

BRAIN TEASERS

You have made up your mind to enter a design career, the first thing is to open your mind to these new paths!

WAKE YOUR MIND UP!

When there is something wrong with your body, you go and see a doctor. But if you are perfectly all right but want to be healthier, fitter, thinner or more flexible, you might go to the gym.

The same rule applies to the mind.

And to make our mind more fit and healthy, we need to exercise it regularly.

That's what we are going to start with this book!

Write below in steps how you would make a cup of tea?

Most of us don't think creatively as we go through our lives and tend to follow the fixed patterns of doing things that have been taught to us. And though there is nothing wrong in doing so, since these fixed patterns generally give the desired results, we need to sometimes get more adventurous and playfully to make our lives more lively and creative.

In our lives, there are many situations where it pays to be more creative. For example:

1. To solve a problem.
2. To Spot an opportunity.
3. To find better, quicker or easier ways of doing things.
4. For the pleasure of being creative, be it writing a story or designing a dress.
5. To add a little sparkle, humor or romance.
6. To make life more interesting.

Unfortunately, our minds are so well trained in following the fixed pattern routines, that even when we want to, we have difficulty thinking creatively.

There fore, the first step for anyone who wants to be more creative is to spot the mental short cuts or the fixed patterns and remove them. Although this process sounds a little difficult, the moment you

start seeing the results, you will get addicted to it and will see for yourself how the creative juices start flowing.

And the moment the creative juices start flowing, you are on your way to solve any kind of problems, be it your day to day problems, difficult situations, or any Creative Test for any design or fashion institute.

LET THE CREATIVITY FLOW

A man is driving a black car on a blackened road without street lights and without headlights on his car. A black cat crosses the road right in front of his car and still he is able to apply brakes to save the cat. How come? The answer to this Brainteaser lies in the fact that we have to think differently and creatively as we used to when we were small kids. Remember, we used to ask a lot of such teasers to our friends and were always excited about such things. But somewhere down the line, we lose such creative thinking simply because we think that we have outgrown that age!

99% of the young adults are not able to answer the above teaser at the first go. Do you know why? Because the patterns in understanding and problem solving that we have developed are predictable that it is as if we are wearing a tinted spectacles before our eyes and they provide a distorted view of reality.

The trick of thinking creatively is to take off these problem solving spectacles and look at the world differently with fresh ideas.

But we have to take off these filters or glasses only at the time of thinking creatively. These glasses are also useful in our day to day practical problem solving. And when we want to be creative, we have to remove these glasses and see things as we have never before.

Let us first understand the ways in which we are all used to seeing the world.

I KNOW THE PROBLEM

We often make assumptions about the problem or situation before we try to find some ideas to solve it.

A cow is tied to a rope 8 feet long and there is a stack of hay 10 feet away. How can the cow reach the hay if it cannot bite or undo the rope?

To this problem, let us see first, what are the assumptions that we make. That the cow has four legs. And we assume that the rope is tied to the!!!. That's where lies the solution to this problem.

We assume that the other end of the rope is tied to a tree, whereas it is nowhere mentioned in the problem. The other end of the rope is free for the cow to reach out to the hay.

What it means is this. We all make assumptions about a problem before we try to solve it. This reduces the no. of possible answers. And if our assumptions are wrong, they do not allow our brain to get to the answer.

Now, can you spot the assumption in the earlier brainteaser at the beginning of this part? Most of us imagine the scene in the black cat problem and because the word black appears so often and there is a mention of the words like street light and headlights, we **assume** that it is night time. However, it is not mentioned anywhere.

Once we realize that it could be daytime, we get to the answer!!

We can find an answer to half the problems if we always often do not rush to the first solution to any problem. Remember, there could be more possibilities, so wait and think. The next set of answers and options that you would get, could be more interesting and exciting.

The above is very crucial for any student who is appearing for any kind of creative ability Test. for any institute.

EXERCISE

A woman with no driver's license goes the wrong way down a one-way-street and turns left at a corner with a no left turn sign. A policeman sees her but does nothing. Why?

Our schooling, education and work train us to do the intelligent conscious approach very well, while the quirkier, unconscious method of idea generation to all kind of problems is often ignored. We learn to solve problems logically, whether it is a Maths question or completing a comprehension test. Speed and showing how we worked out a problem are appreciated. However, the more playfully and daydreaming is discouraged.

Imagine you told your parents that you were going to spend the day sitting under a tree in the park thinking; and then when you come back, you freely admit that you did not come up with any useful ideas the whole day.

This would not go down too well with them.

But if you go to school punctually and achieve 99% in all your subjects, you would be crowned as a genius.

The difference in the two situations arises simply because in the first situation the ideas or solutions to problems do not come up spontaneously. Actually, you do not know when they would come up. Nobel Prize winner Leo szilliard revealed that the concept of a nuclear chain reaction came to him while he was waiting at some London traffic light. William Blake saw visions which he later drew or used for his poetry. Einstein said that his best ideas occurred when he was taking a shower.

And you don't have to be one of the words geniuses for ideas to come to mind at unexpected moments. This process is called incubation. Incubation is allowing our minds to mull over the problem

Whilst doing something else. Building in incubation time to come up with different and unique ideas is a very good investment for a student wanting to clear the NID exam.

We put the meat in the oven and expect it to be cooked in half an hour, or plant a tree and assume that if we keep watering it every now and then, it will grow. In a similar way, we need to leave the idea in our mind sometimes, and trust that a creative idea would emerge without trying to force it.

Another way to dip into our unconscious mind is that of daydreaming. Each of us can generate great creative leaps, where we make sense of concepts, link different thoughts together and produce some truly original ideas.

Daydreaming is a state we can all recognise; that moment between wakefulness and slumber when we half dream or when we peer out of a window and our imagination takes us on a bizarre and quite unexpected journey.

This is not about the daydreams where we remember our past. This is the daydreaming where we construct a new reality for ourselves. We might be pirates, astronauts, people with very long fingers – we distort or amend reality in such a way that a new situation occurs, however freaky or strange that might be.

So how do we go about getting ourselves into this state?

The answer is in visualization or unconscious imagining. There are three steps that will help us get into this state and generate ideas.

RELAX – the first step in this creative visualization process is to ease our minds. Focus on your breathing. We don't breathe as effectively as we can. When concentrating on our breathing we can begin to let all other thoughts leave us.

VISUALISE A SPECIAL LOCATION - The special location is a visualized setting where we can relax and think clearly, feeling safe and comfortable. It can be real or imagined like a beach, park, stream, cave, forest, a place we have read about in a book, seen in a film or simply generated ourselves.

INTRODUCE A CREATIVE GUIDE – The creative guide is a visualized guide whom we trust, value and respect. It is someone who is wise and original. Again the creative guide can be real or imagined. They can be a person, character, animal or another type of being. Our guide may respond to us verbally or may give us an object or show us an image.

The process requires us to use all our senses to bring ideas to life as much as possible. By using sight, sound, touch, smell and taste we make the experience much richer and more engaging. Let's look at the process in detail.

THE VISUALISATION PROCESS - Breathe in deeply through your nose, filling both the top and bottom of your lungs. Breathe out easily through your mouth. Concentrate on the rhythm of your breathing and really focus on inhaling and exhaling and nothing else.

Do not actively push your thoughts away as this can be distracting. Let your thoughts drift away. If a thought comes into your mind imagine it as a cloud that will get blown away with your next breath. Don't fight your thoughts: just let them drift in and then drift away again.

Imagine arriving at your special location. Use all your senses to visualize this place in as much detail as much detail as possible so you feel like you are really there. You should imagine how it smells, what sounds you can hear and how calm and relaxed you feel. Spend a few moments enjoying the tranquility of your special location and drifting into a deeper state of relaxation.

Now imagine you can see a figure moving towards you from the distance. As the figure gets closer you see that it is your creative guide who has come to help you with your objective. Imagine your guide arriving next to you wherever you are and greeting them. You feel relaxed and inspired in the presence of your guide and are very happy to be in their company.

Imagine you are explaining your objective to your guide. You may want to explain this verbally or write it down or even use telepathy to inform your guide, whatever you prefer.

You wait for a response, confident that your guide will help you come up with an original and innovative solution. Your guide may talk to you, give you an object or even show you a scene.

The symbol, object or idea may be abstract or cryptic and so you may need to spend a few minutes deciphering the various symbols.

Having thought about what the symbol or gesture may represent you can then relate it back to your objective and see what it may mean. You mustn't worry about your ideas being too strange or difficult to put into action-part of the creative process is simply generating ideas themselves.

DREAM ON – People find that they come up with ideas they never would have reached using the more logical approaches to problem solving; or at least an initial thought that, with incubation, leads to a great idea. Part of this may be that we find it difficult to self-censor in the generation of our ideas when using this mode of thinking, hence the interesting and more quirky products generated from using this technique.

This process doesn't work for everyone right away – it improves with practice so if you enjoyed it use it regularly. It seems that the more practiced we become at visualization the more likely we are to generate useful and interesting ideas from it.

TOOL 3: AUTOMATIC WRITING – Automatic writing is rather like recording a stream of consciousness. By capturing all our thoughts as they occur, it is difficult to evaluate as we go along and so we are more likely to drift into new and unexpected places somewhere at the back of our unconscious mind. First, find a space you are comfortable in, making sure you have a pen and paper, and then get into a relaxed state of mind (the previous exercise should have done this).

Start writing as quickly as you can and without thinking. If the flow of writing is broken then you take a new line and start writing again. If you want to, use a trigger word to get your Sentences going.

Be prepared for if they are odd- when we explore in this more extreme form of free association, we are more likely to produce ideas that are unusual and out of context; after all, that's the point.

A FEW TIPS

1. Let go. No one is watching and no one will see what you've written. Let it rip.
2. Write as fast as you can.
3. Have a trigger word. If you dry up don't worry, but use your trigger word to get you going again.
4. There should be some grammatical sense (rather than just a string of words) but it doesn't need to be perfect or a work of literature.
5. Use it as a starting point. It won't give you 'the answer' but it may take you to it. Review, amend or adjust afterwards, not as you're going along.

Sean Cannery's character in Finding Forrester is teaching someone to write. He explains, 'First you have to write with your heart, then you have to write with your head.' Automatic writing is like writing with your heart.

MORE THAN HALF A BRAIN – People often find that this is a great place to start the creative process, but their ideas then need to be significantly refined, improved, discarded or amended before they can be used. In other words, once our 'Tortoise Mind' has come up with the ideas, it is time to switch back to 'Hare Brain' mode to analyze them. For the first time in a long while, we are using all of our brain rather than just half of it: by doing so, the possibilities of what we can achieve are endless. Sweet dreams.

TECHNIQUES TO THINK DIFFERENTLY

THE USE OF RELATED TERMS

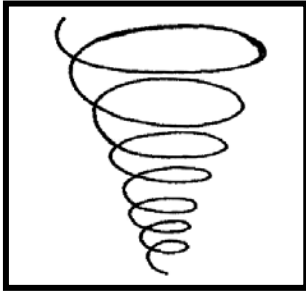
A very good technique to start on with thinking differently is by thinking differently is by thinking on the related terms. Sometimes we use the words in one context but they can easily be interpreted in different contexts by an intelligent mind.

For Ex.

1. Mountain – A symbol of success.
2. Dice – gamble of life.
3. Broom – A symbol to clean up the mess in the society.
4. Lamp – A symbol of life
5. A burnt out lamp – death.
6. Key – A solution to an answer.

In the above examples, observe how easily you can link relations with the words and look at them from a totally new perspective. The same technique can be followed in drawing. We can look for images which can be related to a word and linked easily.

For Ex. ANGER



TORNADO



VOLCANO



LIGHTNING

EXERCISE

BRAINSTORM ON THE FOLLOWING LIST OF WORDS. LOOK FOR RELATED TERMS.

1. FLOWER - Beautiful , Fragrance - _____
2. BIRD – Innocent. Free - _____
3. FOOTPRINTS – Idol, mentor - _____
4. PLAYING CARDS - _____
5. EYE - _____
6. LIPS - _____
7. CLOCK - _____
8. FOOTBALL - _____
9. GEAR - _____
10. BOAT - _____
11. SKULL - _____
12. BROOM - _____
13. KEY - _____

14. MILESTONE - _____

15. PEAK - _____

EXERCISE

IN A BOX OF 2" ×2" PORTRAY THE FOLLOWING WORDS USING LINE DRAWINGS

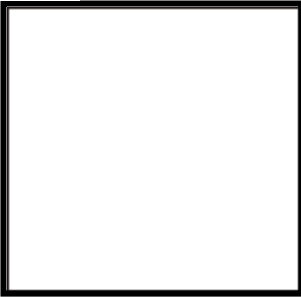
1. SAD

2. JOY

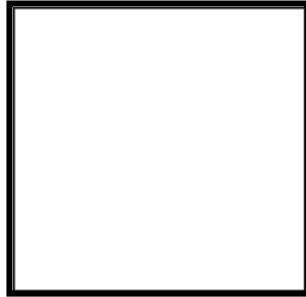
3. PROTECT

4. FRAGILE

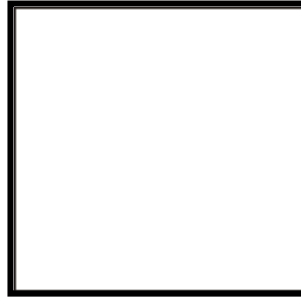
SAD



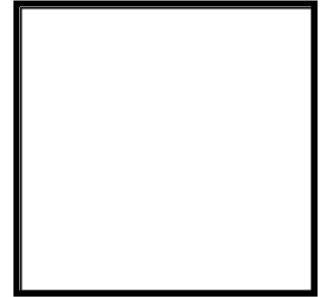
JOY



PROTECT



FRAGILE



THE USE OF IMAGINATION

Another technique to develop creative ideas is to increase your imagination power. The ability to imagine is a very essential tool to be able to come up with a new idea. To be imaginative is to add on what is not there. The addition is your creative idea which makes the work more interesting.

For Ex.

Let us add something imaginative to the list of words in the last exercise.

- 1. FLOWER – geometric flower / let your child bloom like a flower.
- 2. BIRD - A bird with GPRS guiding systems .
- 3. FOOTPRINT – of a disastrous / of an ant / footprints on Jupiter.
- 4. PLAYING CARDS – made of fabrics / playing cords made of wood / leaves.

Can you now do the remaining words?

EXERCISE

Describe how a car would be in the year 2075.

EXERCISE

Imagine yourself to be a beam of light reaching out in the sky at night time. Describe in 100 words what do you see, feel, hear, and Build up a small story.

EXERCISE

Give a new idea for “Railways Catering Tiffin Box” for serving the people traveling on trains.
