

## Think Wrong: Random Word Drill

The following information is available at: <https://solvenext.com/random-word-drill>

As well as: Bielenberg, J., Burn, M., Galle, G., & Dickinson, E. E. (2016). *Think wrong: How to conquer the status quo and do work that matters*. San Francisco, CA: Instigator Press.

### Free Associate.

*Use when you want to let go of your problem-solving orthodoxies to generate convention-defying solutions (and also when you want to have some fun!)*

Random Word is part of the Let Go Practice, and a drill we use to help rapidly generate as many potential ideas as possible. Think of it a bit like free association, with a purpose. The drill is typically preceded by a Get Out Drill — such as [That's Odd](#) or [3x3x3](#) — for inspiration. Then it's time to *let go* to preconceived notions, biases, orthodoxies, and beliefs.

During Let Go Drills we're not searching for *the* correct answer—it's too early to solve. We're aiming to break the synaptic connections in our brains to produce hundreds of ideas (quantity over quality) using random starting places to arrive at solutions that we could not come to otherwise. Get your Post-its and pens and let your imagination run wild! Bonus points for laughter—if you find it funny, or too crazy to work you are on the right track!

### Outcomes

- A shift in mindset from what is right to what is possible
- A portfolio of unexpected, inconceivable solutions, ready for quick evaluation and further exploration

### Materials

Pens  
Sharpies  
Post-its  
Brown paper bag or blindfold

### Instructions

**Step 1.** Introduce the Random Word Drill.

**Step 2.** Have teams place the two-word descriptions from That's Odd (or a similar Get Out Drill) into a paper bag. Let each team choose two Post-its.

**Step 3.** Instruct Wrong Thinkers to use their random word pair as the starting place for generating ideas for how they might solve their challenge. Note: we are looking for nouns, we're not just generating ideas for fun. We want *things* that will address our challenge, i.e., a new product, service, campaign, etc.

**Step 4.** As the teams generate ideas, have them post them on their Random Word Poster.

**Note:** Encourage Wrong Thinkers to begin with ideas that use all their words (for example: Meat Suit Treasure Map). After a while suggest that they can use parts of words, or recombination of letters in words to further inspire their ideas.

**Let Go Tip:** Wrong Thinkers who are new to the Let Go Practice often focus on solving the problem, rather than generating as many ideas for solutions as they can.

Listen for debates and individuals advocating for a particular solution while running Let Go Drills. You may need to interrupt the group and announce that you are not interested in the answer, but instead want as many possibilities as possible.

Encourage people to turn off their inner critic, suspend disbelief, and focus on quantity of ideas. Often the most outrageous ideas turn into the most compelling solutions.