CREATIVE THINKING 101
How to Improve Your Creative Problem Solving Skills
Creative Thinking 101

How to Improve Your Creative Problem Solving Skills
Introduction

I want to thank you and congratulate you for downloading this book, “Creative Thinking 101”.

This book contains proven steps and strategies on how you can excite your creativity and get your problem solving skills to a much higher level.

Ever feel in need for some new creative juice? Maybe you have been going over a problem time and time again and keep coming up with no solution.. How would you like to know how to come up with new innovative solutions?

Creative problem solving skills involves thinking differently, and to be able to think differently you have to be able to change your perspectives.

You've heard the saying "Think outside the box" right?

Well thinking outside the box only gives you another perspective, to really think creatively, you want to think about the box in as many ways as possible.

1) Think inside the box
2) Think outside the box
3) Think about the inside of the box from the outside
4) Think about the outside of the box from the inside
5) Think about the whole box
6) Think about the box in relation to other boxers

etc....

The above doesn't really explain anything, it just illustrates the point that it's best to come at a problem from as many different perspectives as possible. If you can go a step further and re-define the problem from each one of those perspectives, you'll find a goldmine worth of ideas.

By reading this book you'll learn the techniques to pull apart problems and to think creatively to come up with those much need solutions.

Most of the solutions to the problems you are trying to solve are already
within your memory, you just haven't given your brain the right cues to access that information, the tools, tips and tricks you'll discover in the following chapters are designed to do just that, this book will help improve your creative thinking, and improve your creative problem solving abilities.

You'll be amazed at the amount of information and brilliant ideas you already have stored within you head, you just need an easy to follow process to access those ideas.

In the following chapters you'll learn:

- How to generate multiple ideas (and how to improve this skill)
- How to use mind mapping and brainstorming tools effectively to boost creativity
- Learn how to evaluate your ideas and test their validity
- Tips & Tricks on creating a creative environment, which will get your creative juices flowing.

Thanks again for downloading this book, I hope you enjoy it!
Creative Thinking 101

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Chapter 1 – If There’s Something You Want to Do, Just Do It

Somewhere along the way, doing the same things repeatedly can get pretty monotonous. For example, a file clerk in an office cubicle may be enthusiastic to accept filing and organizing reports and spreadsheets on his first day of the job – but come back a month later, that same clerk will agonize over the monotony of his tasks. You cannot argue with the fact that day-to-day tasks can get tiring after some time, and it can stunt your thinking skills too.

If you want to improve your creative thinking skills, then it’s a good idea to break out from whatever routinely work you’re doing and try something new for a change. It does not have to be something as bold and ambitious. You can enhance your creative thinking by doing something fun, something you enjoy, or something that you have always wanted to do.

If you are hesitant to do experiments because you do not think you can finish them, don’t worry because what’s important is that you improve your thinking. If you want to try baking a chocolate cake, then go ahead. If you want to stop baking after a failed attempt to get the cake just right, then it’s okay – you can move on to another idea that you want to put into action. Again, it is important to use these random actions as a way to not only beat the boredom and monotony of your current life, but also to get your creative juices flowing.
Chapter 2 – In Case of Block, Take a Break

Take a break. If you are too tired or stressed to work on a task, then do not bother staring at your assignment because at your state, it won’t get you anywhere or worse, you’ll end up doing a very poor job at it. Step outside and enjoy a leisurely stroll around the block, or head to your favorite place to visit, such as a public park or the shopping center. If you don’t feel the urge to head out due to circumstances beyond your control, then even a nice break at your home such as reading a storybook will do.

Here is an example of how one person’s break improved his creative thinking: he is going to submit an application to participate as an exhibitor/merchandise-seller in a pop-culture convention that’s going to happen in two months. He has a big problem: what exactly is he going to sell in the convention? He wants his product to be unique, standing out in the sea of bookmarks, stickers, commissioned sketches and countless fan-made T-shirts.

Not knowing what to do, he decides to go around the block and admire at the wares in the shopping stores, until he stops in front of an art café that has numerous displays of paper cups with hand drawings on them. The discovery gave him a wonderful idea, and after getting a cup of coffee from the café, he heads back to his workstation at home to begin writing about paper-cup crafted items.

You may surprise yourself when you come across a wild or creative idea in the middle of your break, and that’s the good thing about breaks. When you’re at ease, you begin to dream of ideas that couldn’t have been conceptualized in the midst of stress. Going back to your assignment, you will come up with a sudden idea, and sooner or later, you’ll head back to your computer and you type away and solve your problems with ease.
Chapter 3 – Emotions Result to Creating Ideas

Some emotions actually trigger our drive to get our creative juices flowing because they set creative environments that may influence your level of creative thinking. Anger, sadness, happiness and fear are few examples of emotions that can sometimes influence your brain to improve your thinking skills.

Let’s start first with anger. When you’re angry, you’re more likely to take actions right away, because you want to prove a point by thinking of ways to back up your points. When you’re angry, you generate many ideas in the process.

While the feelings of anger inspire you to find creative ways to solve your problems aggressively, feelings of sadness inspire you to think of words to dramatize your problems. This absurd way of improving creative thinking is not ideal, and it’s the kind of feeling that works better on artists, musicians, singers or actors. These aforementioned people channel their sadness using words and actions, and put them into song, dance or script.

A lot of sad songs (whether upbeat or slow) on the radio are inspired by the singers’ feelings of sadness. Actors take advantage of this emotion to make their theatrics more convincing and authentic to everyone watching them.

The emotion of happiness inspires you to improve your creative thinking skill. It’s the inverse of inspiration from sadness, but unlike the latter, happiness is a feeling that any person can make full use of. It’s as typical as getting inspired to work on a report after receiving a compliment from a client, or it can leave you inspired to think of ways to create the perfect date after your love interest agrees to have a night out with you. Those two instances are part of the many examples wherein the feeling of happiness enhances your problem-solving and creative thinking skills.

Then there is the feeling of fear – and like anger, this feeling may either help or harm you, depending on how careful and calm you are when faced with an alarming situation. Fear may, in some cases, drive you to pump up a lot of ideas out of urgency, such as coming up with all the ideas to exhaust in
finishing your presentation before the 10-minute deadline.

When planning to use your emotions to set the mood for getting your creativity level in motion, keep in mind that it’s not always healthy to use negative emotions like anger and fear. It is best to use positive emotions to trigger or influence your creative thinking skills.
Chapter 4 – Improve your Note-taking

For some people, nothing is more satisfying than writing an idea or a dream down in paper. Some people have the habit of grabbing a sheet of paper, tissue or anything that’s smooth enough to write with using a pen. They then scribble away the first thing that pops up in their mind.

The downside is that in most cases, there are just so many creative ideas that you can’t get to organize them properly. Soon, you’ll have a whole sheet with notes that are all over the place.

The good thing is that it is alright for your notes to be messy and jumbled-up. Because as you go over your notes, you’ll see how much of a mess you made in your previous notes – and with this outcome, you will likely resolve to keep your notes neater next time. At the same time, it enforces you on how to keep your ideas organized, and it depends on how you want it.

For one, you may have your ideas listed in a numerical order or in bulleted points. You may also use illustrations like drawing rectangles over an idea or a group of ideas.

The point here is that note taking is already a way of bringing out your creativity. When you have too many creative ideas, you can further improve your problem solving skills by sorting them out and organizing your thoughts.
Chapter 5 – There’s the Best Time for Everything

We all have 24 hours every day and given that a typical individual sleeps between 5 to 8 hours, the way we spend our remaining time is up to us. Too often, we waste some of our time by promising to deliver a document or conduct a research report at an early time, only to be disappointed by procrastinating until the final hour.

This can cause us to rush – at the cost of quality. If you feel like you are at your best at a certain time of the day or night, then it is better if you stick to that timeframe. The reason is that you get your creativity going at your so-called “peak hours”.

Peak hours are the hours where you get to be the most productive and the most creative. It’s also those hours where you actually deliver well. Morning people include 9-5 employees and at-home parents whose peak hours are, undeniably, in the morning. Upon getting up and getting ready for work or school, they immediately have the energy to fire up their computers and type down everything they can think of. These people definitely get their creative juices going at the early part of the day.

On the other hand, the night owls are people who best perform at night – college students and late-night shift workers fall under the night owls. They best perform at night because of the quiet evening setting and the reduced number of distractions such as vehicle noises and daytime chatter. The quiet setting gives them peace of mind, which influences their brain to pump up creative ideas and thoughts. With that, these people put their ideas to work as they sit on the computer with a desk lamp, typing away or drawing illustrations with ease and comfort.

Hence, your level of creativity and productivity skills are influenced by the time you put yourself to work. If you are a better performer in the morning, then stick to doing work during the day. If you are more creative at night, then stick to a nighttime schedule. If you have creative ideas during the afternoons, then work on this schedule. Those peak hours can put your mind to work.
Chapter 6 – Have Other People Evaluate your Ideas

Sometimes, we have family members, friends, co-workers, even total strangers who can evaluate our ideas and give their own suggestions on how to do things right. Oftentimes, we either argue with them, contradict them, or passively agree with them, hoping that they will not disturb our peace any longer. However, there are instances when getting the opinions of other people can help in testing, evaluating and reconstructing your own ideas.

There is this one case of an individual looking to get opinions from others before deciding to pull off a major tea-party event. He wants a tea party simply because he wants it to be in stark contrast to the many nightclub raves and drinking parties around his neighborhood. In short, he wants to pull off an event for people to appreciate things such as earl grey tea and little teacups with cakes and biscuits on the side. However, he is very unsure whether his idea is worth giving a go, so he made survey forms and submitted these to his friends, co-workers and colleagues.

Surprisingly, most of the respondents give their honest feedback and suggestions on not just the things to have in a tea party, but also the activities that they want the event to have. One girl suggests a board game, while a co-worker suggests that there should be art-drawing activities. Another one wants the event to have a souvenir stand to buy items such as snacks and tea sets. After getting all the suggestions, the event-head reconstructed his plans and using the ideas others gave, he incorporated them with his own ideas and eventually put the dream event into action.

You may say that you feel hesitant to ask for other people’s opinions because they will only drive your ideas down. However, even if they do disagree with you, you can still learn from their opinions upon going back to the writing board and rewriting your plans because now that you know what they have to say, you can use your creative thinking to come up with a back-up plan or much more.
Chapter 7 – A Little Daydreaming Won’t Hurt

There is nothing wrong with daydreaming. In fact, it is much better that you do daydream once in a while. In spite of our superiors telling us to quit daydreaming and get back to work, it actually stimulates our minds.

When you daydream, you get to think of all the ideas that you can imagine. No matter how wild or ridiculous your ideas can be, your bouts of daydreaming can influence your creative thinking as you make up your world of imagination. If you are in the middle of working on your creative project such as graphic design and advertising videos, your mind pumps up more ideas as you daydream a while more.

Just remember though, that daydreaming is most effective as soon as you get back to work – it should not serve as an excuse to waste work-minutes just because you have been dreaming about your ideal presentation. Once you’re done with your little bout of imagination, don’t forget to go right back to work.
Chapter 8 – Stop and Observe Everything

There is so much going on around you that it is so easy to overlook all of them. Whether you are in the city’s central business district or in the town square, it is a good idea to take a good look around you and see what is happening. You’ll never know what might interest you.

When faced with a problem, your first course of action is to take a good look around you and observe for any ideas or clues that can solve your problem. The people you spot from a distance may unlock an idea if you just observe how they behave or interact with objects or other people. The cars that drive by also generate an idea, as they zoom past you into whatever destination they go.

Observation also works even if you are not within a high-traffic area. You can also get creative ideas by observing your office space or your classroom. You can also observe co-workers and the way they write down their reports, which may be quite useful in improving your skills. If you are a student, then you can observe how the students study for the next test and find out if their strategies work for you.

Observation brings out the creativity in you, albeit in a passive way. Nevertheless, it pays to get ideas just by looking at the people, places and things in sight.
Chapter 9 – Get a Giant Canvas

Large canvases such as whiteboards and chalkboards are fun, but effective ways to brainstorm for creative ideas.

You’ve already known by now why offices, meeting rooms and function halls are equipped with at least one whiteboard: it’s the adults’ own canvas for writing down all the brainstorming ideas, especially during meetings, seminars and workshops. These people find them as a better outlet to unleash their ideas, create illustrated maps, graphs and charts, and point out their ideas to others for evaluation and question.

The same thing goes for chalkboards, as a teacher or professor uses it to draw down his/her ideas on explaining subject matters from simple mathematics to financial accounting. In addition, the students use these chalkboards to illustrate their ideas as they solve academic problems like math and art.

If you don’t have a whiteboard or a chalkboard that you can use as your own giant canvas, you can stick a large cardboard on your wall and use it as your own outlet to write or draw your brainstorming ideas. The point here is that giant canvases can serve as brainstorming and mind-mapping tools to boost your creativity.
Chapter 10 – Think Like a Kid

The special thing about kids is that they can be so creative. That is because at early ages, their little minds are at their optimum level and they fully express their creativity. It’s just too bad kids tend to lose that creative fire as they grow up.

One way to think like a kid is to ask lots of questions. When kids don’t understand what the other person is saying, they ask questions, hoping to get a clear picture of what they’re talking about. In your case, asking many questions may lead you to getting more details about a specific topic. This results to generating ideas after hearing the explanations and fully grasping the words. If there are things that are unclear to you, do not hesitate to ask questions.

Another way to think like a kid is, as mentioned earlier, to let your imagination run wild and come up with crazy ideas that just might work. An example of using imagination is think of creative ways to sell your pastries and sandwiches if you are a startup baking entrepreneur. You can conduct a research about the strategies used by successful entrepreneurs and start developing your creative marketing and advertising plan from there.

Thinking like a kid does not mean dumbing down your brain and acting all immature. There is no shame in trying out this method of getting ideas. If the kids get to express their creativity this way, then this will also work for you.
Chapter 11 – There’s Power in Powerpoint

The Microsoft PowerPoint program is not just for making visual presentations, although that is the main purpose of the software. Many features are available in PowerPoint that contain functions for graphic arts and graphic design. Those simple but overlooked features such as shapes can serve as your digital drawings, and those slides can serve as your digital canvas when mind mapping and brainstorming for ideas.

Using PowerPoint, you can develop a web of ideas or a digital mind-map by creating and labeling shapes such as rectangles and squares, then connecting them with links. Besides mind-maps, you can also use PowerPoint slides as clipboards for all ideas that you have picked up from the internet such as web images. You can also stash snapshots and pictures into the slides. After adding all the necessary contents, you can tweak your ideas, making combinations of two or more ideas and “playing” with them.
Chapter 12 – Board Games and Video Games as Learning Tools

Before there were video games, there were board games – and these board games are what the previous generations used to play in their spare time. Of course, board games have been proven many times to enhance people’s thinking skills.

Have you played a game of chess? Most of us do, as it is the most recognized board game of all time. We all know that chess is a game that tests your strategies and decision-making skills, since you will decide and think of ways to protect your king while at the same time deciding how to pull off a “checkmate” at your opponent’s king. It is said that kings and nobles play this game in order to improve their tactics in preparation for war against other kingdoms.

While today’s world replaces kingdoms with democracy, the age-old game-board stands the test of time. In fact, there are still chess players around the world who take the game very seriously, as their experience in playing it improves their strategic-thinking skills and constantly calculate every possible move they could think of.

There is also the board-game Scrabble, wherein the objective of the game is to come up with words to get a score using game times, and strategically set the tiles on the special board tiles to double or even triple the score. This board game definitely helps improve your knowledge and vocabulary, as you eventually find yourself thinking of creative words to win the game. Scrabble is then another game that influences your mind to generate ideas as far as producing words is concerned.

Video games can also condition your creative minds, improve your thinking ability and enhance your problem-solving skills, depending on the genre that you are playing. Simulation games can improve your decision-making skills, as well as your creativity since these games require you to take full control of the outcome.
Chapter 13 – Have Someone Experiment on your Ideas

There are instances when you can never tell whether a certain idea will work unless you put it the test. Putting an idea to test involves letting a person or a group of people try it out. It may not be the go-to method of validation for all ideas, but experimentation is the way to get obvious results whether an idea works or not.

For example, before you begin selling your homemade apple pie, you need a couple of taste-testers to have a sample. Therefore, you gather your friends and your family to a big dining table, bring out your baking craft, and request each of them to take a bite and leave comments about it. Some of your friends will say that the pie needs to have more apples and less crust, while one of your family members will comment how bland it was and suggested to use more sugar or honey next time.

As you get more and more comments, you now have a list of their feedback, and you can determine whether their comments are valid enough for you to change the recipe of your creation. Another example is testing a homemade perfume using natural extracts from fruits: before you sell it, you will have to test it first on yourself. You test it on yourself by applying a small dab on your wrist, and observe if it leaves skin irritation.

You then smell your wrist to check whether the scent is too sweet or too powerful. Aside from yourself, you also let other people experiment and evaluate the product. Note that there are people who are too sensitive in certain ingredients added to perfumes, so it is advisable to gather the opinions of others by letting them experiment the product, as well. After getting a number of comments, you then decide whether the mixture you used is correct or if a change is necessary.

It is a must for your ideas to be experimented for validation. Just do not take some negative comments personally. It is better to experiment an idea now, so you will spare yourself from headaches when you realize that there is something wrong with it after exposing it to the market.
Chapter 14 – Give your Ideas a Second Look

Now that you have brainstormed your way and wrote down all the creative ideas that you had come up with, the next important step is to filter out the good ideas from the bad ideas.

You may have cases of having too many ideas, and you do not know which one to choose. To solve that problem, you will need to ask yourself these questions: (1)

- Does the idea work in solving the problem?
- Are there consequences in using the idea?

For example, if your idea to solve your money problems is to cut expenses on food and shopping, then you will need to find out if actually solves your money problems at all. You also need to determine if a cut in shopping and food expenses will have a positive impact not only on your finances, but also in your overall health and wellbeing. If cutting expenses does not sound like a good idea, then you can move on to the next one.

Filtering ideas by looking at the short-term and long-term effects of each one is one of the most effective ways to evaluate them. It may be hard to choose one out of the many ideas that you have developed. However, you have to take note that you only have little time to implement all your creative ideas, so it is best to find out which one works and which one does not.
Conclusion

Thank you again for downloading this book!

I hope this book was able to help give you more confidence in your creative problem solving abilities.

By now you’ll realize that creative problem solving works and has the ability to work really well, you just need to go through the process.

Keep strengthening your creativity by continually using it. I wish you all the success in the future.

Finally, if you enjoyed this book, please take the time to share your thoughts and post a review on Amazon. I do appreciate it.

Thank you and good luck!
Suggested
Short
Reads
Increase Your Brain Fitness: Discover How To Make Your Brain Smarter by Daniel Aman

Would You like to Supercharge Your Brain?
Can you imagine what your life would be like if you could increase your brain power?
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Your Potential Gain:
* You'll Understand Your brain better
* You'll develop an Increase in focus & concentration
* You'll Realize what foods help you think more clearly & more creatively
* You Can do Your first brain workout today - the exercises are within

Once you understand your brain, increasing your brain fitness becomes easy.
When you increase the fitness of your brain your goals become easier to achieve, because you have more focus, you are more creative. Because your brain is healthier, it's sharper, you can process new information at quicker speeds.
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By now you may be aware that Self Hypnosis can be used to alleviate and even cure a range of different ailments such as, stress, anxiety, procrastination, insomnia.

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Can you picture how much greater your life will be once you become the master of your mind through the methods of self hypnosis that you'll read about in Mark's *Self Hypnosis* book?

To find out more or to download a copy of this book and discover the unlimited resources you have within yourself, follow this link [http://amzn.to/1BWvusf](http://amzn.to/1BWvusf)
Better Your Communication Skills: How to Improve Your Communication Skills & Get What you Want by Thomas Kane

Would You like to become a Master Communicator?

Has there ever been a time in your life that you wanted to get your point across but couldn't find the right words?

Have you wanted to convey a certain message to your team at work, that when you did, it seemed like no one at all was listening?

You will benefit by reading "Better Your Communication Skills", because it's packed full of useful information that will improve your effectiveness at communication.

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Imagine... being able to avoid alcohol and drugs without any internal arguments

Imagine... not procrastinating any more and getting all those goals done that you have planned

By reading "Inner Strength" you'll learn the methods so you too can increase your willpower and get more things done.

You'll Discover:

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* Proven methods of increasing your willpower giving you the ability to control your actions, reactions, emotions and decisions.

* Bonus exercises to speed up your progress

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Creative Thinking 101 by Daniel Aman

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