

# Video transcript

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## Encouraging divergent thinkers

Divergency is actually hardwired into about 8 – 9% of humans. So, it's a little less than one in 10 persons. However, this is what's interesting about humans. If we were herd animals, that would be it, because they don't have an ability to change the way their brains work. Humans, though, have something called neuroplasticity. That allows us to learn different things, you know, we can move things around – you can be an expert on something - animals can't do that. So, our neuroplasticity is really important. It's the thing that made us humans and why we're dominant on the planet is that neuroplasticity.

A divergent person always wants to think about new things and wants an ability to do that and find a way to explore. They're into "explore", they like ambiguity. They want to create conditions where it's interesting and adventurous to move through. They don't like conformity. So oftentimes what happens is that person – in a meeting or in an organization – is annoying to people. Like, we have it all figured out, moving forward and this person says: "but what about this, and what about that?"

So, one of the things is you have to figure out how to create teams that allow people, what I say: "to walk through doorways". And the doorway – the leader has to open that up, by the way – a leader has to create a moment. They open a doorway and say: "I'm going to let you walk through this and do a new thing. That's really important for divergent people.

If you have a divergent person, the other thing is don't put them in charge of something that is around making the trains run on time. They won't like that. That doesn't mean that you don't have to have a balance – a divergent person has to have some convergent ability to get things done. But if you have a team of three divergent people, stuff won't get done. That's just not the way it happens. You need a mix. The whole point of it is divergent does not equal good and convergent equal bad – it is that both are needed. They just needed different ways and different times. So that's why it's really important for you to allow that divergent person to have that time and space to do something.

The other thing that's important around the divergent person is make sure that you're doing work with them on getting them outside of the office. One of the great organizations that I noticed – something really interesting – where every year you can apply to go to a conference that has nothing to do with the business. So, if you're in banking is about rainforests. And the reason for that is... it seems like a waste for organizations to do that – but where you're really doing is saying to the divergent person: "go out and have collisions with ideas". If the divergent person is really good at having idea collision... and we don't know what causes innovation, but you can be sitting in that conference and hear something and realize: "oh, this sparks a third way". That's what a divergent person is really good at. So that's really key, and then just like you're doing that, the diversion person also needs time to think of new ideas.

So, the way new ideas are created is you have information, you have your personal life. You have a new set of data. You learn a new set of data, you absorb it, and then you have to walk away a bit. And this is actually proven, by the way, neurological things happen in your brain. When you walk away, it takes a while and



literally new biological dendrites formed together. And that's what makes that idea pop – that “Eureka!” moment happens. But to do that, you need time and space away from doing anything else. And it's really hard for organizations, who are accounting for every minute of time of the day, to allow a divergent person to walk away a little bit, and have some space to think about that. But if you follow those kind of things: giving them some room to move, giving them progress, sending them new places that are outside the building, and recognizing that there's a time and space for them that is their own to think of new things, will really move the organisation forward.