

# Four Stages of Genius

with

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“think  
learn?  
succeed”

“Smart training for clever people”

You're struggling to solve a problem. The harder you think, the less progress you make. You give up. That's when you have the great idea.

For years, scientists have wondered why this happens. Scans of the brain in action have helped to solve the mystery. They suggest 'insight' happens in four stages.

## Stage 1: Awareness of a dilemma

At this stage, you're frustrated. Your reality doesn't match your desires. Psychologists call this cognitive dissonance. It triggers the process of creative thinking. This means frustration is a good thing.

## Stage 2: Reflection

You concentrate on your problem. You focus inwards and ignore external events. As you do so, your brain gives off alpha band waves. This 'downtime' state is essential for creative thinking. This means you need quiet time in order to solve problems.

## Stage 3: Illumination

A wave of gamma band activity occurs. New brain pathways form. You can think in new ways. This is when ideas blossom. This means you should use your creative moments to think of multiple ideas. Keep pen and paper handy so you can do this.

## Stage 4: Motivation

You feel excited and motivated by your idea. Your brain releases endorphins, serotonin and dopamine. This triggers a strong desire to act. Your new brain pathways are fixed by neurotransmitters. This means you need to take action in order to preserve your new ways of thinking. Do something with your idea within 48 hours.

By understanding the stages of insight, you can think of better ideas more quickly.

## Read more about it

***Rock, D: 2006. A Brain Based Approach To Coaching. International Journal of Coaching In Organisations, Vol 4.***

The above article is based on David Rock's ideas. Read his article for a fuller description of the four stages of insight. A Brain Based Approach also explains how the insight model can be used by managers, coaches and trainers.

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