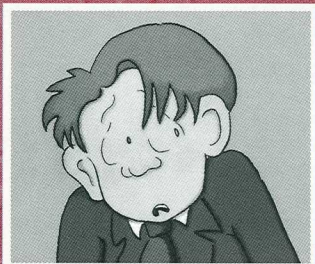


Ernie's Idea

A National Film Board of Canada Release



Ernie is a simple fellow who loves his job as the seventeenth-best nut and bolt sorter in the company. Keep quiet and don't make waves...that's his way of staying out of trouble. But the blissful routine of Ernie's life is thrown into chaos when a pesky and persistent idea suddenly decides to follow him around, demanding attention in the most disruptive of ways.

Suddenly, the neighbours are getting suspicious, there's talk of involving the police, and Ernie's job is in jeopardy. What do you do with an idea, when you've never had one before? How can you tell if it's worth keeping or just plain trouble?

A delightful animated film based on an original short story by Peter Vogler.

Directors: Claire Maxwell, Peter Vogler
Animators: Claire Maxwell, Tracy Lewis
Producer: Svend-Erik Eriksen
Associate Producer: Claire Maxwell

13 minutes

Order number: C9196 048



Closed captioned. A decoder is required.

IN CANADA 1-800-267-7710

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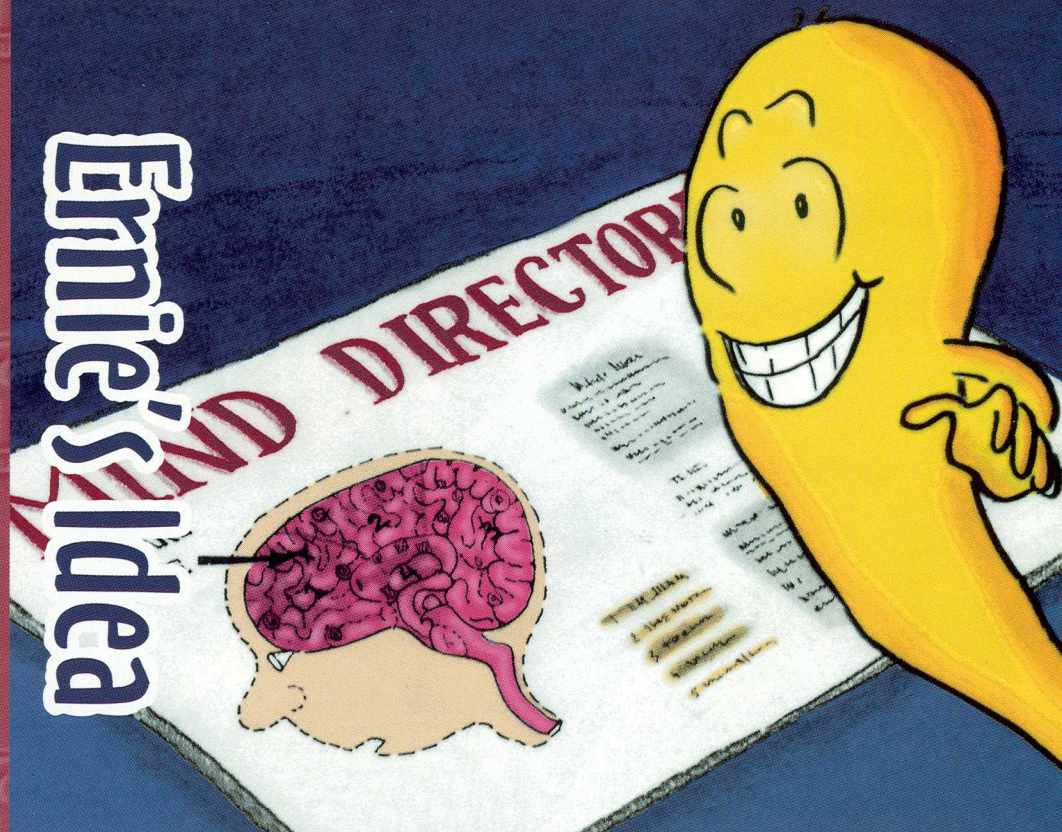
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Ernie's Idea



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Opportunity knocks,
but ideas aren't nearly so polite.



VHS

C9196 048

Ernie's Idea

USER'S GUIDE

This guide is intended to be used by teachers and trainers or facilitators in the non-education sector. Recommended audience: ages 8 and up.

1. Ernie was a creature of habit. He was comfortable with his routine behaviours, the regularity of his existence and the set patterns of his life. When the idea entered his consciousness, Ernie became rattled, uncomfortable and nervous because the idea disturbed his equilibrium. It represented the possibility of change and having to readjust to new patterns, behaviours or habits. Why was this disturbing for Ernie? Why does the idea of change seem to make many people uncomfortable and resistant? How can people be helped to appreciate the value and potential of a new idea? What can be done to ease its implementation?

2. There are several phrases in the English language to describe the "eureka" moment when an idea becomes a concrete solution or thought. Some examples are:

- it hit me between the eyes
- it hit me over the head
- it came to me out of the blue
- it just hit me

All of these phrases suggest that the idea was a separate entity that just appeared in someone's conscious thoughts — similar to the idea that seemed to appear in Ernie's mind. Where do ideas come from? What are sources of inspiration?

3. There are many adjectives in the English language that are applied to the word "idea." Some examples include: *crazy, brilliant, complicated, bright, wonderful, ingenious, fateful, great, stupid, fancy, neat, good, bad, hair-raising, simple or sensible*. The same idea may provoke different adjectives depending on the context. For example: using a wood-burning stove for heat may be useful if you live in the middle of the woods, but it may be impractical if you live in Antarctica. Many of Leonardo da Vinci's ideas — the helicopter, for example — were considered to be ridiculous by the standards of his time. Yet today they are described as visionary. Over the past five years, what ideas have you seen move from science fiction to reality, or from crazy idea to wonderful innovation?

4. In one of the last scenes of the video, Ernie's boss describes the idea as "great." In the next line, the narrator describes it as a *grate* idea. Both spellings of the word are correct. Words that sound alike but mean very different things are called "homophones." Make a list of other homophones found in the English language. Can you think of any that are found in other languages?

Directed by
Claire Maxwell
Peter Vogler

Original short story
by

Peter Vogler

Animators
Claire Maxwell
Tracy Lewis

Animation
Assistant
Sharon Miskinis

Narrated by
Mike Cram

Music
John Forrest

Camera
Tom Brydon
Lynka Belanger
Alvin Chong

Editors
Janice Brown
Liz Walker

Sound design
& supervision
Gael MacLean

Producers
Svend-Erik Eriksen
Claire Maxwell

5. Ask the group to describe a problematic situation — an unsatisfied need or product that requires a new idea or solution. Define who needs the solution and any potential constraints on its development, such as money, facilities, people, materials, time, or weather. Create small groups of four to five members. One member of each group will act as an observer who will record the process that their group follows to solve the problem. The others will try to come up with a way to improve or solve the problem. Set a time limit for this process. Afterwards, compare the resulting ideas and the processes by which the groups arrived at their solutions. Were the ideas similar? Were the solution-seeking processes similar? Why or why not?

6. When you were a young child, where did you think ideas came from? How did your concept of what an idea was and where it came from change over time? Have the group try to create a succinct and focused definition of the word "idea." How are the following words related to each other, if at all: *idea, notion, concept, suggestion, thought, solution*?

7. Ernie pictured his idea as a yellow droplet-shaped entity that moved around in his brain. He imagined the different parts of his brain as having doors that opened into distinct areas where specific people or things resided. Is this an accurate depiction of the inside of a human brain? How many major sections of the brain are there and where are they in relation to each other? Which part of the brain would really be "in charge" of ideas?

8. *Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers. She sells sea shells by the seashore.* These two sentences use alliteration to create tongue twisters. Divide participants into small groups of three or four members. Assign each group one consonant (P, R, S, T, M) and give them three minutes to write as many words as possible that begin with that letter. Then have the groups trade lists. Give them five minutes to write a sentence using as many of the words on the list as possible. They can then challenge each other to say the sentences as fast as possible.

9. Ernie's idea seemed to just come to him, unannounced and unbidden. Yet there are many times when people try to create ideas. How do you come up with your best ideas? Do you have to be in a specific place, wearing specific clothes, sitting in a specific position, eating or drinking specific things? Do you say to yourself: "I need an idea" and then it just appears in your head? What do you do or say to try to come up with an idea?

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