

Creativity may not be on the competency list for many roles but none the less it's an essential part of many of them. We're often asked to think out of the box or do some blue sky thinking. So how do you do this?

Lets take a lesson from one of the creative giants Disney. Much of NLP is based on modelling. Modelling those who do something well and uncovering the difference that makes the difference. That is we may not have to copy 100% of what an expert does to get the same results. We just have to copy the possibly 20% that makes the difference as it's that c20% which really delivers excellence. This model for creativity came from modelling Disney.

**Why it works?**

There are a few essential reasons why this process works:

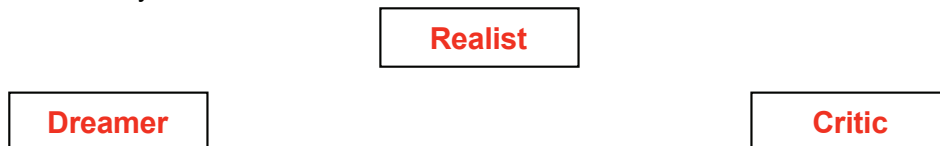
1. Separation Dreamer, Critic and Realist roles
2. Sequence of each of these roles
3. Time allowed for idea to percolate

Often great ideas never get the light of day because we don't give them time – we jump in with the reason why something wont work too quickly. This process allows for ideas to be fully explored with critical analysis taking place when most appropriate.

You just have to think about when you get your best ideas to know they don't often come when you're sitting at your desk ? This process allows for when and how you get your best ideas.

**Robert Dilt's Disney Strategy for Creativity**

The example here assumes you're doing it in a group as part of an options generation session. However this process can be done individually as well as in a group. It can also be used to explore one option more fully.



1. Ensure everyone understands the process. This is particularly relevant for people most likely to identify with the critic role to ensure they understand their concerns will be heard – just later in the process.

2. Identify different locations for each of the 3 roles (these may be different rooms if you have the space. Each room can then reflect the activity being undertaken in it):
- Dreamer – dreams the dreams
  - Realist – explores how to make the dream a reality
  - Critic – questions viability, do-ability, ecology and resource availability

3. You may decide to allocate a Facilitator and Note taker. This will ensure that everyone else can fully experience the process knowing that they will be guided through the process and all thoughts are being noted. Obviously if you're doing this on your own this may not be possible – although having someone guide you through the process can be very useful.

4. As a group visit each space in turn thinking of a time when you've been most like the description. You may have someone ask the group to remember a time in the past when they were for example in a Dreamer role and think about how they felt, what they were doing, what they were saying. They may also think of role models for this behaviour. Repeat for all 3 roles ensuring they think of something completely different as they move from one role to the next.
5. Now take the ideas you all have for delivering more value from a category or relationship into the Dreamer space. The sky is the limit – what would you do if you could not fail? This is about a vision, imagination, options, possibility and what if. Allow every member of the group to share their ideas. Allow others to build on these ideas. Ensuring that any Critic or Realist behaviours are prohibited for the time being. This space is for dreaming and exploring the options. If it gets heavy or non dreamy with eyes to the floor for any length of time leave that space. Returning when everyone is able to continue to explore the options being generated.
6. Now take these options into the Realist space – how would you make these ideas work? What steps would you need to take, what does the plan look like? Make sure that any Dreamer or Critical behaviours are prohibited for now. This space is about being effective, realistic and implementing a plan to deliver the options.
7. Leaving the plans in place step into the Critic space and observe and constructively criticise the plan from there. Don't allow Dreamer and Realist behaviours as they will have an opportunity to comment later. What are the flaws to the plans, what doesn't work, what's missing, what about any unintended consequences, how can you make it work?
8. Now take all the insights gained from the Realist and Critic to the Dreamer space and adjust the options generated.
9. Then take the adjusted options into the Realist space. Are there any further insights?
10. Now thinking of something completely different e.g. preparation for the negotiation tomorrow, supplier visit or even what you having for tea tonight walk through all the spaces 3 times: Critic, Dreamer, Realist. Finishing at the Critic space.
11. From the Critic Space consider the options and notice what has changed.
12. Moving through the Dream space to the Realist space agree and prioritise the options and identify next steps.

Once an option has been agreed this process can be used to further explore that option.

Whilst undertaking the process you may find you have a preference for one of the roles. If you work with others with other preferences this can work well. Although often we enjoy working with those with similar preferences. In these situations and when working on your own be aware the impact your own preferences will have on options generation:

- Dreamers make wonderful plans but never action them
- Realists jump in too soon and try to implement a plan before it's complete
- Critics never get anywhere because no plan is ever good enough

As with all tools as you become more familiar with its use you'll obtain more benefit and identify other opportunities to use it. We look forward to hearing how you get on.

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