

# **Creative Thinking**

For Phenomenally Effective People

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Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations in this volume are from the King James Version of The Bible. Capitalised text added for emphasis.

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## **Creative Thinking For Phenomenally Effective People**

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*The Mind Is A Terrible Thing To Waste*



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## CREATIVE THINKING?

**W**e had been going round and round for hours and had covered many miles. The Tsavo national park Kenya indeed lived up to its reputation. It was a breathtaking experience. Seeing all the animals in their natural habitat, I couldn't help but observe one interesting fact about them. They all had such a unique way of blending with their environment that it took a trained ranger pointing out a lion that was barely fifteen feet from us. It was so well camouflaged in its environment that it was not visible until it came up on you. As huge as the elephant and the buffalo were, they all seemed to be at one with their environment. Then, I saw it.

*The human race is the one creation that stands out from its environment. Aquatic life was made to adjust. Terrestrial life was made to adjust. Could the Creator have made a mistake in making mankind so visible?*

Certainly not! Man was given the ability to change his

environment to suit his needs. Man has the ability to take a deep jungle and make a habitable paradise out of it. Man can take a mountain and carve a road through it. Man has reclaimed land from the ocean. Man has even slept on the moon. Just like animals were naturally equipped to adapt to their environment, mankind was naturally equipped to change his environment. A man that lives to adapt is therefore living a sub-human life; in fact he is living at an animalistic level of existence. The greatest force on the Earth today is an active brain and a progressive imagination. There is nothing great that ever was and ever shall be without the working of these forces. This puts all human beings born with a brain at par at the point of birth. Many however have lived life on the premise that what will be will be; but even the bible says that *what you allow is what will be*.

Man has blamed his circumstances on his environment yet he was equipped to change his environment. Some blame it on the past yet they have 525,600 minutes every year (527,040 every leap year) to create a present with no relevance to the past for it takes not more than a minute's decision in the present to change the relevance of the past. It therefore follows that the only person you have to blame for where you are today is yourself.

In a world where paupers have become presidents and weaklings have become generals; where the disabled have won Olympic medals and where the absence of formal education has never been a stumbling block to success; in a world where people who never stepped inside the four walls of a university have acquired tens of honorary doctorate degrees -all things are indeed possible to him that believes!

So my friend, Wake up. Change your world.



## MINDS RULE THE WORLD

The Beatles, the script of the movie *The Sound of Music*, the personal computer..... these are just a few of the ideas that were once rejected by experts as bad ideas. Every failed business was once considered a great idea by someone. The problem most times is not in the idea but rather in the articulation and execution of the idea. Successful businesses were once considered bad ideas by the experts.

The truth is that there is really no bad idea. Whether an idea is considered good or bad is subjective but the fact is that *ideas rule the world*. The possibilities that you enjoy in life will be determined by ideas and your response to them. This book is about generating ideas on purpose. It is about thinking through from A to Z. It is about taking full control of your mind to produce results that are desirable to you.

I have seen people flock to certain professions because they think there is a profession that makes people wealthy. I have however seen wealthy bankers and poor bankers. I have seen wealthy lawyers and extremely poor lawyers. I have seen wealthy doctors and poor doctors. This tells us that there is no perfect profession. Similarly, I have seen people flock out of Africa in search of greener pastures. However, in the countries in Europe and in North America where these people flock to, I have seen poor people as well as extreme levels of poverty. This tells me that there is no perfect location. I have also seen people who work extremely hard and yet have not been able to break out of poverty. *It would seem that the way out is not in working hard but in working hard in a smart and informed way.* It is about working hard in a way that engages the fullness of the human potential to break out of man-made boxes of limitation.

Strategic Thinking is the ability to think with a purpose. It is the ability to deliberately generate ideas. It is the ability to think about the future and see what does not exist. It is the ability to call those things which be not as though they were. By this ability, battles have been won and kings have ruled and subdued enemies. By this ability great civilizations were built in the past and by the same ability great companies have been built and are being built today. It is through that same ability that you will build the life of your dreams or the business of your dreams.

The first step is to teach you how to think. This may sound absurd as you probably already think a lot. That is where the problem is. For most people, thinking is an unconscious activity. The first part of this course is dedicated to making a deliberate thinker out of you. The quality of your life will be determined by the conscious use of your mind. I am also going to recommend a lot of books for you to read because I believe that the person who does not read has no advantage over the person who cannot read. Abraham Lincoln famously said, *'things I want to know are in books; my best friend is the man who'll get me a book I ain't read.'*

## THE LOGIC TRAP

The human brain is primarily a pattern recognition system. This simply means that the human brain does not function like a computer. It takes years of training before we learn to do simple arithmetic, something that computers do very easily. On the other hand, we can instantly recognize patterns such as faces, language, and handwriting. The benefit of good pattern recognition is that we can recognize objects and situations very quickly. If I start to count and I say 2, 4, 6 ... without really thinking about it, your mind gets into the loop and knows instinctively that the next number is 8, 10 and so on. Once the mind has identified a pattern, it latches on to it very quickly and will continue in that direction instinctively. It does not need to think about it or conduct any form of analysis. The moment the mind identifies the pattern, it automatically follows it through and once our brains have caught on to the logic behind something, it then becomes the natural way of analysing. That means every new

situation will be viewed in the light of a previous one.

Another test is this. When you hear the following words, who do you think of?

- Freedom
- Software
- Virgin
- Environment
- Terrorist

Everywhere I have asked these questions the answers have been more or less the same. All over the world, when people hear the word *freedom*, they think of Nelson Mandela. When they hear the word *software*, they think of Bill Gates. Then they hear the word *virgin*, they either think of Richard Branson or the Virgin Mary. When they hear the word *environment*, most people in Africa think of Nobel Laureate Wangari Mathae while others especially in North America think of Al Gore. Unanimously, when people hear the word *terrorist*, they think of Osama Bin Laden.

This simple test shows the logical nature of the human mind. When it hears a sequence of words together over a period of time, it stores the words in a database. When one of those words is mentioned like we just did, the brain goes into that database in search of a pattern or a matching word. Most people have heard the word freedom in connection with Mandela over a period of time and that is why their brain makes this match. The same thing applies to all the other words that we listed.

An understanding of these patterns have helped law enforcement agents all over the world to catch criminals because most crimes follow certain patterns and once the

pattern has been discovered, solving the crime is a matter of time.

An understanding of these patterns has also helped immensely in the medical profession. Think of the times you have been to see a doctor. Your visit never starts with a diagnosis. It always starts with a series of questions. Through these questions, the doctor is trying to establish a pattern. This is because every sickness or disease has its own peculiar pattern and once a pattern has been discovered, the doctor can come to a conclusion. Once a conclusion has been made, a prescription can then be given. In the educational sector, we see the same thing especially when dealing with problem children. A psychologist tries to get to the root of the problem by trying to discover a pattern. The pattern could be a behavioural pattern or it could be a pattern in the family or a pattern with the race or even a pattern with the company kept. Once a pattern has been discovered, it is easy to bring closure.

As advantageous as logical thinking and an understanding of patterns may be, there is a danger.

Once a person has become trapped in his logic, it then becomes very difficult for that person to think outside that box. The expression thinking outside the box actually refers to thinking outside the logical parameters of the normal human brain. It refers to thinking outside the parameters of patterns that are obvious.

So while logical thinking has its benefits, on the general scale it is a form of thinking that has the ability to keep people within the box of the norm. It confines people to expectations based on experience and it shuts the door to the unknown. Doctors get stuck when the symptoms do not bear resemblance to any known pattern. Criminologists become stuck when the behaviour of a criminal does not

follow any known pattern. Similarly, teachers and child psychologists get stuck when the child's behaviour cannot be matched with any known patterns.

Many times at this stage, in medicine, in criminology and even in dealing with children, an external expert is brought in. These external experts are those who have been able to think outside the normal box of patterns.

Statistics have shown that only people who are able to do this become exceptionally successful. The keyword here is *exceptionally*. So among successful doctors, the exceptionally successful ones are the ones that are able to think outside this logical box. Among successful criminologists, the exceptionally successful ones are the ones that are able to think outside the box. Among successful teachers and child psychologists, the exceptionally successful ones are the ones who are able to think out of the box. The truth is, among all successful people on earth, the exceptionally successful ones are the ones that are able to think outside the box of human logic. They are people who have mastered the art of thinking outside logic and have become creative. They are the strategic or creative thinkers.

Very often in life, events do not tow the line of logic and so if we are experts at thinking logically, we will get stuck when events are not logical and as mentioned earlier it is at this point that experts are brought in. The expert is the person who is able to take the situation further by thinking outside the box of logic.

The irony is that logical thinking produces great academicians. Creative thinkers on the other hand are often considered to be inattentive students. In fact, many of them at some time or the other were said to have Attention Deficit Disorder - ADD (check the epilogue for the description of this disorder).

The ability to think logically is what makes it easy to answer questions the way you were taught by your teacher. However, research has shown that many times the logical thinkers ultimately work for the creative thinkers. It is not necessarily that these creative thinkers are more brilliant than the rest. In fact, many times they are not considered brilliant students. However, they have developed a way of thinking that has placed them in a position where the logical thinkers call on their help when situations defy logic. This may explain why the rule seems to be that the most brilliant students end up working for the ones that were not considered so brilliant. Another way of saying this is that logical thinkers often end up working for creative thinkers.

Those with the academic brilliance are brilliant because they have mastered the art of thinking within the box of instruction (logical thinking) which was passed on to them by their teachers. They obey without questioning. In fact, our educational systems are the cauldrons of logical thinking. We are trained to accept what is taught and never to question authority.

In the book, *The Jewish Phenomenon* by Steven Silbiger, in explaining why the Jews were phenomenally successful all over the world even though they are in the minority, he pointed out that questioning the Torah was encouraged. The children were allowed to ask questions and once they could question the Law of the Almighty, there was no one they could not question. Silbiger attributes this ability to question authority to the amazing out of the box minds that has given birth to a Steven Spielberg, Larry King, Michael Bloomberg, Albert Einstein, Michael Dell and many more.

Remember, that this has nothing to do with the ability to answer questions properly in class. It is not the ability to be an A student in class. It is the ability to be an A student

in life and many A students of life where either C students or below in class.

Colin Powel rose to become a US Army General and Secretary of State but he said he was so academically challenged that his school could not wait for him to get out but when he became the Colin Powel we know, he suddenly became their best alumnus and they couldn't wait for him to come to the school!

Richard Branson in his book, *Losing my virginity* states that he was so academically challenged in school that he never made it to college. Yet today, his intelligence has changed the world in a lot of ways and he has many college graduates working for him.

Bill Gates dropped out of Harvard to follow his dream and through creative thinking has established a product that has changed our world. It is interesting to note that Harvard now honoured him with a doctorate degree and that thousands of people all over the world now have to learn to think his way if they want to understand his products. He imposed his thinking on society.

## MIND EXERCISES

The following exercises are mind games to show the logical thinking nature of the brain.

- i. Write out the following sentence in proper English  
Bcs we r ptrn rcogntn prcsrs, it dsnt mtr evn if teh wrds re nt splt prply. Once d brn sees the wrd, it atmtcly lnks th wrds to a ptrn. See y spln ws nt as imprtnt as u tht it ws in schl?

I nd to b crfl abt evrythg I alw into my mnd bcos it wl



come back to either bless me or hunt me in future.

- ii. How many F's can you find in the following statement?  
FINISHED FILES ARE THE RESULT OF YEARS  
OF SCIENTIFIC STUDY COMBINED WITH THE  
EXPERIENCE OF YEARS...
- iii. Write out what is written in the triangle below



- iv. Mary's mother has five children. Their names starting from the oldest are: Sasa Sese Sisi Soso  
What is the name of the 5 child?
- v. An electric train is going at 250 kph. The wind is blowing north at 100 kph. What direction will the smoke blow?
- vi. A southbound train is going at 180 kph. The wind is blowing towards the east at 50 kph. A train on the other track is going to the east at 100kph. The Sun is shining from the East. What direction is the first train going?
- vii. A patriotic American living in Kenya decided to paint his bungalow in American colours. He painted the exterior white with dashes of blue and red. The interior has a white marble floor and blue walls with red borders at the edges. The ceiling is

a combination of red and white stripes. The master bedroom has red white and blue splashed on the walls. What colour is the staircase?

*(For answers go to [www.powertalks.biz](http://www.powertalks.biz))*