



Lateral Thinking

Edward de Bono

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THE classic work about improving creativity from world-renowned writer and philosopher Edward de Bono. In schools we are taught to meet problems head-on: what Edward de Bono calls 'vertical thinking'. This works well in simple situations - but we are at a loss when this approach fails. What then? Lateral thinking is all about freeing up your imagination. Through a series of special techniques, in groups or working alone, Edward de Bono shows how to stimulate the mind in new and exciting ways. Soon you will be looking at problems from a variety of angles and offering up solutions that are as ingenious as they are effective. You will become much more productive and a formidable thinker in your own right. 'If more bankers and traders had read Lateral Thinking and applied the ideas of Edward de Bono to their own narrow definitions of risk, reward and human expectations, I suspect we would be in much better shape than we are' Sir Richard Branson

Edward de Bono invented the concept of lateral thinking. A world-renowned writer and philosopher, he is the leading authority in the field of creative thinking and the direct teaching of thinking as a skill. Dr de Bono has written more than 60 books, in 40 languages, with people now teaching his methods worldwide. He has chaired a special summit of Nobel Prize laureates, and been hailed as one of the 250 people who have contributed most to mankind. Dr de Bono's titles include classic bestsellers such as Six Thinking Hats, Lateral Thinking, I Am Right You Are Wrong, Teach Yourself How To Think, Teach Your Child How To Think, and Simplicity - all now re-issued by Penguin. www.edwdebono.com

Lateral Thinking Details

Date : Published January 4th 1977 by Penguin UK (first published January 1st 1970)

ISBN : 9780140219784

Author : Edward de Bono

Format : Paperback

Genre : Psychology, Nonfiction, Self Help, Business, Philosophy

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Ali alhusainy says

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Ahmed Almawali says

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Nen Simmons says

Firstly, putting my status as finished is a fib, because I only got half way through before I had to abandon this book. It is so boring I fell asleep reading it when I wasn't even tired. 90% of the content is a smug, self-congratulatory ramble about how great lateral thinking is, using different metaphors to explain exactly the same thing. The remaining 10% actually describes ways to use lateral thinking, but the dulllest manner imaginable. I know improving your lateral thinking skills requires more effort than solving a few puzzles, but this book fails to engage or inspire you on this quest. I would have given it 1 star, but as I only read half way, I gave it the benefit of the doubt that it would improve. A shame, because I really would like to improve my lateral thinking skills, but this is not the book for me.

Eric says

I've always wanted to improve my lateral thinking skills. I guess some childish part of me was hoping for instant gratification, read this book and bing! you're a lateral thinker. Of course not. It's something you need to work on everyday, even for 5 minutes a day (add that to the list of things you should be doing everyday even for five minutes, stretching, meditating, napping, etc). I guess the book was OK, got a little bored wading through the exercises [these are suggestions for a tacher, and not quite optimised for solo work, though you could probably work that out for yourself].

The chapter on the word 'Po' infuriated me, I must add. Artificialness of it grated very strongly my nerves, so much so that I wanted to toss the book (library book!) out the bus window.

But then he follows up with a very nice chapter on being 'blocked by openness'... having these blind spots

that come from your suboptimal solution work.

Notes to future eric: difference between vertical (logical) and lateral thinking like difference between depth first and breadth first search? or hill climbing vs mutation? You need both. Clichés are useful. Self-reinforcing patterns and laziness (vertical) are good! You can sit around disrupting all day, otherwise you never get things done... that said, sometimes you do need to shake things up, pop yourself out of a dead-end, and that's where lateral thinking comes in useful. It's not about right or wrong, just about different, generating alternatives. Use vertical thinking later to sift through the crap. Suspending judgment.

Hang on to the blocked-by-openness thing.

Argh, now I'm frustrated. I wish I could attend a lateral thinking class, or read something not written by De Bono (and not something fluffy-markety either)

Uriel Vidal says

¿Qué es lo que tienen en común el humor, la creatividad y el pensamiento lateral? :
La capacidad para romper esquemas mentales previamente hechos.

A pesar de que De Bono es uno de los grandes autores de la creatividad, su propuesta se basa en la forma de romper esquemas mentales para “saber qué pasa” y si esto nos lleva a algún lado.

Este parece un libro un poco redundante, ya que en cada capítulo repite la esencia del pensamiento lateral, sin embargo y como el mismo autor lo menciona, es un libro para leerse por capítulos y de consulta en la enseñanza del pensamiento lateral.

Esto último, indica quiénes son los lectores ideales de esta obra: educadores, maestros y personas interesantes en reestructurar su pensamiento, por lo que al libro se le debe leer evitando juicios precipitados.

Una excelente recomendación para perdonas que se autodenominan “creativas”.

Abe Hanara says

The basis of Edward De bonos theory of thinking 'lateral' or in essence, more broadly. This was one of the first of Edward De bono's books that I read. Great read. In his efforts to explain complex theorys, he uses insightful abstract comparisons that his theorys have with tangible objects. Love it

Christian says

The idea could potentially help you to 10X your current performance because it will help you to zoom out and break/surpass what is holding you back.

A very interesting read on a different way of thinking. If you consider yourself a logical thinker you might hate this or you might find this one of the best reads of your life. It is designed to help teachers but does also

give students and beginners plenty of material to work with.

My friend who suggested this told me to read it over a few years. And so I did. There is a lot of good stuff in it and in order to process a lot of it, you will need to read it over time.

Deepu Shibu says

As much as we think logically and vertically in life, there comes a time when those techniques just won't be good enough to solve your problem.

Enter lateral thinking. This book gives an idea on what lateral thinking is, how it alongside vertical thinking is the most deadliest tool an individual can have in solving any problem.

This book and its concepts should be introduced in our primary education system and kids should be taught to inculcate lateral thinking in their day by day world.

A good book to read and understand buy at your own pace.

Murray says

This book starts with a dilemma faced by a pretty merchant's daughter confronted by her father's nasty creditor. The creditor says he will settle the issue with a game of chance. Where they stand are white and black stones. he will put two stones in a bag and she will draw one out. A white stone means the debt is settled, a black stone means the debt is settled but she must marry the money-lender. Our heroine notices that the money lender puts two black stones in the bag. So whatever she chooses she is in a fix. And if she demonstrates he is cheating then he will just ruin her father. So she . . . uses lateral thinking. (You need to look at the book to see what she does, I won't spoil it.)

De Bono likes to point out that this phrase - lateral thinking - was coined by him and is now in the Oxford dictionary. Why he should worry that people do not realise he invented the idea I don't know - his books have allowed him to buy a whole island near Venice apparently, which can't be bad.

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Moayad Taibah says

“How do I love thee, let me count the ways”... apparently, there were a lot of ways for this author to explain

Lateral Thinking and its techniques over and over and over...and over. I feel if this book was shorter by 100 pages it would've delivered the same content, sheesh...

Lateral thinking is an alternative way of thinking that leaves some room for incorrect ideas to surface without being judged or shut down before their time. We tend to think in a structured way in order to find the correct path towards the answer. But with lateral thinking, the purpose is finding something interesting and eventually getting to an answer regardless of the path we took to get there.

The book is good at explaining what vertical and lateral thinking are and how they differ from each other, and it provides some techniques to facilitate lateral thinking along with practices to actually try out those techniques.

Let's start with the good stuff. I loved the analogies the author made to explain the concept of lateral and vertical thinking, it simplified how the brain processes information and the possible limitations it entails. I also appreciated some of the techniques presented to practice lateral thinking, even though some of them are common sense and we just need to be conscious of them when needed.

What I didn't like was the practices that seemed to be too distant from being practical and for me, it didn't serve me much other than to actually get a better grasp of the techniques they represent. The other MAJOR disappointment and the main reason this book got a 2 was the amount of redundant information.

Overall, I find it quite difficult to recommend this book to anyone with the amount of time you'll have to waste in order to get to the meat of things, but if you're working in a creative field I would say let go of your perfectionist and skim through it.

Key Takeaways:

1. The way the mind works is by trying to fit pieces of information into an already known pattern thus the order in which you receive information matters and shifts your way of thinking.
2. Vertical thinking is focused on what is correct and the best while avoiding making mistakes. Lateral thinking suspends judgment and generative.
3. Challenging assumptions can be difficult but it comes with practice, one method that can be applied is the 5 why's.
4. Design is a problem-solving technique that shy's away from cliches.
5. Acknowledging dominant ideas and their boundaries helps in loosening things up and going in a different direction.
6. When dealing with concepts and rules reverse and reorder the information to challenge the preconception.
7. The usefulness of generated ideas from brainstorming can be immediate (solution), generate new ideas, or for reframing the problem.
8. Our perception can be polar (black.vs.white) and tends to categorize things which can be limiting.
9. Our perception can be blocked when things are unseen/blocked/adequate (good enough) which stops us from going further and exploring additional solutions.

Manikandan T S says

Everyone is born creative. Creativity can't be learned, but it involves unlearning some of the approaches we learned as part of education.

This book explains the process which helps in improving creativity. This is must read for professionals who solves many technical problems day to day and also for college students to have a successful career.

Howard Y says

Only read this if you want to verbalise De Bono congratulatorily masturbating to himself.

Ramzi says

Being creative is a process, seeing through different lenses and different ways of using information. Also most importantly practice. Good one.

Amiruddin Nagri says

Reading Notes :

- 1 the way mind works
 - 2 difference between lateral and vertical thinking
 - 3 attitudes towards lateral thinking
 - 4 basic nature of lateral thinking
 - 5 the use of lateral thinking
 - 6 techniques
 - 7
 - 8 generation of alternatives
 - 9 innovation
 - 10
 - 11
 - 12 dominant ideas and crucial factors
 - 13 fractionation
 - 14 reversal method
-

Sahaj says

Skim read

Valerie says

To me, the crux of this book might be summed up in an epigram that appears in the book. I don't remember it exactly, but the basic premise is that logic can dig a very deep hole--but you won't strike water until you use lateral thinking to decide where to PUT the hole.

It reminds me of my experiences with school systems that encourage rote learning. When I first went to such a school, I was extremely impressed by how quickly and thoroughly most of the students were able to memorize things. I've always memorized laboriously, and retained little. I continued being impressed until I brought a problem to some of them. "Look." I said "If you change this, and bring that in, doesn't that imply this result?" They looked at me as if I were speaking Sanskrit. Further questioning revealed that they had memorized the formulae, and could apply them without difficulty--but they couldn't understand what the formulae MEANT, or how they were arrived at, or could be changed.

This book is simply a starter for people who want to LEARN rather than memorize. To use Ms Frizzle's line from The Magic School Bus, "Take chances. Make mistakes. Get messy." Once you grasp the principle, the rest of the book is mostly exercises and illustrations. Useful, but you could develop your own--and probably should.

Nikolai Iakimov says

I have recently noticed that I started to stumble upon really simple, but still brilliant ideas that can change my life for the better. But I am coming up with those ideas rather accidentally, in a haphazard way. So, I wondered if there's a way to find a distinct pattern, a sort of well-proven technique to pull off "eurekas" every single day.

In De Bono's "Serious Creativity", which I read a couple of weeks ago, the author dwells upon his concept of "Six thinking hats" and some other thinking tools, such as random words or images. "Lateral thinking" is a somewhat shorter book, and a fair part of it is devoted to that very gimmick of inserting a random word into a thinking equation. At first, it didn't come off as a viable tactic, but I tried it myself and it worked!

Other concepts that De Bono extrapolates on are finding the crucial point (e.g., do robots need to have five-fingered hands, like humans? - no, the crucial point is that they simply need enough to hold something firmly); reversal (e.g., does the policeman regulate the traffic flow? - yes, and no, in a way the traffic flow commands his actions) and, probably, the most applicable one - challenging assumptions. Let's say, you need to plant five trees so that each one of them would be at an equal distance from others. Seemingly, this is impossible, but only assuming that they are all on a flat ground. If we break this assumption and imagine the central tree growing on top of a hill or at the bottom of some pit - and it's perfectly feasible!

However, just like "Serious Creativity", this book lacks real-life examples and contains too much conceptual theorizing instead of practical advice. Above that, it possibly caters more to school and university teachers teaching creativity in classes, than to actual learners of creativity. But if one distills the presented lessons carefully, he can still gain a lot from this book.

Fatema Hassan , bahrain says

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Renato Besen says

Interesting book, offering some processes to generate ideas and solve problems.

To me, the main point of the book is to see problems and solutions as patterns, so after you recognize a pattern you can break/rearrange to form new patterns (or new solutions).

The author argues that ideas should not be discarded, no matter how ridiculous they seem. Even the most outrageous ideas can provide insights about a problem. It's not important to be right all along the problem solving process, it's only important to be right at the end.