

So often I hear someone say, "I picked up a great idea this noon at the — meeting" or "During the meeting yesterday I got to thinking . . ." Remember, a mind that feeds only on itself soon is undernourished, becoming weak and incapable of creative progressive thought. Stimulation from others is excellent mind food.

Second, join and participate in at least one group outside your occupational interests. Association with people who have different job interests broadens your thinking and helps you to see the big picture. You'll be surprised how mixing regularly with people outside your occupational area will stimulate your on-the-job thinking.

Ideas are fruits of your thinking. But they've got to be harnessed and put to work to have value.

Each year an oak tree produces enough acorns to populate a good-sized forest. Yet from these bushels of seeds perhaps only one or two acorns will become a tree. The squirrels destroy most of them, and the hard ground beneath the tree doesn't give the few remaining seeds much chance for a start.

So it is with ideas. Very few bear fruit. Ideas are highly perishable. If we're not on guard, the squirrels (negative-thinking people) will destroy most of them. Ideas require special handling from the time they are born until they're transformed into practical ways for doing things better. Use these three ways to harness and develop your ideas:

1. Don't let ideas escape. Write them down. Every day lots of good ideas are born only to die quickly because they aren't nailed to paper. Memory is a weak slave when it comes to preserving and nurturing brand-new ideas. Carry a note-