

Interview with Richard Florida



photo by Jamie Hogge

- **Can you define the Creative Class?**

The creative class includes 40 million American workers, about a third of the workforce. It includes scientists and techies, innovators and entrepreneurs, artists, designers and media types as well as knowledge workers in business, management, healthcare, education and law. The creative class generates about \$2 trillion in wages and salaries, two-thirds of the nation's total wages and salaries. Creative class people have wide range of personality traits, but psychologists find the most highly creative people tend to be high in openness-to-experience, and this partly explains the tendency of highly creative people to cluster in exciting urban areas.

- **Which are your most popular presentation topics?**

Creativity and the importance of cities and place. Cities matter. Places matter. In fact, place has supplanted the industrial corporation as the central economic and social organizing unit of today's economy. That is why stewarding community and building great places is so very important. Our cities and communities are central to creativity, innovation and the development of new technologies. They are the places where creative types and entrepreneurs combine and recombine to spark new ideas, inventions, businesses and industries. They are humanity's greatest invention.

- **What do audiences gain from your keynotes?**

I focus my research and speaking and inspiring. That's what I truly love, helping people understand the broad shifts in our economy. Regions are becoming more specialized in economic activity, creating a global battle for talent. With my presentations, I provide my audiences with insights into how creativity and the Creative Class are revolutionizing the global economy during a time of "Great Reset". I also help audiences understand the patterns that will drive the next Great Reset and transform virtually every aspect of our lives—from how and where we live, to how we work, to how we invest in individuals and infrastructure, to how we shape our cities and regions. I show how these forces, when combined, will spur a fresh era of growth and prosperity, define a new geography of progress, and create surprising opportunities for all of us. Finally, I utilize the lessons learned from the last 10 years to show how Creative Class theory has grown from a prediction to a prescription for an economy in turmoil, outlining the need for a Creative Compact—a new social compact that can put us back on the path to economic growth.

- **Can you tell us about your latest book and why you chose to write it?**

The Rise of the Creative Class Revisited explains why creativity is our fundamental economic resource. There's no turning back—the change is already happening. If we want to strengthen our communities, our businesses, and our country, we have to tap into the creativity of everyone, from those of us privileged enough to work in the creative class to the other 66 percent of blue-collar working people and those who toil long hours in routine service jobs like food service and personal care. The basic logic of our economy dictates that economic development will be driven by the use and development of everyone's creative capabilities.