

Mental Locks of Creativity



The following 10 statements and ideas can block you from being creative.

Do any of these relate to you, and how can you 'break out'.

1. **“The Right Answer”**

Much of our educational system is based on the search for the one right answer. Thus the “right answer” approach becomes ingrained in our thinking. The problem is that life is ambiguous; there are many right answers- all depending on what you are looking for.

2. **“That’s Not Logical”**

The thinking process can be divided into two processes: soft thinking which is approximate, diffuse, and contradictory, and hard thinking which is precise, specific and consistent.

3. **“Follow The Rules”**

Our culture puts a great deal of pressure on one to “follow the rules.” Although some rules are good and serve to protect society, “following the rules” can result in only “thinking of things as they already are.”

4. **“Be Practical”**

We become prisoners to the familiar and practical. When faced with a problem, the question is “what has been done” rather than “what if.” For daily activities the practical is important, but it can be destructive if it prevents us from asking “what if”.

5. **“Avoid Ambiguity”**

Avoid ambiguity because of the communication problems it can cause. However, too much detail and specificity can stifle the imagination.

6. **“To Error is Wrong”**

There are times when error is inappropriate. Although many times an error on the 1st, 2nd, or 50th attempt can serve as a steppingstone to the desired result. Being afraid to fail and constantly playing it safe can work to slow down or halt the creative process.

7. **“Play is Frivolous”**

Necessity may be the mother of invention, but play is certainly the father. Many times an idea will be generated when you are involved in a task completely unrelated to your problem. But for some, the attitude is “stop playing around and get down to business.”

8. **“That’s Not My Area”**

Specialization is a fact of life. Society requires you to narrow your focus and limit your field of view. To counter this attitude, make it a habit to be on the lookout for novel ideas that others have used successfully. Actively be on the hunt for new and interesting approaches.

9. **“Don’t Be Foolish”**

This phenomenon in which group members are more interested in retaining approval of the other members than trying to come up with creative solutions is poking fun at “the fool’s” idea when they may have something important to say.

10. **“I’m Not Creative”**

This attitude results in the self-fulfilling prophecy. Individuals stifle themselves because they believe that creativity belongs only to others. To be creative, one must believe in the worth of their ideas and have the persistence to build on them.