










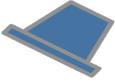


Summary: De Bono's (1985) Six Thinking Hats

-  WHITE – Concerned with objective facts & figures.
-  RED – Gives the emotional view.
-  BLACK – Cautious & careful. Points out the weaknesses in an idea.
-  YELLOW – Optimistic & hopeful. Positive thinking.
-  GREEN – Indicates creativity and new ideas.
-  BLUE – Concerned with control, the organization of the thinking process, and the use of the other hats.

Hat	Questions to Consider	Tips on Using this Hat
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What info do we have? • What info do we need? • What info is missing? • What questions do we need to ask? • How will we get the info we need? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Just provide the facts in a neutral and objective manner. Don't interpret them or offer opinions. (Pretend you're a computer.) • Distinguish between checked facts and unchecked facts. If a particular unchecked fact is especially relevant, check it before proceeding. • Use this hat toward the beginning of a thinking session to provide background.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do you feel about this? • What's your gut reaction? • What are your impressions? • What different emotions are evoked? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If a topic is emotionally charged, consider starting with the red hat so people can get their feelings off their chests. • Consider ending with a final red hat to reflect on the session (e.g., How do we feel about this meeting? Are we happy with the outcome?) • Don't explain or justify your feelings. Explanations/analyses are not red. • <i>Every</i> person should quickly provide his/her red hat reaction. No "passing" allowed. (Say "neutral" if that's how you feel.) • Remember that intuition can be wrong.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the weaknesses of this idea / approach? • What obstacles are likely? • What are the risks? • Are there any errors in our thinking? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beware of overusing the black hat. • Don't let black hat thinking degenerate into argument. • Black hat thinking should always be logical. If it's not, you're actually dealing with red hat thinking.

Hat	Questions to Consider	Tips on Using this Hat
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the potential benefits of this idea / approach? • What is the value in this? • What's the best possible scenario? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In an assessment situation, put the yellow hat before the black hat. If you can't find much value to an idea, there's no point proceeding with further analysis. • Yellow hat thinking is a deliberate search for the positive aspects, not just saying nice things. • Yellow hat thinking does <i>not</i> mean ignoring reality. Look for logical support for the positive possibilities.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the different alternatives here? • What non-obvious solutions have we overlooked? • How can we improve or combine our current ideas to add more value? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use the green hat to find ways to cope with the difficulties uncovered by black hat thinking. • Use "thought experiments", outside stimuli, "provocations", lateral thinking, and other techniques to prompt creative new ideas. • Give people time to brainstorm on their own before brainstorming as a group. • Make it safe to use the green hat.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What's the best way to proceed in considering this issue? • What's the purpose of this discussion? What outcome are we looking for? • How should we define the problem / issue? • What criteria should we use for evaluating our ideas? • What questions do we need to be asking ourselves? • What other colored hats do we need to apply to this? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Always use the blue hat both at the beginning and at the end of a session. • Use it at the beginning to clarify the problem/purpose, to set goals, and to clarify process. • Use it at the end to summarize, draw conclusions, and lay out next steps. • The facilitator is <i>always</i> wearing the blue hat. • Blue hat thinking should be used to determine which other hats are needed and when.

Some "hat language" for you and your group:

- "Can we stop and apply a little 'blue hat' thinking here? It feels like we're getting off track."
- "We're talking about 'white hat' facts right now, but what you've just mentioned sounds like a 'red hat' issue. Let's put that in the parking lot and come back to it."
- "As the facilitator, I'll be wearing the 'blue hat' throughout today's discussion. But *anyone* is welcome to request an explicit 'blue hat' process conversation whenever they feel it's needed."
- "I suggest we do some 'red hat' thinking first to clear the air. What different feelings does this proposal prompt for us?"
- "Sam, I've noticed you keep putting on the 'black hat' during our discussion. Those are important thoughts, but we *all* need to be wearing *each* of the hats in order to come up with the best solution. Can you put the 'black hat' aside until the designated time?"