

# Four Keys To CREATIVE SUCCESS



*Creative Solutions From Creative People*  
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**New Year:** a good time to start looking at things differently. All things. “See differently, change perspectives, and grow authentically” as you address your goals and challenges in your personal and professional lives for 2016. There are the four personal resources to provide you creative solutions to any challenge.

## **History**

Emerson said that, basically, history is a collection of biographies. You have lived through history, and studied it. Tap into the lessons learned along the way.

Perhaps you’ve experienced the World War II era, or your parents did and you’ve heard their stories. There were great lessons on being thrifty, growing gardens and “re-purposing” almost everything before the term existed.

Perhaps you lived in a community that suffered great tragedy or loss, like the Clear Lake area after Space Shuttle disasters (read a tribute poem here) and saw first-hand how communities can come together, grieve together and heal together.

The list is as long as your life span. You have learned many things along the way. For example, many of the concepts from the World War II era thinking would be called “hacks” today or “shortcuts” a few decades ago, or “common sense thrifty” then. All that you have lived through and witnessed provides a resource of ideas to solve the problems of today.

## **Firsts**

Your firsts—the first time you experienced or obtained something—taught you a lot about risk, courage, excitement, enthusiasm, trepidation and joy. Tap into those moods, emotions and convictions, and you will have answers to today’s challenges.

How did you learn to drive a standard transmission? Practice, patience, practice, patience. Where else can you apply that to overcome challenges? How did you manage to buy your first car? What was your first public presentation like and how did you get the opportunity? How did you get your first big contract? Look back on the times that you accomplished or acquired something with little more than spunk, serendipity, courage and grit, and you’ll see creative applications for what you are facing today.

## **Significant Events or Experiences**

Things happened to you that mattered, that shaped you, that had an impact on you; those provide the seeds for a harvest of ideas.

My first boss in higher education did something very important: he acknowledged and thanked me for good work.

That was significant because it was my first job in higher education, I could NOT fail (mortgage, two kids and a wife), the economy was in rough shape in Houston, and I was in a completely new field of work while using past experiences. He simply patted me on the shoulder and said, “You’re doing a great job. Keep it up.” At that moment, all fears and concerns dropped away, enabling more of my skills and enthusiasm to shine. That simple experience taught me a critically important trait of a good manager: thanks and acknowledgement of a job well done. I have tried to be generous with the same at appropriate times with all my employees over the years. Think back on experiences or events that were significant. They may be profound or sublime, but they touched you. They may be positive or negative, but they molded you. Think of the aha moments and the reflective ones, the times you were on top of your game and times you weren’t ... open your mind to significant times and tap into the lessons learned.

## **People**

People you’ve met or encountered, literally or virtually, provide you with wisdom, perspectives, inspiration, coaching and much more.

Think broadly: the homeless man who showed you kindness on the street; the grocery stocker who exemplified courtesy; the grandparent’s patient listening ways before sharing wisdom; the photographer from a half century ago whose images and writings inform and enlighten your own thinking; the musician who opened your ears to a new instrument; your children, spouse and friends.

Everyone you meet provides lessons and wisdom that can be applied to whatever issue you face.

Remember, there is nothing new under the sun and you’ve likely already encountered before the solutions to your issues, or you’ve seen the ingredients to a solution to what vexes you now. They reside in history, firsts, significant events and people because those four are the summation of your life.

Look at the four resources as pools of wealth and ideas. Pause and consider the knowledge of information, experiences and context that resides there. Creative solutions result from dipping into those pools.