

Creativity In Your Pocket

A portable workshop in
creativity boosting techniques
by
D'Arcy Mayo

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Creativity In Your Pocket

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Table of Contents

Introduction

Some Preliminary Thoughts	1
Creativity Quotes	2
How to use this guide	3

The Techniques

Assumption Smashing	4
Brainstorming	6
Brainwriting	8
Checklists	10
Discontinuity	12
Escape Thinking	14
Forced Analogy	16
Fuzzy Thinking	18
LARC Method	20
Lateral Thinking	22
Lotus Blossom Technique	24

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Table of Contents continued

The Techniques

Mind Mapping	26
Problem Reversal	28
Random Input	30
Storyboarding	32
Six Hats	34
Six Action Shoes	36
The Synectic Method	38

Applying the techniques

The Creative State	40
7-Stages of Creativity	42

Going further

Getting personal assistance	44
Creativity training	45
Creativity Circles	47
Further references	48
About the Author	49
NOT The End!	50

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Introduction

Some preliminary thoughts

Creative problem-solving skills and an ability to produce abundant new ideas are two of the most valuable attributes that we can possess. Together with an action-orientation, they are the characteristics that have always accompanied massive success. This booklet reveals tested techniques to draw out your innate genius and prime your ideas-pump with the explosive potential of break-through creativity.

Creativity in Your Pocket is a compact resource that can be carried with you for instant access to the techniques of master creators; techniques that you can quickly use to solve those unsolvable problems, smash through your idea-blocks and revel in the exhilaration of the Eureka! experience.

The material has been drawn from my books, ***Kick-Start Your Creativity*** and ***How To Program Your Creative Mind***, both of which cover these and many other techniques in much more depth and from different perspectives.

Further pocket-size volumes are planned and will be announced in my newsletters and elsewhere. In the meantime, enjoy your journey through this portable workshop and remember that all the ideas in the world are useless without action. Have fun, achieve the extraordinary and resolve your creative challenges by applying these techniques in your life.

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Creativity Quotes

*There are subtle messages in these quotations.
Seek them out and apply them to your own thinking and
you may very well surprise yourself. Go on, give it a go!*

Nothing can be created out of nothing
Lucretius c.94-95BC

The urge for destruction is also a creative urge!
Michael Bakunin 1814-1817

All men are creative but few are artists.
Paul Goodman 1911-1972

As the births of all living creatures at first are ill-shapen,
so are all innovations, which are the births of time.
Francis Bacon 1561-1626

The discovery of a new dish does more for human
happiness than the discovery of a star
Anthelme Brillat-Savarin 1755-1826

Discovery consists of seeing what everybody has seen
and thinking what nobody has thought.
Albert von Szent-Györgyi 1893-1986

When man wanted to make a machine that would walk
he created the wheel which does not resemble a leg.
Guillaume Apollinaire 1880-1918

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This is more than a cute little booklet.


It contains 18 well-established creativity techniques derived from diverse sources, each distilled for rapid application to your *Creative Challenges*.

It is designed to help you find creative solutions rather than mimic academic rules. Use it as a practical tool.

Next time you need to come up with a creative solution, pull out ***Creativity in Your Pocket*** and use it to kick-start your thinking. Flip through the pages and pick a technique at random. Apply the suggestions. Note the results. Select another page. Apply that technique and note the results.

Do this as many times as you feel necessary. Sooner than you expect, you'll have a surplus of solutions. Isn't it nice to have choices?

All that's left is to evaluate the solutions, choose the one that is most practical and put it to work

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I always enjoy receiving feedback, so jump in and tell me your thoughts & suggestions for future editions ~ D'Arcy Mayo

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The Techniques

Assumption Smashing

Every decision we make is based upon presuppositions or assumptions. We assume that lawyers are conservative, that actors are extroverts, that tradespeople have no sense of time.

What if we demolished these assumptions? How would it change our expectations? How would it change the way these people respond to us? How will we know if we don't try?

That's the basis of the Assumption Smashing technique. It provides an 180° shift in our perspective. We begin to see things from new angles. We produce ideas that may be diametrically opposed to our original viewpoint. Here's how you can begin to smash aside the assumptions attached to your creative challenges:

1. **Define** your creative challenge in measurable terms.
2. **List** all assumptions attached to the situation. Be generous. Make the list as long as you possibly can and allow room to add to it as you progress through the other steps.
3. **Smash** them one-by-one with questions like, "What if this is untrue?" "What happens if.....?" "What else could be false?" Be ruthless. Utterly destroy each presupposition. As each assumption is dropped, think about the situation surrounding your challenge. How many ideas does this spark?

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The Techniques

Assumption Smashing

4. **Reverse** the responses and ask the same questions again. This is where you'll often make the critical break through. As each reverse-assumption is added, think about your challenge and look for insights that will lead to idea-seeds
5. **Relax** and allow your ingredients to simmer. This is a critical stage. Do it without fail; even if it is only a matter of closing your eyes for a moment & taking a few deep breaths. This germination phase will cause your idea-seeds to produce strong solutions but only if allowed to sprout naturally.
6. **Allow** ideas to float to the surface of this bubbling brew. It is still too early to be judgemental. Permit yourself the luxury of playing with these fresh ideas in fanciful ways. Join them together. Create idea-chains. Be outrageous. You'll have a chance soon enough to anchor yourself in reality.
7. **Evaluate** each idea for coherence, usefulness and relevance. Each idea that fulfils the measurement criteria from step 1 can now be ranked and you can make your final choice..
8. **Implement** your chosen solution and measure the results.

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The Techniques

Brain Storming

The principle behind brainstorming is that ideas generate other ideas when people give free rein to their thinking in a group environment. It causes a chain reaction of ideas.

On the negative side, some experts, notably Dr Edward de Bono in his book, ***Serious Creativity***, are of the opinion that brainstorming has become such an automatic response to corporate problem solving that an impression has been given that creative thinking can only be done in groups.

In fact, individuals are often more productive at creating new ideas in isolation. Once the fledgling idea has been hatched, group brainstorming will often develop the idea more effectively than the originator could alone.

My experience has been that brainstorming is most effective when the participants arrive at the meeting after having already given the target situation sufficient consideration and have produced at least a few ideas to contribute to the process. Sessions at which the problem is revealed with no prior warning can certainly be effective yet tend to occupy more time & involve lots of repetition along the way.

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The Techniques

Brain Storming

To conduct a brainstorming session the steps to follow are:

1. Write down your problem in a well-defined, clearly stated way that includes the criteria that you will use to identify when a solution has been reached.
2. Select members of the group according to the type of problem being addressed and give them adequate notice to allow for pre-session thinking.
3. Ensure that you have the right number of people. Too many can make the process cumbersome. A good number for most issues is 3-7 but this may be far greater at times. For example, at a caucus meeting where the numbers are dictated by structural circumstances
4. Appoint a record keeper to write down all ideas as they occur without exception.
5. Appoint a chairperson to control proceedings and enforce the following guidelines
 - Suspend all judgment
 - Every idea is accepted and recorded
 - Encourage people to build on the ideas of others
 - Encourage eccentric ideas

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The Techniques

Brain Writing

I don't recall where I first heard this term but I've adopted it as the name for a personal technique that I use on almost a daily basis. It is a combination of the principles of brainstorming, rapid or free writing and a little role playing.

By entering into the creative state (p. 40) you allow yourself to experience a sense of expectation, a knowledge that the solution has already arrived and all you have to do is record it. You allow your inner mind to freely associate and adopt the viewpoint of various people as you rapidly write down exactly what is flowing through your head as you work.

Sound a little weird? Then set aside your doubts for a few minutes and step through the process. It works more effectively each time you use it and eventually you'll find that the mere act of sitting down with pen and paper will create the right 'feel' and the writing will flow easily as you record your thoughts.

In every session, the initial words will be disjointed and probably superficial, perhaps even silly, yet as the process proceeds and you strip away the veneer you'll uncover pristine ideas that will surprise you with their simplicity, practicality and effectiveness.

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The Techniques

Brain Writing

The steps are:

1. Define your problem in the form of a question. What precisely is my desired outcome? Place the written answer in a prominent place where it will be visible throughout the process.
2. From this point onwards, starting with a blank surface, write down every thought that goes through your mind irrespective of its nature.
3. Select your role-models for this session. Who would you have absolute faith in being capable of solving this issue for you?
4. Enter into the creative state (p.40)
5. Adopt the persona of one of your role models. As that person, how would you solve this problem? Get right into the role. You have all the talents & genius of your role model. Use them to find your solution.
6. Repeat step 5 for each role model
7. When you exhaust all your role models, stop and review what you have written. Many times you'll find ideas that you don't recall having recorded.
8. Finally, collate and evaluate the ideas generated.

This technique works magic when applied with enthusiasm

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The Techniques

Checklists

You can create all sorts of checklists to produce innovative ideas and resolve issues. Some are as simple as the old writer's 5W&H formula with a little modification:

- Why is it necessary?
- Who should do it?
- What should be done?
- Where should it be done?
- When should it be done?
- How should it be done?

(A great source of "Questions to spur ideation" is Alex Osborn's book, *Applied Imagination*.)

Checklists based upon criteria is another application of this approach. As you develop your problem definition you can create such a checklist with very little extra effort.

For regularly occurring creative challenges, checklists are a great way to prompt your thinking. I have checklists for my regular newsletter columns that guide me rapidly through the writing process every month. Checklists save time, semi-automate the process and lead from one idea to the next.

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The Techniques

Checklists

To implement the checklist approach:

1. Select a category of regularly occurring issues. It could be the need to develop new products, to produce periodic reports or whatever
2. Define the common characteristics of this class of creative challenge.
3. From these characteristics, develop a checklist of the criteria for successful completion
4. Examine the processes used in the past when similar projects produced outstanding results
5. List the common steps that were taken in each of these projects and produce a consolidated checklist
6. Review this list to see if other steps can be added in the future.
7. Test the checklist by applying it to your next project
8. Modify the list according to results

Some keywords that spark questions to incorporate into checklists are: Substitute? Combine? Adapt? Modify? Eliminate? Reverse? Alternatives? Expense? Profit? Success? Prosperity? Spirituality? Energy?

Constantly review your checklists to maintain their integrity

The Techniques

Discontinuity

"Familiarity breeds contempt" and leads to dull thinking.

The more we become used to something, the less it is capable of stimulating our creativity unless we disrupt the pattern in some way. This is where discontinuity useful.

Roger von Oech's "Whack on the side of the head" is one example of the discontinuity principle. You've probably experienced it many times. Your train of thought is rattling down a well-defined line when suddenly an abrupt jolt bounces it off one track and onto another. The disruption brings with it new conditions, new perspectives, new threats, new challenges, new ideas.

Discontinuity is simply breaking into the dominant thought pattern in an unexpected or unfamiliar way. It is moving out of your comfort zone. It forces you to start making new connections in order to understand the changed situation. That in turn stimulates fresh creative thinking.

You can incorporate discontinuity into your daily live with very little effort.

Travel to work a different way each day. Study unfamiliar topics. Change radio stations. Be daring. Just break your routine ☺

The Techniques

Discontinuity

This technique is a difficult one to lay down specific instructions for because its effectiveness lies in its unpredictability. Consequently, to incorporate discontinuity into the creative process you must approach it from a flexible and courageous position.

1. Recognize that the issue being addressed is not being resolved by the standard processes.
2. Accept that the you may experience severe discomfort from being plunged into unfamiliar waters.
3. Make a conscious decision to program interruptions into your daily routine. Allow for the unexpected to happen. Cultivate a spontaneous mind-set.
4. Juxtapose ideas with each other in ways that create friction. Take ideas from one discipline and mix them in with ideas from others. That is how NLP (Neuro-Linguistic Programming) came into existence.
5. Never stop. Do something unfamiliar every day

The Techniques

Escape Thinking

Human beings have a tendency to categorize and pigeon hole things. The more experience we have, the more rapidly we are able to pop things into their correct pigeon hole. The side effect of this is that once we have put something into a category, inertia tends to keep it there.

The Escape Thinking technique breaks us out of this categorization prison by forcing us to see beyond the restricting confines we have imposed upon ourselves.

An interesting example of escape thinking is the way the German military commanders conceived the blitzkrieg which made the French Maginot Line instantly obsolete. Accepted thinking after World War I was that future wars would be fought along similar lines with improved technology.

By breaking out of this WWI mind-set, the Germans saw new possibilities to which the French remained blind. They escaped the constrictions of conventional thinking and achieved creative insights that resulted in the German army by-passing the Maginot Line with a rapid strike through the Belgian lowlands. Move your issue out of its pigeon hole.

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-14-

The Techniques

Escape Thinking

New ideas are often overlooked because we don't have a pigeon hole suitable for them to be deposited. One way to overcome this and to simultaneously shuffle the contents of other pigeon holes is to indulge in some escape thinking.

1. Select an issue you wish to address.
2. Place it in a category or pigeon hole. A business issue related to decreasing sales might be categorized as a "Sales" issue
3. Randomly select another category for the same issue
Our example might become an "Accounting" issue
4. Spend several minutes thinking and sharing ideas about the issue (decreasing sales) from the perspective of the new category (e.g. accounting).
5. Repeat steps 3 & 4 with as many categories as time permits and imagination provides.
6. Evaluate the resulting ideas

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-15-

The Techniques

Forced Analogy

This one is a lot of fun and produces such an abundance of ideas you'll want to use it over and over again. It involves comparing your creative challenge with something else that is totally unrelated to it; something that appears to have nothing in common with your issue.

I have not yet encountered a situation where a relationship could not be forced between issues. Betty Edwards in her book, ***Drawing on the Artist Within*** uses a pencil as a forced analogy of marriage: "Eraser-Forgive & forget mistakes *Lead*-Get it out! Press hard & it will break *Flat Side*-Dull daily routine. Change activities" and so on.

You can develop many different ways of applying this concept within your private and professional life. Like all the other suggestions in this booklet, expand on the guidelines and you'll enjoy some very pleasant surprises along the way.

Using these techniques could be likened to a matchbox. The striking surface sparks ideas. The six sides remind us of the six hats & shoes of de Bono. The sliding centre tray is flexibility in action. The cardboard structure is inexpensive

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-16-

The Techniques

Forced Analogy

Here are some ways that you can force relationships and develop new solutions to old problems:

- Use a selection of objects or picture cards. Select items at random and see what relationships form
- Build up a matrix of attributes of your creative challenge then choose an object for forced comparison. For example, you could create a matrix for a product such as a watch then create a matrix for a fish. Relate the attributes of the fish to the watch. Who knows, maybe that's the way they came up with the idea of watches that can operate under water. I don't know, but can you see the potential?
- Have members of the group answer a series of trigger questions to provide a pool of potential comparisons. The key is to make the questions unrelated to the topic under discussion. And then choose items at random rather than by consensus. The greater the contrast between your issue and the comparative item, the better.
- Use mind-mapping to explore aspects of your issue and its analogy. Overlap the maps and look for relationships that spark ideas. Repeat with other analogies.

The Techniques

Fuzzy Thinking

Lotfi Zadeh developed the discipline of **Fuzzy Logic** which is used extensively in areas where things are not amenable to yes/no logic such as artificial intelligence, control of nuclear reactors, and other process control situations.

Fuzzy Thinking by Bart Kosko and **Fuzzy Logic - The Revolutionary Computer Technology that is changing the world** by Daniel McNeil and Paul Freiburger are good books for a lay perspective of Zadeh's concepts.

Because Aristotle's model of thinking is so ingrained in our western culture it is often hard for people to grasp "grey areas" where true or false logic is not appropriate. How to reach decisions on multi-faceted issues such as changing jobs is the province of fuzzy thinking.

When you ask such a question as, "Should I change jobs?" you give a false expectation of a yes/no answer. Yet, when you examine the factors that must be considered, the process is far from yes/no. Even asking, "Are you happy in your job?" has varying degrees of truth attached to it. "Yes, when things are going well. No, when the boss is on your back. Overall, 60% of the time" Fuzzy Thinking allows for these variations of response (input) and produces action (output) accordingly.

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-18-

The Techniques

Fuzzy Thinking

Now this really is something that is a creative challenge to squeeze into this small space. It takes an entire chapter in one of my other books but let's give it a go.

- Define your issue and list its attributes "I need to find a good accountant"
- Generate a checklist of questions (p.10)
- Review these questions and identify those with yes/no as the only possible response. "Are you a good accountant?"
- Re-word them to be open-ended "How good are you as an accountant?"
- Create a graph or other visual representation of degrees of "truth" for each answer. The Ben Franklin model used by sales people is a good example of a textual representation. You list the pros in one column, the cons in the other & compare the lists to weigh up your decision

Fuzzy Thinking is invaluable in resolving grey issues.

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-19-

The Techniques

LARC Method

In ***Unleashing the Right Side of the Brain*** Robert Williams and John Stockmyer introduce this **Left And Right Creativity** process for applying whole-brain thinking to problems.

There are 4 versions LARC1 and LARC2 are for quick, imaginative solutions to everyday problems. LARC3 and LARC4 take longer and address more complex issues.

The component of the LARC method includes:

Drawing pictures of each word or concept. Specific pictures for specific terms (house, car, truck) and symbolic pictures for symbolic terms (love, happiness, fulfillment)

Smashing where trigger words are used to break down terms into "fact-bits" Active, Passive, Simple, Complex word lists can be used or you can simply make up your own ad hoc list

Rearranging involves grouping items in new ways. Perhaps in categories, pyramids, chains, circles or other configurations.

Creating involves scrutinizing responses to smashing questions, identifying idea-seeds and developing them

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-20-

The Techniques

LARC Method

The right brain is stimulated by the drawing and visual images whilst the left is stimulated by the smashing, rearranging and evaluating phases. My versions vary only slightly from those of Williams & Stockmyer

LARC1

1. Drawing
2. Smashing
3. Creating
4. Evaluating

LARC2

1. Drawing
2. Smashing
3. Creating 1
4. Rearranging
5. Creating 2
6. Evaluating

LARC3

1. Drawing
2. Smashing
3. Creating 1
4. Rearranging:
Group, Pyramid,
Chain, Circle
5. Creating 2
6. Evaluating

LARC4

1. Drawing
2. Smashing
3. Creating 1
4. Rearranging:
Group, Pyramid,
Chain, Circle
5. Creating 2 Relationship lines
6. Evaluating

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-21-

The Techniques

Lateral Thinking

Moving sideways, trying different perceptions, different concepts and starting from fresh points. Lateral thinking is really a term that covers many different techniques. It slashes through accepted ways of doing things to move our thinking outside the system. The saying, "think outside the box (or nine dots)" was a creative thinking exercise attributed widely to the father of Lateral Thinking, Dr Edward de Bono

An example of lateral thinking is the pressured writer working away and being constantly interrupted by his young pup. One solution would be to put the pup outside or into a playpen. A lateral solution might be to put the writer outside or in the playpen to protect him from the distraction of the pup.

Lateral thinking can be specific as in applying defined techniques to shift perspective and address a particular issue. It can also be general as in exploring many potential paths towards resolving an issue or a broad problem-type.

A reading of de Bono's book ***Serious Creativity*** is a sound introduction to Lateral Thinking and its techniques

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-22-

The Techniques

Lateral Thinking

The key to lateral thinking is to recognize that our normal mode of reasoning is based upon a patterning system and that provocative methods are needed to break the pattern.

"Lateral thinking is concerned with changing concepts and perceptions" it is a more specific term than creative thinking. Occasionally, changing perceptions provides solutions but more often it gives us fresh starting points that can be further developed by other means.

All the techniques in this booklet are ways of applying Lateral Thinking to your creative challenges. The sentence, "There may not be a reason for saying something until you have said it" is an example of a statement that makes no sense in the world of logic but which is perfectly sensible in the lateral world. In the logical world every step follows from the previous step. In the lateral world we jump about at random to provoke changes in the perceptual stage of thinking.

To think laterally, use de Bono's **PO** (Provocative Operation) as a routine way of bouncing yourself into new ways of looking at things. The Discontinuity Technique (p.12) is an excellent way of doing this on a daily basis. Try it.

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-23-

The Techniques

Lotus Blossom Technique

Michael Michalko has an outstanding explanation of this technique in his book *Thinkpak* where I found a diagram similar to this one:

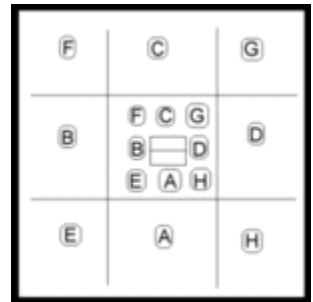
The process involves a central theme that is developed outwards with ever-expanding circles. The shape is suggestive of the petals of an opening lotus blossom.

Begin by copying this outline onto a large surface such as a white board or sheet of paper.

Write your creative challenge in the central box.

Think of related ideas and add them to the circles surrounding the central box.

Transfer the ideas from the inner circles to their equivalent circle in the adjacent squares.



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-24-

The Techniques

Lotus Blossom Technique

Repeat the process for the new central themes. Use aspects of other techniques to help stimulate ideas.

Continue the process until you have completed as much of the diagram as possible. If you fill the diagram expand it another level and keep going until you absolutely can't go any further.

Evaluate your ideas and begin the implementation process.

It is easy to confuse this approach with the mind mapping technique. The difference will become apparent as you practice applying both approaches. You will find that the Lotus Blossom method is far more structured and far more focused on producing results from within itself.

This is a good technique to use in rigid organizations where people are wary of change and bristle at the suggestion that they can benefit from the more free-wheeling concepts outlined throughout this and other publications that address creative thinking issues. It worked wonders within a staid para-legal department of a multi-national corporation that I worked with on developing new training methods.

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-25-

The Techniques

Mind Mapping

Mind maps were developed by Tony Buzan and can be used not only for generating ideas but are also a wonderful way of taking effective notes.

Mind maps organize information in ways that are in line with the way our brain operates. That is one of the reasons that mind maps seldom need to be changed and seldom need to be referenced once they have been completed. They become embedded in our memory more easily because they are structured in a way that suits the patterning schemes in which our memories are recorded.

Mind maps can be used in conjunction with every other technique in this booklet apart from Lotus Blossom. Use it as a means of recording what happens as you work through each method and you'll multiply your creativity enormously.

As you build up your mind maps you'll find that you are making new associations so rapidly that recording them by any other means is impractical. It may be difficult to keep up with conventional note taking and later review will reveal gaps that simply don't exist when mind mapping is performed effectively. The small effort involved in developing your mind mapping skills will reward you many, many times over.

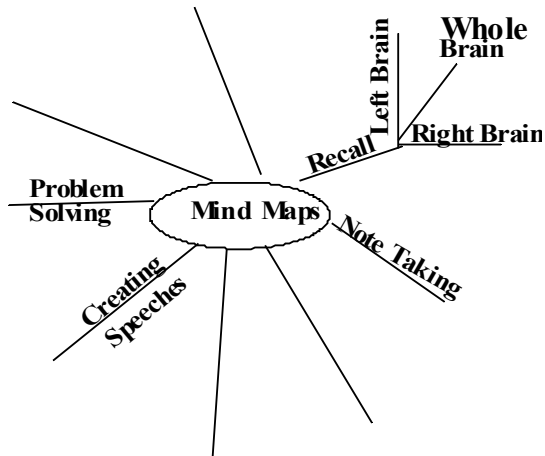
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-26-

The Techniques

Mind Mapping

This partial map will give you a launch pad to explore the mind mapping technique and develop your understanding of the process.



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-27-

The Techniques

Problem Reversal

Lao-Tzu in the *Tao-te Ching* frequently utilises problem reversal. "The wise leader knows how to be creative. In order to lead, the leader learns to follow. In order to prosper, the leader learns to live simply." This is reversal in action.

There are seven steps in the problem reversal process:

- 1. State your creative challenge in reverse.**
If you want to be promoted, ask yourself, "How can I make my boss lose confidence in me?" List all the negative things you could do to make yourself *unpromotable*.
- 2. Define what something is *not***
Examine the things associated with your challenge. Remember the way in which Mac computers were introduced to the market place. They were presented as being everything that IBM computers were not.
- 3. Do what everyone else is *not* doing**
The Japanese conquered the American car industry by manufacturing compact vehicles that ran on a fraction of the fuel required to power "Yank Tanks". Use contrarianism.

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-28-

The Techniques

Problem Reversal

4. **Use the "What If" challenge**

What if we ... do nothing?

Give it away?

Offer it in one size/color/model?

What if you plug in your own what ifs?

5. **Change perspective.**

Shift your vantage point.

Look at it from above, below, every angle, every dimension

6. **Flip-Flop**

If you want to increase revenue, think about decreasing it.

I did this with a brick distribution company that wanted to expand rapidly. Instead, they ended up actually cutting sales by 40% with a resulting 15% increase in profits. How? By flip-flopping the goal and assessing the likely results they discovered that less was really more.

7. **Defeat=Victory Victory=Defeat**

Turn things around. If you lose, consider the positive outcomes. If you win, think about what would have happened if you'd lost, then consider the benefits that would have come out of the defeat.

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-29-

The Techniques

Random Input

Here we have the simplest technique of them all. It is widely used by creative specialists who need to produce masses of ideas every single day without respite. It is used by satirists, comedians, advertising copywriters, inventors, scientists and just about everyone at some point.

Random input works because the brain, being a self-organizing system, makes connections so easily, so fast and so well that almost any random input can stimulate ideas.

Chance events and artificially generated random input are equally valid tools. They both take us into an existing thought pattern at a point other than the beginning. It's like entering a house through a different door or climbing in through a window or down the chimney or removing tiles from the roof to enter from above.

Random input can be in any form. It can be an event. It can be a word or an image. It can be another person. It can be whatever you want it to be so long as it is not part of the pattern involved with the situation you want to change.

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-30-

The Techniques

Random Input

Techniques for generating random input include:

- Computer programs that randomly flash up words or phrases or images or questions or something else
- Flash cards that you make yourself or buy
- Books, magazines, anything containing words or images

When you close your eyes and stab at a word in a book, be sure that you use that word. You can't pick a word, shrug your shoulders and say, "Don't like that one, let's try again"

Such an approach defeats the purpose.

The simplicity of the process can sometimes conceal its power. Use it several times and you'll discover what I mean.

1. Find a random input item such as a word.
2. Look for associations between the random item and your creative challenge.

3. Go beyond the initial association to associations of associations until you exhaust all possibilities
4. Use every aspect of the input including metaphors

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-31-

The Techniques

Story Boarding

In 1928 Walt Disney used a story boarding system to manage the development of his animated cartoons. By having artists arrange their drawings in sequence on the studio walls he could keep track of production. Scenes could be inserted and removed easily without disrupting the overall progress of the project.

Management meetings use a form of story boarding by recording results from brainstorming sessions on flip charts and pinning them to the office wall. Project managers are particular masters of this technique. They'll spread time-line graphs, problem definitions, project phases, check points and other critical information along their walls to provide an instant overview of the project status.

As with the other approaches, every idea is considered in story boarding. Each one is recorded on a card or sheet. In the process of sorting and re-sorting the inconsistent ones automatically find themselves shifted aside. Sometimes the sidelined idea makes a come back so hold off on discarding any until after you've entered the implementation phase.

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-32-

The Techniques

Story Boarding

When **Story Boarding** be sure to conduct your creative sessions separately from your evaluation sessions.

To story board a creative challenge:

1. Begin with a **Master Card** on which your challenge is stated or illustrated or both
2. Create **Header Cards** after the **Master Card One Header** for each item to be considered
3. After the **Headers** put **Idea Cards**.
Each idea on a separate card for ease of sorting
4. Arrange the cards so that all are visible simultaneously.
If the quantity is too large, use a hierarchical display system
i.e. **Headers** only, then all **Ideas** under one **Header** etc
5. Review the flow and rearrange as you go until you have a complete picture of the path to be taken in order to travel from your

Current Position (Creative Challenge) to your **Desired Outcome**
(A coherent, useful, practical solution)

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-33-

The Techniques

Six Hats

This is another of Dr de Bono's methods and is the subject of his book **Six Thinking Hats** and a trade marked training program that is presented by authorised trainers around the world, including Canada, Australia and the USA/

The Six Hats represent six modes of thinking. Each Hat is more than a label. They each direct participants into specific thinking activities.

It "separates egos from performance" according to de Bono because everybody is able to contribute to the task at hand since each hat encourages performance rather than ego defence. Participants contribute under any or all hats irrespective of their initial position on an issue.

Six Thinking Hats encourages parallel thinking, full-spectrum thinking and ego separation.

Whilst the hats are metaphorical, it is critical that they be 'put on' and 'taken off'. It is also important that they are not used as a means of categorising individuals. When done in a group, the same hat is worn by

everyone at the same time. The wearing of the hats is more than merely symbolic.

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-34-

The Techniques

Six Hats

White Hat Thinking covers facts, figures, information needs and gaps. It is used when it is time to suspend argument and look at the factual data base.

Red Hat Thinking involves intuition, feelings and emotions. It is used to grant permission for subjective views to be expressed without any need for justification.

Black Hat Thinking is judgmental and cautious. It is not negative. It is used to expose suggestions that don't fit the facts. The black hat is always logical

Yellow Hat Thinking is logical positive. It is used to show why something will work and why it will be beneficial.

Green Hat Thinking is the hat of creativity, alternatives and propositions. It is used to express interesting material, provocations and suggested changes

Blue Hat Thinking is the overview or process control hat. It is used to look at the thinking about thinking activities; meta-cognition for the NLP people. It's used to determine the sequence in which the hats are going to be used.

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-35-

The Techniques

Six Action Shoes

The **Six Action Shoes** book was written by de Bono on a flight from London to Auckland. In his author's notes, he says, *"This book has very much to do with operacy. The framework of the six action shoes is a help both in the training of action skills and also in the use of those skills at the moment of action."*

The six hats suggest thinking while shoes suggest movement and action. Here is a summary of the summary provided in **Six Action Shoes**.

Navy Formal Shoes suggest routines, drills formality. These shoes are worn when what needs to be done is well defined and procedures are in place. They free your thinking for other matters while you execute the habitual, routine chores.

Grey Sneakers are casual and quiet. The grey color is suggestive of fog and mist as well as the brain's grey matter. It is the mode for collecting information and thinking about it. Its purpose is to gather as much data as possible whilst remaining as neutral as possible. Keeping more than one hypothesis in mind is recommended.

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-36-

The Techniques

Six Action Shoes

Brown Brogues are the color of earth and are suitable for most situations where hard work and practicality are involved. They are pragmatic and do what can be done with whatever is available

Orange Gumboots warn of danger. They are used for emergencies and other critical situations.

Pink Slippers represent feelings in action.

Purple Riding Boots suggest authority. The imperial color of ancient Rome. They are for performing in official roles. Actions that are consistent with authority require these boots. It is important to be consistent. When donning boots you remain in official action mode until such time as you make a complete switch to another mode. You cannot be "official" one moment, "unofficial" the next and expect to be taken seriously when you flit back to "official"

Use these action modes in a similar way to **Six Hats**

"The purpose of the framework is to set the **style of the action** in advance so that a person can behave within a certain style framework"

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-37-

The Techniques

The *Synectic* Method

Synectics is derived from the Greek *synektikos* meaning "bringing forth together". All creative activity is **synectic** in that it involves drawing forth something new by connecting existing things.

In the **Synectic Method** the focus is on finding the links between apparently unconnected elements. The objective is to discover new insights that lead to resolution of creative challenges of all types.

There are three components in the **Synectic Method**.

The *Synectic* Attitude

- Adopting a free-thinking state of consciousness
- Mobilizing both sides of the brain; the dreamer (right side) and the judge (left side)
- Embracing apparent contradictions as the norm

- Developing a capacity to accept complexity even when the details are not understood
- Cultivating flexibility in addressing issues
- Opening the mind to imaginative alternatives

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-38-

The Techniques

The *Synectic* Method

The *Synectic* Trigger Mechanism

- Catalyse new thoughts and ideas
- Utilises de Bono's *PO* thinking and Discontinuity
- Consists of sets of trigger questions that:
 Subtract - Add - Transfer - Empathise- Contradict
 Animate- Superimpose - Change - Scale – Substitute
 Fragment - Isolate - Distort - Disguise – Parody
 Prevaricate - Analogise - Hybridise – Metamorphose
 Symbolise - Mythologise - Fantasise - Repeat - Combine

The *Synectic* Ways of Working

- Fusion of opposites
- Based on analogical thinking

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- Produces results that are greater than the sum of its parts.

Use these notes to stimulate your thinking.

The process will reveal itself to you as you play with the concepts and apply them to specific problems. You can develop your own trigger questions based upon what appears to be meager information. That is the **Synectic** way. Such transformational thinking will lead you towards creative solutions. Yes, you sure can do it!

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-39-

Applying The Techniques

The Creative State

There is a certain state of mind in which your creative energies are at their most vibrant. This state is one that is easily attained with just a small amount of effort.

The **60-Second Creative Trigger** is a method for empowering yourself to be able to apply all the preceding techniques in more effective ways. It does this by releasing tension from the situation and allowing you to focus on the issues at hand, both consciously and subconsciously.

I'd encourage you to make use of this trigger on a daily basis.

You'll find yourself thinking more clearly and enjoying higher energy levels than you may currently think possible. With practice, it can lead to natural highs that leave you feeling exhilarated and capable of immense achievement

The health rewards that come as a side effect of reduced stress are worth the effort by themselves. Use the method for a few weeks and see for yourself. After that, it will have become such an ingrained habit that the *Creativity Response* will be virtually automatic.

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-40-

Applying The Techniques

The Creative State

Setting Your Creative Trigger:

1. Choose a trigger
2. Close your eyes, relax, release all tension
3. Go back to a past situation involving a difficult problem
4. Reconstruct in vivid sensory detail the experience of being confronted by this difficult problem
5. Recall the "Eureka!" moment. Revel in the sensory feelings that washed over you at that precise moment. Immerse yourself in the relation, the relief, the excitement of the moment of resolution.
6. Fire your trigger

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7. Release the trigger, rapidly open and close your eyes, take a deep, deep breath and clear your mind
8. Repeat steps 2 to 8 several times to install the trigger

Pulling Your Creative Trigger:

Whenever you need to find yourself in a creative state, close your eyes, take several deep, deep breaths and activate your trigger mechanism.

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-41-

Applying The Techniques

7-States of Creativity

Creativity is a process of bringing something into existence.

Therefore, it isn't surprising that many great thinkers have used analogies based upon the miracle of life. This involves, in one form or other, three major phases; Germination, Incubation, Birth.

Each phase can be divided into various stages as has been done in the following 7-stage approach

Germination Phase

1. ***Desire:***
Awareness of a need. Generation of energy and motivation.
This is the problem definition stage.

2. **Exploration:**
Searching for input. Gathering resources.
Exploring other areas, related and unrelated.
Seeking opinions.
Identifying options. This is the preparation stage

3. **Transformation:**
Eliminating preconceptions.
Withholding judgment.
Manipulating material.
Mixing & Matching.

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-42-

Applying The Techniques

7-States of Creativity

Incubation Phase

4. **Incubation:**
Letting go.
Allowing the subconscious to play with the resources and materials you've gathered.
Shifting perspective.
This is the mental distraction stage

5. **Illumination:**
The *Eureka!* experience.
Arrival of multiple ideas.
Possibilities & solutions pouring forth without judgment.
The *Aha!* stage

Implementation Phase

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6. Evaluation:

Ranking & choosing ideas that are coherent, useful and relevant.
Modifying, improving, seeking third-party feedback & support.
The validation stage.

7. Action:

Nothing happens until your ideas are put into action.
This is where they go out into the world and are required to satisfy those desires awoken way back in stage one. They must produce results or yield to more practical ideas that work. This is the application stage.

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-43-

Going Further

Getting Personal Assistance

Individual Challenges

Stuck? Need help to implement one or more of the techniques?
For quick queries, go to <http://DArcyMayo.com/contact> and I'll usually respond within a day or two depending upon my travel status at the time.

Organizational Challenges

My creative consulting, training, and facilitation services are available to corporations, government departments, associations and other organizations around the world,

Conventions/Conferences/Meetings

<http://DArcyMayo.com/> <http://LowCostBusinessTools.com>

What do you want your next event to achieve? As an experienced keynote speaker and presenter, I will deliver proven creativity challenges that are aligned to *your* objectives. Together we will generate an energy and commitment that leads to measurable results.

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-44-

Going Further

Creativity Training

Discovering Your Natural Creative Wisdom

Inside each of us is a reservoir of natural creative wisdom which we can draw upon to produce profound results in our lives and expand our value to our organization.

This program is designed to draw forth the creativity within each participant, allow them to experience its power and make creativity a permanent part of their lives.

2 hours of insightful fun and productivity

Kick-Start Your Creativity

Leave Your Competitors Gasping

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Your continued business and career success depends on keeping many steps ahead of your competitors. Coming up with new ideas, thinking creatively, being innovative are all learned skills. This program will have you generating mountains of ideas to increase sales, improve customer relations, expand your product range, add new income streams to your business, create promotional materials and so much more. You'll learn a simple 60-second exercise that turns on your creativity followed by a 7-step process for implementing these fresh ideas at little or no cost. And that's only in the first session!

Available as a 2-day workshop or in selectable 2-hour modules tailored to your organization

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-45-

Going Further

More Creativity Training

Nurturing Creativity within Organizations

A one-day workshop in which participants remove their inner barriers to creativity and discover how to intensively apply creative thinking skills.

They learn fresh ways of nurturing their own creative growth as well as how to develop a culture of creativity within your organization. Special emphasis is given to examples and exercises based upon your organization and industry.

8 hours of intense activity leading to permanent change

Corporate Creativity Programs

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What would need to change in your organization for the creativity cap to be blown away forever?

What would happen if every member of every department operated in an environment that fostered innovation, encouraged fresh thinking and rewarded people who added value and introduced better ways of doing things?

How much would that be worth to your bottom-line?

How much would morale improve?

How much better would your customer relations become?

How much more effective would you become?

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-46-

Going Further

Creativity Circles

Organizations who rely upon a continuous outpouring of creative ideas and innovative solutions don't leave things to chance. They apply proven techniques and processes that are guaranteed to produce a never-ending stream of ideas.

Creativity Circles provide an incredibly effective way of managing this process by utilizing a vast repertoire of techniques, some of which are outlined in this booklet.

Creativity Circles utilize all the different skills, personality types and individualism of their members. A trained facilitator guides the process towards ever more productive outcomes. Over time, the cumulative effect is to instill a culture of creativity within the group and throughout the

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organization. A creative synergy is generated that spawns innovative ideas and solutions.

Implementing Creativity Circles is a simple process. In a 3-hour session, I can guide you and your people through the process of establishing your first **Creativity Circle**, provide you with all the tools to maximize its effectiveness and establish checklists to measure effectiveness.

A 2-hour follow-on session to train your own in-house facilitators will ensure that ongoing **Creativity Circles** will be equally as fruitful as the first one
~o~ It's that easy ~o~

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-47-

Going Further

Further References

In addition to my own training programs, presentations, audio tapes and books, there are many excellent items available. Some of these are:

Books:

A Whack on the Side of the Head

Roger von Oech ISBN: 0-7225-2456-0

(A personal guide to being more creative)

Switch On Your Mind

Edited by Drs Justus Lewis & Moni Lai Storz

ISBN: 1-86448-256-7 (Buy this one! It is full of useful articles by many different writers; and it's Australian.)

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Six Action Shoes

Dr Edward de Bono ISBN: 0-88730-513-X
(Takes up where *Six Thinking Hats* finished)

Creativity In Business

Dr Carol Kinsey Gorman ISBN:0-931961-67-X

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-48-

Going Further

About the Author

D'Arcy Mayo is a writer, keynote speaker and trainer specializing in business writing as having a deep interest in spirituality in action and self growth.

Born in Australia in 1948 he has worked and traveled in many countries where he has taught writing, business and personal growth workshops.

His client base includes organizations and individuals from Australia, Canada, USA, New Zealand, Hong Kong, Japan, Malaysia, The Philippines, Singapore, South Africa, Britain and Europe.

He is available for seminars, workshops, public speaking engagements and writing assignments anywhere the world.

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-49-

Going Further

NOT The End!

And so we arrive at the final page ...

It's been a heap of fun researching, testing and compiling this rapid reference collection of creativity-boosting techniques.

Now it is up to you to put them into practice.

Keep the creative energies flowing ...

You're now eligible to receive my **FREE** newsletter, "*Updates from D'Arcy!*"!

This update of fresh tips and techniques is for online business people
<http://DArcyMayo.com/> <http://LowCostBusinessTools.com>

<http://DArcyMayo.com/newsletter>

For now, thank you for sharing this short journey with me. Until we meet again, either in person or through my books and tapes allow yourself to revel in your natural creativity and have fun 🌈

Warmest wishes to your success

DArcy Mayo

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-50-

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