

# Six Thinking Hats

Edward de Bono

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# *The Six Thinking Hats*



# Learning objectives

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- Dr. Edward de Bono
- Traditional Thinking
- What is Parallel Thinking?
- Traditional Thinking vs. Parallel Thinking
- What is Lateral Thinking?
- Introduction to Six Thinking Hats method
- How to apply Six Thinking Hats method
- Benefits of Six Thinking Hats method
- Six Thinking Hats method – Case Studies
- Apply six hats method to problem solving

# Dr. Edward de Bono

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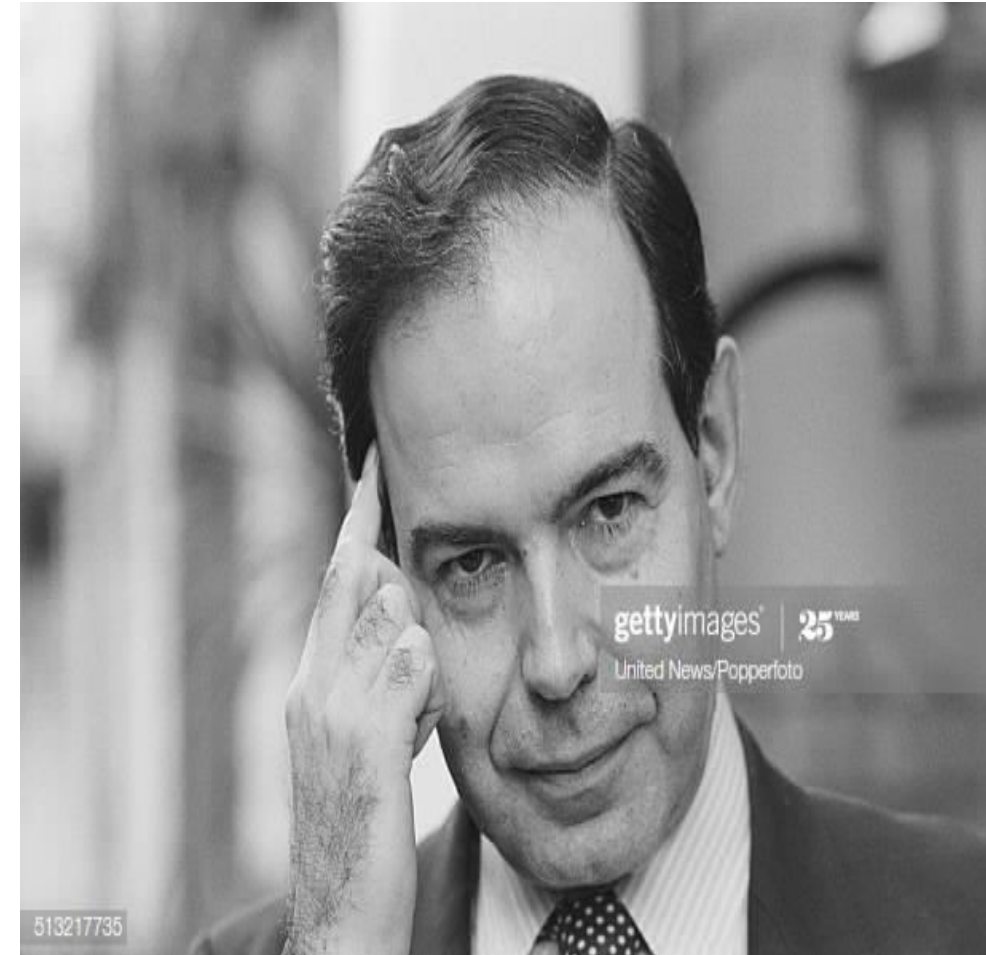
- Born in Malta in 1933
- M.D., Ph.D., (medicine & psychology)
- Faculty at the universities of Oxford, London, Cambridge and Harvard
- World-renowned consultant to business, governments, schools and industry
- Author of 62 books in 47 languages



# Dr. Edward de Bono

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- Originator of the following:
- Direct teaching of thinking as a skill
- CoRT :Cognitive Research Trust Thinking Programme
- Lateral Thinking (1967)
- Parallel Thinking (1985)
- Six Thinking Hats (1985)



# Traditional Thinking

- Traditional thinking is 2400 years old, based on the philosophies of Socrates, Plato and Aristotle
- Socrates used to point out 'what was wrong' to clarify the concepts
- Plato believed that we can see only shadows of truth as we go through life
- Aristotle believed that people would put together different 'boxes' in their mind based on their experience & judge things into one of those boxes

# Traditional Thinking

- Traditional thinking is concerned with “what is” which is determined by analysis, judgment & argument. It is not constructive or creative and doesn't involve design.
- It is also called ‘argument’, ‘adversarial’, or ‘western’ thinking
- Partial exploration of subject / problem
- Involves analysis, judgment and argument
- There is no focus and thinks about too many aspects / things at a time
- Traditional thinking is not collaborative or cooperative

# Parallel Thinking

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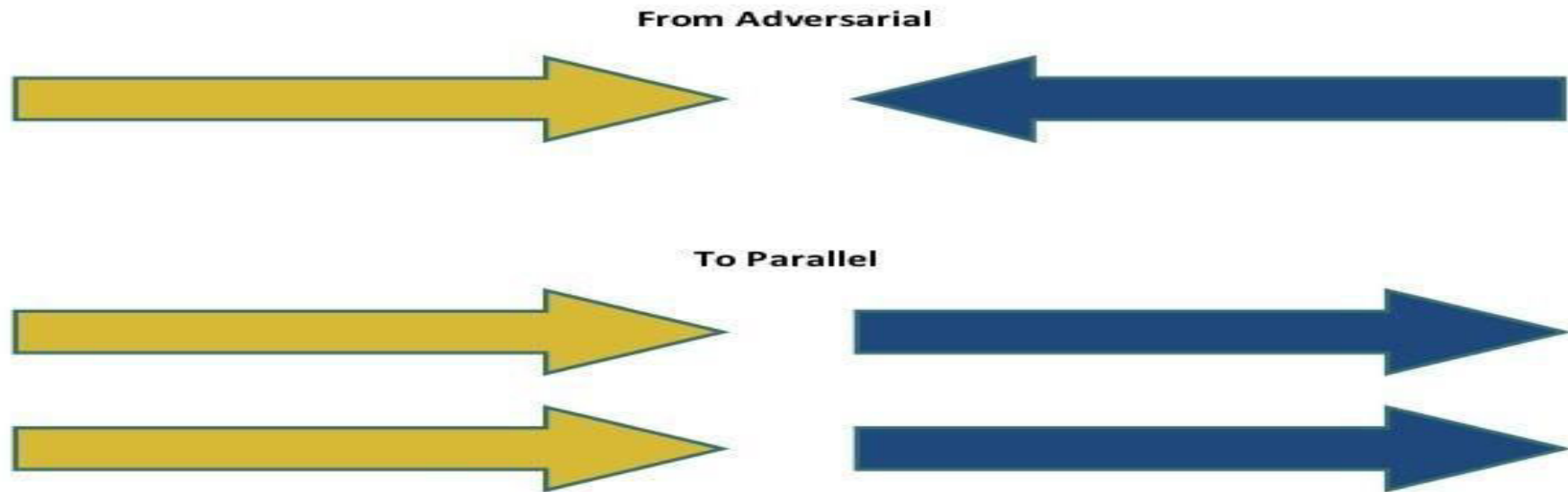
- At any moment everyone is looking in the same direction
- Each thinker puts forward his or her thoughts in parallel with the thoughts of others
- Guides thought processes in one direction at a time so we can effectively analyze issues, generate new ideas, and make better decisions
- Constructive alternative to arguments



All members look in the same direction at any moment  
Direction changes one after other. All views are put down in parallel

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## Parallel Thinking





# Parallel Thinking Why

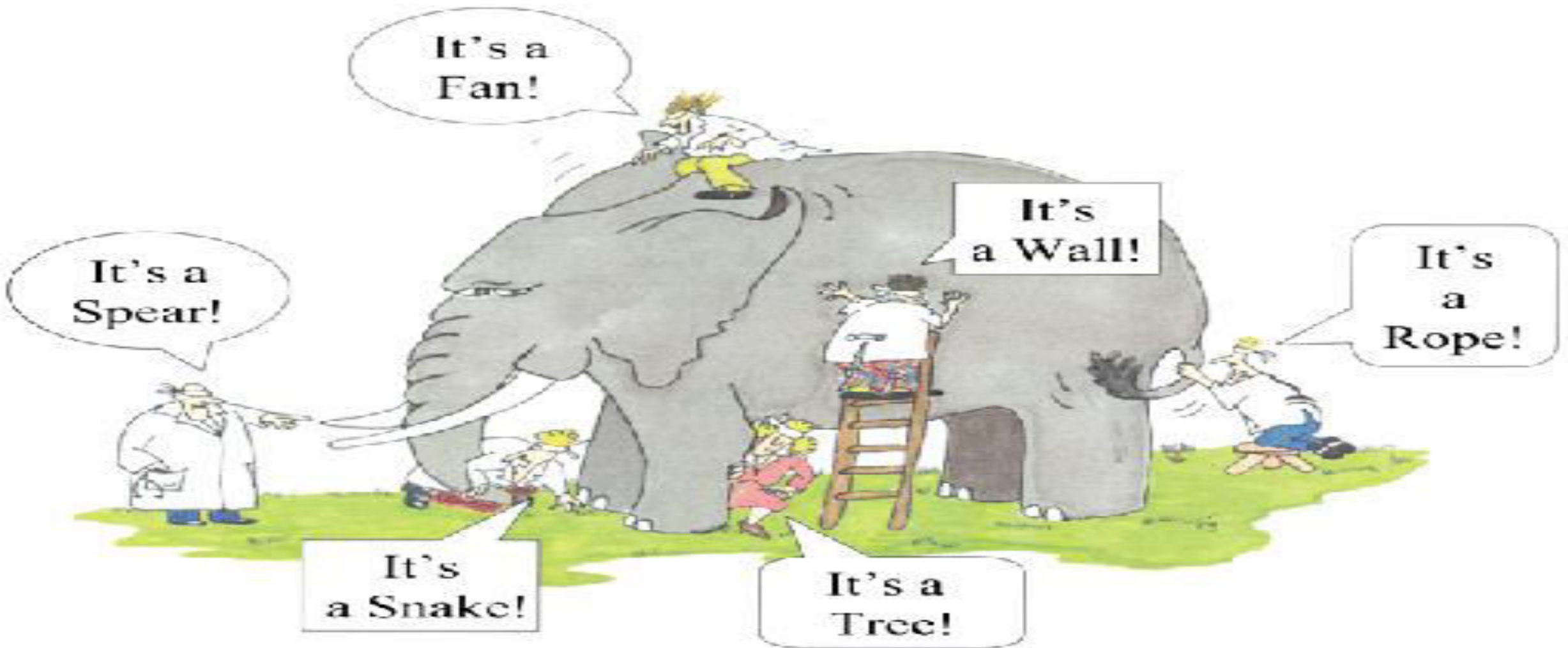


John Godfrey Saxe's (1816-1887) version of the famous Indian legend

It was six men of a Country To learning much inclined, Who went to see the Elephant (Though all of them were blind), That each by observation Might satisfy his mind.



These men disputed loud and long. Each in his own opinion exceeds stiff and strong. Though each was partly in the right, and all were in the wrong!



# Traditional Thinking

- Called 'argument', 'adversarial', or 'western' thinking
- 2400 years old – based on philosophies of Socrates, Plato and Aristotle
- Partial exploration of subject / problem
- Concerned with 'what is'
- Involves analysis, judgment and argument
- Thinks about too many aspects / things at a time

# Parallel Thinking

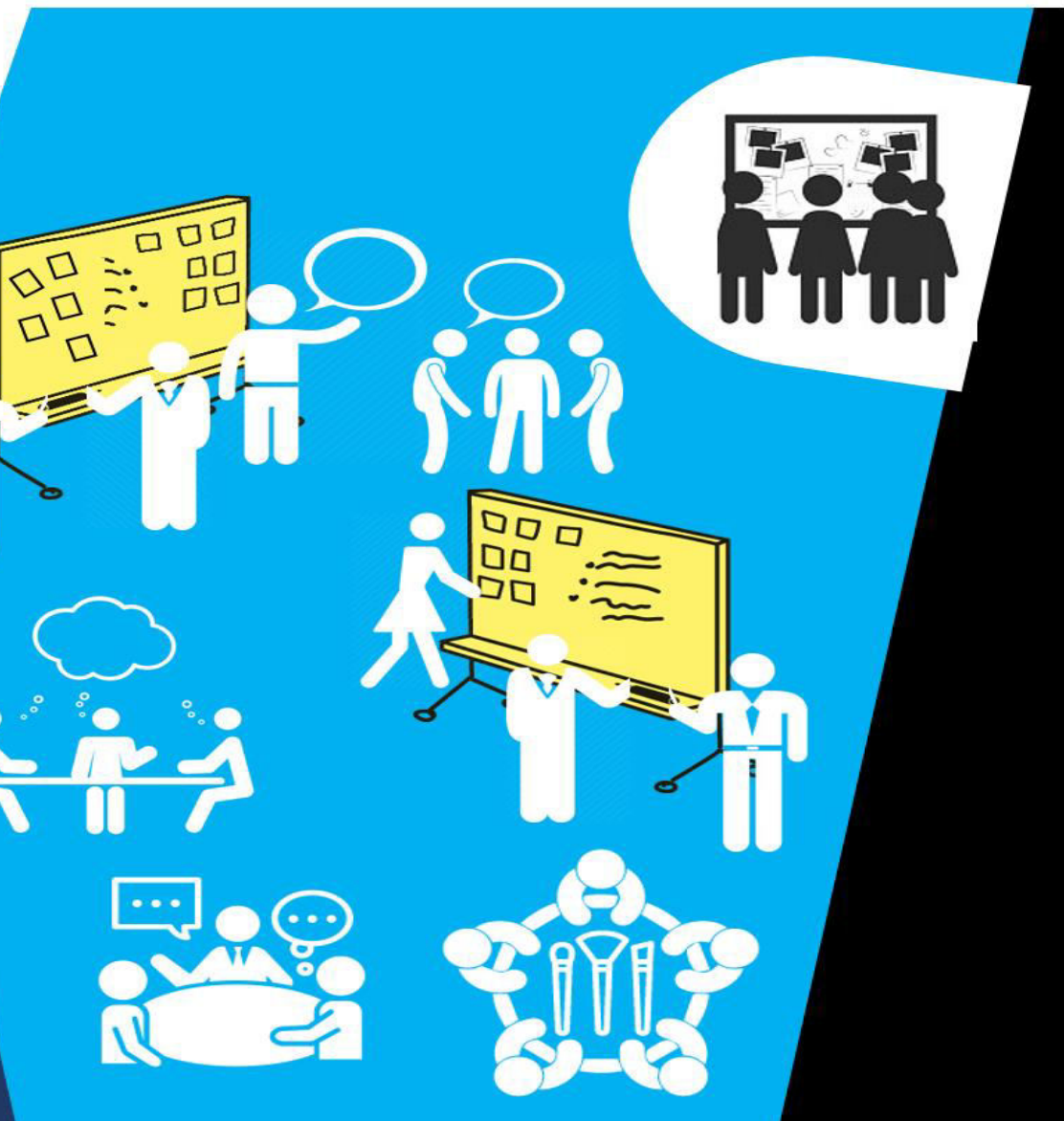
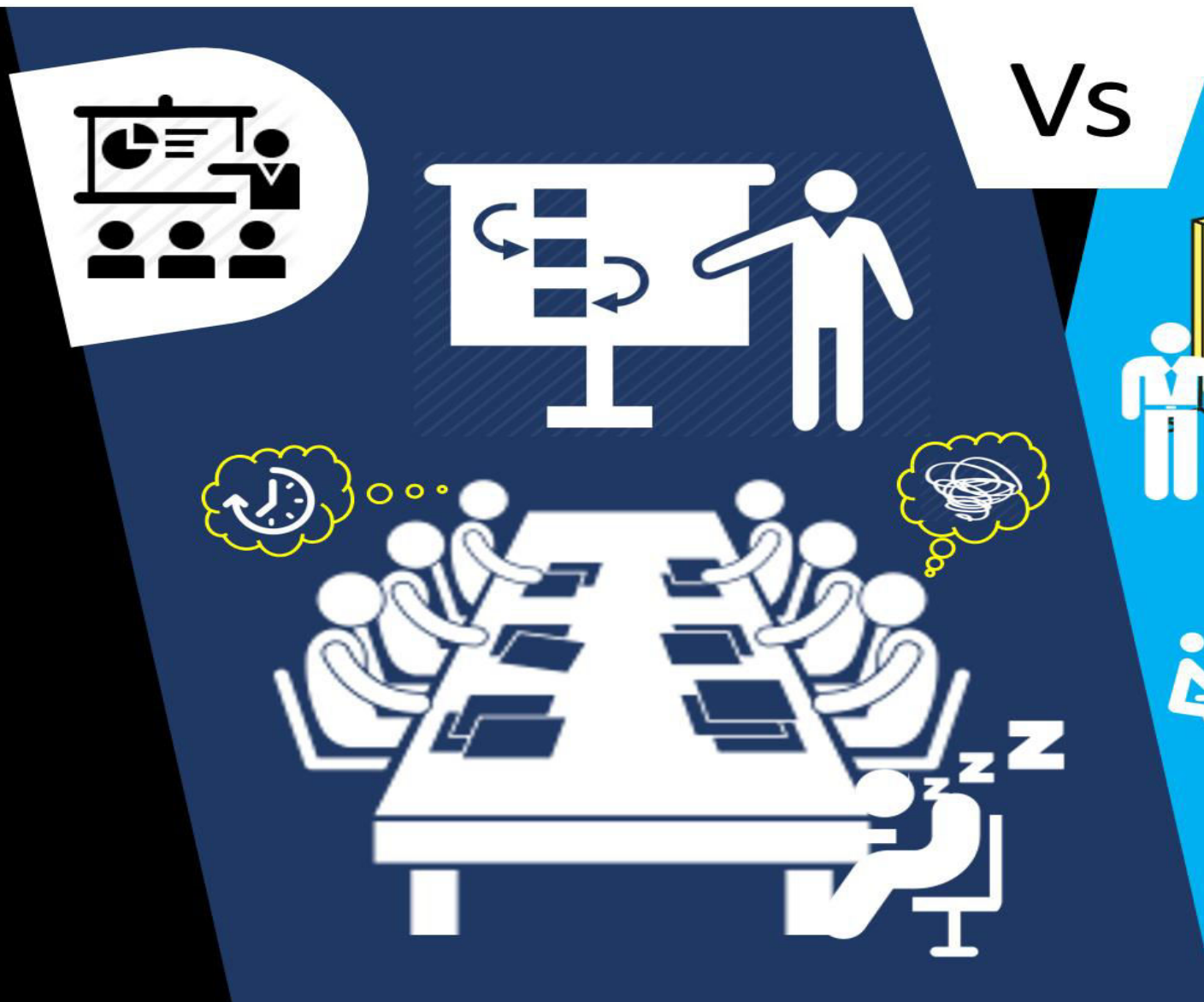
- Deals with only one aspect / thing at a time
- First published by Edward de Bono in 1985
- Full exploration of subject / problem
- Concerned with 'what can be'
- Involves constructive thinking, creative thinking and 'designing a way forward'



# Traditional Workshop

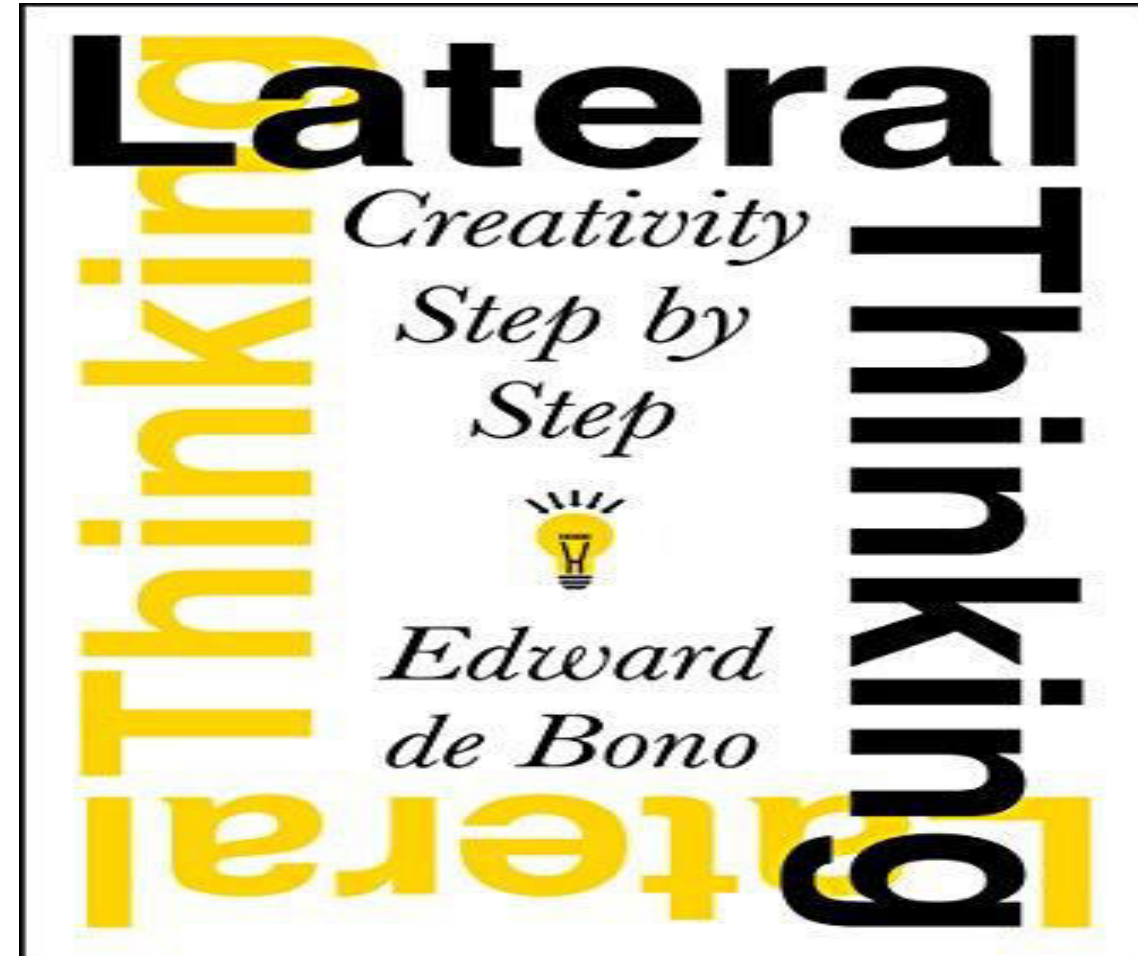
# Design Thinking Workshop

Vs

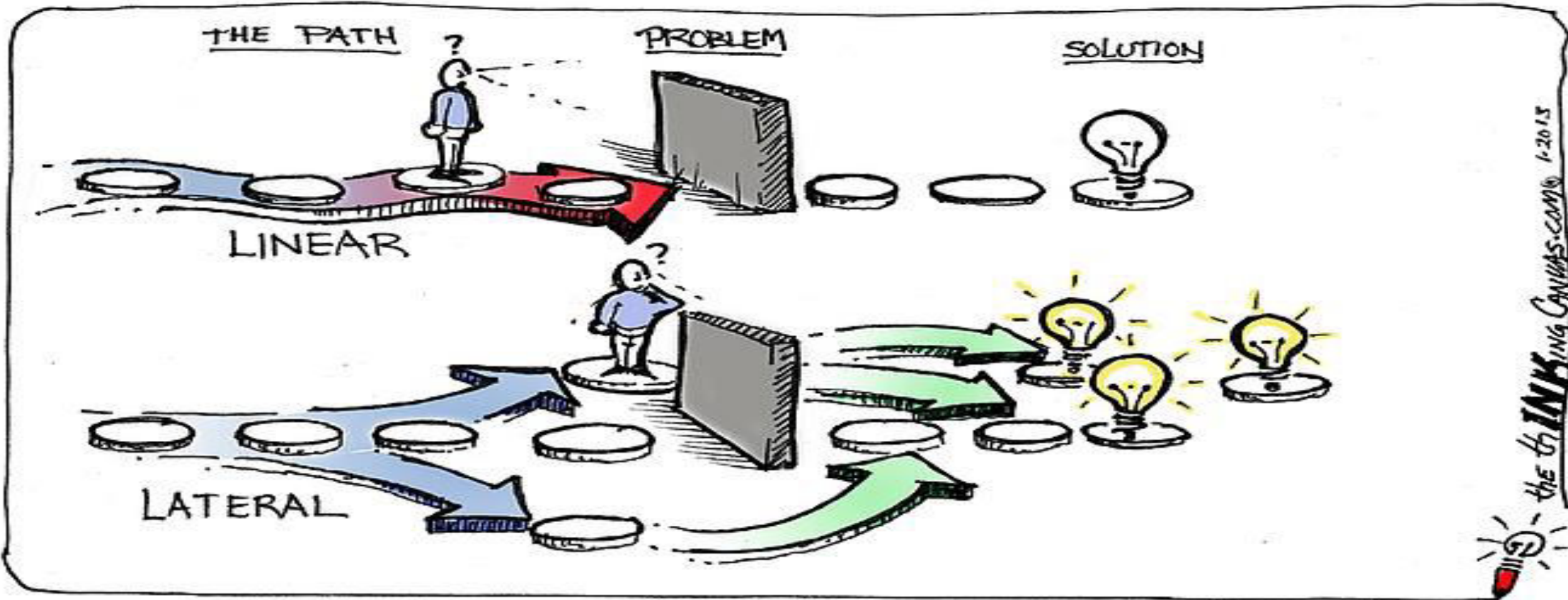


# What is Lateral Thinking?

- Lateral Thinking means thinking differently or thinking out of the box.
- Coined by Edward de Bono in 1967



Lateral thinking involves looking at problem from a different angle. If you are still not clear, here are the 6 top classic examples of exactly how lateral thinking works.



# What is Lateral Thinking?

See the popular lateral thinking puzzles below:

- Puzzle 1:
- Three switches outside a windowless room are connected to three light bulbs inside the room. How can you determine which switch is connected to which bulb if you may enter the room only once?
- Answer: Switch one light on for a minute; turn it off and turn another on. Go into the room and feel the off bulbs. The warm bulb is connected to the first switch, the on bulb is connected to the second and the cold bulb is connected to the third switch.



# What is Lateral Thinking?

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- Puzzle 2:

- A man is replacing a wheel on his car, when he accidentally drops the four nuts used to hold the wheel on the car, and they fall into a deep drain, irretrievably lost. A passing girl offers him a solution which enables him to drive home. What is it?

- Answer: Use one nut from each of the other three wheels.

# What is Lateral Thinking?

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- Puzzle 3:
- A truck is stuck at a road under a bridge. It's just a couple of inches too high to pass under. Any other route, avoiding the bridge would add a couple of hours to the journey. A young boy comes along and again saves the day. How?
- Answer: Let air out of the tires till the truck is low enough.

# Introduction to Six Thinking Hats

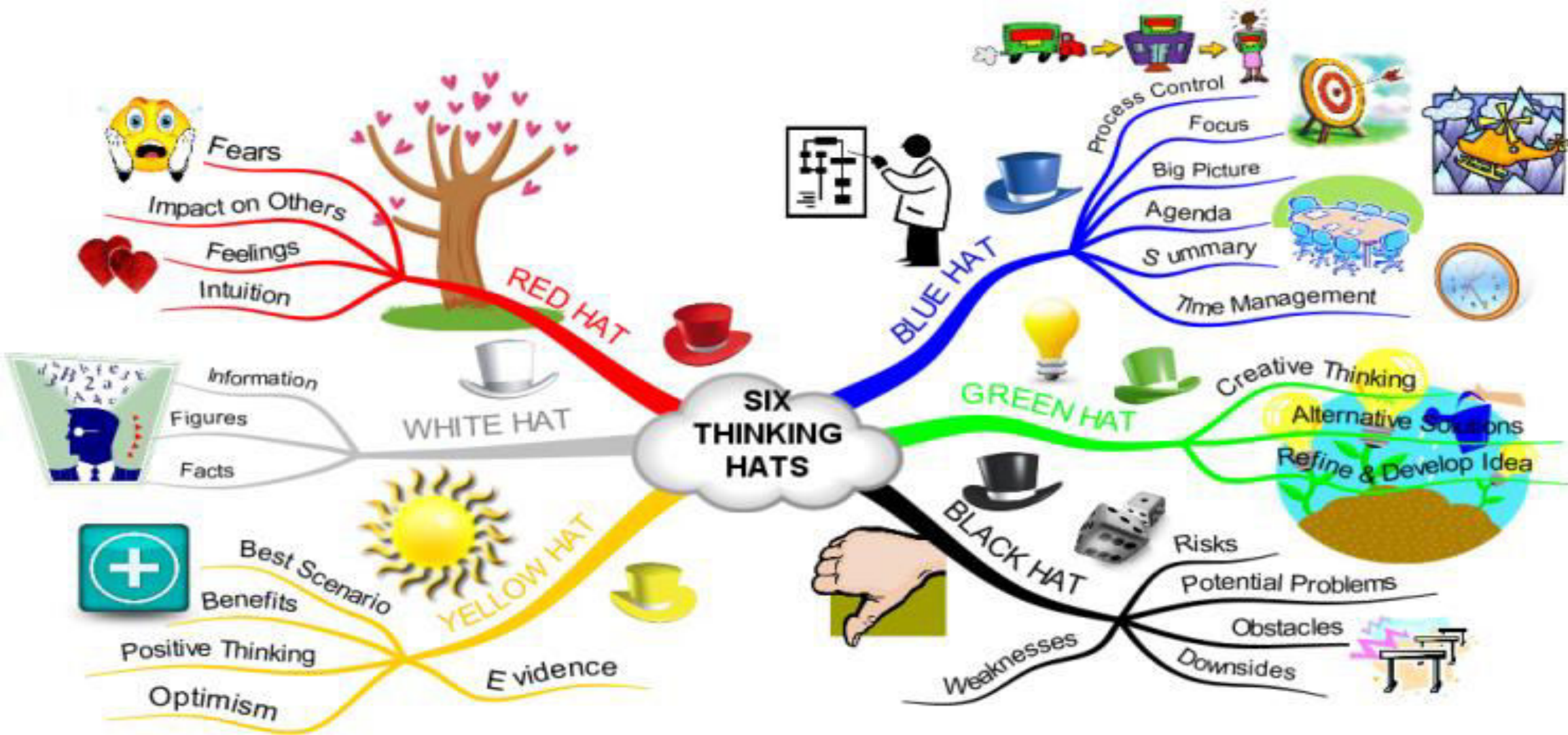
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- A method for effective team meetings, problem solving, decision making and proposal/design evaluation
- A method based on the concept of parallel thinking
- Can be used in businesses, schools and families for resolving issues and making decisions
- Major organizations using Six Thinking Hats are: NASA, IBM, ABB, Siemens, Microsoft, British Airways, BP, Statoil, NTT, Federal Express, Polaroid, Pepsico, DuPont, Prudential Insurance etc.

# Introduction to Six Thinking Hats

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- It Can be used by businessmen, professionals, teachers, students, children or individuals.
- There are six different color imaginary hats that you can put on or take off.
- Hats help a group to use parallel thinking
- Color of hat identifies the type or direction of thinking
- The main idea is to have the group “wear only one hat at a time”





# White Hat Thinking









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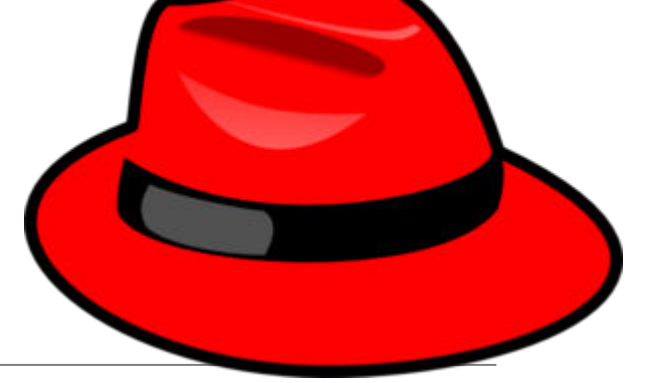
-  Neutral, objective information
-  Facts & figures
-  Two tiers of facts - Believed Facts & Checked Facts
-  Excludes ones own opinions
-  hunches, judgments
-  Removes feelings & impressions
-  Report of opinion of someone else



# White Hat Thinking

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-  Questions to be asked & answered under White hat:
-  What information / facts do we know?
-  What information is missing?
-  What information / facts would we like to have?
-  How are we going to get the information?
-  What is relevant?
-  What is most important?
-  How valid is this?



# Red Hat Thinking

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„Emotions & feelings influence thinking & red hat acknowledges this fact „

Emotions come in three ways:

- Background emotions such as fear, anger, hatred, love etc.
- Initial perceptions (eg. having insulted by someone etc.)
- Emotions after a map of situations has been put together „

Hunches, intuitions, impressions „

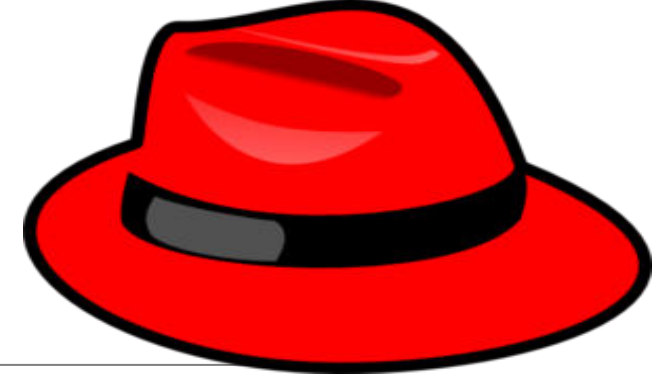
Doesn't have to be logical or consistent „

No justifications, reasons or basis









Questions to be asked & answered under Red hat: „

How do I feel about this right now? „How cold or warm do I feel about this? „How am I reacting to this?



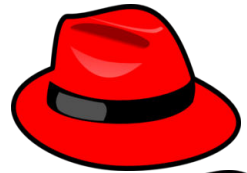
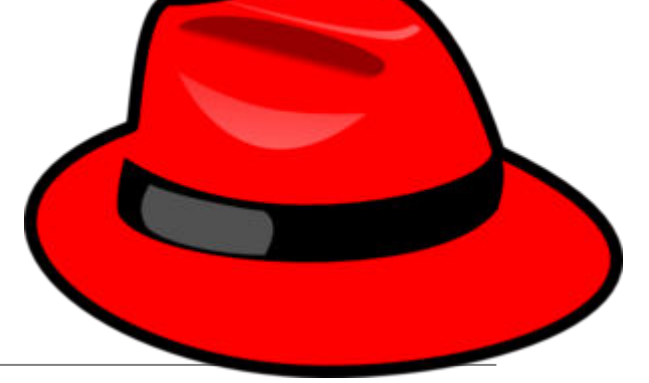


# Red Hat Thinking

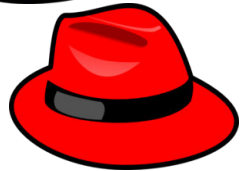
-  Emotions & feelings influence thinking & red hat acknowledges this fact
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# Red Hat Thinking

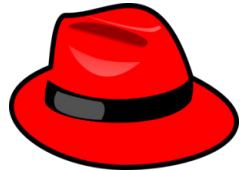
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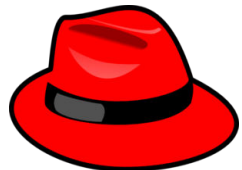
Questions to be asked & answered under Red hat:



How do I feel about this right now?



How cold or warm do I feel about this?









How am I reacting to this?



# Black Hat Thinking

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-  Cautious and careful
-  Logical negative – why it won't work?
-  Critical judgment, pessimistic view
-  Separates logical negative from emotional
-  Focus on errors, evidence, conclusions
-  Worst-case scenarios

# Black Hat Thinking

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Questions to be asked & answered under Black hat:



Is this true?



Will it work?



Why it won't work?

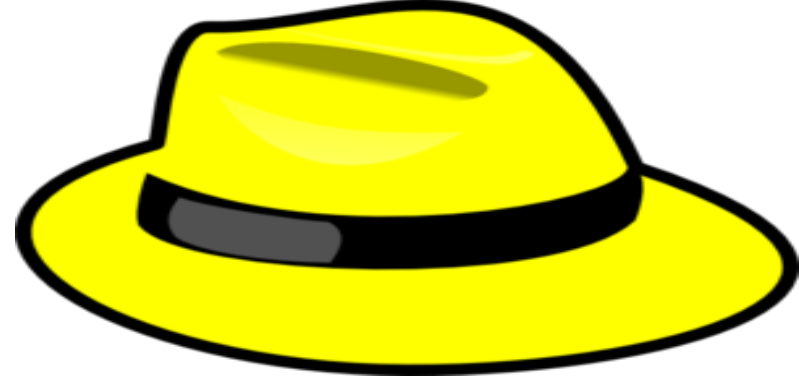


What are the weaknesses?



What is wrong with it?

# Yellow Hat Thinking



Positive & speculative



Positive thinking, optimism, opportunity



Benefits „Best-case scenarios



Questions to be asked & answered under Yellow hat: „



What are the good points?



What are the benefits?



Why will this idea work?



Why is this worth doing?



How will it help us?



Why can it be done?

# Green Hat Thinking



New ideas, concepts, perceptions



Deliberate creation of new ideas



Alternatives and more alternatives



New approaches to problems



Creative & lateral thinking



Questions to be asked & answered under Green hat:

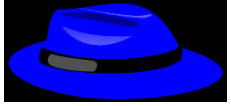
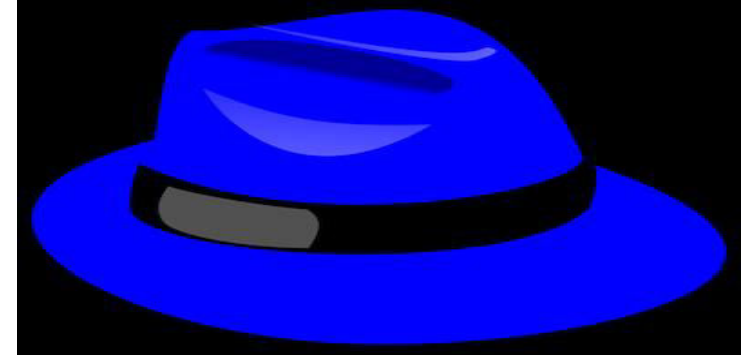


What are some possible ways to work this out?

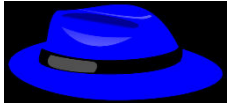


What are some other ways to solve the problem?

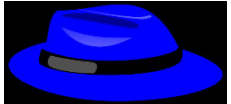
# The Blue Hat



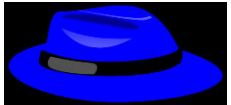
Blue hat is unique as it thinks about thinking



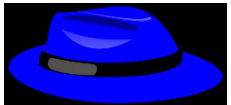
Control or organization of thinking process



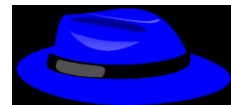
Thinking sessions usually begin & end with blue hat



Normally, session leader uses blue hat „Instructions for thinking



Controls the sequence or use of other hats



Brings in discipline and focus

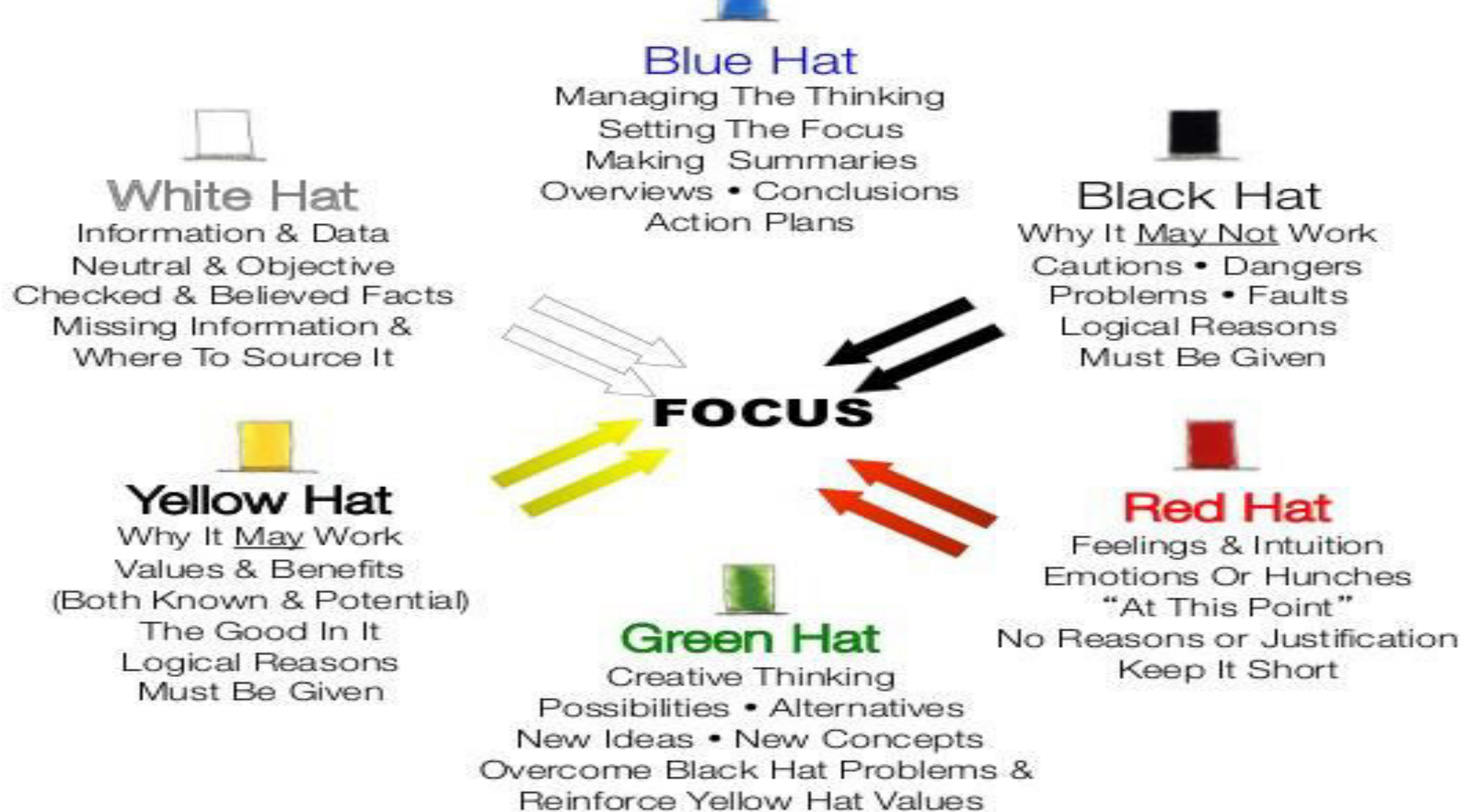
# Open with the blue hat...

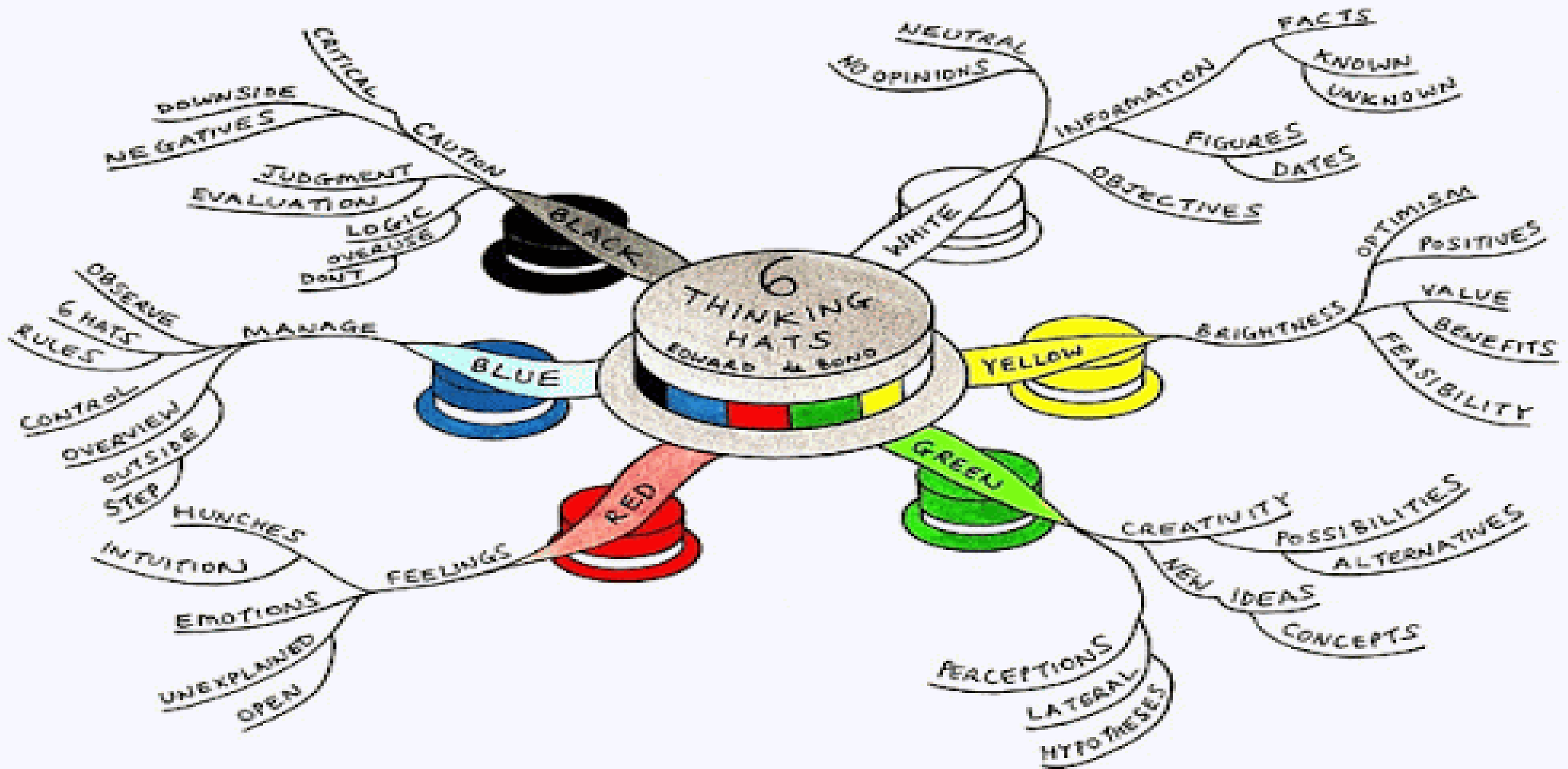
- Why are we here?
- What are we thinking about?
- Definition of the situation or problem
- The background to the thinking
- What we want to achieve?
- we want to end up?
- A plan for the sequence of hats
- Time for each hat session and time allowed for each individual



# ...and close with the blue hat

- „What have we achieved?
- What decision have we reached?
- What do we do next?
- Summarizes the following:
  - Outcome
  - Conclusion
  - Design
  - Solution
  - Next steps





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# Using the Hats

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- Use blue hat at the beginning and end
- Blue hat is usually worn by the facilitator
- Use any hat, as often as needed
- Hats can be used singly at any point or as a sequence of two, three, four or more hats
- Sequence can be preset or evolving

# Using the Hats

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- Not necessary to use every hat
- Time under each hat: generally, short
- Requires discipline from each person to stay focused „
- Adds an element of play
- Can be used by individuals and groups

# Hat Sequence - Evaluation

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To discover the positive aspects and negative aspects of an idea:

*f*Open with the blue hat.

*f*Use the yellow hat before the black hat. *f*

Then, follow up with the green hat (new ideas) and red hat (feelings) thinking

. *f*Close with the blue hat.

Examples: *f*

Consider positive and negative aspects of having a weekly technical seminar.

*f*Evaluate different alternative technologies for developing a software system

# Hat Sequence - Caution

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To look at situations critically: *f*

Open with the blue hat. *f*

First consider facts using the white hat. *f*

Then, use the black hat to discover difficulties. *f*

Follow up with some red hat (feelings) thinking. *f*

Close with the blue hat.

Example:

Consider the consequences of project leader's resignation in the middle of the project

# Hat Sequence - Design

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To create new ideas, products or improvements to existing design: *f*

Open with the blue hat. *f*

Then, use the green hat to generate new ideas & designs. *f*

Follow up with some red hat (feelings) thinking. *f*

Close with the blue hat.

Example:

Brainstorm to generate new ideas for marketing our products and increase sales



# Hat Sequence – Others

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Comparing fact and opinion - Blue+White+Red+Blue „

Comparing and synthesising (coming up with new ideas from the known) - Blue+White+Yellow+Black+Green+Blue „

Choosing between alternatives – Blue+White+Yellow +Black+ (Green) + Red+Blue „

Identifying Solutions – Blue+White+Black+Green+Blue „

Quick Feedback – Blue+Yellow+Black+Green+Blue „

Strategic Planning – Blue+Yellow+Black+White+Blue+Green+Blue

„Process Improvement – Blue+White+White (Other peoples views)+Yellow+Black+Green+Red+Blue „

Performance Review – Blue+Red+White+Yellow+Black+Green+ Red+Blue H

# Facilitator's Role

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Define the focus of your thinking „

Plan the sequence and timing of the thinking „

Ask for changes in the thinking if needed „

Handle requests from the group for changes in the thinking „

Form periodic or final summaries of the thinking

# Participant's Role

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„Follow the lead of Six Thinking Hats facilitator „

Stick to the hat (type of thinking) that is in current use „

Try to work within the time limits „

Contribute honestly & fully under each of the hats

# Benefits of Six Thinking

Hats Method „Decisions seem to make themselves „

Focused thinking „Improved exploration „

Improved creativity & innovation „

Foster collaborative thinking

„Provides a common language „

Helps people work against type, preference „

Removal of ego from decisions (reduce confrontation)

„Allows a switch in thinking without threatening ego. „

Saves time

# Six Thinking Hats – Case Study

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Scenario: „

The Technopark management is looking at whether they should construct a new building. The amount of available vacant office space is coming down and economy is doing well. „As part of their decision making process, they decided to use the Six Thinking Hats during the meeting. „Given below is just an example of what has come out of the meeting:

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White Hats: „

Analysis of data on the trend of un-rented office space versus the growth in demand, shows that by the time the building is completed there would be severe shortage of un-rented office space with the increasing demand for office space. „

Current government projections indicate solid and steady economic growth for some time. „

Builder's estimate shows that the square feet rate would be more than two times the prevailing rate in other buildings.

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Red Hats: „

Feel that the design of the new building would be very attractive and modern. Hence, the potential tenants may like it, though it may not be cost effective. „

There is a feeling that some of the companies in the old buildings & companies in incubation center might be attracted to the new building because of better facilities. „

Prospects of business expansion & more employment opportunities may seem attractive to the government & management and they look forward to the project.

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Black Hats: „

Worry that the government projections may be wrong, and over estimating the strength of the economy. „

Since the cost per square feet would be double the current cost, it may be difficult to rent out and therefore the company must be prepared for this possibility



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Green Hats: „

Old building spaces vacated by the companies moving to the new building could be renovated to look more trendy with some creative alterations to the basic design and some additional facilities.

This would again attract companies to these old buildings with more revenues because of renovation / additional facilities. „

Special discounted rates in new building could be offered to the companies in old buildings & incubation center to motivate them to move to the new building. „

Considering the increasing fitness awareness, propose to convert some spaces vacated in the old building into a Health Club, which would bring additional revenue.

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Yellow Hats: „

If economy holds up and government projections are correct, we may even achieve the 100% occupancy rate of the new building, and the company stands to make a higher profit.

„If companies in old building & incubation center also move to the new building as Red Hats feel, the company may even successfully sell the new building before the next economic downturn and make a substantial capital gain.

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Blue Hats: „

Needs to keep the meeting focused on the agenda. At the same time, there should be a balance between the company's original objectives in proposing the new building and the possibility of enhancing the plan by considering the new business opportunities that may be identified. „

Must ensure that all members are able to contribute to the discussions meaningfully without letting anyone dominate the meeting



**Thank You!**