Innovation distinguishes between a leader and a follower...

Which do you want to be?

Chris Griffiths
With Melina Costi

How to find the best answers to everyday challenges
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We’ve all heard the saying “knowledge is power” - but what happens when everyone has access to pretty much the same knowledge and information?

Information is becoming old news. It’s no longer a differentiator, it’s a commodity. With access to copious communication channels, websites and media, we can all find out what we need to know, when we need to know it. And with the aid of modern technology, there’s nothing remarkable in being able to analyse, process and manipulate information. In many ways, we’re all skilled knowledge experts already.¹ So where’s the edge?

It’s time to start facing the facts - the landscape of our society is changing profoundly. We’re in the throes of an extraordinary creative revolution and we need a whole new set of mental and operational tools to deal with it.

People say “If you keep doing what you’ve always done, you’ll keep getting what you’ve always got.”

I disagree with this. In the new economy, if you keep doing what you’ve always done, you’ll get left WAY behind.

Creativity is more than just the buzzword of the moment. Individuals and organisations are finally acknowledging just how vital it is for contending with an increasingly complex and mercilessly competitive environment. Everything is shifting around us – our markets, our tasks, our technology, even our relationships. The famous adage “change is the only constant” has never been more apt as Russian futurologists report that the frequency of social and technological change will continue to intensify rapidly in the coming decades.² The upshot of all this change is that we’re being forced out of our comfort zone and into a higher gear to boost our chances of making it in the long-term.

Creative thinking is becoming a prime tool in these wildly uncertain times, bringing us new choices and setting us up to differentiate products and services, to envision and develop new insights and processes, and to achieve growth.¹ In surveying more than 1,500 CEOs and senior managers from around the world, IBM discovered that ‘creativity’ is believed to be the most crucial factor for future success. More and more senior executives are focusing on it as a key mechanism for reinventing customer relationships, producing greater operational dexterity and establishing a thriving business all-round.² Consequently, there’s a genuine need for a purposeful and strategic approach which people can use to encourage and enhance creativity actively.

My goal in writing this book was to fill that need.

In these pages, I introduce a conclusive ‘real-world’ system that makes it possible for anyone to achieve the creative brilliance that’s needed for personal and professional success today. Not only does it break the bad habits that ‘kill’ creativity, it creates the most fertile conditions for the thought process to work at its highest levels - so we can all solve problems and make decisions using our full brain power and creative potential. This is the GRASP The Solution (GTS) system.

In Chapters 2 to 20, you’ll learn how to understand your modes of thinking (GRASP) and how to put them to play in a way that helps you generate more and better ideas, select the right solutions and make them happen boldly and successfully (Solution Finder).

But, first things first. Before we embark on our journey of creative development, we’re going to look more in depth at WHY we need to focus on our thinking and creativity in Chapter 1. We’re also going to explore how our creative abilities diminish with age and how taking an active interest in our mental development can put us back in control of our creativity… and our lives.

Read on to experience the POWER of creative thinking!

Chris Griffiths

INTRODUCTION

During the last decade, we underwent one of the most significant shifts ever experienced in human history – the information explosion. As a result, we witnessed the rise of what Peter Drucker termed the ‘knowledge worker’¹ - the programmers, IT workers, accountants, MBAs and lawyers who could process and manipulate this all-important resource. These individuals have been credited for achieving some of our most spectacular successes in business and industry – and rightly so. But today, this is all changing.

While the linear, logical and analytical talents of knowledge workers are still very much necessary, it’s hazardous to presume that these skills will continue to shape the nature of success in a new ‘creative’ age. As the value of ingenuity and innovation skyrockets, the competencies of analysis and logical processing of information can no longer rule.

Why is that?

New technologies are proving that they can execute this type of sequential, analytical and computational work better, faster and more accurately than even those with the highest IQs.² Ask any lawyer, stockbroker, analyst or programmer and they will bemoan how many of their functions are increasingly being turned over to machines!

Knowledge is a fantastic means for aiding advancement but it's not a solution in itself. In this new creative era, the power is inevitably going to shift to people who can look at things differently, who can think imaginatively and objectively to deliver new values and ideals. The leaders of the next decade will be those who can deliberately and systematically make fresh connections and discoveries, generate original ideas, solve problems creatively not just logically, and break the rules to overcome sameness. They will be true ‘whole brain’ thinkers, harnessing

² Pink, Daniel H. (2005), A Whole New Mind: Moving from the Information Age to the Conceptual Age, Riverhead Books
both their left (analytical) and right (creative) cortical skills to make optimal decisions.

Information is still important, but unless we make the effort to look at it in different ways we get stuck and stagnate in the same old habits and patterns. It will be this new breed of thinkers who will be able to synthesise, exploit and transform information to find original solutions to contemporary challenges and so forge the way forward. Success is no longer a matter of what we know but how we think.

By reading this book, you’re fundamentally setting yourself up to be one of these people - to be someone who makes a difference instead of following the crowd. You’ll be learning how to equip yourself with strategies and tools to cultivate your thinking and, by doing so, discover how you can add value to your organisation, confidently address problems, and massively boost your chances of reaching pre-eminent levels of productivity and innovation.

“The leaders of the new age will be those who can think differently!”

“No company can grow and prosper without new ideas. Customer’s changing needs, increasing pressure from competitors, and the evolving abilities of suppliers all necessitate a continual source of creative thinking for a company to stay on top.”

Henry Chesbrough, Author of ‘Open Innovation’

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3 de Bono, Edward (2009), *Think! Before It’s Too Late*, Ebury Publishing
The Most Important Factor…

Here’s a question for you. If you wanted to create a successful organisation, whether a business, school or charity, what would be the most important advantage or asset you could have?

Take a few moments to think about this. Would it be the best product, most competitive price, a brilliant sales team, a powerful brand, sound infrastructure and processes, a hungry crowd?

Let’s say you believe that brand is the most influential factor. Of course the brand is an incredibly valuable component of a business, but where does it come from in the first place?...

...It comes from PEOPLE. People are the driving force of an organisation; they are without doubt the single most important ingredient for success. Seth Godin, entrepreneur, author and public speaker on marketing and change, quotes:

“Carnegie apparently said, ‘Take away my people, but leave my factories and soon grass will grow on the factory floors...Take away my factories, but leave my people and soon we will have a new and better factory.’ Is there a typical large corporation working today that still believes this? Most organizations now have it backward. The factory, the infrastructure, the systems, the patents, the process, the manual... that's king. In fact, shareholders demand it. It turns out that success is coming from the atypical organizations, the ones that can get back to embracing irreplaceable people, the linchpins, the ones that make a difference. Anything else can be replicated cheaper by someone else.”

So with this being the case, what’s the most important factor that determines the success of the individual? Again, stop and think about this for a short while.

Perhaps there are a number of qualities and aspects that could be significant here - intelligence, inspiration, communication skills and creativity. But again, where does inspiration come from? Where does intelligence come from? They all funnel down to the ability of people to THINK in the correct way. Ultimately, all of the successful elements of a business are devised by individuals who, first and foremost, are able to think fittingly to the task. In simple terms, thought is our most valuable human resource.

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People – The most important factor in an organisation

We are what we think, and if we think better we can be more efficient, creative and productive... But how many of us actually stop to think about how we think?

We probably all agree that having adequate systems, processes and procedures in place is instrumental for a business to grow and succeed. A pilot can’t fly to his exact destination without a set of monitors and gauges to guide the way and make sure everything is progressing well. Likewise, an organisation benefits from systems and processes to drive its operational efficiency and help optimise end-to-end performance.

McDonald’s is an excellent example of how efficient and organised processes can become the basis of a successful business model.

Every activity at McDonald’s has a very specific process, enabling the entire organisation to run like a well-oiled machine. Ray Kroc, the man responsible for building McDonald’s into a massive-scale fast food operation, even created a 75-page manual detailing the entire ‘McDonald’s Method’ to the letter. The system is so fine-tuned, it delivers the required end result almost every time.

With such great value brought by systems and processes, surely a chief goal for all organisations should be to implement systems which assist people to think in the most focused and effective ways for particular tasks. If thinking is the most fundamental factor for success, doesn’t it make sense that the best action we could take would be to actually help people think about thinking?

“The ability to think better will soon become the most significant competitive advantage companies and individuals can claim.”

Tim Hurson, Author of ‘Think Better’

Are We Ready For Creativity?

Although most of us have an intuitive understanding of what it means to be creative, there’s still a great deal of uncertainty surrounding the nature of this fascinating concept.

I define creativity as “the incubator and cultivator of new ideas, which are born from existing knowledge and combined to form a new neural pathway in the brain, leading to a personal original thought.”

The key point to take from this definition is that, at its simplest level, creativity relates to the mental processes that lead to solutions, ideas, concepts, theories or products that are unique and novel.7

Creativity is a fundamental driver for innovation - but what is innovation? It’s “the marriage of creative thinking and sound logic, which when applied together, create a solution or direction for one to explore and deliver.”

“Creativity is thinking up new things. Innovation is doing new things.”

Theodore Levitt, American economist and professor at Harvard Business School

On this basis, we can acknowledge that all progress and advancement is attributable to creativity at the outset. It’s the catalyst for change. Without it we remain trapped in the past, rehashing the same out-dated concepts. In business especially, there’s a need for creativity to make up for the shortcomings of conventional logical thinking which boxes us in by merely extending what we already know, rather than bringing something entirely new to the table. And critical thinking is just as bad! As the eminent thinker

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Edward de Bono puts it, “You may be so brilliant at critical thinking that you can destroy any silly idea, even good ones. But no amount of critical thinking can produce good ideas in the first place.”

Despite our serious need for creativity, we have a tendency to push it to the side and do very little to facilitate it in the workplace and in our lives. Usually we hope that certain naturally ‘gifted’ individuals will supply us with new ideas and opportunities, or we hold disorganised ‘brainstorming’ sessions that are little more than a platform for the more dominant personalities to impress their ideas on others.

The interesting thing is that, as children, we were all far more creative than we are today. Stephen Shapiro, author of 24/7 Innovation: A Blueprint for Surviving and Thriving in an Age of Change, discusses how this premise has been tested over the years. He reports that in a study which began in 1969, 1,600 five-year-olds were given a creativity test used by NASA to select the most innovative engineers and scientists. Of these children a staggering 98% scored in the ‘highly creative’ range. Five years later, these same children (now 10-years-old) were re-tested and only 30% were still rated ‘highly creative’. Another five years later, when the children were 15-years-old, just 12% of them were ranked in this category. More revealing, however, was that 250,000 adults over the age of 25 also took the same test and a paltry 2% of them scored in the highly creative range. So unless you’re five-years-old, the chances are your creativity is seriously lacking!

What does this study prove? In the words of Stephen Shapiro, “Creativity is therefore not learned, but rather unlearned.” Creativity is a quality that can be universally found in all of us as young children, but it fades rapidly as we progress towards and reach adulthood. We can liken this ‘creativity unlearning’ process to how elephants are taught not to stray.

An elephant is tethered to a chain when it is still a baby. After pulling at the chain several times, the elephant soon learns that struggling doesn’t help it break free. Eventually, when released from its chain, the baby elephant won’t attempt to stray further than the length of the original chain! As the elephant gets older, the chain is shortened, and again when it’s released, it doesn’t go further than the limits originally placed on it. Despite growing into the most powerful land mammal on earth, the chains in the elephant’s mind remain deeply ingrained and it doesn’t attempt to pull away.

This is so true of children, who during their formative lives have numerous chains put on them. The chains get shorter and shorter as they progress

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8 de Bono, Edward (2009), *Think! Before It’s Too Late*, Ebury Publishing
9 Shapiro, Stephen (2003), ‘Unleashing The Inner Innovator’, *Control*, No. 3, p. 19-21
through education and when they’re finally released out into the real world, they have difficulty advancing further than the limits that were placed on them in school and by society!

Education systems generally focus on training the mind for storing and analysing information instead of developing its power to generate new ideas and bring them into being. And they stigmatise mistakes! A fear of being ‘wrong’ frightens a lot of children out of expressing themselves in ways that are even mildly unconventional or different. In preserving such an approach to schooling, Sir Ken Robinson, author of *Out Of Our Minds: Learning To Be Creative*\(^\text{10}\) believes that we’re actually educating people out of their natural creative capacities. He argues that, in today’s world of accelerated change, creativity is as important in education as literacy and, for that reason, we should regard it with the same status and respect.

The idea that many people ‘grow out’ of their creativity correlates with the results of our own ThinkBuzan Creativity Study,\(^\text{11}\) which we devised specifically to measure creativity and its subsets such as flexibility, originality, fluency and association. It’s an ongoing study which over 4,500 participants have now completed (you can take part by accessing this weblink: http://www.thinkbuzan.com/creativitytest). Our findings have so far revealed that, while certain skills such as fluency in response are unaffected by maturity, original thinking skills decline dangerously with advancing age.


\(^{11}\) ThinkBuzan Creativity Study (2010), http://www.thinkbuzan.com/creativitytest
But this doesn’t mean they’re gone forever! My belief is that for the majority of the adult population, creativity is an untapped resource that’s withered through lack of use. Young children can generate highly original solutions to problems because they aren’t bound by the rigid conventions and methodologies of adulthood. By contrast, adults will try to pull a solution from their repository of knowledge, solving the problem in a way that’s been proven to work in the past. A common issue with senior executives is that they’ll use their sharp reasoning skills to pick out a tried and tested solution from their wealth of experience and will then impose it onto the problem, forcing it to work no matter what. More often than not, they’re trying to fit a round peg into a square hole – the solution just isn’t a good match for the problem. We have to understand that an increasing number of today’s business problems have few or no precedents, so this line of approach isn’t likely to get us very far!\footnote{Proctor, Tony (1999), Creative Problem Solving For Managers, Routledge} It’s crucial that we start thinking in terms of new possibilities rather than looking for ready-made solutions.

“We definitely think people can learn how to be creative, but I think for the most part people unlearn how to do it.”

Evan Williams, Co-founder and former CEO of Twitter

We can all be creative, even in the later stages of life. We just have to be very purposeful about it. In writing this book, my aim is to offer a self-contained and systematic guide to reawakening our innate creative abilities and tackling our problems and opportunities innovatively. First we have to free our minds from the shackles of limited thinking that constrain our creativity. We can then apply directed principles, processes and techniques to stimulate the kind of original thinking that brings the best possible answers to our everyday (and not so everyday!) challenges.

Though it may appear otherwise, being creative isn’t a process that occurs just by chance. Good ideas usually arise when people are actively engaged in seeking them out; when they’re curious, enquiring and on the alert for opportunities.

This notion is reinforced by additional experiments we’ve conducted using the ThinkBuzan Creativity Test. The pilot group who participated in the original study came from our vast database of contacts and, for this reason, could confidently be said to have a general interest in mental literacy and ‘creativity-enhancing’ tools such as Mind Maps. When we compare the results of this pilot group with groups of participants who
have no special interest in the brain or thinking, we gain valuable insight into exactly how much inquisitiveness and directed effort influences levels of creativity. For instance, in the ‘Visual Imagination’ category, our pilot group scored an average of 7.15 out of a total of 10, compared to a mere 4.3 average within the test groups. In every single category the pilot group consistently demonstrated far greater levels of divergent thinking, idea flexibility and original thought than the test groups. Quite clearly, active interest and pursuit of creativity and mental improvement are important factors in determining our creative ability. It’s not just a case of who has the ‘natural talent’ for it.

This begs the question – how much more creative and innovative can we be if we develop our interest and really start to put a process behind our thinking?...

“This have no special gift, I am only passionately curious.”

Albert Einstein, Nobel Prize winning theoretical physicist

This brings us to the dual purpose of this book:

1) To help you develop an awareness of your thinking – To be more creatively productive, it’s vital that you understand why you think the way you do and how to use your natural thinking abilities to your best advantage.

2) To help you apply a strategy to your thinking – With an understanding of your thinking in place, it becomes possible to apply a process (for problem solving and decision making) that will direct your attention in the most optimal way to bring new and better ideas.

Both of these values are brought to you via the GRASP The Solution (GTS) System.

**GRASP The Solution (GTS) System**

As much as we know that creativity is important to the success of our work or business, it’s disheartening how few of us actually understand how it comes about or how to put it into practice. The GTS system was brought into being to provide the know-how and practical strategies that we can all benefit from in striving to think more creatively and productively.
Firstly, it introduces **GRASP** - a concept which paves a way through the maze of established neuroscience and psychological research about how we think, presenting the information in a way that makes it easy for anyone to ‘grasp’!

And secondly, it offers a practical and strategic process – the **Solution Finder** – which helps us apply this knowledge of our thinking to generate more options, evaluate them effectively and implement the winning ideas and solutions that will propel us forward.

1) **GRASP**

Definition of ‘Grasp’ in the Oxford Dictionary:

- Take (an opportunity) eagerly
- Comprehend fully
- A person’s power or capacity to attain something
- A person’s understanding

In fitting with these descriptions, the aim of **GRASP** is to help you better **understand** your thinking processes so you can ultimately become more productive and creative when making decisions and solving problems. In short, it’s there to get you **thinking about your thinking**.

**GRASP** is an acronym that stands for the various modes of thinking we need to be aware of if we’re to take charge of our thinking. These are:
Generative – Generating thoughts and ideas
Reactive – Reacting to existing influences and ideas
Analytical – Analysing ideas to reach a solution
Selective – Validating and implementing a potential solution
Proactive – The strategy of thinking (encompassing all of the above)

The mode of thinking you’re in always dictates the way you approach a particular task. When making a decision, you may well draw on all the modes at one point or another to help you find the answer. The problem is that without an underlying awareness of the nature and contribution of each mode of thinking, you’re far less likely to apply them in the most constructive and congruent way.

GRASP presents a simple way to become conscious of the independent characteristics of each mode of thinking so you can better understand the mental route you take to reach a solution.

Once this awareness of your thinking is in place, you’re in a more advantageous position to approach challenges in ways that deliver more creative and innovative outcomes. At any point during problem solving or decision making, you can use GRASP to discern whether you’re in the right frame of mind for the specific task you’re working on. It will give you real food for thought!

Knowing and recognising the modes of thinking is still only half the journey, however. To be successful in business, you need to be able to effectively use systems, processes and tools that harness each mode of
thinking, but in ways that are optimally targeted towards your particular situation or desired results. In effect, GRASP gives you the foundation from which to start building a **strategy** for your thinking.

Just like a business creates strategies, systems and processes to facilitate its success, your thinking needs a proactive and purposeful strategy through which you can bring about the results you want. In the GTS System, that strategy comes by way of the **Solution Finder**.

### 2) The Solution Finder

The Solution Finder is a pragmatic strategy designed to provide focused direction for your thinking. It’s a very simple but powerful process, channelling your efforts for 1) defining your challenge, 2) generating ideas, 3) evaluating those ideas and 4) setting your goals and action plans.

When trying to solve problems and make decisions, most of us allow our thoughts to roam haphazardly, hoping that we’ll somehow happen upon the right answers. Conversely, the Solution Finder guides us in our mental journey, helping us utilise the modes of thinking optimally to generate and implement successful business ideas. Through making use of the recommended tools and techniques at each stage of the Solution Finder process, we can be sure that our thinking and behaviour will be in line with what we need to achieve.

Importantly, the Solution Finder provides a **proactive** and orderly basis for creative thinking, so it’s no longer a matter of waiting for specific people to produce brilliant ideas or forcing teams into ineffectual brainstorming processes. Now everyone has the opportunity to be creative and, instead of being a rarity, innovation can become an everyday practice. If we leave innovation to chance, we may never get around to it. This is because we usually go about our daily lives in a **reactive** state.

What’s the first thing you do in the morning when you get into work? Like most of us you probably check your emails. What then? You probably set about immediately responding to the important ones, i.e. you start the day by reacting to what’s in front of you!\(^{13}\) While this might seem efficient, you’re not actually giving yourself time to think things through, to gather more information, to be innovative or flexible in how you respond. To reach peak levels of performance in today’s dynamic world you need to be **proactive**. Success happens on purpose, not by accident. Instead of reacting impulsively to the events in your life, you have to consciously create the opportunities that will bring your desired future and outcomes.

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Once we rid ourselves of traditional thinking we can get on with creating the future.

James Bertrand, Vice President of Delphi and President of Delphi Thermal Systems

In any creative process, it’s vital that we begin by DEFINING THE PROBLEM. The way we pose our problem shapes the answers we get and so it’s worth taking the time to establish the right ‘version’ of the problem we want to solve (or goal we want to reach). Chapter 10 outlines how. Understanding the facts and subtleties inherent within a problem sets the scene perfectly for us to find innovative solutions to solve it.

Creativity is essentially about having killer ideas. To get the most out of a situation, we have to learn to use our brain to question, explore, invent, discover and create – in other words we need to be hugely generative in our thinking. Whether we’re looking to solve a business problem, find new ways of working, change policies or to boost sales, it’s through using generative thinking mechanisms such as metaphoric stimulation and reframing that we can produce insights and ideas which we would never have envisaged through conventional problem solving methods. To this end, the Solution Finder employs generative thinking tools to help you tap into your creative abilities at every stage of the process, not just the idea generation phase. Chapter 3 explains all about generative thinking and Chapters 12 to 17 kit you out with a range of creativity enhancing tools and techniques to play with on your problem solving journey.

Work Your Brain!

The GTS system is designed on the basis of understanding the brain and how we think. Due to the diligent work of neuroscientists and psychologists over the last three decades, we have a much greater awareness of exactly how the brain works. That’s how we know that if we stimulate the brain with the correct thinking tools, it will reward us with brilliant solutions to any kind of problem or challenge. One of the most effective and useful tools for optimising how we use our brain is the Mind Mapping technique invented by the world’s foremost brain and learning expert, Tony Buzan.
In a Mind Map, we record and present ideas or concepts in a visual format that duplicates the non-linear nature of the human thinking process. Our thoughts, ideas or facts are laid out on branches around a central theme to form an organic, connected structure which ‘radiator’ outwards. Lines, key words, colour, space and images are all employed according to simple brain-friendly concepts.

Mind Mapping supports and enhances our creative problem solving efforts by improving the way we take notes and allowing us to consolidate all the information we need in a compact space. Whether it’s employed by one person or a team of people, the Mind Map is a positive and constructive way of maximising generative thinking as it puts us in a creative mode for rapidly producing novel ideas and solutions. It can be used comfortably and conveniently alongside other generative tools as an excellent addition to our creative thinking arsenal.

In this book I demonstrate precisely how Mind Mapping can be applied within the Solution Finder process for problem solving, decision making, organising ideas and thinking creatively. Where the Solution Finder helps you set up the best environment and mindset for what you need to achieve, Mind Mapping is the practical device through which you can capture and cultivate your ideas for resolving your specific challenges.

“Action is the real measure of intelligence.”

Napoleon Hill, Author of one of the best selling books of all time ‘Think and Grow Rich’

The overriding goal of this book is to get a balance between intelligence and application to increase your chances of succeeding. After all, it doesn’t matter how intelligent you are in the first place, if you can’t apply that intelligence, you’re not going to get very far. As expressed by Edward de Bono, “Intelligence is a potential. Thinking is an operating skill.”14 Highly intelligent people still need to put their thinking skills into operation if they’re to make full use of that intelligence.

You can read all the books you want about improving your golf swing, but in the end it’s being able to apply the skills through methodical practice that determines how good you become. Likewise, all the greatest intellectual minds teamed together couldn’t produce an idea or a solution without some sort of systematic application. IQ and strong academic results

14 de Bono, Edward (1982), Thinking Course, BBC
INTRODUCTION

A Mind Map

Visual Elements
- Size
- Style
- Space

Color
- Mixed

Text Elements
- Emphasis
- Vary
- Draw

Symbols
- Key
- Codes
- Images

Create
- Branches
- Organs
- Multi-dimensional
aren’t guaranteed indicators of success in life. Many brilliant students who ace all their school tests go on to perform poorly later in their careers. Psychologist Daniel Goleman argues that this is because cognitive abilities aren’t the only ones that count. Self-awareness and the ability to draw on other resources such as emotions to make sound decisions are equally important to success.\textsuperscript{15}

The GTS System, in and of itself, is merely an invitation to direct your attention to your thinking. The best it can do is to make you more aware and confident in applying the right thinking modes and tools when you need to. There are no hard and fast rules – your focus on thinking can be as tight or as loose as you want it to be. Though it’s fair to say that when you’re getting the most out of your thinking, you significantly increase your chances of finding, developing and ultimately implementing novel and creative ideas. To what degree, is all up to you.

\textbf{Where I’m Coming From…}

One thing you’ll have gathered by now is that I’m not a neuroscientist or a psychologist. I didn’t go to university, so I’m far from being an academically qualified expert. This is certainly not a book by a scientist for a scientist. It’s a book for ordinary, everyday people that just want to think better and come up with more ideas. There are thousands of brilliant minds who are specialists in every possible area of neuroscience and applied psychology, and they’re discovering more unique facts about our thinking hour by hour and day by day. My goal with this book is to simply bring this knowledge to you in a way that’s easy to understand and, most importantly, can be acted upon. I’m simply the translator. It’s by interpreting and converting this knowledge that I’ve been able to design appropriate thinking models such as the GTS system that are easy to grasp, simple to use, very practical and produce synergistic results.

You could say that my expertise is more hands-on and experiential. I’ve been very fortunate to have kept company with some exceptional people over the last 20 years. I’ve facilitated brainstorming sessions with over 30 Nobel Prize winners, incredible thinkers who have demonstrated the ability to apply creative thinking to change the world. I’ve also had the opportunity to spend time with leading experts in science, business, humanitarian concerns and academics. I’ve worked on developing products with thousands of schools in the UK and across the world. More recently, I’ve lectured to audiences worldwide on entrepreneurship, the brain, learning and the impact of technology on human thinking. These amazing encounters have furnished me with invaluable knowledge.

\textsuperscript{15} Goleman, D (1997), \textit{Emotional Intelligence: Why It Can Matter More Than IQ}, Bantam
and real world experience in how to handle demanding challenges and situations. What I’ve done with this book is consolidate and repackage that knowledge and experience in a way that makes it easy to apply immediately.

Lately, I’ve learned that the majority of people are ready for new ways of thinking that are based on sound and solid principles of how the brain works. They want tools that make sense and that are practical for increasing productivity both on a business and personal basis. My wish is to bring this new era of thinking to the fore and demonstrate that, when we target our thinking, we’re actually enhancing our most fundamental human resource. In this book the GTS System provides the knowledge and guidance for this to happen.

Many CEOs and entrepreneurs across the globe are now using this system to generate fresh solutions for tough business challenges and lots of individuals rely on it to for their personal issues and goals. Creative thinking is a skill anyone can learn to develop and I’m very proud to say that this material has also been integrated into a nationally accredited qualification to help people maximise their thinking and creative potential.

How much better would your life be if you could truly think creatively and productively? You have a mind and there’s nothing stopping you from using it more effectively by way of the material in this book. By all means read about it, think about it, but most importantly apply it!
Chapter 1: Introduction