

creative thinking



Think big, think fast,
think effectively

4 SIMPLE STEPS TO IMPROVED CREATIVITY BY HUGH GRAHAM

If you want your business to realize its full potential you need to spend more of your time day dreaming – which Andrew Jenkins, author of *You Are More Than You Think*, believes to be an essential management skill for all SBMs – Small Business Managers - because those who day dream obtain different insights into what's really going on... where they want their business to be... and how to get there.

Andrew, who has an impressive string of letters after his name, including Chartered Engineer, says that day-dreaming is an essential part of the strategic planning process: it enables SBMs to envision the future direction of their businesses. Day-dreaming allows SBMs to “think big” without being constrained by reality – which encourages the mind to wander into places it would not normally go... where new connections can be made... which in turn creates even newer ideas.

Day-dreaming is important because dreams have no boundaries, walls or barriers. When SBMs day dream anything and everything becomes possible.

Andrew told me: “Walt Disney knew all about the importance of day dreaming. He attributed his phenomenal run of film successes to his four step creative process – much later designated as The Disney Strategy.”

Andrew has successfully helped many businesses and their leadership teams to day dream, plan ahead and enrich their thinking by using his version of the Disney strategy.

THE STAGES

“Stage One,” Andrew told me, “is the Day Dream Stage where the team collectively brain-storms new ideas and explores potential goals and intentions. No idea, no matter how ridiculous, is rejected. Anything goes and above all, there is no criticism or critique. Team members ask: What is wanted? What are the benefits? By when can they be expected? How will they be recognized?”

“Stage Two” is the Realist Stage during which questions are asked based on... what are the main chunks of activity... what evidence will be required to know that something has worked... how can the inherent risks be diminished... how can the results be tested?

“Stage Three” is the Critical Stage. The team is encouraged to criticize, challenge and engage in constructive critique. Normal questions at this stage are: what are the objections? What could stop the pain? What's the intent behind every critique?

“Stage Four” is the Final Stage where the team revisits the original day dream to determine whether the idea(s) stack up or should be rejected so that a new day dream can be considered.

Day-dreaming is a powerful and engaging process because it involves both sides of the brain at different times. The right brain deals with emotion, spatial awareness, music, creativity, imagination, dimension and the whole picture. The left brain deals with writing, logic, language, science, maths and priorities.

Critical thinking is important, but it doesn't work very well when people become leaders and business owners because the mental focus shifts subtly when men and women move into positions of authority and responsibility. A leader's role broadens from working for the business to working in the business and spending time contemplating its future. Successful businesses depend upon good leadership decisions being made.

SBMs need to give themselves permission to stand on the balcony of their businesses to day-dream about the future and to visualise what might be.

To do this effectively, SBMs need to learn how to push the mental slider to develop their creative and intuitive capabilities.

So, does this mean SBMs no longer need to exercise critical thinking? Of course not. Day-to-day operational decisions still need experience and critical analysis. Successful SBMs develop flexibility and are able to switch easily between right and left brain thinking.

All SBMs concerned about expanding management vision would benefit from reading *You Are More Than You Think*. Andrew is a dynamic and skilled facilitator, coach, mentor, presenter and teacher of new thinking. He is also MD of PDx Consulting Limited, dedicated to helping leaders, managers and executives operate at the top of their game.

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EXPLORATION

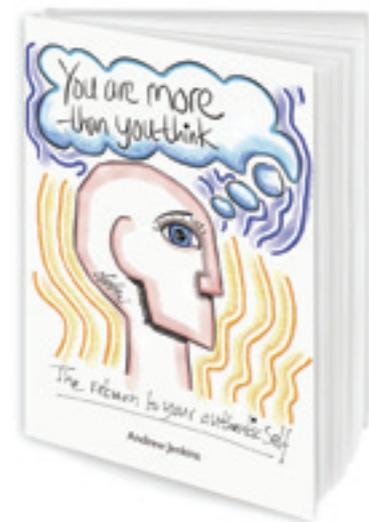
“Have you,” he asked me, “ever had the feeling that life is passing you by? That somehow, somewhere you took a wrong turning and that you're not living the life you should be... that you have not turned out to be the person you could have been... if only...?”

In his wide ranging and challenging book, Andrew takes the reader on a journey of self exploration into how these feelings arise through the development of what he calls the acquired self, essentially the beings SBMs have become. He maintains that because of the elasticity of our brains - and the extraordinary potential each brain has - it's possible for SBMs to re-educate their thoughts and behavior to return to their authentic selves, recreating the blank canvas with which they began, allowing them to generate happy, effective and fulfilled lives.

Andrew has overcome a great many disadvantages, one of which is dyslexia and he can remember being told at a parents' evening when he was a teenager that he would never be capable of taking maths or English at 'O' levels. He left school



Author, skilled facilitator, coach, mentor, presenter and teacher of new thinking Andrew Jenkins



with virtually no useful qualifications, and an almost non-existent self confidence.

“However,” he told me, “an inner voice told me I was actually quite bright. It took me some time to believe this inner voice. I needed a job, and that was proving difficult without qualifications. However, one day I was interviewed by a Mr Hinds, who was to help me make the first changes in my life. I was greeted by him telling me that since I did not have the right qualifications I should not have been invited for interview. Because I had travelled so far, he interviewed me anyway, and he liked my personality so much I was offered an engineering apprenticeship.”

Andrew's apprenticeship required him to attend technical college one day a week where he once again felt dumb and stupid – just as he had at school. Mr. Foster was the senior maths and science teacher who became exasperated with the Class Clown role Andrew had constructed as a defence mechanism to deal with his feelings of inadequacy. Mr. Foster took Andrew aside one day and told him: “you are quite bright. If you focus your brain and concentrate your mind you could go to university. You are far more clever than you believe.”

BELIEF

That was the second mentor to encourage Andrew and fortunately he took the encouragement both offered and began to believe in himself. “I realized that all the things I had once dreamed about could become reality.”

Many hours of study and several degrees later Andrew became a mentor himself and MD of PDx Consulting Limited, dedicated to helping leaders, managers and executives rediscover themselves and to operate at the top of their game.

“When Small Business Managers dare to dream anything and everything becomes possible. When Mr. Hinds and Mr. Foster told me (a no-hoper as I then believed) I could become a success, everything changed.

“We have to think differently if we want different results. We need to fight against our own conditioning and to want to change what we have become. To do this we must first be inspired to change – then we can realize we have unintentionally been travelling along unsuitable headings in life.

“This generates the light bulb moment illuminating the difference between fate and destiny.” **MM**