

# YES! AND... CREATIVE GORILLA # 7

*Using naïve people in your creative sessions can give you a whole new perspective ...*

## Use Naïve People to Innovate...

*"I know. It's called a flatulator!" Andrew Brooker aged 6 ½ years*



**Moving Walkway**

***Do you consider it necessary to be an expert  
to generate creative ideas?***

The family and I were going through a station, travelling on a moving walkway. Eleanor, my daughter, asked, "If the moving steps going up are called an escalator, what do you call these flat ones?"

I mumbled something about "moving walkways" when Andrew, my son, shouted, "I know, they're called flatulators!" With visions of wind assisted pedestrians in my head I roared with laughter. What a great idea!

Andrew had no idea of the potential alternative meaning when suggesting the name "Flatulator", but he made a good guess. Often, naive people like him can offer us good insights and new trains of thought when we are struggling to create an original idea.

They know little or nothing about the subject so are not limited by the conventional thinking

that exists and can provide radically different input.

As a Creative Leader you can use this device of naive thinking in three ways:

1. Bring in someone with no knowledge of your topic, give them a basic understanding of the issue / situation and then ask them for other ways to look at your situation or ideas (perhaps alone but more likely in a group of more knowledgeable people)

2. You can use a variation on the "What If" technique alone or in a group. Essentially this means asking yourself and / or others to imagine what a five year old would think of a situation / challenge. For example, you want to design a new telephone. You ask others to become five years old and to give you ideas about a telephone. It might sound something like this train of thought...

- "I am five and I want my phone to have big colourful buttons. I want a button to press to tell me how to use it. It has to have a lot of fun ringing tones that I can change when I want. It tells me who is calling and I can just speak numbers to it and it dials them for me or I can say "Mummy" and it calls her. Instead of that funny dial tone it says "ready to dial" and it has wheels and a cord so I can pull it and I can throw it in the bath..." you get the picture.

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- Notice I am speaking in the present tense; I am a five year old! The important point about pretending to be a five year old is to become one, to feel and act like one, not to think what they would do. This makes the exercise less abstract, however, if doing this with others, you will need to relax them first
- Having generated a number of ideas I sift those that may be directly useable (a voice saying "ready to dial") and use the wackier ideas (called "springboards") to help develop more practical ideas... instead of wheels how about lockable ballbearings so it could slide easily on the desk when I pull it?

3. Imagine that you are describing your issue to a group of five year olds so that they can understand it. This can help simplify complex problems and spark ideas.

## SO

How might you use a naive viewpoint to tackle a challenge or give you a different perspective on one?

## ACTION

Think of a challenge you have right now and apply the "five year old" technique to it (or try what I did with the telephone). Alternatively, have someone who knows very little about your topic to come along to your next meeting to give you some different insights.

## TO CLOSE

I was thinking. Someone must have coined the term "escalator", wouldn't it be great if enough people started calling moving walkways, "Flatulators"? It might get in the Oxford dictionary and you'll know where it started. So if you're commuting through Heathrow or Waterloo, wherever, just grab that Flatulator and go...

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