30 Circles Activity

Introduction

What is it?
An activity for getting “unstuck” from thinking about a challenge in a certain way. This activity gives participants an opportunity to think creatively in a fun, and easy way.

Why use it?
This exercise is a great tool for getting stuck - and then getting unstuck. Recognizing what “stuck” feels like is a valuable skill when navigating uncertainty and trying to move forward. The feeling of being “stuck” could be a sign that you’ve exhausted possibilities in your current way of thinking and that it’s time to jump to a new one. This realization and ability is the foundation of many of our “aha” moments.

What you need:

- 10-15 minutes
- The attached instructions
- 3 or more people
- The 30 circles sheets, or a sheet of paper, pen or pencil for each participant.
30 Circles Activity

Instructions

Step 1: Create your sheet
Draw or print 30 identical circles on a sheet of paper and grab something to write with.

Step 2: Get creative
Your task is to turn all the circles into something in 3 minutes.

Step 3: Debrief
After the 3 minutes is up, think about these questions to debrief the activity:

● Did you solve the problem?
● Did you do as well as you wanted to?
● Were you ever frustrated or stuck?
● What did that feel like?

Step 4: Introduce different schemas
Introduce the idea of different schemas.

● One schema that most people jump to immediately and stick to is the schema of drawing inside the circle, like drawing a smiley face inside the circle.
● Ask the group if anyone drew outside the circle or used two circles?
● There were no actual rules for this activity, but the ones each individual made up for themselves to complete the exercise.
● Show the group five new schemas that are different ways to solve the problem (see image below).
● Have the group try the activity once more after figuring out the additional possibilities.
● When everyone has completed the second round, have the group reflect on their two experiences for any insights.
● Some possible takeaways to share with the group:
  ○ This is what “getting stuck” feels like.
  ○ This demonstrates how “unstuck” happens and feels.
  ○ When you get stuck there are always more ideas.

Examples on the following page
Examples

OUTSIDE THE CIRCLE

TWO CIRCLES

CIRCLES AS TEXTURE

SOLID OBJECTS

MULTIPLE CIRCLES