

YES! AND... CREATIVE GORILLA # 70

Sometimes we have to overcome our own obstacles ...

Overcome barriers to creativity...

"If you're trying to achieve, there will be ROADBLOCKS. I've had them; everybody has had them. But obstacles don't have to stop you. If you run into a wall, don't turn around and give up. Figure out how to climb it, go through it, or work around it." Michael Jordan



"Push the wall down"

Have you some personal obstacles to overcome? ...

The Gorilla was on holiday in August, but fresh back from Cornwall, I ran a Flexible Thinking course. At the end of a very successful course I reviewed the feedback from participants. One had written that I should not demonstrate the creative technique "Super Heroes" in the course because there was no way he could use it with senior managers in his organisation.

"Super Heroes" (which I mentioned in the last article) is a technique in which you get people to adopt the persona of a super hero e.g. Spiderman and consider the challenge from their perspective. For example on the challenge of improving company communication - "I'm Spiderman [adopts the pose] and I fire my web. That makes me think of all the .cc emails that fly around this office to cover back sides.

What if we set the system up to fire back an automated response from every person copied on the email? That would fill up the in boxes of the guilty parties and deter them..." I just made that up but I hope it gives you an idea (I quite like it actually!)

It may be that the senior managers in his organisation might take a personal affront at being asked to adopt a super hero persona or feel it too childish. The technique does require that the group has an element of trust. However, it may rather be that the person had a personal obstacle to using the technique, e.g. looking foolish if the technique doesn't work. It may be though, that he is congratulated for trying something different. I have used this technique with many senior people with great effect and a lot of humour.

SO

Personal obstacles do deter us from trying new ideas and I am as guilty as others of being nervous when trying out certain exercises with a new group, but I do try it. If it doesn't work, I know I can say "Well that didn't work, let's try another one."

So if you find yourself not trying a new idea or not taking a risky action, here are some questions you might ask yourself which are designed to help you overcome some of these personal obstacles.

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- Describe what you are trying to achieve. List the benefits and potential benefits of this to you. Do they encourage you?
- Imagine you have been successful already and achieved your goal. What positive things are people saying about you? What are they doing that pleases you? What positive feelings do you have?
- What personal resources do you have to achieve your goal? What traits, skills, training and knowledge?
- What external resources might you call on? Who might provide you with support?
- When have you achieved success previously? What helped you then? Can you use it again?
- Who do you know who has achieved what you want to do? How might they help you?
- What is the worst thing that can happen if this doesn't succeed? On a scale of 1 – 10 where 10 is as bad as anything can get in your life, how would you rate that?
- What is one small action you might take to get you started now or very soon?

ACTION

If you have something to do and you are avoiding it or procrastinating, take a look at the last question again and get started.

TO CLOSE

On holiday in Cornwall, I suggested we hire some bikes and go for a ride. The idea didn't much appeal to my wife but she agreed to come along with me and the children. When we got there, the bike shop had only one ladies' bike left, which a mechanic had found in the corner of the shop. We rode off with my wife mentioning to the mechanic that the bike felt odd, but he said it was fine.

Two miles down the track, after a short stop, my wife called out to me that she couldn't move the bike. Suspecting she had got the gear change mechanism stuck, I rode back and not very graciously, took a look at the bike. I looked at the chain and it was fine but I couldn't push the bike forward. I assumed the brakes had jammed on but they were fine. It was only as I inspected the front brake I realised that the front wheel had fallen off!

There were no quick release fasteners to hold the wheel on and it had jumped off the spindle when she had lifted the bike over a pavement and jammed in the forks. We saw the funny side, but my lesson from that is that obstacles are not always in the mind!

Have a week free from obstacles and avoid dodgy bikes

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