



CHAPTER NINE

Shaping, Molding or Forming Broken Crayons

Leaders need to be focusing on the development of the creative skills and abilities of their people

Successful Leaders Develop the Creativeness of All Their People

Teaching people to be creative or to become more creative is a challenge for all of us who lead people, whether we are leading one or hundreds of thousands. Whether we lead people at work, school, church, temple, synagogue or at home.

Many excellent books have been written about how we can teach people to be more creative beginning with the classic, Applied Imagination (1953), by Alex Osborn the creator of Brainstorming© and the Creative Problem Solving Process© and founder of the Creative Education Foundation and it's annual Creative Problem Solving Institute held in Buffalo, New York each June. Excellent books have also been written by two of my mentors E. Paul Torrance, Ph.D. (doctoral major professor) and Edward de Bono of England (in absentia?) to name simply two. Others are listed in the bibliography of this book for your further growth.

To start to teach someone to be creative we need to discover what they think is creative. Copy the next page and ask your people to work on it for three minutes.

What is Creative?

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During Workshops on Creative Thinking, participants have been asked to come up with ideas to improve, better use, sell or market paper clips. Your task is to pick which of their ideas you think are creative. Work for about three minutes.

- | | | |
|--|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> jewelry | <input type="checkbox"/> tie tack | <input type="checkbox"/> fence |
| <input type="checkbox"/> art statue | <input type="checkbox"/> clean nails | <input type="checkbox"/> pipe cleaner |
| <input type="checkbox"/> gas appliance | <input type="checkbox"/> dwarf trombone | <input type="checkbox"/> anchor |
| <input type="checkbox"/> cleaner | <input type="checkbox"/> ammunition | <input type="checkbox"/> magnets |
| <input type="checkbox"/> sling shot | <input type="checkbox"/> bubble blower | <input type="checkbox"/> pin |
| <input type="checkbox"/> eyeglass frames | <input type="checkbox"/> zipper | <input type="checkbox"/> house wiring |
| <input type="checkbox"/> decoration | <input type="checkbox"/> plug puller | <input type="checkbox"/> corn skewers |
| <input type="checkbox"/> handles | <input type="checkbox"/> belt hanger | <input type="checkbox"/> swinging bridge |
| <input type="checkbox"/> jump rope | <input type="checkbox"/> bobby pin | <input type="checkbox"/> curler |
| <input type="checkbox"/> fork | <input type="checkbox"/> ear cleaner | <input type="checkbox"/> toothpick |
| <input type="checkbox"/> missile | <input type="checkbox"/> welding rod | <input type="checkbox"/> tie clip |
| <input type="checkbox"/> fish hook | <input type="checkbox"/> chain link | <input type="checkbox"/> cheese slicer |
| <input type="checkbox"/> tie wire | <input type="checkbox"/> skewer | <input type="checkbox"/> stirrer |
| <input type="checkbox"/> needle | <input type="checkbox"/> toad stabber | <input type="checkbox"/> ladder |
| <input type="checkbox"/> hammock | <input type="checkbox"/> tire poker | <input type="checkbox"/> coat hanger |
| <input type="checkbox"/> hypo needle | <input type="checkbox"/> knitting needles | <input type="checkbox"/> eye scratcher |
| <input type="checkbox"/> sword | <input type="checkbox"/> paint stirrer | <input type="checkbox"/> flower holder |
| <input type="checkbox"/> picture hanger | <input type="checkbox"/> spring | <input type="checkbox"/> snowshoe |
| <input type="checkbox"/> lightning rod | <input type="checkbox"/> ice skate blade | <input type="checkbox"/> scrap iron |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ski pole | <input type="checkbox"/> toe brace | <input type="checkbox"/> tracer tool |
| <input type="checkbox"/> finger brace | <input type="checkbox"/> boot strap | <input type="checkbox"/> boot hook |
| <input type="checkbox"/> animal trap | <input type="checkbox"/> sled | <input type="checkbox"/> Christmas |
| <input type="checkbox"/> wind chime | <input type="checkbox"/> cigarette holder | <input type="checkbox"/> ornaments |
| <input type="checkbox"/> tinsel | <input type="checkbox"/> languages | <input type="checkbox"/> alphabets |
| <input type="checkbox"/> numbers | <input type="checkbox"/> hanging lamp chain | <input type="checkbox"/> plant stake |
| <input type="checkbox"/> doll clothes | <input type="checkbox"/> bracelet | <input type="checkbox"/> crochet needle |
| <input type="checkbox"/> hanger | <input type="checkbox"/> hood ornament | <input type="checkbox"/> ring |
| <input type="checkbox"/> electric coil | <input type="checkbox"/> ruler | <input type="checkbox"/> hat rack |
| <input type="checkbox"/> metal pretzels | <input type="checkbox"/> wheel | |

How many did they pick? 5, 10, 15, 20, 30, 40, 50, perhaps all 83? Do they believe that all 87 ideas are possibly creative? As **CRAYON BREAKERS** their answers would be yes. Why? Because they were probably at least creative to the person who thought of them. As **CRAYON BREAKERS** they would tend to be more open to accepting other people's ideas as creative or original. Now discuss the following with them.

What makes one idea creative and another not?

Usually our personal definition of what makes something creative will determine what we accept as creative. The criteria we use to determine creativeness determines creativeness.

Might some of these criteria cause people to cross off many ideas?

1. Is it practical?
2. Will it work?
3. Can I see or imagine it?
4. Is it brand new? I haven't thought of it before?
5. Have we tried it before?
6. Has it failed before?
7. Will it hurt anyone?

Our criteria greatly affect our creative thinking and our ability to judge other people's creative thinking openly.

The following 12 lessons can be used to help teach other people to be more creative.

Lesson No. 1

Accept all ideas as potentially useful. No longer criticize any idea. Do not judge or kill ideas ever again. BUT always challenge solutions before you try them.

Simply because something is not practical is not a valid reason for killing an idea. The wilder the ideas the better. "It is easier to tame down a wild and exciting idea than it is to make a tame idea exciting," Sid Shore, inventor, physicist and engineer.

Lesson 2

Continuously encourage people to generate many ideas to be fluent when they brainstorm© for ideas. One way to do this is to have people practice brainstorming© and having them focus on quantity of ideas not quality. For example you could ask people to produce a list of unique uses for a common brick, a toothpick, a marble, or a used tennis ball.

Lesson 3

Subscribe to six new magazines outside your field and read them for a year looking for how other fields use creativity and for ideas that you might use in your field. Also encourage your people to do the same thing and ask them to share what they discover and learn each month during the year.

Lesson 4

To help people to expand and enrich their creativeness we can also help them by encouraging them to be more flexible in their thinking and challenge them to produce lists of completely different types of ideas for a single problem or exercise.

One way to do this is to ask people to look at problems or situations from multiple viewpoints or from the viewpoints of several completely different people or occupations when they are generating ideas. Try this yourself right now. Your goal is to minimize or eliminate the homeless problem in

your town or city. How might a person in each of the following occupations possibly solve this problem?

- a. artist
- b. contractor
- c. baseball player
- d. choir director
- e. street cleaner
- f. rocket scientist
- g. movie star
- h. pick pocket
- i. politician
- j. nun

Lesson 5

Always push yourself to list 12 ideas. Then push for twelve more. In fact do this twelve times so that you have 144 or a gross of ideas. The greater the number of ideas you have the greater the chance you will create or discover highly creative ideas you have never tried before. When working with other people encourage them to reach 12 ideas and then twelve more rather than push them. Only we should push ourselves, never push others.

Lesson 6

Collect ideas from magazines, newspapers, books, television and radio. Organize them by category or type. Encourage your people to collect ideas. Make it a department or office habit to collect ideas. Then review your collections periodically looking for ideas that can be used directly or modified to fit your situations or challenges.

Lesson 7

Combine ideas into new ideas. Yes 1 + 1 can 3, 4, 5, etc. when you are combining 1 idea with another idea. Begin contests asking people to combine ideas. Ask your clients, customers, patients, etc. for ideas. Ask them to combine randomly chosen ideas searching for new ideas.

Lesson 8

STOP CAN'T—ing. Instead of saying can't or accepting can't find ways it might be done. Don't emphasize looking for answers or solutions. Encourage looking for possibilities, near hits, almos. Once you have a maybe or an almost work on it once and awhile and eventually it will be turned into an answer or solution.

Lesson 9

Ask everyone to ask 12 people for ideas. 12 clients, customers, patients, students. Even 12 total strangers. Go out onto the street and ask the first 12 people you meet who will stop and talk with you for idea each. Remember you are not looking for answers or solutions. You are looking for ideas, possibilities, maybes, things to develop or grow on.

Lesson 10

Take imagination breaks. Encourage people to take them too. During meetings that you are leading ask people to stop, close their eyes and simply imagine by doing one of the following:

1. ask them to imagine something specific
2. encourage simply let images float buy

3. ask them to relax and close their eyes for 90 seconds while you play music and then ask them what they imagined.
4. pair people up and have one person guide the other who has their eyes closed to see certain things.

Lesson 11

Take an exploration lunch break once a week. Take a brown bag lunch or pick up some to-go food and go for a walk somewhere you have never walked before. Go into a store you have never been in before and just browse. Let your imagination guide you. If ideas come write them down or take action on them.

Lesson 12

Focus on keeping a positive atmosphere around you. Create a fun, humorous, enjoyable creative environment. It may be your entire office or simply a single room people can go to when they need a “creative break” or a “fun break”. If it is a separate room include: humorous or comedy videos, tapes, books, magazines (Mad, Cracked, etc.), joke books; art materials, toys, games, novelty items. Tapping your quieted “child-like” nature will help you tap your natural creativeness and help you to expand and enrich it.

Working on each of these 12 Lessons one at a time or in groups will help to expand and enrich your creative skills and abilities. Try one of these next week during a lunch or at breaktime. Perhaps you could set up a 2 hour to 4 hour creativity workshop and invite fellow employees or friends to participant one weekend next month or after work one afternoon. You could send out for pizza or ask the participants to bring food and create a creative potluck

supper. Remember as you teach someone else you help yourself to learn even more. Make it one of your goals during the next 90 days to teach up to 12 people some of the techniques you have had the most success with as you read through this book.

Keep in mind that the most effective teachers put their focus on helping people learn something that is useful, meaningful, beneficial and fun for them rather than simply teach them what the teacher thinks is most important.

