

WHAT'S THE BIG IDEA?

6 WAYS TO TURN YOUR FUZZY THOUGHTS INTO A CRYSTAL-CLEAR CONCEPT

1. ASSESS YOUR THOUGHTS

If the right words escape you, you're acting like a Stifled Forecaster. Look at your idea from three different angles.

1. Zoom out by filling in the blanks.

This idea will help/improve/fix _____.

This idea will help these people: _____.

The best part of this idea is _____.

2. Create a mash-up with Hollywood shorthand. *RoboCop* has been described as *Terminator* meets *Dirty Harry*. *Flashdance* was *Rocky* for women. *West Side Story* is *Romeo and Juliet* with singing and dancing (and no tights). Got the gist? Try this with your idea (pop culture references not required).

3. Bust your assumptions. We all assume things that subconsciously shape our thoughts — truths that may or may not be true. Write down the assumptions around your idea. Ponder them. Keep, adjust, or throw them away.

OR

If your idea is too big for words, you're acting like an Expansive Forecaster. Here's how to surface your core concept.

Come up with a list of must-haves for your idea. For instance:

- Needs to achieve X. ▪ Costs no more than X. ▪ Focuses on the topic of X.
- Must happen by X.

Next, look at all your brainstorm (it helps to write them down) to see if they meet your must-have requirements. If they're nice-to-haves, put them aside for later.

Then, organize your must-have thoughts to see if you recognize your original idea. If you're still bogged down, repeat the exercise.

OR

If your idea is sounding wishy-washy, you're acting like an On-the-Fence Forecaster. To take a stand, discard your safety net.

Write down all the different aspects (actions, decisions, reasons, people, etc.) of your idea on Post-it notes or index cards. Come up with 15 or more. Then sort the cards into three piles:

- My belief
- Someone else's belief
- Decided by fear

Review the cards in your "My belief" pile and readjust your idea to follow your own point of view.



2. EXPRESS YOURSELF

Briefly and clearly write or record your idea in 50 words or less. Use plain language. Don't try to sell it or get fancy with big words. (You can always finesse it later.) Repeat as necessary until it feels right.