

The hitchhiker's guide to ideas

 By [David Edworthy](#)

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In Douglas Adams' *Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*, he gives a 'how to' guide on the basics of flying. It's brilliant really. To some it up, he says that all you need to do is throw yourself at the floor... and miss. Genius. It is a little more complicated than that - and if you haven't read it, do yourself a favour, read it - but it goes something like this...



Image by [TeeFarm](#) from [Pxabay](#).

He says that you need to throw yourself at the floor with every intention of hitting it but then become accidentally distracted. In which case, you'll find yourself flying. Well, bobbing or floating to be precise. He also says that you can't try and distract yourself on purpose. If you do, you will hit the floor. Instead, you should put your full attention into knowing how hard the floor is going to hurt and really go for it.

Creating something original

If, however, you are lucky enough to have that before mentioned attention, distracted, say by a lovely pair of legs, a bomb going off in the vicinity, or an extremely rare beetle, you may find yourself floating above the ground. You may be one of the lucky people who can afford one of his flying clubs where you pay to be distracted. This mainly comprises of people with odd body parts, or surprising opinions, jumping out from behind bushes at the exact crucial moment. Most hitchhikers, it is said, can't afford these clubs.

If you do find yourself floating, you should really not acknowledge it. Don't listen to anybody else in this time either because it's likely that anything they say is not going to be helpful. Instead, breathe regularly, try a few swoops and enjoy the sensation without putting too much thought into it. Or you might find it comes to a very sudden end.

I think that coming up with ideas works in the same way. If you truly want to come up with something original, about the worst thing you can do is try to focus on a way to do so. Instead, go off and do something else. Go play a game of squash, meet your mates for a pint, read a book, drive a car with the top down (the car's, not yours. Although that will work too...), and then, all of a sudden, come back to your idea with vengeance.

Original ideas are a privilege

Try and be the person in the flying club that sneaks up on your brain and shows it an odd body part. Metaphorically speaking, of course. If you do, you may just find yourself floating, or bobbing. And then, whatever you do, don't look down and don't listen to people. Just go with it. Try a few swoops, play a little, but don't acknowledge what you're doing. Just enjoy it.

When you've safely landed, then take stock of what's just happened. You've been privy to something truly original – an idea. Untainted. Untarnished. Just the pure raw energy of what the world is made of. Savour it. Cherish it. Then do all you can to write it down, record it, take mental pictures, or carve it in stone, but whatever you do, capture it. Original ideas are a privilege and you've just had one.

Of course, this is just one way of many to come up with them. There really isn't a formula. But the one thing that I've found that is common with all ideas is that you need to give them space and time to appear. If it's too rushed, too calculated, too forced or too mechanical, you're going to hit the floor.

ABOUT DAVID EDWORTHY

I'm a freelance copywriter who has worked for some of the biggest advertising agencies in the country. I have experience in above and below the line advertising - having won awards, locally and internationally, for both. I think that the ad industry, as it stands, is broken and it can't be fixed using the same thinking that got us into this problem. Things are going to change. I want to be a part of that.

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