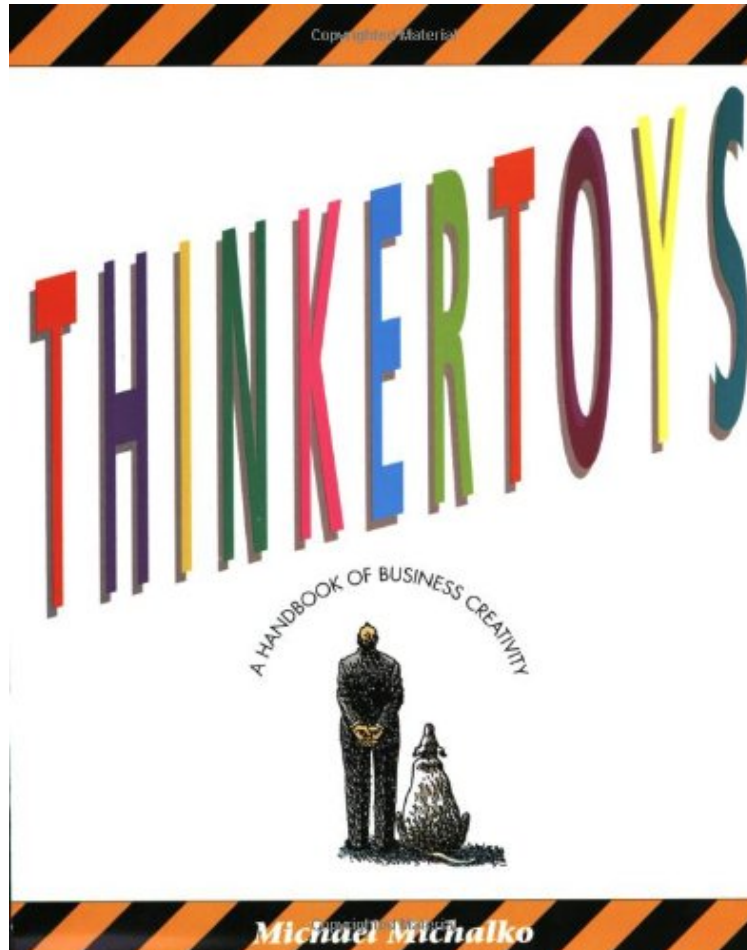


Thinkertoys: A Handbook of Business Creativity

Michael Michalko

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Michael Michalko : Thinkertoys: A Handbook of Business Creativity before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Thinkertoys: A Handbook of Business Creativity:

4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. This book makes my unconscious mind happy. By Richard N. Stephenson Ever come up with an idea that just made you shiver in giddy excitement? I'm talking "hair-on-the-back-of-the-neck" type "whoa!" thrill? Give the brainstorming methods of this magnificent gem a chance and I can assure you this will be a part of your life. I've been able to find a spattering of brainstorming methods on the internet. Heck, I even made a couple of my own. However, I was never really satisfied in that no single reference point occupied a dedicated space in my library. Nothing seemed worth it. Let's just say that this is no longer the case. Thinkertoys is a tool that any person, creative or 'not', can use and *will* produce usable results. An honest attempt at the exercises is necessary - you can't go becoming a body-builder just by picking up a weight one time now can you? This book will take some time to go through if you take your time but it's worth the effort. Add this to your library, tab/flag the Thinkertoy

'blueprints', and proceed to have a great innovation tool by your side at all times. This book makes my unconscious mind shout for joy. For that, Mr. Michalko, I thank you many times over. ===== Recommend to anyone who is (or is not) creative, anyone looking for a metric "butt-ton" of idea generators, and anyone who would like to understand the mind a bit more. ===== This is one of the rare books I actually paid full (discounted) price on ... and it's worth every penny. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. I liked it so much I bought it again for Kindle ... By Poe I was looking for a way to be more creative in breaking down problems. ThinkerToys teaches you two things 1) What it means to be creative--this is all perspective, you must think you're creative and practice it 2) Techniques for encouraging creative thinking, eg questioning assumptions and overturning them. I bought this in paperback and it was inconvenient to carry around; I liked it so much I bought it again for Kindle for easy reference when I need to pump the creative juices. It's really that good. The techniques are very helpful just to exercise your creative muscle everyday. 2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Creative Thinking De-Mystified By O. Halabieh As the title hints, this is a handbook on creative thinking techniques. The techniques described in this book can be applied to any problem small or large. They are divided into two broad categories: linear and intuitive. Linear thinkertoys make use mostly of the left side of the brain. They rely on analysis, patterns etc. These techniques include mind mappings, fractionation, reversal and matrix just to name a few. Intuitive thinkertoys make more use of the right side of the brain. They rely on intuition, imagination etc. These techniques include analogies, relaxation and imagery to name a few. What makes this book stand out are the depth and breadth in which the abstract topic of thinking is discussed. In addition the author provides numerous concrete examples of situations in which these techniques were employed. This is an addition to the blueprint on how the technique should be applied. That being said, the guidelines leave room for interpretation which is crucial for generating new ideas. Overall a very interesting and unique read that's highly recommended for anyone looking to learn more about thinking in general and creative thinking in particular. It is highly applicable to any individual regardless of business area. To make the most use out of this book, it's advisable to read one or two sections at a time and try to apply the preached techniques to solve one's every day problems.

Rethink the Way You Think In hindsight, every great idea seems obvious. But how can you be the person who comes up with those ideas? In this revised and expanded edition of his groundbreaking Thinkertoys, creativity expert Michael Michalko reveals life-changing tools that will help you think like a genius. From the linear to the intuitive, this comprehensive handbook details ingenious creative-thinking techniques for approaching problems in unconventional ways. Through fun and thought-provoking exercises, you'll learn how to create original ideas that will improve your personal life and your business life. Michalko's techniques show you how to look at the same information as everyone else and see something different. With hundreds of hints, tricks, tips, tales, and puzzles, Thinkertoys will open your mind to a world of innovative solutions to everyday and not-so-everyday problems.

Shows you how to expand your imagination. --Newsweek A special find. Period. --Executive Edge A must-have book in any business setting. --Women in Business About the Author Michael Michalko is one of the most highly acclaimed creativity experts in the world. As an officer in the U.S. Army, he organized a team of NATO intelligence specialists and international academics in Frankfurt, Germany, to research, collect, and categorize all known inventive-thinking methods. His team applied these methods to various NATO military, political, and economic problems and produced a variety of breakthrough ideas and creative solutions to new and old problems. After leaving military service, he was contracted by the CIA to facilitate think tanks using his creative-thinking techniques. He specializes in providing creativity workshops, seminars, and think tanks for clients who range from individuals to Fortune 500 companies. Excerpt. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved. Introduction THE BARKING CAT What would you think of someone who said, I would like to have a cat, provided it barked? The common desire to be creative, provided it's something that can be easily willed or wished, is precisely equivalent. The thinking techniques that lead to creativity are no less rigid than the biological principles that determine the characteristics of cats. Creativity is not an accident, not something that is genetically determined. It is not a result of some easily learned magic trick or secret, but a consequence of your intention to be creative and your determination to learn and use creative-thinking strategies. The illustration below shows the word FLOP, which we all know and understand. Look at it again. Can you see anything else? Once we see the word FLOP, we tend to exclude all other possibilities, despite the strange shapes of the letters. Yet if you look at the O in flop, you can see a white I. Now if you read the white outlines as letters with the I, you will see the word FLIP. Flip-flop is the complete message. Once found, it seems so obvious that you wonder why you were, at first, blind to it. By changing your perspective, you expand your possibilities until you see something that you were unable to see before. This is what you will experience when you use Thinkertoys. You will find yourself looking at the same information everyone else is looking at yet seeing something different. This new and different way of seeing things will lead you to new ideas and unique insights. Thinkertoys train you how to get ideas. They are specific hands-on techniques that enable you to come up with big or small ideas; ideas that make money, solve

problems, beat the competition, and further your career; ideas for new products and new ways of doing things. The techniques were selected for their practicality and range from the classic to the most modern. They are divided into linear techniques, which allow you to manipulate information in ways that will generate new ideas, and intuitive techniques, which show you how to find ideas by using your intuition and imagination. A popular children's puzzle shows six fishermen whose lines are tangled together to form a sort of maze. One of the lines has caught a fish; the problem is to find which fisherman it belongs to. You are supposed to do this by following each line through the maze, which may take up to six tries, depending on your luck. It is obviously easier to start at the other end and trace the line from the fish to the fisherman, as you have only one possible starting place, not six. This is how I researched and developed Thinkertoys. Instead of presenting a catalog of all known creative techniques and abandoning you to puzzle out which ones actually work, I started with the ideas (fish) and worked backwards to each creator (fisherman). Then I identified the technique that caught the idea. Some readers will feel that they profit more from the linear techniques and will discount the intuitive ones. Others will prefer the intuitive and discount the linear. You can produce ideas using both the linear and intuitive techniques, and should not limit yourself to one or the other--the more ideas you generate the better. This book will change how you perceive your own creativity, while stripping creativity itself of its mystique. You will, perhaps for the first time, see endless possibilities stretching before you. You will learn how to: Generate ideas at will. Find new ways to make money. Create new business opportunities. Manipulate and modify ideas until you come up with the most innovative and powerful ideas possible. Create new products, services, and processes. Improve old products, services, and processes. Develop solutions to complex business problems. Revitalize markets. See problems as opportunities. Become more productive. Be the idea person in your organization. Know where to look for the breakthrough idea. Become indispensable to your organization. Thinkertoys do not render the creative experience, they suggest it. To illustrate, let us imagine me drawing a rabbit on a blackboard. You say Yes, that's a rabbit, although in reality there is nothing on the blackboard but a simple chalk line. The rabbit appears because you have accepted my motion that the space within the line suggests a rabbit. The line limits the content by suggesting a significant form. I must stress that it is not enough to read the book--to create your own ideas, you have to use the techniques. Try to explain the joy of skiing to a bushman who has never left the desert. You can show him some skis and a picture of a snowy mountain, and perhaps get some of the idea across. However, to fully realize the concept of skiing our bushman must put on the skis and head down a mountain. If you merely read these techniques, you will have no more than a suggestion of how to get ideas. You'll be like the bushman standing in the desert, staring at a pair of skis and a photo of the Matterhorn, with a small notion of what skiing might be. Each Thinkertoy is a specific technique for getting ideas to solve your challenges. Each chapter contains a blueprint that gives precise instructions for using the technique and an explanation of why it works--including anecdotes, stories, and examples of how real heroes used each technique to produce ideas and breakthroughs. I call them heroes because they left behind a mark, a sign, an idea, an enterprise, a product, or a service that reminds us of their innovation. I also use illustrations, puzzles, charts, and hypothetical examples to demonstrate how various techniques work. Some of these hypothetical examples present usable ideas for new businesses, products, and services. These ideas are the gold beneath the river of words continually rushing past. Each chapter begins with an inspirational quote from *The Art of War* by the legendary master, Sun Tzu. Sun Tzu wrote his extraordinary book in China more than 2,400 years ago, but his principles are as applicable to creativity in business as in warfare. Long a classic for Japanese businesspeople, his book is now required reading at many leading international business schools. From Tokyo to Wall Street, business leaders quote and apply the principles of Sun Tzu. This new edition contains new Thinkertoys Lotus Blossom, and True and False, updated examples, and an entirely new group-brainstorming section with several new techniques. A friend of mine, Hank Zeller (an executive, entrepreneur, inventor, and poet), once described creativity this way: When you realize that you just came up with an idea that betters anything that has been done, well, your hair stands up on end, you feel an incredible sense of awe; it's almost as if you heard a whisper from God.