

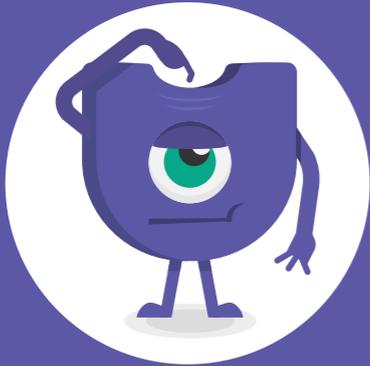
# CREATURES OF HABIT ACTION PLAN

**HOW TO COME UP WITH MORE INVENTIVE IDEAS, MAKE BETTER DECISIONS AND  
INSPIRE CREATIVE CHANGE IN OTHERS**



56 practical creative tips and strategies through a lens of the 7 Creatures of Habit. Plus 60+ innovation examples to fuel your imagination.

# HOW TO OVERCOME ROUTINE



Routine makes it easier for your brain to process similar things to those that have been seen before. You are what you repeat! However, the brain has a remarkable capacity to connect the dots when new information has been presented. This is all about finding new information and insight to work with.

## 1. CHANGE YOUR TYPICAL

Start small. Do one thing differently than you did yesterday. Feel the difference and activate your senses. Once you've succeeded there, try out a range of ways of doing your usual activities in a different way.

Take a different route to work, try a new food for lunch, talk to strangers (assuming you're an adult!), work in a different location, read instead of watch tv, get out of bed an hour earlier, speak to someone instead of emailing, draw instead of type, use a new greeting when you meet someone, take a different exercise class...

...do anything that is at odds with your usual

routine. Don't worry about forcing anything, just let yourself go with the flow. Once you get used to breaking your routine actions, your thinking will also begin to loosen up. Even just switching up how you work with bursts then breaks allows your subconscious more room to bubble up new ideas.

### WHEN AN IDEA JUST LATCHES ON TO YOU



The idea for Velcro came when George de Mestral was walking his dog one day and noticed how Burdock Burrs had stuck to his trousers and to his dog's fur via tiny little

hooks. This gave him an idea!



### WHEN YOU EXPLORE THE MIDDLE EARTH



Tolkien got a lot of inspiration for Lord of the Rings when visiting the intricately carved and fantastical salt mines in Poland. Golem was inspired by a trip to

neighbouring Prague where Golem is a mythical mud creature.

I (Simon), once got a paper aeroplane calendar for Christmas. As I folded aeroplanes each morning with breakfast, my subconscious started whirling. I ended up inventing a new creative game to play in workshops that works fabulously. There would have been no way I would have come up with it otherwise.

## 2. IGNORE THE USUAL SUSPECTS

When working on a challenge, find the usual context and change it. When, where and how is it typically done? Who is usually involved? What skills and specialisms are required? As soon as you change even the little things, your mind will start racing to figure out some new logic. This means you have to make new connections you just wouldn't have thought of otherwise.

### WHEN YOU TAKE A FLIGHT OF FANCY



Airline safety instructions have always been done in a very routine way for decades. Now airlines are out to hold attentions with all sorts of variations including kids doing

the briefing, the Lord of the Rings cast and even dance versions!

### WHEN PUPILS CAN EDUCATE YOU

A growing number of schools in the UK are inviting the kids to have a say when hiring a new teacher, rather than relying purely on the grown-ups. A survey revealed 87% of children feel they know what makes a good teacher. At the end of the day, if they buy-in to a teacher, they are likely to do better in school.

## 3. GET OUT OF YOUR OWN MIND

Find inspiration and validate decisions based on a wide range of examples other than what you are typically exposed to. That might be other industries, other cultures, popular trends or different environments. Whether it's making a meal or coming up with a strategy, it can be eye-opening to look beyond the way you would usually go about it and broaden your sphere of influence. You'll always be able to surprise yourself with something new and potentially useful.



## WHEN MOTION MEETS EMOTION



Pixar animators take acting classes as they know finding the right emotions involves looking outside of their computer screens. In the same vein, in the UK,

some rugby players take classical dance lessons to understand how different ranges of movement can help their balance and agility.

## WHEN YOU MIND THE GAPS



The London Tube map is so successful as an instructional layout because Henry Charles Beck understood a geographic map was too complex and that he

needed a more workable solution. He happened upon the logical layout of a circuit diagram and the rest is history.

# 4. GO RANDOM

When I was at drama class in school, we were often challenged to put on a play at short notice. We weren't given a script or a theme, just an image. Each group got the same image and the resulting plays were always completely different.

This is an example of how a random stimulus such as an image can create a great deal of variation based on new interpretations.

**Try it yourself now. Flip to a picture in a book or magazine and see what story you might conjure up.**

Your brain often craves random inspiration to spark some magic. It's often much easier to jump start the creative process this way than relying on the thoughts currently circling around in your head.

The further removed the inspiration is from your challenge, the harder you have to work to make an alternative interpretation and find new associations. But that makes for more creative solutions that you wouldn't have come up with otherwise. If you have the confidence and belief that connections are there and they will come.

When stuck, just find a random object, picture, word and ask:

- How can it be used directly to create an idea?
- What associations with the stimulus can trigger ideas?
- What functions and benefits related to the stimulus can I extract and use?



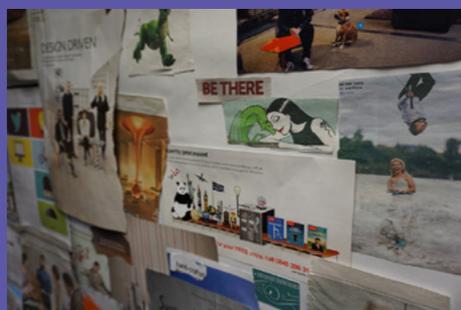
# HOW TO INFLUENCE OTHERS

## OPEN THEIR EYES FOR THEM

Act as their springboard for more inspiration. Show them new stuff and bring new experiences to them, otherwise they will find it difficult to see anything outside their usual sphere of influence.

Show them wider possibilities and paint their eyes with gold. Otherwise they will stick to their usual colours.

### WHEN YOU CHANGE THE MOOD



When working on designs with clients, mood boards are a great way to divert thinking from their own norms and throw up a load of new inspiration that they would have never come across by looking in their typical circles.

## TELL THEM A STORY

The secret of storytelling is to encourage a mindset change by teasing out new associations and enabling people to see other possibilities. Once the message of a story is understood, it can be related to the current situation and cause a change of perspective different to their typical.

To tell a powerful story, all you need to do is draw comparisons between the challenge you face and an analogous situation where the benefits are clear. Ask where else does something similar occur and what else does this challenge remind you of?

### WHEN YOU CHANGE TACTICS



I once heard a story of a company director that refused to take on board the idea of mixing up the staff in the office to work within different teams. However, he

was told the story of the Dutch Total Football team from the 1970s. This team's training strategy involved players switching positions to get a wider perspective of everyone's role and be more adaptable when playing. The team became



legendary because of this. That analogy was the trigger for this company director to realise switching around staff could be something well worth trying to increase team collaboration and performance.

If you're ever stuck when looking for an analogous situation, just look towards nature. Mother Nature has had billions of years to solve practically everything! If you were stuck trying to get something to try new ways of attracting customers, you might ask, 'how does nature use laws of attraction'? Once you start exploring actions, sights, sounds, smells, you'll be sure to find relevant mechanisms that snap people out of their typical frame of reference.

## CHANGE THEIR ENVIRONMENT

If you want to get people to think differently, make sure they aren't in the same place where they do their typical thinking. Environmental context is so important for our thinking patterns. If the mind is stimulated by new surroundings, it will be more open for input. It could be simple as taking a walk to talk rather than sitting in the usual spot.

## HIJACK THEIR USUAL PATTERNS

Draw attention to the action you desire by hijacking the existing routine. Where do you see typical patterns in others and how can you infiltrate them? It's exactly the reason supermarkets place sweets at the checkout, to disrupt your shopping and make you buy something you wouldn't have thought of.

### WHEN ROUTINE IS RUBBISH



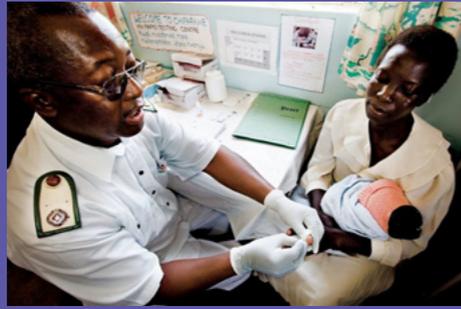
People are used to throwing their waste in a rubbish bin without too much thought. However, when an experiment was done to change the labels on bins

from 'general waste' to 'landfill', recycling rates increased by 35%. Realising just where their waste was going was enough to disrupt the routine.

In the Netherlands, there was a problem with littering and people ignoring the bins. The solution was to install bins that tell jokes when they were used. This fun feedback mechanism created a very positive behaviour change. Similarly, in Sweden, experiments have been done where uplifting music comes from the recycling bins to make people feel good about using them.



## WHEN YOU THINK IN THE OTHER BOX



Sometimes disrupting routine can be as simple as moving a tick in the box. In Zimbabwe, HIV testing rates for pregnant mothers went from 65% when they had

to purposefully opt in to 99% when they had to consciously opt out. Making opting in the default provided the new routine.

# GET THE FULL ACTION PLAN

**IF YOU ENJOYED THIS SO FAR, YOU CAN ACCESS THE FULL VERSION WITH ALL 7 CREATURES OF HABIT AT THE FOLLOWING LINK:**

<http://www.creaturesofhabit.me/creative-action-plan/>

