Mastering Your Mindset

Habits to Spark New Ideas

Shelley Carson, PhD
Harvard University
Definitions

• *Habit*...
  is any regularly repeated behavior that requires little or no thought and is learned rather than innate. A habit is generally developed through reinforcement and repetition.

• *Creativity*...
  is the ability to combine unusual and diverse elements to form novel or original ideas/products that are in some way adaptive. Generating New Ideas is part of the creative process.
The Importance of New Ideas

- Ideas are the precursors to everything you see around you.
- Every invention/discovery/work-of-art/new product starts from an idea.
- Ideas open minds to possibilities for the future.
- Ideas solve problems.
- Ideas make you an active participant in change not a passive pawn.
Preparing to Spark New Ideas

Which of the following best describes your belief about yourself?

- I don’t have a head for new ideas
- I observe other people’s ideas and wonder how they can come up with them
- I observe other people’s ideas and wonder why I didn’t think of them
- I have new ideas sometimes but shake them off as foolish or impractical
- I enjoy coming up with lots of new ideas
You ARE Creative!

Your unique mental repository
Where Ideas Come From

Possible Pattern Matches from Brain Repository

Question Why, How, What If?
Where Ideas Come From

New Idea!
Forming Good Habits
Our Plan to Form Good Habits

• The *Token Economy* Contingency Plan

  immediate gratification  +  pleasurable delayed reward
Our Plan to Form Good Habits

• The *Token Economy* Contingency Plan
Strategies for New Ideas

• These will become your new habits!
Five Strategies for New Ideas

1. Notice New Things
Five Strategies for New Ideas

1. Notice New Thing  
   (there’s novelty everywhere!)

Association with openness to experience
2. Cultivate your unique mental repository)
2. Cultivate your unique mental repository

- General knowledge
- Specific knowledge
- Skills
- Experiences
- Memories

Association with openness to experience
Five Strategies for New Ideas

3. View Life from Multiple Perspectives
Five Strategies for New Ideas

3. View Life from Multiple Perspectives
3. View Life from Multiple Perspectives

Association with cognitive flexibility
4. Take Time to Incubate
Five Strategies for New Ideas

4. Take Time to Incubate

A. Gather information
B. Form a creative problem
C. Turn it over to your neural R & D team

Associated with subconscious processing
The Idea Journal

- different page for each new idea
- record of when and where ideas occur
The Idea Journal

Notebook and Pen

Evernote

OneNote

Simplenote

...OR
5. Contemplate What’s Hot
Five Strategies for New Ideas

5. Contemplate What’s Hot

Connect what’s trending today to your hobbies, interests, or business

Associated with associative thinking
Five Strategies for New Ideas

1. Notice New Things
2. Cultivate your unique mental repository
3. View Life from Multiple Perspectives
4. Take Time to Incubate
5. Contemplate What’s Hot.
Five Strategies for New Ideas

1. Notice New Things
2. Cultivate your unique mental repository
3. View Life from Multiple Perspectives
4. Take Time to Incubate
5. Contemplate What’s Hot.
Thank you!

Shelley Carson

carson@wjh.Harvard.edu