

# YES! AND... CREATIVE GORILLA # 61

*There's always a stimulus for creativity .....*

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## Random Connect to Create Ideas...

*"For every living creature that succeeds in getting a footing in life there are thousands or millions that perish. There is an enormous random scattering for every seed that comes to life. This does not remind us of intelligent human design. "If a man in order to shoot a hare, were to discharge thousands of guns on a great moor in all possible directions; if in order to get into a locked room, he were to buy ten thousand casual keys, and try them all; if, in order to have a house, he were to build a town, and leave all the other houses to wind and weather - assuredly no one would call such proceedings purposeful and still less would anyone conjecture behind these proceedings a higher wisdom, unrevealed reasons, and superior prudence." John W.N. Sullivan Science Writer (d 1937)*

*"Just as well you won't read this article John." John Brooker*



**"Luanda"**

*Are you stuck for an idea?*

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I sat having a beer and a toasted cheese sandwich in the bar of my hotel in Luanda, Angola, earlier this month. It was a slightly surreal experience as I was eating in the dark, breached only by the dim glow of the myriad oil industry PC screens on battery power. Luanda had suffered another power cut and we waited for the emergency generator to kick in.

The pianist played gamely on and I mused that sight reading of music is obviously not the principal qualification for a pianist in Angola. As

he played and I groped for my cheese toastie, my mind drifted back to a hotel bar in Zurich some years ago on another business trip.

That time there were two of us listening to the lady pianist as she played and sang our endless requests from her song catalogue – a book similar to a large wine list, with over six hundred songs listed.

During one of the breaks, we began discussing the design of a graduate recruitment scheme but soon ran out of ideas. Idly looking at the song list, one of the titles gave me an idea for the scheme and I challenged my colleague to find one based on another song title.

Maybe it was the beer, I recall we never did make it to dinner, but he joined in enthusiastically and soon we were generating ideas by giving each other a title from which to generate an idea. We generated quite a number of useful ideas and though the graduate scheme

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never got off the ground, I have always remembered that evening.

## SO

The lesson it taught me was that no matter how “stuck” you are, you can always find a way to be creative. All you need is a stimulus. Song titles are a very rich way of sparking ideas and if you don’t have a list handy, you might try scrolling through the song titles on your MP3 player or iPod.

As some of you will recognise, we were using Random Connection which is particularly good when you are stuck for ideas.

Koestler had the idea of bisociation some years previously but Edward De Bono named this technique and has a neat way of using it. He has a list of sixty words and chooses a random word by looking at the second hand of his watch. Next, he seeks to associate the word with the challenge he faces.

## ACTION

If you have an MP3 player or iPod handy, see if you can force fit some of the titles to a challenge you have currently and generate some fresh ideas. If not, generate a list of sixty nouns and use de Bono’s method.

## TO CLOSE

As many people who know me personally are aware, it doesn’t take much to persuade me to sing after a beer, so when late in the evening the

pianist (in Zurich!) asked me if I wanted to sing a song, I took the opportunity.

Only halfway through did I realise quite how high a note Don Henley of the Eagles reaches when he sings “Desperado”! As my voice made random connections with the right notes I was “desperado” for any random idea that would get me out of the bar and away from the wincing audience! I did however, get a round of applause at the end, whether it was for the song, bravery or just finishing I will never know...

May your ideas flow this week...

***.John Brooker | Facilitate, Innovate, Transform.***

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