

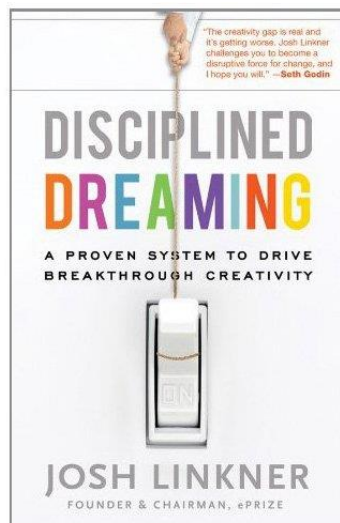
A SUMMARY OF

Disciplined Dreaming

By Josh Linkner

Summary by Kim Hartman

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This is a summary of what I think is the most important and insightful parts of the book. I can't speak for anyone else and I strongly recommend you to read the book in order to grasp the concepts written here. My notes should only be seen as an addition that can be used to refresh your memory after you've read the book. Use my words as anchors to remember the vitals parts of the book. I know I will. Or you can just hire me and get the content of this book as well as many others in one, beautiful package. I'm always up for a fun challenge, so bring it on.

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Chapter 1: The case for creativity

- Change agents win because they have the courage and creativity to break the mold. Red Bull broke the mold by launching an entirely new beverage category: the energy drink. Michael Del broke the mold by selling computer directly to the consumer and cutting out the middlemen.

Chapter 2: Disciplined dreaming: your system for creativity

- If I asked you to come up with a metaphor for your business, you could find it a daunting task. But if I provided some additional structure by, say, asking you to tell me why your business is like a pencil, the job becomes much easier. The system that is provided gives creativity a platform to grow on.

Disciplined dreaming – 5 steps

1. *Ask*

Set clearly defined objectives for finding a solution to a specific problem – your creativity challenge. The ask phase is all about asking questions, exploring possibilities and awakening curiosity and awareness.

2. *Prepare*

In this step you set the stage for the disciplined dreaming process by preparing every aspect of your mind, body and environment to support maximum creative performance.

3. *Discover*

The discovery phase gives you the treasure map to uncover creative ideas and bring them to the surface.

4. *Ignite*

With the foundation in place from steps 1 through 3, you are now ready to let your ideas fly free.

5. *Launch*

In the final phase your analytical is reconnected with your creativity as whole-brain thinking goes to work.

- Buying into a limited definition of creativity prevents many from appreciating their own potential.

Most creativity challenges require solutions that fall into one of three categories:

1. *Breakthrough innovation*

Game changing innovations that rewrite the rules of the game, like iPod, assembly line etc.

2. *High-value change*

Results in significant improvements in product offerings, processes, or business approaches that drive tangible value. Ex product add-on, marketing campaign etc.

3. *Everyday creativity*

Change the way you and your company think and behave in everyday work – like better meetings etc.

- Studies have shown that creativity is close to 80% learned and acquired.
- **Lateral thinking:** thinking that seeks new ways of looking at a problem rather than proceeding by logical steps.

How to explore in new directions:

- *Tolerate ambiguity:* when you are off track you are often close to a breakthrough. Hang in there.
- *Avoid right and wrong answers:* focus on the questions, not the answers.
- *Accept ruts and grooves:* focus more on the process and on driving curiosity than on trying to force results and the results will come.
- *Listen:* be open-minded and listen to what people say, what they don't say, what the environments are telling them.
- *Don't be rigid and stubborn:* don't let experience translate into your being hardwired to the past.
- *Seek input:* adversity: look on different and unrelated places.

Step one – ASK

Chapter 3: Defining the creativity challenge

- The more clearly and thoroughly you detail your creativity challenge, the more effective you'll be at resolving it.
- First you have to create the creativity brief – a series of questions that will help you fill in the blanks as you define your creative challenge.
- By providing a system for organizing your thoughts up front, the creativity brief will serve you as your north star and guide you toward the best possible creative outcome.
- Hold a quick brainstorming session with your team to list all your collective fears about the project. By identifying them up front in one fear list and agreeing not to allow them to hold you back, you are giving yourself and your team permission to push the boundaries and let your creativity soar.

Chapter 4: Driving curiosity and awareness

- Asking **why** helps you understand the current state of affairs and challenge the status quo and conventional wisdom. When you ask **what if** you are exploring fresh possibilities and imagining how the world would look if you made a change or if a new idea came to life. Asking **why not** helps you understand constraints. It allows you to connect with the limiting factors that are currently blocking positive change.
- **The meatloaf metaphor:** shows how an out of date tradition have made in the sense bot is no longer relevant.
- **Beginners mind:** a mind that remains completely open to new concepts. As people progress in life they become filled with preconceived notions, assumptions, and history that can cloud their thinking.
- Change reading habits, patterns, food, music, the route you take to work on anything you can think of. These changes will raise your awareness and help you connect with the world in fresh ways.
- **The five whys:** ask five why questions in a row. One of the most powerful exercises you can use to uncover new ideas and drive curiosity.
- The best innovations come from tuning in to customers. The key to tuning in is empathy. The more you can understand your audience, the better you'll be able to appeal to them. Role playing is a fun way to get tuned in. have a few people on your team act out a scene or two in the role of your customer, while the rest of your team takes notes and observes.
- Creativity is 20% inherited, 80% learned behavior.

Five skills separate the most accomplished innovators from the rest:

- *Associating:* creating links between seemingly unrelated items.
- *Questioning:* ask open-ended questions that because questioning is at the core of creativity.
- *Observing:* will raise your level of awareness and make you imagine what could be different.
- *Experimenting:* experiment and dabble until you stumble upon the best solutions.
- *Networking:* find diverse people that whose ideas challenge your won thinking and expand your perspective.
- The pike syndrome is an illustration of how we can become paralyzed by imaginary barriers.

Step two – PREPARE

Chapter 5: Gaining the keys to a creative mind and culture

- Preparing yourself to be creative will allow you to unleash your best ideas.

The seven rules of creative cultures

1. *Fuel passion*

- a. Develop a sense of purpose: how can you make the paycheck become a secondary reason for people working? How can you make you people work like they owned the company themselves?
- b. Promote collaboration: passion is contagious and motivated people influence each other.
- c. Have fun: having fun puts you in the zone and optimizes your brain chemistry for creativity.

2. *Celebrate ideas*

- a. Establish an environment that celebrates and rewards your team.

3. *Foster autonomy*

- a. Give trust and responsibility and you shall have more passionate people. Guide them with clear goals and support, but let them use their own heads to come up with solutions. Trust!

4. *Encourage courage*

- a. If you go too far you can always turn it back. If you don't go too far you will never know how good something could have been.

5. *Fail forward*

- a. Keep trying. The key is to fail quickly.

6. *Think small*

- a. Even though your companies grow, keep the small company mindset where innovation can flourish and everyone can come with an idea, no matter position.

7. *Maximize diversity*

- a. The more different worldviews and ideas, the better ground for building a creative culture with original ideas as an outcome.

- Quote: "In our 80-person company, no one reports to anyone else. Everyone have a mentor instead of a boss."

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Chapter 6: Preparing your environment to promote creative passion

Nothing of interest (to me).

Step three – Discover

Chapter 7: Discovering the ways for creativity

- Miles Davis thought that the music already existed, and it was his role as an artist to discover it.
- If you change the way you look at things, the things you look at change.
- **The borrowed idea:** find something that is working in one area of life and apply the same principle to the problem at hand.

The upside down concept

- The upside down concept is all about turning a problem around and solving for something different in order to succeed.
- *Use a “what if” approach:* instead of trying to offer our customers lower rates at our bank, what if we offered the best service?
- *Wii example:* Nintendo changed the problem it was solving. Instead of building a device to support better games, the company built a device with a better game experience.
- **Find the inflection points:** what general inflection points can you identify within your life, your customers lives, your industry, your competition? Spend three minute periods identifying and listing s many of these inflection points as you can. Use the list as an inspiration for creativity.

Step four: IGNITE

Chapter 8: Generating creative sparks

- **Creative spark:** A creative spark need not be a fully baked idea. If you are an author working on a new novel, for example, a spark may be simply the name or even the hair color of the protagonist.

When trying to create your creative flame, remember these two points:

1. Start with a number of small sparks, no matter how incomplete, to begin the creative process.
2. Be very careful not to quickly extinguish those sparks.

Creative techniques

- **Imbizo groups:** Imbizo groups - gatherings of people from diverse backgrounds and disciplines who have come together to simply discuss an idea – are one of the most powerful ways to generate creative sparks.
- **Wrong answer technique:** To uncover some sparks and kick off the creative process, try searching for the wrong answer instead of the right one. Examples: How could we win an award or the worst customer service?
- **The Hemingway Bridge:** rather than ending a chapter and then beginning the next day with a blank page, Hemingway would write the first paragraph of the next chapter before ending his days' work. Having the initial thoughts already started on the page allowed him to pick up midstream rather than from a dead stop.
- **Provocation technique:** make a provocative statement such as "houses should not have roofs". From there, explore the ins and outs of the statement and provoke your team into a lively discussion.
- **Substitution technique:** think about your creative challenge as several unique and interconnected parts. Then simply take one part at a time and try swapping out something fresh.
- **The worst idea technique:** think of the worst solution to your problem and explain why the idea is so horrible. Discuss and see what new ideas you can uncover for improvements.

Chapter 9: Igniting the sparks of creativity: The eight most powerful techniques

- **Parking Lot:** When side issues arise, add them to your Parking Lot. This keeps the group focused on the task at hand while making sure that important concepts are discussed later.
- **Edge storming:** take your brainstormed ideas to the absolute extremes. It forces you to go beyond conventional wisdoms and incremental changes.
- **The long list:** write a huge list of ideas in a short time. The first ideas tend to be obvious. Next comes the edgy ones. Then the inappropriate ones. Then the gross ones and the bizarre ones and the stupid ones. The best ideas are usually at the end of the list.

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Step five – LAUNCH

Chapter 10: Bringing your ideas to life: The launch

This chapter should be read directly from the book. The worst chapter in the book, if you ask me.