Creative Problem Solving: 
To Generate Creative Possibilities

Works well with a large group divided into several small groups of 6 to 8 participants.

1. Identify the goal with an I W W M W Statement

\[ \text{I W W M W - - -} \]
(In What Ways Might We - - )

2. Acknowledge facilitating (strengths/opportunities) and limiting (obstacles) conditions within the problem situation.

3. Begin the group brainstorming. All ideas should be accepted and written down. Use butcher paper so the writing can be large enough for everyone to see. The facilitator should present the rules for participation. The key behaviors are:
   - Speed (fast-paced; quantity--at this point-- is the goal)
   - Suspend Judgment (don’t evaluate as you go)
   - Silly (be as ridiculous as you want--it may spark some real possibility)
   - Synergy (build on the ideas of others)

4. After a designated period of time (maybe 5-8 minutes). The groups should be stopped. Encourage each group to share out one of their good solutions. This is called Cross Pollination and the goal is to share ideas so that they may spark others’ thinking.

5. After another designated period of time (maybe another 5-8 minutes), stop the groups again. This time instruct them to Think in Reverse. They are to provide solutions or suggestions that would have the worst possible result--or do the exact opposite of what is desired. Give them 5 to 8 minutes to generate this separate list. This may seem to be a silly step, but it is really a most productive one. The participants will find that some of the worst solutions are the very ones currently being used and those that contribute to the problem in the first place. Hopefully, within these worst solutions there are some positive answers!

6. Allow the group to continue the IWWMW-- for about 5 to 8 minutes. They may then as a group identify the 2 or 3 solutions they feel have the most potential for success. Share those with the total group.

\[ \text{Begin with the POSITIVES} \]

\[ \text{I W W M W - - -} \]

\[ \text{Cross Pollination} \]

\[ \text{Think in Reverse} \]

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