

The Value of Wishing

Increase the possibilities of innovative ideas

Wishes rich in imagery, bring novel ideas. A wish acts like a full pardon. It permits us to think and express the unthinkable. By doing so, the range of material we can call upon vastly expands. We know this from observing hundreds of groups trying to get ideas to solve a problem or invent something difficult and new. The act of wishing surfaces repressed impossibilities which can then be used as connection-making material.

Remember when you were five years old. What did you wish for? A bike? To fly? A skizillion dollars? A brother (or no brother)? Remember what it was like to wish? It was okay. It was free. Often it was not bound to reality.

What we're doing here is merely reclaiming that kind of wishing – it's one of our earliest and strongest creative abilities. Most likely, your wishes are closer to reality than they used to be. Think of something you want. What real deep desire is behind that want? If you could have your wish, and more, what would that more be? This can help you to begin wishing to a greater degree.

Wish: A thought or beginning idea that attempts to solve a problem with the words "I wish."

Why wish:

Allows for expansive thinking.

Avoids need to defend.

Allows bits and pieces of ideas voiced.

Helps guard against evaluation.

Increases level of speculation.

Invites further thinking.

Wishes spring from:

GOALS Aims or optimal results that need to be attained.

FEELINGS Hunches and senses of the emotions and desires.

OBJECTIVES Features or characteristics of a problem; added elements or interesting extras.

PRE-IDEAS Beginning germs from which ideas can grow or develop.

CARDINAL SINS Feelings of desire, greed, lust, cloth, power.

OPINIONS GENERAL DIRECTIONS Personal points of view. Broad avenues of approach which might have potential.

SPECIFIC IDEAS Very specific ways and means of solving a piece of the problem.

DISAGREEMENT Ideas or statements which are different or opposite ways of thinking.

FACTS Information, data, or evidence that helps give further understanding or clarification.

BUILDS Ideas which are specifically targeted to add value to others' contributions.

PET IDEAS Ideas that have been around for a while; things personally intriguing, even if you don't know why.

Sample wishing exercise

Problem:

I seem to be wasting a lot of time at the office.

Transformation to Opportunity:

How to make more efficient use of my time at the office.

Examples of Wishes:

I wish I could bottle time.

I wish I could redefine time.

I wish I could divide everything into one-minute chunks.

I wish I could be more efficient than matter.

I wish I could clone myself.

I wish I had more time.

I wish I had less to do.

I wish I had a timer on my 'to do' list.

I wish for a drug that made me work faster.

I wish I could turn on 'flow' whenever I wanted.

I wish the world moved at half speed.

I wish my work were my recreation.

I wish I could work so fast everything would appear to go backwards.

I wish I could split the hairs of time.

I wish I could borrow time from eternity.

I wish everything stopped at my command.

I wish I could work faster than daylight.

I wish the world were like a single-frame movie.

I wish I had four months.

I wish the power of my growing hair reduced my 'to do' list.

I wish time stuck to me like gum.

I wish I could speed-work like I speed-read.

I wish I could cultivate time.

I wish I could get time to leave me like Sandra did.
I wish my parts were used more efficiently.
I wish I could sell my waste time like waste heat.
I wish I could time-share everything.

Wishing applied to problem-solving

It sometimes works to push good ideas in unusual or absurd directions even after you are sure they fit the bill, and then return to the ideas. If you relax and allow yourself to be vague, absurd and irrelevant, then you get much more speculative and thus more original.

Getting the wishes

First examine the problem or need for ideas; get a feel for what you are going after. Then transform the problem into a how to statement. The how to will make the problem appear more friendly ("How to use my time more efficiently" versus "I can't seem to find time to get anything done").

Try to get an idea by using wishing, e.g., "I wish I had a calendar." Try several wishes to get a feel for the process.

Next, ask yourself, "What if I could wish for more? What would it be?" For example, "I wish that something organized my life for me, or I wish that I did not have to read all of the material at the office, or I wish someone read it for me."

Write down several ideas and consider each of them in the wishful category without questioning or evaluating what your imagination offers.

Challenge yourself to make your wishes even more absurd.

Use the 1, 1 + and 1 ++ concept which acts as a rough gauge of how available we are making ourselves.

1 offers go beyond the concrete and relevant.

"I wish I could see time stand still."

1 + offers are even more metaphorical and paradoxical.

"I wish time were like fast food, always available."

1 ++ offers have a paradoxical, poetic quality and are impossible to explain logically.

"I wish I were more efficient than matter."

"I wish time were like a filled void."

The reason we want to stretch for the 1 + of 1 ++ ideas is that they make the richest connections. They create tensions that cannot be immediately resolved by the mind's tendency to go for Heaven's first law: Order, form and unity

Polaroid

Perhaps one of the most profitable wishes of all time was made by the daughter of Dr. George Land, founder of Polaroid Corporation. His daughter once wished that she did not have to wait so long to get her pictures developed. That led to an absurd wish: "I wish that pictures would develop themselves right in the camera." The rest is history.

Post-it Notes

Another famous wish was made by Art Fry who wished that the bookmark in his hymnal at church would stop slipping out and falling on the floor. He wished that it would stick to the page and could be moved without tearing the page. This wish led to the Post-it at 3M Company.