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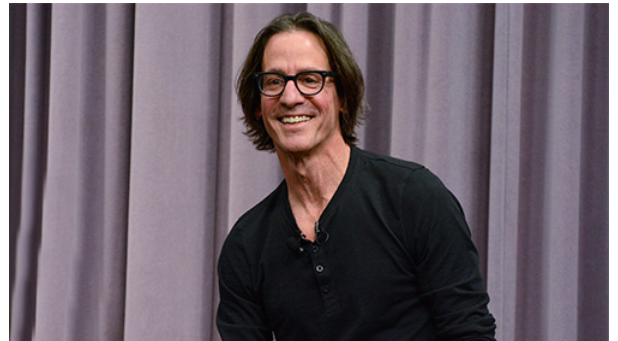
How to Brainstorm Better

Brendan Boyle, *IDEO*

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Video URL: <http://ecorner.stanford.edu/videos/4912/How-to-Brainstorm-Better>

Toy inventor Brendan Boyle talks about key concepts for making brainstorming sessions more effective, like including those adept at the technique and bringing together divergent and convergent thinkers. Boyle, a partner at IDEO who teaches the course “From Play to Innovation” at Stanford’s design school, speaks with creativity expert Tina Seelig, faculty co-director at the Stanford Technology Ventures Program.



Transcript

- A lot of people say brainstorming doesn't work, and they try to do brainstorming, and they're not successful, what makes brainstorming in your group successful? - Yeah, that's a really great question, and, if you back off of brainstorming a little bit and think of the design process, there's inspiration, so you gotta get inspired, see something your competitor's aren't seeing, then there's ideation, take what you saw, it's framed up somehow, under an opportunity, a strategy, and then ideation, and brainstorming's just one technique. I mean you could have a technique where you get good ideas in the shower, it's just not every repeatable, you have to run home or tell your boss I'm going... - [Interviewer] And you use a lot of water. - Yeah, you use a lot of water. But for us, brainstorming's a really great tool that we know how to use, so I think it gets a bad rap because people who just read the rules and try it once don't actually know how to do it. It's like, or maybe it's your analogy around if you put four people in a room and they know how to play musical instruments, they can jam pretty well, but if you put four people who don't know how to play, it's not gonna sound very good at all, so, if you are practiced at brainstorming, you understand it, you're gonna get better at it, it's a muscle, if you think about ideation, too, is divergent thinking, how wide can you go versus converging, and we are so good, everyone in this room is probably so good at converging thinking, because you didn't get into Stanford, you didn't get all these degrees without converging and making decisions and understanding how to get to the answer in a hurry. Divergent thinking is just like, how do you keep your brain going wide, and ridiculous ideas, and all sorts of crazy ideas, because that's where you're gonna find a good idea, if you're really close to being ridiculous, it's probably could be brilliant, otherwise it's just okay, so getting in that mode, and then there's confusion around, folks think creative people are only divergent, they're just constantly, like, no, they know when to turn it on and when to turn it off, versus, too many people go a little bit and then close, little bit then close.