



## Ten Minute Problem Solving

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July 2010

It's been well documented that humans process 60,000 thoughts a day. The challenge when developing creative marketing techniques or solving challenging business problems is that you think the same 60,000 familiar thoughts day after day.

Lifetime learners know that unless they do something to stretch their status quo thinking, they're stuck today with yesterday's solutions to their problems.

You have an 'inner editor' that works furiously to protect your identity in screening out thoughts that are not *you*. After coming up with a brilliant solution to a long standing problem you may hear yourself say: 'Where did that come from? That's not me.' And you sadly negate this solution.

I've recently had the pleasure of meeting author Mark Levy who introduced me to the technique of 'free writing'. As Levy explains in his book Accidental Genius 'free writing' allows you to solve all sorts of business problems and generate new ideas quickly.

Levy explains that to get beyond your inner editor, you must write faster than you think. "If you think at five miles per hour, you must write at six miles per hour." Here's his technique:

First, have a topic on which to write. It can be an employee problem, important presentation, new business idea, marketing scheme or negotiation. Set a timer for a specific amount of time to write. Slots of 5, 7, 10 or 12 minutes work well.

Start writing fast. Don't edit, check spelling or reconsider your use of words. This is purely a time to write what's on your mind *now*. If you stop even for a moment your internal editor will kick in and you'll return to yesterday's thinking.

Don't be afraid to name names, say what's really on your mind, or write things that you would not normally say out loud. No one will see your writing. The more freedom you give yourself to be open, wandering and honest, the more creative your results will be.

If you are stuck, imagine you are holding a paper conversation. Pretend you're talking to someone outside of yourself. This objectifies the situation in your mind and helps you see it through less of a stuck or emotional lens. Abraham Lincoln, George Clooney, Oprah, Jimmy Buffett or a beloved relative that has passed are great paper conversationalists for this process.

Stop writing immediately upon the sound of the timer. You will then do one of two things: 1) see the wisdom of what you wrote producing a new direction or solution on which to proceed, or, 2) see nuggets of wisdom begin to form on which you can structure your next free writing session.

Levy himself, who writes blogs, articles, books, and teaches writing often finds his solution of over-the-top-creative idea in one setting. And sometimes he'll use this technique for an eight hour period to generate more ideas or solutions.

Know that if you could have solved your problem with straight logical thinking you would have already done it. All great ideas are logical in hind sight.

My first experiment with free writing produced dramatic results after two ten-minute sessions. While this technique is fresh in your mine I challenge you to select one challenge and experiment with it. I hope you surprise, perhaps even shock yourself with how easy it is to allow your inner brilliance out.

Read all of Ann's Writing and Wisdom at: <http://gvasuccess.com/writing-and-wisdom.htm>

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