

How to have brilliant ideas

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Photo by Patrick Tomasso on Unsplash.

Wouldn't be wonderful if you could turn on being able to have great ideas like you do a tap. Just think how much that would benefit your business, boost your career or even improve the quality of your life?

Sounds a bit far-fetched doesn't it, like it's a superpower only to be found in a Hollywood movie. But the simple truth is that anyone can develop the ability to come up with great ideas so long as they're prepared to practice a few simple thinking exercises.

The truth is that the ability to have great ideas is something we all possess, even if most of us don't realise it. We are all of us creative because thinking creatively is a natural part of human intelligence, and it's what separates us from the other species on the planet and puts us on top of the food chain.

The other misconception that holds us back and makes us think we can't come up with great ideas is that we think that this ability is some kind of special gift that is only bestowed on the lucky few. However, the science says different and blows that notion out of the water. Being able to have great ideas isn't a talent, it's a technique, and like all techniques it can be learnt. What's more, it's actually a very simple technique made up of only five steps.



The five step creative thinking process makes it easier to have brilliant ideas. Photo by Jason Strull on Unsplash.

The 5 step process

The process was pioneered by James Webb Young who said, “An idea is nothing more nor less than a combination of old elements. The capacity to bring old elements into new combinations depends largely on the ability to see relationships.”

And that’s it in a nutshell really, or in other words ideas don’t happen in a vacuum. They also don’t happen if you stare at an empty page or screen waiting for inspiration to strike. Ideas are more often than not a reaction to something like having to solve a problem or a desire to do something in a new or better way.

Step 1: Information

Ideas need sparking into life. So step 1 is learning as much about the problem your idea is going to solve, or the situation your idea is going to address, as much as you can. This is the creative fuel that will power your idea making, and the more you can put in the tank the better.

Step 2: Sweat it...

Having gathered as much information or learnt as much about the situation as you can, now you have to wrestle with the problem and try and think of solutions and ideas. Don’t worry if inspiration doesn’t strike at this stage, because the really clever bit is coming up in step 3.



James Webb Young is the father of the ideas process that people all over the world use.

Wrestling with the problem is an essential step before inspiration strikes.
Photo by William Iven on Unsplash.

Step 3: ...and then forget it

What you have to do now is forget all about it. That’s right, switch off and think about something else completely, or go for a walk, or do another job or something entirely different. When you do you’ll let your subconscious get to work and that’s where the magic happens.



Go for a walk or do something else, that's when your idea will strike you.
Photo by Olia Gozha on Unsplash.

Step 4: The Eureka moment

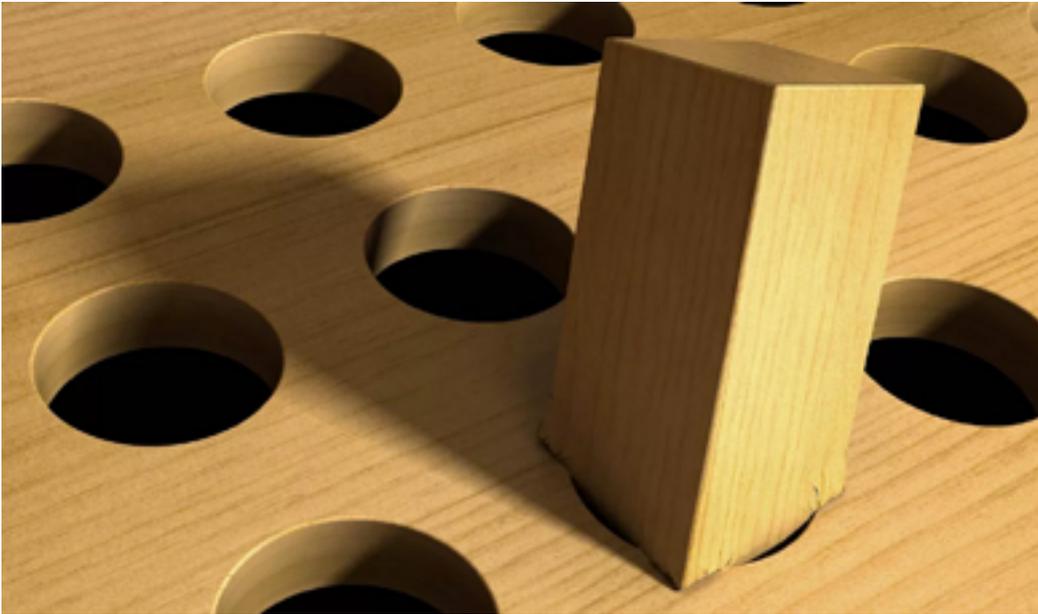
Remember the story about Archimedes running down the road stark naked shouting "Eureka, I've found it"? Well he was having a bath when the idea he was looking for suddenly popped into his head. It makes for an amusing story but it's also a good example of how ideas happen. Your subconscious is the wellspring of your ideas generation and it can only get to work when you're thinking about something else. However, what most people don't realise is that unlike Archimedes ideas tend to whisper in our ears rather than slap us in the face, so we have to be alert to them. So you'll be doing something else, or letting your mind roam free when suddenly the idea you've been searching for pops into your head out of nowhere.



The 5 step process puts the ability to have brilliant ideas within your reach.
Photo by Júnior Ferreira on Unsplash.

Step 5: Shape to fit

Most ideas don't arrive fully formed which means they may not solve the problem perfectly, so you may have to think of ways to adapt it to achieve the result you want. In most cases you'll find this is pretty easy because the idea will have done most of the work.

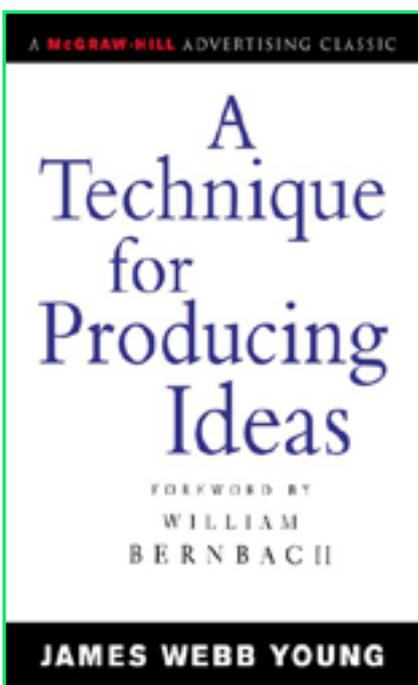


Not all your ideas will fit perfectly so you may have to think of some adjustments before they do.

James Webb Young

If you want to get the whole story on how to come up with brilliant ideas then James Webb Young wrote a short book about the process which you can download for free here when you copy and paste this link:

<http://www.advancedhiring.com/portals/0/docs/a%20technique%20for%20getting%20ideas%20-%20james%20wood%20young.pdf>



Increase your creative powers

Having brilliant ideas means putting your mind to work and the more you do it the better you get at it. Cognitive scientists call this neuroplasticity, which says that our brains are like a muscle and the more we exercise our brains, the stronger they get. So just like a rowing machine will exercise one set of muscles in your body, exercises like coming up with ideas can increase your creative thinking capacities. So practice doesn't just make perfect, it can make us a lot more creative as well.



Train your brain like you do your body.
Photo by Catherine Heath on Unsplash.



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