The Hyper-Creative Personality

You've been up half the night. You just had to get started. That idea that came to you while you were staring at the bedroom ceiling at 3am was just too good to forget about. So, you got out of bed and headed for your laptop. You started writing the proposal or the business plan or the letter to the Institute of Nanotechnology. It felt great. Your blood was pumping, the creativity was flowing and simultaneously 5% of your brain was working on your Nobel peace prize acceptance speech.

But this morning, in the broad light of day, the doubts have started to appear. Maybe you did a bit more research and discovered your unique concept is already on the market and making millions for some other brain-box. Or maybe you just realised the world wasn't ready for your ground-breaking initiative.

Over the coming days or weeks your initial zeal wanes as more and more obstacles appear to sabotage your project. What started as a fresh, shiny, exciting new chapter becomes a boring, slog; an additional burden; a "should" rather than a "want to". And eventually, with the odds against success stacking up, you admit defeat and shelve the whole thing.

If this tale resonates with you though, you will know that there is a sequel. Because next week, next month or next year some other flight of fancy will pop in to your head, even better than the last, and the cycle will repeat. And repeat. And repeat.

You are Hyper-Creative. You have more great ideas than you know what to do with but your impatience, your disinterest in detail, your short attention span and your sheer entrepreneurial zeal are getting in the way of turning this incredible gift in to the secret of your success.

When I started research for my book, The Hyper-Creative Personality, I guessed that about 30% of the population struggled with Hyper-Creativity at times. But the figure is closer to 75%. Almost all of us have times when we’re psyched about an idea, hugely enthusiastic, committed and focused. And then, for some reason, we lose interest, energy and momentum and the idea dies.

Some of these ideas deserve their place under the floorboards and are best forgotten. But it is an excuse to argue that if your ideas were any good you would have pursued them to completion. There are far more valid reasons why ideas fail to bear fruit...and they are within your circle of influence.

Self-Talk
In the chapter entitled The Devil (and the Angel) on your shoulder, I explore the huge power of the internal voice that regularly puts you off track. Variously known as the devil, the sergeant major or the top dog, this is the voice that asks "Who do you think you are?" and tells you “People like you don’t get to the very top". It argues “If this were such a good idea, someone else would have thought of it” and finally "Here we go again – you’re going to give up, aren’t you?” With messages like that seeping through your brain, how could you possibly succeed?

At the same time your wise voice is whispering “I know you can do it” and “Why shouldn’t you make it rich?” But the devil is so loud it is hard to hear her angelic voice.

Practice. If necessary, brain-dump all the negative beliefs and assumptions that hold you back, and list the positive affirming comments of the angel on your shoulder. She’s quiet...but she’s wise.
Support Squad
Get yourself a team. Hyper-Creatives find it hard to finish what they start. In fact, that’s not quite true. What they find hard is the middle bit – the detailed, repetitive, slow-burn, analytical work. The start is exciting and the end is fulfilling. So instead of expecting yourself to be different than you are, recruit a Success Squad of people to fill the gaps. Believe it or not, some people enjoy paperwork, doing the same thing every day, keeping an eye on the detail....all the jobs that send your teeth on edge.

Manage your emotional highs and lows
38% of artists and writers have been treated for mood disorders, compared with 5% of the general population. Even if you are not clinically bi-polar, most creative people experience significant periods of high and low mood which can affect their productivity...and the productivity of those around them.

Learning to understand your patterns, your triggers and your “treatment” can enable you to manage these highs and lows more effectively.

I am certainly not suggesting you iron them out completely. In fact, highs can be hugely productive times where great sparks of inspiration can strike. It is inevitable that lows will follow, providing time for you to gather your energies again, look more deeply inside yourself for revelations and, frankly, recover from the enormous burst of energy you just experienced.

But unless they are managed, these moods can control you. And they can impact your reputation. You won’t be seen as a safe pair of hands if you have a tendency to behave in an emotionally erratic manner. And that will get in the way of your journey to the top.

The Hyper-Creative Personality, by Blaire Palmer, is published by New Holland, price £7.99. Available at www.amazon.co.uk or most good bookshops.

PPS Associate, Blaire Palmer, is a specialist creative thinking partner and coach for high-ranking executives. Her experience ranges from working with individual entrepreneurs to develop creativity, to building large-scale coaching programmes for companies. Blaire is also one of a very few UK professionals to have achieved Professional Certified Coach status.

As both a facilitator for groups and in one-to-one interventions, Blaire partners key decision-makers in developing innovative yet sound, profitable solutions to business challenges. She brings her years as an executive coach along with her training in creative thinking and her own vibrant, energetic style to all her work.

Previously, Blaire enjoyed 10 years as a successful journalist with the BBC producing, among others, Radio 4's Today and Woman's Hour programmes. In parallel with her consulting work, Blaire also speaks and writes about creativity in business.