

## **Unimaginativeness**

*To be unimaginative is to take the given world at face value, to make no effort to transform it. The unimaginative person may speak up, when you tell your story about the huge fish you caught, and set the record straight. For that person the flat truth of how things are is plenty, and should not be corrupted. If you object to him that he is 'taking the fun out of life,' he may reply that the fun in life is right there in the life itself.*

### *Examples*

#### **1 Nuts and Bolts**

I have a friend who is an accountant. She likes it, about her professional work, that there is no need to go 'beyond the data.' She is aware of complexity, for she faces dauntingly extensive and involved calculations—the balance sheets of major corporations—but that complexity can be penetrated by the machinery of calculation. (The physicists, seeking for the Higgs-Boson particle at the CERN lab, similarly believe that only refined computational equipment lies between them and the full understanding of the Big Bang.) My friend believes that 'imagination' is irrelevant to the analytical work she is carrying on, and for that matter that the works of imagination—the arts in general—are highly over rated fantasies. While we often employ the word unimaginative critically, implying that it is dull to be unimaginative, my friend prefers to reverse the usage, and to praise the unimaginative person as the one who thinks and acts significantly.

#### **2 Matter of fact**

One of my friends is a logistics supervisor for a large company. Paul is matter of fact in the carrying out of his job. He is not what we would call 'lacking in a sense of humor,' for he can mock himself, but he is practical, quick, and down to earth. If one asks him for an explanation of something practical, like how to set up a television set, he will take out a sheet of paper, spread it on the table, and sketch the relation of the set to the connecting wires and the available electrical outlets. One might say that Paul is imaginative, in the primitive sense of thinking in visual images, but he is unimaginative, in the sense that he thinks most comfortably in empirical, how-to-do terms. If you ask him how you should paint your porch, he will tell you exactly the size of brush and roller, the brand of paint, and the best weather for doing the job.