

CHAPTER THREE

Crayon Breakers = Creative Leaders

Creative Leaders Break Crayons

**Becoming a Creative Leader equals
becoming a Crayon Breaker**

Think of a truly effective and productive leader you have been impressed with in business, industry, education, sports, the arts, government or politics.

Chances are, you are thinking of someone who broke crayons and is or was a Crayon Breaker.

Effective leaders from all nationalities must be risk takers, curious about many things, challenge most things, willing to go against the norm or the accepted ways of doing things. Managers stay with the accepted, the usual, the normal, the ways things are or have been. The very nature of a leader is to break crayons.

Some of my favorite leaders have been:

Walt Disney creator of amusement parks, movies,
tv shows

Norman Schwarzkopf military general

Mother Theresa social and medical services

Lee Iacocca automobile manufacturing

Jack Welch General Electric

John Sculley Pepsi VP, Apple Computer—President & CEO

Ted Turner CNN, TBS, Atlanta Braves & Hawks

In each case these leaders have been successful because they **broke crayons** and were or are **Crayon Breakers**.

It does not matter whether you are a leader of a major corporation, a religious movement, a local softball baseball, a bowling team or a PTA committee.

To be highly effective you need to break crayons. You need to capitalize on some of the traits of Crayon Breakers described in Chapter One.

- | | |
|---|------------------------|
| 1. sensitive | 17. ingenious |
| 2. not motivated
by money | 18. energetic |
| 3. sense of destiny | 19. sense of humor |
| 4. adaptable | 20. self-actualizing |
| 5. tolerant of ambiguity | 21. self-disciplined |
| 6. observant | 22. self-knowledgeable |
| 7. perceive world
differently | 23. specific interests |
| 8. see possibilities | 24. divergent thinker |
| 9. question asker | 25. curious |
| 10. can synthesize
often intuitively | 26. open-ended |
| 11. able to fantasize | 27. independent |
| 12. flexible | 28. severely critical |
| 13. fluent | 29. non-conforming |
| 14. imaginative | 30. confident |
| 15. intuitive | 31. risk taker |
| 16. original | 32. persistent |

You need to challenge the typical, the standard and the customary ways of doing things in order to make progress and succeed.

Chances are, you will not be liked; such as a box of broken, used crayons often is not liked by children, because you don't do things neatly, orderly, the usual or old way(s) or are you predictable. Most definitely you won't. But effective and productive leading often requires messiness.

Creativity produces change and change often produces creativity. Most of us, even the highly creative, resist change. By resisting change we resist creativeness because it requires us to change how, where, when, and why we do things. As we become more and more creative we need to understand the stress that change creates for ourselves and others. Because some of us experience a great deal of stress we often need to pace our creativeness slowly in order to win others as supporters or our creativeness.

Think of a situation where you are a leader or would like to be the leader. Perhaps at work, your church, your child's school or your school.

List what crayons you believe need to be broken:

- a. policies
- b. rules
- c. regulations
- d. procedures
- e. systems
- f. way equipment is being used
- g. equipment or tools
- h. furniture arrangements
- i. teams or groups

Let's say you chose the office copying machine. How might you break this crayon?

First, you might consider where it is located.

Second, you might consider the room it is in. Is it big enough? Is it too big? Does it need anything? Windows, another door, shelving, cabinets, waste baskets.

Third what might be done with the scrap paper?

Fourth, do you need more colors of paper?

Fifth, who is responsible for making copies?

Sixth, how are you keeping records of the copies being made? If by hand, by whom? If by machine, does this method give you all the information you need? Is it accurate enough?

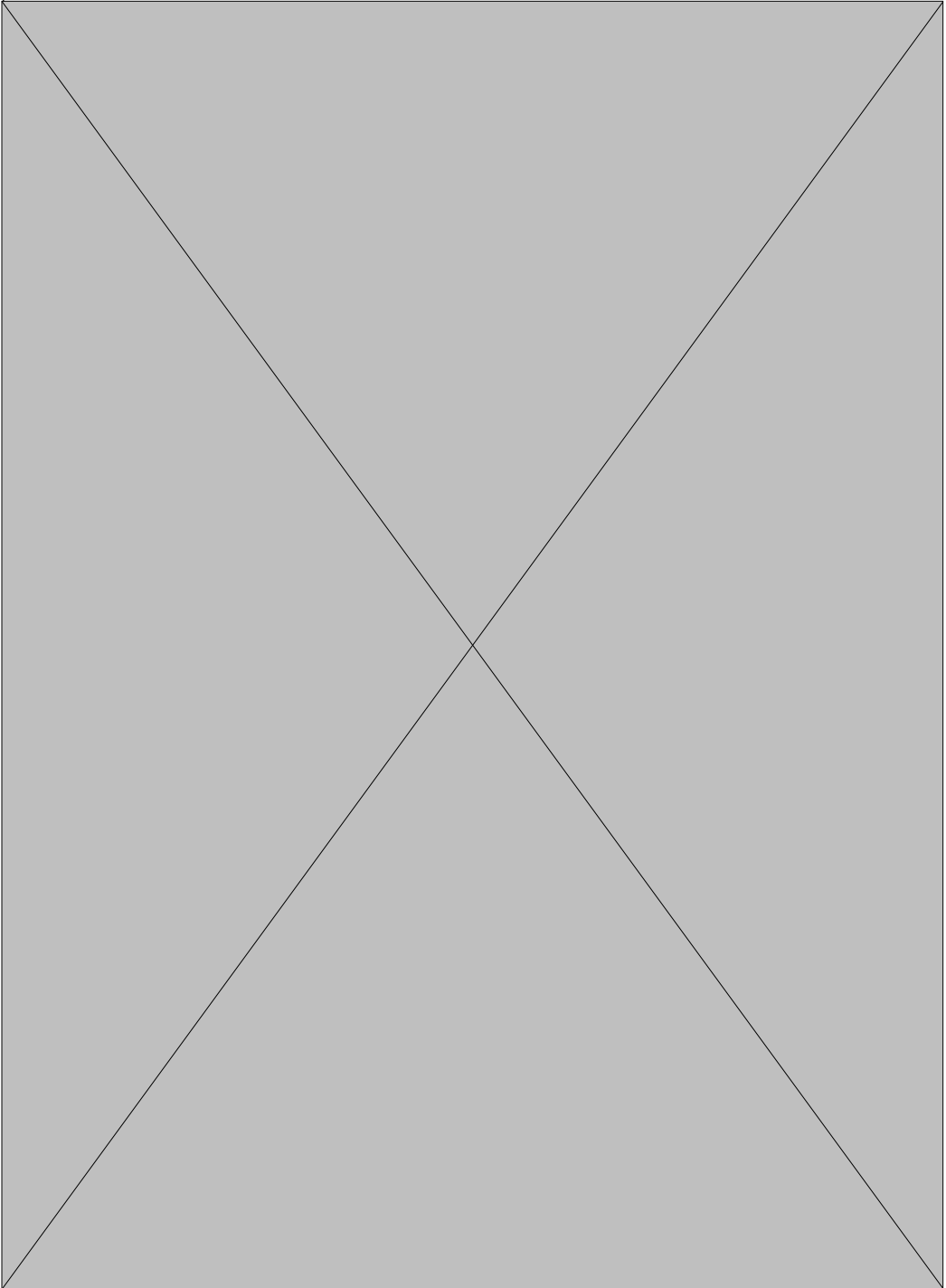
This is a sample method for how you might **break a crayon** in your office as a leader, whether you are the **Leader** or simply one of the **leaders**.

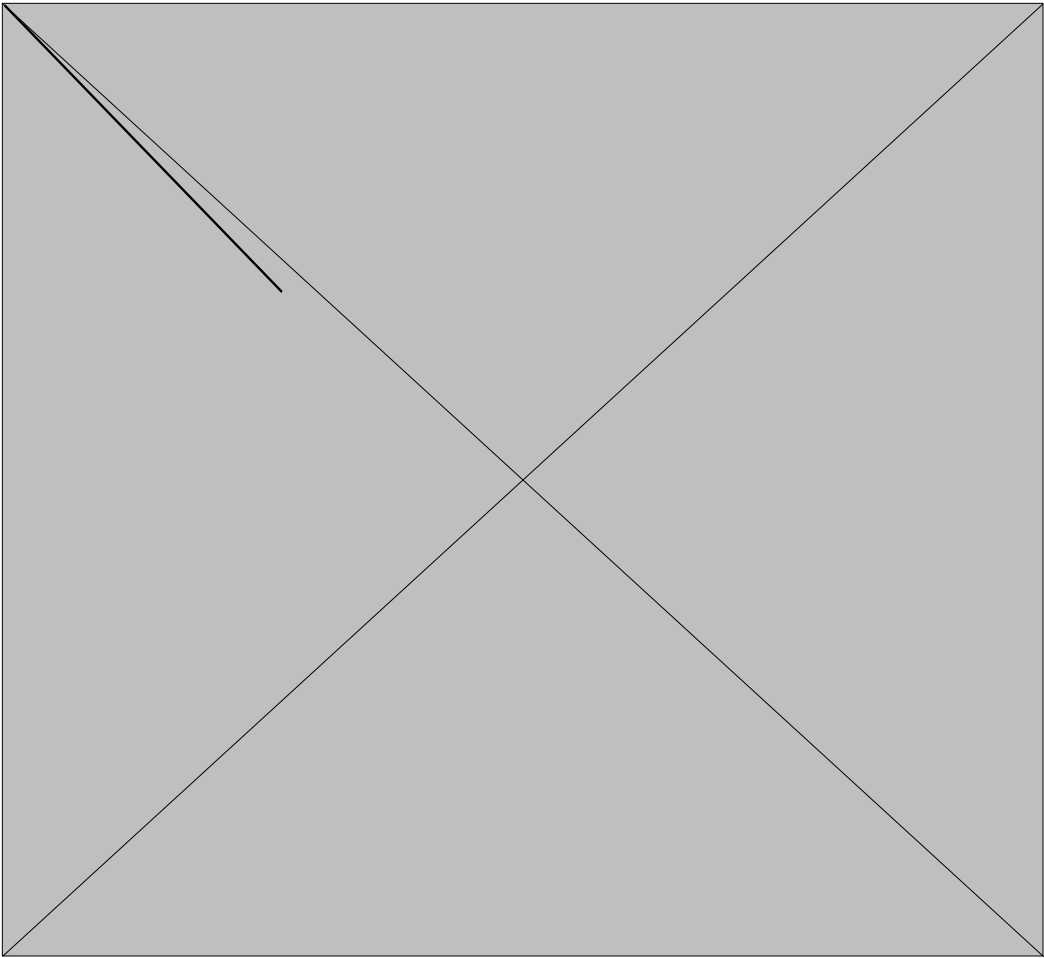
Breaking crayons requires the use of questions, questions and more questions. You need to remember you are not necessarily looking for immediate answers or solutions. You are looking for:

- possibilities
- alternatives
- basic reasons
- new perspectives
- paradigms.

One of the difficulties of asking questions (breaking crayons), is that people can become defensive and start justifying their existing ways of doing things. By justifying the existing they may resist becoming open to looking for potentially improved future solutions.

Review the following chart and add the leaders you have chosen that are not already listed. Then mark off the traits you feel they exercised.





Now choose a situation you are currently leading in or would like to be the leader in. How might you apply some of the traits? Jot down some notes of how you could apply these traits, one by one or in combinations or groups.

Traits**Your Notes**

1. sensitive
2. not motivated by money
3. sense of destiny
4. adaptable
5. tolerant of ambiguity
6. observant
7. perceive world differently
8. see possibilities
9. question asker
10. can synthesize, often intuitively
11. able to fantasize
12. flexible
13. fluent
14. imaginative
15. intuitive
16. original
17. ingenious
18. energetic
19. sense of humor
20. self-actualizing
21. self-disciplined
22. self-knowledgeable
23. specific interests
24. divergent thinker
25. curious
26. open-ended
27. independent
28. severely critical
29. non-conforming
30. confident
31. risk taker
32. persistent

Focusing on these one by one or in small groupings for a week to a month will help you strongly increase your leadership skills and your effectiveness and productivity as a valuable leader.

Next time you are asked to lead, break a few crayons, and watch what happens.