



# Seven Habits of Successful Creative Thinkers

By

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## Seven Habits of Successful Creative Thinkers

(Developed by John Adair - see Effective Innovation by John Adair)

John Adair suggests that successful creative thinkers regularly practice the following - in other words they develop these approaches as habits.

### 1) Go Beyond the Nine Dots

- Challenge assumptions
- Free yourself from fixed ideas
- Define the problem correctly
- Look for alternative ways of doing things or unusual solutions
- Forget the rules and see if there could be other ways to do it

### 2) Welcome Chance Intrusions

- Inventor's luck
- Practise serendipity - seize on lucky chances. Serendipity means finding welcome or enjoyable things when you are not looking for them
- Be alert for inspirations from any source - for example,

### 3) Listen to Your Depth Mind

- Prepare, incubate, illuminate, verify
- Sleep on problems & solutions
- Often the solution to a problem comes after you have stopped concentrating on it! Sleeping on it, going out for a walk or doing something entirely different can free your mind to work in its own time. When you return to the problem the solution may appear quite easily

### 4) Suspend Judgement

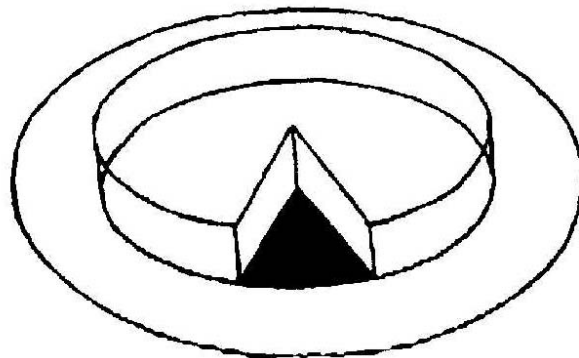
- Don't criticise your own ideas prematurely - don't dismiss it because it does not seem conventional or sensible.
- Beware of quick fire critics - don't let others pour cold water on your idea before you have had a chance to try it out or work it through
- Choose constructive critics - find people who can build on your ideas rather than dismiss them out of hand

### 5) Use the Stepping Stones of Analogy

- Models for solutions probably exist somewhere - for example, the cat's eyes used in our roads were suggested when the inventor saw light reflected from the eyes of a real cat in the dark. The shape of the spitfire's wing was inspired by the wing of a seagull

### 6) Tolerate Ambiguity

- What do you see here?



A piece of pie or a pie with a piece missing?

- Don't be too quick to try to apply rules or regulations to your idea
- Be prepared for your solution to appear to contradict conventional wisdom - everyone knew the world was flat and that the sun went around the earth at one time!
- Get working - don't wait for inspiration

### 7) Ideas Banking

- Collect and save ideas. Use:
  - Curiosity
  - Observation
  - Listening
  - Reading
  - Travelling
  - Recording