

When genius strikes

Myths are any invented story or concept that we sometimes believe to be true. We believe in it so strongly that we often underestimate ourselves and compare our lives with others. In desperate times, when our head and heart don't give the expected output, we beat ourselves up by indulging in such overwhelming myths. Here are a few myths that have been exposed for the welfare of the society.

1. "Like a thunderbolt"

Any creative process naturally requires time for development, where ideas and relevant knowledge hang around in the subconscious mind. The ideas connect suddenly, which seems like a flash, or it takes some time to connect after the growth of an idea.

We often believe that an idea can hit us like a bolt, or light up like a bulb on top of our heads – which is wrong.

Creative individuals reflect on their ideas regularly and shift their thoughts to other projects to take some time off their subconsciousness. It is when our mind does our work for us and makes sense out of much information.

2. DNA decisions

There are high-achievers, geniuses, athletics, all-rounders and such to make us question our existence. When we look at these outstandingly talented individuals, we assume that they are of certain breed or the chosen remarkable people to walk upon this Earth.

Truth is, there is no such special science to decode them. We are all born with the same abilities and similar creative potential resides in all of us. Creativity is a part of every human being, we have to stop differentiating ourselves with others and nurture our instincts.



The best solutions come from those who have enough understanding and less complexity which will not block their creative thinking. People will have a downward trend if they don't continue to cultivate their mindsets by learning new techniques and applying it to old problems.

3. Originality

Best ideas are generated when a person thinks out of the box, coming up with an authentic and pure idea. Wrong! The truth is that all new ideas are built from combing ideas from other sources. Our brains are a mixer of connections, and new connections are formed all the time. Most creative people are good at forming new links, making new original copies, not necessarily completely fresh original ideas.

4. Incentive boost

Motivations like incentive pay, promotions have an exceptional effect on work output, both positive and negative. Unless the task and the offer are on common grounds, such offers may or may not work. Incentives

work best when people are already hard at work, instead of luring workers with offers when they are just beginning because it might obscure purpose.

5. Hermit mode

We all assume that isolating ourselves from the world will give us the will and energy to slave for our task and get the best results. But the truth is, people come up with the best ideas when they are working in a group. When we think alone, we rarely initiate new ideas as brainstorming or thinking is done best with teams and new collaborators. For example, Thomas Edison needed 15 other inventors to work in his project and Michelangelo had 13 other painters to help him finish the Sistine Chapel. A little help doesn't hurt.

6. Yes to unity

Conflict is a sign that new ideas are being suggested; cohesion is often a sign that there are no new ideas. Teams or companies that are open to criticism and task related debates (not people related) lead to active

discussions. Innovation requires a fun and playful environment where people are not afraid to voice their opinions. Blindly agreeing to one's idea may not ensure good output from others in the group.

7. Abundance is the key

It is in our human nature to have endless demands and blame our output on the shortcomings. If we get stuck on a challenge, we complain about the resources or the environment and regret that we could have performed better. However, we fail to analyze that individuals are more creative when they face an obstacle or a roadblock. Constraints provide us a structure to our understanding for the challenge we need to overcome. Creativity thrives under constraints. Creativity and innovation are the two ends of a pole. If we want to go from idea to innovation, we need to focus on lessons and techniques. When we are able to move past the myths successfully, we will surely

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Deadlines and drama

How to improve your project management skills

Across most occupations and industries at some point you will be faced with a project, task or assignment to be completed within a timeframe. From personal experience, I can tell you as the deadline approaches stress can saturate your body and even the simplest of tasks may become complicated. In my line of work, this may mean grammatical errors, missed references in reports or linking errors in financial models. It gets even harder when you need to prepare an in depth analysis and you have a clock ticking behind you. You don't want to be sweating yourself silly, so here are some ways to manage projects to make sure you reach your deadline with the highest quality of work.

Know what you know and what you don't

Before you dive headlong into your assignment, take a step back and assess what lies in front of you. Firstly, break down the tasks into smaller ones and identify the approach you want to take and most pertinently, how long it may take. Secondly, assess the areas in which you need help and seek it out immediately if you can. One way to make a serious dent to your limited time is to mull over an issue, only to seek out help anyway. Do not be too proud to ask for help, no one has all the answers.

One step at a time

Sometimes you may feel overwhelmed with the task at hand, especially when you realise how many different things you may need to do. While there may be many tasks in your peripheral vision, focus on the one in your hands at that moment. Too often, especially on large projects, you may find yourself drifting into ideas about another task. Stop. Start again and complete what you were doing. If you give it your full concentration it will be done as quick as possible and as best as possible. When it comes to the 'death overs' at the end, don't panic! By this stage the stakes are high, so it is even more important that you give your full concentration to the task and complete it

with no fuss.

The pareto principle

When I was starting off as a graduate I was told of this golden principle, that the first 80% of your work takes 20% of your time and the last 20% of your work takes 80% of the time. While the percentages may not be exact, the essence of the rule remains valid. Do not underestimate how much time you will need at the back end of the project. In most instances, high quality work is a product of a rigorous review process so make sure a good chunk of time is set aside for this.

The buffer

Circumstances can change and new ones can arrive. Either way, you need to be flexible to adapt and need to plan for the unplanned. For example, if the client wants some extra work done, you will still need it completed along with anything else within deadline. So make sure that when you are estimating how long a task will

take to complete time you leave some extra time. It will give you the opportunity to pounce on any surprises without compromising your deadlines or other tasks.

Delegate

While it may be tempting to keep control of all your work, when you have the opportunity, it is far more efficient to share the load. If you set the tone early and engage colleagues or juniors, it will reap benefits for you all the way through the project. For example, at the back end of the project when you may need additional help, it will be far more efficient to assign a task to someone who has a working knowledge of the project rather than spending time training someone who is yet to make any contributions. Furthermore, additional hands mean additional minds, and it can be an opportunity for someone to open your

eyes to some new methodologies and practices. Finally, entrusting others will help camaraderie and create a positive work environment, which will have long term benefits for all.

Manage expectations

It is rare in the workplace to be dedicating your time to only one assignment at any point in time. The reality is that time is finite and it is inevitable that clashes regarding deadlines will occur, whether intra or inter-departmental. This is a difficult issue and requires setting achievable targets and more importantly, communicating them with clarity. If it is clear that you have been assigned a deadline which is untenable do not simply accept it, express this as soon as possible. It is important you provide reasons for rebuffing your duties and offer a solution to mitigate the situation. For example, you may organise another colleague to help you. Another avenue is to recalibrate your responsibilities by initiating a discussion to all the parties who have a vested interest in your deadlines and coming to a solution. To reiterate, do not simply accept a deadline you cannot meet. Admittedly, it takes courage to be able to express yourself to seniors but the alternative, overpromising and under-delivering is a path that you do not want to take. I hope these pointers help out those who have deadlines ahead of them. It will almost always be stressful, but with preparation, planning and focusing on the task at hand, you can go a long way to minimise the pressure.

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What career were you actually meant for?

Don't feel at place in your job? Or just wondering where your true potential lies? Answer these ten questions and find out.

1. When it comes to jobs, you'd rather...

- A. Do something no one else has done
- B. Do what pays the most
- C. Do what makes you happy
- D. Do what helps others
- E. Something else

2. Deep down, you think you're more...

- A. Intelligent
- B. Entertaining
- C. Creative
- D. Serious
- E. Something else

3. When it comes to outdoor activities, which appeals most to you...

- A. Running a marathon
- B. Kayaking a nice, long lake
- C. Skydiving off a plane
- D. Camping out in the forest
- E. Something else

4. Generally, which would you prefer to do...

- A. Making something people will use
- B. Coming up with a new recipe
- C. Creating something visually appealing
- D. Helping people with their problems
- E. Telling a story with words

5. When it comes to personal hygiene, you'd mostly say...

- A. I think it's important, but not always
- B. I take it very seriously (and believe everyone should)
- C. I honestly don't care very much
- D. I don't really know what that is
- E. I'd rather not say



6. For just one day, you'd choose to live...

- A. On a tree
- B. In a forest
- C. On a boat
- D. In as many places as possible
- E. None of the above

7. When it rains you...

- A. Enjoy it
- B. Hate it
- C. It depends

8. Does the weather affect your mood?

- A. Never
- B. Always
- C. Sometimes

9. Do you generally care what others think?

- A. No
- B. Yes
- C. Sometimes

10. Be honest, you tend to live (or dwell) more...

- A. In the future
- B. In the present
- C. On the past

Results:

Mostly A's: Scientist. You're analytical and calculated. You have an experimental attitude towards life, and are mostly motivated by big, challenging problems. The world is your little playground, and what you do benefits our entire species.

Mostly B's: Chef. You're naturally creative, imaginative, and you can instantly come up with new ideas in your head. More than anything you want to create something beautiful and enjoyable that will satisfy and make people happy.

Mostly C's: Designer. You see something in your head, and your brain has a way of figuring out how it should come into existence. You see something in the world, and you already know how to improve it tenfold. You have the power to affect people's emotions and the ability to truly change how people perceive things.

Mostly D's: Therapist. You are a caring and selfless individual. Your compassion, warmth, and sensitivity can heal others in the most authentic way possible. You help and inspire others, and can really touch people's lives.

Mostly E's: Writer. You have an unmatched skill for creating vast worlds both through facts and pure imagination. You heart gracefully guides your hands as you work to bring what is truly your spirit to life. You were truly meant to guide the world with your words.