# Generating ideas

How hard is it to come up with an idea?

Some of us find it really difficult. But that's because we try too hard to come up with the perfect idea straightaway. We don't allow ourselves to have bad ideas, but we should do.

As we get older we often become less creative. We become afraid of making mistakes and being judged. We keep our mouths shut instead of speaking up, because we don't want to look stupid. We didn't feel like this when we were children, so somewhere along the line we lose our creative confidence.

Imagine that only 1 in every 100 ideas is a great one. This means the other 99 ideas are not so good. So, if we're trying to come up with a great idea, we need to focus on the quantity of ideas over the quality of them. This is hard to do if everyone filters their own ideas – you have an idea but then the little voice in your head says: "*that's a terrible idea, don't say that out loud*". So, you keep it to yourself - another idea lost to the fear of being wrong.

The other important reason why we should love bad ideas is that they often turn into genius ideas.

A 'bad' idea can sound so random and ridiculous, but with a bit of finessing it can become a game changer. If you don't want to keep coming up with the same old ideas, then you need to become comfortable with the seemingly bad or ridiculous ideas. Trying to find the perfect idea just doesn't work. Ideas need to time to breathe. They come out rough and often a little clumsy. Remember, any idea that's truly innovative always sounds weird at first.

If you're trying to come up with an idea for a business or social venture, here are some ideas to help you get started:

- think about a problem that you've noticed – maybe you've seen friends posting about an issue on social media, or you've experienced the problem first-hand
- Define the problem clearly, e.g. *there is a lack of healthy, affordable food locally to buy at lunchtime*
- Try to understand the root cause of the problem –why does this problem exist?
- think about whether the problem presents an opportunity for a solution
- let your ideas flow – write them down – including the 'bad' ones
- don't worry if someone says: "*that idea's already been done*". Maybe it could be done better – differently – using different methods or resources – cheaper – faster – higher quality – more efficiently – more environmentally friendly
- ask yourself if any of your ideas can be *monetised* (is there a chance that any of your ideas can generate enough money to make it worthwhile?)