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Functional Fixedness and Negative Judgements Destroy Creativity

Functional fixedness and negative judgements are major impediments to creativity and innovation.

In today's business environment, the accelerating pace of change means you need to establish and maintain the cognitive flexibility capable of boosting

creativity. You must reliably accelerate the process of generating the original and useful ideas needed to *constantly and effectively fuel your innovation investment portfolio*.



Despite this need, all too often our default creative process is one of trial and error that is often too focused on the *functional requirements* of the problem to be solved.

Typically, when we innovate in freeform, we experience functional fixedness and negative judgements which leads to incremental ideas – *marginally original and useful ideas*.

You must overcome functional fixedness and negative judgements if you want to generate breakthrough ideas.

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What is Functional Fixedness

Functional fixedness is *a cognitive bias that constrains our thinking* (e.g. a chair must four legs).

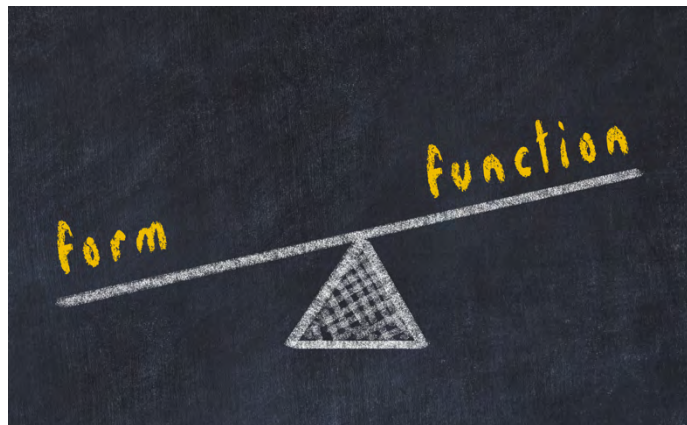
It limits our thinking to the way something has traditionally been used. It's a mental block that prevents us from using or thinking of something in a new way.

This fixation is something that affects everyone and it limits our ability to solve problems and capture opportunities. It's a *major impediment* to innovation.

Overcoming Functional Fixedness

The reality is that:

- A large proportion of today's innovations are a result of reorganising and recombining existing ideas rather than creating new knowledge
- There are patterns of creative thinking that reoccur across industries - *common approaches that can be applied from one industry to another*



The tools that have been developed to exploit these creative patterns are extensive, and in some cases, can take significant effort to master while others are more readily adopted. At a basic level, overcoming functional fixedness can be achieved by providing step-by-step instructions for a creativity task.

Providing step-by-step instructions can:

- Increase enjoyment and therefore creativity by avoiding 'white page syndrome' - the feeling of being overwhelmed, anxious, etc.
- Force you to think about *form before function* and therefore allow you to explore the components that make up the existing solution, and reorganise and recombine those components to create new forms of value

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By making a task more enjoyable and breaking the often linear thinking processes we engage in, step-by-step instructions provide a powerful means of achieving more breakthrough ideas.

Negative Judgements

In many situations our beliefs and negative judgements (and those of others), significantly impede our creative potential. Our mindset and the environment we operate in, **play a critical role in our creative potential and output.**

When our thinking creates hurdles, we discourage ourselves from looking for solutions and when others negatively judge our ideas, they effectively destroy our curiosity. They destroy our ability and motivation to find creative solutions.



When we're intrinsically motivated to solve problems, we're more:

- Curious
- Cognitively flexible
- Open to new knowledge
- Willing to consider non-traditional approaches to problem solving

While sometimes our goals are truly unachievable, more often than not it's our **negative judgements** that block our curiosity, constrain our thinking and prevent us from putting in the effort needed to find the ideas that will bring our goals to life.

Overcoming Negative Judgements

Mindset training and specific creative tools can be a powerful means for overcoming **self-imposed limiting beliefs and negative judgements.**

Overcoming negative judgement enable you to boost creativity by:

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- Making you aware of your fears, negative judgements and assumptions that are holding you back
- Providing a systematic and concrete way of crushing 'excuses'
- Increasing your prospects of finding the insights and solutions needed to deliver on your goals



With the right mindset, approach and focus, you're likely to enjoy the curiosity and intrinsic motivation needed to develop feasible ways of developing solutions that will achieve your goals.

Developing the skills needed to overcome functional fixedness and negative judgements will likely make you a happier person and significantly improve your prospects of harnessing the value of your creative potential.

If you would like to learn more about how to overcome functional fixedness and negative judgements, give the team at [Fortitude Business Consulting](#) a call on **1300 551 040**.

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