

## **LATERAL THINKING – HOLISTIC/SYSTEMIC APPROACH**

### **What Is Lateral Thinking?**

Lateral thinking is concerned with the perception part of thinking. This is where we organize the external world into the pieces we can then 'process'.

A healthy human brain does not want to always be creative, it is designed to figure out how to do things or how to think about things and then 'locks' that automatic response or behavior into a subconscious process so that your conscious brain can focus on other matters.

### **Lateral Thinking Techniques**

**Alternatives:** How to use concepts as a breeding ground for new ideas. Sometimes we do not look beyond the obvious alternatives.

**Focus:** When and how to change the focus of your thinking. You will learn the discipline of defining your focus and sticking to it.

**Challenge:** Breaking free from the limits of traditional thinking. With challenges, we act as though the present way of doing things is not necessarily the best.

**Random Entry:** Using unconnected input to open up new lines of thinking.

**Provocation and Movement:** Generating provocative statements and using them to build new ideas.

**Harvesting:** Capturing your creative output. At the end of a creative-thinking session, we normally only take note of the specific ideas that seem practical and have obvious value.

**Treatment of Ideas:** How to develop ideas and shape them to fit an organization or situation.

Often trying to think harder in the same direction may not be as useful as changing direction. Effort in the same direction will not necessarily help you achieve your goal. Lateral thinking deliberately distances itself from "vertical" or logical thinking (the classic method for problem solving: working out the solution step-by-step from the given data) or "horizontal" imagination (having many ideas but being unconcerned with the detailed implementation of them by deferring judgement).

## **Use Lateral Thinking for Problem Solving**

Often when you are problem solving or designing something there may well be an obvious answer. If the matter is important it can be beneficial to a small amount of time to use lateral thinking to discover alternative ways of defining the problem and to start thinking about it in a broader sense. You can train your brain to be more naturally creative and discover better solutions to known problems.

### **Finding new ways**

It is possible that the way you do everything in your life or business is the best possible way of doing it, but not likely. Whether you have created a way of doing things yourself or have been told that 'this is the way to do this', there are likely other ways to do those things more effectively and efficiently. By using the techniques from Lateral Thinking to look for new ways to improve yourself and business you can achieve your goals.

## **Get Control Of Your Creativity?**

“Lateral thinking may take no more than one or two minutes. You try to see things in a different way. You try to find a new approach or a new concept. And if you do not succeed you just drop it and get on with the usual way of doing things. It does not matter how short a time is allocated to lateral thinking. What is important is that some time is allocated. To allocate thirty seconds now and again is of far more use than having a mammoth creative session once a year. Like many things in life, if you want to improve it you need to work on it.

There is no doubt that creativity is the most important human resource of all. Without creativity, there would be no progress, and we would be forever repeating the same patterns.”

*Edward de Bono - from the de Bono Online Course*