

CHAPTER SEVEN

GENUINE THUNDERING AHA'S!

Idea generation techniques and making creativity happen as a facilitator or, group leader

Everyone Can Be Creative When They Need to Be Every Day

This is a truth if we use any of the following definitions or synonyms of creativity:

Creativity = newness, novelty, uniqueness, out of the ordinary, unfamiliar, familiar seen differently, different, alternate, unusual, weird, exotic, unexpected, untried

There are many alternate ways of being creative on demand. Any day you need to deal with a challenge, problem, situation, opportunity or you are simply looking for potentially creative ideas that you need, only turn to this chapter and use any of the following creative thinking tools or what I call **S.T.A.M.P.S.** (Systems, Techniques, Attitudes, Methods, Processes, Strategies) to start your creativeness flowing.

S.T.A.M.P.S.

To be and become more creative each of us needs to capitalize on our natural creative abilities and develop or borrow others. By doing this we can **STAMP OUT**

- 1) mundaneness, 2) unnecessary repetition, 3) boredom,
- 4) staleness, 5) tediousness, 6) apathy, 7) monotony,
- 8) humdrumity.

S.T.A.M.P.S. = **S**ystems-**T**echniques-**A**ttitudes-**M**ethods-**P**rocesses-**S**trategies

Each **STAMP** is a separate way of using human creative capabilities. Some of them are quick and easy, others are lengthy and complex. All of them are learnable tools.

The following is only a sampling of the **STAMPS** I have created or have found or you could create. These are meant to challenge and tease you. The number of potential **STAMPS** is infinite. Books describing many more are listed in the bibliography at the end of this book. Each of us, due to our own uniquenesses, can create infinite **STAMPS** of our own.

What is essential is to train your mind so that it is capable of THINKING, LEARNING, SOLVING PROBLEMS, COMMUNICATING and BEING CREATIVE.

Use the following as a beginning in your efforts to enhance, encourage or expand your creative thinking skills.

Here are a variety of **STAMPS** (Tools of Creative Thinking and Creativity). Experiment with each of them on a mixture of your problems or challenges or to help you develop ideas just for fun. After you have become familiar with these and others in the book, you may want to start

your own “collection” them. The greater the variety you collect and become proficient with the greater your creative potential will become.

You will probably find that some don't suit you. Some suit one group, while others will suit another group. The more you experiment with them and use them the more you will become aware that it may be more appropriate to use particular ones at specific times or with specific people or groups/teams.

S Systems

An organized series of steps more left-brained in intent, approach and application.

T Techniques

A single exercise, generally open-ended or right-brained in approach (flexible, fluent, spontaneous).

A Attitudes

Mental or emotional moods, usually more affective (emotional) than cognitive (mental or intellectual).

M Methods

A single systematic exercise, generally closed-ended or left-brained in approach (specific, logical, focused).

P Processes

A pattern of exercises or steps more right-brained in intent, approach and application.

S Strategies

General approach ranging from right to left-brained from individual to team to large group from mental to physical to emotional to spiritual to imaginary.

S.T.A.M.P.S. are not meant to replace your natural creative abilities. They are meant to supplement them, as well as, further develop them.

S. T. A. M. P. S.

CREATIVE ORGANIZATIONS

This stamp is an example of an **ATTITUDE** tool of creativity.

The purpose of this exercise is to assist you and your group in altering your organization and enhancing, encouraging, developing and training the creativeness of all your people through the creation of an **“Ideal”** organization using a metaphor or an analogy.

Choose one of the following to use as a metaphor or an analogy.

Circus	Mall	Pet Store	Cafeteria
Zoo	Tool Box	Teenager’s room	Church Picnic
Garden	Bookstore	Farmer’s Market	Bowling Tournament
Train	Toy Box	Junk Yard	Game Preserve

In what ways might your new organization be like a _____?

Describe the managers.

Describe the employees.

What could be the strengths?

What might be the weaknesses?

S.T.A.M.P.S.

BRAINSTORMING

This **STAMP** is an example of a **TECHNIQUE** stamp. Often we need to deal with our emotions and attitudes before we can use our intellects or creativity.

Brainstorming is a creative idea **TECHNIQUE** originally developed by Alex Osborn in the 1930's while he was partner in charge of creative production for the world famous advertising firm BBD&O. The goal of a **BRAINSTORMING** session is to develop large numbers of unique ideas; ideas that may lead to solutions. Keep in mind that **IDEAS** are not necessarily **SOLUTIONS**, they are the beginning to possible solutions. Occasionally solutions are produced during a session. The key behind a profitable session is free, uninhibited thinking [**RIGHT-BRAINED THINKING**]: individual and joint.

Osborn established four (4) "rules" or "guidelines" for **BRAINSTORMING** sessions...

1. Quantity breeds quality.
2. No judgement is permitted.
3. Hitchhiking is encouraged.
4. Free-flowing thought is promoted.

Unlike what most people have experienced as "Brainstorming" what was developed by Alex Osborn and his followers since involves training, practice and

preparation. It is not a gathering for “semi-open minded” or idea rap sessions. Steps need to be followed to help make a session effective.

1. Participants need to be selected to prevent discord.
2. Plan the space to be used to make it effective.
3. Review the “rules/guidelines” at the start.
4. Practice with the “rules/guidelines” during a “warm-up” period.
5. Decide on how ideas will be recorded (notes, audio/visual tape).
6. Hold a warm-up session first with loosening-up material or problems.
7. Review “assigned task” before starting (optional).

When you brainstorm individually you need only keep the general guidelines in mind.

Okay it's your turn to try **BRAINSTORMING**.

First start with a warm-up exercise.

Pick one of the following every day objects and generate a group of **20** to **25** possible new uses for them other than what they are already used for.

- | | |
|--------------------------|-------------------------|
| a. common building brick | g. facial tissue |
| b. pencil eraser | h. scrap paper |
| c. cocktail napkin | i. broken rubber bands |
| d. ballpoint pen | j. plastic wrapping |
| e. toothpick | k. broken glass |
| f. fallen tree leaves | l. an empty parking lot |

Here's an example. If you chose **i. broken rubber bands** you might brainstorm some of these ideas:

1. furniture stuffing
2. smelly smoke alarm
3. stretchable hinge
4. weapon
5. hair tie
6. tie holder
7. book mark
8. under a saucer or plate-tablesaver
9. door cushioner
10. chewing gum
11. hold braces
12. fix broken glasses
13. picture hanger
14. hold a door open
15. hold shirt closed
16. packaging
17. artificial fishing worms
18. doll hair
19. tow rope for model car
20. melt down for rubber
21. stop blood flow from a cut
22. hold socks/nylons up
23. hanging X-Mas ornaments
24. artwork
25. roll into a ball

The main goal of **BRAINSTORMING** is to be flexible, fluent, and as original as you can. You are not necessarily looking for immediately useful, practical creative ideas. Often you are simply looking for new directions. Sometimes the odd ideas will spark more creative rational ideas. Through research it has been discovered that it is generally easier to take a "strange, weird, crazy" idea and tame it down into a new creative one than it is to take a practical idea and make it more creative and exciting.

Now it's your turn. Randomly choose 3 from the list of 12 and practice BRAINSTORMING before you move onto to the next STAMP.

S. T. A. M. P. S.

Creative Skills & Strengths

This **STAMP** consists of a list of **STRATEGIES** discovered in the research of E. Paul Torrance, Ph.D. founding member of the Creative Education Foundation.

Since the early 1950's researchers have been researching the teaching of Creative Thinking Skills. One of the leading researchers, E. Paul Torrance, Ph.D., professor emeritus of the University of Georgia, also my mentor, major professor and professional friend, developed a series of tests of creative thinking skills that are used around the world. His tests measure several separate skills that can be developed. Twenty of them that can be developed and applied in any job are listed below.

I see these as 20 separate strategies we all can use when we are deliberately attempting to be more creative. With practice these will become second-nature to you or simply automatic.

As a team leader, manager or supervisor you can help your employees develop these skills and strategies daily on the job.

1. **Fluency** Strive towards producing many ideas.
2. **Flexibility** Focus on generating different types of ideas.
3. **Elaboration** Concentrate on adding details.
4. **Originality** Continuously look for uniqueness.
5. **Abstractness of approach** Move away from reality.

- 6. Openness** Resist instant answers or completion.
- 7. Change of Context** Look at things from varied perspectives.
- 8. Combination of Ideas/Facts** Combine ideas.
- 9. Breakthrough from Current Limits** Stretch.
- 10. Unusual Viewpoint** Bird's eye, worm's eye, baby's view.
- 11. Internal Perspective** Climb inside, imagine yourself small.
- 12. Humorous Perspective** Use a comic or bizarre viewpoint.
- 13. Richness & Colorful Detail** Add color & excitement.
- 14. Feelings & Emotions** Focus on feeling/emotions note facts.
- 15. Fantasy** Fanticize, imagine, pretend, dream.
- 16. Movement & Sound** Add physical senses.
- 17. Multiple Idea Combinations** Combine ideas.
- 18. Macro Scale Perspective** Seeing from larger view.
- 19. Provocative Viewpoint** See from provocative person's view.
- 20. Future orientation** Go into the future, look back from future.

Choose a current challenge you have and choose three different strategies from this list randomly or "out of a hat" and spend 10 minutes thinking about your challenge using the strategies you pick one at a time. Your goal is to produce 12 new ideas or thoughts..

S. T. A. M. P. S.

FORCED RELATIONSHIPS

This **STAMP** is an example of a **METHOD** because it involves the use of order and logic.

Many products have been developed through the use of **Forced Relationships**: clock-radio, wrist watch, car stereo, thermo mugs, weight-reducing belts, replaceable carpet squares, etc.

Step One Choose an item seemingly unrelated to the problem.

Step Two List the basic traits of the chosen item.

Step Three Think of ways the traits of the chosen item could be adapted to the original problem.

SAMPLE

You would like to improve the design of a secretarial chair.

First Select an unrelated item—a canary

Second List basic traits
it flies, it is yellow, it is light weight, it has feathers, it sings, it has two legs with claws, it can be a pet in a cage,

Third Now take these traits one by one or in combination and apply them to the chair.

make it sing
make it lighter
put a cage around it
make it soft and friendly

The results occasionally are a little far-fetched sounding but with a little modification and stretching they can be made useful.

S. T. A. M. P. S.

ATTRIBUTE LISTING

This **STAMP** is another example of a **METHOD** because it involves the use of order and logic. This STAMP was originally developed by Robert P. Crawford one of the original professors who taught courses on creative thinking in the 1950's and 60's

ATTRIBUTE MODIFYING

Procedure

List main attributes...

characteristics

dimensions

parts

of the problem object or process and then think of ideas of improving each attribute. Then combine one item from each list to create a new product.

I.E. New type of CANDY BAR or CEREAL

ATTRIBUTES

size

shape

flavor

ingredients

color

texture

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

S. T. A. M. P. S.

KAIZEN

This **STAMP** is another example of a **METHOD** because it involves the use of order and logic. This is a modification of Robert Crawford's Attribute Listing that I have developed relating it to the general Japanese approach to problem solving in teams or "quality circles".

Everything and every problem has it's own particular attributes. According to Webster, attributes are.....

inherent characteristics or accidental qualities
distinguishing traits or properties
essential or peculiar characters
inherent features
capacities, abilities, skills
degrees of excellence or lack of...

The purpose of this **METHOD** is to help people break through "creative blocks".

First you isolate the particular problem, causes of it, or parts of it.

Second you list all the attributes of the main parts or causes.

Third you begin to work with individual to groups of attributes looking for directions toward solutions or to create solutions through

- | | |
|-------------------------|----------------------|
| 1) changing attributes, | 2) eliminating them, |
| 3) combining them, or | 4) adding new ones |

SAMPLE


You are a pencil manufacturer. Your problem is that your pencils are not selling. Your goal is to sell pencils and stay in business profitably.

FIRST:

List the attributes.

Physical (sight, touch, smell, taste, sound)
Materials
Uses
Competition
Benefits/Detriments

Now look for or develop solutions by

- 1. changing**
 - 2. eliminating**
 - 3. combining**
 - 4. adding**
- 
- attributes.**

S. T. A. M. P. S.

6 THINKING HATS, HELMITS, HOODS, CAPS, VISORS & BEANIES

This **STAMP** is an example of a **PROCESS** because it involves a collection or pattern of steps. This is a creative right-brain oriented adaptation of Edward de Bono's "SIX HATS©" For more information on Edward de Bono's work see the bibliography. He has written over thirty books on creative thinking and creative thinking techniques. I personally find his SIX HATS approach too left-brained or logical for me personally for my groups.

When you use this STAMP your goal is to approach your challenges or problems from up to six different ways of thinking, ranging from very logical to very emotional.

You start by choosing a particular head cover ("thinking hat or cap") and then deliberately choose to think for a chosen amount of time only that way. Then you continue choosing from the other five until you have used all six. Edward de Bono explains thoroughly several uses and different procedures for using the multiple ways of thinking.

YELLOW CLOWN BEANIE

WHITE MEDICAL CAP

GREEN MAGICIAN HOOD

BLUE BOOKKEEPER VISOR

RED FIREFIGHTER HELMET

BLACK WITCH HAT

BLACK WITCH HAT

Black is gloomy and negative. The black witch's hat covers the negative aspects why it should not or can not be done.

RED FIREFIGHTER HELMET

Red often suggests anger (seeing red), rage and emotions. The red firefighter's helmet is used to symbolize the "fire" in a situation, the emotional view.

GREEN MAGICIAN HOOD

Green is grass, vegetation and abundant, fertile growth. A magician creates things, such as magic. The green magician hat indicates creativity and new ideas.

WHITE MEDICAL CAP

This hat represents neutral and objective thinking. It is concerned with finding out objective facts and figures without emotion.

BLUE BOOKKEEPER VISOR

Blue is cool, and it is also the color of the sky, which is above everything else. The blue bookkeeper visor is concerned with control, systemizing and organizing.

YELLOW CLOWN BEANIE

Yellow is sunny and positive. The yellow hat is optimistic and covers hope and positive thinking.

I have created visual aids that you may want to use for choosing the type of "**thinking hat**" you are using. Simply reproduce the following sheet.

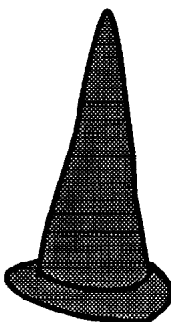
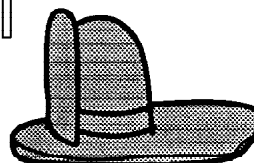
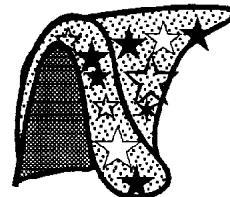
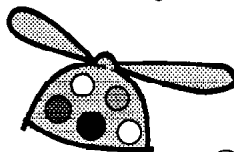
You also might want to collect or gather your own "head covers" from novelty stores or thrift shops to use as props for yourself or for your next creative team meeting.

6

Thinking Hats, Hoods, Helmets, Caps, Visors & Beanies

Creative

Unique, novel, untried; new ideas or possibilities, new combinations of old or existing ideas, solutions or possibilities, hunches, guesses, risk taking, boundary breaking, paradigm challenging



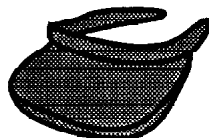
Positive
All the positive aspects about Ideas, situations, challenges, problems. Asking ourselves **"What's Good About It?"** What will we learn and gain from this?

OBJECTIVE

Data, facts, information, knowledge Specific, Clear without bias or influence. Ask the Questions: **Who? What? When? Where? Why? How?**



M Y G
W G
Be R



Dd B n

Systematic

List and examine the systems required, involved. What systems need to be developed? What systems might help?

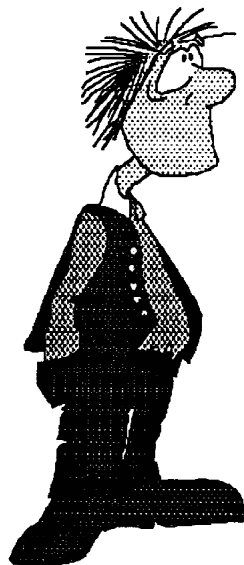
Emotional

All Emotions involved in the Ideas, situations, challenges or problems: happy, sad, angry, frustrating, etc.

NEGATIVE

What's wrong with Ideas, solutions, possibilities situations, challenges, problems. Ask ourselves: **"What's Wrong With It?"** What Might/Could Go Wrong?

When we are thinking we need to focus the type of thinking and the style of thinking we are using



MEDITATIVE	INTUITIVE
Directive	negotiative

S. T. A. M. P. S.

CREATIVE THINKING SKILL DEVELOPMENT

FLEXIBILITY

This STAMP is an example of a **TECHNIQUE** and a **STRATEGY** combined.

The greater the numbers of different kinds of ideas a person comes up with the greater their flexibility.

What may a glass ash tray be used for?

1. to hold marbles
2. as a coaster
3. as a mirror
4. as a lens
5. crush it and use to coat paper to make sandpaper
6. to prop open a door

One easy way to develop your FLEXIBILITY skills is to consider different action verbs and activities...

alter	freeze	knit	paint	unravel
boil	gut	light	quiet	vacate
coat	hammer	mold	rotate	warp
divide	insert	naturalize	shuffle	xerox
eliminate	jell	overhaul	tumble	yaw
				zoom

Write down ideas for filing cabinets using the a-z action verbs.

S. T. A. M. P. S.

CHECKLISTING REVISITED

This **STAMP** is an example of a **TECHNIQUE**.

1. Other uses.

Are there other functions or purposes to which this can be applied?

2. Adapt.

What else is like this? What can be copied from something else? Is there a past history to get ideas from?

3. Magnify.

Add to it. More time; stronger; longer; thicker; higher; bigger. Add ingredients or parts; reproduce it; duplicate it; exaggerate the whole.

4. Modify.

Change its color, shape, odor, size, weight, form, texture, position, energy source, uses, etc.

5. Minimize.

Lessen it. Subtract; condense; reduce; remove parts; make it lower; shorter; lighter; smaller; omit; split it; understate; use only a part.

6. Substitute.

What else instead? who else? A different part or ingredient? A different process, result?

7. Rearrange.

Components; patterns; sequence; direction; speed; persons.

8. Reverse.

Advantages with disadvantages. Use opposites. Transpose cause and effect. Reverse roles, actors, actions.

9. Combine.

Different units; purposes; elements; component ingredients. Use blends, parts of other problems.

10. Remove

Take away parts, processes, demarket (stop making it)
Test **un-**marketing in some area.

In addition to using the preceding S.T.A.M.P.S., we can promote our natural creativeness by **reviving, encouraging, practicing**, and/or **developing** it. We can do this **mentally, physically, emotionally** and/or **socially**. The results can be achieved consciously and subconsciously. The key to our natural creativeness is action and involvement: individually, in groups, teams or organizations.

The following are exercises you can use to further develop and rejuvenate your personal creativeness and creative thinking skills.

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. Change daily routines
(1 per week). | 2. Do some risky things. |
| 3. Create new meals. | 4. Play with children. |
| 5. Play a new game
(1 per week). | 6. Work some puzzles. |
| 7. Take up writing (stories,
poem, play, letters to new
new pen pals). | 8. Start learning a new
technology. |

9. Watch Television or movies creatively
10. Develop or take up a new hobby.
11. Become a volunteer
12. Join a different club.
13. Read a new type of book.
14. Start a fun exercise.
15. Look for an older or younger role model.
16. Plan something you can look forward to.

Recommendation

Because this chapter contains so many exercises I recommend that you try one at a time and sample a variety of them. Then continue reading and return to this chapter to sample a few more. Then continue on reading and return once again. The more you return the more your creativity and your creative thinking skills will grow.

