

Being Creative can be Hard Work

By Andy Taylor

As a Trainer, being creative when you are designing a training event is vital to make you stand out from the crowd. Being creative though is not something that comes automatically when looking at a blank computer screen.

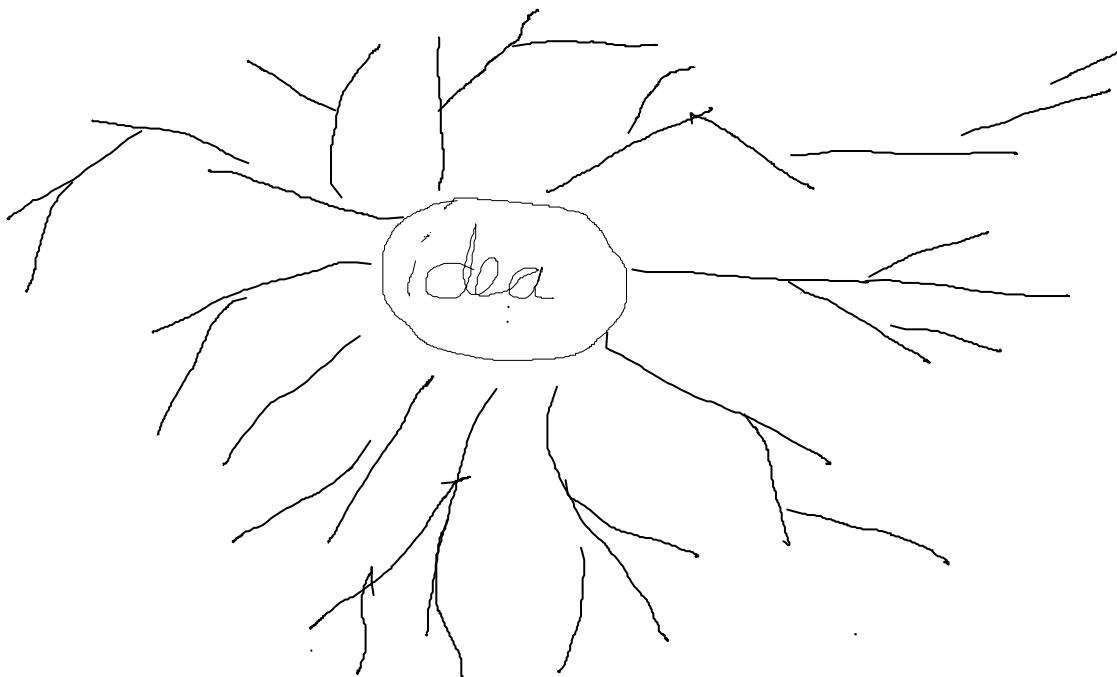
So how do you make your creative streak come forward? There are many theories and thoughts about how you can force this but, creativity, I believe, cannot be forced. You might be on a tight deadline in which case you might have to work extra hard to be creative.

We all have ways in which we get inspiration to be creative. Taking a walk, listening to music, doing the gardening or sitting doing nothing, whatever it is it is up to us to find what makes us creative, and we all are.

Being creative takes time and that needs planning which makes the creative process a little forced and fake. Most of the time creativity comes when you are doing something unrelated to the task for which you need to be creative. Being creative can be affected by your learning style and how you feel on a particular day. Some days I am not creative at all and all attempts at being creative fail miserably and usually with a temper.

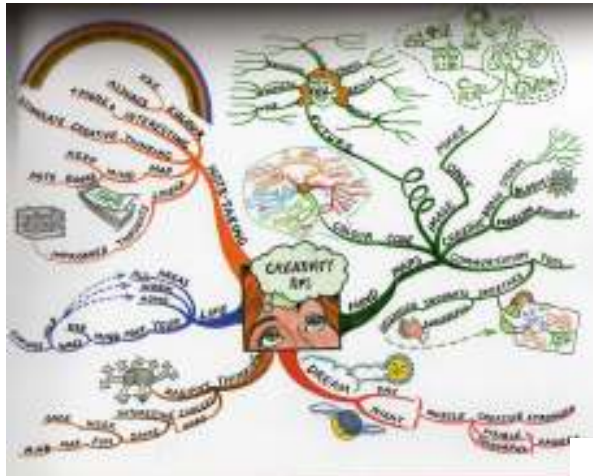
Helping the creative process is the key to being creative. Take it slowly if it is not forthcoming and learn to walk away if there is nothing at all. Make lists if that helps you. They can contain what needs to be included in the task or what you want the outcomes to be.

A **Brain Storm** is another way of gathering lots of ideas from which a creative urge can spring. Brain storms are not tidy and there is no right or wrong answer it is a tool to get all your ideas and thoughts both positive and negative onto paper to sort them out.



The idea or task is placed in the middle and then ‘branches’ with words or phrases that add to the idea or task are added. None of these ideas are right or wrong. The goal is to get as much into the brain storm as possible. Once you feel that you have exhausted your train of thought for the task or idea you then pick a couple of the phrases or words that you have written down and that you feel might work and develop them further in a Mind Map.

A **Mind Map** is a more structured development of ideas. Mind Maps were developed by Tony Buzan and he has published many books on the subject. His book ‘The Ultimate Book of Mind maps’ illustrates how to create and use Mind maps for everyday life.



The idea that you want to develop is still in the middle but, this time you develop the idea more logically. You use colours and pictures to develop your idea as this aids your creative and thought process.

A Mind Map still only contains words or phrases with pictures but, the detail is not included in the Mind Map. The Mind Map is to aid you remember the details you were thinking about when you created the Mind Map.

Figure 1: Source: The Ultimate Book of Mind Maps, Tony Buzan, 2005.

I find Mind Maps very useful and I have used them to deliver Training Events if I am not sure what will work for the subject. In the Mind Map I include all the possibilities and decide with the group I am working with what might work. I may use the Mind Map on several occasions to get the course right before I commit to writing a Trainer’s Guide or Brief or whatever you want to call it.

Being creative requires ‘out of the box thinking’ at times and the two tools mentioned above can help with this. Above all when you are being creative don’t be afraid to investigate the ideas you have through a Mind Map, you never know what you will come up with. From one idea you might get the solution to other ideas.