



Questions & Answers about *The Dot*!

Here are some questions that Peter frequently receives about *The Dot* and how it came to be, as well as his answers...

Q: What is *The Dot* about?

A: *The Dot* is the first of three books -- a trilogy of books dedicated to creativity. I call it the "creatrilogy." In this first book, we meet a girl named Vashti who has convinced herself she can not draw. Her teacher dares her to make a mark. Vashti makes one little dot on her sheet of paper... which turns out to be the beginning of her creative journey!

But *The Dot* is more than a book about art. It is a book that encourages us to be brave about expressing ourselves. It gently reminds us to start small and explore the IDEA. It is also a tribute to great teachers who know how to use humor, "off-the-path" approaches, and who have the vision to see the possibilities in EVERY student. The book ends off with Vashti sharing this gift with others, beginning a ripple of inspiration.

Q: How long did it take you to write *The Dot*?

A: It took me about a year and a half to complete *The Dot*.

Q: How did you get the idea for *The Dot*? What inspired you?

A: Although it did take me about a year and a half to complete *The Dot*, the initial idea came to me as a quirky accident. I have a promise to myself that I will make a mark in my journal each night, even if I am tired. I will try to jot a drawing, or a poem, or a word, or even a simple mark to just prove I was alive that day.

One night, when I was exhausted, I made a mark with a black felt-tipped marker and promptly fell asleep. When I awoke with a start an hour or two later, I noticed the little mark had mushroomed into one giant black dot.

I put the cap on the pen, put the book to one side and went back to sleep. When I awoke the next morning, I looked at the journal again and instead of seeing it as a mistake... I suddenly realized that perhaps this was one of the best ideas I had ever had.

I grabbed the pen and quickly jotted "The Dot" above the black dot and "by Peter H. Reynolds" below it. I had just created the cover to my new book.

The story that belonged to the cover came to me quickly after that. I had the image of a girl staring at a blank page. She was frustrated by not being able to draw. I had another image of a gentle and wise teacher who would not see a blank page, but rather the potential that was there. With an encouraging word she could help this girl take a step in the direction of self-expression.

Q: Where did the name of the main character come from?

A: Vashti is the name of the main character in *The Dot*. This was inspired by a young girl who I met at a coffee shop in Dedham Square, Massachusetts. She was selling flowers to raise money for her school. After I bought a carnation, she asked what I was doing. I said, "Painting. Here... you can have this one. I'll sign it to you - what's your name?"

"Vashti."

I smiled. "Vashti? You're the very first Vashti I've met! Can I use your name in my next book?"

Her big brown eyes lit up. "YES!"

She disappeared with the drawing I had made for her. I have not seen her since. Perhaps one day she will discover *The Dot* and make the connection!

Q: As its creator, what do you like most about *The Dot*?

A: I'm really excited about the message in *The Dot*, and I'm eager to hear from people who are inspired to make their own mark.



Are you a writer? A storyteller? A film maker? A poet? Someone who inspires others? Are you someone who wants to do some or all of those, but needs a nudge? Needs a bit of inspiration?

Creative thinking is the fuel for getting things going. Dreaming about the project is a huge part of the process. The actual 'doing' requires following through on the dream, but the dream is the rough sketch. I encourage people to ponder and conjure the vision, but eventually I'll nudge you to "prove your groove." Don't just say you are a writer... Write. Don't just dream about making a film... Pick up the camera and go!



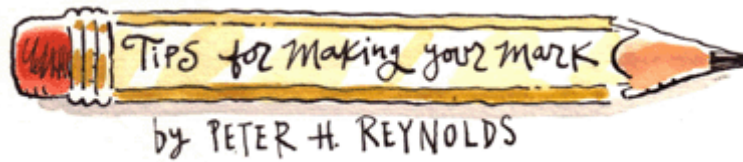
Also realize that your creative thinking might be flowing naturally, but perhaps you've never thought to capture it. Have you ever told a terrific story to your friends or family? Why not write it down? Have you ever made up a fable for a group of eager kids? Jot it down and make a children's book! Are you good at jokes? Make an illustrated joke book.

I'll share my view on creativity, hoping it helps you on your creative journey, but it is a very personal process and might be very different for you than me. Whatever your style or strategy, I hope the creative process brings you joy.

Join me in my 'campaign' to make the world a more creative place. The next time you're thinking about what gift to give someone, think of something that will encourage creativity. Whether it's a blank journal or book on crafts, a set of watercolors or a guide to making films, a stationery set or a watercolor brush - let it be something that inspires expression. Children and grown up children need to be encouraged to consume less, and create more.



Peter appeared on FOX-TV recently and shared some of his tips for sparking and nurturing creativity in the home. Here's a recap:



1. Keep a Family Journal -- After dinner, share the day together, write down what everyone did.

2. Keep blank books handy -- for personal journals

3. Write snail mail -- these are "journals on a journey"

4. Keep art supplies handy -- creative environments inspire writers



5. Read! Read! Read! Good readers make better writers.

6. Let your kids see YOU read! Be a role model. Show them your artistic side. Don't speak badly about your own art. Read "The Dot" and "Ish."



7. Get a library card for everyone on the family.

8. Frame a homemade decorated poem and hang in the kitchen.

9. Tell stories. Family stories. Made-up stories. You don't need a book to read with your children. In fact, if they see you improvise they will learn to do the same. Improv is key to creative thinking and innovation.



10. Write your own greeting card poems. Save money and delight friends and family.

11. Find an old typewriter. Kids love these "antique word processors."

12. Name our studio. Pretend you have your own publishing company. Design a logo. Make stickers to adhere to your homemade books.



13. Buy stationery or make it. A program like [Stationery Studio™](#) makes it easy. Create personalized stationery and USE IT!

14. Be your child's scribe! Let them tell the story aloud – even very young children — and jot down their story.

15. Write about what you love. Tap into your child's natural interests to spark writing!





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Peter H. Reynolds

