

# Random Entry

*“If at first, an idea is not absurd, then there is no hope for it.”*

*- Albert Einstein*

Random Entry is a lateral thinking tool that's especially useful when you need fresh ideas or new perspectives when solving problems.



As we tend to think by recognising patterns based on past experience, we can get cognitively 'stuck', and our once helpful patterns become constraining thought prisons.

Random Entry frees us from our normal, structured ways of thinking by the forced insertion of a totally random stimulus, into the issue to be addressed.

## Using the Tool:

1. **Identify the issue** or problem to be tackled, for example, 'Ways to reduce car pollution.'
2. **Generate a random noun** by sticking your finger onto a random line of a chance page of an arbitrary book, and selecting the first noun you see i.e. a tangible thing such as 'plant', 'dog'...etc.
3. Use this as the **starting point for brainstorming** your problem by thinking about the noun, and ramming it, metaphorically, into your problem/situation. You're effectively forcing the two items together, the noun and the issue.
4. Regardless of the word/issue, their **combination** will add surprising new ideas and concepts to your brainstorming. Whilst most will be useless, if you persist you're sure to gain some new insights, and at least one creative, powerful idea.

So, previously conventional solutions such as catalytic conversion, smaller cars and cleaner fuels, are now superseded (by ramming 'plant' into the problem) with:

- Plant trees on the side of roads to convert  $\text{CO}_2$  back into  $\text{O}_2$
- Pass exhaust gases through a soup of algae to convert  $\text{CO}_2$  to  $\text{O}_2$
- Put sulphur-metabolising bacteria into exhaust systems
- 'Plant' = 'factory', so could exhaust gases be collected in a container, and sent to a special plant to be cleaned whilst you fill up with fuel?

These ideas are raw; some will be wrong, some impractical some hilarious! The point is that a random provocative stimulus can provide the seeds of an idea, which would not have been thought of via a more traditional, linear thinking process.

