

Let's Discuss - *Lateral Thinking for adults*

Written & developed by Christine Cross & Sandy Morton Consultancy

What do we mean by lateral thinking?

- You may know of lateral thinking by a more familiar name such as “thinking outside the box or square.”
- Lateral thinking is a way of problem solving that allows you to come up with a variety of solutions to a problem, which in turn helps you to view things in context.
- Once you have mastered this way of thinking all the big problems are broken down into smaller issues that you then feel able to cope with and life becomes more interesting and less laborious.

Try changing routines to make them more interesting

Routines are inevitable in children’s services. We have to follow to them to ensure the wellbeing of the children in our care i.e. meal times, rest time etc. Some routines can be modified however so that they are not longer a drudge. If your routines are boring you they will dull your senses. If they are not set in concrete, use lateral thinking techniques to change the monotony. We set day to day routines for ourselves and then over time we become a slave to them, and see them as a chore because we have to achieve them day in day out.

Using lateral thinking will help you to find many solutions and possible alternatives to the way you complete a task. Begin by listing all the routine tasks you do during the day and think about how you could change them to make them more interesting. Think about:

- ♦ How you complete them—are there alternative ways?
- ♦ When you complete them—do they have to be completed there and then?
- ♦ Is there a change you can make even if it is only a small change?
- ♦ What do you think about while completing the routine task?

Once you have thought about the task in this way you will find a few changes can be made so that the task is not so monotonous.

For instance—if one of your tasks is to do the washing up, this task is not mind blowing or interesting, but what if you placed a picture by the sink of:

- ♦ Your favourite location
- ♦ A puzzle picture
- ♦ A cross word puzzle
- ♦ A design that is so intricate you see a different aspect each time you look at it

(Remember whatever you place on the wall will be viewed by others, so keep it professional.)

The same principles apply to your professional or private life. Using lateral thinking techniques will help you to improve your brain power and add variety to your life. Try some of the following:

- ♦ Change the route you take to work
- ♦ Find another radio station to listen to
- ♦ Try new foods to eat
- ♦ Join a dance class, or take up belly dancing
- ♦ List all the things you do for hobbies—then add new things that you would like to do—write down a date of when you will achieve these

Learn how to think “outside the box”

Lateral thinking is looking at something and finding how many new uses you can put the object to

How many uses can you find for:

- ♦ A saucepan
- ♦ A cup
- ♦ A rope
- ♦ A shoe box
- ♦ A pair of gloves

These types of activities unlock your mind



Lateral thinking techniques

All the time you are using lateral thinking techniques you are exercising your brain capacity. You are also developing your skills and ensuring you are an interesting person to be with or work with.

We all know that children love being with interesting people because they can problem solve and never get bogged down by being boring. They always have new exciting ideas and are people that are nearly always positive.

Use your lateral thinking skills to visualise what you can see or imagine from the drawings below.

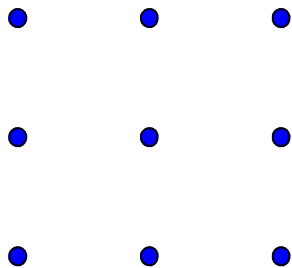


or



Lateral thinking is reasoning that is not immediately obvious and finding solutions that may not be obtainable using only traditional step by step logic

Connect the dots



Copy these dots onto a large piece of paper.

Connect the dots using 4 straight continuous lines, and never lifting your pencil from the paper.

Clue: Think outside the box.

Test your lateral thinking skills

1. A man and his son are in a car crash. The father is killed and the son is taken to hospital gravely injured. When he gets there the surgeon says "I can't operate on this boy, he is my son." How can this be?
2. Each of two persons are standing behind one another. Is this possible?
3. John was 6 years old the day before yesterday. Next year he will be 8. How can this be?
4. Three large people try to crowd under one small umbrella, but nobody gets wet. Why?
5. A woman has 5 children and half of them are boys. Can this be true?
6. Two sons and two fathers go fishing. They each catch 1 fish. The total number of fish caught was 3. How come?

Answers

1. The surgeon is the boy's mother.
2. They are standing back to back.
3. John was born on December 30th and today is January 1st.
4. It is not raining.
5. She has all boys.
6. A grandfather, father and son go fishing.