

# 21 Days To A Big Idea Summary

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**1-Sentence-Summary:** *21 Days To A Big Idea* shows you how to combine the creative and rational sides of your brain to come up with cool, new ideas and fun ways to implement them, which might even help you create a sustainable business in the long run, in as little as 21 days.

**Read in:** 4 minutes

**Favorite quote from the author:**



The line is really thin. The one between too many and too few ideas, I mean. Most of the people fall into one category, or the other. They either think they have way too many ideas (like me) and can never possibly execute all of them. Or they believe they have absolutely no good ones and can't come up with anything creative at all.

Nobody says: "Yeah, I've got a few good ideas every now and then, just enough when I need them!" It's always one or the other.

Truth be told, those of us in hyper-idea-hibernation mode would probably be best off shutting down their creative crazy brain most of the time, getting to work, and then brainstorming when we need to. But if you're in the other camp, then this book is for you.

Here are 3 lessons from Bryan Mattimore's book to help you come up with big ideas – and it won't even take 21 days:

1. Ask yourself what you wished for as a kid to find areas to innovate in.
2. Use the "and" technique to come up with ideas in seconds.
3. Try billboarding to see which ideas could become a business.

Ready to seriously level up your brainstorming game? Let's figure out what ideas are made of!

## Lesson 1: Kid's wishes will get you right to the intersection of creativity and rationality.

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In 1968, George Land took a test he'd developed for the NASA, aimed at determining how creative people are and decided to give it to children. It worked so flawlessly, that he thought even children could do it. He was right. And they passed with flying colors.

Among 1,600 kids, who were all five years old at the time, creativity was sky-high. 98% of them were ranked on the far creative end of the spectrum.

To see how their creativity developed over time, he decided to let the same children go through that test again five years later. By the time they were ten, only 30% remained creative – that's a steep drop with 2 out of 3 kids losing their creativity.

As you can almost imagine, it only gets worse from there. At 15 years old, only 12% were still creative. And if you give the test to adults...well...you get the flip side of the five-year-olds: **only 2% are creative.**

Clearly, it seems like a good idea to bring back your inner child to light the creative candle again! And in fact, it works: **Think of the things you wished you could do as a child.**

Chances are, a few of these dreams have been developed already, but there are probably plenty left to still create. For example, if you wanted to fly, well, we have airplanes now. And if you want to travel to a whole other world, virtual reality is slowly making its debut.

All of these things started as crazy childhood dreams – but once rational adult brains started tackling them, they became a reality.

## Lesson 2: Come up with ideas in 30 seconds flat by using the “and” technique.

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What if I told you you had to come up with a crazy new innovation in the next 30 seconds? You'd probably panic and freeze right up, wouldn't you? Alright, alright, here's a little help:

**You can combine two random words, a noun and an adjective, before starting to think about your idea.** This is what Bryan Mattimore calls the “and” technique, and it's simply meant to get your brain to think in new ways.

If you write nouns on a pile of cards and adjectives on another, then draw one from each pile, new ideas will quickly fall into place. For example, what would you do with cards that read “garden” and “loud?”

Maybe you'd start thinking about how you can build a music box that covers your whole backyard with its echo when you have a party. Or how you can muffle the sound of your lawnmower to make it less annoying for your neighbors. See, that's two already!

Of course this doesn't just work for totally new ideas – you can just as well use it to come up with a big idea in a specific industry. Just fix the noun in place, for example “flowers,” “online,” “fashion,” or “pizza,” and then try 20-30 different adjectives.

You'll quickly have a whole bunch of new ideas!

## Lesson 3: Find suitable business ideas with billboarding.

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But not all ideas are sustainable. To find out which ones are, you obviously have to get feedback from the real world. Before you do so, however, it helps to come up with a snappy way of sharing your idea, so you don't end up giving a 30-minute talk to each prospect.

This is where billboarding comes in. It works in three steps:

1. Come up with a **snappy name** for your product, by clearly defining what your idea is and which problem it solves for your customers.
2. List all of your products **benefits**.
3. Take the strongest of all the plus points and use it to **create a slogan**.

For example, in case of the lawnmower muffler above, you could call it "Silawn," "MuteMower," or "MuffleMower," to make it instantly clear that it'll make mowing your lawn a quiet practice. In addition, if you make your slogan "Never fight with your neighbors, ever again!" you're sure to let people know this'll take care of a potentially heated topic in advance.

Pretty cool, huh?

## My personal take-aways

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Again, I'm not on the "low-on-ideas" side, but still, I liked how simple this book made the entire process, especially for teams or larger groups of people. Also, brainstorming with the real world in mind, like during billboarding, instantly makes your ideas more actionable. *21 Days To A Big Idea* is a good read.

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## What else can you learn from the blinks?

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- The two advantages of brainstorming
- Why your everyday problems can be your best sources of ideas
- How to find game-changing ideas by looking at already existing technology
- The kind of paint you dreamed of as a kid
- How to keep track of trends using the web and six questions

## Who would I recommend the 21 Days To A Big Idea summary to?

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The 32 year old accountant, who thinks her job is boring and that that's why she doesn't have any good ideas, the 67 year old retiree, who has plenty of everyday annoyances he can solve for himself and the world, and anyone who's never thought of a product name or slogan.