

## Improving Your Creative Abilities

### Keep track of your ideas at all times.



Many times ideas come at unexpected times. If an idea is not written down within 24 hours, it will usually be forgotten. Some people even keep a notepad and pencil at their bedside in case they wake up in the night with a creative idea and want to write it down.

### Pose new questions to yourself every day.



An inquiring mind is a creatively active one that enlarges its area of awareness. If you are doing a homework problem, ask yourself how to make the problem more difficult or more exciting. Apply the critical thinking questions discussed in Chapter 3 to *yourself*.

### Learn about things outside your specialty.



Use cross-fertilization to bring ideas and concepts from one field or specialty to another. Consider how different classes in school relate to each other or how you can use your abilities in one activity for another purpose. Cross-fertilization is further examined in Chapter 7.

### Avoid rigid, set patterns of doing things.



Overcome biases and preconceived notions by looking at the problem from a fresh viewpoint, *always* developing at least two or more alternative solutions to your problem.

### Be open and receptive to ideas (yours and others).



Rarely does an innovative solution or idea arrive complete with all its parts ready to be implemented. New ideas are fragile; keep them from breaking by seizing the tentative, half-formed concepts and possibilities and developing them.

### Be alert in your observations.



This principle is a key to successfully applying the Kepner–Tregoe approaches discussed in Chapter 8. Keep alert by looking for similarities, differences, and unique and distinguishing features in situations and problems. The larger the number of relationships you can identify, the better your chances of generating original combinations and creative solutions.

## Improving Your Creative Abilities *(Continued)*

### Learn to know and understand yourself.



Deepen your self-knowledge by learning your strengths, skills, weaknesses, dislikes, biases, expectations, fears, and prejudices.

### Keep abreast of your field.



Read the magazines, trade journals, and other literature in your field to make sure you are not using yesterday's technology to solve today's problems.

### Keep your sense of humor.



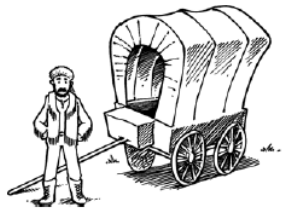
You are more creative when you are relaxed. Humor aids in putting your problems (and yourself) in perspective. Many times it relieves tension and makes you more relaxed.

### Engage in creative hobbies.



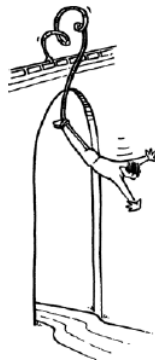
Hobbies can also help you relax. Working puzzles and playing games both keep your mind active. An active mind is necessary for creative growth.

### Have courage and self-confidence.



Be a paradigm pioneer. Assume that you can and will solve the problem as described in Chapter 2. Don't be afraid to take a risk. Persist and have the tenacity to overcome obstacles that block the solution pathway.

### Adopt a risk-taking attitude.



Fear of failure is the major impediment to generating solutions that are risky (i.e., have a small chance of succeeding) but would have a major impact if they are successful. Outlining the ways you could fail and then ways you would deal with these failures will reduce this obstacle to creativity. Some ways you can practice risk taking are challenging established patterns of doing business within your organization, trying a new sport, singing at a karaoke bar, or volunteering to organize a group activity.