<Be an artist right now, to bring more creativity into your work>

The theme of my talk today is, "Be an artist, right now to bring more creativity into your work." Most people, when this subject is brought up, get tense and resist it: "Art doesn't feed me, and right now I'm busy. I have to go to school, get a job, send my kids to lessons ..." You think, "I'm too busy. I don't have time for art." There are hundreds of reasons why we can't be artists right now. Don't they just pop into your head?

We are all born artists. There are so many reasons why we can't be, indeed, we're not sure why we should be. We don't know why we should be artists, but we have many reasons why we can't be. Why do people instantly resist the idea of associating themselves with art? Perhaps you think art is for the greatly gifted or for the thoroughly and professionally trained. And some of you may think you've strayed too far from art. Well you might think this way, but I don't think so.

If you have kids, you know what I mean. Almost everything kids do is art. They draw with crayons on the wall. They dance to Sye's dance on TV, but you can't even call it Sye's dance 'Gangnam style' -- it becomes the kids' own dance. So they dance a strange dance and infect their singing on everyone. Perhaps their art is something only their parents can bear, and because they practice such art all day long, parents honestly get a little tired around kids.

In fact, this is my story. I have a daughter.

When my daughter was 4 years old (Now, she is 13), she was dancing to the music at home all day. In particular, when she heard her favorite song, she would pick out the suitable costume for dance, dress up and forced us to view her own artwork. It was possible for us to enjoy her stages for one year because we were parents. To be honest, I felt like ten years have passed.

Anyway, kids will sometimes perform monodramas -- playing house is indeed a monodrama or a play. And some kids, when they get a bit older, start to lie. Usually parents remember the very first time their kid lies. They're shocked. "Now you're showing your true colors," Mom says. She thinks, "Why does he take after his dad?" She questions him, "What kind of a person are you going to be?"

But you shouldn't worry. The moment kids start to lie is the moment storytelling begins. They are talking about things they didn't see. It's amazing. It's a wonderful moment. Parents should celebrate. "Hurray! My boy finally started to lie!" All right! It calls for celebration. For example, a kid says, "Mom, guess what? I met an alien on my way home."

"Um, in front of the supermarket."

When you have a conversation like this, the kid has to come up with the next thing to say to be responsible for what he started. Soon, a story develops. Of course this is an infantile story, but thinking up one sentence after the next is the same thing a professional writer like Shakespeare did. In essence, they are not different. Roland Barthes once said of Flaubert's novels, "Flaubert did not write a novel. He merely connected one sentence after another. The eros between sentences, that is the essence of Flaubert's novel." That's right -- a novel, basically, is writing one sentence, then, without violating the scope of the first one, writing the next sentence. And you continue to make connections.

"One morning, as Gregor Samsa was waking up from anxious dreams, he discovered that in his bed he had been changed into a monstrous verminous bug." Flaubert "Yes, it's the first sentence of Franz Kafka's "The Metamorphosis." Writing such an unjustifiable sentence and continuing in order to justify it, Kafka's work became the masterpiece of contemporary literature. Kafka did not show his work to his father.

He was not on good terms with his father. On his own, he wrote these sentences. Had he shown his father, "My boy has finally lost it," he would've thought.

And that's right. Art is about going a little nuts and justifying the next sentence, which is not much different from what a kid does. A kid who has just started to lie is taking the first step as a storyteller. Kids do art. They don't get tired and they have fun doing it. I was in Jeju Island a few years ago. When kids are on the beach, most of them love playing in the water. But some of them spend a lot of time in the sand, making mountains and seas -- well, not seas, but different things -- people and dogs, etc. But parents tell them, "It will all be washed away by the waves." In other words, it's useless. There's no need. But kids don't mind. They have fun in the moment and they keep playing in the sand. Kids don't do it because someone told them to. They aren't told by their boss or anyone, they just do it.

When you were little, I bet you spent time enjoying the pleasure of primitive art. When I ask my students to write about their happiest moment, many write about an early artistic experience they had as a kid. Learning to play piano for the first time and playing four hands with a friend, or performing a ridiculous skit with friends looking like idiots -- things like that. Or the moment you developed the first film you shot with an old camera. They talk about these kinds of experiences. You must have had such a moment. What do you think that art makes us feel happy? Because it's not work. Work doesn't make you happy, does it? Mostly it's tough.

The French writer Michel Tournier has a famous saying. It's a bit mischievous, actually. "Work is against human nature. The proof is that it makes us tired." Right? Why would work tire us if it's in our nature? Playing doesn't tire us. We can play all night long. To be honest, as I get old, It is hard for me to play all night long. If we work overnight, we should be paid for overtime. Why? Because it's tiring and we feel fatigue.

But kids, usually they do art for fun. It's playing. They don't draw to sell the work to a client or play the piano to earn money for the family. Of course, there were kids who had to. You know this gentleman, right? He had to tour around Europe to support his family -- Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart --but that was centuries ago, so we can make him an exception. Unfortunately, at some point our art -- such a joyful pastime -- ends. Kids have to go to lessons, to school, do homework and of course they take piano or ballet lessons, but they aren't fun anymore. You're told to do it and there's competition. How can it be fun? If you're in elementary school and you still draw on the wall, you'll surely get in trouble with your mom. Besides, if you continue to act like an artist as you get older, you'll increasingly feel pressure -- people will question your actions and ask you to act properly.
Here's my story: I was year eight and I participated in a drawing contest at school. I was trying my best, and my teacher came around and asked me, "What are you doing, In Sun?" "I'm drawing diligently," I said. "Why are you using only black?" Indeed, I was eagerly coloring the sketchbook in black. And I explained, "It's a very dark night and a crow is perching on a branch." Then my teacher said, "Really? And then he just was laughing at me. Well, In-Sun, you may not be good at drawing but you have a talent for storytelling." Or so I wished. He said. You were supposed to draw the school buildings or the trees, etc., but I was coloring everything in black, so he dragged me out of the group. There were a lot of girls there as well, so I was utterly mortified. None of my explanations or excuses were heard, and I really got it big time. If he was an ideal teacher, he would have responded like I said before, "In-Sun may not have a talent for drawing, but instead you have a gift for making up stories," and he would have encouraged me. But such a teacher is seldom found. Later, I grew up and entered the college of arts and got to have several exhibitions. Someday I went to Europe's galleries — when I was working on a Ph.D in the Moscow national university — and I thought this was really unfair. Look what I found.

Works like this were hung in Basel while I was listening to a startling admonition. Look at this. Doesn't it look just like wallpaper? Contemporary art, I later discovered, isn't explained by a lame story like mine. No crows are brought up. Most of the works have title, Untitled. Anyway, contemporary art in the 20th century is about doing something weird and filling the void with explanation and interpretation -- essentially the same as I did. Of course, my work was very amateur, but let's turn to more famous examples.

This is Picasso's. He stuck handlebars into a bike seat and called it "Bull's Head." Sounds convincing, right? Next, a urinal was placed on its side and called 'Fountain'. That was Duchamp. So filling the gap between explanation and a weird act with stories -- that's indeed what contemporary art is all about. Picasso even made the statement, "I draw not what I see but what I think." Yes, it means I didn't have to draw school building. I wish I knew what Picasso said back then. I could have argued better with my teacher. Unfortunately, the little artists within us are choked to death before we get to fight against the oppressors of art. We get locked in. That's our tragedy.

I wrote a resource book lately describing the mental development of children that takes place as they work in art. These are children's works. I would like to introduce one of students' works who drew a desert. Normally, the desert is symbolic for death and desiccation. But this student drew looking on the dynamic and wriggly side of things in the desert. His artwork is second only to Picasso, because he draw not what he saw but what he thought.

What should we do then? Yes, that's right. Right now, we need to start our own art. Right this minute, we can turn off TV, log off the Internet, get up and start to do something. Where I teach students in drawing school, there's a course called 'Drawing through Drama'. In this course, all students must put on a play to draw. Students at first wonder why they actually do it, but later they have so much fun. I rarely see children who are miserable doing a play. In school, the military or even in a mental institution, once you make people do it, they enjoy it. I saw this happen everywhere -- many people had fun doing plays.

Research suggests creative people are actually happier than everyone else. It means that when we feel happy, we can be more creative. Actually what many researchers are finding is it's not necessarily the reality that shapes our creativity, but the lens through which your brain views the world that shapes your reality. And if we can change the lens through art, not only can we change your happiness and creativity, we can change every single educational and business outcome at the same time. Which means we can reverse the formula. If we can find a way of becoming positive and happy in the present, then our brains work even more successfully as we're able to work harder, faster and more creatively. Art is very helpful to see the essence of our reality

I have another experience: In my drawing class at school, I give students a special assignment. -- many who are not good at writing and think they can't write. It can be a simple theme: Write about the most unfortunate experience in your life. There's one condition: You must write like crazy. Like crazy! I walk around and encourage them, "Come on, come on!" They have to write like crazy for an hour or two. They only get to think for the first five minutes.

The reason I make them write like crazy even in drawing class is because when you write slowly and lots of thoughts cross your mind, the artistic devil creeps in. This devil will tell you hundreds of reasons why you can't write: "People will laugh at you. This is not good writing! What kind of sentence is this? Look at your handwriting!" It will say a lot of things. You have to run fast so the devil can't catch up. The really good writing I've seen in my class was not from the assignments with a long deadline, but from the 20-minute crazy writing students did in front of me with a pencil. The students go into a kind of trance. After 20 minutes, they can draw without knowing what they're drawing. And in this moment, the nagging devil disappears.

So I can say this: It's not the hundreds of reasons why one can't be an artist, but rather, the one reason one must be that makes us artists. Why we cannot be something is not important. Most artists became creative because of the one reason. When we put the devil in our heart to sleep and start our own art, enemies appear on the outside. Mostly, they have the faces of our parents. Sometimes they look like our spouses, but they are not your parents or spouses. They are devils. Devils. They came to Earth briefly transformed to stop you from being artistic, from becoming artists. And they have a magic question. When we say, "I think I'll try acting. There's a drama school in the community center," or "I'd like to learn Italian songs," they ask, "Oh, yeah? A play? What for?" The magic question is, "What for?" But art is not for anything. Art is the ultimate goal. It saves our souls and makes us live happily. It helps us express ourselves and be happy without the help of alcohol or drugs. So in response to such a pragmatic question, we need to be bold. "Well, just for the fun of it. Sorry for having fun without you," is what you should say. 'I'll just go ahead and do it anyway.' The ideal future I imagine is where we all have multiple identities, at least one of which is an artist.

Once I was in Chicago and got in a cab. I took the backseat, and in front of me I saw something related to a play. So I asked the driver, "What is this?" He said it was his profile. "Then what are you?" I asked. "An actor," he said. He was a cabbie and an actor. I asked, "What roles do you usually play?" He proudly said he played King Lear. King Lear. "Who is it that can tell me who I am?" -- a great line from King Lear. That's the world I dream of. Someone is a golfer by day and writer by night. Or a cabbie and an actor, a banker and a painter, secretly or publicly performing their own arts.

Recently, for many overseas K-pop fans, Psy emerged out of nowhere with his stunningly popular 'Gangnam Style' dance track and hilar'ious music video. The release on July 15 of 'Gangnam Style' has seen his profile explode internationally. How did this video become famous? I found out this video was born with creativity from an interview with Psy.
…. How did the horse-riding dance come about? I’ve always tried to come up with funny dancing since I was young. It’s got to be funny. I can’t pull it off with serious dances. That’s not me. So I’d say the choreography in the video has my whole life melted into it. Also my choreography team and I often have dance battles just for fun. That’s normally when my staff comes up with hilarious and yet great dance moves. These things don’t come out during serious meetings. And I have drawn all pose for dance, have kept scribbling while having fun and we create them.

From Psy we can capture how to be creative. Draw to music, Draw by touch, Draw with making differences, Draw some gesture, , Draw the space between, Draw what we think. Doodle freely!

At this moment, I want to say why art is helpful for us to be creative? Because art is such a good tool to make creativity. By its very nature, drawing takes us out of our worrying minds and into the wide open space of peace and possibility where inspiration comes to meet us. You know that many scientist, artist, musician are creative through doodling, sketching, drawing. So if we want to be creative, we need to make a habit to keep art.

In 1990, Martha Graham, the legend of modern dance, came to Korea. The great artist, then in her 90s, arrived at Gimpo Airport and a reporter asked her a typical question: "What do you have to do to become a great dancer? Please any advice for aspiring Korean dancers?"

Now, she was the master. This photo was taken in 1948 and she was already a celebrated artist. In 1990, she was asked this question. And here's what she answered: "Just do it." Wow. I was touched. Only those three words and she left the airport. That's it. So what should we do to be creative now? Let's use the art way to be creative, right now. Right away. How? Just do it!...Let's try to express your idea as an art form — as a digital painting, recorded song, drawing, taking a photo. Just be creative in your work and life.

Thank you.