

## Profiles of Creativity:

# A Case Study of a Creative Personality

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### Abstract

The study aimed at unfolding the personal creative characteristics of an educator in the field of gifted education, and examining creativity as expressed in childhood and its transformation into adulthood creative approach and outcomes. The study focused on Dr. Erika Landau, the pioneer of gifted education in Israel, an internationally renowned scholar and educator, and the founder of the Young Persons' Institute for the Promotion of Creativity and Excellence. Data concerning the different categories of personal creative characteristics were collected via semi-structured interview and analysis of documents. Findings suggest creative characteristics detected in childhood were mainly openness and courage to explore ideas, and listening to one's inner voice. The full range of categories was detected in adulthood.

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**Keywords:** Creativity; personal creative characteristics; creative thinking, Erika Landau.

### Definitions of Creativity

Creativity includes producing an original and useful product which is suitable for the field or area it is designed for (Sternberg & Lubart, 1999). Perkins claims that creativity is a result that is original and appropriate and fits the cultural context upon which it is based (Perkins, 1981). In creativity there is importance for the interaction between the individual, the product, and the environment (Cziksztmihalyi, 1990). The creative individual solves problems, designs products, or defines novel questions in a field or area that was considered new but became acceptable in the same cultural context (Gardner, 1993). Mau (1997) makes the distinction between two types of creativity: (a) real time creativity—connected to improvisation, immediateness and something done at the same moment; and (b) multi-level creativity—connected to time needed for generating and choosing ideas.

Lubart (1999, 2008, 2010) and Sternberg & Lubart (1995) suggested a multivariate approach considering the creative process as an interplay between two modes of action: divergent-exploratory thinking, and convergent-integrative thinking. They define creativity as ability to produce novel, original work that is contextually relevant in a task context. Therefore, creative productions can be conceived in nearly every domain. The ability to produce creative work is conceived as a partly domain specific skill, so people with high ability to be creative in one domain (such as art) will not necessarily have the same level of creative ability in another domain (such as science) because the specific nature of creativity varies with the field (Lubart & Guignard, 2004). Creative potential refers to a latent ability that may not yet have been expressed. When creative potential is activated and called into play in a task, the result is a creative production. Each person can be described by a profile on the cognitive and conative factors, with the additional contextual factor. It is the combined action of several abilities and traits in a favorable context that characterize the highest levels of creative potential and ultimately is required for the expression of this potential in actual productions (Sternberg & Lubart, 1995; Lubart, Mouchiroud, Tordjman & Zenansi, 2003).

### Creative Thinking

Erika Landau (2002) proposed a model for developing creative thinking in gifted children. Her model combines and balances logic and imagination. It addresses 4 dimensions: (a) ideas; (b) thinking; (c) communication; and d) self. According to this model creative thinking is finding the balance between narrow categorization of ideas and free flow; convergent thinking and divergent thinking; interpersonal communication and intrapersonal; and objective formulation and subjective reaction. Figure 1 illustrates the creative thinking model.

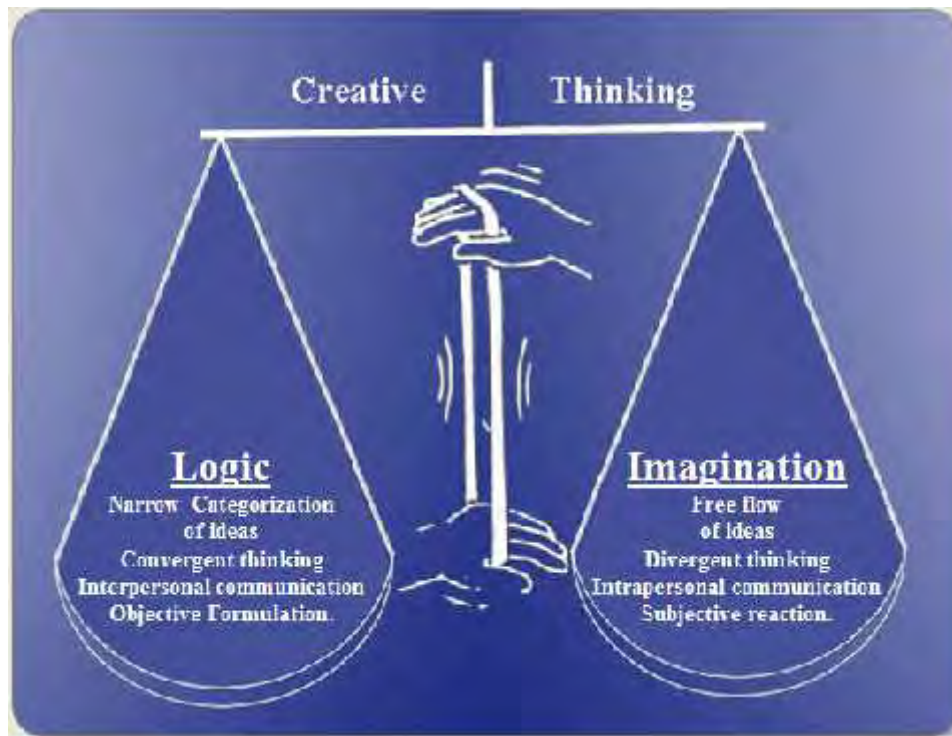


Figure 1: Creative thinking model (Landau, 2002)

### Personal Creativity Characteristics

Three categories of characteristics emerge from studies on creativity: 1. Cognitive characteristics; 2. Personal characteristics; and 3. Biographical events. Cognitive characteristics are connected to the way people think using problem solving and associations (Treffinger, Isaksen, & Dorval, 2000). Personal characteristics are connected to values, temperament and motivation, which are all related to the application of thinking (Mac Kinnon, 1978). Biographical events are connected to experiences that lead the person to creative achievements (Gardner, 1993; Csikszentmihalyi, 1996; Sternberg, 2000). The combination of the characteristics is very complicated as they do not appear in the same extent and no person possesses all of them. Many of the characteristics can be learned and nurtured, and it is very difficult to predict which students will be creative, but still they need to be supported and creativity needs to be developed (Treffinger, Young, Selby & Shepardson, 2002).

Personal creativity characteristics are further divided by Treffinger et al (2002) into four categories: (a) generating ideas; (b) digging deeper into ideas; (c) openness and courage to explore ideas; and (d) listening to one's inner voice.

- **Generating ideas:** (a) fluency; (b) flexibility; (c) originality; (d) elaboration; and (e) metaphorical thinking.
- **Digging deeper into ideas:** (a) analyzing; (b) synthesizing; (c) reorganizing and modifying; (d) evaluating; (e) seeing relationships; (f) desiring to resolve ambiguity-bringing order or disorder; and (g) preferring or understanding complexity.
- **Openness and courage to explore ideas:** (a) aesthetic sensitivity; (b) high levels of curiosity; (c) playfulness; (d) capacity of fantasy and/or imagination; (e) risk taking or thrill seeking; (f) open to feelings and emotions/shows emotional sensitivity; (g) problem sensitivity; and (h) sense of humor.
- **Listening to one's inner voice:** (a) awareness of creativeness; (b) need for or demonstration of autonomy/task oriented behavior; (c) independence of thought; and (d) interest in reflective thinking/introspective.

(Cramond, 1995; Davis, 1998; Csikszentmihalyi, 1996; Gardner, 1993; Perkins, 1981; Guilford, 1959, 1987; Renzulli et al, 1976; Smith & Falldt, 1999; Starko, 1995; Sternberg, 2000; Torrance, 1962; Torrance & Safter, 1999).

## **Focus of Study**

The study attempted to examine the creative characteristics of an innovator in the field of gifted education focusing on creativity and the creative approach. It is aimed at unfolding a better understanding the connection between personal characteristics of creativity expressed in early childhood and adulthood.

## **Method**

### **Participant**

The focus of this study was Dr. Erika Landau. Dr. Erika Landau, an Israeli psychotherapist and researcher in Creativity, Giftedness, and Education, was born in Romania in 1931. After four years in concentration camps, she made Aliya in 1947. Dr. Landau possesses a BA degree in Psychology and History from the Tel Aviv University and a Ph.D. in Psychology and History of Art from the Ludwig Maximillian University in Munich, Germany. In 1968, Dr. Landau founded "The Young Persons Institute for Promoting Creativity and Excellence"- Israel's first center for gifted children, a non-profit association to help talented and gifted children to cope with their problems. The institute strives to develop creative thinking, according to the unique creative approach, that Dr. Landau developed, based on meeting thousands of children and studying the subjects. Up until now, more than 40,000 children attended the program; the Institute works with about 800 children each semester. The Institute is located on the Technical College Campus of the Tel Aviv University in Ramat Aviv engaging enrichment and nurturing children starting from kindergarten through ninth graders and deals in particular with the promotion of the Ethiopian children. The Institute also operates a number of branches in several cities around Tel Aviv. Landau taught psychotherapy as a Supervisor at the Dept. of Psychotherapy at the School of Medicine, Tel Aviv University. She also published several books, which were translated into 12 languages, and dozens of articles in different scientific journals.

### **Data Collection and Instrumentation**

A semi-structured interview with the participant enabled collecting information on creative characteristics as illustrated by stories from earlier childhood and creative approach in adult life (Appendix A). Key documents in the form of books, articles, personal and institute website were gathered to complement the stories and the creative approach.

### **Data Analysis**

Qualitative Data Analysis was used for the thematic analysis of the semi-structured interview using the personal creativity characteristics model by Treffinger et al (2002): (a) generating ideas; (b) digging deeper into ideas; (c) openness and courage to explore ideas; and (d) listening to one's inner voice. Sub-categories suggested by researchers were used and in some cases were combined. Documents were read several times and emerging themes were recorded and divided into specific categories. The thematic analysis was performed in the level of short chunks of sentences, forming a personal narrative.

### **Procedure**

The interview was conducted individually, recorded and transcribed, and documents relating to the subject were collected.

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## **Results**

### **Early Life: Surviving the Holocaust as a Child.**

As a child Erika Landau experienced a horrifying situation of surviving in the camps

during the Second World War. The interview and documents analyzed yielded characteristics in mainly two categories:

(a) openness and courage to explore ideas; and  
(b) listening to one's inner voice. It is based on

the memories as recounted by her in the interview and written in her book "Giving Sense". The additional two categories of characteristics: (a) generating ideas; and (b) digging deeper into ideas, may have been present but did not come up in the stories relating to the Holocaust.

### **Openness and Courage to Explore Ideas**

*High levels of curiosity and aesthetic sensitivity.* Erika mentioned two very distinctive events where her aesthetic sensitivity and high level of curiosity were involved. One had to do with a certain painting and the other with music.

"One of the moments of grace I experienced was with an art history teacher, by the name of Dr. Rappaport. Instead of warm clothes he took to the camp reproductions of Renaissance paintings. To the light of an oil lamp he showed me the pictures of Leonardo da Vinci and Botticelli. One painting that I remember very well is the Return of Judith to Bethulia. Dr. Rappaport showed me the painting and said: You see Erika, there were always young Jewish girls who suffered, but they survived."

Judith was a Jewish woman from the town of Bethulia. The town was threatened by the King Nebuchadnezzar's Assyrian army under the command of Holofernes. Judith came up with a plan to save the town. She managed to sneak into Holofernes' camp outside of Bethulia and pretended to defect to their side. She seduced Holofernes, chopped off his head and brought it back to Bethulia. When the Bethulian soldiers showed the Assyrians Holofernes' head, they retreated. The painting shows her coming back with the chopped head of Holofernes.

"I was nine when our piano teacher recommended me and two other friends of mine to take part in a competition. My father was abroad and my mother got ill, but there was a good feeling of belonging and togetherness with the other competitors and their parents. Waiting for the decision of the jury, eyes met, hands touched, sharing hopes and giggles. When the first prize was announced I walked up to the stage bewildered, shook hands with strangers turned around bowed to the public and looked for a pair of eyes to share my embarrassment ... but my friends looked down and their mothers had narrow lips. Later my friends bunched in a group, did not invite me to join them. I was an

outsider, not wanted. I hated the prize I had once coveted. I felt lonely for the first time and very often since."

*Playfulness and capacity of fantasy and/or imagination.* Erika pointed out that what kept her alive was her ability to fantasize and daydream. Her daydreams involved music and the vast of arena of knowledge out there she was ready to absorb.

"I survived by daydreaming. In the cold nights when even sleep avoided me, I thought and dreamt with open eyes. I saw myself and my fingers on the piano and played and played till the morning came. In another repeated daydream I was standing in front of school, and near me was standing a man with no face. We were waiting for the results of exams. I knew there was a world of knowledge to learn from. My mother taught me all she remembered about poets, music and other things. I had a feeling inside me that I must survive to learn."

*Risk taking and open to feelings and emotions/shows emotional sensitivity.* As a child Erika recalled an incident when she went against her father's commands risking herself and her family as she showed emotional sensitivity feeling deeply for a boy in the camp and knowing she could do something to help him:

"With the morning the suffering began with breaking the ice over the water to wash ourselves. To this we were very attentive, to keep clean because dirt brought lice. The louse was the most frightening being in our life. They brought the sickness, the illness of which many died and only a few survived."

"Many years later, after a television talk, a man called and reported he woke up one day in the camps, after this illness and around him all were dead. He walked out on the street of the camp, everybody avoided him, because he was uncombed and people were afraid of his lice. He was weak and sat down, and cried in his despair. A girl came up to him and asked why he was crying. He told her about his illness, and the fact that his parents did not move and now "nobody wants to speak to me." "But I speak to you" said the girl and smiled. And seeing me on television he recognized my smile. And in spite of those sad memories I was glad that I had helped that desperate child. Who, according to him, got strength out of my smile. Yet, at the same time, guilt feelings came up. What about those I had not smiled at? Those, that life too had not smiled at them? And those that died of hunger, sickness

and pain. Why did they have to die? In what were they bad or wrong and I was good and right?"

**Emotional sensitivity and problem sensitivity.** Erika drew on her experience in the camps showing emotional sensitivity and at the same time being aware of the fact that the human being she was trying to help was suffering from a problem she had faced after the Holocaust:

"Many years later, during the Yom Kippur War, I was asked to help a young man, who for three days did not react, did not speak, just lying there with wide open eyes without seeing, without movement. The only thing I knew about him was, that he was the only survivor of a tank that was hit. I sat down, held his hand and tried to remember what had I studied. What did I know about how to help him? From my brain I received no answer, but from the depth of my guts came the words: "you feel guilty that you are alive and your friends had to die". He turned his head and asked "How do you know?" "For I feel guilty too, that my friend died in the Holocaust and I am alive". He pressed my hand. And I understood that my suffering got some sense. That from my suffering I could help a young man..." (De-Nur, 2000).

### **Listening to One's Inner Voice**

**Awareness of creativeness.** As a child in the camps, Erika was not aware of her creativity, but actually practiced it to try and save her parents' lives:

"At that time I did not know that it was creativity. No one spoke about creativity.

I had a happy childhood. I was love and gave love. Suddenly came Hitler and took the family (mother, father my sister and me) to concentration camp. My parents got sick with typhoid and had very high fever. At 10 years old, I walked out, very sad, searching for something. I saw a big potato. I took the potato and cooked it and made a whole meal. The water in which the potato was cooked became soup. The outer part (the peel) I cut into small pieces and made some kind of schnitzel and served it with the potato. My mother was not conscious, but my father, who could not speak, looked at me with his big eyes and said thank you. His smile was a reward for me."

**Independence of thought.** Erika as a 10 year old child had decided to go and look for food for her sick parents. "Nobody told me to do it. I saw my parents were sick and I thought of

looking for some food to strengthen them." When she found the potato she thought of a way of turning it into a whole meal, just using her own initiative and creativity. An additional case where Erika showed independence of thought was approaching the boy with lice, although she knew it was risky and forbidden. She sat with him because as a person she understood the meaning of being alone and without support, and she thought she could help this boy. She did so in spite of what she had seen and heard around her, feeling she could make a difference:

"I remember, the anger of my father, seeing me with a boy with lice. And when I did not want to leave the boy, feeling his despair, my father in his anxiety tore me away. This was the only time in my life that my father had been rude with me. And in spite of those sad memories I was glad that I had helped that desperate child."

**Interest in reflective thinking/introspective.** Erika showed introspective ability which helped her ease her suffering during a very stressful event. She knew she was not allowed to cry and found within herself a way to cope:

"I was 12 years old and quite tall compared to my classmates. The Ukrainians came into the house. They were the worst. They took people away, killed people, and violated the women. When they came into the house my mother pushed me into a hole/niche in the wall and pushed a cupboard against me. There I was crying quietly and standing in the dark hole. My feet hurt because I could not move, as the stone wall had spikes that hurt my flesh. Suddenly I made a small movement and for a second it did not hurt. Then I moved another finger and another, and this way I could ease my suffering. Many years later I came to the conclusion that in a surrounding, as narrow as it is, you can find alternatives – you can give a child some alternatives."

### **Adult life: The Creative Approach**

As an adult Erika Landau developed a creative approach for teaching gifted children. Analysis of the interview and documents generated characteristics in all four categories: (a) generating ideas; (b) digging deeper into ideas; (c) openness and courage to explore ideas; and (d) listening to one's inner voice.

#### **Generating Ideas**

- Fluency; (b) flexibility; (c) originality; (d) elaboration; and (e) metaphorical thinking.

**Originality.** The first time Erika came across the term “creativity” made her tackle this subject and be the first to write a book about how to teach creativity to gifted and talented children:

“Writing my doctoral proposal at the University of Munich in the 1960’s I found the word creativity in a UNESCO document. They said there that when the Sputnik was sent by the Russians, Americans came to the conclusion that it must be something else not only knowledge and intelligence, but it must be creativity. This was the first time I encountered the word. My book on creativity, which was published in 1969 and translated into 12 languages, was the first one. I saw there is a way to teach children to look at creativity.”

Erika formed a very unique approach to creativity and teaching creativity to gifted children:

“The creative approach challenges the personality at its whole. The problem is approached from all aspects of the personality: intellectually, emotionally and socially. The problem is seen in its course of a process and not in its static position in time and space. The creative approach flows in time and space, present, past towards the future. The creative approach makes learning an experience and each experience is a building block of the personality. It does not burst or brake frames, but tries to find alternatives within the given frame. It is transferable and can be learned. Creativity enriches life, and makes it more interesting, more enjoyable, and more beautiful. It gives life meaning –“my meaning”.

Erika was the first to offer programs and courses for gifted children identified by her in 1968 in Israel. She had founded the Institute which she has been running for almost 45 years now:

“In 1968, I founded "The Young Persons Institute for Promoting Creativity and Excellence"- Israel's first center for gifted children, a non- profit association to help talented and gifted children to cope with their problems. The institute strives to develop creative thinking, according to the unique creative approach, I developed, based on meeting thousands of children and studying the subjects. .Up till now, more than 40,000 children attended the program; the Institute works with about 800 children each semester. The institute started as an educational experience in the Tel

Aviv Museum. I started teaching creative thinking. I had to teach them (the children) to ask questions. Students (mostly from elementary school) take creative thinking and other interdisciplinary courses like humor, neurotransmitters, technology and science, and archaeology. When the story of cloning “Dolly” was published in May we started a course in September. Teachers at the institute are mostly former students.”

**Elaboration.** Elaborating on the creative process, Erika came to the understanding that children need to be taught how to ask questions:

“The most important aspect of education is the way of asking questions. It is through questioning that the individual looks for himself for his own individual way towards the solution. Thus I prepare the partnership of the student to develop the creative approach to their life.”

“I usually start from the present and insist on looking at what is happening "here and now", and only after seeing what is really happening do I ask the causal question WHY? The question "What can I do and what is in me to do about it" is the reformulation of the depressive, causal question "Why is this happening to me?" into an active, creative question: It is the new beginning from an infantile-disturbed into a mature and creative being. This change in form and tense of asking the question is the change from the deterministic approach to the security and freedom to choose the creative alternative.”

### **Digging Deeper into Ideas**

**Analyzing and synthesizing.** She also looked deeper into ways of tackling and solving problems that could be taught, analyzing the process of finding creative solutions and what prevents us from doing so:

“Life is a perpetual search for different ways to find and to solve problems, to feel free to choose among them, to dare to try them out and be responsible for your choice. One of the biggest obstacles to finding creative, original and innovative solutions is our acquired stereotyped and mechanical ways to solve problems. In our desire to be loved, liked and accepted, we tend to speak and behave in terms we know a priori will please the society.”

“Looking at the situation from different angles, we can work ourselves up to different alternatives and the ultimate choice of the most relevant alternative to the real situation is the product of intellectual, emotional and social

participation of each student. It is a combination of inner abilities with outer challenges, interaction of outer logic and inner fantasy, intellect and emotions according to the social needs of the individual in the society.”

**Reorganizing and modifying.** In her approach to teaching gifted and talented students she dug deeper into the problem and recognized relationships between the personal behavioral characteristics of the children and the encouragement to develop and express creativity:

“I first look for the strength in my student "I strengthen the strength" in order to give them the force to confront their weakness. One needs courage in order to confront one's weaknesses: it is much easier to hide behind social conventions and walk trotted ways others went than try out individual ways according to one's own potentials with the risk of failure. We are allowed to make mistakes, what we should not do is not learn from them. Failure could be a good beginning of something new.”

### **Openness and Courage to Explore Ideas**

**High levels of curiosity and aesthetic sensitivity.** Erika offered a course in creative thinking to gifted children interested in arts in the Tel Aviv Museum:

“The institute started as an educational experience in the Tel Aviv Museum. I started teaching creative thinking. I taught them to experience, to look at things from different angles, and to ask questions.”

**Risk taking and open to feelings and emotions.** For the child to be himself and secure taking risks, a special open atmosphere needs to be created:

“We must create an atmosphere for the gifted child which conveys security, so that he dares to be his outgoing, warm, participating as well as his bright, dominating and will feel the inner freedom to venture into a wider world without the perpetual need to compete, to be constantly admired, and always be best. We need to create an atmosphere which will enable him to play and experiment, invent and create, love and share for his own good, as well as that of society.”

**Shows emotional sensitivity and problem sensitivity.** The biggest problem in the education of children, according to Erika, is the gap between the higher intelligence and the lower

emotional maturity. Because parents and school challenge mostly the intellectual aspect in the child's personality. She went on to elaborate on how the child's emotional abilities need to be challenged:

“To challenge their emotional abilities, is as, or even more important, than the challenge of their intellectual abilities. Children should be taught: a. to look at the matter from all aspects of their personality: intellectual, emotional and social aspect; and b. to ask questions and become aware that each question has different answers and each answer could be asked with continuous questions such as: “What more?, what else could be done?, or could be seen?” to see any concept in its process. To flow in their thinking, to defer judgment as opposite to think in static terms that leads to deterministic, rigid and narrow conceptions.”

### **Listening to One's Inner Voice**

**Awareness of creativeness.** Erika reported she had found a method for freeing the creative potential and developing a creative attitude in children that will make them aware of their creativity and help them in real life situations:

“To understand the different stages in this creative process, to activate bipolar thinking (imagination and logic, subjective and objective, intra- and interpersonal communication) to know the theoretical aspects, to experience the practical exercises - are the helpful conditions to free the creative potentials buried sometimes under layers of habits and inhibitions. These conditions could help to develop the creative attitude, to become a general factor in the personality which will find the creative solutions in any existential or learning situation. Most of all we need this attitude in the very frequent crisis-situations in our present life. The future might find us unprepared; therefore we must learn how to create new ways, new reactions, and new solutions.”

**Demonstration of autonomy and independence of thought.** To demonstrate individual and independent thought or autonomy, based on Erika Landau's approach, the child needs to gain confidence in himself and believe that he can conquer all obstacles and be productive:

“The aim of education is to give the individual the confidence that he has the strength, not only to adapt himself to the

demands of the environment, but also to go out and meet its challenges. It is the acceptance of the student's anxiety; to help him to live actively in the present in spite of this anxiety and insecurity - thus preparing him for his independent creative future."

***Interest in reflective thinking/introspective.***

Stressing the experience and feelings that go with it is a major factor in the creative approach. Making meaning of an experience is performed via reflective thinking and introspection:

"I revised the aim of education. I came to the conclusion that when things are connected with feelings or a certain person that you love or hate, you will remember. This is the basis to look at things with brains, with feelings and with social interaction. For me education is not only the aim of knowing. To learn is to experience with many senses. When gifted experience they do not forget; they feel it, they think about it, and reflect on it. Then they can transfer what they had learned to other areas."

**Personal Creative Characteristics in Childhood Transformed into Adulthood Creativity and Outcomes**

The most significant event she had experienced as a child learning from Dr. Rappaport about the painting of Judith and remembering his words, had struck a cord and lead her to the deep realization of new path she would like to take:

"Years later I went to see this painting in the Uffizi Museum in Florence. I imagined it was a big picture, but it was very small. I stood in front of the picture and understood the legacy. I realized I must answer the curious children's questions. This was the turn from creativity to taking care of gifted children."

Erika is a very introspective and reflective person. She has always been thinking of making meaning of what happened to her as a child in

the camps. As an educator and therapist she is for speaking about the dark times and that is why she published her book named: "Giving Sense". Directing these questions into finding answers and doing for the benefit of others is very significant for her. This is something she would like to instill in her children:

"With time I dared to see that suffering was not in vain. Suffering could give another meaning. I think I am a better person because I taught myself to give. This is what I also teach the children, and especially to give to our country, because for me, Israel gave me back my feeling of being a human being."

Her experience in the camps taught her to deal with a variety of situations:

"Creativity for me is not a state but an attitude of living and surviving. We are partners in our destiny, without our participation, stating and choosing alternatives, there is no real life."

"The ability to cope with the future is in us. We have only to free it ... and learn how to use it creatively."

As a person Erika is just like the children she teaches. She never ceases to ask herself questions. These questions are turned into positive ways of coping:

"I never give up. I am ready for surprises and go on asking what else? How else can you cope? You lose something and look for new ideas. You do not regret what happened. You ask questions like what can I do about it?"

She redirected her suffering to create an educational approach to help children who resembled her. She actualized herself and became an innovator and leader in the field of gifted education in Israel and the world because she understood that:

- "An up-to-date, innovative society needs conscious, daring, creative, flexible and self-actualizing individuals. To actualize one-self means to function according to ones' abilities...to become ones' potentials Life is a perpetual creative process."

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**Discussion**

**Early Life**

As a child Erika showed characteristics of personal creativity in two main categories: openness to explore ideas; and listening to one's inner voice. There are no indications of the other two categories of generating ideas, and digging deeper into them, which may result from being quite young and facing hardships that people sometimes try to forget.

**Openness to explore ideas.** As a young child she was very open to explore new ideas in very dark times. She showed high levels of curiosity and wanted to "swallow the world" and its vast



knowledge. She was also drawn to aesthetics and was interested in painting and was already acknowledged as a good pianist winning first prize in a competition. She had the capacity for fantasy and imagination, which turned out to be lifesavers, as she sunk into daydreaming, creating a better life for herself and focusing on future ambitions. As a 10 year old child she showed emotional sensitivity and compassion towards other children knowing she could help them survive. She was also aware of her feeling of guilt because she survived.

**Listening to one's inner voice.** Erika was not aware of her creativity but was actually practicing it when she cooked her parents a whole meal from just one potato. Deciding to look for food and trying to prepare it on her own showed great independence of thought. She also practiced creative ways of coping with the suffering by being introspective and finding the strength within her when forced to stand for hours in a niche in the wall.

### **Adult Life**

As an adult Erika expressed personal creativity in all four categories:

**Generating ideas.** She proved to be very original writing about creativity in the 1960's and developing a unique approach for teaching gifted children. Being the first to found an institute, identifying and catering for gifted and talented children made her the innovator and pioneer in Israel in this field. Courses offered at the institute were revised to suit the evolving model and became more interdisciplinary with time.

**Digging deeper into ideas.** When she analyzed, synthesized, and modified her approach, she thought about the obstacles for finding creative solutions. She came to the conclusion that creativity was a combination of inner abilities and this is what she has to look for and develop in her students.

**Openness and courage to explore ideas.** Possessing a high level of curiosity and aesthetic sensitivity, she started offering a course on creative thinking for children. While exploring the idea she came to the conclusion that the atmosphere created for the gifted needs to be secure in order to enable them to experiment and invent without competition and judgment. She focused on all aspects of personality: intellectual ability or problem sensitivity (asking questions and looking at things from different aspects); as well as emotional sensitivity.

**Listening to one's inner voice.** Developing the awareness to creativeness and actual creative attitude is at the heart of Erika's approach. She believes gifted children who gain confidence in their strengths to meet challenges and make meaning of an experience will better remember and be able to transfer whatever they have learned. Listening to her inner voice and reflecting on her long-term experiences with the gifted she has revised her aim of education including intellectual, emotional, and social interaction.

### **Personal Creative Characteristics in Childhood Transformed into Adulthood Creativity and Outcomes**

Erika Landau is an example of a case of possessing personal creative characteristics in childhood, which were developed and actualized by strong introspective and reflective abilities, into an innovative approach to educating gifted and talented children. The inner voice helped her create meaning to her suffering and transform it into a positive innovative outcome which has helped thousands of children. Generating and digging deeper into ideas, openness and courage to explore those ideas and listening to the inner voice, which she has been practicing all her life, have turned into an approach for teaching creativity to gifted children.

### **Limitations Suggestions for Further Research**

The study examined one case of personal creativity characteristics expressed in childhood, encountering unique and horrifying situations, and aimed at establishing a connection to adulthood creativity and creative approach to educating gifted children.

A major limitation of this study was the focus on a single participant. Given that data were collected by self-report the participant's answers reflected her perception and interpretation of events, thoughts, and outcomes.

A deeper examination of the personal creative characteristics and comparison of several case studies will shed more light on similarities and differences in translating and transforming characteristics possessed by children into adulthood innovative outcomes. Focusing on case studies related to a certain area like education will unfold similarities. On the other hand, examining case studies from different fields of knowledge could lead to a better understanding of certain creative characteristics needed to succeed in those areas.

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## **Appendix A**

### **Interview Questions**

1. Please relate to your experiences as a child during the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War.
  2. How did you show creativity as a child?
  3. How did you show creativity as an adult?
  4. Explain the creativity model you have developed. (What are the characteristics of a creative child/adult? How was the model received in Israel? In the world?)
  5. How does your model relate to models developed by Piirto and others?
  6. How did you get the idea to open a center for developing creativity in children? (How did you start? What courses were offered? How did it develop? What are the future directions? What are some special achievements of your center (awards) and of individual children?)
  7. What are your insights on developing creativity then and now?
  8. What is the required direction the education of talented children should take to prepare children for a better future?
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### **About the Author**

**Hava E. Vidergor** Ph.D. in learning, instruction and teacher education with specialization in gifted education from the University of Haifa, Israel. Hava is the director general of HV Gifted Expertise Center and supervises M.A. theses in Gordon and Oranim Academic Colleges. She has 30 years experience in teaching and holding various administrative positions at school. Hava has conducted a large number PD programs for teachers, and has also developed a comprehensive Multidimensional Curriculum Model (MdCM) focusing on thinking skills. She has presented a number of papers, posters and has conducted workshops in international conferences, and published research papers in top gifted education journals. She is the initiator and co-editor of *The Handbook for Teaching Gifted and Able Students* and *Enhancing the Gift of Leadership*. She is an active member of the World Council for Gifted and Talented Children (WCGTC) and currently serves as the Israeli delegate.  
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