

Creative Thinking Part 1: Reframing and Mind Mapping

1: Reframing

Reframing is about changing the way that we view or interpret information, opening up creative possibilities and new opportunities. For example, we could have assumed a coworker had an attitude problem and later learn that they were going through severe personal issues, which made us view them with compassion instead of anger. Another example would be times in which we resisted or disliked doing a task until we realized the benefits of doing it, which shifted how we experienced it. Also, there may have been a time when you failed and had a negative view of the experience until you realized that the experience actually led to a positive outcome.

In other words, the person, product, or event did not change, what changed was the way you viewed the situation. Therefore, many creative thinkers and creators simply reframe the way they view things in order to shift a situation from being a problem or obstacle to an opportunity.

Questions to help you reframe:

When faced with a challenge or problem that you need to generate creative solutions ask yourself these questions:

Meaning — what else could this mean?

Context — where else could this be useful?

Learning — what can I learn from this?

Humor — what is the funny side of this?

Solution — what would I be doing if I had solved the problem? Can I start doing any of that right now?

Positive aspect — what opportunities are lurking inside this problem?

Points of view — how does this look to the other people involved?

Creative heroes — how would one of my creative heroes approach this problem?

2: Mind Mapping

When someone is making notes or writing down an idea, they tend to do it in a linear form.

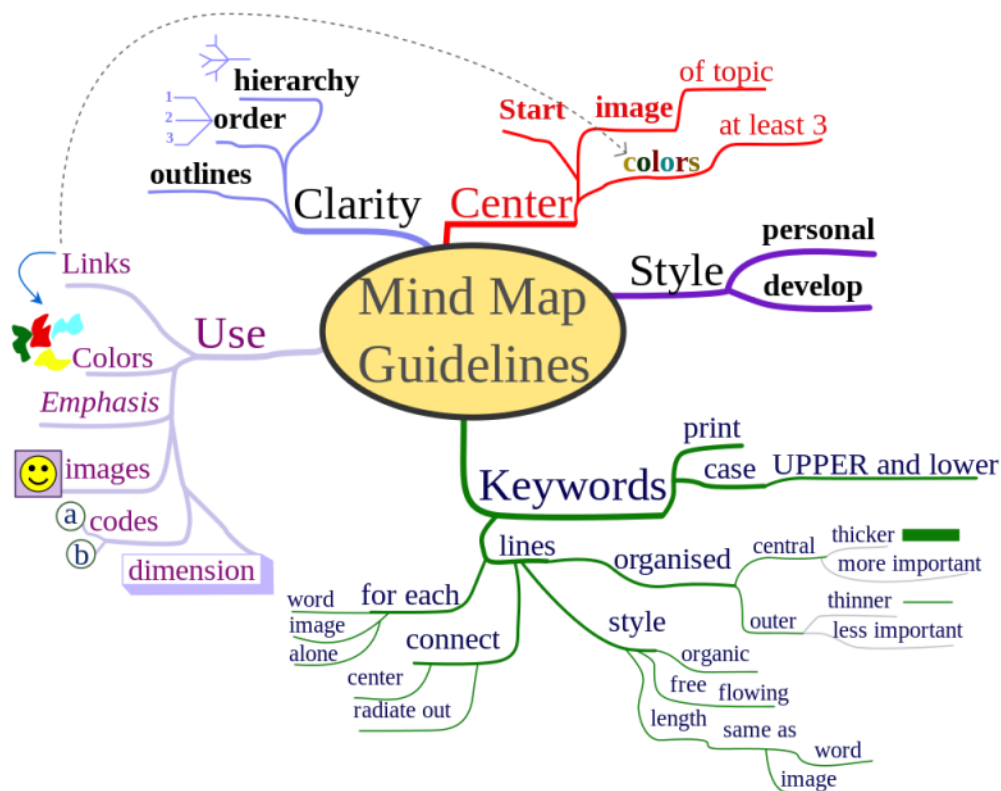
Topics → Thoughts About Topic → Sub-topics → Additional Ideas → Possibilities

However, this can actually inhibit creativity, as writing in sentences or bullet points pushes our brain to write things in logical order. Mind mapping allows you put things down through associations. The way it works is that you put the main idea in the middle of where you are writing. From that spot, you add related ideas around it, connecting them into clusters. Mind mapping stimulates both your left and right brain. It also helps us see associations and relationships with concepts more clearly as we connect ideas.

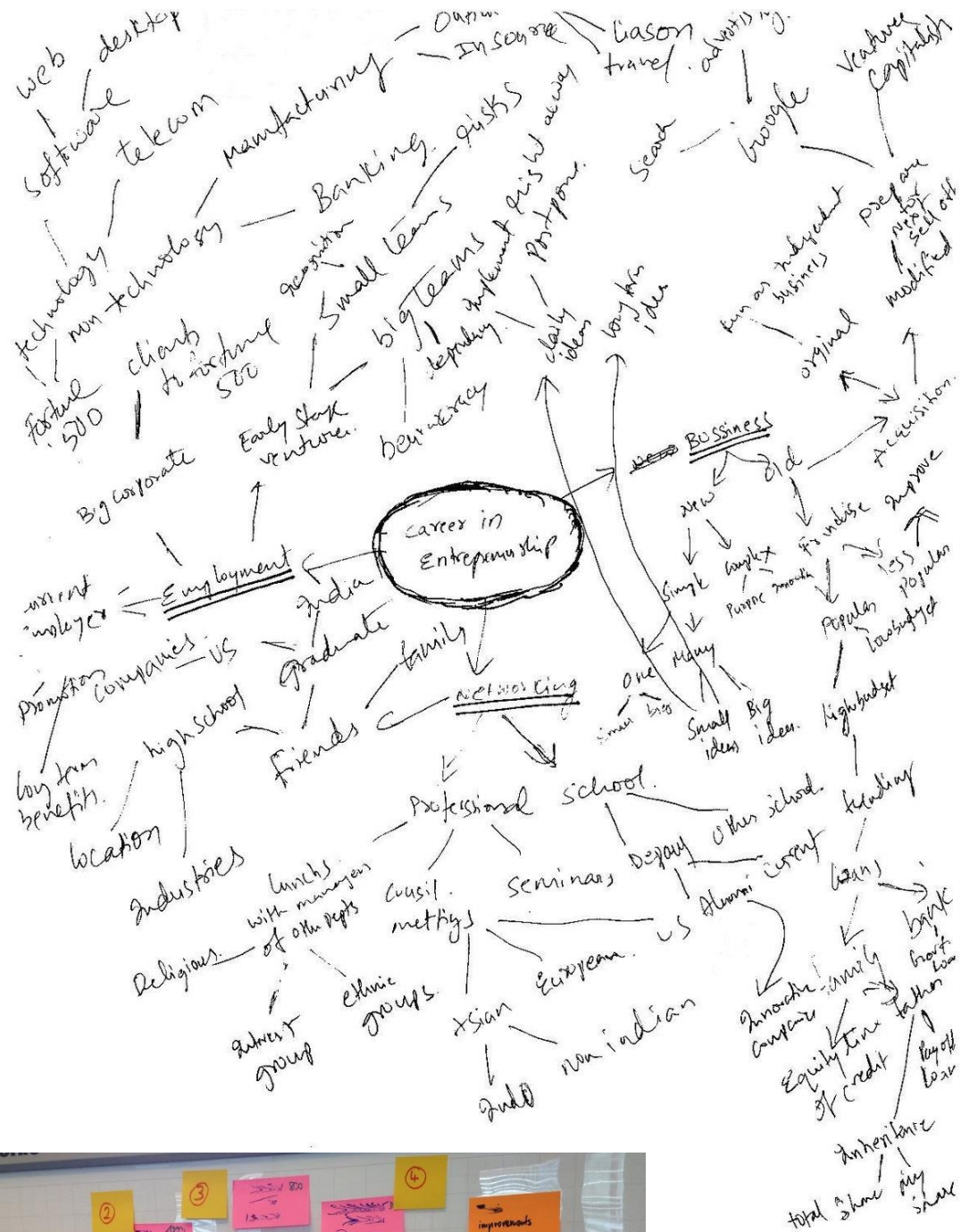
How to make a mind map:

- Start in the center of the page
- The lines should be connected and radiate out from the central concept
- Use different colors for different branches of the mind map
- Use images and symbols to bring the concepts to life and make them easier to remember

Below is an example of a mind map that also includes tips for creating one.



Keep in mind that when using mind mapping for creativity and idea generation, the emphasis is not on what it LOOKS LIKE, instead what matters is the ability to rapidly generate and connect ideas in meaningful ways. Creative mind mapping can be MESSY, like the example below.



You can also mind map with the team! Here is what that might look like:



Mind Map Idea: _____

