

## **An introduction to the scientific creative mind**

Scientists are often depicted as “people in white coats”. They are also thought of as being remote, clever, boffins and serious people who are somewhat removed from normal society. Much of this can be true, however there is another side to scientist and also engineers where they can be fun, extrovert, interesting and creative. This side of the scientist and engineer make up is rarely appreciated by most of the public which is a great pity, as it is these aspects that can potentially excite others towards the true adventure of science and engineering itself.

All scientist need to be creative, however some are very much more creative than others. Science is generally about moving the boundaries of knowledge forward and so scientist are taking a journey into unknown territory. There can be a case for repeating someone else’s experiment; particular if you come up with a different result, but in general repeating what others have already discovered is at best a way of ensuring that you have sound starting point. Many academics cannot bear to be wrong and so these type of people are reluctant to take big risks and often they are not very creative. On the other hand a “crazy scientist” might take huge risks but the chances of success is minimal. So each scientist must choose just how creative the work is going to be. High risk, high potential reward, but greater chance of failure.

Unfortunately the creative appearance, language and ability to communicate with the general public seems to absent in many professional scientist. There are very few jokey scientists, there are very few really extrovert scientists and there are very few scientist who have what you might call the “common touch”. This is a great pity as science can be great fun and full of stories that would make excellent TV Soap programmes or films.

Science and Engineering are serious subjects; but that doesn’t have to mean that all scientists and engineers have to be serious all the time. The creativity that occurs in scientific developments can match the creativity of a best selling novel, stage play or fantastic painting; however rarely, very rarely, does the public as a whole see this aspect of science and engineering.

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