



A Technique for Producing Ideas

By James Webb Young

Reviewed by Jeff House

For those who like to read while you travel, this is the book for you. At 3.4 paperback ounces, it won't weigh you down, at \$2.49 for the Kindle edition you can still afford a Grande at Starbucks, and at 36 pages you can finish it on a non-stop flight from Charlotte to Gastonia. A caution – if you don't want to read the Kindle version, be prepared to pay more. Hardback reprints run about \$10 and paperback reprints cost \$6.95, but original Mad Man vintage paperbacks will cost you over \$50 – and they would probably smell of unfiltered Camels.

The good news is that the value of this book is inversely proportioned to its length and the time it takes to read it. Following Young's five steps will help you create ideas, but not effortlessly or instantly – this is not a remedy for procrastination.

1. Gather information
2. Observe relationships and patterns
3. Put aside your observations for contemplation
4. Patiently wait for ideas to evolve
5. Fit the idea into the real world situation

The premise is based on Young's assertion that new ideas and creativity evolve from existing elements from which you can become creative by discovering relationships and ideas between the elements.

John Webb Young was an advertising executive at the legendary J. Walter Thompson agency, and he was the first chairman of the Advertising Council and an inductee in the American Advertising Hall of Fame. He received many honors and awards including the Advertising Man of the Year Award in 1946.

This book offers a simple yet effective method in a short read.