

THREE FORMS OF BRAINSTORMING ON PAPER

We've been talking about lateral thinking. Here are three techniques to access your right brain and enhance creativity, sense of play, and the ability to connect ideas. These techniques are also helpful for memory enhancement and study.

Our minds work very much like web sites with groups of pages, ideas or concepts that are linked together, or even branch off on their own into other groupings or webs. By using a graphical method of capturing ideas, concepts, or any kind of information, we make available the vast ability of our brains to make connections, spark new ideas, and make sense of a lot of information. Because it is in a graphical, non-linear form, the right mode of the brain is invited to do what it does best – play – and it is the foundation of all human breakthroughs. It's that inspired leap of insight, the aha, the revelation, as is witnessed by countless stories from great men and women. After all, it's the right brain that develops first in children. As we reach adulthood, much of that richness is lost and we live in the left, linear processing mode of the brain. **

The pictures below are of brainstorming I did many years ago on the concept "garbage." I find each of these methods is useful for different situations.

Start with one concept, question, thought, or subject. Put a succinct expression of the central thought in the middle of the page. As you focus on the thought, just allow other associations, ideas, or related subjects to emerge. Tie them in to the central thought. Then allow thoughts to be generated from the sub-ideas and map them. Notice how ideas relate to other ideas. Tie them in with each other. Continue until your brainstorming session is complete. Did you have any revelations? Any aha moments?

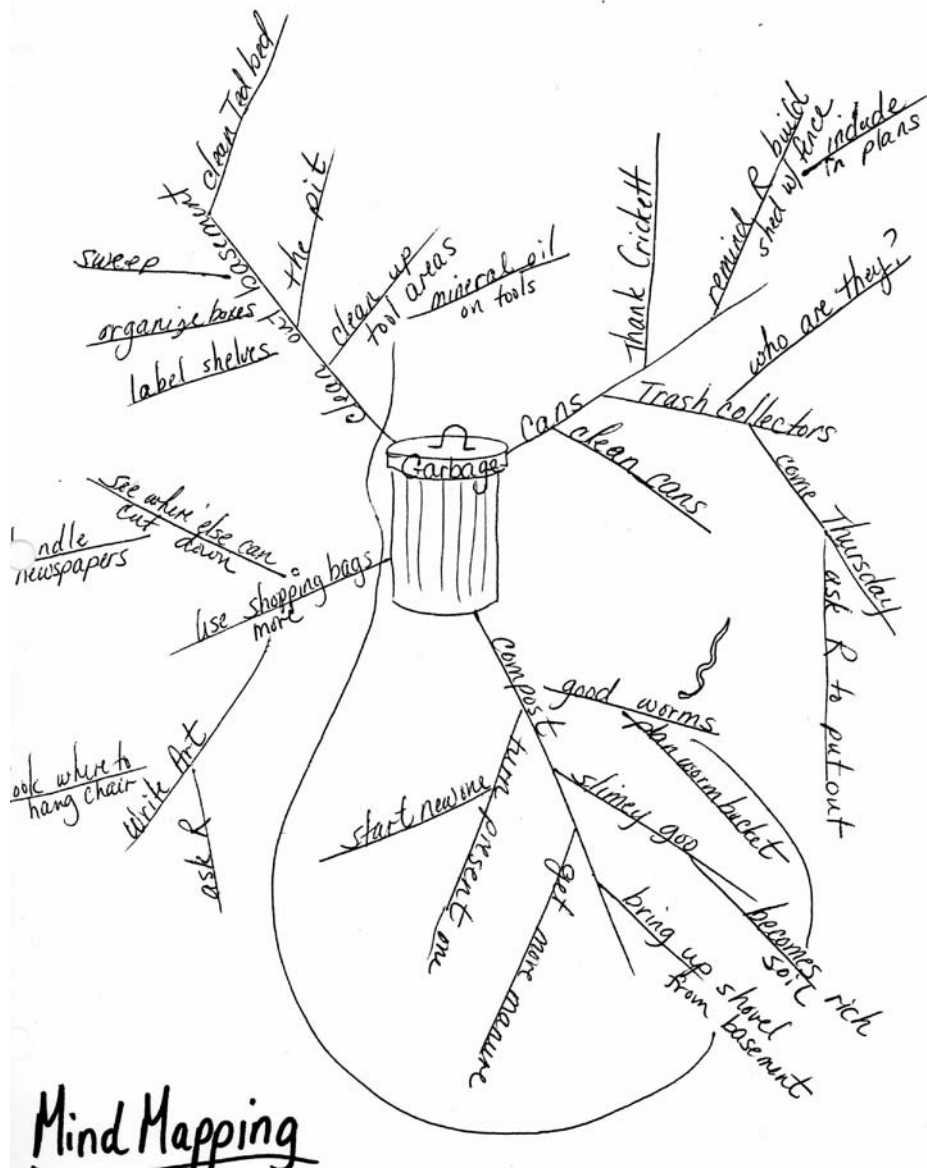
Try experimenting with them. I recommend that you try a few trial runs for different applications. All of them are most effective if you use different colors, shapes, and styles in your drawings because it seems to stimulate more connections, but just pen on paper will still work well. My examples are actually rather tame and a little too neat. Allow yourself to be wild. Any paper will do, but as you get warmed up, you may find that big paper is the most fun. I've also taped together a lot of little pages as my mind took me on a creative journey that exceeded the space.

These techniques are wonderful tools to free the mind from the same old ruts. They are widely used in corporate, educational, and creative settings. I've used them to make grocery lists, which I highly recommend. They are wonderful tools to use in coaching and consulting applications to free up the mind to new possibilities.

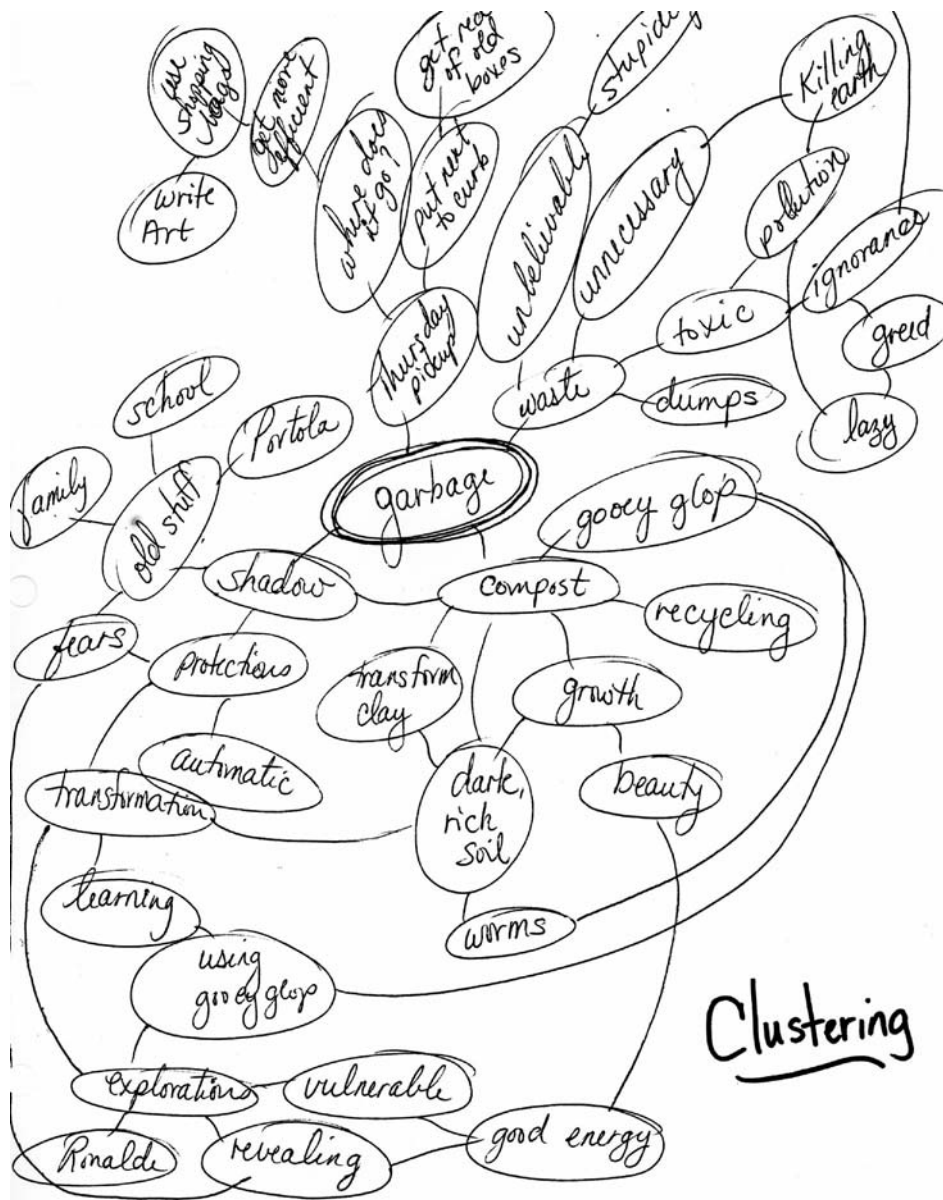
The first method is called mind-mapping. It was developed by Tony Buzan. He originally developed this method as a memory enhancer when he was a student. He has many books on the subject and there is a plethora of websites on the subject (I got 832,000 hits from google.com. This is by far the most recognized and widely used method.

The second and third examples, which I like just as much as mind-mapping, are from *Writing on Both Sides of the Brain : Breakthrough Techniques for People Who Write* by Henriette A. Klausner. Play, enjoy, experiment. See what comes of it.

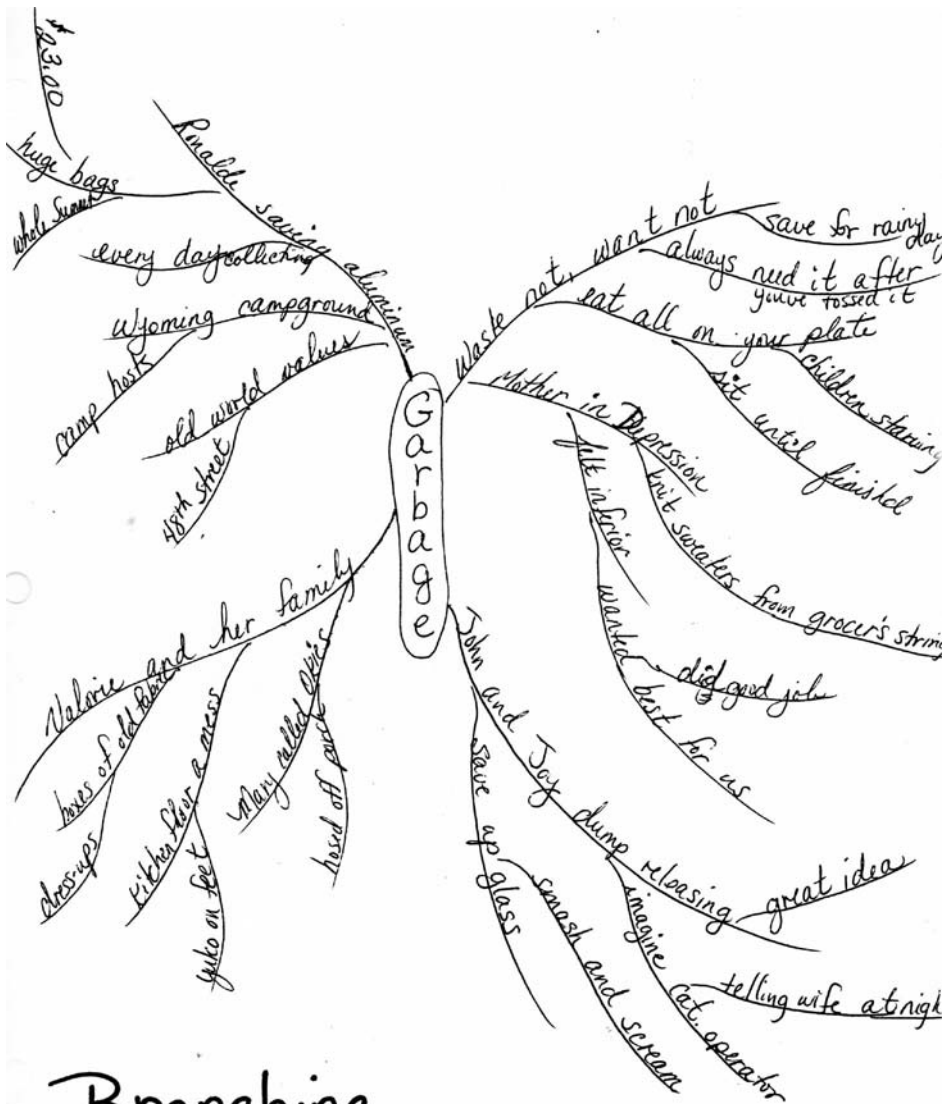
** Right mode processing of the brain is nonlinear, holistic, and visuo-spatial. Left mode processing is linear, logical, and linguistic.



Mind Mapping



Clustering



Branching