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From a creative THINKER'S TOOL BOX

by Lawrence Poole

12 templates to help you
CHANGE YOUR MIND

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Introduction To Our Tool Box

In my book **SELF-Empowerment – How and why to invest in your creative capital**, I propose a new way of seeing the creative process, a proactive way.

The evidence shows that creative intelligence is not so much defined by what we think - as HOW we are thinking it. As such, we tend to forget (if we ever knew) that thinking creatively means bypassing the brain/mind's fixed memory-patterns and changing our ways of seeing.

I suggest that being creative begins with exercising CHOICE. Without choice, we remain reactive, but choice gives us the possibility of influencing and altering our way of seeing. Having the ability to choose perceptual mode when making choices between polarities like *problem<->solution* offers a survival advantage. So then:

CHOICE->PERCEPTION.

As *understanding follows experience*, choose one of the "thinking templates" from **OUR TOOL BOX** and use it to shape your thinking (and that of invited guests) into creative ideas and concepts. The process of choosing what way to perceive for a few minutes will stimulate your imagination in that way. The result of that process, its creative flow, can then be shaped to fill the intent of the exercise. So the whole process unfolds this:

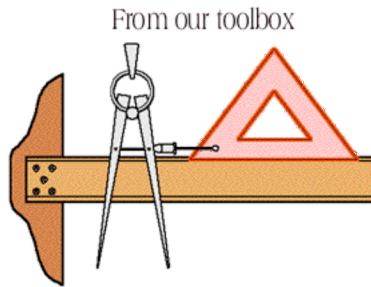
CHOICE->PERCEPTION->IMAGINATION->INTENT->ACTION

As the proof of the pudding is in the eating, ACTION is required to match your creative musings with real world scenarios. You can explore any creative potential by "thinking" in different "styles"; each will cause new interactions with the neurons in your brain and new neural links and possibilities. Paradoxically, some may link contradictions. Paradox resolution = Creative breakthrough.

The following tools describe *templates for the mind*. Imagine how the world will seem "reddish" if we look at it through a red filter. Our CNS - central nervous system - is SELF-organizing and will align the paradigm-shifting tool you select below with the infinite "out there". This will have the effect of "making your mind" change. Each of the following *filters on cognition* requires your mind to change in specific *predetermined* ways. The context will determine the content. (Read my book for more details.)

Changing our mind for fun and profit is as easy as tuning into a new station on the radio dial. You decide "how" to think about something... and then do it, creating innovative concepts, products and services with the effort. The following tools and techniques allow you to alter your thinking patterns at "will". *Empowered thinkers use as many different perceptual modes as the job requires.*

Kindest regards,
Lawrence Poole
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<<Abstract thinking>>

Introduction

Abstract thinking is derived from the technique invented by Alex Osborn in 1952 called **BRAINSTORMING**. It lets people toy with ideas as "abstract concepts" so they'll share data and make new connections. It also allows us to overcome a widespread tendency to overlook "obvious" options before beginning a search for new ideas.

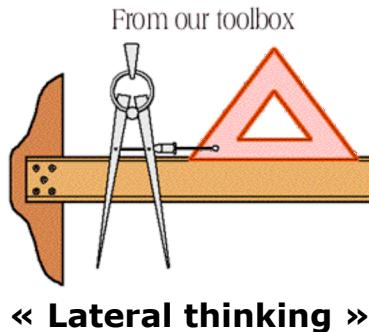
It's best used as a group technique to "open minds", generate ideas and assess "the known" (although it's also a good personal discipline to practice detachment from ideas). It can be an effective tool for examining virtually any type of problem or development.

Method

- * Select a facilitator
- * Use paper and pencil
- * Suspend judgment
- * Insist on writing down all ideas put forward
- * Link ideas that are similar and form patterns
- * Draw out ideas that may be inhibited by the patterns

Note

Avoid analyzing answers; this will only stifle the flow. Allow as much humor as possible to influence the process; this will help transcend personal inhibitions. Bring forth as many answers as possible as limits are contrary to the whole spirit of brainstorming.



Introduction

This "lateral thinking" technique was developed by Dr. Edward deBono who called it **6 HATS THINKING**. It introduces 6 complementary ways of perceiving and allows us to shift thinking modes quickly or to direct others to change their thinking, without offending anyone.

For example, you can ask an individual or a group to wear a specific hat or to change one hat for another while examining an issue; or you can indicate that you are going to wear a specific hat and examine a situation from that perspective.

The method is excellent for minimizing resistance to new ideas, concepts or directions; it allows you to explore ideas from several angles and to avoid overlooking its different aspects. It's a great management tool.

Method

Wear or have others wear any or all of the following "hats" and record perceptions from their vantage points :

WHITE HAT: Open minded thinking. Inputs data, facts, numbers. Questions and listens without judgment. Like "Abstract thinking". Let's the unknown become known.

RED HAT: Emotional brain thinking. Feelings, emotions, intuitions, guts and spirit. One never has to justify these. By soliciting others' RED HAT, you can identify potential positions and resistances.

BLACK HAT: Logical negative thinking. Justifies why something does not fit the facts, rules, culture, system or policy, etc. Explains why ideas are bad, why they won't work or what to fix or rethink. It predicts failure, etc.

YELLOW HAT: Logical positive thinking. Examines benefits, advantages and reasons why something could or should work. Tells why ideas must go ahead, who would profit and how to expect success, etc.

GREEN HAT: Alternative thinking, off-the-wall suggestions or creative provocations, innovative propositions, wow ideas and future/now thinking, etc.

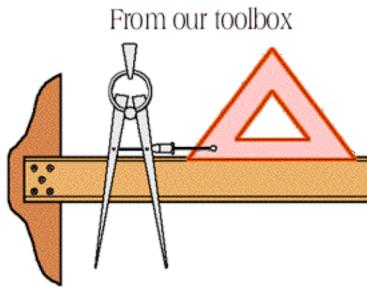
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BLUE HAT: Thinking about doing. Examines the steps to implementation; asks who does what? Goes to the end of a thought, evolves an idea to its extremes or to its next step. Lets the dust settle, works ideas or creatively does nothing but incubate them for a time, etc.

Note.

Creative people want as much information as possible BEFORE committing themselves to a decision or direction. When asked, "how does one get a good idea?" two-time Nobel Prize winner Dr. Linus Pauling answered: "Get a lot of ideas and throw out the bad ones."

This tool helps us generate a lot of ideas in an orderly and detached way and then allows us analyze the options in order to throw out bad ideas (or resolve the contradictions)



« Constructive Thinking »

Introduction

This exercise in constructive thinking was conceived to help people share and build on ideas and thus overcome "territorial" limits. It lets us generate new possibilities and grows concepts in new and different directions. It can be used in a roundtable with a motivated and creative team to improve, amend, expand, solve, change and evolve any idea/concept/situation/project.

One or two people can also use Constructive Thinking over a period of time -a few hours or a few days. After the divergent streams of thought are collected, they can be used to stimulate reflection.

Method

Orchestrate a group meeting with 4-8 people at a large table (or via Internet, et al);

Write a description of what you wish to explore on a sheet of paper and give copies to everyone;

Have each person write a short sentence that builds on that idea on its sheet;

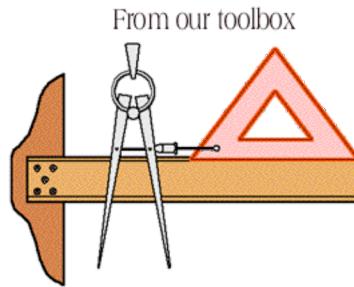
Having recorded their thought, each will pass the note to the person on their left (or next on a list) and receive a note passed from someone else for a second round;

Every person now reads two ideas on the sheet now before them and adds another improvement to it, building it further; repeat the steps for as many rounds as you want until everybody has commented on everybody else's ideas.

You now have an improved list of creative and constructive ideas!! Have fun making them real!!!!

Note:

You can use this tool with family, friends, teams of colleagues and associates to practice "total quality" management thinking which seek to implant a continuum of improvement.



<<Divergent Thinking>>

Introduction

"Divergent thinking" is a creativity tool developed by author Gabrièle Lusser Rico who calls it "grouping". Author Tony Buzan calls it "mind-mapping". The exercise stimulates your imagination and allows you to move away from a point or pre-conceived concept without getting lost.

As it uses an open structure and "free association", it allows you to explore concepts and thoughts and thereby add to your thinking. It'll let you develop complete scenarios around a new idea and lets you keep a disciplined focus on the creative intent of the exercise.

Method

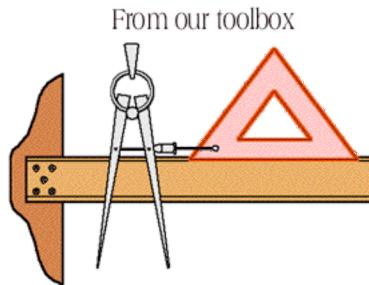
- Use a paper and pencil;
- Write a word at the center of the paper to express a concept or an idea that you want to develop;
- Draw a circle around the word and then jot down every thought, emotion and association it stimulates in an expansive circumference around it;
- Draw circles around each of these new ideas;
- Allow your thoughts to move to any circle and examine the new thought;
- Allow your ideas to take you in any direction around that idea;
- Write your thoughts as quickly as possible until no more ideas come to mind;
- Draw lines to join the circles that you see as similar or somehow linked.

Note

Divergent thinking allows us to organize our thoughts, clarify our position or direction, explore options, analyze a subject and creatively examine new possibilities.

"Grouping," teaches us to change our mind rapidly and effortlessly, it encourages us to examine various views and to explore different perspectives.

Make connections. Use metaphors, analogies and comparisons to generate new ideas. Look for material outside of your normal field of interest. Take creative risks. If you want original and innovative ideas, you've got to break old thinking habits and do your "automatic reflexes" in different ways. This means taking a walk on the wild side... explore the unknown and the new.



« Breakthrough thinking »

Introduction

Breakthrough thinking is for visionaries. You begin by realizing that your assumptions about how things are *supposed to be* interfere with your giving serious thought to how things "might be". Robert Kennedy expressed this idea when he said: "Some men see things as they are and ask 'why?' while others see things that can be and ask 'why not?'"

Assumptions "pre judge" by supposing that things are *as they should be*. In contradiction to that kind of prejudicial thinking, get curious. That will allow you to rethink anything at all.

For example, take a look at something "ordinary" - like your coffee cup. You can spend a lifetime drinking coffee from cups and never wonder about them. Assumptions oblige us to ignore them - after all a cup is a cup! But wondering... about their use, design, color, material, size, back-story, cost, value or anything else will log you on to the creative process.

Breakthroughs will be the result of that process. One day, I dropped my coffee cup in my lap while driving my Jeep down the highway. I instantly but silently thanked its creative designer. One of those well-designed mugs with a snug lid specially made for the road, it fell to the floor and spilled nary a drop. I wish him his well-deserved fortune (as the market for spill-proof cups must be immense). Breakthroughs come after we wonder.

Even if curiosity is a catalyst to creative thinking, most people aren't very curious says author Jeffrey Mitchell - who considers himself an evangelist for curiosity. He thinks the reason so few people work at being curious is that they assume curiosity is a by-product of a need rather than conscious work.

In fact most of us were discouraged from being too curious. *Curiosity killed the cat!* -*Don't be so nosy!*! - *Watch your Ps and Qs!*! - and that old saw: *"Just mind you're your own beeswax!"* are what we heard as children. And repeating them is how to turn off the natural tendency to be inquisitive.

Mitchell says we believe that we'll automatically be curious when there's something to be curious about. Well the human mind works in the exact opposite manner. Rather than identify gaps in our knowledge for further inquiry, our brain fills in the blanks with assumptions and suppositions.

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"We've always done that way!" assumes that it's the only or the best way to do something and stops further exploration.

We have the tendency to form judgments first and ask questions later, if at all. We'll assume that we know what the client wants, what a spouse will answer or what the boss expects rather than question motives and intentions. *"Never assume"*, says the wise man breaking up the word, *"...because if you do, you'll make an "ass" out of "u" and out of "me"*.

Breaking through your limiting assumptions

Certainly, making assumptions is necessary as they enable us to function on a day-to-day basis. We'll assume the day will start with the sun rising in the east, that the car is where we left it the night before, that the train will run on time, that the office building is still standing, et al. While these are not certain to be true, making the assumption lets us to plan our lives without constantly wondering about unknowns or having to re-invent the wheel.

Making assumptions is a problem when we forget that they are simply a shorthand way for us to maneuver through our day. If we don't challenge our assumptions they are reinforced and become impenetrable walls that continue to mask the full potential of any idea, project, situation, event or opportunity. Breakthroughs -by definition- will come **after** breaking down the walls of assumption. The force needed to break them comes from **curiosity**.

The following technique can free you from limiting assumptions about ideas, beliefs or challenges that might be undermining your potential and performance without your knowing it.

Take an inventory of your limits or of things that are limiting your project, company or community. People tend to hold assumptions tightly, almost frozen in their mind. These begin to "melt" when they are exposed to the *light of day and the heat of creative thought*.

The thaw continues when an assumption (*"The world is flat."*) is phrased as a question (*"How is the world flat?"*). The question now becomes a hypothesis that can be resolved or tested. Now the mind can open to new information.

Answers to the question will bring ideas that will allow further explorations. Keep moving out, as breaks will first occur at an assumption's outer edges.

Openness and expansion are essential for genuine creativity. Mitchell suggests that we consciously ferret out the assumptions that interfere with breakthrough thoughts.

Method:

Breakthrough an assumption in easy 5 steps:

1. Recognize the assumption;
2. Record the assumption;
3. Translate the assumption into a question.
4. Seek out facts;
5. Challenge the assumption.

1. Recognize the assumption.

Become aware of personal, corporate or social assumptions by recognizing clues from your own or other people's body language, emotions and words. If a body is closed, tight and stiff, or if you and others automatically deride data that doesn't support what you believe, or if you feel threatened by information, it's likely you're making assumptions that something is true or right and you are consciously or subconsciously protecting them. Truth has stood the test of time and has no need to be defended. Airing out ideas should bring truth to light but the process is most often thwarted by our emotional attachments... our assumptions.

2. Record the assumption.

Creative people think with a pencil. Writing down your assumptions (or those you discover in others) makes them real and that is all the difference. Once it is documented, an assumption can be viewed objectively and tested. Being a creative thinker isn't just "pap" - it's work. Writing down and then studying assumptions creates distance between the observer and the observed. That distance allows one to benefit from a detached overview and permits multidimensional exploration for understanding... and change.

3. Translate the assumption into questions.

From why to why not. First you must paradigm shift into the curiosity mindset. In order to do this, ask questions like: "Why do I believe this?", "How did this belief become?" Or "Why do we think that way? Or do it this way?", "Could I be mistaken when I think about what's right and wrong?", "Can facts be falsified?", "Are there complimentary and contradictory facts?", "Does my experience support my belief?", "Where can I find other opinions?" "Who is doing it differently?" "What can limitless resources contribute?" etc., etc..

4. Seek out facts

Once you've posed a few clear questions, check out the facts. Start with google.com's 1.6 billion web pages and go from there. When asked how do we get a good idea, the powerful thinker Dr Linus Pauling answered: "Get a lot of ideas and throw out the bad ones." Look in non-habitual places for "far out" relationships. Look for patterns and synchronicities in dissimilar data. Find indications of order, beauty, joy or humor, or of human implication; remember, just because you're paranoid, it doesn't mean there is no conspiracy. Follow your heartfelt intuitions and be ready for the unexpected and the serendipitous.

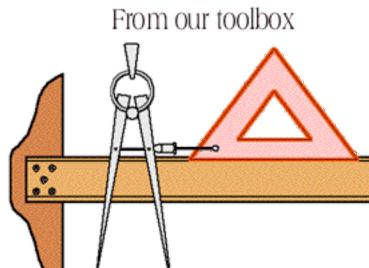
5. Challenge the assumption

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If you find that your assumptions aren't substantiated, get real curious about what other ideas are supported by the "false truth" and its believers and liars. Innovative breakthroughs will be found just past those limiting fakes.

Note:

Be careful, the status quo is powerful foe. Refer to **Strategic Thinking** here below to learn 5 roles you can play to deal with the unknown. Strategy is required because the best places to ferret out new ideas are at the fringes of science, art and society, i.e. in the wilds of human nature.



« Strategic thinking »

This creative exercise has a very long history. It's been described - using different symbols and names - in places as diverse as Crowley's Book of Toth (the tarot) and Van Hoeck's creativity book "A Whack On The Side Of The Head", and is here presented according to the 2500+ year old version handed down by the Olmec sorcerers of Mesoamerica.

Introduction:

Strategic thinking is a behavioral technique that will help you shape new input into creative ideas and projects. It's based on the natural working of the brain's hemispheres and involves seeking out new information, treating it on both conscious and subconscious levels for insight, analyzing it to provoke creative breakthrough, implementing the fruit of that labor and adjusting it to the real world before communicating your intent.

Method:

The following formula shows that the personality can be influenced by role-play or adopting a specific "identity". Inspired by the list of suggestions that the following roles can play, seek out new information and shape it into a winning idea.

The strategic formula is:

$$\mathbf{Ego + Identity = Personality \rightarrow Responsibility}$$

Ego: Who we are (education, knowledge, experience, etc.)

Identity: A strategic role (the attitude) we can adopt

Personality: The fusion of the ego and the id

Responsibility: To be a MASTER STRATEGISTS and learn to play 5 roles - **STALKER, DREAMER, SEER, WARRIOR AND COMMUNICATOR** - changing them according to need.

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Stalkers seeks out information. In their continuing search to fulfill their needs (personal, cultural, social, professional, global, etc.) they must:

- Have clear goals
- Transcend their fears
- Be as curious as possible
- Look for many different ideas
- Be extremely broad minded
- Participate in various kinds of networks
- Open their closed loops (i.e. paradigms of thought)
- Understand their "whole" quest
- Let themselves become inspired by all kinds of things
- Understand and use obstacles
- Etc.

Dreamers transform information into creative concepts. They dream of the result of what they are stalking and must therefore:

- Put order into their findings (classify information)
- Summarize
- Imagine the impossible
- Visualize/meditate
- Identify contradictions
- Become extravagant with hope
- Consider change as a precursor of utopia
- Be "open" to every potential
- Avoid getting hooked on a particular idea
- Adapt and change continuously
- Etc.

Seers judge the pertinence of concepts and of their application. They question information and different facets of an idea/project by questioning themselves:

- What am I trying to accomplish?
- On what aspects of my idea/project must I build?
- What are the disadvantages of this idea?
- Have I thought the idea through to a realistic conclusion?
- Am sure of the information I am using?
- If my idea/project cannot be developed, what aspects of it could I salvage?
- What am I assuming? Are my assumptions still valid?
- Has this idea/project been done before?
- Of what facts am I unconscious?
- Am I ready to make a decision?
- Etc.

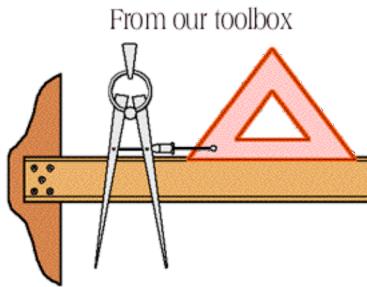
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Warriors take action and actualize their ideas/projects. They know that they are their own main obstacle and battleground. They are aware that as a strategist, they must:

- Have a battle plan
- Go from "if it..." to "it is..."
- Be ruthless, cunning, patient and kind
- Take responsibility for every detail
- Vanquish procrastination
- Get rid of all their excuses
- Let go of all defensive attitudes
- Be extremely persistent
- Master the win/win/win scenario
- Be pragmatic
- Etc.

Communicators are the "word" of creation. Authors of their own good fortune, they must therefore:

- Understand the nature of, and the resistance to change
- Put their emotions in "neutral", i.e. resonate love as self-esteem
- Speak with the light of passion in their eyes
- Give directions as clearly and as simply as possible
- Realize that "speed kills"
- Be totally receptive at all times
- Continuously re-establish a link with their "Creative Intent"
- Promote excellence and "the idea of good"
- Understand the power of silence
- Separate questions from objections
- Etc.



« Contemplative Thinking »

We can choose to experience utopia or oblivion. Utopia begins by embracing change and then learning how to choose. Oblivion requires no further participation.

Ultimately, each of us is responsible for our decisions. We choose and we become.

Introduction

The creative process begins with choosing how to perceive. The empowerment process begins with choosing wisely.

Are you making good choices for yourself? How do you choose?

Method

The following reflection is designed to allow you to question how you make choices. Objective subjectivity will let you to make corrections where you think necessary or beneficial.

- Have I accepted the truth that no one can choose for me, that I have ultimate responsibility for all of my life decisions?
- How do I know that I am making the best choices for myself?
- How have I made choices in the past?
- To what extents have my past choices benefited me?
- Do I gather enough information to make wise choices?
- Are my choices more often Ego-stroked (gratification), Self-satisfying (pie-in-the-sky-after-I-die) or good for all of me?
- Am I processing information in a biased way?
- To what paradigm does my reflection belong? (Reactive, Proactive, Creative, Magical)
- To what paradigm does my final decision belong? (Reactive, Proactive, Creative, Magical)
- How can I make better choices?

Commentary:

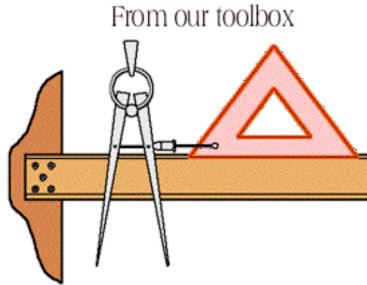
... And then comes the ultimate moment of choice. Ego (left-brain orientation) makes the choice and Self (right-brain mentation) experiences the consequences.

Here is a reflective procedure to stimulate your intuition before you choose. This reflection will ease decision-making:

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- Expand your awareness of the options as much as you can; seek out facts, explore limits, ask for advice; find supportive experiences.
- Evaluate which possibilities you would most and least desire, given complete freedom from any consequence. Why those possibilities?
- Have your Ego (now mind) explain how those possibilities have consequences that are to the detriment of the Self (eternal mind). Have the Self convince the Ego of the merit of the possibilities.
- Which of the possibilities will bring the greatest satisfaction to the whole you (both minds)?
- Reflect on ambivalence, on procrastination, on personal responsibility and happiness.
- Reflect on the act of choosing as the process in which you evolve inner strength.
- Choose - knowing there is no win, no lose; there are just "doings" or "not doings".

After choosing, evaluate the results of your choice by answering the following questions: How am I accepting and coping with my choice? How is what happened different from what I expected? Am I adjusting with and/or co-creating the consequences? Is the choice changing me for the better? Is there confirmation or reaction to my choice? Is this choice irremediable?



« Progressive Thinking »

Sometimes the first solution that comes to mind, as innovative as it might be, is not the best way to go. Sometimes the quick fix or snappy answer won't work because big breakthroughs most often reveal themselves in progressive sequences.

Introduction:

This thinking technique was developed by William Gordon of the Arthur D. Little consulting company who called it « Progressive Revelation ».

A group brainstorming technique, it involves seeing problems or challenges from their larger macro levels, and then working down through a series of planned progressions to their micro levels. Then apply what you learned to provoke breakthroughs in your thinking.

The situation is initially presented to a creative feedback team in a very theoretical, non-specific form - and then more factual details are progressively made known, in a step-by-step way.

The graduated approach avoids premature closure - even if the problem is deemed "easy to solve" - and it helps maintain the excitement and novelty of the group so they don't fall prey to quick fixes.

Method:

The technique assumes that the participants do not already know what the problem is:

- Explain what is going to happen – i.e. that you are going to present a problem in a very abstract and theoretical way, because that often makes it easier to think openly about it.
- The scope of the problem is presented in a very large, generalized form and then downsized to an actual fit of the real issues.
- To generate ideas, participants may use an idea generation tool from our Tool Box.
- Repeat steps 2-3 when the idea flow slows down, you can go back to step 2 to provide additional information, repeating this cycle and providing increasingly more information-facts every time, until you have finally presented the whole problem.

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- Finally once the full scope of the problem is been revealed, the group uses the previously generated ideas as triggers to jump-start finding actual solutions to the original problem.

Example - A problem about the need for more parking spaces might be presented as follows: Extremely abstract and generalized: 'Brainstorm ways to allow larger numbers to transport themselves to a location.

Slightly less generalized: "Brainstorm ways of maximizing space to permit frequent and easy access and egress to that location.

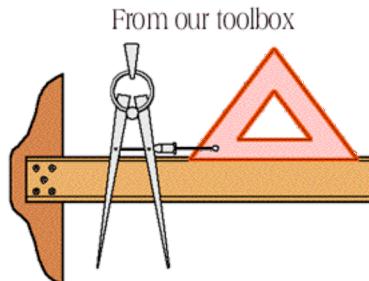
Approaching the real problem: 'What if the location has insufficient space to park many vehicles?'

The actual problem: 'The problem is how to improve the vehicle parking potential of MegaMart Inc. by XX amount of spaces'.

Note:

The procedure needs to be explained clearly to the participants as they could feel like their ideas are being manipulated. They should know that the creative process requires a holistic effort. The idea is to bring ideas from outside of the problem into it.

Try to avoid biasing idea generation and select the most appropriate points at which to reveal more factual information. In the example above once the car-parking problem had been introduced as a storage problem, it is less likely to be seen as a travel problem, as a way of displaying personal wealth or as a security problem, etc. The exercise focuses on the lack of space.



« Enlightened thinking »

This exercise in relaxed illumination was created by Lawrence Poole and is a powerful tool that considers the impact of our plans, goals or objectives on others BEFORE we enact them.

Introduction

Used in order to see how a significant decision can affect others, the technique allow us to preview the potential fall-out of an idea or project, to predict the effect of a decision and to prevent, minimize or repair any negative impact.

We will be enlightened as we consider the "full color spectrum" of intelligence contained in a decision.

Directions

Plan some quality time where you can relax. Alone or in a group, note and register your perceptions as you allow your mind to ascend through the following " 8 rays of awareness " of the full light spectrum.

As the future requires a more en-light-en ed state of mind, ask yourself the following **10 important questions**.

Let your authentic "in here" respond.

The red ray looks unto the physical dimensions of the idea. In this perspective, foresee:

1. What will be done, in what delays?
2. What are the costs in terms of physical resources?

The orange ray looks at the emotional dimension of the idea. Examine its impact on people:

3. What are the emotional and physical repercussions on the human resources or the people committed to the project?
4. What are the repercussions of this decision on the human resources?

The yellow ray is for examining the intellectual resistance -

5. What positive logic can be used in order to plan strategies that minimize any resistance?

The green ray looks into spiritual values -

6. With common interests in light of mutual gains as the universal politic, how can this idea evolve in an ideal way?

The blue ray considers the need for a creative consensus:

7. How can we be sure all required agreements are obtained in what time frames?

The indigo ray is a look at actions and their requirements:

8. What can be done immediately?

The violet ray looks into continuity and renewal -

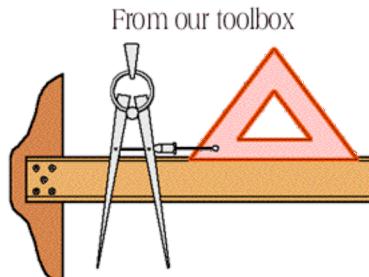
9. What follow-up mechanisms can be put together to assure a creative management of all this?

A pure Light ray opens onto global connectivity -

10. Link all the faces and all the tasks - in common interests for mutual gain - to the follow-up mechanisms and the time frames, and then create a state of receptivity to « the idea of good ».

Note:

Jump ahead and visualize back to the present to foresee, and then prevent, minimize or repair any negative impact BEFORE it occurs... (and before you invest in any idea destined to stall or harm others)



« Heuristic thinking »

The basic idea behind our teaching method is called heurism – self-discovery. After explaining the details of a learning adventure, we guide participants in a series of activities that will provoke an "aha" in their thinking.

Introduction:

Paul E. Plsek studied various models for the creative process for many years and concluded that the basis for creativity is « heuristic ». He found 8 principles that reveal creativity's heuristic aspect.

Creative breakthroughs don't just happen; they are consciously provoked with certain "doings". Creation's basic tenet is a law of economics arranged in a simple and eloquent $(+1) + (-1) = 0$ when 0 represents Infinity. $(+1)$ is the subjected known, (-1) is the unknown that unifies the thought in a creative "AHA" when nothing is "not one thing" and therefore limitless.

Method:

Assimilate the following principles and adjust your thinking and behavior:

#1 Given that you know what you want, make it a habit to pause and notice things. Write them down.

The first principle says that we should make it a habit to pause and notice things because our automatic perception processes miss a great deal of what is going on around us. The importance of seeing the world in a fresh way is an accepted part of all theories of creative thinking but that is a conscious doing.

If you pause and notice, don't look for anything in particular; you needn't know how you will ultimately use the information, just be on the lookout for manifestations of the UNKNOWN.

As creative thinking makes novel association from existing concepts and new input, then it follows that it is useful to create a storehouse of original concepts by experiencing new and different things, or old things new ways. Noticed, some things will leave clear impressions that should be written down in a notebook for closer examination. *If an idea isn't noted within minutes of its appearance, it soon disappears back into the unknown.*

#2 Focus your creative energy on a few key areas that you genuinely care about. Work on these for several weeks or months.

The second principle is based on research into the lives of great creators. Creative breakthroughs rarely come "all of a sudden" but creators work diligently with many ideas, in specific topic areas, over an extended period of time, before they see their conclusions gel. Understanding follows experience.

#3 Avoid being too narrow when defining problems or areas for creative thought. Think in terms of broad definitions and see what insights you can gain from the perimeters. Jump to the next level.

Heuristic principle number three says to define the topic of our concern broadly. This encourages us to maintain maximum space for maneuvering and for making novel connections. It obliges us to explore the territory at the edges of thought... but detachedly, loosely, fluidly.

#4 Come up with original and useful ideas by making novel associations with what you already know.

The fourth heuristic principle is to make new mental associations with ideas. It is based on the mental action that underlies all creative thought - fusion. Different streams of light converge and quantum - higher - magnitude of Light results... i.e. - more intelligence emerges.

#5 - If you need a creative idea, remember to AIM for it: Attention, Intent, and Movement.

The fifth heuristic principle is called AIM - Attention, Intent, Movement. It directs the basic mental mechanics to escape mental patterns so we keep moving our thinking to avoid premature judgment. The rock 'n roll song says take a walk on the wild side! - the idea is to add new neural pathways. Get creative to be more innovative... change!

#6 Pause and carefully examine ideas that make you laugh when you hear them.

Heuristic principle # 6 encourages us to pause on ideas that make us laugh. Affecting cognition in areas where the brain organizes and disorganizes patterns, it appears that laughter might be a physiological reaction to novel connections made by assembling neurons in the brain in unexpected ways.

This heuristic principle asks us to resist moving away when someone suggests a radical concept or far out ideas. Working with such ideas can be one of the most productive things you can do if looking for innovation.

In the world of creativity, laughter is serious business.

#7 - Recognize that streams of thought and patterns of judgment are not inherently right or wrong; they are just what we think and based on patterns from the past.

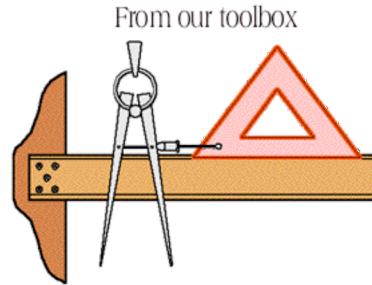
The 7th heuristic principle suggests that judgments are not inherently right or wrong. It reminds us that mental processes and judgments are emotion-laden. This heuristic idea calls on us to keep an open mind and to cultivate flexibility and openness - essential ingredients in creative thinking.

#8 - Make a deliberate effort to implement at least a few of the ideas you generate.

The 8th heuristic principle urges us to try our ideas. It's based on the important distinction between innovative thought and productive innovation.

The true innovator is action-oriented in order to distinguish what works from ideas that might seem good. In fact - be it business or in daily life, creative ideas have little value until they are put into action.

Experience lets us quickly separate the gold from the slag.



« Storyboard thinking »

Storyboards give participants total immersion in a scenario, letting them see how everything fits together. "Run it up the flagpole and we'll see how it flies." captures the essence of the process. Wanting to achieve full feature animation, Walt Disney used storyboards as far back as 1928. Having to produce and keep track of great numbers of images, he had his artists pin their drawings on the studio walls. In this way, their progress could be checked and scenes were easily added or discarded. A long time before that Leonardo da Vinci put his ideas up on the walls to examine them.

Introduction:

To understand a "Storyboard", consider how a comic strip tells a complete story in only four panels. «Storyboarding» is a great management tool as it facilitates the creative-thinking process. It lets us take our ideas and display them - so that larger groups can work on a same project or solve a problem. They allow us to benefit from clear directions and guidelines.

Storyboarding works specially well in group sessions because when we put our thoughts into some sense of order, we begin to see connections, how the various ideas relate to one another and how all the pieces come together into a whole. We can also see what ideas might be missing.

Method:

How do you get good ideas? Get a lot of ideas and throw out the bad ones. To make a simple storyboard use cork or a similar surface that allows you to pin up index cards. Start with a general topic card and under that, place several header cards that contain general categories or particular considerations, etc. Under those cards, put sub-headers with themes that fall under the header; the sub-headers can list details or ideas generated in the creative-thinking session that support the headers or need to be developed - then list as many ideas as you can generate. Try the 5 major kinds of storyboard:

- Idea boards
- Planning boards
- Organization boards
- Creation boards
- Communication boards.

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Idea boards let people trade information in a continuous "brainstorming". A cork board as described above, a large "bulletin board", a chalkboard, a dedicated wall painted with flat white or an Internet BBS can also be used.

They should be created around specific themes and they need to be fed and cleaned regularly:

Planning boards let people see processes, steps and timelines. Think of a recipe - knowing what you are cooking assures that meal will turn out as expected. Strategy can be plotted and "possibility scenarios" added or deleted at will.

[I like using 12" shelf-lining paper to plan out scenarios and events. I'll tape several feet - to represent a number of hours, days, or weeks, etc. - eye-level on a wall (some plastic kinds have an adhesive backing like Post-It Notes). I draw a horizontal line midway along its length, use vertical lines to space out the time sequence and thus make time-space panels. Places or strategic components I'm certain about are noted above the horizontal line while variables - like hopes and suppositions - are noted below that line. Events in the panels are color-coded with felt-tips or glued-in from sources like magazine pix and such. Every panel represents a scenario and the whole sequence is my event script.

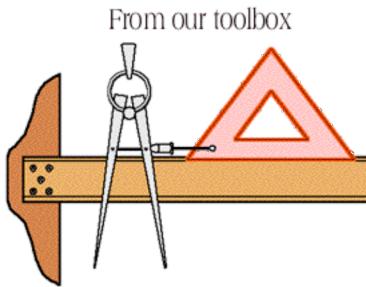
Whenever I move past that wall I see potentials and strategies. Find your own variations on the technique and you will be amazed at how your next month - or year or two - can look at a strategic glance.]

Organization boards let you see who's who, what's what, where's where and when's when. Getting feedback for several collaborators is easy when the feedback process is structured on boards that have "fill in the blanks" panels. Presentation tools like PowerPoint can be used to present ideas in a logical order and they let you benefit simple from visual cues; emailing a presentation around will let others shift things around to give you another slant on things.

Creation boards should have discipline and regular follow-ups included in their process so that people contribute various kinds of input, at specific times. Let contributors experiment with different media. Make color, sound, texture, form, etc., as part of the process. Explore the organic ways that relationships come together and come undone to help with transitions and communication. Use conscious provocation and outside resources to add to a mix.

Communication boards should be facilitated sessions wherein a diversity of contributors deposits its ideas, as they get specific but limited instructions.

Try large sheets of paper and colored Post-it notes at strategic places. How about a telephone-answering machine where people can phone in 24-7? Ideas could be transcribed and forwarded to all collaborators. A sign-in webpage or an intranet site works well for this purpose.



« Empowered Thinking »

How would you profit from having the best ideas on Earth if you don't have the personal power to bring them to fruition.

Introduction

This tool is composed of body/mind exercises that result in the development of "personal power".

They've been chosen to facilitate the emergence of creative potential. While there exists a myriad of variations for each of these techniques, the following descriptions deal with the essentials.

Method

An individual must explore the following techniques to find his or her style. Just make sure you adhere to the basics.

ASANA: The asana is a sitting technique. The "Lotus Position" is the best known but it is a difficult posture for the average person. By experimenting, you should find a suitable position for yourself, one that allows you to sit still for an extended period of time without becoming "tensed up" or tired.

The only criteria to sitting in asana is that the back be straight (the head and the neck aligned with the vertebral column, respecting the spine's natural curves) and that the shoulders be squared back, centered over the hips. Beginners may use a straight-back chair or wall for support. This exercise is necessary to all creativity development work.

PRANAYAMA: Pranayama is a breathing technique. Besides supplying life to organisms, the air that we breathe has an organic life of its own. Pranayama literally means the breathing of prana which is the organic vitality contained in air. Pranayama is a deep rhythmic breathing that originates very low in the abdomen and which allows the conscious perception of the texture, the volume, the life-giving force and the physical journey of air through the body. Experiment and find the rhythm (IN-1-2-3-4 -HOLD- OUT-4-3-2-1, for example) that serves you best. Pranayama balances creative energy, revitalizes the body and stills the mind.

RELAXATION: Loosen your clothing and sit in asana. In order to understand relaxation, you must first become consciously aware of tension. Tense up the muscles in your body by tightening one group at a time. Don't cramp yourself, just

become aware of tension, holding the tension to a count of four and then relaxing it.

- Start with your toes. Tighten the toes on your right foot -hold- relax. Tighten the toes on your left foot... hold... relax. Work up your body - > foot, ankles, calves, etc.
- Tighten your scalp... relax. Tighten your whole body and then feel every muscle relax... breath deeply... hold... exhale. Find your rhythm...
- Become aware that you are completely and totally relaxed. Your body feels light, "you" are floating freely and melting in deeper relaxation... breathe a deep relaxing rhythm... exhale...
- Feel yourself leave stress behind... leave fear, anxiety and worries behind. Perceive tension as being shadows that are slipping away from you and falling to the ground. Feel yourself becoming fresh and new... breathe in a new you, breathe out the old.
- Allow yourself to slip deeply into the comfort of total relaxation and visit for 10-15 minutes. When you're ready, allow yourself to very gently come back to reality... open your eyes and slowly move your body. Stand up calmly and gently stretch a little.
- Practice this exercise daily until you can willfully relax without going through the entire process. Train your conscious spirit to be completely alert and yet totally relaxed at all times. This discipline develops a serenity of spirit and incredible power.

VISUALIZATION: Visualization is viewing a picture you build in your mind's eye using a series of interlinking thoughts. The larger or more complex the picture, the more thoughts are necessary, each thought being an aspect of the final picture. Visualization requires developing two capacities: the first is the discipline to maintain clarity and focus of mind; the second is the ability to create a visual image while you view and hold it internally.

Technique A : Begin with the relaxation exercise. Once you have completely relaxed, you are ready for the next step: Imagine that you are seated inside a theatre. The hall is quite dark and you are sitting very close to a giant screen, which is the only thing you can see. Imagine that the number 10 appears on the screen in very large, well-lit numerals. Enjoy seeing the number and hold the view for a few seconds, allowing it to completely disappear and be immediately replaced by the number 9, then 8, and so on to 1. Now do the exercise again with the ascending sequence 1-10. Take the time to truly see the numbers, holding them and visualizing every detail. Remain calm, breathing deeply, finishing the visualization by being soothed with the blank screen and then ending it as you would the relaxation exercise. Note: Practice this exercise daily until you can easily change the numbers on the screen. The capacity to visualize what you want is the first step to attaining it.

Technique B: Begin with the relaxation exercise. Once you are completely relaxed, you are ready for the next step: On your inner screen, imagine a situation which is similar to one you would like to experience, to accomplish or to have. Imagine yourself as a film director and clearly develop the

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scenario -its location, the set, the props, the cast and the extras- so that it corresponds exactly to what you want. Use your senses to actually "feel" the event as if it were real. Direct it so that it perfectly matches your ideal.

Imagine yourself "starring" in your vision; imagine yourself in perfect harmony, serenity and joy.

Capture the scenario's subtle nuances with your "mind's eye" camera. Hold your vision, replaying it for about 10 minutes and then slowly allow it to dissolve, empty your mind and relax. End your visualization as you would the relaxation exercise.

Creative visualization is very useful for planning the different stages and changes in life. "Anything the mind can conceive, the will can achieve" sayeth the wise man... and this because the human brain makes no difference between reality and, visualization, dream or illusion, treating them all as real and learning from them all, tracing neuropathways, etc...

The mastery of this exercise is the key to developing the deepest self-confidence. (If you experience trouble learning to visualize, you can begin by learning to gaze. Gazing is a conscious, eyes opened exercise. Find a form such as a leaf, stone, crystal or other complex pattern. Using eyes as mere windows, suspending all judgment, "see" the form in infinite and exquisite detail. Discipline your mind to observe without thought. The effects of this exercise are quite wondrous.)

Note:

You can train your imagination to be as flexible and responsive as you would a muscle. World-class competitors prepare for the *Zen* of peak performance. They train and develop all their senses, including the sense of winning, with visualization techniques.

Encourage images on your inner screen to become more and more vivid and lucid. Get beyond imagery and encourage your mind to see the unimaginable and the unexpected.

Allow your inner screen to explore the infinity of universe, thereby expanding your reality's potential.

Play attention to the mental images crossing your mind on a daily basis. Note the kind of images that tend to depress you or to exalt you. Become particularly aware that you have the power to rewrite your life's script at will, simply by redirecting your inner film.

PERCEPTUAL ENHANCEMENT: Begin with the relaxation exercise. Once you are completely relaxed use the visualization exercise to imagine the following perceptions and thus enhance your technique:

- What does the word participate smell like?
- How do you feel the number 9?
- What does the color blue taste like?
- What does the concept of freedom look like?
- What is the structure of Wednesday?

What do you hear when you read the word joy?
How does the tree think?
Etc.

Note:

Find your own concepts, ideas, forms, odors, etc. and develop "sense perception" as often as you can. The cumulative effect of this exercise will greatly enrich your quality of life.

"MEETING INNER POWER": Sit in Asana. Relax and breathe Pranayama.

Method: Imagine that you are comfortably seated in front of a crackling campfire. You're in the middle of a magnificent forest and you can see the shadows of majestic pines stretching towards a clear sky, under the light of the full moon. You have never felt so calm and so well; the healing warmth of the fire is lulling you into a deeper and deeper relaxation.

You begin gazing through the flames, across the campfire, and become aware of a silhouette. You are perfectly relaxed and you allow the picture to become clearer; you begin to distinguish a face. At first you don't recognize it, but as you relax deeper and deeper it becomes clearer to you. You recognize that the face is yours and you breathe deeply, looking into its eyes.

You understand that the face belongs to the "perfect" you. It is perfectly healthy, radiating serenity, wisdom, and prosperity; its eyes are telling you how this is the face of the potential within you.

For the first time in your life, you have the opportunity to speak with the real you. You relax deeply and contemplate that part of you which is ultimate wellness, creative intelligence, infinite wisdom and prosperity.

In relaxed contemplation, visualize the "perfect" you on your inner screen. How are you dressed? How are you sitting? Look at the intensity of your eyes; see the light radiating from them. Look at the expression on your face; examine the attitude in it.

While contemplating the perfect you, formulate a question and expect to receive a perfect answer. Ask a question of this higher mind and wait for the answer. Relax and breathe deeply.

When you have your answer let the silhouette begin to dissolve. Feel the warmth of the fire and let the forest begin to dissolve. Slowly come back to a now reality by letting go of all images and relaxing. End the exercise by slowly opening your eyes and gently stretching.

Note:

You can write down questions that you would like to bring into this type of visualization. You can ask your questions out loud and expect to receive the

answers. The process of reaching your higher Self is more important than the Q & A techniques. It is suggested that you meet your Self as often as possible and that you allow the ideal image of yourself to transform your life. Da Free John of the Laughing Man Institute in Boston thinks that one can reach enlightenment within a very short order by continuously asking oneself "Who is the Master I am serving NOW?" This morphogenetic resonance has parasympathetic benefits on the central nervous system which cause an increase in creative receptivity.

GROUNDING and CENTERING: Sit in Asana. Relax and breathe Pranayama.

Method :

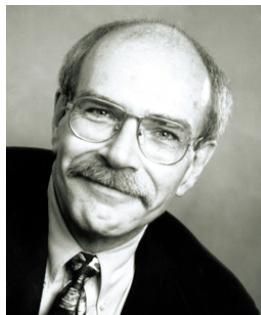
- Begin with the Relaxation exercise. Once you are perfectly relaxed, you are ready for the next step. Visualize a tube extending from the base of your spinal column to the centre of the earth. If you are indoors, visualize the tube going through the floors into the earth.
- Imagine the tube as being like an electrical grounding wire. Breathe slowly and deeply. When you are inhaling, visualize the tube; when you're exhaling, feel the tube reaching deeper and deeper into the ground. Imagine the tube solidly linking the centre of the earth and the base of your spine.
- Feel your skeleton. Hang your skin and your organic mass on your skeleton, as you would drape jello over a wooden frame. Completely relaxed, visualize your hara (your physical centre which is about two inches below your navel between yours hips) and breathe deeply into its centre.

Gravity will signal the minute adjustments necessary to perfect your Asana. Feel yourself reach a perfect balance. Feel your psychic energy gently rising and falling in your tube as you inhale and exhale. Feel yourself firmly and gently anchored to the centre of the earth. Feel yourself reach a perfect equilibrium. Breathe deeply into your tube. Deeply and gently allow your psychic energy to reach the centre of the earth.

Note:

Practice is the process and an empowered mind is a result of the process.

ABOUT LAWRENCE POOLE



**Lawrence is – with little doubt – the only researcher
on Earth who treks jungles... *in a wheelchair*.**

More than 25 years ago, Lawrence had a tragic automobile accident in which he was paralyzed. After a long hospitalization, motivated by a drive to understand himself and what he'd been through – which included death and out-of-body experiences - he began an intuitive study of Nature, and has devoted himself to understanding the creative forces found there for more than 25 years.

His pursuits have led him to wilderness areas from Newfoundland to the Vancouver Island, from the tundra in Northern James Bay and the taiga and pine forests in Northern BC, to the jungles of Panama... *in his wheelchair*. His treks not only helped him rebuild his strength - he says they've given him years of joy while helping him discover his reason for being. The fruit of his labor is revealed in his book "**SELF-Empowerment (How and why to invest
in your creative capital (IQ Press - ISBN: 2-922417-45-X)**.

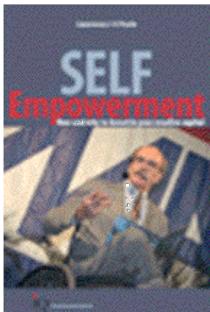
In 330 pages, he demystifies the principles of self-motivation, creative intelligence, strategy, innovation, passion and personal power. Lawrence also writes a monthly column called *Lessons from the jungle..* in the Quebec business magazine "La Réussite" (Success) and he writes an online newsletter called "The Jungle Times".

Engaging readers with his compelling story and adding the latest science facts, Poole explains our creative potential with practical applications. His book is a very effective at-a-glance synthesis, loaded with powerful tools and exercises. It will stimulate you to empower your own life.

Lawrence animates « multimedia training events » that are highly motivating and empowering. He leads leadership and team-building programs based on Nature's primary management strategy: Altruistic self-interest. He is a pioneer developer of heuristic teaching tools. The word heuristic comes from the Greek meaning self-discovery, and focuses on how people learn. He and his partners will lead you in a learning adventures in Costa Rica, in Québec or in your favorite place.

Visit him online at www.consult-iidc.com to subscribe to The Jungle Times.

How can I learn more?



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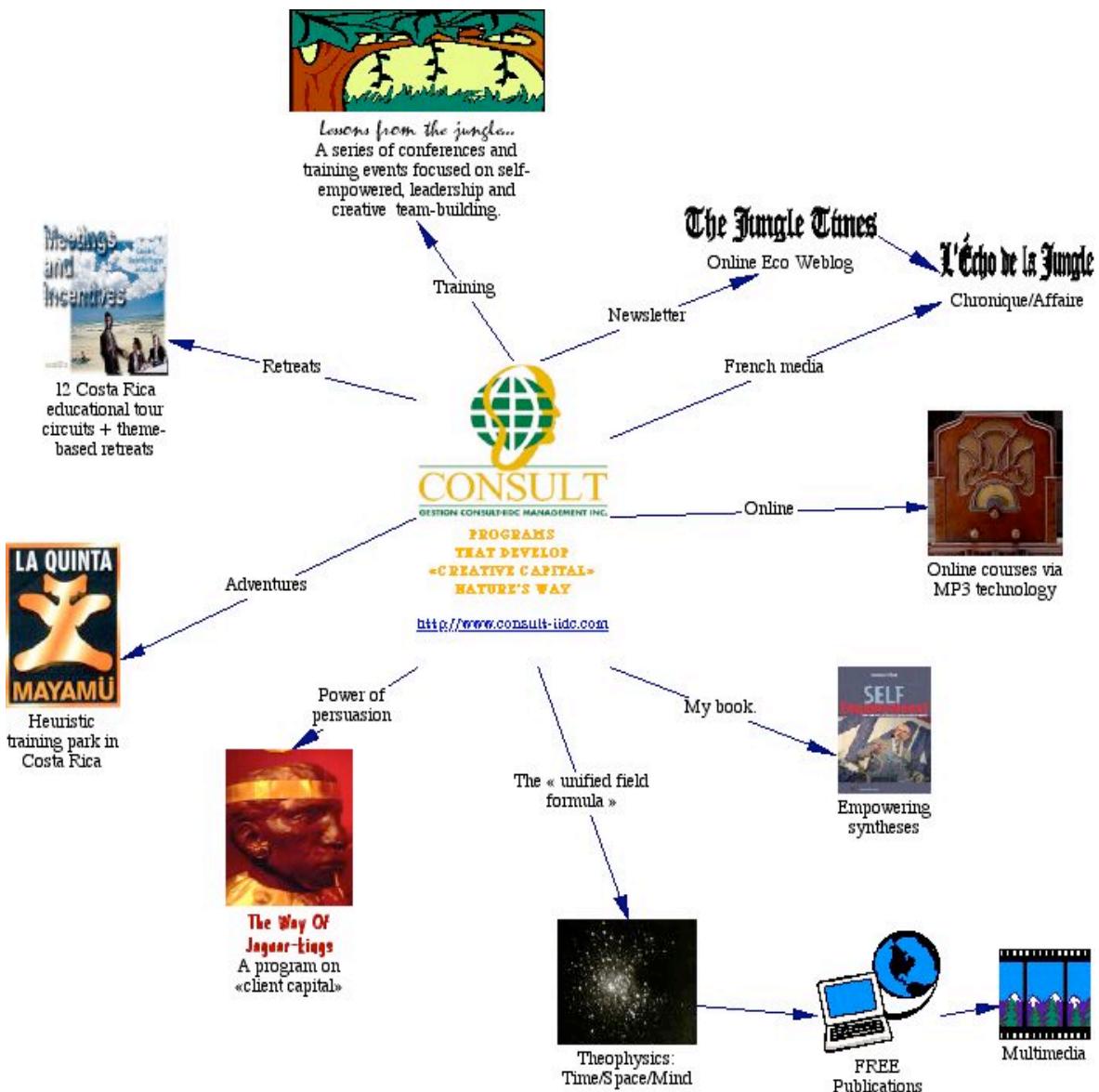
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