

Lets us think out of the box

A selection of different papers and readings dealing with this fundamental question for the development of individuals, institutions, companies and even countries are presented. A wide literature on this subject is available, but I do not think that this behaviour is part of University Academic courses. I hope that various readers through this reading will get the incentive to go a little further...and to apply!. (Henri Dou)



Are you trapped inside the box - the emotions of the game?
Thinking 'outside the box' means balancing lower frequency emotions - fear, anger, etc.
With higher frequency emotions and therefore not being controlled by your emotions.
Let it all go ... it's just an illusion in time

<http://www.crystalinks.com/outofbox.html>

Thinking Out of the Box (ou lateral thinking)

<http://knowing.yuku.com/forum/viewtopic/id/725>

What is Thinking Out of the Box?

Thinking out of the box is the mode of thought that dares to challenge conventional wisdom, ie it dares to question beliefs so deeply held by so many that they are considered almost sacred. Thinking out the box is an all too rare quality, but when applied it can bring revolutionary leaps in human progress. Even where the existing ways really are most appropriate, an "out of the box" critic can actually enhance their validity by forcing their proponents to justify them.

Note from H.Dou This is quite close of the remarks of Leonard M. Fuld, in The secret language of Competitive Intelligence, How to See Through & Stay Ahead of Business, editor Crow Business, NY, 2006-10-07 See page 12 Reality 2: the Mind blinds.

By contrast, thinking inside the box is following convention. doing what everyone else does just because that's the way it's always been done. Thinking in the box allows survival, but without innovation we cannot do much more than stand still and stagnate.

Why Think Out of the Box?

Do we survive or thrive? If it ain't broke don't fix it runs the old adage. But evolution is based on the continued improvement of that which already works. From the very earliest forms of life that gained a foothold in a barren universe progress has come from doing things different than how they'd been done before.

A common human tendency is to seek the acceptance and approval of our peers. Another is the desire to operate within our comfort zone. The first tendency means we tend to conform to popular opinion. Perhaps we feel safer in a crowd, are afraid of possible ridicule. Perhaps we once held contrary views, but have had these stifled by societal pressure. The second tendency means we simply accept what we are told because we are too lazy to think for ourselves. Add to those the conditioning to conform, be a good citizen etc etc etc...

And by following these tendencies we can survive the various trials of life. We can get a job, make enough to live, with perhaps enough left over for a yearly vacation. We'll certainly survive, but we'll be anonymous, and when our time on earth is finally done we'll leave behind nothing but the memories of a few loved ones.

By thinking out of the box we give ourselves the chance to go beyond this bare existence and begin to fulfill the true potential of our earthly incarnation. Not everyone can be a Da Vinci or Einstein, but we can all try to maximize our own particular potential. Given the most precious gift of incarnation that is surely our most basic duty.

How to Think Out of the Box

Firstly, don't get in a rut. Avoid the comfort zone. Push yourself. Accept, and actively seek out new challenges. Take chances. Avoid routines, or if you end up with one, change it for change's sake. If you usually drink coffee at breakfast, try a cup of tea instead. If you normally take route A, try route B, or C, once in a while.

Notse from H. Dou A while ago, in a restaurant situated in a mole, I was eating spaghettis with tomato sauce. Of course what should happen became through and some sauce "jump" on my shirt. I rapidly when to a store and I bought some spot remover (6 €), when back to the restaurant and I tried to remove the stain. It did not work. I sat down again a little embarrassed. Then an idea came through, I should buy a new shirt. (It was in summer and a have a short sleeves one). I went back to the store and I found a cotton shirt fancy and nice for 4€. The first time I think in the box (trying to spare the shirt and to remove the stain as my mother told me when I was a little boy!). The second time, push by the necessity (I had to go to a meeting after lunch), I thought out of the box. Never mind the stain, let us buy a new shirt, of course it worked, but most s important, the price of the shirt was less the price of the spot remover.

Another example from :

<http://mboard.rediff.com/board/board.php?boardid=money2006jan20guest>

Its easier to understand 'lateral thinking' or 'thinking outside the box' by examples, One good example is as follows.

When the american astronauts went up in the space they wanted a pen to scribble some notes. But a normal pen won't work up there because of air pressure, rather the lack of it. The americans spent millions to design a pen that would work even in low or 0 air pressure. What do u think the Russians did to solve the same problem? Well, they used a pencil instead Human brains have the tendency to think in a conventional line of thought which has already been thought by others. Lateral thinking is taking a lateral thought path right from the root. Given a problem, we donot take the path already given by others to reach the solution and work on that path to give a better solution. Rather, we give a different solution altogether. Lateral thinking can be very interesting and amusing at times to solve problems

For French readers they may consult the following book about lateral thinking: La stratégie du projet latéral par Olivier d'Herbemont et Bruno César, Dunod, 1998. A little old in its conception, centered on project development and not on idea and personal development and institutions or companies development.

Get into the habit of questioning and challenging established practice. Not all established practice is wrong, but where it is right, rising to a challenge will strengthen its claim to legitimacy.

Is there a different way of doing this/that? Or rather how many different ways can you think of? Allow yourself freedom to brainstorm on a frequent and regular basis. In brainstorming phase accept everything that comes into your head, don't censor yourself. The wilder the idea, the better. Of course, brainstorming needs to be followed by rationalization, but at a later time. Keep a note of all your ideas, even the initially rejected ones. You never know when they might be useful.

Thinking out of the box is hard. It uses more energy and creates more stress than simply going with flow. Very few can comfortably operate out of the box 100% of the time. If we can employ that faculty 10% of the time we are probably doing better than 90% of the population. It follows that we need to judge very carefully which situations are worth making that extra effort for. Most times it's fine to drift along on auto-pilot, saving our out of the box thinking for things that matter to us most.

All we can take from this world is experience, all else is illusion. We live each moment only once, so we might as well make the most of it. And we make the most of it not by accepting, but challenging accepted

Policies ... Keeping Us Thinking Inside the Box

by Sloan Campbell

<http://www.refresher.com!/slcbox.html>

We have all uttered or at the very least heard the phrase "Rules are made to be broken !" during our day-to-day business endeavours ... probably in the last thirty minutes. Though the idea may not be exactly proper, the philosophy is right on target.

Rules or policies of some sort have been present in our lives since the beginning of time, starting with the 10 Commandments right up to the present day Corporate Governance of major corporations around the world.

It is not so much that there are different interpretations of corporate policies depending on who you are or that most policies are confusing and devoid of common sense, we all understand that. What really bothers me is the black & white manner to which many policies are regimentally followed ... ultimately resulting in an overall lack of creativity in today's business developments.

If business partnerships in the current global marketplace are designed to be based on creativity, communication and teamwork, why is it not logical to believe that the rules, which govern such unions, would be used as 'guidelines' and not the 'regulations' to which all must blindly adhere, no matter what? It is logical! The problem is that we have been conditioned to follow the policies as good corporate citizens, and not to play outside the box when dealing with customers.

Thinking inside the box means accepting the status quo, like Charles H. Duell, Director of the US Patent Office, saying, "Everything that can be invented has been invented." That was in 1899: clearly he was in the box!!

In-the-box thinkers find it difficult to recognize the quality of an idea. An idea is an idea. A solution is a solution. In fact, they can be quite pigheaded when it comes to valuing an idea. They rarely decide to invest time to turn a mediocre solution into a great solution.

Add corporate policies to the mix, and in-the-box thinkers will stop at a status quo business solution because venturing beyond might be in conflict of said policies. By the time it is determined whether or not these policies have been violated, a possible opportunity has been lost.

Thinking outside the box requires different attributes that include:

Willingness to take new perspectives to one's day-to-day work;

Openness to do different things and to do things differently;

Focusing on the value of finding new ideas and acting on them;

Striving to create value in new ways;

Listening to others;

Supporting and respecting others when they come up with new ideas.

Out-of-the box thinking requires openness to new ways of seeing the world and a willingness to explore. Out-of-the box thinkers know that new ideas need nurturing and support. They also know that having an idea is good but acting on it is more important. Results are what count.

Out-of-the-box thinkers will use the rules as guidelines and the sky is the limit to their creation of business solutions, ... being innovative, pushing the limits of the corporate policies with creativity. This is not being a bad corporate citizen.

Let's try a quick exercise in thought, to illustrate how conditioned we are to status quo and thinking in-the-box ...

Instructions: Draw this simple box of dots on your own little scrap of paper and begin with these simple instructions:

The idea is to connect the dots with lines, but only four lines will do.

Position your pencil on one of the dots and do not allow the pencil to come off the paper, that is, do not pick up the pencil and start from another place in the box. It must be a continuous flow of writing once you start.

Think outside the Box! (*the answer is provided at the end of this selection*).

This simple example illustrates the creative solutions that are possible when you are not constrained, by regulations, in the solution of a problem. In order to become an out-of-the-box thinker you (or your organization) really need to master three fundamental thought processes: [motivation](#), [expertise/knowledge and creative thinking skill](#) ... or the [capacity for creativity](#). Success in this arena is linked to your ability to develop an awareness of articulated and unarticulated customer needs, looking deeply and insightfully into customer needs to discover what drives behaviour and motivation, thinking flexibly about current and future business and with the suspension of business boundaries (i.e. corporate policies).

Out-of-the-box thinking is in no way a new concept, but it is often the first to be abandoned when organizations are struggling and do not use the long-term view to drive short term planning.

I will leave you with a short quote from Albert Einstein about the importance of thinking creatively:

"It is nothing short of a miracle that the modern methods of instruction have not yet entirely strangled the holy curiosity of inquiry; for this delicate little plant, aside from stimulation, stands mainly in need of freedom; without this it goes to wreck and ruin without fail. It is a very grave mistake to think that the enjoyment of seeing and searching can be promoted by means of coercion and a sense of duty" Einstein, 1949

Enough said

[Special Congress Issue - Number 2 - May 24, 2001](#)

<http://www.fedcan.ca/english/fromold/persp2001-spec2.cfm>

An electronic newsletter on research and science policy. A pilot project of the Humanities and Social Sciences Federation of Canada.

PERSPECTIVES will appear at regular intervals throughout the year and will be posted on the Federation web site: <http://www.hssfc.ca/english/policyandadvocacy/perspectives/perspectives.html>. Please address your comments and suggestions to Jacqueline Wright, Membership Communications Officer, at: jawright@fedcan.ca.

[CONGRESS 2001 - Creativity Report](#)

[Universities and Granting Councils Must Innovate if Canada is to Thrive](#)
[Government urged to establish national Task Force on Creativity](#)

QUEBEC CITY - Take a calculated risk. Loosen up and live a little more dangerously. Canadian universities and granting councils must adopt more innovative programming if they're to help Canada thrive in the new millennium, according to a report released at the annual Congress of the Social Sciences & Humanities. Recommended measures include the creation of a tri-council fund to support "high-risk, highly likely to fail" research proposals; the establishment of more multi-disciplinary courses within universities; as well as more flexibility for students in taking elective courses that bypass standard assessment procedures.

The wide-ranging report also recommends that universities promote more cross-disciplinary study and research, by both "allowing and encouraging students to combine seemingly unrelated fields

such as music and engineering or computer science, history and education" so as to promote creative thinking, as well as encouraging multidisciplinary approaches to problem-solving in research.

It also urges measures to better integrate the social sciences and humanities more directly in efforts to promote economic, social and cultural innovations that are essential to Canada's quality of life in the new millennium.

To that end, it recommends the federal government immediately establish a national Task Force on Creativity, Inventiveness and Innovation "whose mandate would be to explore and identify ways in which new and original ideas can be encouraged and developed across the full spectrum of the arts, sciences, medicine, social sciences, business, industry and technology in Canada for the use and benefit of all Canadians."

Such a task force should be a central element of the forthcoming federal white paper on innovation now being developed by departments of industry and finance, says Dr. David Bentley, professor of English at the University of Western Ontario and author of the principle recommendations of the report, which was published by the National Research Council and entitled "Renaissance II: Canadian"

Notre from H. Dou. Two other reports are important in this line of thinking: the Palmisano Report from the USA (Innovate America) and the Beffa Report on Renewing French Industrial Policy. A comment of the Palmisano Report and the Beffa Report are available on <http://www.ciworldwide.org> see the rubric Thinking out of the box or consult <http://www.ladocumentationfrancaise.fr/rapports-publics/054000044/index.shtml>

See also The millennium Project <http://www.acunu.org/index.html>. The link is available on <http://www.ciworldwide.org> see the rubric Gateways Important Hosts – Miscellaneous.

Creativity and Innovation in the New Millennium'. Based on the findings of a series of Millennium Conferences on Creativity in the Arts and Sciences held over the past two years, including a national symposium on creativity chaired by Bentley and sponsored by the Humanities and Social Sciences Federation of Canada (HSSFC) at the University of Alberta last May, the report argues that Canada should follow the lead of Great Britain and Europe in creating some form of national body to find new mechanisms to promote economic, social and cultural innovation.

The task force should be comprised of a broad mix of representatives ranging from researchers to fashion designers, businessmen, writers, engineers and film-makers, Bentley says. "Get them together and let them study the question of why Canada is perhaps not being as innovative and creative as it might be and the steps that need to be taken in the educational system, in the funding (research) councils, in the universities, to promote a culture of creativity."

Noting that industrial leaders have extolled the value of the social sciences and humanities in resolving economic and technological problems, Bentley also argues that "the connection between creativity and innovation is going to be crucial to the development of a healthy economy in the 21st century."

The report's recommendation that the granting councils earmark a pot of money for highly-speculative research is aimed at ensuring that truly imaginative ideas don't run aground on the shoals of established scientific churches, Bentley says.

"It does seem to me that the granting councils have built silos for themselves. The way the money comes from the government, it's a pyramidal process of money coming in and then being filtered down according to a set of normative principles that are laid down at the start."

While there's merit in pursuing traditional lines of research, room must be made for "synergistic,

cross-border thinking, the making of connections between things, where otherwise people haven't seen the connection," Bentley says. "If you're going to bet on a horse, bet on a horse whose form you already know. But at the same time, perhaps, take a modest amount of money and use it in a strategic way. Try it for five years and see what comes out of it."

Such imaginative approaches to research and pedagogy are absolutely integral to creating a knowledge-based society, says HSSFC president Dr. Patricia Clements.

"The central message is: let's stop thinking in the box. Let's think outside of the box."

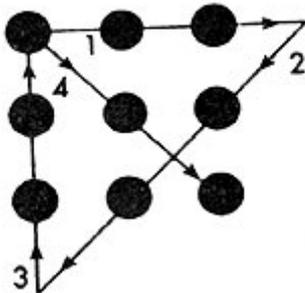
Let's break open the conception of innovation and include every kind of creativity that we can in the process of being, not only an originating economy, but an originating society."

A national task force on creativity would help to "bring the attention of the country to this broad issue of how we think and how we create and why that matters, first of all, to the kind of life we lead in this country, and secondly, to the kinds of policies that our governments adopt," Clements adds.

With 58% of university graduates coming from the social sciences and humanities, "do we really want an innovation policy that excludes a large number of players?" Clements asks. "It seems to me that an innovation policy that is focused very tightly on applied science neglects whole ranges of productive innovators in our country who perform essential work in our culture, the work of running governments, the work of managing businesses, the work of education. All of those areas need to be thought of very much as part of the whole chain of creativity."

KING OUT OF THE BOX

By Hiren Shah



Edward de Bono's gift to the world, lateral or nonlinear thinking can help you conjure creative solutions to emerge a winner in an increasingly complex world

There is a story of a salesman in America who became a multimillionaire selling life insurance. On being asked about the secret of his success, he answered that he told his clients he was there to buy life insurance for them rather than sell it. He did this to pre-empt the instinctual American scepticism and abhorrence of salesmen. In Canada, Ron Barbaro, chief executive of the Prudential Insurance Company, made one of the most innovative changes in life insurance. He introduced a system where a person diagnosed with a terminal disease could be paid off during his lifetime to enable him to afford his treatment. This was the most revolutionary and successful idea in life insurance in 120 years. Barbaro used the methods of Edward de Bono, whose name has become synonymous with lateral thinking.

A Ph.D. in psychology, de Bono has held high academic positions at Oxford, Cambridge and Harvard universities. He has written over 40 books translated into 25 languages and has also made two television series aired around the world. He is the author of the famous "coRT" thinking program used internationally to directly teach thinking in schools. Examples of applications of lateral or nonlinear thinking abound in several fields. In cricket, Kerry Packer introduced day/night matches and colourful

balls and clothing, a departure from tradition that became so successful, the whole world of cricket adopted it. Australia recently experimented with two different captains for the Test and one-day matches.

Lateral thinking is a step-by-step method of creative thinking with prescribed techniques that can be used consciously. According to de Bono, intelligence is a potential and thinking is a skill to use that potential. He adds that thinking is no substitute for information but information may be a substitute for thinking. While information is swamping us, the need is for appropriate thinking techniques to avoid being weighed down by excessive information. Just as the skill of the driver determines how a car is used, thinking determines how intelligence is used. One may be a good thinker without being an intellectual and vice-versa.

There is a spiritual dimension to lateral thinking that has more to do with perception than logic. Good conduct that arises from right thoughts and perceptions is as important as meditation and spiritual practices. De Bono compares cleverness to a sharp focus camera and wisdom to a wide-angled lens and wisdom depends heavily upon perception. Nearly all systems of meditation aim at purity of heart and mind to refine perceptions for sound judgment. Philosophy, literally 'love for wisdom', is also a means of spirituality. Wisdom to a large extent involves correction of perception by experience when one considers the dictum, "knowledge comes but wisdom lingers". Focusing directly on 'thinking' sharpens perceptions and lateral thinking is one of the best means to achieve that objective. In the introduction to his book *Serious Creativity Using the Powers of Lateral Thinking*, de Bono states **that human perception works as a self-organizing information system.**

A SKILL THAT CAN BE LEARNT

There is a misleading belief that creativity belongs to the world of art and is a matter of talent and chance and nothing can be consciously done about it. Lateral thinking is specifically concerned with changing preconceived notions to bring out new ideas and can be acquired and practiced as a skill. It is a special information handling process like mathematics, logical analysis or computer simulation. Thinking techniques, once mastered, can be used both individually and in a group, dispensing with brainstorming. In all the examples of lateral thinking given in this article, unconventionality clearly comes to the fore. According to de Bono, one should be free of constraints, tradition and history in order to be creative. But that freedom is more effectively obtained by using certain deliberate techniques rather than by hoping to be free. There is a prevailing belief that structures are restrictive for creative thinking but this is not entirely true. A cup does not limit one's choice of drink, so one can consciously avoid being limited by structures and apply them to one's field.

De Bono has developed several techniques of lateral thinking under the three broad categories: Challenge, Alternatives and Provocation. The creative challenge is a challenge to exclusivity, which does not accept status quo and is particularly relevant in those areas where ideas have become obsolete with time. Circumstances and situations often restrict the choice of alternatives and, therefore, it is better to assume a dynamic state of affairs. Limits and components are changed to enable new ways of doing things to emerge successful. Provocation is more in the nature of hypothesis where a situation is first conceived or imagined and then one proceeds to arrive at unique plausible conclusions. According to De Bono, the words hy(po)thesis, sup(PO)se, (PO)ssible and (PO)etry all indicate the forward or proactive use of a

statement, which implies that we make a statement first and see where it takes us. This is against prose and description, in which we seek to show something as it is, currently.

DE BONO'S 6 THINKING HATS

The most popular technique presented by de Bono is the **six thinking hats**. Acting on the presumption that doing different things at the same time is difficult and confusing, we normally make use of one type of thinking at a given time. The hats denote the following:

1. White Hat: facts & figures, (what information do we have and need to get?)
2. Red Hat: emotions, intuition, feelings (how do we feel about the situation?)
3. Black Hat: judgment (does this fit the facts?)
4. Yellow Hat: advantages, benefits (how is it a good thing to do?)
5. Green Hat: explorations, alternatives, etc. (are there different ways?)
6. Blue Hat: thinking about thinking (control of the thinking process)

Hats are often used to denote the role one is playing such as a baseball cap, soldier's helmet, and can be easily taken off and worn again. When a person puts on a hat he or she plays the role that belongs to that hat. This makes it a game where individuals are encouraged to contribute all kinds of ideas under diverse hats. The role-playing detaches the ego from thinking, which leads to objectivity, one of the most difficult things to achieve in a group discussion. The western tradition of argument results in taking positions whereby discussions are reduced to verbal wars of attrition with a clash of personalities rather than of issues. With the six hats, instead of confrontation there is supportive scrutiny of an issue, which is useful where there are fierce arguments, bickering or obstinacy. It is easy to switch thinking without causing offence. The six-hats method works as well everywhere and can also be used in family situations. Its most fruitful advantage is that it forces you to think more broadly.

De Bono further states that generating creative ideas using his various techniques is not enough. Ideas, by nature, are risky. Because the idea is new, one is not sure that it will work or be practicable at the operational level. There may be a need to invest time, money and energy before an idea bears fruit. Most people are reluctant to make this effort so necessary as complexities multiply at the turn of the 21st century. One person who did and became a stupendous success is Dhirubhai Ambani.

Note . Dou http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dhirubhai_Ambani

*Known as Dhirubhai, was born on **28 December 1932**, at Chorwad, **Junagadh** in the state of **Gujarat, India**, into a **Modh** family of very moderate means. When he was 16 years old, he moved to **Aden, Yemen** and worked there as a gas-station attendant, and as a clerk in an oil company. Ten years later, he returned to India and started a business (**Reliance**) with a capital of Rs. 15000.00 (US\$ 375).*

*Over time his business has diversified into a core specialisation in **petrochemicals** with additional interests in **telecommunications, information technology, energy, power, retail, textiles, infrastructure services, capital markets, and logistics**. The company as a whole was described by the **BBC** as "a business empire with an estimated annual turnover of \$12bn, and an 85,000-strong workforce".*

*Dhirubhai Ambani was named the 20th Century by the **Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI)**. A poll conducted by **The Times of India** in 2000 voted him "greatest creator of wealth in the century".*

Lateral thinking can save your life, as illustrated in this story. Two men were on a jungle safari in Africa. Suddenly, they came across a tiger that started roaring. Both men were frightened and one of them started wearing his shoes. The other one said: "How is this going to help? We can't outrun the tiger." The first man replied: "I don't have to outrun the tiger, I only have to outrun you."

Note H Dou Other readings, even old ones are very close from this way of thinking. We recommend the following; Reengineering the Corporation by Michael Hammer and James Champy.

