

YES! AND... CREATIVE GORILLA # 120

Looking at a challenge in a fresh way can transform how you tackle it...

Reperceive Situations...

"There is no truth. Only perception." Gustave Flaubert (French author in Madame Bovary)



"Piers Brosnan"

Need to perceive a problem from a different angle?

Recently, I gave an after dinner talk for around 80 college lecturers and examiners attending a seminar on innovation in assessment.

The premise of my talk, more an interactive lecture, was that if we could inspire people to enjoy the whole process of exams, it would reap benefits for the college and be an innovation in assessment.

This idea underpins a study day that my friend, Elvin Box, and I have run for many years, for MBA students studying Creativity, Innovation and Change. We challenge the students to enjoy and look forward to the exam rather than dread it.

I had happily accepted the challenge of giving the talk, but a couple of weeks after accepting I became a little nervous, wondering what I would find to talk about that would interest and be of use to the audience.

I didn't realise how nervous I was until one night, I had a dream. In it I was delivering the talk and in front of everybody, could not think of a

thing to say. In the dream, (this is absolutely true) Piers Brosnan, ex - James Bond and erstwhile singer in "Mamma Mia," appeared and sagely told me all I needed to know. He may even have sung it, I don't recall because when I awoke, I had forgotten all he told me!

However, some of you will recognise the type of dream as the "examination dream", one I used to have regularly before appearing in plays, constantly forgetting my lines on stage in the dream.

Given that I had dreamed the examination dream, it struck me that delivering this talk was an exam in itself. With this new insight and in the spirit of my topic, I decided to enjoy the talk. And the best way to enjoy it, I thought, was to get the examiners to answer the questions!

Before the talk I asked a number of people for their thoughts on how I might tackle it in an interactive way, both in Internet forums and in discussion. An ex - student gave me the idea to have the diners list the golden rules of exams and then have them break these rules to generate ideas for ways for students to enjoy exams. This I did.

The talk started very well, however one gentleman was intent on disagreeing with my premise. He regularly and loudly questioned it.

When I asked the group to generate ideas he called me over and told me that he could not do this because "many people hate exams, but they dig deep and find the resources to revise and answer questions. They pass, don't enjoy the exam but enjoy passing."

YES! AND... CREATIVE GORILLA # 120

I agreed, countering however, that many people view exams negatively, find that approach stressful and learn less than they might if they enjoyed them.

"So," he said, "does that mean we have to have different types of exams for different people...?"

As he said those words his face and eyes literally registered surprise as he realised that he had just perceived the situation differently, and generated a great potential idea for an innovation in assessment. I had great pleasure in having him explain his idea to his colleagues over the microphone.

SO

I trust that the examples of the dream and the heckler have illustrated that re-perception can help tackle a challenge or have it cease to be a challenge.

A dream is difficult to create to order but there are other ways to achieve re-perception, for example using meditation and imagery to surface subconscious thoughts.

As well though, encouraging some people to articulate their thoughts and listening to them carefully can also help them to perceive things differently. A few glasses of wine probably helped him in this situation too!

TO CLOSE

I am flying back and forth to Ireland at present, running innovation workshops and writing stacks of reports when back, so once again wrote the draft of this article on my mobile telephone whilst travelling. It may not be an efficient way to write, but in a cramped airline seat it works.

At home, my daughter saw me pecking at the phone's keyboard with one finger and said that I would be quicker with two thumbs like her.

Somehow we ended up challenging each other to a race, she on her phone and me on mine.

Those of you who are older and no doubt ribbed about your use of technology will be very pleased to know that in a one paragraph race, maturity beat youth, hands (and forefinger) down! I think she perceived her Dad in a new light!

Finally, can I thank Patsy, Debs, and Caroline along with other readers of the Gorilla who kindly contributed ideas to my talk, they were invaluable and a great example of the power of the group..

John Brooker | Facilitate, Innovate, Transform.



We facilitate leaders and teams in medium to large organisations internationally to:

- *Make Meetings Outstanding*
- *Make Transformation Simpler*
- *Make Innov8ion Flow*

Imagine what we can do for you...

Contact John or Kate Brooker:

Speak: +44 (0) 20 8869 9990

Write: hi@yesand.eu

Read: www.yesand.eu