

Defining Creativity S1E19: Harold Popp transcript

Debbi: Hi, everyone. Thank you for joining me for this episode of *Defining Creativity*, a podcast that explores where and how creativity is found. I'm your host, Debbi Ponella, a creativity researcher, cultivator, and devotee. On today's episode, we're joined by...

Harold: My name is Harold Popp. I've spent my lifetime and career teaching, sharing, and I've taught 56 years in all kinds of manner of music, almost every kind of music courses, and I've done conducting, I've played trombone, professionally, and I have been involved in composition.

So my thrust throughout my entire life has been dealing with creativity, and as a matter of fact, I've taught a lot of courses, but the one that has meant the absolute most to me, the most to me personally, and I think to my students, has been a course called "Discovering the Creative Impulse," where the whole thrust of that course is to help students from all kinds of countries, from all kinds of majors, discover who they are as creative beings.

Debbi: Well, I'm very excited to have you here talking to me today, and I'm going to be transparent right up front and say that not only are you, Dr. Harold Popp, but I am lucky to be able to call you Dad.

Harold: Thank you.

Debbi: So, I have had many conversations with you throughout the years, and I've seen many examples, but I'm excited to take this opportunity in this format to discuss creativity with you.

Harold: Good.

Debbi: So, I want to sort of do this in maybe slightly chronological order, knowing that things will jump all over the place because everything in life is connected and interconnected, and so I know that it won't stay that way, but at the first, I'd at least like to start with your childhood, childhood experiences. How they, your experiences, maybe some of the people, influence your creativity, whether that was with inspiration or with stifling... and how you got on this path really embracing and being aware of your creativity.

Harold: Without really knowing what to call it when I was a young child, my mother, who had been a Latin and English teacher, had me memorizing poetry, reading. I cannot remember a time when I couldn't read books. I just absorbed books, and singing or making noises, making rhythms. In fact, I used to get in all kinds of trouble in elementary school because I would be disruptive because in my head... my mind was not in that classroom, but my mind was doing other kinds of things, and I would hear various kinds of things.

My father, who was an American Baptist pastor, did a lot of reading. Both of them were highly influential on me. Everybody in my family was musical, but these kinds of experiences that I was absorbing, I used to read a set of books called the Book of Knowledge, and it didn't make any difference what it was. I wanted to read mythology. Now, that did not translate to doing well in school necessarily, but I struggled with that except when it came to music or art or some kind of expression.

If there was any kind of opportunity for me to express what I was thinking, what I was feeling, I really relished that, and that's what I did the very best with. I think that those kinds of opportunities were invaluable to me, and what it did for me was to begin to realize that what I really, what one of the driving forces was, I wanted to share with other people.

I mentioned my mother, she was a self-taught person, but she and I, on Sunday afternoons very often, she would sit at the piano and I would be playing trombone. We played through books of solos. And I have no idea whether it was any good or not, that's not the point. We were enjoying what we were doing. And I could still quote several of the poems she had me read or memorize. One week, I think I was a freshman or sophomore in high school, just to see if I could do it, I read 45 books. I didn't get any schoolwork done, but I read books.

So, I just absorbed those kinds of things. And the further I got along in my education, the more I wanted to share ideas. I'll have to say that there were times when the ideas I had that I wanted to share, other people couldn't figure out, what in the world is he talking about? So, that's kind of a two-way street as far as being a good thing and maybe not a good thing. But at the same time, it was important to me.

And the further I went in my education and all the degrees that I have and all the years of teaching, I think that driving force, I just had an insatiable appetite to want to share with other people. And the more I began to understand what creativity was all about, the more I begin to realize, hey, everybody's creative. We can all make connections, isn't it an amazing thing?

The one thing that I can really pin my belief on is that everybody is creative, so that ties all humankind together. But the fascinating paradox is, everybody is creative in their own way. So, for everybody, for them to communicate, to understand, to plumb the depths of reality in a way that other areas simply are not open to them, they're all different. You can't put creativity in a box and hand it to somebody because it's not their box.

But those things, I didn't understand them as a young child. But I was part of them. And the further I got along in life, the more I began to realize what I've just been talking about and how critically important being in an environment that was nurturing of these kinds of things, of freedom. I wasn't squelched. I wasn't crushed. I was not driven to be the best or the whatever. I was just driven to understand more and the desire to want to share that understanding, those kinds of ideas with other people. How's that for a short answer?

Debbi: [8:20] So, you talked a little bit about some of the struggles in school, though...

Harold: Oh my.

Debbi: Were there any situations there that... You say you weren't squelched, but I think that maybe, maybe it was your creativity that helped you get through some of them.

Harold: Oh, yes. Yes, and they didn't stop me. I'll take third grade for an example. I don't remember anything about third grade except, I spent most of the year standing in a corner because I was, I was making noises, because my mind was not in that room. My mind was doing other kinds of things, and I just didn't fit sometimes with the classroom or what was expected. Oh, I remember. I remember enjoying some of the things—geography and whatever—but my thinking was someplace else much of the time, much of the time, and I didn't know why, but I was not pressured by my parents. My parents tried to be very understanding, they tried to help, and they did help, but those kinds of things, hmm.

Debbi: So, I know that you said books were a good way for you to release...

Harold: Oh yeah...

Debbi: ...and to explore and maybe give you an alternate reality and get that brain going, right.

Harold: Yeah.

Debbi: And music, obviously, you said, so

Harold: Right.

Debbi: But beyond that. Creativity goes so far beyond that. What are some of the other experiences? Say, I know you worked on a farm, for instance.

Harold: Yep.

Debbi: ...and some of those other things.

Harold: [09:58] Sure. Well, let me go back to the childhood first and say that, I found myself experimenting with things. I love to work with wood and I would create the most bizarre kinds of things and I would find ways of putting wood together. I would find ways of coming up... something to, some way to do something better, because it worked and I enjoyed doing it. So, I spent a lot of time with wood. One of the things I love about wood is: no two pieces of wood are the same. Okay, same as with people.

Working on a farm was wonderful. I had unbelievable experiences that I would not trade for anything. And we had to work with crops. We had to work with machinery that broke down and we had to be inventive even with those things. Working with animals—gee. I even helped two veterinarians perform a cesarean on a cow. How's that for an unusual? You know they wouldn't think of a college professor as being out there and doing those kinds of things.

But it was always working out difficulties and there was all kinds of opportunity to doing it in a creative manner. The people who could not see beyond just what they thought was reality of the little pieces in front of them couldn't cope with them, didn't make it work. My father was an avid gardener. He grew enough produce to feed the whole county and in fact that's what he tried to do. But just to understand that process of growing, that process of developing—that all is part of this understanding of growth, maturity, creativity, sowing, harvesting, all those things were part of my experience on the farm.

I didn't even mind the hard work because I was enjoying it. I knew I wasn't going to grow up to be a farmer, but I just relished the experience of being involved with the entire process, whether it was animals, whether it was crops, whether it was—oh boy, did I get tired of building fences. But at any rate you find creative ways, you find ways to deal with that.

And I'll have to say, when I was cultivating corn in the Iowa cornfields from probably five o'clock in the morning so we could take off in the heat of the day, I was singing. I sang up and down those corn... and I knew nobody could hear me. But I'll have to tell you, I swallowed a lot of Iowa dirt, but my mind was always going. I just had to. I was forced to. And I loved it.

Debbi: You mentioned the livestock, the crops, the machinery. What about the people? What kind of influence, and not just in the practical, but I know you got yourself in some trouble, too, being creative, but the people. Talk a little bit about that culture.

Harold: [13:14] Did you have to bring that up? Okay. Yeah, the people, of course, this really started with my parents. My parents were rural people, basically where they came from. And I've always loved rural people. I've always loved rural life. I could relate to them, the working together, and even on something like a day of corn shelling, all the neighbors got together in a grainery or a corn crib to help each other out. That kind of camaraderie, that kind of help, and serving and being considerate of others has always been a part of what I feel is important.

Debbi: [14:10] A lot of what you were talking about on the farm or in various ways is creative problem solving... without it being a book, a textbook learning. You were learning it practically.

Harold: That's right. And all of those kinds of experiences, even though that I would get myself in trouble here or there or whatever. In my seventh grade geography class, all of a sudden, "Harold, come up here, stand in front of the room." "What?" "Yeah, well, if you're gonna sit there and whistle, I want you to whistle for the entire classroom." What was that?

But those kinds of experiences that I had helped me to understand, especially when I got into my career of teaching, helped me to understand what students were going through, why this one didn't quite fit there, why it didn't fit here, what they were thinking. And I don't know that I'm worthy of using the word compassionate, but I understood what kinds of things they were going through. Oh yeah, I made my mistakes, too.

Debbi: Respected the diversity of where people come and different perspectives. It's so important.

Harold: Oh yeah, it really is.

Debbi: Before we leave high school, I do wanna bring up one name, Stan Bennett, who was your best friend in high school, who I met many years later. In fact, I first met him when you first met your grandson in East Hill Mountain, Maryland.

Harold: That's right, that's right.

Debbi: That is where we happened to get together and you met my first born. But the stories, you guys created and invented all sorts of things. So at least give me a top, maybe two, or at least one invention.

Harold: [15:54] Okay, one of the things that we did, I had a record player. And, what we did, this is probably before the automatic stuff came on the market. We invented a mercury switch that could turn on and off at certain times. I mean, we put together the darndest things you've ever seen. Also, growing up, we didn't have a TV in our household, but their household had an old black and white TV. One of the things that Stan and I, and I'll blame it on him, since it was his house, but we, and we got in trouble for this too.

We drilled a hole in the floor back by the seats and drilled a hole in the floor up by the TV, and we ran lines, and we had a solenoid control that we could sit back in the chair and change the channels. You can't imagine when his father, I'm glad I wasn't at his house, when his father found out that we drilled holes in the floor, but, yeah, all those kinds of things were fun.

We were into something, and as a matter of fact, Stan went into education and we could talk about, hmm, any kind of thing, and we could go off in our own tangents, but when he passed away, what was he doing? He was in the process of inventing an automatic kitty litter cleaner.

So, you know, creativity is not just single-faceted, it's multifaceted, and the people that enjoy life the most, and he and I are good examples of it, are those who are willing to open themselves up to the challenge and have courage to explore.

Debbi: [18:12] Talking about how it's multifaceted, obviously there's lots of creativity, and you explored it in lots of ways, not just, so many people think of creativity with the arts, or they specifically think of that kind of creativity as different, but as you grew and as you developed, and now you're going to college and you're getting and, you know, degrees and exploring different career opportunities and things. How did the creativity, and even how did music and arts and reading and the humanities, how did you see those applying in different ways beyond the arts?

Harold: Okay, well, first of all, I have to say that all the experiences I have had obviously result in who I am, in my interaction, not only interaction with myself, but with those around me. One of the things that this multifaceted kind of a concept allowed me to do in my classes that I taught, university classes especially, was that I could go almost any direction a class wanted to go, we could make it work, we could make it positive.

I could talk to anybody about almost anything, whether it had to do with professional performance, whether it had to do with practical matters, but my mind could immediately connect with what kind of a direction their thinking was, whether I agreed with it or not, their thinking was doing. And you have to be open to creativity, you have to be open. For instance, I had a hardware store person in Portales, New Mexico. I went in and asked if I could find a stud finder. He looked at me and then took me over. He looked at me. Aren't you a college professor? Yes, well, how do you know about a stud finder? She? But you see, all of those experiences combined... If you remained open, all those experience combined can allow you to enjoy so many areas of life and talk to other people about almost anything.

I felt so badly when I played in the Kansas City Philharmonic. I saw people who were maybe a violinist. All they'd ever done was just play a violin. If you talk about violin, fine. You'd talk about baseball, they look at you strange... What? Their life maybe was rich in one way, but it was so limited it was... And we are not hardwired that way. We make ourselves that way. We are hardwired to be in community and to share, and that's been, as you well know, that's been the driving force in my life. I've gotten myself in trouble doing it sometimes, but I feel so deeply about things that I just feel a drive to share those things.

Jonas Salk, polio vaccine, said: "Hope lies in dreams, in imagination and in the courage of those who dare to make dreams into reality." And I'll have to say those are the kinds of things that have kept me somewhat sane and has been the kind of things that I strive for. Erich Fromm, a psychologist who wrote some time ago, said, "Most people die before they are fully born. Creativeness means to be born before one dies. Creativity requires a courage to let go of certainties. And, because of the experiences I've had, especially with other people and all kinds of students, that is something that has been part of my life.

I cannot... I cannot even begin to imagine what my life would have been without a sense of creativity. And yes, I've been in the arts, but it's been everything. Through creativity, you can reach a level of realities. Some people think, oh the arts, they're off someplace in another cloud, but that's not true. It's through that kind of plumbing the depths of our inner being and learning how to express it, which is not always possible in our society or within our communities. You can find a way of looking at reality you can't get any other way. You can't get it through politics. You can't get it through economics. You can't get it through sciences.

There's a part of us, because of who we are, of what kind of a person we are, that is often not allowed to develop in our society. And I wish our communities would understand that. We get so hung up with varying agenda, plural, directions, that we tend to not understand the incredible power that creative thinking can have in our

lives. There's complacency, certainly. Be careful with conformity, and we have so much conformity around us, and people get stuck in that conforming. And then there's comparison.

I know of many, many instances— and this maybe doesn't relate to community, but it does— where people have been crushed by a small little statement. A boy in third grade who's sitting in the front row and singing loudly, and the teacher says, oh, you're singing too loud. I know of instances where that boy never sang again in his life. We find those things in community continuously.

Debbi: Yeah. And part of creativity is that vulnerability. You have to be okay with it, and how can you be okay with it if you're squelched like that? But that vulnerability, and you have to get past the fear of failing. Failing is how we learn.

Harold: Yes. The human psyche is very fragile. So, in my creativity classes, the first thing I have to do, as you have seen, I have to create an environment in which the students will allow themselves a degree of vulnerability. The first kinds of exercises we do are ones that don't have any right answers. It can be whatever their imagination takes them to. And then they begin to realize, hey, in this class, that's acceptable. And we become, in our class, our class always became a community in which there was a willingness to share.

There was not the fear of failure. There was not a fear of bad attitude or rejection. But, so much of that is built into our communities and it is detrimental to what the strength of our communities really could be.

Debbi: And I will say that those classes— and I was in many of your classes, you know, it wasn't—maybe it was in a music school where it was being taught, but it wasn't music students.

Harold: Oh no.

Debbi: These were, you know, Kelley School of Business or Arts Administration— and just to see them connect. They had no idea what they were getting into, those students when they came to your class. But, man, did they grow.

Harold: Yep. You know, I could almost tell you exactly what experiences they had had in the community in which they grew. All people for all times, all cultures for all times, have always had within them, because it's part of being, an inherent drive to express themselves deeply.

Debbi: [27:31] I think that one of the strengths of your teaching as well, looking back on those classes and all those different cultures, is, first of all, you made yourself vulnerable and you showed you care and you made it a safe place to be that way. But also, with all these students from different cultures— I know we had them in our homes so much and you showed not only just an interest, but a respect and you accepted them for who they were and I think that's so valuable.

Harold: In my world music class— and these were large classes, you know it'd be in an amphitheater, 125 or more students—and I had students from all over the world in that class and some of them came in somewhat very tentative, let me say. But when they begin to discover that I really valued what their cultural aspects were in their communities in which they came, that I wanted to know more about them and what they had to say, they would warm up and it was amazing.

You know, I would require in my world music class some kind of a final project, and it was pretty broad what it could be. But then I would say, okay, I have maybe one semester, quite a few different students from Africa, from maybe five or six different countries, and I would say, all of the students from Africa would you meet with me and they would come up in the front wondering, “What in the world is this professor doing?” And I'd say, you know, you people come from different countries.

If, instead of doing a final project, if you would work together and create something that you could use in my classroom to share with the rest of the class, then I'll let that be a substitute for a final project. They would begin to look at each other and these were people from a continent in Africa which is huge, of course. They never had a reason to even talk to each other and they came up with some incredible things. In fact, maybe those are the best class periods that I had. I could sit back and let them have at it.

My Native American group that I always had come in, before they came in, I would tell the students, don't clap for them. They're not here to entertain. And they would sing and drum Lakota Sundance songs. And they

wanted to share with the students. They would tell the students, we came here today to make new friends and to share our prayers with you. And then whoever came, I never knew... In fact, some of them would call in sick to their job just so they could come and drum and sing in my class.

And then they would stand by the door and shake hands with every one of those students as they filed out. I mean, talk about a sense of community, a sense of sharing. We just were able to do a lot of things. And that's all the students recognizing, beginning to recognize, who they are as somebody who has something to say, somebody who has something of worth to share with the world.

Debbi: Evidence of the impact that made specifically is looking through your house, even after downsizing, at the number of musical instruments that were gifted to you from all over the world and CDs that they wanted to share with you. And wow, how special is that?

[31:20] I had made a note to bring up the Native American thing, just because growing up, we lived in New Mexico, we lived in Kansas, we lived in South Dakota, all places with huge Native American populations and different, very different and very different situations. So just briefly, if you want to touch on that but also to throw in there indigenous, you went to New Zealand, took a sabbatical and went over there and studied the Māori music. So, I would just love a little bit of that sort of interaction and how you do that, how you go into that as the outsider and embrace that.

Harold: Well, the first thing you have to be able to create, and this even goes back to what I said about my class, recognizing that the human psyche is very fragile, and you have to have a degree of vulnerability as part of your approach. Well, the same thing is true. You have to show a genuine interest in what they have to say, not what you are telling them. Well, what they have to say, what they have to share, you recognize that there is a depth in what they believe and show them an automatic respect for that. Yeah, where should I start?

Well, okay, yeah, in New Mexico, we went to a lot of powwows. The attitude toward Native Americans there and South Dakota are diametrically opposed. In terms of acceptance, you talk about South Dakota, we're talking about influence still of Little Bighorn type things. And sometimes it's my way or the highway, but it was different in New Mexico. My students from the reservations and the pueblos, the pueblos basically were probably going to be more successful, and the women, the females, the girls were going to be okay. The men had more of a difficult time. But, you know, there are a lot of things to take into consideration as far as the culture is concerned. But when you begin to understand that you can talk with them, and they will begin to share. That is so important.

The Māori in New Zealand. Oh, wow. We had a great time. Before we went, we contacted leaders of the various groups there, and they shared, but they want to share their culture. If anybody is truly interested, because there are too many times that people indicate an interest in somebody else's culture, but it's only to gain something. And if they recognize, no, hey, this guy is really kind of interested in what we have to say, then you can strike up, and you can find so much richness in other cultures that it may be quite alien to your own. But even that, you see, I have gained, I have expanded my understanding, my awareness.

And again, it makes the venue for talking with other people a possibility, a sharing, a communication. And if we had more of that, we would have less trouble in this world.

Debbi: Yeah, sharing. Shared experiences are so valuable. Yes, we're all humans. We all have that creative drive and different things. We're so polarized, and I just feel like... You know, I have this discussion a lot around music, but we can all sit in a concert and listen to the same music and have that shared experience, but the second that we get out and we put on our hat from this camp or that camp, we forget that we all just connected.

We have to understand that the person who is from a different culture or from a different political view or from whatever, there's a reason who they are who they are. And that whole perspective thing and understanding that you don't have to agree with them, but you have to understand that there's a reason and that, you know, there's a history there, and their stories are valuable as well.

Harold: Absolutely, they are. And that has been a highlight in my life, to be able to talk to other people in other kinds of venues, other kinds of cultures, other kinds of belief systems. I suppose there have been times when it's a little bit struggle for me to accept, but I should never give them the feeling that I'm rejecting them, because then any kind of line of communication is immediately truncated.

Debbi: [36:36] We've talked a lot about education, because obviously education is a big part of your life, whether it's your own, because you're just, you say insatiable, but reader, learner, you just have this love of learning that you share. But I wanna get back to education because just to make sure that we cover that, because creativity is so important. But I wanna get there through this way.

One of the things that I feel very strongly about is that all of these things can be cultivated from a very young age, and it doesn't have to be you're teaching creativity, you're teaching the arts, it's just in natural things...

Harold: That's right.

Debbi: ...and in perspectives, and just, I think about how just the fun and the games, and whether you're playing sports or music or whatever, and making those connections and learning those little things without it having to be so structured or so in a curriculum. But one of the things I was thinking about, this isn't young age, but one of the things I was thinking about with perspective is you always taught me to just look at things different ways, and you throw crazy things at me.

Harold: Yeah.

Debbi: And we've talked about that so many times when I was in high school, you'd give me different things to transpose and read duets with you, things like that, that your natural reaction is, yeah, no, how do we do it? There's that problem solving. How do we look at it in a different way? Just this last weekend, I was at your house for dinner. We had this mystery we were solving. And the answer was in the back of the book. You're supposed to read it in the mirror. Well, you handed me the book and I just read the backwards writing.

Harold: Yeah.

Debbi: That's neither here nor there. That doesn't matter in life. But I was able to just look at it and read it a totally different way because, you know, you just look at things differently, right? And those are just really weird and random things that came to mind when I was thinking about perspective and creativity. But it was never, okay, this doesn't work or not that.

Harold: Yeah, it was never structured to keep you in this box. I'm going to give you a couple of quick examples, okay? Here's a negative one. I had a friend who knew the person in charge of music education in New York City. He went to visit this person. And this person said to him, I want to take you to observe a master teacher. Okay. Well, this was in a junior high school. This has been decades ago, okay? And as they got close to the room, students who had been bustling and hustling started to become quiet.

This is when they had those old desks that were connected in rows. Okay. And the students filed in, and they sat in those, and they were basically quiet. Then a matronly lady with a long stick, when the bell rang, stood up, whacked her stick across the table and said, today, I want you to sit with your legs under the chair, under your desk and be quiet. We're going to listen to one of the most wonderful pieces of music ever written.

And the rest of the class period was playing a recording of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony with a lady with a stick patrolling up and down those desks. Talk about the opposite. How much do you think any of those students ever thought about listening to Beethoven's Ninth Symphony again? On the other hand, you have somebody like, uh... "Don't worry, be happy." What...

Debbi: Oh, yeah. Bobby McFerrin.

Harold: Bobby McFerrin. I saw him work with a group of youngsters, elementary youngsters. They were gonna do this percussion and rhythmic thing. And they did it for the Kansas Music Educators. And those kids got up there, they were having a blast just enjoying themselves. And he gave them opportunities to improvise to do this. They were exploring. Those experiences will never leave those kids as long as they live.

And that is going to have or had an influence on their perspective, on their perspective of life, on their perspective of what they can do, and what is inside of them that can be manifested in many different ways. Those are just two examples. Perspective is so important, and perspective comes with understanding. And the more elements that you can understand, the ramifications of those put together just serve to enrich your life.

Harold: [42:00] The arts are essential to humanness. They're so much a part of life that in some cultures, for instance, there are some cultures in Africa that have no word for music because music is so much a part of their life. They're surrounded by it, that part of their daily existence and they form a natural phenomenon to be acknowledged as integral to life as is breathing. And I say that to that precise extent, the arts are among the most powerful, most compelling manifestation of every cultural heritage.

And you can find out, well, you can find out more about history, cultural history, societal history through the arts than any other avenue. You don't find them in some of the other avenues. I feel so strongly about that. Here's another quote. Thomas Hudson said, "Creative activity is more than a mericultural frill. It is a crucial factor of human experience. The means of self-revelation is the basis of empathy with others. It inspires both individualism and responsibility, the giving and the sharing of experience." And Maslow continues that by saying, "We're dealing with a fundamental characteristic inherent in human nature, a potentiality given to all or most human beings at birth, which most often is lost or inhibited as the person gets enculturated." And that drive, that search for meaning is a drive. I've taught for 56 years and there were a lot of changes in students, but there are a few that didn't change.

And one of the things that never changed and will never change is everybody is looking for meaning in life. And that takes all kinds of directions. That takes us all different, different places, but the arts are one of the most significant avenues for us to discover what is deeply inside of us. Because everybody inherently, I believe, is creative.

Debbi: Yeah, and I think making that connection with your own creative impulse, as you would say, I'll plug your book, *Discovering the Creative Impulse*, which was also the title of your class that you taught these last few years. But those connections with yourself, with others, with experiences, with nature, with the world, with community. I talked to Elzbieta Szmyt, who grew up in Poland. And when she was talking about it, one of the big things she said was, "That's humor." She grew up behind the Iron Curtain, it's humor. It's making those connections so you can deal, and adversity, it's getting through adversity and all those types of things.

So, it's the joy in life. It's what sustains us through the trials in life. It's what allows us to be artistic or to appreciate. And I believe it's what allows us, if you're a scientist, to make those connections and make the discoveries. Or if you're an entrepreneur, be the next innovative. It's all making those connections and putting them together in a new way or with people. I really think that it's kind of important. And it starts with education. It starts with, when you're young, it starts with providing environments where people can be all those things we talked about, vulnerable, no fear of failing, or at least get past it and be okay, and have that cultivated and facilitated their development and creativity.

Harold: They're right, exactly. And, you know, we used that Ken Robinson film. And he said, unfortunately, we have created a society that believes the worst thing you can do is make a mistake. Boy, that really hurts. That really hurts. Too often, bottom line, measurable accountability drives the ship that may or may not have a rudder. And we forget our children for the wonders that they really are, they truly are. And sometimes you feel like you're fighting an uphill battle, but it's so critically important. And it was such a reward to see students discover their voice that was unique to them and learn to accept that. Yeah.

Debbi: Accept it and value it and know that others value it and that there is a place for it.

[47:11] All right, well, this podcast is called Defining Creativity, so I have to ask you... From you and your perspective, your unique perspective, how do you define creativity?

Harold: Well, that's a whole other hour. Okay, I'm going to say a couple of things here. First of all, I've got to say, one of the things in which I believe strongly, and I've always felt this, that being creative is a critical important part of being created in the image of our Creator. We have inherent within each of us, and it's different with everybody. We can't expect every... There is nobody in this world that I'd want the rest of the world to be a clone of. So, we're all individuals, and we all have value.

And what we have to say creatively, sometimes people don't ever have a chance to discover that, because of their situation. But I know it's there. And if we can find a way to allow them to discover what really is extant in the deepest recesses of who they are, we won't have to be content with being less than who we really are. That sounds incredible, maybe not make sense. You've got to think about that for a while, I suppose. But being creative is far more than being able to sing a new tune.

It may be something just to take whatever materials you have in your hand to invent something that nobody else has thought of. To bring to light something new that has never been, quote, creative, that has never been put together. And we all have that possibility. Bring to light something new. Bringing to life something new. Something that has not previously existed. Even taking other things that have existed and bringing them to a new perspective, as you said, and giving them a meaning. I don't know. Ask me tomorrow and I'll probably say the same kind of thing in a different way

Debbi: [50:00] Well, I can't thank you enough for having this discussion with me. I think anybody who has listened to this discussion knows that I'm a pretty lucky person to have grown up with you as a father. But I just do want to go on record and say, truly one of the biggest blessings and honor of my life is that I am your daughter.

Harold: Well, that's a two-way street.

Debbi: That's a wrap for Episode 19, my discussion with teacher, trombonist, composer, and life-long music, arts, and creativity aficionado, my father Harold Popp I'm so grateful for him and for you, the audience, for tuning in. Additional thanks to August Fackler for composing and recording the music. Join me next time as I wrap up season one. I'll be joined by Professor Emerita from Indiana University whose research and writing focused on the role of play in early childhood education and development, Dr. Mary McMullen. Our conversation will look back over season one to discuss the creative connections and commonalities throughout my amazing guests, and look forward to where these explorations can take us as I prepare to launch season two. Meanwhile, be open to possibilities, make connections and embrace your creativity however it manifests itself in you.