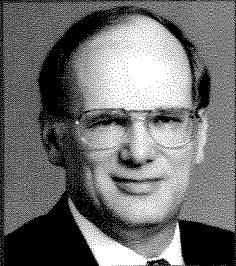


Report to Legal Management

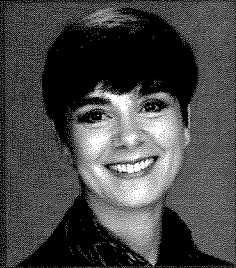
OUR 25TH YEAR

February 1999

Volume 26, Number 5



Norman Clark



Janice Merendino

Creative Legal Management The Lawyer as Artist: Improving the Way Lawyers Think

By Norman K. Clark and Janice Merendino

This is the first of a series of articles that explore how lawyers can apply creative and artistic techniques to solve problems and improve performance in their practices.

Norman K. Clark is an attorney who has practiced law for more than 25 years. Currently a principal of Altman Weil, Inc., he is a recognized authority on law office productivity and performance. Janice Merendino is a member of the Fine Arts faculty at Rosemont College, and is the director of the Branch Out Project, in which she introduces creative problem-solving techniques to senior management in education, government, and industry.

Lawyers today are challenged as never before. To be successful in today's highly competitive legal market, lawyers must pay closer attention to the management of their practices as a business. Concepts such as productivity, process improvement, associate leverage, and realization rates have become survival skills.

Lawyers are also facing new professional challenges from clients. Many attorneys tell us that they are being asked to advise on issues that don't fit neatly within a traditional practice-area definition. Clients seek their advice because of the reputation many

lawyers enjoy for being able to analyze new or complex issues and to develop common-sense courses of action to solve them. The image of the lawyer as problem-solver is stronger than ever before.

Many lawyers are very uncomfortable in this new role. Law school certainly never prepared them to tackle some of the problems that clients are now bringing to them. There is little in their professional histories that is directly on point. How can they continue to meet the needs and expectations of their clients?

As in every other business, lawyers are learning that traditional approaches do not always work in the rapidly changing discontinuity that characterizes legal practice — and the global economy in general — at the end of the twentieth century. We believe that lawyers need to improve the way they think — the way in which they analyze client problems and design the solutions. In short, lawyers need to become artists.

Creative Legal Management

The *Creative Legal Management Series* explores several practical techniques that enable lawyers to be more creative in their daily practices. Some of the approaches, such as paradigm analysis and brainstorming, may be familiar to some. These articles, however, will suggest how problem-solving tech-

niques can be structured and disciplined to improve their power. Other techniques will draw upon perceptual concepts and artistic methods that can actually improve our ability to analyze problems and discover new solutions that may have previously eluded us.

The major part of each article is presented in the form of a dialog between the two authors. Each article concludes by pointing out fundamental issues that lawyers must confront in order to unleash the creativity that is inherent in the practice of law. Each one also introduces several practical exercises, tools, and techniques that legal professionals can use to improve their ability to find solutions to practice and management problems that may have seemed insolvable.

Does this creative stuff work? It certainly does. Clients of both the Branch Out Project and Altman Weil have used these methods to discover solutions to problems that previously have appeared impossible to solve. All that is required is the willingness to try a new approach.

The Starting Point: Self-Awareness

Merendino: Self-awareness is a key component of creative thinking. Too many times individuals fail not because they are incapable of solving the problem but because they fail to see how their patterns of thinking contribute to the problem. When Joseph Jaworski, founder and CEO of Leadership Forum, assembled a group of business leaders to formulate their ideas on leadership, the group agreed that the number one crisis in leadership was a lack of self-knowledge.

Trying something new, being a beginner, holds the greatest opportunity for self-awareness, because it reminds us of how we learn, how we

process new information. When we find ourselves in uncharted waters, all of our patterns of thinking rise to the surface, especially our resistance to change. It is not surprising that major contributions in many fields are often made by outsiders who are able to bring fresh thinking to old problems.

Clark: Self-knowledge is critical to long-term success in the legal profession. When a law firm begins strategic planning, one of the earliest steps is to engage in some very searching, critical self-analysis. *What are our strengths? What makes us different from the hundreds of other good law firms?* Some lawyers say that this is the hardest part of strategic planning. One attorney with more than 40 years at the bar recently told me that the hardest thing he ever had to do as a lawyer was to step back and, for the first time in his career, try to see himself through his clients' eyes.

Merendino: All people are creative. Early in my work with business and professional leaders, I learned that before I can introduce them to creative problem-solving methods, I first have to convince them of the innate creativity they already possess. Usually the definition of creativity is so limited in people's minds that they overlook the creative thinking that they use everyday.

Clark: At its best, the practice of law is a creative experience. Many lawyers, however, are reluctant to consider deviating from tried and true approaches. They are often distrustful of "creativity" or "out of the box thinking" because of the risks of the new.

Merendino: The problem is that our training from earliest childhood shapes our expectations of what we can and cannot do. The interesting part is that it is often based on very

"At its best, the practice of law is a creative experience. Many lawyers, however, are reluctant to consider deviating from tried and true approaches."

little evidence. My kindergarten teacher told my mother that I was going to be an artist because I drew my turtles differently from everyone else. That little bit of reinforcement influenced my entire life. Of course there were also other factors at play. I was very shy, so it was easy for me to sit and practice hour after hour, because I had been told I was good at it. In contrast, because I was shy, competitive sports were a real problem for me. So, after missing the ball three times in gym class, I was too embarrassed to keep trying. *And besides, everybody knows that artists aren't athletes!*

Clark: Lawyers are trained in cause-and-effect analysis. What are the reasonable inferences that can be drawn from the evidence? The analytical perspective, however, is usually one of cause and effect — linear thinking. As a result, we may overlook approaches and solutions that could be revealed by non-linear thinking.

Merendino: The first step to creativity is to recognize the limitations of "left-brained" or linear thinking, and to realize that non-linear, "right-brained" thinking is needed as well. I suggest beginning this "whole brain" approach in a safe way. Using drawing — an activity that most people are

convinced they can't do — I help people step beyond their self-imposed limitations. I help them look at their "false facts," those assumptions we make that aren't true. The idea is to exercise creative options by breaking those false assumptions and exploring the consequences, without taking huge risks.

Clark: There is a place for linear thinking — cause and effect — in legal management. The creative approach, however, is a powerful way to get started. So often in my career, I have seen professional people blinded to an obvious answer because they seized on a hypothesis at the very beginning and wouldn't let go. As a trial judge, I saw detectives who were so sure that they had "got their man" that they completely missed the dozens of compelling reasons for reasonable doubt. I have seen lawyers spend hundreds of hours and thousands of dollars pursuing legal dead-ends, while missing an obvious solution. In almost every

approaches to their set of intellectual tools. This is not as easy as it sounds. It takes courage.

The truth is that in order to be a creative person, you must be emotionally involved in what you're doing. It takes both emotional involvement and courage to create.

Clark: Intellectual courage is highly prized in the legal profession. Clients pay us to tell them what they should hear, not what they want to hear. Nonetheless, it sometimes takes great intellectual courage to tell a client bad news. Moreover, the finest lawyers I have known — the ones who are my own professional role models — also demonstrate great passion in their professional lives. They see professional quality as meeting the needs of their clients, the first time and every time. In short, they care.

Merendino: The tools and techniques we introduce in the Branch Out Project are designed to challenge and, at the same time, encourage business

with a consideration of these questions. Some of these issues will require "out-of-the-box" thinking:

- *What are my strengths as a lawyer?*
- *What are my weaknesses?*
- *Are these assessments accurate or based on old ideas about myself?*
- *Would I hire myself if this were my problem? Why or why not?*
- *What are the obstacles that prevent me from solving this problem?*
- *Which of my strengths and weaknesses have the greatest impact on my solving this problem?*
- *What is impossible for me to do now, but, if I could do it, would fundamentally and substantially improve my practice?*
- *What are my "false facts," those assumptions I follow that aren't true?*

Exercise

The "left brain" labels things because it is an efficient way to condense a large amount of information. Unfortunately labels can blind us from really seeing and prevent us from making fine distinctions. In the following exercise take note of the struggle (your right and left hemispheres in battle) as you attempt to put words to the complex visual information and go beyond what author Betty Edwards called "ordinary seeing."

For this exercise you'll need a piece of paper and a pencil or pen.

Choose an object near you. Not referring to it by name or function, write a list of visually descriptive words for it. Begin simply, with color, shape, size, and materials. Then add to this list by forcing yourself to look

"Instead, lawyers need to add creative approaches to their set of intellectual tools.

This is not as easy as it sounds.

It takes courage."

case, it was because they failed to look beyond the narrow linear thought channel they were pursuing.

Merendino: This raises an important point. None of this means that lawyers should abandon linear thinking — to quit being lawyers. As a society, we need that intellectual rigor. Instead, lawyers need to add creative

leaders to think more like artists, to understand and engage the creative process. The first step however, is to commit mentally and emotionally to trying a new way of looking at problems and looking for solutions.

Issues

Creative approaches to practice and management problems begin

at every nuance, every subtle change in shape, texture, etc. Next, close your eyes and examine the object. Does that give you more information? Is it cool to the touch, smooth, rough? If you can pick it up, how much weight does it have? How is its weight distributed? If it makes a sound or movement, describe it.

Now bring the object to life, animate it and give it a personality. Imagine that it can move across the room and has a voice. Would it walk, roll, skip, saunter, whine, scream, mumble, etc.? Add these words now

continued success depends on our ability to respond to fundamental shifts in our profession. If we try to understand the paradigms that control the way we perceive and react to the world around us, we can use those same paradigms to chart a new course to success.

Consider this: What would your law firm do if one of the Big Five accounting firms acquired a major law firm in your area and started marketing a complete package of business services to your clients? This is already happening in Europe

Biederman, *Organizing Genius: The Secrets of Creative Collaboration*, Addison-Wesley, 1997.

Betty Edwards, *Drawing on the Artist Within*, Simon & Schuster, Inc. 1986.

Michael J. Gelb, *How to Think Like Leonardo da Vinci: Seven Steps to Genius Every Day*, Delacorte Press, 1998.

Joseph Jaworski (Betty Flowers, ed.), *Synchronicity: The Inner Path of Leadership*, Berrett-Koehler, 1998

David Whyte, *The Heart Aroused: Poetry and the Preservation of the Soul*. Doubleday Books, 1996 ♦

Norman K. Clark is a principal of Altman Weil, Inc. His office is located in the firm's Newtown Square, Pennsylvania headquarters, and he can be reached at 610-359-9900.

Janice Merendino is a member of the Fine Arts faculty at Rosemont College, and is the director of the Branch Out Project in Philadelphia, PA, which introduces creative problem-solving techniques to senior management. She can be reached at 215-483-2196, or by e-mail at branches3d@aol.com.

“What would your law firm do if one of the

Big Five accounting firms acquired a major law firm in your area and started marketing a complete package

of business services to your clients?”

to a separate personality list. If you have trouble with this, compare the object to a person you know. Is it stubborn, ambitious, generous, friendly, a bit boring? What are its hobbies, political opinions? Look at the physical/visual cues and personality you gave it and see how they are linked? Ask yourself what cues or qualities brought you to those conclusions about the personality?

Looking ahead

Our next article will explore the concepts of paradigms, the traditional patterns of perceiving and thinking that can blind us to opportunities to solve new problems. The word *paradigm* comes from the Greek word, *paradigmos*, or *pattern*.

Our approach is influenced by the pioneering work of Joel Barker and others, who have demonstrated how

and Australia. The Law Society of England and Wales is considering whether to relax its traditional restrictions on non-lawyer ownership of law firms. The trend appears to be headed to the United States. Your firm's ability to survive this challenge may depend on your ability to understand and use shifting paradigms about the delivery of professional services.

Reading list

There are hundreds of good books in print on the subject of creative management. Here are several of our favorites. Don't let the titles fool you. Each book presents insights and concepts, which you can put to work in your practice the moment after you put the book down.

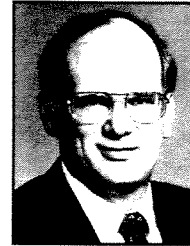
Warren Bennis and Patricia Ward

Report to Legal Management

June 1999
Volume 26, Number 9

OUR 25TH YEAR

Seeing the Invisible Why Lawyers Need to Understand Paradigms



Norman Clark



Janice Merendino

By Norman K. Clark and Janice Merendino

This is Part 2 in the Creative Legal Management Series. The articles in the series explore how lawyers can apply creative and artistic techniques to solve problems and improve performance in their practices. In the first article, in the February 1999 issue of Report to Legal Management, the authors discussed how the traditional analytical methods of lawyers may prevent them from discovering new ways to approach challenges in managing their practices and solving clients' legal problems. Clark and Merendino also suggested several exercises that lawyers and other professionals can use to warm up "right-brained," creative thinking.

Many lawyers do not think of themselves as creative people. By training and experience, lawyers learn to think along well-defined channels. For example, the practice of law requires that the lawyer:

- Identify and frame the decisive issues in terms of the facts and the law.
- Focus on those facts that are determined to be material and relevant to the issues.
- Apply precedent.

The traditional approach usually works well enough to resolve most client problems. It does not lend itself, however, to developing the innovative approaches that are often needed to meet the new, fundamentally different chal-

lenges facing the legal profession today. Instead of thinking "outside the box," most lawyers instinctively try to build the smallest possibly analytical box and then climb inside it.

How can we break out of these intellectual restraints? This article discusses the first Creative Legal Management method. To solve today's problems, as well as meet tomorrow's challenges, we first need to understand the paradigms that govern them.

What are paradigms?

The paradigm concept first appeared in business in the late 1980s, principally through the work of Joel A. Barker who adapted the concept from the scientific world. As used in the context of Creative Legal Management, however, a paradigm is a set of rules (written or otherwise) that define the way in which we perceive, understand and solve problems.

Barker points out that paradigms operate in two ways. Some paradigms set boundaries. They define what is and is not relevant — or

continued on page 3

Inside This Issue

<i>Seeing the Invisible: Why Lawyers Need to Understand Paradigms — Part 2</i>	1
<i>The Critical Importance of Knowledge Management to a Law Firm's Success</i>	2
<i>How To Ask: Commissioning and Conducting Market Research</i>	8
<i>Successful Practice Areas of the Future — A Client Perspective</i>	11

Paradigms... *continued from cover*

ignore any information — for example our paradigm might cause us to think: “That can’t possibly be the cause. It’s never been a factor before.” The concept of relevance is a powerful boundary-setting paradigm.

Second, paradigms define acceptable action within those boundaries. They may cause us to reject out of hand radical solutions and approaches. “That’s not the way we do things in this firm.” Some of the rule-defining paradigms, such as concepts of professional responsibility, make good sense. Others, such as “paralegals can’t do this work,” may produce unprofitable distribution of work.

Why Are Paradigms Important?

Paradigms affect the legal profession in two ways. First, when a paradigm changes, the rules fundamentally change for everyone. Consider the impact when the professional ban on lawyer advertising was lifted in the United States. Perhaps no other single event in the history of the American legal profession did more to change the practice of law from a profession to a business. Lawyers and firms who could not or would not adjust to the shift in the advertising paradigm eventually found their practices in danger of business failure.

The second impact of paradigms is that they restrict creativity. A strong paradigm in a law firm can blind even the most intelligent and imaginative person from finding a solution. Identifying and understanding the paradigms that control an issue can point the way to powerful solutions.

Swiss Watches and Red Spades

Merendino: Paradigms affect the way we see our world, and our culture affects how we behave in it. Edgar H. Schein, MIT Professor of Management, defines culture as “a pattern of basic assumptions invented, discovered or developed by a given group ... that has

worked well enough to be considered valid ... because such assumptions have worked repeatedly, they are likely to be taken for granted and to have dropped out of awareness.”

The legal profession can learn a valuable lesson from the experience of the Swiss watch in the late 1960s. Barker tells the story in detail in his videotape *Paradigm Principles*. In 1968, the Swiss invented and then rejected the quartz watch movement. They allowed the rights to be sold to a Japanese company and almost destroyed their own industry. Within ten years, the Swiss share of the watch market dropped from 68% to less than 10%. More than five out of every seven employees in the Swiss watch industry lost their jobs. The point is not that the Swiss were stupid or misinformed, but that their corporate culture prevented them from asking new questions. They relied too rigidly on their own categories and self-image. The quartz movement was so far removed from their experience that, even though they invented it, they could not see how it could possibly be the future, of time keeping.

But it’s only fair to add that the Swiss created the next paradigm shift. The popular Swatch watch redefined what is meant by a “limited edition.” This trendy design, mass-produced, inexpensive, but “limited,” helped the Swiss go from paradigm lost to paradigm found.

Clark: For the legal profession, it’s been one paradigm shift after another for the past fifteen years. Only 30 years ago, lawyers in the United States could not advertise. In some states we were even allowed to fix minimum fees. Routinely charging lower than the minimum was considered professional misconduct. Law firms of more than 100 lawyers were rare, and ones of more than 200 were considered by most lawyers to be inherently unmanageable. Regulations against the unauthorized practice of law protected the

profession against competition from outsiders.

Since then, all of these old paradigms have been swept away. The end of the prohibition against advertising was truly a seismic shift. More than any other event in this century, it forced lawyers to start thinking of the practice of law as a business. Today, the 50 largest law firms in the world each have more than 500 lawyers, and the top ten each have more than 900. Finally, the traditional barriers against competition are crumbling as new competitors offer products and services over which lawyers once had a virtual monopoly.

Some lawyers anticipated these seismic shifts of the paradigms of the legal profession and reacted to them. Many more did not. They simply did not see them coming.

Merendino: In his video, *This Business of Paradigms*, Joel Barker gave a stunning demonstration of just how powerful paradigms can be. A paradigm can actually prevent us from perceiving anything that is outside our normal experience.

During the video, a series of playing cards are flashed on the screen. Each card is visible for only a fraction of a second. The viewer is challenged to spot the incorrect card in each series. Most people can’t. It is only when the display is slowed down that one notices that the hearts, for example, are black or the spades are red. Our eyes see the cards as they really are, but our mind allows us to perceive only what we’re supposed to see: a red heart, not a black one.

Clark: This may explain why many American lawyers still deny that five years from now non-traditional players such as the Big Five accounting firms and financial service companies may be competing head-to-head against law firms for a major part of the legal market. Even when we point to the

continued on page 4

Paradigms... *continued from page 3*

incursions in Europe, many in our audience still say, "But it can't happen here."

Merendino: Unquestioned assumptions allow us to function in our very complicated world. We need our patterns just to get through the day. But they work against us when we don't pay attention to information that runs counter to them. If we only seek out evidence that confirms and supports our initial point of view, we get lulled into a false sense of security, of "knowing" and "being in control." That is when we don't notice the possibilities available in the evidence that seem, in hindsight, to come "out of left field." The ability to succeed tomorrow, whether in the legal profession or any other business, will depend on our ability to spot the new emerging paradigms today. As Joel Barker points out, when a paradigm shifts, everyone goes back to zero. The rules have changed. It's a new game for everyone.

Clark: Many law firms have found themselves "back to zero" in just the past five years. Some practice areas have become low-margin, high-volume work. Workers compensation and insurance defense lawyers, for example, have been forced into highly competitive, price-sensitive markets that give them only two options. They can hold fees down, streamline work processes to control overhead, and operate on slender profit margins. Or they can get out of the market. As a result, many defense firms are looking for ways to move out of insurance defense work and into more profitable litigation specialties.

Overcoming Paradigms

Clark: Our paradigms can be major obstacles to problem solving. In fact, they can make problems look impossible to solve.

How do we learn to identify the paradigms and, more importantly, look beyond them? There is one basic

tool that almost always produces results, and which anyone can use: the simple flow chart. It is one of the most effective ways to see the paradigms that go unnoticed in our everyday work, and that prevent us from making the improvements we want.

Document production, for example, is one of the most unprofitable and inefficient functions in most law firms. The amount of rework needed to turn out a contract, memorandum, or pleading can be an enormous drain on profit. The first step to make the process more efficient should be to construct a flow chart. List all the steps that go into the production of a document and who does which step. Trace the way work flows from one person to another.

The inefficiencies and waste in the process will almost jump off the chart once it is drawn. In my experience, many of the solutions become apparent once we see the process charted out.

Merendino: There is a drawing analogy that comes to mind here. In drawing a still life of several objects, the temptation is to work object by object, completing each one before you move to the next. One may have the idea that if each object is drawn well, then the entire drawing will be perfect. But as your technical skills develop, so does your ability to see more clearly. By the time you begin to draw your second or third object, it becomes embarrassingly obvious to you that the first object wasn't drawn accurately. Rather than start over, you decide that it's easier to adjust the second object to make the first object look better. This adjusting "snowballs" until the entire drawing is distorted with a series of compensations based on an earlier flawed decision. Even with new information pointing to something we missed, we seem to fear failure so much (in this case the dread of starting over) that we end up perpetuating our mistakes — a sort of sunk-costs bias.

Another common drawing problem is limiting your options for a solu-

tion by perceiving a single cause and consequently, defining the problem too narrowly. For example, struggling unsuccessfully to fix something in your drawing, you discover that the problem lies somewhere else entirely. This is an example of trying to understand the whole by analyzing each of its parts separately. A major shift in thinking occurs when you understand the relationship of the parts to the whole.

The solution to both of these drawing problems is to not focus on completing one object at a time, but instead to "skip around," constantly checking one part of the drawing in relationship to another. It is as if you are looking through a camera and bringing the entire subject into focus at the same time.

Clark: In his work on paradigms, Barker poses what he calls the "Impossibility Question": *What is impossible to do today, but, if you could do it, would fundamentally change your business?* In order to identify the impossible, we have to take that one step beyond the current paradigm.

When we conduct one of our Altman Weil Creative Legal Management Workshops, one of our first activities is to have the participants identify one or more significant problems that they have been unable to solve. It can be a law office management issue or a problem in a lawyer's practice. We then focus the rest of the seminar on applying the Creative Legal Management tools to discovering possible solutions. The first of these tools is the Paradigm Analysis, described later in this article.

Merendino: Practice generating alternate patterns by looking forward rather than justifying where you are now. If we continue to evaluate new information through our old lenses, the same mindset only gets reinforced and strengthened. Look through different lenses, but try them out before you need to drive on the highway! This may mean seeking out someone from a different area of expertise or,

better yet, expanding your own. The more areas one can draw from the more ideas one can bring to the table.

From Paralysis to Analysis

Clark: Sometimes the hardest part of creative problem solving is to get started. The Creative Legal Management approach to problem solving starts with a simple flow chart of the issue — the simpler the better. Be sure to chart the process as it actually exists, not as it's supposed to be. Sometimes this can be one of the hardest problem solving steps. Different people may understand the process differently, or even perform it differently. Keep at it. A good understanding of the current situation is critical to learning how to solve its problems.

Once the process has been charted, ask these questions:

- *What are the negative impacts of the current way we do things?* Define these effects in terms such as cost, time, efficiency, staff requirements, and morale.
- *Why are things this way?* The Japanese pioneers of the Total Quality Management movement recommended asking *Why?* ten times.

- *What are the possible paradigms that explain the current situation?* What are the rules, office politics, customs, etc., that govern?
- *Which one(s) is (are) the most likely explanation?* Challenge each one. Does it still make sense? What value does the rule add? If, as is often the case in the law, we

can't eliminate a paradigm altogether, can we lessen the negative impacts we identified in answer to the first question?

Figures 1 and 2 below are sample forms used in the Creative Legal Management program.

continued on page 6

Figure 1

Paradigms as obstacles to problem solving

Sometimes we conclude that a problem cannot be solved because we fail to recognize the underlying paradigm or paradigms that have created the current situation.

1. Identify a problem in your practice that appears to have no practical solution.	
2. List the most noticeable negative impacts of that problem	1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____ 4. _____ 5. _____
3. What are the possible (not probable — possible) paradigms that explain the problem?	
4. Which paradigm(s) is (are) the most likely explanation?	

Figure 2

How to shift a paradigm

This form will help you identify and understand existing paradigms in your work, and will help you discover new and better alternatives.

A PROBLEM THAT WE CANNOT SOLVE	THAT PROBLEM'S NEGATIVE IMPACTS	THE PARADIGM THAT APPEARS MOST LIKELY TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE PROBLEM	POSSIBLE ALTERNATIVES
<p><i>Example:</i></p> <p>The time and effort involved to produce the monthly report</p>	<p>Overtime.</p> <p>Regular work piles up.</p> <p>Angry clients and internal customers</p> <p>Confusion</p> <p>Low morale</p>	<p>The Central Office believes that it must be informed once a month about all aspects of each and every active case.</p>	<p>Abolish the monthly report.</p> <p>Install a database that would allow the Central Office to obtain exactly the information it wants exactly when it wants it.</p>

Paradigms... continued from page 5

Merendino: Seeing the invisible is a challenge. Before tackling the Paradigm Analysis method described above, we recommend a warm-up exercise to get the creative neurons firing.

Paradigms are constructed. We must learn to deconstruct them in order to understand them. But, we can't acknowledge their presence or replace them with something better until they are made explicit; otherwise, they remain invisible.

As an art teacher, I have been curious about the lack of drawing skills among adults. People who are perfectly able to excel in other disciplines draw at what would be considered a grammar school level. I looked at all the obvious reasons for the lack of skill and then questioned the basic assumptions behind them. I discovered that when people are asked to draw an object, most of them begin by outlining the object and then filling in the outline. Frustrated and disappointed with their flat cartoon-like drawing, most adults conclude that they don't have the talent necessary to draw. They can't seem to make their drawing look anything like the real thing. After working with beginning students over a number of years, I've come to the conclusion that it is because their paradigm is not suited to drawing objects in the real world. What is this paradigm? Namely this: *They assume that what is meant by drawing is to outline an object then fill in the outline.* Yet there are no lines around objects, we see solid forms with edges. This confusion is the major stumbling block to learning the process of representing a three dimensional form on a two dimensional surface. This is not to say that line drawing isn't an effective technique, but it is only one technique and perhaps the most difficult to learn.

Rather than using a line around objects, lines can be used to help students *understand* what they are seeing before attempting to draw it. I use lines to diagram the object, going across its

surface in both directions much like the latitude and longitude lines on a globe. By breaking down an object's form it is easier to show how that form is constructed. This simplified version of what is considered an advanced technique (normally referred to as "cross-contour") gives my students a new and powerful tool. This technique has nothing to do with talent or exceptional motor skills, just new information. The visual results are impressive.

**"Paradigms are constructed.
We must learn to deconstruct
them in order to understand
them. But, we can't acknowl-
edge their presence or replace
them with something better
until they are made explicit."**

Three Worms, Three Trees and Three Men

Try the short exercise on the next page. It may change the way you see. All you will need is paper, a pencil and a photocopier (optional).

Looking Ahead

How do we move from understanding the paradigms and problems in the current situation to solving them?

Our next article will explore brainstorming. In our experience, the overwhelming majority of the solutions that were eventually implemented came from the first brainstorming session. Then why do so many groups consider brainstorming to be a waste of time?

There is a right way and a wrong way to brainstorm. The next article will show how to get the most from

this powerful, but misunderstood creative tool. ♦

Reading list

Joel A. Barker, *Future Edge: Discovering the New Paradigms of Success* (William Morrow & Co., 1992)

Joel A. Barker, *Paradigms: The Business of Discovering the Future* (Harperbusiness, 1993).

James M. Higgins, *Innovate or Evaporate: Test & Improve Your Organization's IQ: Its Innovation Quotient* (New Management Pub. Co. 1995).

Debbe Kennedy, *Breakthrough! Everything You Need to Start a Solution Revolution* (Leadership Solutions Publishing, 1998).

Ellen J. Langer, *Mindfulness*, (A Merloyd Lawrence book, 1989)

Massimo Piattelli-Palmarini, *Inevitable Illusions, How Mistakes of Reason Rule Our Minds*, (John Wiley & Sons Inc. 1994).

Tom Peters, *Thriving on Chaos* (Harper Perennial, 1991).

CORRECTION from the first article in this series: Joseph Jaworski is founder and CEO of American Leadership Forum.

Norman K. Clark is a principal of Altman Weil, Inc. His office is located in the firm's Newtown Square, Pennsylvania, headquarters, and he can be contacted at 610-359-9900 or nkclark@altmanweil.com.

Janice Merendino is a member of the Fine Arts Faculty at Rosemont College and the Director of The Branch Out Project in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. She can be contacted at 215-483-2196 or branches3d@aol.com.

Exercise 1 — The Worms

1. Begin by drawing three worms, try to make them as similar as possible or photocopy one for exact duplicates. The first worm will remain as an outline. See Figure 1.

Fig. 1



2. At the top of the second worm draw a curved stripe on it that resembles the letter "C." Continue to work your way down to the bottom of the worm with the curved stripes. See Figure 2.

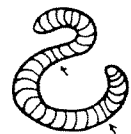
Fig. 2



Now look carefully at the example of the third worm. Notice how the worm seems to bend in different directions. This is achieved by drawing a straight stripe and then switching to the opposite curve where you want it to bend.

3. Beginning at the top of your third worm, draw the first curved stripe as a backwards "C" and continue with four or five of these stripes, then add a straight stripe and continue with the opposite curve. You can repeat this sequence of changing to the opposite curve wherever you want the worm to bend. See Figure 3.

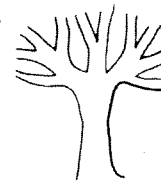
Fig. 3



Exercise 2 — The Trees

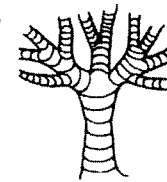
1. Now try a winter tree with bare branches. Start with a light guideline of a tree, rather than a dark outline (I've drawn my tree with dark lines to make it easier to see). See Figure 4.

Fig. 4



2. Start with a light guideline of a tree, rather than a dark outline (I've drawn my tree with dark lines to make it easier to see). See Figure 5.

Fig. 5



3. When you reach the branches you can bend them by changing the direction of the stripes (as you did with the worms), by making a straight stripe then continuing in the opposite curve. See Figure 5.

Imagining stripes on a form is a wonderful tool to help you to understand how to draw what you see. To fill in the tree, making it appear as a solid form, follow the direction of your stripes. Don't worry about going outside of your guidelines. To bring it into sharper focus you can erase to clean up the edges of the tree. See Figure 6.

Fig. 6



Exercise 3 — The Man

Now, by using the same technique, try drawing the man. Notice that you can bend his limbs by changing direction of the stripes. Have fun. See Figure 7-9.

Fig. 7



Fig. 8



Fig. 9



In each sequence, moving from the first flat outline of the worm, the tree and the man, we show a new paradigm for drawing, namely, deconstructing what we see, understanding it and giving it a more satisfying form.