

Ideas Unlimited:

10 Simple Ways to Generate Endless Great Ideas



By David L. Deutsch

If you need to come up with ideas for headlines and copy, marketing, or solving any kind of problem in business or in life, there's good news...

Coming up with great ideas is a lot easier—and much more fun—than you might imagine.

All you need are a few simple techniques to trigger your natural-born creativity...

1. Attend Diversity University

Often, if not usually, new ideas are simply bits and pieces of existing ideas that have been re-jigged.

That's why the more different kinds of knowledge, ideas, opinions, impressions and experiences you are exposed to, the more fodder you'll have to "assemble" new ideas.

The most creative people deliberately expose themselves to as wide a range of people, experiences, sights, sounds, and ideas (online and off) as possible.

Not only will this make you more creative, but life is just more fun that way!

2. Speed Up Your Brain—and Slow It Down

Paradoxical as it sounds, it turns out that to be really creative, you need to both speed up *and* slow down your brain.

Because sometimes ideas come when your brain is moving slowly—when you're relaxed, in the shower, daydreaming, meditating or not thinking about anything in particular.

Other times, ideas come when your brain is racing along—when you're taking in information, asking questions and thinking deeply about the problem.

Don't just stick to one method or another. Make sure to explore your brain's various speed settings.

3. Observe More by Watching

Yogi Berra once famously pointed out: "You can observe a lot just by watching."

And so many great inventions and ideas have come about by watching what people do and listening to what they say.

For example, if you were paying attention circa 2009, you may have noticed many people complaining about taxis—how hard they were to find, how unreliable they were, how you never knew how long you'd have to wait, how annoying it was to always have to carry change to pay fares and tip... you get the idea.

Travis Kalanick and Garrett Camp listened.

Their solution, as you may have guessed, became Uber.

4. Think Different

Apple was right: The key to creativity and much else is to think *different*.

Because who needs ideas that are the same as all those that have come before?

Sometimes it seems like everything in education, business and in the media conspires to make us think like everyone else.

So practice deliberately thinking differently. Try to take a novel approach to one thing each day—for example, if you are in favor of something, think of how and why you might be against it.

If you read an article that takes one point of view, try taking the opposite stance.

Keep practicing and cultivating your inner contrarian!

5. Be a Magnifying Glass

A fellow scientist once said to the renowned physicist Richard Feynman, “Richard, I finally figured out how you do it.”

“How?” asked Feynman.

“You take a problem and you think about it and you think about it and think about it and don’t give up until you’ve solved it.”

Feynman had to acknowledge that there was much truth in this. He knew his IQ was only somewhat above average—he was no natural-born genius.

What he did have was extraordinary determination and ability to focus.

Determination is easy—just don’t give up. (To paraphrase a common, “Most people don’t fail at coming up with an idea, they just stop too soon.”)

For example, I find many brain teaser-type puzzles easy to solve—IF I’m willing to put the time into thinking about them and persist through when the going gets rough.

By the way, I find it helps my focus if I write and sketch things out while I do so—which forces my mind to persist on topic.

Want to ignite a conflagration of ideas and burn through the toughest problems?

Be like a magnifying glass that, if held steady long enough, focuses the sun’s rays and burns through paper.

6. Put Your Mind's Eye to Work

Another reason for Richard Feynman's brilliant creativity despite his average IQ was his ability to think using visual cues.

For example, when he was young, he was given the problem of a boat moving at 10 mph down a stream flowing at 5 mph.

Someone in the boat drops their hat overboard and the boat travels for 7 minutes before anyone realizes it.

The question is: how long will it take the boat to travel back upstream to where the hat is?

Instead of doing a complicated calculation, Feynman *envisioned* the problem and saw that the speed of the stream is only relative to the shore and therefore not a factor—just like if you dropped your hat on a moving train.

So, if you spent 7 minutes traveling away from the hat, you would have to spend 7 minutes traveling back to it—regardless of the current.

Albert Einstein also relied heavily on imagination and visualization. In fact, he came up with his theory of relativity by envisioning what it would be like to ride on a beam of light.

7. Want More Answers? Ask More Questions!

Nothing helps you shift your perspective more than asking different questions.

So, be like a journalist and ask Who, What, When, Where, Why and How about anything related to what you're trying to be creative about: the product, the prospect, the industry, the market, the competitive situation, the people involved.

You'll start to see things in new ways, which means you can reassemble parts of the whole to solve problems and come up with creative ideas and solutions in new ways, too.

8. If at First You Don't Succeed, Fail, Fail Again

The more you fail, the more you will succeed.

The more bad ideas you come up with, the more good ideas you will come up with.

It's a mathematical certainty.

James Altucher, one of the most creative thinkers I know, claims to have become more creative and more successful simply by coming up with 10 ideas a day—good, bad or in between.

9. Raise the Roof (Literally)

When it comes to creativity, it's not only what's *in* your head — it's also what's over it.

According to a cognitive hack called The Cathedral Effect, while low ceilings facilitate refinement and detail work, high ceilings inspire freedom and creativity, enabling you to better see relationships and work with abstract concepts.

Or even better... try *no* roof.

So, make like Winston Churchill, Steve Jobs, Ernest Hemmingway, Charles Darwin and go out for a walk!

The philosopher Fredrich Nietzsche walked a total of four hours a day before his writing sessions and believed that truly great thoughts are only conceived while walking.

Even the scientists at Stanford University agree, having found walking increases creative output by up to 60 percent!

Besides providing the ultimate “high ceiling,” walking invigorates ideation by eliminating distractions, inspiring you with nature or the cityscape, reducing your stress, defocusing you (see #2 above), and pumping blood and energy throughout your body— particularly to your brain.

10. Be Systematic, Not Erratic

Many prolific creative people are able to come up with so many good ideas not because they are natural-born creative geniuses, but because they follow a systematic process for idea generation.

Like a series of questions that you can ask yourself, such as “What if I did the opposite?” Or “What element can I add to this to make it work?”

The foolproof idea-generation system I use — and have taught to thousands of others —is revealed in my new **Idea Power** training.

Just check out what Joe Vitale, marketing guru and one of the stars of the movie *The Secret* had to say about it:

“I love this! These are the kinds of mind-expanding techniques that enabled me to generate millions of dollars for my clients and myself— finally expressed in a systematic, easy-to-understand, easy-to-use way. My head’s alive with money-making ideas.”

To find out more about this game-changing program, [here’s where to check it out](#).