

# Quadrant II Newsletter

Research shows that the difference between leaders who derail in their career and those that soar to great heights is social skills. Social skills appear in the second quadrant of Stephen R. Covey's Importance-Urgency matrix: social skills are important to a career but not urgent (Covey is author of the top-selling business book *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*). Quadrant II provides an opportunity for business and technical professionals to learn and try out new social skills based in science.

6Apr2016, author: Valerie Patrick, PhD, *Secret to Peak Creativity*

## Quotable (*Key Message*)

The ability to be highly creative involves the access of both an unconscious flow mental state and structured consciousness.

## Quantify (*The Science*)

The BVS (Blind Variation, Selective Retention) Theory of Creativity is about the ability to defer judgment and to exercise judgment at the appropriate time and in the appropriate way. For example, blind variation is the process of generating ideas without foresight into their potential for selection and retention. There are many different cognitive processes involved in blind variation including both conscious and subconscious processes and types of reasoning such as the use of analogies. Selective retention is the evaluation or judgment process that follows blind variation. BVS was originally proposed by Donald T. Campbell in a 1960 paper titled "Blind Variation and Selective Retention in Creative Thought as in Other Knowledge Processes" and has been further studied and elaborated upon by Dean Keith Simonton (1985, 1988, 1999, and so on) and others. Simonton explains more recently ("Debating the BVS

Theory of Creativity,” *Creativity Research Journal*, 2011, 32(4), p. 381-387) that BVSR is not a necessary and sufficient condition for creativity, rather, BVSR comes into play in the creative process when expertise alone is insufficient to solve or find a problem in a given situation.

Similarly, peak creativity is also about a balance between two different states. In the case of BVSR, the balance is between the two states of non-judgment and judgment. In the case of peak creativity, the balance is between the two states of internally focused cognition and processing some external stimuli. For example, neuroscientist Dr. Heather Berlin describes the highly creative activity of freestyle rap as a balance between unconscious flow of information from the Default Mode Network and a structured consciousness which is reaction to the audience feedback to the improvisation (see <http://92yondemand.org/top-neuroscience-creativity>). Dr. Berlin has shown through neuroscience that there is a back and forth between these two states when someone is doing freestyle rap.

## Qualify (*Put into Practice*)

What better way to experience a state of peak creativity than to try freestyle rapping! Below are the recommended steps to take to give freestyle rap a try (from: <https://www.quora.com/How-can-I-become-a-good-freestyle-rapper>). You could have a “learn how to freestyle rap” party and get your friends in on the experience.

The first step is to train your brain to say words to a beat, to rhyme at certain places, and, most importantly, to keep going even when you don’t have a word to say. Start by listening to some great rap to get the feel for the beat and rhyme needed in freestyle (for example, science rapper Baba Brinkman who you can find on YouTube here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ROgR3nK6ayk&list=RDR0gR3nK6ayk#t=177>). When you are ready to give it a try, rap over some instrumentals, such as can be found on the Hip Hop Instrumental Station on Pandora.

If you want to improve after the first step, then the second step is to create rhyme schemes, and memorize them by rapping them over a beat (from the Hip Hop Instrumental Station on Pandora) for 2 minutes straight. Each day or week, create 5 new and clever rhyme schemes and then memorize them. These will become your “pocket rhymes” that your brain will return to when trying to finish a verse during freestyle rap. The concept of “pocket rhymes” for freestylers is analogous to guitar players who incorporate chords, or memorized finger patterns, into their improvisations and then play off those.

To further improve, the third step would be to develop the ability for “scatting” over the beat. Scatting, or making rapping sounds without focusing on creating words, is done by imitating a flow pattern without using words. Scatting gives you the freedom to focus solely on improving and expanding your flow capabilities. For inspiration on scatting, listen to Eminem, Nas, or Big L.

The fourth step would be to play a game called Word Play with your friends to build your rhyming capacities. In Word Play, your friends throw random words at to you while you are freestyling and you try to incorporate those words into your rhyme schemes, as either words to rhyme against, or as a topic for your freestyle. You can also play Word Play on your own by using a random word generator on the Internet.

The fifth and final step is practice, practice, practice.

## Quip (*Fun*)



Like when American Idol judge Jennifer Lopez coaches contestants to “just let it go,” she really means a balance between “let it go” and structured consciousness to reach the peak of creativity.

## Quest (*Resources*)

Fulcrum Connection LLC believes that barriers to working together can be eliminated to unleash the power of collaboration in order to best address organization’s and society’s challenges. The way we eliminate these barriers is to use and make available tools and techniques that are rigorously refined and validated with research findings and with repeated use in organizational settings.

Dr. Valerie Patrick, Founder and President of Fulcrum Connection LLC, is an expert on the people engagement side of technical project management. Dr. Patrick is a Certified Professional Facilitator who can collaborate with you to plan, prepare, and execute engagements that are productive and rewarding experiences for all concerned. Dr. Patrick also provides training, consulting, and keynotes on facilitation, teamwork, collaboration, creativity, innovation,



social intelligence, change management, and thriving on a steep learning curve. Contact Dr. Patrick ([valerie.patrick@fulcrumconnection.com](mailto:valerie.patrick@fulcrumconnection.com) or text 412-742-9675) to set up an exploratory call. Ask about the new Performance Acceleration Package for technical teams.

Listen to the interview with John Vespasian in Episode 12 of “Science of Success: Social Secrets” podcast here:

<http://scienceofsuccess.libsyn.com/podcast>. Also available on iTunes and Stitcher Radio and all comments are welcome and encouraged!

Also see the companion blog post about the power of context to put content to work here: <http://fulcrumconnection.com/blog/power-context-put-content-work/>.

## About Fulcrum Connection LLC

Fulcrum Connection specializes in instructional design, training, speaking, facilitation and consulting to develop skills in leadership, innovation, sustainability, troubleshooting teamwork, and managing technical professionals.