF OUR MINDS (1ST EDITION)

“Out of Our Minds explains why being creative in today’s world is a vital necessity. This is a book not to be missed. Read and rejoice.”

Ken Blanchard, Co-author, *The One Minute Manager*
and *The Secret*

“If ever there was a time when creativity was necessary for the survival and growth of any organization, it is now. This book, more than any other I know, provides important insights on how leaders can evoke and sustain those creative juices.”

Warren Bennis, Distinguished Professor of Business, University of Southern California; Thomas S. Murphy Distinguished Research Fellow, Harvard Business School, best-selling author, *Geeks and Geezers*

“This really is a remarkable book. It does for human resources what Rachel Carson’s Silent Spring did for the environment. It makes you wonder why we insist on sustaining an education that is narrow, partial, entirely inappropriate for the 21st century and deeply destructive of human potential when human beings have so much latent creative ability to offer. A brilliant analysis.”

Wally Olins, Founder, Wolff-Olins

“The best analysis I’ve seen of the disjunction between the kinds of intelligence that we have traditionally honored in schools and the kinds of creativity that we need today in our organizations and our society. I learned a lot.”

Howard Gardner, A. Hobbs Professor in Cognition and Education, Harvard Graduate School of Education; best-selling author, *Frames of Mind*

“Books about creativity are not always creative. Ken Robinson’s is a welcome exception: a set of wide ranging, provocative and useful reflections for anyone concerned with bringing new ideas to fruition in business, academia, or the arts.”

Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, C.S. and D.J. Davidson, Professor of Psychology, Claremont Graduate University; Director, Quality of Life Research Center; best-selling author, *FLOW*

“If you would like to start to unlock the inherent creativity that exists in every human being (including you), then start ... by reading this book!”

Simon Woodroffe, founder Yo Sushi

“Ken Robinson’s is an original and creative mind. I can think of no better spokesperson on creativity. His views are as much directed to learning institutions as they are to industry. Out of Our Minds is a genuine challenge to complacency.”

Ruth Spellman, Chief Executive,
Investors in People, UK

“I definitely want to meet Ken Robinson. I have a great affinity with the ideas he proposes. His writing is witty, sometimes caustic, and he supports his arguments with evidence and research. Robinson points us towards a future where young people must be enabled to unleash their creativity and deal with change through a different and better education system. As someone who gains a living from management development, this is all too evident to me. Robinson makes powerful arguments for change. I recommend that you read this book, take part in the debate and become part of the paradigm.”

People Management

“For a book called Out of Our Minds, Ken Robinson’s illuminated assault on the current state of academic education is actually a very sane read. The current obsession is not only failing businesses but also our children. Robinson is right on the money.”

Arts Professional

“Out of Our Minds has a powerful agenda – how to solve the appalling lack of skills in a world demanding ever more brainpower. This is a thoughtful book that does not dodge such cruel paradoxes of our time as the fact that standards of living get higher while the quality of life declines: a truly mind-opening analysis of why we don’t get the best out of people in a time of punishing change.”

Director Magazine

“This is a deeply significant work in this area – I am really impressed with the historical perspectives and breadth of insights drawn from the arts, sciences, psychology and many other fields. It is an immensely powerful statement of the current educational situation and highlights very powerfully the need for transformed thinking from top to bottom.”

Creative-Management

“Out of Our Minds calls for radical changes in the way we think about intelligence, education and human resources, in order to meet the extraordinary challenges of living and working in the 21st century. This book will make compulsive reading for anyone who shares an interest in the future of creativity, education and training.”

Center for Creative Communities

“Sometimes a writer has an uncanny knack of sharply focusing something, which up until then you had not seen in all its simplicity and brilliance. This book does that but at the next moment it makes connections never before imagined ... Even the most obstinately prosaic and safe thinkers will be tempted out of their box by Ken Robinson’s ideas, theories and speculations. What’s more, he writes as he speaks, in a way that, magnetically and compulsively, is simply irresistible.”

Professor Tim Brighthouse

“There are certain books that manage to be authoritative, entertaining and thought-provoking and are also well written and richly exemplified. Few authors are able to fashion this attractive mixture. Alvin Toffler and Charles Handy can craft it. I add Ken Robinson’s absorbing account of creativity to my personal list of gems. Creativity is one of those topics that excites some and enrages others. For Ken Robinson it is a universal talent that all people have, often without realizing it. Society in general and education in particular, can squash the imagination and rock self-confidence. I was sorry to reach the end of the text, as it had maintained its momentum throughout. The reading may finish, but the thinking goes on, just as you would expect from a book on this intriguing subject.”

Professor Ted Wragg

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

SIR KEN ROBINSON, PHD is an internationally recognized leader in the development of creativity, innovation and human resources. He has worked with governments in Europe, Asia and the USA, with international agencies, Fortune 500 companies, and some of the world's leading cultural organizations. In 1998, he led a national commission on creativity, education and the economy for the UK Government. "All Our Futures: Creativity, Culture and Education" (*The Robinson Report*) was published to wide acclaim in 1999. He was the central figure in developing a strategy for creative and economic development as part of the Peace Process in Northern Ireland, working with the ministers for training, education enterprise and culture. He was one of four international advisors to the Singapore Government for its strategy to become the creative hub of South East Asia.

For twelve years, he was Professor of Education at the University of Warwick in the UK and is now Professor Emeritus. He has received honorary degrees from the Open University, the Central School of Speech and Drama, Birmingham City University, Rhode Island School of Design, Ringling College of Art and Design and the Liverpool Institute for Performing Arts. He has been honored with the Athena Award of the Rhode Island School of Design for services to the arts and

education; the Peabody Medal for contributions to the arts and culture in the United States, and the Benjamin Franklin Medal of the Royal Society of Arts for outstanding contributions to cultural relations between the United Kingdom and the United States. In 2005 he was named as one of *Time/Fortune/CNN's* Principal Voices. In 2003, he received a knighthood from Queen Elizabeth II for his services to the arts. He speaks to audiences throughout the world on the creative challenges facing business and education in the new global economies. His renowned talks at the annual TED conference (2006 and 2010) continue to be viewed by many millions of people around the world.

Sir Ken was born in Liverpool, England as one of seven children. He is married to Therese (Lady) Robinson. They have two children, James and Kate, and live in Los Angeles, California.

Also by Sir Ken Robinson: *The Element: How Finding Your Passion Changes Everything* (Penguin/Viking 2009) is a *New York Times* Best Seller, which has been translated into 20 languages.

PREFACE

“We will not succeed in navigating the complex environment of the future by peering relentlessly into a rear view mirror. To do so, we would be out of our minds.”

CREATIVITY IS THE GREATEST GIFT of human intelligence. The more complex the world becomes, the more creative we need to be to meet its challenges. Yet many people wonder if they have any creative abilities at all. *Out of Our Minds* is about why creativity matters so much, why people think they are not creative, how we arrived at this point, and what we can do about it. The first edition of this book was published in 2001. What you have in your hands now is a completely new and revised edition. So, why a new edition, and how new is it, really?

I wrote the original edition of *Out of Our Minds* during 2000. The first reason for a new edition is that so much has happened since then, both in *the* world and in *my* world. On almost every front, the pace of change has become ever more frantic and the issues at the heart of this book have become more pressing. Consider the rate of change in technology. Ten years ago, the Internet was still a novelty for most people. There were no smart phones, iPods; no Facebook, Twitter, YouTube or most of the social media sites that are now transforming

culture and economics around the world. Many other things have happened too – from the global impact of the events of 9/11 to the compounding effect of the Great Recession – that simply could not have been anticipated ten years ago: in politics, the economy, in culture and in the environment. The sheer unpredictability of human affairs lies right at the heart of my argument for cultivating our powers of creativity: in business, in education and in everyday life.

The second reason for this new edition is that I now have more to say about many of the core ideas in the book and about what we should do to put them into practice. During the past ten years I have presented and debated these ideas with people at all levels in every sort of field; including CEOs of multinational corporations and not-for-profit organizations, politicians, artists, scientists, students, parents and educators. These experiences have deepened my conviction about the importance and the urgency of the arguments put forward in *Out of Our Minds*; and the need to represent them to an even wider audience.

The third reason is, not only has the world moved on in the last ten years, I have too. Literally. When I wrote the first edition, my family and I were living in Stratford on Avon, a small market town in England and birthplace of William Shakespeare. I wrote the new edition in Los Angeles, where we live now. The architect Frank Lloyd Wright once said that if you were to turn the world on its side and shake it, everything loose would land in Los Angeles. Just after the first edition of *Out of Our Minds* was published, my family and I shook loose and did just that. You can imagine what a seamless transition that turned out to be. Since then, I have traveled all over the United States meeting many extraordinary people and seeing fascinating initiatives. All of these experiences have informed this new edition, which has a much stronger emphasis on developments in the Americas and Asia as well as in Europe. The fact is that these really are global issues.

In 2006, I spoke at the world-renowned TED conference (Technology, Entertainment, Design) in Monterey, California and touched on some of the core themes of this book. That talk has since been downloaded over 5 million times in over 100 countries.¹ Mind you, our son James and daughter Kate, showed me a 30 second video on YouTube of two kittens that seem to be talking to each other and that has been downloaded 30 million times. So I am keeping this in perspective. I do know though, that unlike the cats' video, my TED talk has been shown at large and small conferences, meetings and training events, all around the world. As a result, it has been seen by an estimated 100 million people to date. That is one indication of the level of interest in these issues. I gave a second TED talk in 2010 and that too is drawing a powerful response.²

During 2008, I wrote *The Element: How Finding Your Passion Changes Everything*, published in the USA in January 2009³ and in many editions around the world since then. That book looks at the nature of personal talent and creativity and the conditions in which it flourishes. In many ways, *Out of Our Minds* is a natural companion to *The Element*. It looks in much more depth at why the need to develop our natural talents – especially creativity – is so pressing, and at how and why organizations in general and education in particular tend to stifle them in the first place. Consequently, I was delighted when Capstone suggested I work on a new edition of *Out of Our Minds* to mark the tenth anniversary of its first publication. I have to admit that initially I had in mind a less sweeping revision. I pictured spending a long weekend with a casual bottle of claret and a spell check program, sprucing up the original text. In the event I have virtually rewritten the entire book: to include new material, to make the arguments sharper and the overall tone more accessible. So if you did read the first edition, you should not be deterred from buying (or borrowing) and reading this new one. It is very different

in many ways and I think you will find enough that is new to repay a second look. If you are picking this book up for the first time, whether you work in business, education, the not-for-profit sector, or if you are concerned about your own creative potential, I trust you will find a great deal here to interest and engage you.

My aims in this book are to help individuals to understand the depth of their creative abilities and why they might have doubted them; to encourage organizations to believe in their powers of innovation and to create the conditions where they will flourish; and to promote a creative revolution in education.

I said in the original introduction that I had called the book *Out of Our Minds* for three reasons. I still have three reasons and here they are. First, human intelligence is profoundly and uniquely creative. We live in a world that's shaped by the ideas, beliefs and values of human imagination and culture. The human world is created out of our minds as much as from the natural environment. Thinking and feeling are not simply about seeing the world as it is, but having ideas about it, and interpreting experience to give it meaning. Different communities live differently according to the ideas they have and the meanings they experience. In a literal sense, we create the worlds we live in. We can also re-create them. The great revolutions in human history have often been brought about by new ideas: by new ways of seeing that have shattered old certainties. This is the essential process of cultural change.

Second, realizing our creative potential is partly a question of finding our medium, of being *in our element*. Education should help us to achieve this, but too often it does not and too many people are instead displaced from their own true talents. They are out of their element and out of their minds in that sense. Finally, there is a kind of mania driving the present direction of educational policy. In place of a reasoned debate about the strategies that are needed to face these extraordinary changes,

there is a tired mantra about raising traditional academic standards. These standards were designed for other times and for other purposes – as I will explain. We will not succeed in navigating the complex environment of the future by peering relentlessly into a rear-view mirror. To stay on this course we should be out of our minds in a more literal sense.

Ken Robinson
Los Angeles, February 2011

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OUT OF OUR MINDS

“When people say to me that they are not creative, I assume that they haven’t yet learnt what is involved.”

HOW CREATIVE ARE YOU? How creative are the people you work with? How about your friends? Next time you are at a social event, ask them. You may be surprised by what they say. I have worked with people and organizations all over the world. Everywhere I go, I find the same paradox. Most children think they’re highly creative; most adults think they’re not. This is a bigger issue than it may seem.

CREATING THE FUTURE

We are living in a world that is changing faster than ever and facing challenges that are unprecedented. How the complexities of the future will play out in practice is all but unknowable. Cultural change is never linear and rarely predictable. If it were, the legions of media pundits and cultural forecasters would be redundant. It was probably with these dynamics in mind that the economist J.K. Galbraith said, “The primary