

Jeff DeGraff and Staney DeGraff

The Creative Mindset

Press Kit

Thank you for your interest in interviewing Jeff DeGraff. Our team has created a number of resources for you, including the following:

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Jeff DeGraff Bio

Jeff DeGraff is both an advisor to Fortune 500 companies and a professor at the Ross School of Business at the University of Michigan. His simultaneously creative and pragmatic approach to making innovation happen has led clients and colleagues to dub him the “Dean of Innovation.”

He has written several books, including *Leading Innovation*, *Innovation You*, and *The Innovation Code*. Jeff's thoughts on innovation are covered by Inc., Fortune, and Psychology Today. He has a regular segment on public radio called The Next Idea. His new book, *The Creative Mindset*, brings 6 creativity skills to everyone and will be published in September 2020.

Staney DeGraff Bio

Staney DeGraff, CEO of the Innovatrium, works with large organizations, universities, and nonprofits to create a sustainable innovation ecosystem that can grow organically and connect the dots between cutting-edge research, talent acquisition and retention, commercialization, and economic development.

Her research is focused on generating Constructive Conflict™ in teams and organizations to produce innovation and on quantifying the commercial and social value of innovation.

She co-wrote *The Innovation Code* with her husband Jeff and they are collaborating on a new book, *The Creative Mindset*, to be published in September 2020. Staney has an MBA and an MSE in Computer Science and Engineering from the University of Michigan.

The Creative Mindset Description

Nearly all of today's major innovation workshops and programs call on organizations to drive innovation. What they miss is that innovation comes from the personal creativity of individuals. And creativity doesn't require an advanced education or technical skills—all employees can be creative. Often, all they lack is a fitting mindset and the right skills.

The Creative Mindset brings how-to advice, tools, and techniques from two master innovators who have taught and worked with over half of all Fortune 500 companies. Jeff and Staney DeGraff introduce six essential creative-thinking skills that can be easily mastered with limited practice and remembered as the acronym CREATE: Concentrate, Replicate, Elaborate, Associate, Translate, and Evaluate. These six skills, sequenced as steps, simplify and summarize the most important research on creative thinking and draw on over thirty years of real-world application in some of the most innovative organizations in the world.

It's time to rethink the way we make innovation happen. Individual creativity is an immense untapped resource, and you don't have to be Beethoven to make a big difference. As the spirit of chef Gusteau proclaims in the Pixar classic *Ratatouille*, "Anyone can cook."

Book Links

- [Amazon](#)
 - [Barnes and Noble](#)
 - [Penguin Random House](#)
 - [Porchlight](#)
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Website and Social Media Links

- [Jeff DeGraff Website](#)
- [Jeff DeGraff's LinkedIn](#)
- [Jeff DeGraff's Twitter](#)
- [Jeff DeGraff's Facebook](#)
- [Jeff DeGraff's YouTube](#)
- [Staney DeGraff's LinkedIn](#)
- [Innovatrium Website](#)
- [Innovatrium's LinkedIn](#)

Endorsements

“Jeff and Staney emphasize that small acts of creativity can have huge consequences and that ordinary people can do extraordinary things if they can see the opportunities in front of them.”

— **Mitch Jacobson, Executive Director, Austin Technology Incubator, UT Blackstone LaunchPad, University of Texas at Austin**

“We can all use a bit more creativity in our lives! Jeff and Staney DeGraff have made it easy for anyone—in any organization of any size—to take their free-thinking up a few levels. In this concise and creatively put together volume they share dozens of down to earth, easy to implement, ways to enhance our creative energy.”

— **Ari Weinzwieg, Co-founder, Zingerman's Community of Businesses**

“Finally, a book that maps out the practical side of creativity and makes it doable for anyone! The specific skills and relevant examples provided in this book will enhance creativity in your professional and personal lives. Thus, this is the must-read book if you are thinking about innovating some aspect of your work or life.”

— **Lynn Perry Wooten, President, Simmons University**

“The DeGraffs have successfully transformed a complicated concept of creativity into a series of practical, easy to understand but very effective techniques to enhance our thinking and ability. They are truly leaders and mentors in the field of creativity and innovation.”

— **John Evans, the Charles D. Miller Endowed Chair, Samuel Ginn College of Engineering, Auburn University**

Interview Resources

Topics

- The Creativity Club: It's Not As Exclusive As You Thought
- 6 Steps To Getting Into a Creative Mindset
- C.R.E.A.T.E: 6 Creative Thinking Skills
- Creativity Boosts the Bottom Line, and Here's How
- Out of the Box: The First Step is the Hardest
- The Innovative Mindset: Knowing When To Launch and When To Fail

Talking Points about Jeff

- Professor DeGraff has consulted with over half of all Fortune 500 companies at the senior executive level and has extensive experience in most industries worldwide.
- Dr. DeGraff established the Innovatrium Institute for Innovation, a groundbreaking innovation ecosystem, as well as the Certified Professional Innovator Program at Michigan, which has served as a prototype for dozens of similar university certificate programs.
- Jeff's mission is to democratize innovation - teaching everyone to innovate everyday everywhere.
- Jeff has had a national public television special - Innovation You: Four Steps to Becoming New and Improved.
- Jeff was the youngest senior executive at Domino's in the 1980s when it was one of the fastest-growing companies in America.
- Dr. DeGraff received his Ph.D. at 25 and started teaching Creativity at Work decades before the field became popular in business schools. He earned his Ph.D. in 2 years.
- Jeff was one of the last graduate students of Rudolf Arnheim, a pioneer in the field of perceptual psychology and creativity.

Talking Points about Staney

- Staney has been married to Jeff for a long time and together they have raised three children and four Shelties. They are left with one Sheltie for the moment, a beautiful 16-year old Belle.
- Staney loves to work with and mentor young men and women who are Innovatrium Fellows to develop their personal and professional skills, particularly in finding their sense of self and journey in life.
- Staney is passionate about creating an inclusive and diverse work environment, which leads to high performance, growth, and engagement. Her research is about how particular conflicts are necessary elements in team and organizational success.
- Staney was born in Indonesia.

Image Gallery

You can select and download headshots, lifestyle shots, logos, and book covers [here](#).

Past Interviews and Speaking Links

- [Inside Launchstreet Podcast](#): How Identifying Your Innovation Code Can Help You Innovate in the Right Way and at the Right Time
 - [LifeHack Article](#): Arguments Aren't Bad for You, If You Know How to Disagree
 - [AirForce Magazine](#): Innovation is Not Possible Without Diversity
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Q & A with Jeff and Staney

Jeff, your entire career has been based on creativity and innovation.

What drives you to stay in that field?

I have always considered myself a “pracademic.” That is, both an academic and practitioner. I have developed several theories and practices widely used by organizations. Each project brings an opportunity to learn something new and to create the next innovation method. Every day is a new challenge. We established the Innovatrium Institute for Innovation to share what we have learned through our fieldwork with students and leaders.

At what point in your career would you have most benefited from a book like *The Creative Mindset*?

I would have really appreciated this book when I was a student or when I first became a leader of a team. In both cases, creativity skills would have helped me work through challenges and opportunities in a simple and systematic way. Since this book is about mindset and not just skills, I feel that it would have benefited me in both personal and professional lives, and in many stages of my life.

Often, creativity and innovation are thought of elitist ideals, who is creativity really for?

Everyone is creative. We are just creative in different ways and in a wide variety of situations. We coined the term “creativizing” to describe how small acts of creativity transform the ordinary into the extraordinary. Creativity is for everyone, every day, and everywhere.

What is the first step to democratizing creativity?

Believing you are creative is the first step. Adopting a creative mindset is the next step. Finally, a variety of small experiments puts your creativity to work.

What is the key takeaway from *The Creative Mindset*?

By adopting a creative mindset, and mastering a few creativity skills, you can make innovation happen anywhere and anytime.
