

kickstart*

**26 ways to spark
better & bolder ideas**



Gabriella Goddard

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26 Ways to Spark Better & Bolder Ideas

By Gabriella Goddard

eGuide Edition

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MAKING A DIFFERENCE ONE IDEA AT A TIME

*We believe the world can be a better place
and it will be your ideas that will make it so.*

All it takes is a spark.

Gabriella Goddard, 2018

about brainsparker:

Our mission is to ignite over 1,000,000 people by 2020, to spark new & brilliant ideas that shift paradigms in life, at work and in our world.

Our free brainsparker app is used by hundreds of thousands of people around the world to brainstorm new ideas, overcome blocks and stimulate creative thinking.

And our global academy offers a range of online coaching and training programs designed to develop creativity and innovation capabilities especially at work.

Brainsparker is based in London, United Kingdom, and was founded in 2013 by Gabriella Goddard, a highly experienced Executive Coach, Leadership Trainer, Speaker and Published Author.

Visit us at:

www.brainsparker.com

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INTRODUCTION

We've all been there before. You're up against a problem or a challenge and you just can't seem to find the way forward. You feel frustrated and stuck. And invariably, a big bar of chocolate seems to be your best source of inspiration!

same thinking = same ideas

Albert Einstein once said, "You cannot solve a problem from the same level of consciousness that created it."

Unfortunately, our brains prefer the path of least resistance.

That's why we get stuck in a rut, busy regurgitating old and tired solutions to similar problems.

*"The difficulty lays not so much in developing new ideas
as in escaping from the old ones."*

(John Maynard Keynes)

So how can we get out of this rut and shift into a new level of consciousness?

And how can we do this anytime, anywhere?

To come up with fresh and new solutions to your challenge, you need to disrupt your routine patterns of thinking and fire up your brain's neuronal pathways to connect differently.

In other words, you need to "spark" your brain out of its rut.

This will trigger unusual and surprising connections across different areas of knowledge and experience in your brain. We call this "associational thinking," and it's the hallmark talent of highly innovative entrepreneurs and managers.

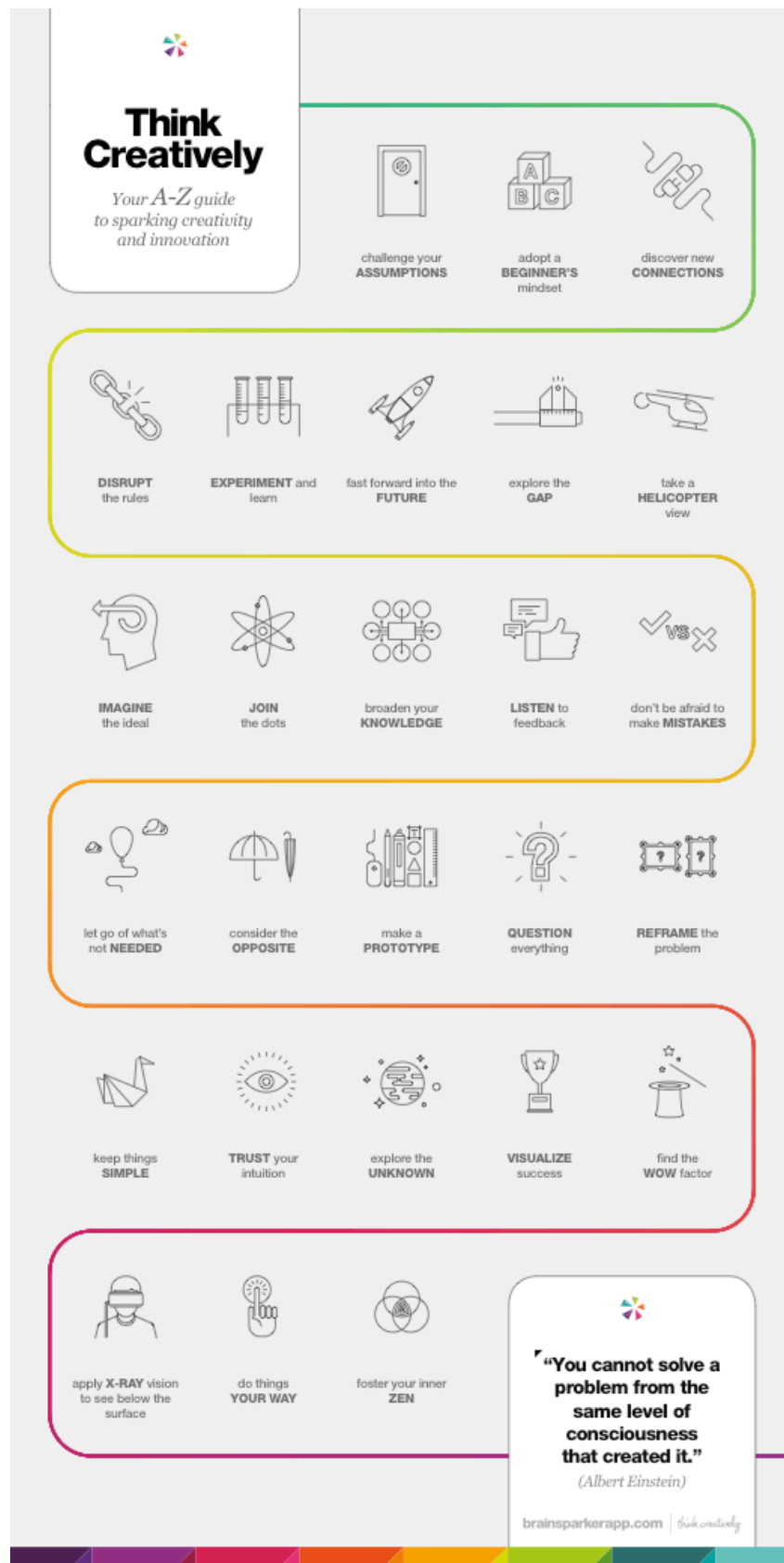
In this eGuide, I've created an A-Z roadmap with 26 creative sparks designed to force your brain to think differently and form new connections. These are just a few of the random brainstorming prompts available in our free Brainsparker app.

So if you're feeling stuck or banging your head against a brick wall, why not put your problem or challenge through each technique?

You never know what fresh ideas will pop out.

“THINK CREATIVELY” WALL-CHART

download via <http://brainsparker.com/kickstart-wallchart/>



26 WAYS TO SPARK BETTER & BOLDER IDEAS



A: Challenge Your ASSUMPTIONS

“Your assumptions are your windows on the world,” says actor Alan Alda. “Scrub them off every once in a while, or the light won’t come in.”

When you think about your issue, what assumptions are you making?

Make a list and challenge each one of them.

Do they really hold true?

What new light can you let in?



B: Adopt a BEGINNER’S Mindset

At 3 years old, Sofia has a brain like a supercharged engine, hungry for learning and creativity. Can you guess what her favorite question is?

Why not take a fresh look at the problem you want to solve? Invite your curious inner child out to play and pretend you know nothing.

Ask “why?”

Or even better, ask “why not?”



C: Discover New CONNECTIONS

As Steve Jobs once said, “Creativity is connecting things.” The more you expand your consciousness, the more connection points you can make. Look outside your field and explore other people’s successes.

What can you learn?

What new connections can you make?

How can you bring these insights into your current situation?



D: DISRUPT the Rules

Remember the days when you had to actually go into a bookshop to buy a book? Then Amazon came along and changed everything.

Take a moment to think about how you might just be accepting the status quo, and inadvertently conforming to “the way things are done.”

What “rules” could you challenge and change?



E: EXPERIMENT and Learn

Thomas Edison didn’t get the light-bulb right the first time. In fact, he “found 10,000 ways that didn’t work.”

Experimenting gives you the chance to fail fast and learn quickly about what works and what doesn’t.

How could you test some of your best concepts on a small scale?



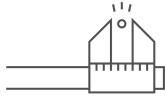
F: Fast Forward into the FUTURE

The great artist Leonardo da Vinci was renowned for his ability to imagine the future. He conceptualized designs for the parachute and helicopter centuries before they were even invented.

So fast-forward to 1 year, 5 years and 20 years from now.

What could be possible?

What would be your biggest dream?



G: Explore the GAP

The gap is the space between where you are today and where you want to be. Filmmaker Jane Campion once said, “If you can stand in the space just for a little while, a new door will open.”

So reflect on your current situation and explore the gaps.

What are the biggest obstacles?

What are your greatest fears?



H: Take a HELICOPTER View

Sometimes we get so focused on the trees that we can't see the forest. When you can rise above your problem, you're able to view it in the context of the bigger picture.

So think about the wider scale of your life, your job or your company.

What is most important?

What are the top priorities?

How does this perspective change your view of the current challenge?



I: IMAGINE the Ideal

Walt Disney said, “If you can dream it you can do it.” And look at what he was able to achieve with a dream and a mouse.

Close your eyes and imagine your absolute ideal scenario.

What do you see?

How do you feel?

What are people saying around you?

How were you able to achieve this vision?



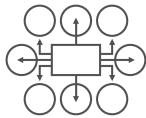
J: JOIN the Dots

History is full of innovative concepts that were the result of combining existing ideas in novel ways. Dyson did exactly that when he combined a vacuum cleaner with a sawdust cyclone to invent the first bagless vacuum cleaner.

Grab some Post-it notes and write or draw one idea on each.

Mix and match them together.

How many new and interesting combinations can you discover?



K: Broaden Your KNOWLEDGE

Tunnel vision can stifle creativity. That's why it took an outsider like Apple to revolutionize an entrenched mobile phone industry with the iPhone.

Explore outside your area of expertise to enrich your mind and expand your consciousness.

What new trends are emerging?

What new topics could you explore?

How can you integrate this new knowledge?



L: LISTEN to Feedback

Great ideas rarely emerge fully formed. Feedback helps improve and evolve good ideas into great ones. Facebook started as a college website before evolving into a global phenomenon some years later.

So ask a diverse range of people for feedback.

Listen carefully to what they say.

Be aware of the words they use. Also notice what they don't say.



M: Don't Be Afraid to Make MISTAKES

The fear of making mistakes is a huge stumbling block to creativity and innovation, especially in the corporate arena.

Yet the humble Post-it note was a concept that originated from a bad batch of glue.

So how can you think big, act small, fail fast and learn rapidly?

And what's the worst that can happen, anyway?



N: Let Go of What's Not NEEDED

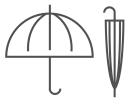
The artist Hans Hofmann once said, "The ability to simplify means to eliminate the unnecessary so that the necessary may speak." Budget airlines have built successful businesses around this philosophy.

Minimalist design has done the same. Google's home page remains the epitome of a "less is more" approach.

So think about the ideas you've generated.

What is not necessary?

How could this be eliminated?



O: Consider the OPPOSITE

Apparently, Albert Einstein was able to imagine an object both in motion and at rest at the same time. Being able to hold paradoxes shifts you from an "either/or" mindset to a "both/and" mentality.

This blows open the creative spectrum from which fresh ideas can emerge. So consider your challenge.

What is the "norm?"

What is the opposite of this?

How could both hold true?



P: Make a PROTOTYPE

Rapid prototyping has been key to the design and development of our Brainsparker app. First we used rough paper mock-ups. Then we moved on to refined digital screenshots. We shared our prototypes with others, watched how they used them and got their instinctive feedback.

How could you do the same to improve and refine your best ideas?

Remember, your prototypes don't have to be perfect.



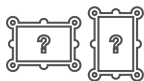
Q: QUESTION Everything

Asking questions is the best way to probe a problem and find the pain points. Take the idea behind Netflix, for example. The driving question that co-founder Reed Hastings asked after he was fined \$40 for an overdue DVD was, "What if a video rental company didn't charge late fees?"

Think about your situation and brainstorm ideas around these two killer questions:

"What if?" and

"How might we?"



R: REFRAME the Problem

Imagine a circus performance with no live animals. Cirque du Soleil did. "We didn't reinvent the circus," said co-founder Guy Laliberte. "We repackaged it in a much more modern way."

By taking a different perspective, they tapped into a plethora of fresh ideas that have made their show a global sensation.

So put yourself in the shoes of your user or customer.

What is missing for them?

How could you deliver this in a new and novel way?



S: Keep Things SIMPLE

The brand name “Skype” comes from an abbreviation of “sky peer-to-peer.” And this describes the essence of the Skype service, which hasn’t changed much since it launched in 2003. By keeping things simple, Skype has gone on to attract more than 660 million users worldwide.

So boil your challenge down to the absolute essence.

What is at the heart of the problem?

Brainstorm ideas around that. And keep your ideas simple, too.



T: TRUST Your Intuition

“Intuition is the wisdom formed by feeling and instinct – a gift of knowing without reasoning,” says top businesswoman, Angela Ahrendts.

As such, your intuition can hold a wealth of insight and surprising ideas if you’d only stop and listen to it.

When you think of the challenge you’re facing and the ideas you’ve generated, what does your gut feeling say?



U: Explore the UNKNOWN

In 2001, entrepreneur Elon Musk conceptualized “Mars Oasis,” a project to land a miniature greenhouse on Mars containing food crops. But first he needed to buy a rocket. Easier said than done for a space novice such as Musk.

In the end, he decided to build his own and founded SpaceX with the long-term goal of creating a “true spacefaring civilization.”

In the same way, what unknown could you explore?



V: VISUALIZE Success

When Nobel Laureate Jonas Salk was asked how he went about inventing the polio vaccine, he replied, “I pictured myself as a virus or a cancer cell and tried to sense what it would be like.”

How could you do the same?

Just imagine that your solution has been incredibly successful.

What is happening?

What are you doing?

What are you seeing?

How do you feel?



W: Find the “WOW” Factor

Mills & Boon has been publishing romance novels for over a hundred years, yet it was an unknown self-published author, E. L. James, who hit the best-seller list with her *50 Shades of Grey*.

For millions of people around the world, it has the “WOW” factor. Somehow it has hit an important known (or unknown) need or want.

Which of your ideas could really “wow” your user?



X: Apply X-RAY Vision to See Below the Surface

Our emotions play a key role in the decisions we make. One research study even showed that sunny days, which make us feel happy, caused a boost in stock market performance.

So look past the surface of “what is” and drill down into “what is the real problem.”

Tap into the emotional needs and wants of your users and customers.

What fresh ideas can you come up with to satisfy these?



Y: Do Things YOUR WAY

Instagram has just revealed that its top 5 accounts, including Taylor Swift, Beyoncé and Kim Kardashian, each have more than 40 million followers.

What draws people to follow these celebrities is their authentic and very personal updates, all posted in real-time.

You too, are unique. Your best creative asset could be the way you see things, the way you think and the way you do things.

If you knew you couldn't fail, what would YOU do?



Z: Foster Your Inner ZEN

Brain specialists have found that Theta waves activate your imagination, trigger new ideas and create a feeling of calm. That's why those spontaneous "light bulb" moments often happen when you're relaxed, in the shower, walking the dog or driving home.

So take time to walk in nature, do something repetitive, meditate or simply daydream.

And be mindful; you never know when that "aha" moment will arrive.

"Creative thinking inspires ideas.

Ideas inspire change."

(Barbara Januszkiewicz)

IN SUMMARY

The 26 creative sparks we've just covered are designed to help disrupt your routine thinking and help you make new connections. This will naturally spark better and bolder ideas.

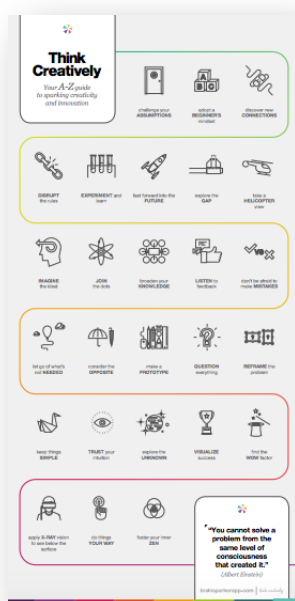
So try them on a challenge or problem you're facing.

You never know what might pop out!

Self-Reflection:

- *What have been your 3 most important take-aways?*
- *What have you learned about yourself and your creativity?*
- *Which 3 techniques would you like to focus on over the next 30 days?*
- *How will you know you've been successful?*
- *How are you going to remind yourself to practice these?*
- *How can you help others to be more creative?*

Your “Think Creatively” Wall-chart



This is a very handy reminder of all the 26 ways we've covered to spark new and fresh ideas.

Just print it off and post it on your office wall to remind yourself to think differently every day.

Plus it's great to use with groups and teams.

Download your wall-chart via this link:

<http://brainsparker.com/kickstart-wallchart/>

FREE RESOURCES

Download our Free Brainsparker App (iOS only)

www.brainsparkerapp.com

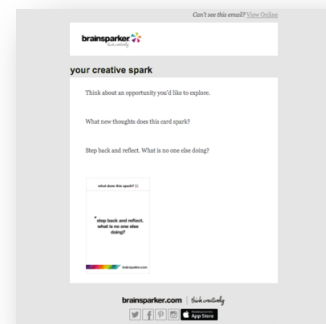
Join hundreds of thousands of people around the world who are using brainsparker's random creativity prompt cards to trigger new and fresh ideas. With more than 250 creativity prompts simply a tap away, you'll never be short of creative inspiration.



Get a “Daily Spark”:

<http://brainsparker.com/brainsparker-app-for-android/>

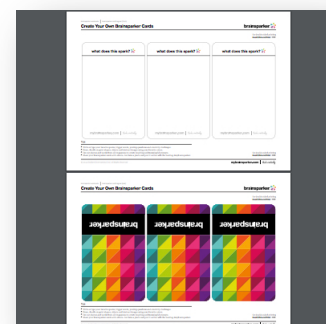
Inspire your creativity with our "daily spark" service. Every day we'll email you a random brainsparker card designed to get you thinking differently. It's ideal for people using Android & Windows phones.



Make Your Own Creativity Cards

www.mybrainsparker.com

Let your creative spirit go wild and make your own brainsparker cards. Just download and print our card template. Add your favorite quotes, trigger words, probing questions, doodles, paintings and images.



About Gabriella Goddard



Gabriella is an international Executive Coach, Leadership Development expert and Published Author with over 15 years of experience developing people to become game changers and pioneers of the future.

She has coached leaders and managers in organizations such as L'Oreal, Renault, Hitachi, Heinz, Logica, Barclays, Panasonic, EY, Airbus, Tesco and Sanofi.

In 2013 she developed the brainsparker app as a tool for people to tap into their inner creative genius anytime, anywhere.

Brainsparker is now one of the top-ranking apps for creativity and creative thinking in the App Store and has been featured in The New York Times, Boston Globe, Design Milk, Fox News and App Advice.

Gabriella is also the Lead Coach at the brainsparker academy, a global online coaching and training organization specializing in creative thinking and innovation.

Please feel free to email Gabriella directly with any questions at:

gabriella@brainsparker.com