

## **Take Your Brain to the Gym for SponBRAINEous Combustion!**

*Margo Berman*

Just like your body, your brain needs exercise to stay creative. Oh, not boring exercises, but exciting ones that wake up your imagination. It doesn't take much. Almost anything new will first stimulate, then strengthen the creative, cerebral muscle. Just start with any of the suggestions below. Before you decide they sound silly, try them. The part of your brain that's hesitant and judgmental right now is your left side.

Okay, you may be asking: How do I know the difference between the left side and the right side? It's easy. Here's how. If I said to you, "You're invited to a glamorous, Hollywood party." The right side would say, "Yippee! Count me in!" The left side would ask, "What do I wear? When is it? Who's going?" It already took all the joy out of the whole idea of a party. The right side is your imaginative side, always ready to play. The left side is the analytical side, the one that makes decisions based on logic and evaluation. To make it clearer, think of it this way: your right is side your fun side. Your left side is your mom, always telling you to be careful.

So how can we keep the right brain robust and revved up? Here are a few easy-to-use techniques that will take your brain to the gym for a mini workout. Let me first say, the sillier it sounds, the better. You don't have to understand how these actions work. Just trust, for now, that they do. For just a few minutes, withhold criticism and play along. Are you ready? Good. Here we go.

1. Get a red pillow or any other red object and place it near where you spend your most time. Why red? Because it has the highest energy quotient of all the colors. It raises your heart rate and energizes any environment. So, if you're stuck in a mental rut, just seeing the color red will reactivate your thinking. Wearing red also peps you up if you're physically fatigued.
2. Go to a clothing store where you wouldn't normally shop. Pick out some clothes you'd NEVER wear. Try them on. You don't have to leave the dressing room, and it doesn't matter if you won't buy them. Now, look in the mirror. The more outrageous the outfit, the better because it's more of a shock to the right side of your brain.
3. Listen to music you wouldn't usually choose. Change the channel on your radio, just for a few minutes. The right side will say, "Wow! What's that?" By then, you've already revitalized it with the unexpected, new sounds.
4. Go to the supermarket or a restaurant and try an exotic new fruit or food. Your taste buds will be awakened and so will your creative side. It simply thrives on surprise and novelty.

5. Try line dancing, belly dancing, Hip Hop, clogging, salsa, or even pole dancing. If you're more athletic, go horseback riding, hiking, bike riding, or rock climbing. Just moving your body in a new way, infuses it with life and shakes up any mental lethargy.
6. Visit a museum. Take a walk in a park. Sit beside a river. Rest in a hammock. Watch the clouds. Gaze at the stars. Breathe in all the new sensations. Allow yourself to lose your sense of time. Even for a short while. You'll come back revived and rejuvenated.
7. Go a different way to work, or the mall, or the dry cleaners. Wander down an undiscovered little street. Try a different exit on the highway. Deliberately get lost. Enjoy the pleasure of true exploration. The new landscapes you discover will refresh you.
8. Open the windows and listen to the sounds you usually overlook. Really listen. Something's always happening. A bird is singing. A frog is croaking. The leaves are rustling. Soak in the wonder of natural sounds and let them fill you with tranquility. This break will act like mental vacation at a luxurious, cerebral spa.
9. Buy some toys and keep them in your purse or nearby. Look for small key chains with toys like Etch A Sketch, Koosh balls, or yo-yos. Get some Play-Doh or Silly Putty. No, toys are not just for kids. They're for the kids in all of us. The act of play is a total workout for the right brain.

Don't worry about what others say or think. Who cares? You're busy ingesting a powerful creativity tonic, like an energy drink, to pump up your mental fitness. Best of all, you're generating SponBRAINEous Combustion®. Your right brain will thank you for the fun workout it had because it actually loves to exercise. Quite possibly, once your left brain recognizes the benefit, it might even approve!

## **MARGO'S BIO**

Margo is an award-winning marketer, author, inventor, speaker, and professor at Florida International University. Her first book, *Street-Smart Advertising: How to With the Battle of the Buzz*, was the June 2008, Business Book of the Month in *Delta Sky Magazine*. Her two *Street-Smart Advertising* 6-CD webinar sets won a 2008 National Clarion Award for Educational Materials. She invented *tactikPAK*®, a patented system of learning, created *Mental Peanut Butter*® Training, and developed three advertising CDs, plus an inspirational DVD. Her second book, *The Brains Behind Great Ad Campaigns*, will be out in 2009. Her award-winning Web site exudes creativity <http://www.UnlockTheBlock.com>.