25 Useful Brainstorming Techniques
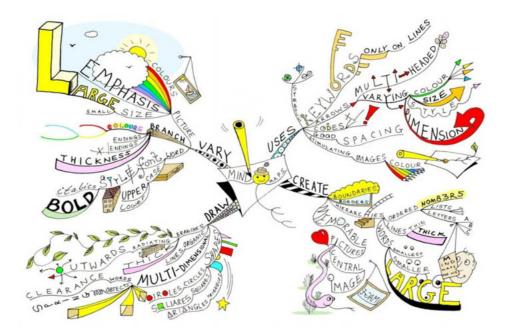
Caught with a problem you cannot solve? Need new ideas and solutions? The process of brainstorming requires you to think out of the box that is keeping you in the problem.

The idea for this post was triggered by a question from a reader, who asked me on my thoughts of the best brainstorming methods to achieve the best results. Because brainstorming is applicable to all kinds of contexts and there is no one size fits all method, I thought it'll be more helpful to write a post on the different possible types of brainstorming techniques we can use instead.

Here is a list of 25 brainstorming techniques you can use to get out of the situation you are in. From this list, you can assess what's the best method for the issue you are facing and apply it accordingly. 😃

1. **Time Travel.** How would you deal with this if you were in a different time period? 10 years ago? 100 years ago? 1,000 years ago? 10,000 years ago? How about in the future? 10 years later? 100 years later? 1,000 years later? 10,000 years later?
2. **Teleportation**: What if you were facing this problem in a different place? Different country? Different geographic region? Different universe? Different plane of existence? How would you handle it?
3. **Attribute change**. How would you think about this if you were a different gender? Age? Race? Intellect? Height? Weight? Nationality? Your Sanity? With each attribute change, you become exposed to a new spectrum of thinking you were subconsciously closed off from.
4. **Rolestorming.** What would you do if you were someone else? Your parent? Your teacher? Your manager? Your partner? Your best friend? Your enemy? Etc?
5. **Iconic Figures.** This is a spinoff of rolestorming. What if you were an iconic figure of the past? Buddha? Jesus? Krishna? Albert Einstein? Thomas Edison? Mother Theresa? Princess Diana? Winston Churchill? Adolf Hitler? How about the present? Barack Obama? Steve Jobs? Bill Gates? Warren Buffet? Steven Spielberg? Etc? How would you think about your situation?
6. **Superpowers**.This is another spinoff of rolestorming. What if you suddenly have superpowers? Superman? Spiderman? Wonderwoman? X-Men? The Hulk? One of the Fantastic Four? What would you do?
7. **Gap Filling.** Identify your current spot – Point A – and your end goal – Point B. What is the gap that

exists between A and B? What are all the things you need to fill up this gap? List them down and find out what it takes to get them.

8. **Group Ideation.** Have a group brainstorming session! Get a group of people and start ideating together. More brains are better than one! Let the creative juices flow together!

9. **Mind Map.** Great tool to work out as many ideas as you can in hierarchical tree and cluster format. Start off with your goal in the center, branch out into the major sub-topics, continue to branch out into as many sub-sub-topics as needed. [Source Forge](#) is a great open-source mindmapping software that I use and highly recommend.

10. **Medici Effect.** [Medici Effect](#) refers to how ideas in seemingly unrelated topics/fields intersect. Put your goal alongside similar goals in different areas/contexts and identify parallel themes/solutions. For example, if your goal is to be an award winning artist, look at award winning musicians, educators, game developers, computer makers, businessmen, etc. Are there any commonalities that lie among all of them that you can apply to your situation? What worked for each of them that you can adopt?

11. **SWOT Analysis.** Do a SWOT of your situation – What are the Strengths? Weaknesses? Opportunities? Threats? The analysis will open you up to ideas you may not be aware before.

12. **Brain Writing**.Get a group of people and have them write their ideas on their own sheet of paper. After 10 minutes, rotate the sheets to different people and build off what the others wrote on their paper. Continue until everyone has written on everyone else's sheet.

13. **Trigger Method.** Brainstorm on as many ideas as possible. Then select the best ones and brainstorm on those ideas as 'triggers' for more ideas. Repeat until you find the best solution.

14. **Variable Brainstorming.** First, identify the variable in the end outcome you look to achieve. For example, if your goal is to achieve X visitors to your website, the variable is # of visitors. Second, list all the possibilities for that variable. Different variations of visitors are gender/age/race/nationality/occupation/interests/etc. Think about the question with each different variable. For example, for Genre: How can you get more females to your website? How can you get more males to your website? For age: How can you get more teenagers to your website? How can you get more adults to your website? And so on.

15. **Niche.** This is the next level of variable brainstorming method. From the variations of the variable you have listed, mix and match them in different ways and brainstorm against those niches. For example, using the example in #14, how can you get more male teenagers to your website? (Gender & Age) How can you get more American female adults to your website? (Nationality, Gender & Age)

16. **Challenger.** List all the assumptions in your situation and challenge them. For example, your goal is to brainstorm on a list of ideas for your romance novel which you want to get published. There are several assumptions you are operating in here. #1: Genre to write: Romance. Why must it be that romance? Can it be a different genre? Another assumption is for a novel. #2: Length of the story: Novel. Why must it be a novel? Can it be a short story? A series of books? #3: Medium: Book. Why must be it a book? Can it be an ebook? Mp3? Video? And so on.

17. **Escape Thinking.** This is a variation of Challenger method. Look at the assumptions behind the goal you are trying to achieve, then flip that assumption around and look at your goal from that new angle. For example, you want to earn more income from selling books. Your assumption may be 'People buy books for themselves'. Flip the assumption around such that 'People do NOT buy books for reading'. What will this lead to? You may end up with people buy books as gifts, for collection purposes, etc. Another assumption may be 'People read books'. The flip side of this assumption may be people look at books (drawings). Escaping from these assumptions will bring you to a different realm of thought on how to achieve your goal.

18. **Reverse Thinking**. Think about what everyone will typically do in your situation. Then do the opposite.

19. **Counteraction Busting.** What counteracting forces are you facing in your scenario? For example, if you want to increase traffic to your website, two counteracting forces may be the number of ads you put and the pageviews of your site. The more ads you put, the more users will likely be annoyed and surf away. What can you do such that the counteraction no longer exists or the counteraction is no longer an issue?

Some solutions may be 1) Get ads that are closely related to the theme of your site 2) Get contextual ads that are part of your content rather than separate, and so on.

20. **Resource Availability.** What if money, time, people, supplies are not issues at all? What if you can ask for whatever you want and have it happen? What will you do?
21. **Drivers Analysis.** What are the forces that help drive you forward in your situation? What are the forces that are acting against you? Think about how you can magnify the former and reduce/eliminate the latter.
22. **Exaggeration.** Exaggerate your goal and see how you will deal with it now. **Enlarge it:** What if it is 10 times its current size? 100 times? 1000 times? **Shrink it:** What if it is 1/10 its current size? 1/100? 1/1000? **Multiply it:** What if you have 10 of these goals now? 100? 1000?
23. **Get Random Input.** Get a random stimuli and try to see how you can fit it into your situation. Get a random word/image from a dictionary/webpage/book/magazine/newspaper/TV/etc, a random object from your room/house/workplace/neighborhood/etc and so on.
24. [Meditation]. Focus on your key question such as 'How can I solve XX problem?' or 'How can I achieve XX goal?' and meditate on it in a quiet place. Have a pen and paper in front of you so you can write immediately whatever comes to mind. Do this for 30 minutes or as long as it takes.
25. **Write a list of 101 ideas.** Open your word processor and write a laundry list of at least 101 ideas to deal with your situation. Go wild and write whatever you can think of without restricting yourself. Do not stop until you have at least 101.

Final note: To get a quick mental boost in just 15 minutes, check out: [Increase Your Mental Clarity in Just 15 Minutes]

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