

YES! AND... CREATIVE GORILLA # 5

How can you clear your mind of all those problems whirling round it?

Clear Your Mind Technique...

"I sometimes find, and I am sure you know the feeling, that I simply have too many thoughts and memories crammed in to my mind," said Dumbledore..."at these times... I use the Pensieve." From [Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire](#) (J.K. Rowling)



"What else can you see in there?"

Has an issue been running through your mind for a long time?

Do you ever get the feeling, Dumbledore has? You have some kind of significant, complex challenge, something you are concerned about and all these pieces of information run around in your brain. Facts, questions, half formed answers, things people have said, ideas, things you said or wished you said, the emotions, endlessly running around in your brain like an iPod on shuffle.

Dumbledore's "Pensieve" is a stone basin in to which he places his excess thoughts and then views them from a distance, to help him analyse them.

When I was reading the book it struck me that here was a magical version of the "Essay"

technique, a well known creative technique that helps you to explore a nagging problem or opportunity very quickly.

The technique is one to which I have added a few "rules" and it seems to help most people, so let me share with you what I am now calling the "Pensieve Technique".

Take a paper pad and a pen (tear yourself away from the keyboard) and write down everything you can about your situation as possible. The rules I have added are:

Don't worry about your spelling (imagine the paper has automatic spell checking), your grammar or the legibility of your writing (your old English teacher is not going to mark it)

Don't censor yourself - let emotion run unchecked, be opinionated, tell your boss / client / colleagues what you think, write it ALL. Nobody else is going to read it!

Most importantly, don't stop to reflect, just write whatever comes in to your head every time you feel like you are coming to a stop, even if there is repetition

In workshops I set a time limit of ten minutes but you can write until your wrist aches or you run out of steam.

When you have finished writing, go though the essay and identify the 5Ws and H; that is,

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underline everything that is a **Who**, a **What**, a **Why**, a **Where**, a **When** and **How**. Check to see if any category is missing from the story. If it is, you may have missed something.

Now leave the essay for a while and then review it to see if you get a fresh view of your situation.

I use this technique quite regularly for myself and in my creative techniques workshops. Some examples of feedback I have had from people who have used it are:

“It helps clear the mind”; “There was a sense of relief”; “Changed my perspective”; “It helped put problem in context”; “A revelation, gave me new insights”; “It was cathartic”; “Showed recurring themes”; “Gets lots of things off your chest”; “Enables the subconscious to come through”; “It was therapeutic”; “It reframed my problem”.

I trust these are some fairly good reasons to give it a try.

SO

Are you running a lot of ideas around in your head? Frustrated? Confused? Don't worry, as Larry Leissner said, (and if you know who Larry is ~ please let me know!) “If confusion is the first step to knowledge, I must be a genius”.

ACTION

Take fifteen minutes to give this technique a try and reflect on its value. Perhaps you could suggest it to a colleague who has an issue? Oh and buy the Harry Potter book, it's great and it might help take your mind off the situation.

TO CLOSE

I have my own Pensieve – every day I transfer the memory of where I left my wallet and car keys and when I need them... I ask my wife...

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