

CHAPTER SIX

EDWARD DE BONO'S OUTSTANDING ORIGINAL CONTRIBUTION

1933 - 2021

MARGARET MANGION & SANDRA M. DINGLI

ABSTRACT: Edward de Bono was often acknowledged as a creativity guru, an influential thinker. His reputation stems from his ability to publish numerous books, deliver countless workshops and establish a world-wide network of business trainers. He was often referred to as 'the Lateral thinking guru', 'the inventor of Lateral Thinking' or 'the Six Hats person'. There is, however, a great deal more to de Bono than first meets the eye. His original contributions to education, management, training and to the world in general are remarkable and they deserve increased recognition. Edward de Bono was a remarkably inspirational individual. This chapter discusses some lesser known – but equally outstanding – contributions to the world of applied creativity and thinking. It includes a discussion of his concept of 'constructive thinking', a consideration of some of his less known 'thinking tools', and an appraisal of some of the valuable original ideas communicated in his books. The evolution of de Bono's thought, which started off with the publication of *The Mechanism of Mind* in 1969, to his present-day work will be discussed, demonstrating the trajectory from issues related to medicine and psychology towards teaching children and learning from their ideas, to playful but erudite texts and on to his success as a world-renowned thinker who came from one of the smallest island nation states in the world. Some of the programmes designed by de Bono are then discussed. Application of the de Bono methods allows for improved thinking, increased creativity, better idea generation and enhanced value creation.

Introduction

This chapter focusses on the originality of Edward de Bono's ideas and on the astonishing fact that a world-renowned thinker was born on one of the smallest island nation states in the world. Edward de Bono was born on the 19 May 1933 in Malta to Joseph, a physician, and Josephine, a journalist who was instrumental in the women's suffrage movement in Malta in the 1940s. Malta is a very small island nation state in the middle of the Mediterranean Sea with a population of around 500,000 people.

This chapter also discusses the trajectory of de Bono's original ideas, ranging from issues related to medicine and psychology, towards teaching children and learning from their ideas, to playful but erudite texts and publi-

cations that are best sellers in the world of creativity and innovation management.

Although de Bono was often known as ‘the inventor of Lateral Thinking’, there is a great deal more to his work than first meets the eye. This chapter first discusses the trajectory of de Bono’s ideas, moving from education to business management and including some of his more provocative ideas. It then discusses three of his programmes that, when applied, allow for improved thinking, increased creativity, better idea generation and enhanced value creation.

de Bono’s first degree was in medicine, which was a family tradition, but which he never practiced. This was followed with the award of additional degrees as a result of his being awarded a Rhodes scholarship to study Psychology at the University of Oxford. Edward de Bono was always very curious and inquisitive. While at school in Malta he jumped a class, he was the only student at school who was given a key to the school’s laboratory, and he joined the medical course at University of Malta at a very young age. His upbringing and education led him to reflect on the manner in which the human brain works: as a self-organizing information patterning system. In the next section, some of the works and concepts developed by de Bono are explored.

The Mechanism of the Mind (1969)

The human brain as a self-organising information patterning system is the main topic of one of de Bono’s first books, *The Mechanism of the Mind*, published in 1969. This is, without doubt, one of his most original and inspirational texts which provides the basis for much of his later work. In this publication de Bono describes, often in metaphorical terms, how the human brain functions and how it processes information. His background in medicine and psychology is clearly discernible in this book. He believes that the human brain is not designed to be creative. This is the basic premise of his later work, including his world-renowned lateral thinking methods. Although the human brain processes information and is a pattern making system, yet it is possible to by-pass these inbuilt neurological circuits. In other words, if the human brain organises the information it receives into patterns which tend to become more ingrained over the passage of time, just as a valley gets to be more defined as a result of the passage of water over time, then there are ways of overcoming this constraint. How can this be done? Simply by ‘cutting across patterns’, that is, by creating algorithms or recipes which one can easily follow, and which simulate the process that occurs when inspiration comes about. de Bono believed that far from being an innate trait, creativity can be developed and nurtured. He claimed that individuals can become creative through the deliberate use of idea generating methods that may be used to set a focus, to produce new ideas or to evaluate situations.

Random Input: one of de Bono’s Lateral Thinking methods

Random Input is one of the Lateral Thinking methods which de Bono proposed which clearly addressed this limitation and enables the human brain to

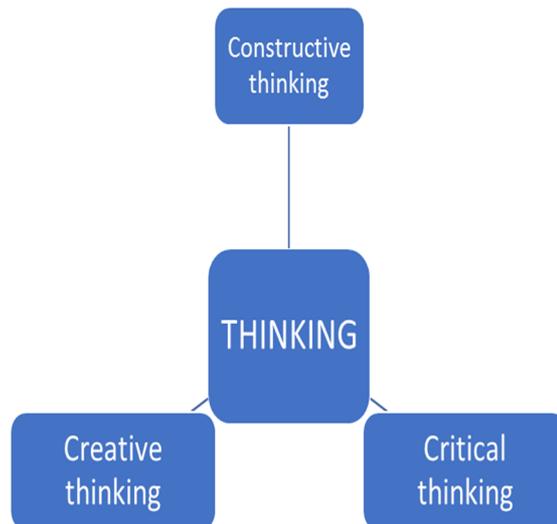
overcome it. It is a lateral thinking technique that is simple to use and it enables the instigation of inspiration (or idea generation) at will. This takes place through the introduction of an extraneous random word or thought that is linked to another idea or thought on which original ideas are generated. This is precisely what happens when inspiration takes place, as our current thoughts require the introduction of an external idea, or extraneous input, in order for them to be shifted towards an entirely new direction.

It is often assumed that idea generation is closely linked to problem solving and decision making. These often involve argument and analysis and the tendency to get into a position where *I am right, you are wrong*, which is the title of another of de Bono's publications (1990). Argument and analysis are useful and relevant in certain contexts, but there is a great deal more to thinking and reasoning than just argument and analysis. This is why de Bono advocated the application of 'constructive thinking'.

Constructive thinking

According to de Bono, new ideas are not only required for problem solving or decision making. Rather, constructive thinking (see Figure 1) allows for the creation of original ideas in the absence of any pressing need to resolve a problem or take a decision. The value of constructive thinking is evident when considering the manner in which designers and manufacturers create new products or services which offer value that by-passes necessity. New tablet and smartphone designs, for example, do not resolve any problems. They are created as so-called 'objects of desire' and gain popularity as a result of convincing marketing strategies.

Figure 1: Constructive thinking as the 'pinnacle' of the thinking triangle



Imagine a triangle with creative thinking and critical thinking as the two base angles. Constructive thinking is placed on the topmost angle (see Figure 1). The latter concept, constructive thinking, involves the generation of ideas which are not directed towards decision making or problem solving. Rather, they create ideas which, when converted into services or products and placed on the market become 'objects of desire'. Does a person really 'need' to have all the latest gadgets, twenty tubes of face cream, more books than can be read in a lifetime, three or four cars, etc.? New models of some renowned smart phones are examples of objects of desire, as some novel design features make them appealing to quite a broad public.

Constructive thinking offers a number of advantages where economic success related to products or services is concerned. It could, moreover, be contrasted to adversarial thinking which merely concerns a reactionary process, as discussed by de Bono in *I am right you are wrong* (1990). This latter publication draws attention to flaws in the current mode of Western thinking and provides suggestions as to how this may be overcome. With change being so prevalent in today's world, constructive thinking allows for the design of new possibilities and opportunities and for moving away from simply arguing about who is right and who is wrong.

Three categorizations

de Bono's books may be divided into three main categories. The first are the 'tongue in cheek' or provocative books which advocate for paradigm changes, some of which may sound preposterous at face value, but which embody a serious underlying message. The second are the books on education, mainly aimed at including 'the direct teaching of thinking' as a subject in school curricula. The third are self-help business books which target the management market. de Bono has also published a number of additional self-help books which are directed at a broader target market, many of which have achieved international bestseller status, such as *The Use of Lateral*

Thinking (1971) and the Six Thinking Hats (1985).

de Bono's provocative ideas

The provocative books are numerous and include de Bono's *Why I want to be King of Australia* (1999). Here he provocatively attempts to motivate Australians to seriously think about their future in the 21st century, due to the fact that his ideas have generally been very popular in Australia, which he visited on numerous occasions. *The de Bono Code Book* (2000) addresses the inadequacy of language and the urgent need for new concepts and perceptions, as de Bono presents an international language with numbers representing various thoughts, concepts and perceptions. *H+ (plus) A New Religion? How to live your life positively through Happiness, Humour, Help, Hope, Health* (2010) is yet another provocative piece of work. Here de Bono proposes a framework for living by means of conscious positive actions (or 'pons') which result in a sense of achievement and an increase in self-esteem and belief in oneself. de Bono's originality and his fertile imagination are clearly visible as he playfully suggests the use of a secret hand signal to demonstrate

adherence to H+ and the payment of fines payable to the H+ central headquarters, whoever that may be, if one does not achieve one's daily 'pons' target. The message of the book is, however, clear: H+ appeals to the positive side of human beings, and an increase in self-esteem allows for increased self-confidence and the motivation to make the world a better place through changing outdated paradigms.

de Bono's focus on thinking in education

In his early work, de Bono focussed mainly on education. The CoRT work-cards and teachers' handbooks (1976) were published when de Bono strongly advocated the introduction of 'thinking' as a subject in its own right in schools, with short-term success in places such as Venezuela, Australia and Malta. Most educational and self-teaching publications, such as *Teach your child how to think* (1992) and *Teach yourself to think* (1995) included numerous practical exercises which could be used to improve the skill of thinking. de Bono further advocated the setting up of Thinking Clubs where people would get together to generate and exchange ideas (see, for example,

de Bono's Thinking Course (1982) pp.142-53).

The Dog Exercising Machine (1970) and *Children Solve Problems* (1972) are two rather iconic, playful and original de Bono publications which reveal his interest in education in the early days and his conviction that children do not censor their ideas as adults generally tend to do. Both publications provide a number of insights into children's thought processes. The 1970 publication presents drawings submitted by children who were asked to design a dog exercising machine. The second exhibits children's ideas related to assigned tasks, such as how to weigh an elephant and how to design a sleep machine. The content of these two publications demonstrates the manner in which young children tend to be totally uninhibited when coming up with ideas, something which, sadly, tends to diminish over time as they move through the educational system and become more cautious where censorship and right and wrong are concerned.

de Bono's contribution to management thinking

Edward de Bono was well known as a guru in management circles and his publications in this regard have been prolific. Various professional courses are offered by the organisation which de Bono had set up to manage his intellectual property and training rights. These are generally administered and run by regional or country representatives and by certified de Bono trainers.

Addressing the business sector, de Bono's work is mainly concerned with the creation of value (or what he calls 'valufacture'). The numerous publications authored by de Bono and directed towards management include two very original publications, *Sur/Petition: Going beyond competition* (1992) and *Simplicity* (1998). *Sur/Petition: Going beyond competition*: This book instigates those who are involved with running a business to ignore competition which, he claims, limits and restricts business thinking, and to move towards Sur/petition – another new word (among many others) which de Bono has coined. Sur/petition takes organisations beyond their typical understanding of how advantage may be sought by doing better than the compe-

tion. The emphasis in this book rests on the exploitation of ‘integrated values’.

‘Competition’, de Bono claims, ‘is one of the things that is necessary for business to survive, but it is not sufficient. ... Competition is merely part of the baseline for survival. Success requires going beyond competition to sur/petition’ (pp. viii-ix). How is this done? de Bono advocated the creation of ‘value monopolies’ as he stated: ‘For survival, you need competition, but for success you need sur/petition and the creation of value monopolies. ... Instead of running in the same race, you create your own race’ (p.xi). Although the book is peppered with a great amount of self-promotion (as are many other de Bono publications), it also contains numerous interesting anecdotes and examples. Its originality lies in the fact that de Bono provided management with methods that may be used to generate value for their organisations in such a manner so as to ‘create their own race’ and to move beyond the competition, rather than simply reacting to what the competition comes up with. Numerous examples of this are evident as tactics used by organisations that are in competition with each other today, such as automobile companies, the soft drinks beverage industry, the airline industry, and the smartphone and tablet market. For example, an automobile company introduces an innovative feature in its vehicles, soon after the competition follows suit. This is what de Bono meant by ‘running in the same race’, i.e., competition. It is only by adding value and creating an appealing, distinctive and original market presence that an organisation would successfully be able to go beyond competition, as is apparent, for example, in a number of products which *Apple* has produced over the years.

As nowadays numerous industries have shifted their focus on to customer experience, de Bono was ahead of his time by pushing forward the notion that organisations had to understand the complex values of the customer. Integrated values and sur/petition cannot be achieved if an organisation becomes complacent. When this happens, organisations are no longer in a position to embrace innovation or to have the ability to question how things can be done differently. Complacency hampers organisations from being able to stand out and be instantly distinguished from their competition. Sur/petition enables not only improvement but also innovation.

Simplicity (1998) is de Bono’s reaction to increased complexity, both with regards to devices (de Bono mentions video recorders, which are rarely used today, on the dust jacket of the hardbound version) and with regards to legislation. The book contains valuable suggestions, tactics and rules for simplicity. The first suggestion is that ‘Every country should set up a National Institute for Simplicity’ and ‘nothing much is going to happen unless someone is given the responsibility for making it happen’ (p.9). In an original, provocative and unique de Bono fashion, the book starts by directing the reader to Page 279 where the ten rules of simplicity are presented. Although the book appears to be rather long, the actual text appears only on the right-hand side pages, with the left-hand side providing key quotations that summarise the information on the right-hand side. The book ends with an Appendix that advocates the setting up of ‘The Edward de Bono National Simplicity Campaign (and local campaigns)’ (pp.289-305). This includes a suggestion for an annual ‘Simplicity Day’ when everyone puts forward their thoughts to

making something simpler' (p.305). It is interesting to note that the ideas in *Simplicity* have been converted into a successful training program offered by certified de Bono trainers.

Thinking is a skill

Central to his discourse and visible as a running thread throughout his publications is de Bono's strong recommendation: Everyone ought to make time for thinking. According to de Bono, thinking is a skill that can be learnt, practiced and in which we can excel. In turn, this could make the world a better place. de Bono approached his teachings with simplicity, adopting concepts that are relatively easy to grasp and implement. There are, however, a few criteria that he stipulated which make for more successful learning and applicability of these thinking skills. To make these skills transferable to various practical spheres of our lives, it is important to suspend judgement by letting ideas flow freely without prejudice. We also must make a deliberate effort to allocate time. There is a time for everything. de Bono stipulated that there should be a time for thinking too. One other element he emphasized is calling the thinking tools he designed by each of their names. Just as a carpenter chooses his tools carefully, and refers to each tool by name, using each tool for a specific function, in a similar fashion, it is important to distinguish between the different thinking tools, and use each of them depending on the task at hand, that is, what we need to use them for. This would, in turn, make us better and more effective thinkers.

It may be noted that de Bono's pioneering of a variety of attention directing thinking tools over the years can be linked to the need to develop 21st Century Skills that can help us to face the challenges that the modern world throws at us. By practicing these thinking tools, de Bono posited that we can improve our thinking skill and become more fluent and proficient at thinking. Just as one requires practice to play a musical instrument or to become proficient at a particular sport, in the same manner, one requires repetitive practice in order to become a more proficient thinker.

Operacy: the skill of thinking that leads to action

de Bono coined yet another word for this – 'operacy' – the practical skill of thinking that leads to action. Improving one's thinking skill may be achieved through 'operacy'. The term is derived from the words 'operate' and 'operational', and operacy refers to the skill that one needs to do something and to set things in motion for action to occur. de Bono strongly advocated for operacy as a third gateway for success in formal education, together with literacy and numeracy. His argument was that not all children may be good at learning language or numerical skills, but they may be potentially excellent at thinking.

Letters to Thinkers (1991)

de Bono wrote a vast array of books that could be used as companion resources for implementation on an individual basis or in a group. These books include *Letters to Thinkers* (1991). In this publication, de Bono raises the need to start 'thinking about thinking' and to give it its due place in our lives, to challenge assumptions and to aim for improvement even where systems

that are already in place are working well, or where we may perhaps assume that they do. Through simple diagrams the issues that de Bono raises come across clearly in each letter, while raising awareness about various aspects. This inquisitiveness aims to arouse the need for intervention and improvement of existing systems. Resonating with current trends related to mindfulness and the acquisition of a more reflective stance, in order to assess and evaluate what goes on around us, in letter number 5, *Think Slowly*, de Bono advocates the urgent need to create an attitude towards thinking. This involves the creation of a space where we can look back to see what ground has already been covered and to assess the situation before moving further forward. When we stop to look around us, there is more of a possibility of observing what options are available, with the consequence that we may make better choices. In a fast-paced world, slow-thinking becomes more challenging, yet increasingly rewarding. Making time for thinking becomes essential.

Focus on three of Edward de Bono's programmes

Known mostly for his lateral thinking techniques, de Bono designed a variety of creative thinking methods. This section focusses on three methods that are perhaps less well known. When reading de Bono's works, one comes across key principles that are addressed using his techniques. One finds the notion of value at the core of all the thinking tools and programmes designed by de Bono.

The different independent frameworks that de Bono designed complement each other. For instance, the Six Frames can easily be incorporated into a sequence of the Six Thinking Hats or the Power of Perception tools. Used individually or as part of a sequence, the tools developed by means of these simple methods may prove to have a powerful influence in how we structure our thought.

The three programmes outlined in this section are *The Six Value Medals* (2005), *Six Frames: for thinking about information* (2008) and *Bonting: Thinking to create value* (2015).

Consistency and complementarity

de Bono's much acclaimed Six Thinking Hats programme, the Six Value Medals and the Six Action Shoes share the same number of tools within each of the respective programmes. However, notwithstanding this detail, each programme is totally autonomous and independent of the others. Once an individual becomes fluent in these skills through practice, then these frameworks may very well complement each other quite easily.

The Six Value Medals (2005)

The main concept behind the Six Value Medals is, in de Bono's tradition, to bring to the fore values. de Bono claimed that almost all of our thinking and our actions are driven by values, and that forgoing values is almost impossible. Values could be perceived from a personal, individualistic point of view or from a group or an organisational point of view.

As values are central to everything that we do, it is highly relevant to dedicate time to untangle and unpack these values and to optimise their use.

The Six Value Medals programme aims to direct our attention towards where one can address values. This thinking method allows one to scan for values, and to prioritise which of these values are most important to follow in the face of a particular situation. The maximisation of values is considered throughout the process.

Six types of thinking are outlined that support the practitioner of this framework to think in parallel and streamline any process involving planning, decisions and other forms of thinking. It is like putting on a pair of spectacles, where one can change the lenses and look at things from a different perspective. Six lenses are, in this case, used to represent the six value categories.

The Six Value Medals may be used to optimise decisions at individual, group or organisational level by supporting users in their effort to resolve conflicts by giving importance to different outlooks on a shared concept. Until now there has not been a concrete way to assess the impact that a decision may have on attempts to create and protect value. When employees can scan, identify and prioritise values, they become vital partners in growing a business.

Gold Value Medal

Gold is perceived as a precious metal. de Bono metaphorically compares this precious element to people – people are precious. The function of the gold value medal is concerned with what matters to people. Human values include pride, achievement, a sense of belonging, hope, trust, and growth. Human beings have basic and psychological needs, all these are addressed by means of the gold value medal. The basic human needs include good health, shelter, respect, safety and freedom from oppression. On the other hand, psychological needs refer to the sense of recognition, appreciation, prestige, simplicity, trust and human dignity.

Silver Value Medal

The Silver Value Medal relates to organizations. What are the values at the heart of an organization? By applying the silver value medal, members of organisations recognize which goals are being worked on and how action may influence the path forward in the pursuit of these goals. There are various areas where silver value medal goals may apply, including advertising, public relations, promotions, pricing, distribution, and saleability. Silver medal values arise from the intended purpose and goals of the organization. Silver medal values incorporate everything that helps the organization to fulfil its mission.

Steel Value Medal

The general perception of steel is that it is a strong metal. This robustness is portrayed in the steel value medal through a quest for quality. The function of this medal is to question implications for quality. How will quality be impacted by any impending decisions? The term 'Quality' may be interpreted from different perspectives, such as the quality of service, function quality and the quality perceived by the end user. In an attempt to constantly better output, constant improvement is essential. Improvement, particularly related

to quality, comes under the steel value medal. The steel value medal may incorporate incremental improvement or there may be a paradigm shift which constitutes a creative leap. However, it is critical not to focus on creative leaps at the expense of overlooking incremental improvement. Both ought to be seriously considered and worked upon diligently.

Glass Value Medal

Glass can be moulded into different shapes, addressing both beautiful aesthetics and functionality. The different dyes that may be applied during glass moulding are figuratively aligned with the functions of this medal. As it is made out of sand, glass bears no resemblance to or link with the original ingredients, once it becomes a finished product. The glass value medal addresses action in the form of change, innovation, simplicity and creativity. Just as glass is fragile, new and creative ideas may also be fragile. Extracting the potential benefits of an idea may make it stronger and this may be useful when the potential of an idea is challenged, and when its existence is threatened. Just as glass can be shattered, ideas may be crushed if they are not nurtured. Therefore, extracting the potential of an idea is essential for it to have an opportunity to germinate and to take shape.

Wood Value Medal

The Wood Value Medal focuses on the environment. What positive or negative impact to the environment will there be if certain decisions are made? In this case, the environment could be related to nature, in the way that this term is generally associated. However, taking a broader perspective, the wood value medal addresses the manner in which decisions and actions may impact third parties. It is often the case that third parties are not involved in a decision-making process. However, by empathizing and by putting ourselves in their shoes it would be easier to understand how they could respond to what is proposed. When assessing competition, it would be useful to put yourself in the shoes of competitors and to consider how they would respond to a decision. The same applies when dealing with suppliers. On a more personal level, the wood medal value could enhance empathy since anticipating impact could lead to the reconsideration of an action. Some values that may emerge may be negative. A decision could then be taken on how to act on these emerging negative values and how to deal with them in order to avoid or to enhance a specific impact.

Brass Value Medal

At first glance, brass may look like gold but is not gold. Sometimes appearances could influence the way we perceive situations. Perceptions, influenced by diverse backgrounds, could change the interpretation of situations. The brass value medal is all about perceptions. First impressions are important when searching for and identifying brass medal values which enable the examination of appearances and perceptions.

Perceptions make up how we interpret the world around us. It is important to be careful about how selective perception unfolds. The general tendency is to pick what fits a particular purpose, and this implies that perceptions may simply mirror the values that fit current emotions, preconceptions

and prejudices. When scanning for the brass value medal, it is important to consider different points of view. Considering all these different perceptions adds value to the thinking process.

General application of the six value medals

The six value medal values could be applied to a variety of situations. When using the six value medals, de Bono suggests conducting a value scan in order to identify the core values that are used when making decisions. The analogy of a builder using a spirit level to check that the building is coming up well applies here, as it is necessary to make regular checks in order to increase the certainty that the decisions taken turn out to be right. Value scanning is essential when selecting ideas, when allocating resources or when timing an event. Cost-cutting, design, drawing up strategies and addressing areas of conflict are also critical areas where it is important to check values.

Six Frames: for thinking about information (2008)

Life today involves the constant processing of information of various kinds. Some information may be personal, other information may be work related. It is at times rather difficult to create sufficient space and time to process each type of information separately, and this may lead to inefficiencies.

de Bono's Six Frames programme helps to increase thinking about information by deliberately making the time for it. de Bono designed this framework to support individuals in order to optimise their ability to think about routine processes effectively. Each frame points towards a direction in which to look. As with de Bono's *Six Thinking Hats* (1985), parallel thinking is key to lay out the process. Groups of people using this method are encouraged to use one frame at a time in order to think on the same lines, rather than allocating different frames and using them concurrently. Each frame has a specific function representing purpose, accuracy, point of view, interest, value and outcome.

The Triangle Frame (Purpose)

Everything that we do should have a purpose. The triangle frame, which represents purpose, emphasises the importance of being clear and establishes the baseline of why information is required and how engagement with this information should occur. Issues which are obvious are often overlooked and the result implies missing out on potentially useful information. By directing our attention towards the purpose, notions that would otherwise sit at the back of our minds are brought to the foreground. This acts in a similar manner to putting a spotlight on specific areas for thinking. Establishing the purpose helps to improve clarity about what should be extracted from the available information.

The Circle frame (Accuracy)

Being bombarded by information could potentially lead to mindless action. When this is the case, specific details tend to be overlooked, with the result that potentially useful information may be ignored. Representing accuracy, the circle frame directs attention towards the precision of the information that

is being considered. The manner in which the information at hand is assessed will reflect the value of that same information.

Accuracy could play a role in how the information generated is perceived in a critical manner. It is sometimes the case that sources are trusted for some time for practical reasons or due to lack of knowledge in specific areas. By placing the circle frame into the thinking process, accuracy of the information processed is increased.

The Square Frame (Point of View)

Interpreting information is critical in order for it to be fully understood. Being able to infer information in more than one way is useful in order to categorise and store information. Being aware of any prejudice or any inclinations of thought acquires relevance as information is assessed for its objectiveness. Without clarification and objective understanding, information could be distorted and, subsequently, it could become dangerous. Assessing points of view using the square frame adds comprehensiveness and objectivity to thinking.

The Heart Frame (Interest)

The heart is often instinctively related to emotions, love, and possibly to romance. This is not the case when applying the heart frame. The heart frame refers to areas of interest. Interest may be aroused through the intensity of the need for information. When the need for information emerges as a result of personal involvement, it is then necessary to seek information to find out more about the situation at hand.

The Heart Frame directs attention to matters of interest. The level of interest may vary from general to specific or special interest. Over time, background information that may apply under different circumstances is accumulated. Although seemingly tacit, intangible information related to interest may acquire considerable relevance.

The Diamond Frame (Value)

The Diamond Frame offers the opportunity to recapture thoughts in order to move on to the next steps. Its function is related to providing a summary and an overview. Once again, value is brought to the fore as the value of the information available is assessed. As value may be subjective, it is relevant to acknowledge that there are different variations of it. The diamond frame clarifies these values through direct attention. When summarising or building an overview of the situation, values that would have been observed through other frames may be reviewed through the Diamond Frame.

The Slab Frame (Outcome)

Once a summary of the process is provided, a thinking session could be drawn to a conclusion. The Slab Frame directs attention to this process. Discipline is required, together with a deliberate effort to arrange the conclusion on the 'slab' for everyone to take note of. It is important that conclusions are clearly spelt out, since different perceptions may lead to different interpretations of the same conclusion. The Slab Frame facilitates conclusions by clearly establishing the outcome of the thinking effort.

Bonting: Thinking to create value (2015)

One of the most recent books authored by de Bono is entitled *Bonting: Thinking to create value* (2015). As with many of the frameworks designed by de Bono, Bonting is about thinking for value creation. de Bono claims that directing attention in a deliberate manner could lead to new ideas, even in areas that are usually taken for granted. This is typically done through engagement with specific tools that enable novel perspectives, including the ability to look at something from different angles, even if it is something that was experienced time and time again. By re-visiting a familiar situation, or re-evaluating an existing product or service, Bonting allows for the adding of value to something which may already be considered as good, but which may not be good enough. There is always room for improvement as nothing is perfect. This is in line with another of the words which de Bono coined: 'ebne', which means excellent but not enough. An example he provides is an excellent speech which, when focussed upon, may not be enough in spite of its excellence as further action would be needed.

de Bono claims that the improvement of thinking could have an impact on how problems are approached. He claims that 'bonting' is derived from the Latin word *bonum*, which means good.

Bonting is used to refer to the process of thinking to create value by focusing on positive values. This is done by engaging in constructive and creative thinking and by looking forward to anticipate potential situations. Through the use of different thinking methods, Bonting encourages users to be forward looking and to look for possibilities, to imagine what might be. This may create areas where value may be added. To do this, a point of change or a desired state is used as a focus, and alternatives are generated as a way to achieve the anticipated state.

This publication also exhibits a number of de Bono's provocative and original ideas. He admits that some may be feasible, others less so. In line with his tendency for provocation, one of the suggestions he recommends is that there ought to be one moment in the day when people are allowed to propose ideas such as 'preposterous suggestions, crazy ideas and provocations. They need not be taken seriously. ... It would be like having a daily carnival' (pp.293-94). The idea behind this is clear – too many crazy ideas which may contain value for humanity and society are unjustly censored or not communicated at all, generally due to fear of rejection or to unfair criticism. Why should there not be a specific daily 'space' when these ideas could be shared? Some value, which could be of benefit for humanity, may emerge from them.

Conclusion

In order to reiterate certain aspects deemed critical by de Bono, one may observe an element of overlap at times when reading through his publications. However, one must also note his carefully chosen diction. de Bono adopts an almost colloquial writing style, which is a style that is easily understood by a large audience. It is likely that this was done in order to reach out to the largest number of potential followers and readers as possible, and in the hope that uptake of the concepts being proposed would be maximised.

In conclusion, one may deduce that, based on the original and provocative teachings designed and proposed by de Bono, if time is dedicated towards thinking deliberately and slowly, towards a specific focus, and towards the extraction and creation of values, this may then allow for improved thinking, increased creativity and better idea generation.

A value-added perception of the world around us, besides creating more critical and creative thinkers, could make the world a much better place to live in.

List of references of de Bono Publications in this chapter:

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