

## Ideas Come From Experience

*I considered writing a short piece on generating ideas and what you could do if you wanted to achieve positive change in the coming year. Then, loads of ideas came into my head. So, rather than do what a lot of intervention specialists are doing at this time of the year, I thought I'd do something different and ask a question. Where do our ideas come from?*

An idea can be a new thought. A new aim or suggestion. A lot of people would say things like “ideas come from the imagination” or “from contemplation”. I'd say that these statements would be right, but they really don't answer as they don't address the question, they skirt around the edge without taking it on.

It's kind of like when a little kid asks, “Where do babies come from?” and you answer, “from love”. While that answer is basically true, these kinds of dodgy, swerve the answer responses don't have a lot of meat on their bone's idea-wise. So, going back to the original question, where DO ideas come from?

The answer may be as simple as it is elegant. Ideas come from experiences. Your experiences of what you do, what you see, the things you read, the sounds you hear and what you taste and touch, all form the raw materials out of which great, and not so great, ideas are born.

What this means is that ideas are not born in a vacuum. No one came up with a great idea after spending all their time surrounded by the same four walls.



Ideas are like seeds. Seeds need water and light and warmth to germinate, grow and flower. Ideas also need water, in the form of experience, and light, in the form of events, and warmth, in the form of encounters, in order to germinate, grow and bear their own special fruit.

In other words, if you want to come up with great, game changing ideas, you need to get out and experience life.

Now, by experiencing life, I don't mean going to White Hart Lane, taking the cat to the vet or filling the car up with petrol. These types of everyday experiences don't do anything to stimulate the creative places in your brain.

When you do everyday tasks, you are often on autopilot, going through the motions without being fully aware of what is going on. We all do that. To give your brain the food that it needs to produce great ideas, you're going to have to go after new experiences, stuff you've never done before. I've said lots on the subject of stepping outside of your comfort zone.

You see, you come up with ideas by making connections between a few or different pieces of information. If all you have to work with is information that you've had in your head for years, then the connections between these old pieces of information will be ones you've made thousands of times in the past. Nothing new!

But, when you add new information into the mix, information you've gotten from new experiences, then fresh and unique connections between what you already knew and what you've just learned become possible.

It is from these new connections that "A-ha!" moments are born.

I'm so glad we've managed to clear that up.

What new idea can you come up with that will add value to you in the first month of the year?