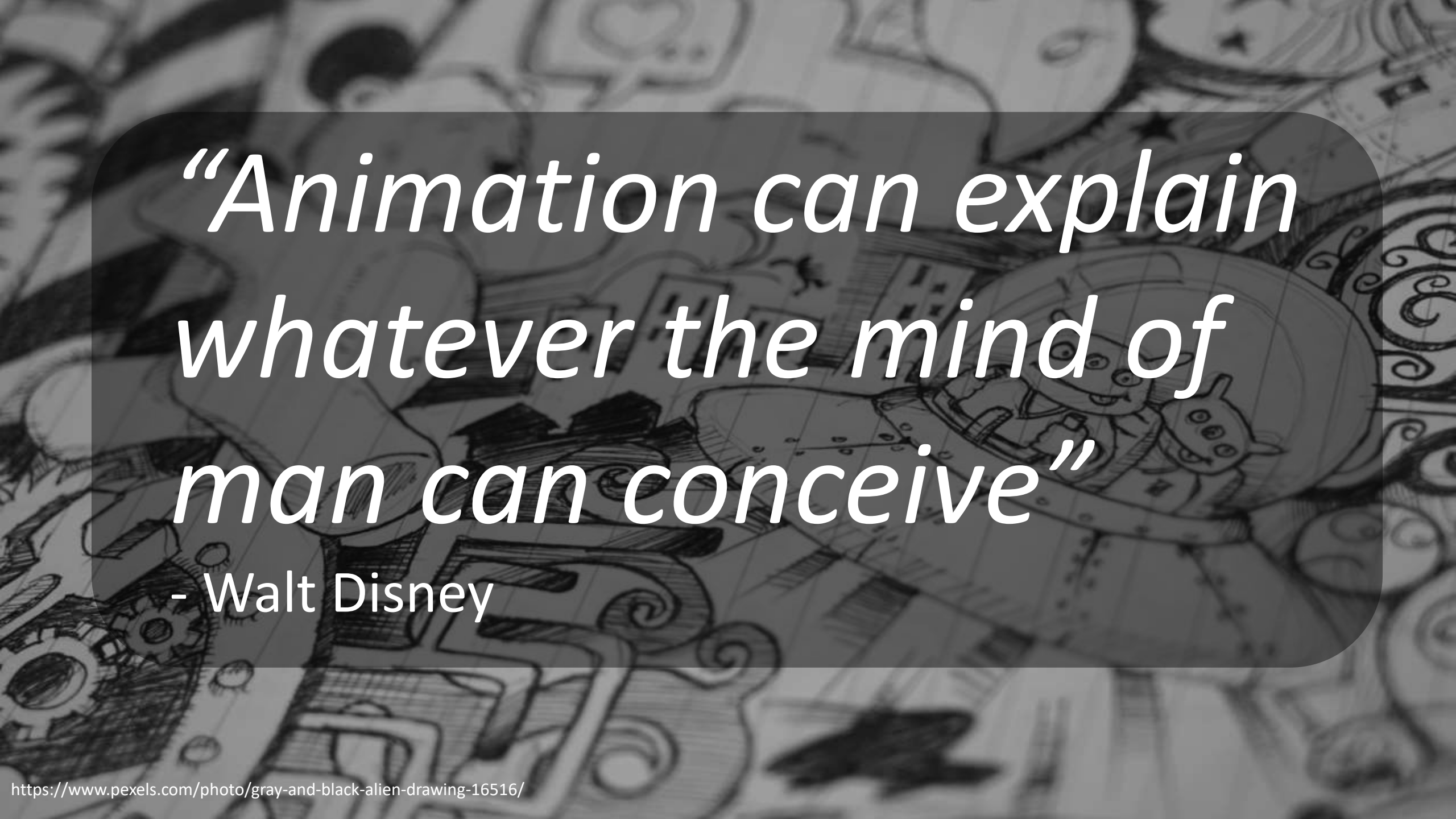




Using Disney Strategy for Creativity

Part of the ANLP Live Virtual Workshops collection



*“Animation can explain
whatever the mind of
man can conceive”*

- Walt Disney

Who Am I?



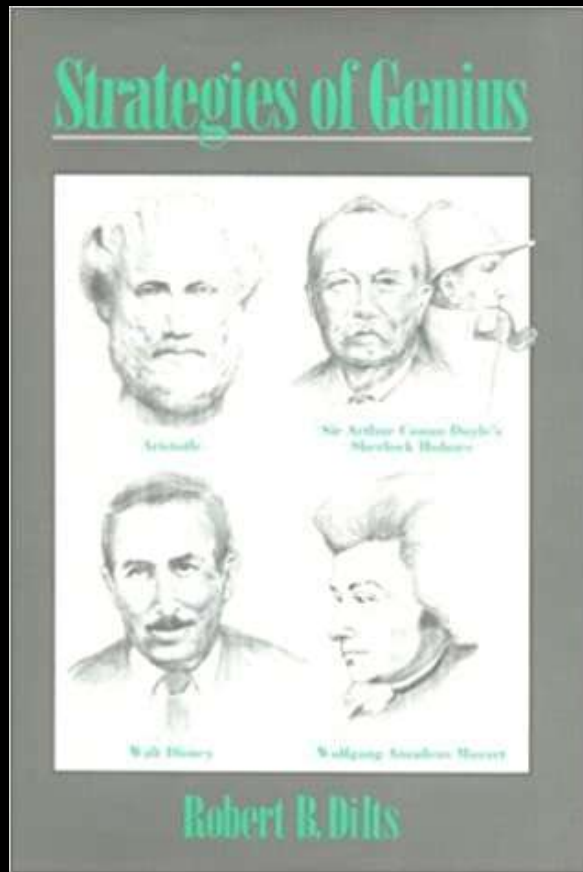
- First qualified as an NLP Trainer in 2012
- Joined The Association for NLP (ANLP) in 2015
- Supported the NLP Conference and NLP Awards over several years
- ANLP Ambassador & Specialist Envoy
- INLPTA NLP Trainer, working on my own Master Trainer certification
- Winner of NLP in Healthcare award 2019
- Father to two girls, one stepson and husband to Sophie
- Live in SE London
- TEDx Speaker March 2022



What are we going to cover

1. The History of the Disney Strategy
2. Why is it so useful for creativity?
3. Taking different perspectives to create new ideas
4. How to use this for yourself and your projects
5. Time to play...
6. Case study examples - Royal Free Hospital / Chilly's Bottles
7. Questions

History



Robert Dilts studied Walt Disney as one of his modelling subjects in his 1994 book, Strategies of Genius Vol I

Drawing upon contemporary reports of the way that Disney approached projects and reports from the man himself, Robert created what later became know as the Disney Strategy.

“Walt Disney's ability to connect his innovative creativity with successful business strategy and popular appeal certainly qualifies him as a genius in the field of entertainment. In a way, Disney's chosen medium of expression, the animated film, characterizes the fundamental process of all genius: the ability to take something that exists in the imagination only and forge it into a physical existence that directly influences the experience of others in a positive way.”

– Robert Dilts See <http://www.nlpu.com/Articles/article7.htm>

Modelling creative genius

The following statement was given by Disney as a description of his process for creating his stories:

"The story man must see clearly in his own mind how every piece of business in a story will be put. He should feel every expression, every reaction.

He should get far enough away from his story to take a second look at it...to see whether there is any dead phase...to see whether the personalities are going to be interesting and appealing to the audience.

He should also try to see that the things that his characters are doing are of an interesting nature."



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Imagineering



WALT DISNEY
Imagineering

The term Imagineering was created in 1940s to explain the companies blend of imagination and engineering.

Now they are the research and development arm of The Walt Disney Company, responsible for the creation, design, and construction of Disney theme parks and attractions worldwide.

They follow the principles of the Disney Strategy on all creative projects to see them to fruition.

What is creativity?



“The capacity to produce ideas that are both original and adaptive”

In other words, the ideas must be both new and workable or functional. Thus, creativity enables a person to adjust to novel circumstances and to solve problems that unexpectedly arise.

Source: The Psychology of Creativity: A Historical Perspective Dean Keith Simonton, PhD 2001



Learning is an iterative process



an approach to continuously improving
a concept, design, or product

The power of incubation





NLP Concepts utilised

1. V A K (O G) association
2. Perceptual positions
3. Accessing states (creativity, productivity, critiquing)
4. Break states
5. Spatial anchors

A Mickey Mouse figurine is the central focus, seated on a dark, ornate wooden bench. The figurine is posed with its right hand raised to its ear and its left hand extended outwards. It wears its iconic red shorts with white buttons and large white shoes. The scene is dramatically lit from above by a single spotlight, creating a strong contrast between the brightly lit Mickey Mouse and the deep shadows of the background and the bench. The overall mood is classic and nostalgic.

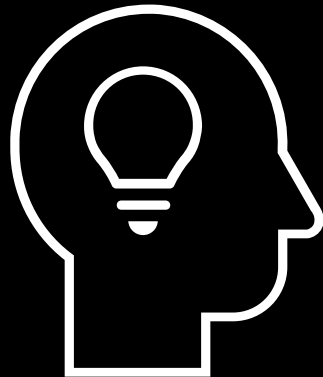
The Process



Set the scope

What do you want to work on?

The Strategy – The Outsider



The Outsider/Spectator

How is it seen from the outside?

- E.g. How would a consultant, supplier, customer or external observer see this?
- Based on facts and data
- Feedback information
- Problem analysis

You only spend a short amount of time here, it's about setting the scene and giving your problem/outcome some context.

The Strategy – The Dreamer



Dreamer

Vision - What

The Dreamer

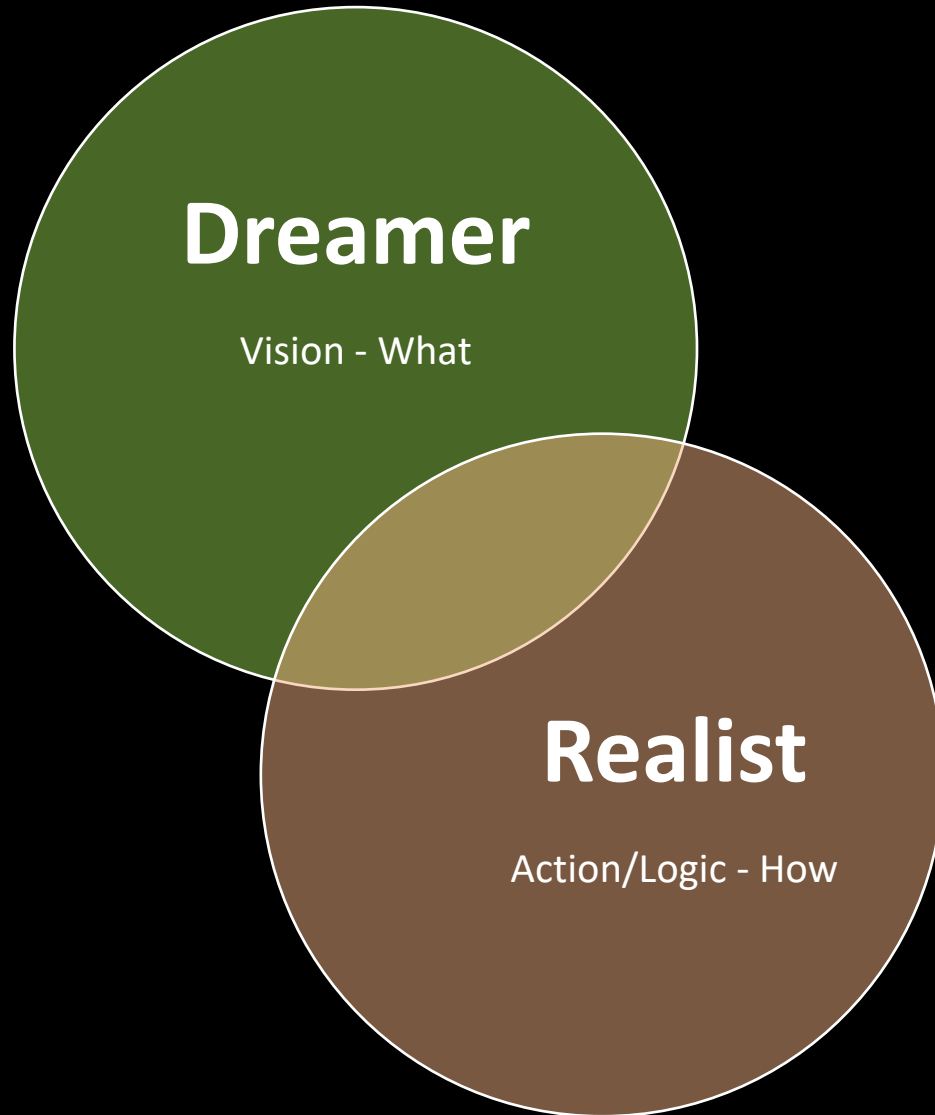
Creative idea starts with a dream full of passion and enthusiasm, the chance to imagine.

This first stage allows the sharing of the dream **without restrictions or criticism**. This helps to build a pool of creative ideas. Some of these ideas are viable and others are not.

Determining the viable creative concepts comes later as a result of the later thinking styles. You can ask questions such as:

- What do you want (big picture)?
- What if it was possible?
- What is the vision when it all goes well?
- How do we imagine the solution?
- What are the benefits of applying this solution?

The Strategy – The Realist



The Realist

Now we switch mode into a doing mode, the chance to examine the implementation

This narrows down the dreamers ideas into a shortlist and discuss constructively. Typically they take the single best idea and work it up into a manageable action plan. During this stage, all the thoughts should be constructive and about getting in the next steps.

This stage includes questions such as:

- How can we apply this idea in reality?
- What is the action plan to apply the idea?
- What is the timeline to apply this idea?
- How to evaluate the idea?

The Strategy – The Critic



The Critic / Spoiler

After producing the action plan to turn the idea into reality, this critical thinking mode is about discovering the barriers of applying the idea and how to overcome it from a meta position.

In this section, you provide a constructive critique for the idea to find the weak points and solve it in the final solution.

At this stage, you ask questions such as:

- What could be wrong with the idea?
- What is missing?
- What are the risks and dangers?
- Why can we not apply it?
- What are the weaknesses?

The Strategy – Cycling through the process



The Disney Strategy

Now that you have looked at things from all four points of view you can create a robust action plan that allows the Dreamer to get the vision, whilst at the same time allowing the Realist, Critic and Outsider to have input into the project.

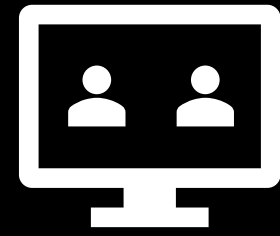
You can cycle the revised action plan through the different stages as well.

Allowing time for creativity to flow and ensuring that all collaborators have time to voice their wishes, plans and objections is important to ensure buy-in for the project.

A Mickey Mouse figurine is the central focus, seated on a dark, ornate wooden bench. Mickey is depicted in his classic red shorts with white buttons and white gloves. He is waving with his right hand and has his left hand extended outwards. The scene is dramatically lit from the upper right, creating a strong highlight on Mickey's head and the bench, while the rest of the background is in deep shadow. The text "Time to play" is centered over the image in a large, white, sans-serif font.

Time to play

Time to Play



1. Pick a problem/outcome you'd like to get creative about
2. **Dreamer:** Sit/Stand in a space that allows you to get creative and remind yourself of times in the past when you have been able to dream big, look up and get visual.
With this problem/outcome what would you like to have happen, what's the dream outcome/scenario, tell your 'coach' and spend time in this position really associating yourself into the dream outcome.
No planning... no critiquing... these come later
3. **Realist:** Move to another space and remind yourself of times when you've been able to put plans into reality, problem solve, make things happen.
Thinking about what the dreamer wants, how can you make that happen? What steps do you need to get there? What resources do you need to make the dream happen and over what time?
4. **Critic:** Move to another space and remind yourself of a time when you've been critical about plans and ideas, taking an overview of a plan and idea and finding out what might go wrong and how to solve the issues.
With that mindset, thinking about the plans that the realist has created, what might happen? What could go wrong, what might be the hiccups? And how can you mitigate against these to ensure that the plans do not get derailed.
5. Finally go back to the dreamer space, what do you know now about your problem/outcome?

Tips: Facilitating sessions within teams



- Ensure that all the key players are participating and have a meeting facilitator
- Only focus on one aspect at a time, this can be done in separate meetings or by using the environment to switch
- Be prepared for a lot of information to come out initially before honing down the action plan into manageable chunks
- Remember to not take things personally, especially at the critic stage. They are critiquing the idea not you!
- Practice on a small project before building up to the major ones
- Rapport and Listening are key skills to utilise, watch your “buts”

Case Study – Royal Free Hospital Merger



Royal Free Trust merged with Barnet & Chase Farm

The issues

The Therapy services teams were expected to collaborate and change the way they worked

Management had told them “all about it”

Staff were upset and unsettled as they were now working at new sites, having to work in new ways with new members of staff and with different working practices

Case Study – Royal Free Hospital Merger



Photo by [Kovah](#) on [Unsplash](#)

Team of 30 people, with everyone taking on each mindset in turn

I used 4 flip charts in four different areas of the room to collect the information from the various roles.

Physically moving space each time and refining down to specific key action points about how the team would like to work going forward.

The managers were in amongst the group, listening to the views that they'd missed previously

Case Study – Chilly's Bottles



Approached by the HR Team to support their rapid team expansion and launch of their new bottle design.

Virtually facilitated a session which enabled the Marketing, Production, Administration and Fulfilment teams to come together and give input to the management about creative ideas they have and problems that needed solving collaboratively.

Each group worked in it's own virtual breakout space, with a member of the management team facilitating the session (previously briefed by myself)

Several new processes, ideas and marketing campaigns came out from this session which was very productive for the company.



Tips: Self-Coaching using this technique



- Use space to move/stand/sit in a different location for each of the aspects and make sure you pre anchor a state into each spot before working on what you'd like to think about.
- Ensure you are only focussed on that aspect, acknowledge that the realist and critic will have their time later when the dreamer is at work
- Have fun with the process, this works for small outcomes/plans as well as the major life changes

Questions?





Speaking, Coaching, Training & Facilitation

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View my TEDx bit.ly/AndyCTEDx