

Go, _____!
Write your name here.

The 60-Minute Idea Generator

Need to solve a problem? Tackle a challenge? Capitalize on an opportunity? Use these prompts to capture your ideas in text and drawings. **Use colored pencils.**

Separate *idea generation* from *idea assessment*. Generate many ideas. Assess them later. Work alone or with others.

FIRST: Name the question.

Often, brainstormers chase answers to the wrong question. *The question named is the question answered.*

Make sure your question is important to you, or it's not worth your best efforts. Include business, family and personal questions.

Be concise, clear and specific. Focus your question narrowly. (You can brainstorm another question later.) Keep it easy to understand, so others can help you.

Be practical. Start your question with "How can I (or we) ... ?" or "What can I (or we) do in order to ...?" Avoid "Why...?" because that gets too philosophical. Stay practical.

Write a dozen potential questions, or different versions of the same question:

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
6.
7.
8.
9.
10.
11.
12.

Circle one question on the list above.

Pursue that question during the rest of the brainstorm.

**Say three times:
"I can do this.
I have good ideas."**

WARM UP: Feel the future.

Imagine: you have a great answer to your question.
How might having that answer improve life?

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And how might *those benefits* make life better?

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And, once again, how might *that* improve life?

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When you think of the improvements to life, what feelings do you experience? Circle words on the list. Add words of your own here:

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Write more about the feelings you experience when you think about the benefits of having a great answer to your question.

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AFFECTIONATE compassionate friendly loving
open-hearted sympathetic
tender warm

ENGAGED absorbed
alert curious engrossed
enchanted entranced
fascinated interested intrigued
involved spellbound stimulated

HOPEFUL expectant
encouraged optimistic

CONFIDENT empowered
open proud safe secure

EXCITED amazed
animated ardent aroused
astonished dazzled eager
energetic enthusiastic giddy
invigorated lively passionate
surprised vibrant

GRATEFUL appreciative
moved thankful touched

INSPIRED amazed
awed wonder

JOYFUL amused
delighted glad happy
jubilant pleased tickled

EXHILARATED blissful
ecstatic elated enthralled
exuberant radiant
rapturous thrilled

PEACEFUL calm
clear-headed comfortable
centered content equanimous
fulfilled mellow quiet relaxed
relieved satisfied serene still
tranquil trusting

REFRESHED enlivened
rejuvenated renewed
rested restored revived

This list of feeling words
comes from www.cnvc.org.



Challenge boundaries.

Before answering your question, solving your problem or achieving your opportunity, make lists of...
...the people who stand in the way. Who might try to stop you?

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...the rules that stand in the way. What aren't you allowed to do? Be brief.

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...other facts, constraints and obstacles, both real and imagined. What is off limits?

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What is not what it seems to be? Review the lists above and draw a line through any person, rule, fact, constraint, or obstacle that you may ignore. Be sure to laugh at any boundary that you yourself created!

What ideas arise? What would you do if you had no fear? Write ideas in just a few words, like a headline.

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Apply your life.

Think of a time when you were in a similar situation. What was the challenge or opportunity?

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What did you do?

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What happened? How did it turn out?

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What did you learn?

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What would you do differently, if you could do it again?

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What ideas come to mind for your main question?

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Get up and stretch.

Sketch it.

Flip it.

Look at everything from the opposite perspective.

How might you turn something, anything or everything upside down?

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Re-read the main question.

How might you turn something, anything or everything back to front?

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What if this were a world of abundance? What if this were a world of scarcity?

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Write anything.

Write any ideas, even if they have nothing to do with the topics above.

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Draw anything.

Distort resources.

Separate dollars from idea generation. What ideas might work with different budgets?
What tools and resources might help?

Get up and stretch.

What might you do if you had \$500,000 and five years?

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What might you do if you had \$50,000 and five months?

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What might you do if you had \$5,000 and five weeks?

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What might you do if you had \$500 and five days?

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What might you do if you had \$50 and five hours?

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Company A → Company B

What are the basic attributes of your company (and how it does business) today? (This is “Company A.”)

Products:

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Services:

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People:

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Personality:

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Other defining characteristics:

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What do you want them to be 18-24 months from now? (This is “Company B.”)

Products:

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Services:

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People:

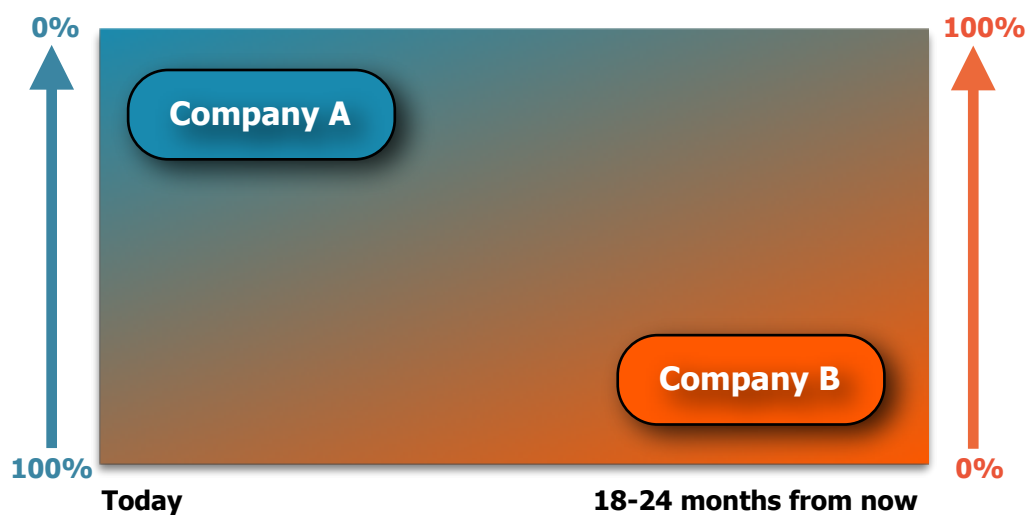
.....

Personality:

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Other defining characteristics:

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Write anything.

Write any ideas, even if they have nothing to do with the topics above.

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Draw anything.

You A → You B

Who are you being? (This is "You A.")

Leader:

Friend:

Spouse / Significant Other / Partner:

Citizen:

Individual:

Who do you want to be? (This is "You B.")

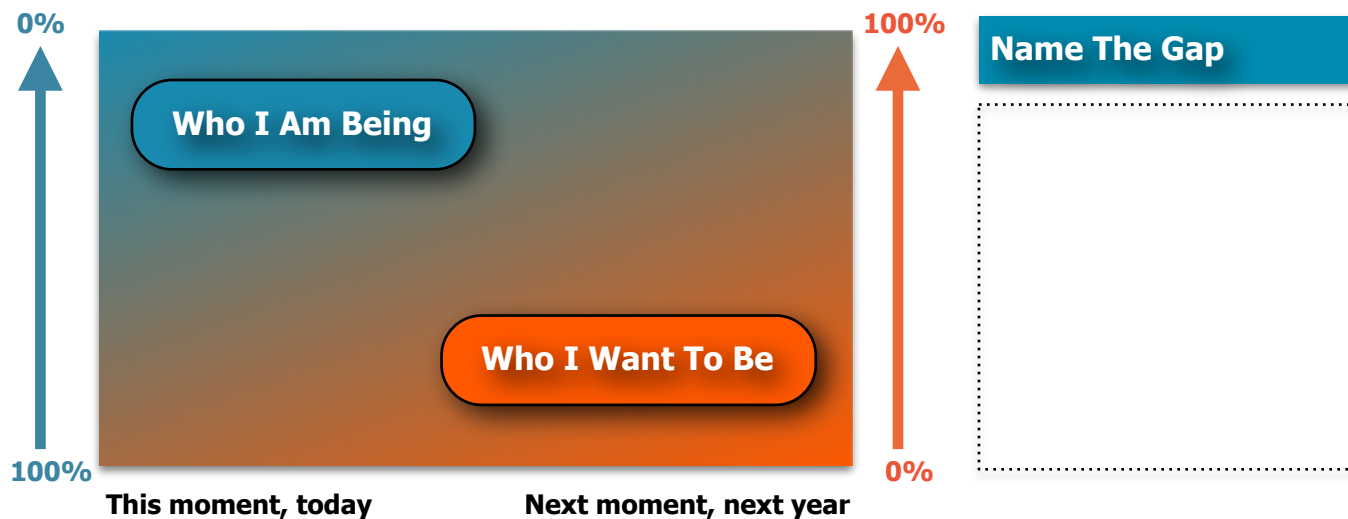
Leader:

Friend:

Spouse / Significant Other / Partner:

Citizen:

Individual:



Write anything.

Write any ideas, even if they have nothing to do with the topics above.

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Draw anything.

Enlist a Genius

Who's the smartest person ever? What would that person do? (Choose someone with great talent and achievement, not merely fame and wealth.)

What would you do if you were this person?

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What would you do if you were your smartest friend?

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What would you do if you were a superhero? What would be your superpower? How would you use it?

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Write anything.

Write any ideas, even if they have nothing to do with the topics above.

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Draw anything.

Creative Agenda (Sample)

Daily Team Brainstorming (10-15 minutes)

- Brainstorm a one-sentence "How Do I/We...?" question brought by a client, employee, supplier or employee:
 - Casually led, standing
 - Headlines only: "Yes, and..."
 - Guests welcome
- 30-second update on previous day's Daily Team Brainstorm

Weekly Team Brainstorm (60-90 minutes)

- Brainstorm one "How Do I/We...?" question:
 - Referred from the Daily Team Brainstorm: worthy of deeper, more focused attention
 - Trained facilitator, formal scribe
 - Guests welcome
- Add to the *What We Don't Know List*
- Within 48 hours, manager circulates post-assessment results

Monthly Company Re-Charge (half-day)

- Field trip
- Book club
- Employee reports on self-learning

Quarterly Re-Focus (full day)

- Creative brainstorming on next quarter's priorities
- Review and Resolve *What We Don't Know List*
- Outside speaker