

“Creativity is not a talent. It is a way of operating.”

—John Cleese

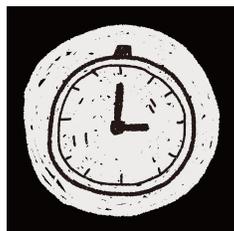
We tend to think of creativity as a special gift bestowed on only a select few. But that's not true. Being creative is a hallmark of being human, and certainly of being a leader. We have a vision for some sort of meaningful change we want to see exist in the world, our organization, our team, or ourselves—and then we try to find a way to make that vision a reality. *That's creativity.*

There is a process to creativity, and like any other craft or skill, once you understand the process, you can better apply new techniques and adjustments to your approach to achieve more impact.

In this workshop we'll explore the 4 Key Stages to the Creative Process through discussion and on-your-feet applied improvisation exercises so that your team can more quickly discover what's next and translate good ideas into real action. (Oh, and we'll have a lot of fun and laughter along the way!)



RESEARCH



RETREAT



REALIZE



REVEAL

Workshop Outline

Introductions and warm-ups: Some time to build rapport, get moving, set expectations, and laugh a bit. It's hard to be creative and uncomfortable at the same time—so we'll make sure everyone is feeling at ease and engaged right away. (15 min)

Short Presentation on Creative Theory and Strategy: The word *strategy* first emerged in the English language about 200 years ago. Generally we think of strategy this way: figure out where you are (point A), figure out where you want to go (point B), and then execute. But how do we figure out what point B should be in the first place? That's where creativity and strategic intuition come into play. We'll briefly describe the 4 Key Stages of Creativity (Research, Retreat, Realize, and Reveal) so that everyone has a handle on the framework we'll be using as we head into the rest of the workshop. (15 min)

Exercises: For the next hour we're going to go a little deeper on each of the 4 Stages to build better understanding so that you can apply it to your work. For each stage we'll do one or two interactive exercises followed by some time to discuss and debrief. Main themes include:

- How critical keen *listening* is to doing accurate and meaningful **Research**.
- How neuroscience proves that taking time to **Retreat** is actually essential when trying to create new ideas.
- How the ways you *capture* and *process* an idea that you have **Realized** are often much more critical than having the idea itself.
- How important it is to **Reveal** new discoveries when trying to have real impact, why so many of us avoid it, and how to get past challenges to more impactful results.

All these exercises will use the practices of applied improvisation. While that may seem intimidating, almost everyone finds that they are not nearly as scary as you might guess. You'll find these feel much more like games than anything else. (45-70 min, depending on the total time available)

Q&A and Process: Time to process the content, share insights, ask questions of the instructor, and identify specific ways to change our approaches in the future. (10-15 min)

Closing Energizer: We always close with a quick, fun energizer to connect one last time as a team. (5 min)

Total workshop time: 90-120 mins depending on your time available

Credentials



Andy Zimney is an improviser, executive-level leader, productivity expert, speaker, writer, and facilitator committed to helping others produce more meaningful and creative change in their work, their organizations, and their personal lives.

Andy has more than 15 years experience as a professional improviser, facilitator, and organizational executive.

Andy is a productivity expert who has taught best practices including Design Thinking and David Allen's *Getting Things Done®* methodology to help improve planning and managing all sorts of work.

Andy has served on the Minnesota State Arts Board Operating Support Panel, is a graduate of both The *Shannon Leadership Institute* and *Studio/E*, and was selected for the Non-Profit Assistance Fund's inaugural *Financial Leadership Cohort*. Andy graduated from St. John's University with degrees in both Theater and English.

For more information, contact Andy at andy@andzimney.com or 651-253-7515, or visit www.LeadingOffTheCuff.com