

EDWARD DE BONO

Practical Thinking



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Summary Notes

- page 11 **Knowing What to Do**
1. Instinct.
 2. Learning (first-hand/second-hand).
 3. Understanding.
- page 21 **The Five Ways to Understand**
- L-1 Simple description (just describing the scene).
 - L-2 Porridge words (vague words like mechanism, device, arrangement).
 - L-3 Give it a name (identifying named mechanisms like magic, gravity).
 - L-4 The way it works (cause and effect, describing process in broad terms).
 - L-5 Full details (full details of what is happening).
- page 97 **The Four Ways to be Right**
- R-1 Emotional rightness (currant cake).
 - R-2 Logical rightness (jig-saw puzzle).
 - R-3 Unique rightness (village Venus).
 - R-4 Recognition rightness (measles).
- page 70 **The Five Ways to be Wrong**
- M-1 Monorail mistake (moving directly from one idea to another).
 - M-2 Magnitude mistake (the idea is right but the size of the effect is wrong).
 - M-3 Misfit mistake (the idea does not actually fit the situation).

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M-4 Must-be mistake (fixation of an idea by arrogant certainty).

M-5 Miss-out mistake (a conclusion from part of the situation is applied to the whole).

page 55 **Two Basic Thinking Processes**

1. 'Carry-on' (follow directly along a train of thought).
2. 'Connect-up' (set up a new point as a problem or a question and try to connect-up with it).

page 123 **The Yes/No System**

Faults:

1. No good for going beyond the adequate.
2. Labels become too permanent.
3. Hard-edged concepts and sharp polarizations.
4. Arrogance of righteousness.

page 130 **Types of Arrogance**

1. No alternatives.
2. No change.
3. No escape.

page 135 **Doubt**

Types:

1. Retardant doubt.
2. Propellant doubt.

The Creative System

page 137 **Humour**

page 140 **Insight**

page 145 **PO**

page 149 **Imagination**

page 159 **Creativity**

page 168 **Clues**

Uses:

1. To suggest ideas.
2. To confirm ideas.
3. To exclude ideas.

- page 141 **De Bono's 1st Law**
 'An idea can never make the best use of available information.'
 (Because information trickles into the mind over a period of time the idea patterns set up cannot be as good as if all the information arrived at once.)
- page 113 **De Bono's 2nd Law**
 'Proof is often no more than lack of imagination - in providing an alternative explanation.'
 (If you cannot think of a better explanation you are sure the one you have is right.)
- page 145 **PO**
 A new functional word designed to introduce the discontinuity function into thinking to help creative and insight changes. PO is as basic to lateral thinking as NO is to logical thinking.
 Two functions of PO:
 1. Liberation (escape from old ideas).
 2. Provocation (generation of new ideas).
- page 139 **Intermediate Impossible**
 An idea which is wrong in itself but nevertheless serves as a useful stepping-stone to an idea which is perfectly valid.
- page 88 **Arrogance-Clamp**
 Used to fix an idea so that it can neither be developed further nor exchanged for a better idea.
- page 61 **Sharp Brain**
 Capable of immediate and fine discrimination (as in animals).
- Blurry Brain**
 Coarse discrimination at first followed by fine discrimination later (as in man).

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- page 23 **Porridge Words**
Vague and apparently meaningless words which play a very important part in thinking.
- page 67 **Uses of Porridge Words:**
1. To set up questions.
2. To provide usable explanations.
3. Cross-links for thinking.
4. To act as black boxes.
5. To prevent too early commitment to a specific idea.
- page 46 **Named-ideas**
Any idea which can be referred to by a single name.
- Bundle-ideas**
Any group of ideas which are temporarily used together as a whole but which do not have a single name.
- page 173 **Bandwidth Analysis**
Establishing the broad statements that one can make with certainty about a situation even though one may not have the fine detail.
- page 41 **Press-button Idiom**
Producing the effect one wants by finding the right button to press and without having any knowledge of what happens in between.
- page 40 **Black Box**
Being able to use an idea or a machine effectively without knowing the details of what goes on inside (e.g. you can use a TV set without knowing anything about electronics).
- page 45 **Leap-frog**
Jumping over details you do not need to know by pushing them all into a black box or a porridge word.

page 49 **Requiron**

A single name given, for the sake of convenience, to 'that which is required' or 'that which we are looking for'.

page 175 **Think-2**

Instead of proceeding from one idea to another as in ordinary thinking (Think-1) you map out your position. For instance in an argument instead of using a train of linked ideas to convince the other person of your point of view you both start by mapping out respective starting positions and then proceed by considering areas of overlap and areas at a distance from each other. Think-2 avoids the common difficulty that two people think they are talking about the same thing when they are not.

The basic principles of Think-2 can be set out as follows:

1. Map out the different pictures instead of assuming that they are the same.
2. Accept the existence of the different pictures and realize you cannot make a picture disappear simply by putting a NO label on it.
3. Try to develop new bridging ideas whereby one can move from one picture to a different one.

page 182 **Basic Rules of Everyday Thinking**

I. Everyone is always right.

(A person's ideas are always right in the context of what he sees and the way he sees things.)

II. No one is ever right.

(In an absolute sense, for rightness is related to a particular context, a particular set of ideas.)

