

Now Go Create Podcast Episode 16: Random Stimulus

Your creative jumpstart worksheet: Try David Bowie's cut-up technique

David Bowie famously used a technique called the 'cut-up' method to write lyrics. It involves taking random fragments of text and reassembling them to spark fresh thinking. This worksheet gives you a simple way to try it yourself whether you're writing a product press release, social media post or just need a creative boost to get your mind thinking differently.

Step 1: Gather your source material

Collect at least 3 different types of text. For example:

- a client brief, a news article, a press release, some pages of an annual report, and some quotes along with a bunch of completely unrelated words.
- Cut them into small fragments or sentences or individual words.
- Shuffle them. Randomly select 3-5 pieces.
- Use those fragments as a jumping-off point to answer your creative challenge.

Step 2: Cut it up

Physically (or digitally) cut your texts into short phrases or single words. Aim for at least 50 fragments.

Step 3: Mix it up

Shuffle the pieces randomly. Pull 3–5 at a time and lay them out. Don't try to make logical sense—just notice any interesting or surprising connections.

Step 4: Start creating

Use your random fragments as prompts. Write a headline, opening sentence, or visual idea inspired by the mashup.

Step 5: Reflect

Which combinations surprised you? Could any of them spark a more concrete or real idea or campaign? What happens if you add one constraint (like making it rhyme, or turning it into a question)?

Tip: You can also use AI tools like ChatGPT to remix your fragments or suggest random associations.

Listen to the episode here for more tips

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