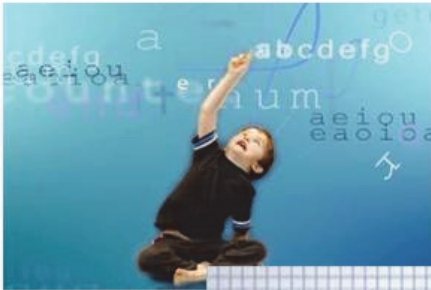


imagine it!



Rediscovering Your Creative Inner-Child



Joseph A. Kayne, PhD

ImagineIt!

REDISCOVERING YOUR CREATIVE INNER-CHILD

JOSEPH A. KAYNE, PHD

**THE IMAGINEIT PROJECT
AMELIA ISLAND, FLORIDA**

The ImagineIt Project
Amelia Island, Florida

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DEDICATION

For my wife Brenda and daughter Shana who
always encourage and support me even when
they remind me my puns and jokes are not as
funny as I think they are.

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Foreword

Imagination is more important than knowledge. For knowledge is limited to all we now know and understand, while imagination embraces the entire world, and all there ever will be to know and understand

—Albert Einstein

On the morning of July 22, 2004, I was preparing for a summer session of the Imagination and Entrepreneurship class I taught for nine years at Miami University. As was my habit, I checked the on-line wire services to catch up on current events or find a potential topic for class discussion. The lead story in that morning's *Washington Post* announced release of the executive summary of the 9/11 Commission report. The opening paragraph began with the following statement. "The National Commission finds the attack on the United States on September 11, 2001 was, above all, a failure of imagination." You might guess that caught my attention.

That morning in class, I put the quote up on the board which generated the following conversation.

Professor: What do you think the 9/11 Commission means by "a failure of imagination?"

Student: No one imagined anyone had the balls to launch that kind of attack against the U.S. (NOTE: It was a summer session and a bit more informal.)

Student: We didn't think we were that vulnerable.

Student: No one believed a single plane could cause so much damage to the Twin Towers or the Pentagon.

Professor: All good answers. But let me ask another question. Before 9/11, when you looked at an airplane, what did you see?

Student: A piece of transportation.

Professor: Now how about Al Qaida? What did they see?

Student: A missile with explosives.

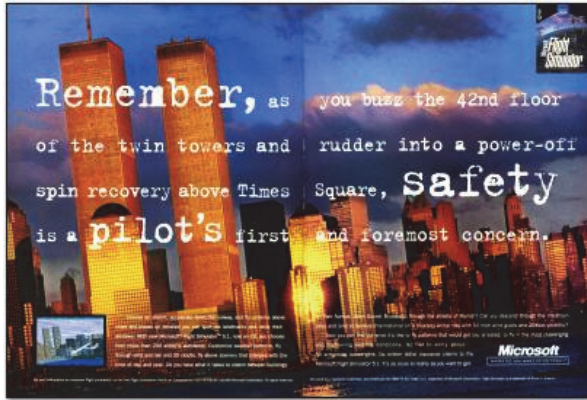
Professor: Exactly. Do you remember watching the video about National Geographic photographer Dewitt Jones and how he encourages us to look at the ordinary and see the extraordinary? Unfortunately, Al Qaida got the message and we did not.

We did not stop there. The rest of the class was devoted to dissecting this "failure of imagination." How could we not see this possibility? The key proved to be a re-examination of the events on and prior to 9/11 in the context of designing and executing reliable creative processes. The following is a brief summary of what we learned that morning. First, as suggested in the dialogue above, we were captives of long held assumptions. A plane is a plane. But there was one

other false assumption related to the terrorists' *modus operandi*. In every previous sky-jacking, the perpetrators were not suicidal. In fact, they often demanded amnesty or sanctuary for releasing the plane and their hostages. Based on this assumption, the preferred response was to let the situation play out. Why should this time be any different?

Second, where was our sense of curiosity? Why didn't instructors at the flight schools question the fact some of their students were interested in learning to take off and fly planes, but not to land them? Why didn't airlines personnel or security officials question passengers who purchased one-way tickets but did not check any luggage?

Third, why didn't we see the subtle warning signs? Anyone who ever owned Microsoft's Flight Simulator program will tell you they would often crash their virtual planes into the World Trade Center or the Sears Tower. But those incidents were dismissed as just a game or fantasy. As we began drafting the ImagineIt training curriculum and conducting additional research for this book, we thought it would be interesting to include a picture of the packaging for the Microsoft Flight Simulator. We Googled for images and here is what we found, an advertisement in the October 1995 issue of *Computer Life* magazine.



How many people viewed this ad and saw only the marketing of a computer program? Yet, all the clues were there. SAFETY. PILOT. And of course REMEMBER eerily superimposed over the Twin Towers.

Another quote from the Commission report is worth considering as we begin our study of imagination.

At 8:46 on the morning of September 11, 2001, the United States became a nation transformed.

We all experienced that shift in national mood. But 9/11 is just one of the many transformational moments in our lives. Consider the following.

- The success or failure of a business.
- The quality of our children's education.
- The survival of our communities (geographic and relational).
- Events which affect our personal happiness and well-being.

Jung at Heart

Teaching the Imagination class at Miami was not something I had asked to do when I was hired as a professor of entrepreneurship in August 2003. The instructor who previously taught the course decided not to return for the fall semester. The associate dean asked me if I would cover the class for the coming school year. I read the syllabus and book my predecessor had used and agreed to teach the class. I enjoyed the subject matter and the interaction with students, but prior to July 22, 2004, one could hardly call it a passion. I continued to draw on the same syllabus and same book. But something else was in play.

Among his contributions to the science of analytical psychology, Carl Jung introduced the concept of synchronicity. Jung coined the term to describe the meaningful coincidences that occur in our lives. Many of us first heard the word when Sting and the Police released their last studio album *Synchronicity* in 1983. The title track contains the following lyrics which capture the essence of Jung's theory.

*A connecting principle
Linked to the invisible
Almost imperceptible
Something inexpressible
Science unsusceptible
Logic so inflexible
Causally connectable
Yet nothing is invincible¹*

¹ Sting and the Police, "Synchronicity," A&M Records, 1983.

Jung also suggested each of these coincidences, if recognized, represents a chapter in our life narratives. Furthermore, he argued coincidences are not the rare events which amaze us when they occur. How often do we respond to a set of seemingly unrelated situations with the exhortation, "Wow! What a coincidence!" Jung believed that reaction was due less to their infrequency than our inability to recognize coincidences when they occurred.

Thus July 22, 2004 became a synchronistic opportunity which would influence the next chapter of my life. If imagination was as important as the 9/11 commission argued, it was not enough to just teach it from someone else's syllabus or text. I needed to understand it and contribute to the discipline. For the next eight years, this became the central focus of my teaching and research at Miami.

But the story does not end there. In June 2006, I received a call from Richard Tavener, whom I met during my time at the Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation in Kansas City, Missouri. Richard and a colleague Rudy Poe had produced two videos and hours of filmed interviews with thought leaders in creativity and innovation under the name "The ImagineIt Project." Richard was aware of my work at Miami and asked me to become a partner in the venture as a content consultant, developing new products and markets. Was this just one more coincidence? I could hear Carl Jung whispering to me, "See! I told you so!"

In December 2011, I retired from Miami University to become CEO of the ImagineIt Project. Since then we have developed new content and several products for both the corporate and education markets (Appendix H). The one thing we had not yet done was capture, in one place, what we have learned or

how our approach to becoming a more creative individual evolved over the past eight years. This book hopefully serves that purpose.

Dr. Joseph A. Kayne
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