


STERNDALE MINDSETS

mindsatwork


“A DREAMER / EXPLORER”



- open-minded, creative, unbounded, divergent thinker, widely read, sees the big-picture, idealistic, theoretical, courageous, bold, risk-taker, confident, mixture of genius & madness, a true believer, visionary, listener..


anything and everything is possible

“A DESIGNER / ARCHITECT”




- translator (dream to plan), idea to reality, abstract, logical, innovative, connector, challenger, enthusiastic, expressive, listener, good communication skills, patient, resource identifier, team builder, crystalizer, clarifier, able to bridge the gap...

“A DECIDER / JUDGE”



- good analytical facilities, logical, decisive, thoughtful, evaluator, wise, practical, realistic, skeptical, negotiating skills, conflict resolution, resource allocation, has political savvy...

“A DOER / WARRIOR”



- action oriented, task focused, outcome driven, detailed, hard worker, persistent, determined, technical, specialist, skilled, hands-on, project manager, creative problem solver, reliable, autonomous, loyal, proud, passionate, powerful, energetic, enthusiastic, motivated, committed ...

warrior doesn't care whether it's a good idea or not - all that matters is getting the job done quickly and efficiently. Focussed, determined, ruthless, mindless, unstoppable - the warrior will adopt a narrow, single-minded approach to the mission and will not take kindly to changes to the plan, no matter how much better they might make things.
You are Doing It.

Dream. Design. Decide. Do.

The explorer - gathers ideas and information
The artist - mixes the possibilities to create something new
The judge - evaluates the strengths and weakness of the idea
The warrior - gets the job done

For an idea to see the light of day, it needs all four frames of mind to be fully operative and in a specific order... bring the judge in at the explorer phase, or ask the artist to head up a band of warriors and the whole plan falls to bits.

It's a rare character that has all four minds operating at maximum effectiveness. According to Van Oech, most us are strong in one or two of these areas but weak in another... which is why we need to find allies and partners, mentors and supporters.

Natural born warriors can be so driven to action that they lack the patience needed to tease out an idea over time. Curious playful people make good explorers but their open-mindedness can sometimes prevent them from making important decisions - there are academics that so enjoy the investigation of an idea that they will never allow it to draw to a close for fear the reality will fall short of the ideal - which of course, it must.

It's difficult (bordering on impossible) to create something unless your prepared to be magical and practical, optimistic and cynical, yin and yang, go to whoa.

That means knowing how to turn an idea into a practical reality. Knowing the logistics... the physics...the economics...the politics - to appreciate and master every aspect of the process.

When Frank Lloyd Wright conceived the Johnson Wax Building, he knew it would be harder than just throwing off a few concept sketches. He knew he'd have to sell his design to his client, physically demonstrate the strength of the supporting columns to engineers and builders who refused to believe the thing would stay up, patiently explain the concept to town planners and bureaucrats, solve complex technical problems on site whenever they arose, deal with the media, negotiate with the financial planners when the project ran over budget, guide construction at key moments in the project...

If he'd wandered around in a dreamy haze or a temperamental rage there'd be no Guggenheim, no Falling Waters, no Taliesin.

He knew there was a time to be dreamy, a time to be cunning, a time for idealism and yet another for sheer bloody-mindedness.

It begins with exploration - thinking, researching, investigating - looking for clues, eating sleeping breathing the subject. Be an explorer - collecting half ideas and scraps of seemingly unrelated information. You don't know where it all leads, and for the time being you don't really care. You're open, curious and adventurous. You are Dreaming It.

At some stage, you stop collecting and start creating. You reach a point when you realise that to keep looking for new material will be a waste of time and energy, so you start thinking about what you could make out of what you already have. This is when you start to rediscover your primary school craft activities - mixing, splitting, stretching, rolling, squashing ... looking for connections and relationships, leaving some things off to the side while concentrating on the bits that really grab you. You are passionate, imaginative, audacious. You are an artist and before you know it you've made something wonderful (or better still, several some things wonderful) out of the found objects. Your ideas are taking physical form - words, images, objects, a business plan, a sketch. You are Designing It.

Enter the judge. Not a critic, not a cynic but someone who can look at things with a fair and open mind. The judge's job is to look carefully at what's presented and then make a considered evaluation of its strengths and weaknesses, opportunities and threats. This is where we need to get real - is it a good idea... and if not, what could be fixed? Are there compromises between the different ideas? Can bits of one be combined with bits of the other? Can we make some sense of the design or do we need to go back to the drawing board? You are Deciding It.

Finally, when the verdict is in and a decision to pursue the idea is made, its time to call in the warrior. Like all good soldiers, the

possessed extraordinary political cunning and he was not afraid to use it.

Through a combination of imagination and sheer bloody-minded ruthlessness, he acquired fabulous wealth and influence, fathered the second industrial age and changed the world forever. He was deeply revered by presidents and tycoons alike - even that hard-nosed industrialist Henry Ford captured Edison's dying breath in a bottle and built a small shrine around it. (No, we're not making this up.)

Richard Wagner was wealthy and powerful, a megalomaniac genius who manipulated and exploited friends and supporters. He used his influence with mad King Ludwig of Bavaria to finance grandiose artistic visions that revolutionised music theatre and opera. An entire town in Munich is built to his memory, and every year Wagner buffs from around the world gather for a four-day festival dedicated to his works, staged and produced by his direct descendants.

Leonardo da Vinci was undoubtedly creative - a great painter as well as sculptor, he was an engineer, a scientist, the first serious anatomist (he secretly dissected bodies stolen from local graveyards) he designed buildings and machines - he drew the first ever blueprints for planes, helicopters, parachutes, submarines, bicycles, a clockwork car, machine guns, tanks...he planned and supervised the construction of many of his designs down to the most practical detail... a sturdy, hands-on man of action, this creative giant was known as the strongest man in all Florence.

Orville and Wilbur Wright dreamt of flight. They pictured it in their imaginations and then built it in their garage, inventing the necessary technology as they needed it. Then they jumped in and flew away in it.

They took the whole process from creative vision to nuts and bolts. The Wright brothers were creative thinkers. So was Einstein, Frank Lloyd Wright, Orson Welles, Frank Baum, Buckminster Fuller, Robert Oppenheimer... all successful, all famous. These people were every bit as practical as they were magical in their thinking.... they had to be to get their ideas up and running (or for that matter, flying.)

Buildings got built. Films got made. Atoms got split.
The world got changed.

That's because creativity is more than just dreaming stuff up... by definition, creation implies the making of something where nothing existed before.

Ultimately, it is our ability to express our dream into a form that can be appreciated by the outside world that defines us as creators.

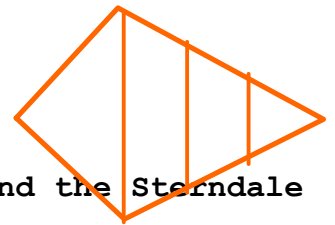
Sooner or later, you actually have to do something with your dream.

Dream. Design. Decide. Do.

THE MINDFIELDS

An adaptation of Van Oech's 4 roles of creativity and the Sterndale Funnel.

Prepared by Minds At Work



If you're like most creative thinkers, you're probably full of great ideas but no good at putting them into action. If this sounds like you then you should either learn to think like a warrior or team up with someone who already does.

If on the other hand you're terrific at seeing the pros and cons in an idea but couldn't come up with one of your own, then you take some time out to rediscover your imagination or borrow someone else's.

There's a popular myth that creative people are fuzzy-brained dreamers. That they aren't practical. That they don't understand logic or reason. That they are incapable of analysis or systematic thought. According to legend, most of 'em can't add up their restaurant bill.

We're not sure where this notion came from - possibly through the stereotypical imagery of the 18th and 19th centuries: the struggling artist plagued by alcoholism and syphilis, teetering between madness and genius, writhing in a torment of melancholia and self-loathing, dying alone, poor, possibly through suicide or neglect...you know the sort of thing.

Always tortured and intense, these people were impulsive, passionate... more like animals or children than sane reasonable grown-ups.

No doubt there have been creative spirits who might roughly match this sort of description - perhaps people like Van Gogh, Emily Dickinson, Dylan Thomas, Jackson Pollack, Hemingway... but there is at least one other version of the creative saga.

In this alternate story a creative mind blossoms from humble and unpromising beginnings to world fame and fortune; this figure dominates society and changes the entire world. This character dies revered and soon passes into legend to be honoured as one of the great giants of humanity.

This story is about a mind that fully appreciated its own worth. It understood its political identity and used whatever leverage it had to further its own cause.

It had the imagination to dream the impossible and the business sense to make it happen.

Thomas Alva Edison was the most prolific inventor in history. A first rate analytical mind with an insatiable curiosity, Edison also