

Thinking Managers

Edward de Bono of www.thinkingmanagers.com argues that insufficient emphasis is placed on the importance of possibility and too much emphasis is placed on the search for certainty.

Ideas and Creative Skills

The desire to be creative exists in everyone – or at least it ought to. With creativity, life can be more fun, more interesting and more rewarding.

Research suggests that 94% of youngsters believe 'achievement' is the most important thing in their lives. Creativity is a key skill as far as achievement is concerned. Without creativity you only have routine and repetition. Of course, these are highly valuable and represent the bulk of our behaviour, but you also need change, improvement and new directions.

Creativity is essential in the world of business and management. This is because everything else has become a commodity available to all. It's not good enough just to hope your business will continue to be more competent than your rival – how can you prevent the competition also developing competence?

Creativity is difficult for the inhibited. Removing inhibition is not without value, but on its own it is a weak way of developing creativity.

Creative skills can be taught, learnt and practised by all. Some will also be more creative than others. But that should not stop everyone learning the skills. Everybody should try to get more creative through practice.

The creative skill of 'lateral thinking' is invaluable for changing ideas, perceptions and concepts. Rather than persisting with the same ideas, perceptions and concepts, you can work to change them. However, 'idea creativity' should not be confused with 'artistic creativity'.

The importance of 'possibility' is undervalued by schools and colleges. Modern computers are of such high standards that people now believe that all you require is the gathering and analysis of data to inform your decisions, strategies and policies. This is worrying as progress will grind to a halt. You need creativity for interpreting data in different ways; combining data to design a way to deliver value; knowing where to seek data; forming speculations and hypotheses, etc, etc.

Our culture and habits of thinking have us believing that we always need to move towards certainty. However, we must pay just as much attention to possibility because it is the key to creativity.

(Adapted from the book 'How to have Creative Ideas: 62 Exercises to Develop the Mind', Vermillion Press, £8.99.)

About the author:

Edward de Bono is the world's leading authority in the field of creative thinking and the teaching of thinking as a skill.

