

# **The Creative Habit**

## **Twyla Tharp**

A discussion guide for the Simple Scrapper Book Club.

### **ON PRODUCTIVITY...**

QUOTE // p. 4 - "Some people find this moment - the moment before creativity begins - so painful that they simply cannot deal with it. They get up and walk away from the computer, the canvas, the keyboard; they take a nap or go shopping or fix lunch or do chores around the house. They procrastinate."

QUESTION // Q1. Does this feeling resonate with you, now or in the past?

QUOTE // p. 14 - "Turning something into a ritual eliminates the question, Why am I doing this?"

QUESTION // Q2. Do you have any rituals as part of your creative process? What do they help tell you about "why"?

QUOTE // p. 25 - "When you're doing two or three things simultaneously, you use more energy than the sum of energy required to do each task independently."

QUESTION // Q3. How do you feel when you try to multitask?

### **ON STORYTELLING....**

Tharp shares an exercise asking the reader to document observations and then observations you find interesting...

QUOTE // p. 50 - "What caught your fancy is not as important as the difference between the two lists. What you included and what you left out speaks volumes about how you see the world. If you do this exercise enough times, patterns will emerge. The world will not be revealed to you. You will be revealed."

She writes later...

QUOTE // p. 61 - "Creativity is more about taking the facts, fictions, and feelings we store away and finding new ways to connect them. What we are talking about here is metaphor. Metaphor is our vocabulary for connecting what we're experiencing now with

what we have experienced before.”

Tharp shares this final thought related to an exercise in studying a photograph.

QUOTE // p. 76 - “The goal is to connect something old so it becomes new.”

QUESTION // Q4. How can these ideas be applied to storytelling?

## **ON PLANNING...**

Tharp describes a box she uses as a home for collecting inspirations related to a work.

QUOTE // p. 87 - “The box is not a substitute for creating. The box doesn’t compose or write a poem or create a dance step. The box is the raw index of your preparation. It is the repository of your creative potential, but it is not that potential realized.

She continues on in a discussing about ideation and the problem of overplanning...

QUOTE // p. 98 - “I could prepare, order, organize, structure, and edit by creativity in my head, but I couldn’t think my way into a dance. I generate ideas I had to move.”

QUESTION // Q5. Where is the line between preparation and procrastination?

QUOTE // p. 117 - “Habitually creative people are, in E.B. White’s phrase, “prepared to be lucky.”

QUESTION // Q6. What is one thing you do (or could do) to be better prepared for creative spontaneity?

QUOTE // p. 184 - “Being blocked is most often a failure of nerve, with only one solution: Do something - anything.”

QUESTION // Q7. What is the next creative action you need to take?