

Focal Object Technique: Unlock Creative Problem Solving

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The technique of focal object for problem solving involves synthesizing the seemingly non-matching characteristics of different objects into something new.

Another way to think of focal objects is as a memory cue: if you're trying to find all the different ways to use a brick, give yourself some random "objects" (situations, concepts, etc.) and see if you can find a use. Given "blender", for example, I would try to think of all the ways a brick could be used with a blender (as a lid?). Another concept for the brick game: find patterns in your solutions, and then break those patterns. If you keep finding ways to build things with bricks, think of ways to use bricks that don't involve construction. Pattern-breaking, combined with focal object cues, can lead to very divergent solutions. (Grind the brick up and use it as pigment?)

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