

THINKING SPACE CHALLENGE

DAY 5 THINKING OUT OF THE BOX

Many people encourage out-of-the box thinking but few have truly provided tools and tips on 'how' we can engage in this way of thinking. Our minds can be compared to an ocean during a storm, sometimes winds of agitation stir up waves of emotion and afflictive thoughts. If we can learn to cut off these winds of agitation, the mind can then settle and reveal the beauty of what lies beneath; we can experience what could bubble up to the surface.

To help us be more mindful and detach from auto-pilot time traveling, Ellen Langer, a professor at Harvard University, suggests noticing what is in front of us. This means taking 5 minutes to just look at certain objects in our space and deeply connecting with the experience. As we pay attention on purpose, we can notice the shape, the colour, the way the light falls on the particular object and how it makes us feel.

Interrogation techniques force people into a corner where they lose their ability to remain focused and calm. Professional sports people use this tactic to pressurize and outwit their opponents. This is done to manipulate them into a corner where there are ways that we also push ourselves into moments of stress. An example is not knowing an old friend's name, only to find that as they walk away their name pops into our minds. When we give up striving to be perfect and find more time to think, we will experience a flood of great ideas.

"Every now and then go away, have a little relaxation, for when you come back to your work your judgement will be surer; since to remain constantly at work will cause you to lose power of judgement. Go some distance away because the work appears smaller and more of it can be taken in at a glance, and a lack of harmony or proportion is more readily seen."~ Leonardo da Vinci (1452-1519)

"When I am completely myself, entirely all alone, or during the night when I cannot sleep. It is on such occasions that my ideas flow best and most abundantly. Whence and how these come I know not, nor can I force them... nor do I hear in my imagination the parts successively. But I hear them at the same time all together.

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756 - 1791)

Practice

- Relax your mind, close your eyes and rest your awareness on your breath.
- Then gently bring to your awareness a problem or an issue you want to solve. You may have hit a creative block.
- Park the problem at the back of your mind, know it is there but relax on the breath and then see what arises, if any solution bubbles up from your awareness.
- To complete your practice, write down the ideas that came to you.