



# The Life Cycle *of the Creative Soul:* The Manifesto.

by Felix Gerena

# The Life Cycle *of the* Creative Soul

## THE MANIFESTO.

Creative work emerges in the context of life. If we want to give account of the experience of creation we must pay attention to the states of the soul that reflect a creative urge, a thirst that needs to be fulfilled by something new. Creativity has been approached from diverse perspectives. This manifesto intends to relate creativity to existence. Existence is defined here as the place for coming events. These coming events concoct our world and it is the exposure to these events that shapes the different stages of the soul in the pursuit of a creative goal.

Each stage bears the name of a character and can individually be considered the realization of the soul in its pursuit of something new.

This manifesto shall be a guide for your creative efforts. A map in case you get lost. A helpful voice in times of solitude. Perhaps, the first spark for a new creative action.

# My principles.

## DISCOVERING LIFE/FACING LIFE.

1. **LIFE IS AN ADVENTURE:** The word adventure comes from the Latin word *ad-venire*. It literally means “what comes-into (me)”. I find this to be the essential trait of life. Life is a succession of coming events that we try to somehow *grasp*.
2. **THE WORLD IS RICH:** By trying to grasp events, we realize the world is extremely rich. This richness fascinates us and we try not to let things go by.
3. **THE WORLD IS ELUSIVE:** Despite our efforts, we must acknowledge that our nature is like a drop in an ocean. Creativity helps make the world easier to handle and more accessible.
4. **THE CREATIVE SOUL BUILDS A WORLD ACCORDING TO HER WISH.**

# Sisyphus.

## STAGE 1.

This is the basic state of the creative soul when work has no meaning and brings suffering. In this state, employees feel they are doing the same things day after day. They repeat the same tasks, fill out the same forms and talk to the same people. They work in an environment they cannot change. They are merely the executors of other's projects. They believe their bodies are the extension of other people's minds.

In this stage, employees are not supposed to be creative. Don't think, just do it! They are told. They don't feel their work is important because they feel replaceable. Finally, they are not satisfied with what they do. When someone spends half their life doing something they don't enjoy, it impacts their soul. Indeed, it has a deep impact.

This is the stage of Sisyphus. Sisyphus was a character of ancient Greek mythology. He represents two states of the soul at work: suffering and lack of meaning. Albert Camus explained the fate of Sisyphus with these words:

"The gods had condemned Sisyphus to ceaselessly rolling a rock to the top of a mountain, whence the stone would fall back of its own weight. They had thought with some reason that there is no more dreadful punishment than futile and hopeless labor".

But the soul tends to move. It is like a river that always finds a channel.

# Zarathustra.

## STAGE 2.

Zarathustra lives in the mountains, like Sisyphus. But Zarathustra is a traveller and his fate is different from that of Sisyphus. “Whatever my fate is, whatever the facts I have to experience, there will always be something like climbing mountains, like a trip. I am a traveller, I don’t like the plains and it seems like I cannot stand still for a long time.” Zarathustra knows there is something worth knowing beyond the mountains. He knows there’s a horizon. And he knows the horizon brings the image of the rising sun. The sun is the source of heat and life. It brings light to the people and shows the path leading to a town called Hope.

Zarathustra sees the sun from his mountain and says: “Oh, big star, what would be your happiness if you had no souls to warm up?” “I am satiated with my wisdom like the bee that has gathered too much honey, I need the hands of others to share my wisdom with them...To do so I have to go down, oh sun, as you do in the afternoon when you take your light into the sea”.

# Prometheus.

## STAGE 3.

Prometheus was a mythological character. His name meant “that who knows in advance”. Prometheus is known among the Greek gods for his skills and intuition. He was also the closest to humans among the Greek divinities. Indeed, he is the divinity that looks after the human fate. Prometheus stole the fire from the gods and gave it to the humans. For this, he was chained by Zeus. His concern for the prosperity of mankind will condemn him to a life of suffering.

The story of Prometheus is the description of the will to know and create. As humans, we have developed an instinct that leads us to master our environment and discover the secrets of the nature. The secrets that were at one time the property of gods.

But Prometheus was not only a very skilled character. He was also a suffering being. For his skills were excessive. Prometheus was too talented. He was so talented that his skills brought him no happiness. They brought him pain and suffering. Prometheus represents the fate of the suffering genius, of the talent as a curse, of skills being trapped by chains. Then, Prometheus seeks liberation.

# Vincent Van Gogh.

## STAGE 4.

Vincent Van Gogh devoted his life to his dream. He painted with such passion and dedication that it almost represented a risk for his health. His case is the perfect example of an extreme vocation. In one of the letters he wrote to his brother Theo, this is how he explained his devotion to painting:

*“Since two weeks ago, I don’t do anything but painting, from early in the morning until the night; if I keep up to this working rhythm it will cost me the health, unless I sell some of my works”.*

Van Gogh is the prototype of the person who finds his vocation and makes it a priority. Still he is aware that creation needs to be rewarded. He has to sell his paintings. This was the tragedy of Van Gogh for he only sold one painting and the person who bought it was his brother Theo.

Van Gogh represents the state of the abandoned soul. It is a soul that cannot find recognition for its work. It’s the talent that seems invisible to the eyes of the others.

# Picasso.

## STAGE 5.

Picasso also went through a period in his life where recognition was absent. When he was twenty, he moved to Paris. His first years there, he had to live in a house that was known by his friends as the “bateau-lavoir” or washing-machine-boat. He did not have much money and certainly was not a famous artist but he was surrounded by a group of close friends. Some of them were artists like Braque, others were dancers and some were just Bohemian guys who provided a safe atmosphere. He had found the love and care of his friends.

In this period, he painted some of the most ground-breaking paintings in the history of art. He broke many rules and founded new streams in the world of artistic creation; one example is Cubism.

Picasso represents the birth and preparation of the artist in an atmosphere that fostered his creative work. It's the first circle in the realm of recognition. It's beyond the sphere of intimacy but still in a closer sphere than massive popularity.



# Warhol.

## STAGE 6.

The work of Andy Warhol irrupted in the artistic scene as the contradiction of the main law of creativity. This law is the law of originality, of uniqueness. He broke this law in three ways:

1. **HIS MAIN WORKS WERE COPIES OF PREVIOUS IMAGES.** For instance, he took photographs of famous people like Elvis Presley. He did not paint the images. He just took them from others and re-designed them.
2. **HE REPEATED THE SAME IMAGE IN UNCOUNTABLE IDENTICAL COPIES.** The artwork was repetitive. This broke the rule of uniqueness for artwork. Though this repetition is completely different from the repetition of Sisyphus. This is repetition with recognition.
3. **HE ACHIEVED MASSIVE POPULARITY.** Everybody was able to “understand” his work.

# Duchamp.

## STAGE 7.

Duchamp saw the impact of massive acceptance of a repetitive product. He realized vanguards were innovative movements and eruptions that finally came to an end. At first, they break ground, but soon they become the standard rule. The new creative soul works in a different way:

1. **THE ARTIST PROVIDES A THEME**, a topic that will be developed by the artist and the client jointly.
2. **THE ARTIST OPENS A DIALOGUE**. In this conversation, the theme will experience many variations.
3. **THE ARTIST OPENS A FIELD**. Here, the customer will feel safe, free to discover new spaces and free to demand new actions from the artist.

In this stage, innovation takes place not just as a physical creation but as the emergence of new worlds.

# Create!

The goal of this manifesto is to foster creative curiosity.

To create is hard, but creation brings pleasure. Lots of pleasure.

Creation will enhance your self-esteem.

Creation will bring you recognition. Or not.

Creation will bring you new friends. That's for sure.

Creation will bring you new worlds. Or you will see this world with new eyes.

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## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Felix is an innovation consultant and philosopher. He has worked with companies of all sizes — from startups, to big companies — from almost every industrial sector.

He has published several books on hermeneutics and philosophy along with such major names as Gianni Vattimo, Raimond Panikkar or Andrés Ortíz Osés. These two elements, work and reflection, are the real visible signs of his personality and of professional activity. Since a teenager, he has been very interested in arts, in the creation and the design of new worlds. “Creativity is the oxygen I need to feel alive,” according to Felix, which explains why he has decided to write this manifesto — though perhaps not a manifesto in the proper sense of the word, but he thinks you will like it. (At least, you will, if you have ever felt that special feeling that occurs when something new is created from nothing.) Oh, one more thing: if you like this (non-)manifesto, don’t forget to visit his blog: [www.felixgerena.com](http://www.felixgerena.com)

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
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