

# Forced Metaphors

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For the most part I've been describing ways of creating metaphors as thinking about the idea and then trying to find out of the world of possibilities ideas that connect with it. Now, this is normally how I create metaphors, but it helps to get into the habit of thinking that everything is connected. There's similarities between any two ideas. To prove this, one other technique you can use to create ideas is what I call forced similarity. This is where you take the idea plus a concept or a set of ideas in a completely different area and you force yourself to try to find a similarity between the idea that you want to understand and the idea that you've picked at random.

So just as a demonstration of that, I'm trying to understand the idea of Opponent Process Theory. So Opponent Process Theory is an idea in psychology which is based on neurobiology and it's simply that it's in a theory about how we perceive colors. Basically it says that the way we perceive colors is in opponent processes. So red and green are opponent processes so we can't see them at the same time. You can only see red or green. You can never see a combination of red and/or green because they're against each other—they naturally clash.

Now, this is a way of describing color theory and why we can't see something that is greenish red, but we can see something that is bluish green. Now, I'm going to take this idea which is complete different and try to link it to something at random. So I've decided just to pick at random golfing. So how am I going to link the concept of golfing to opponent process theory?

It took me a little while to think of this, so I'm not doing this live on camera, but it took me a little while to think, okay what might be some similarities. And the idea I came up with is that when you're golfing, there are features of the golf course such as the grass, which can be a blend. You can have sort of short grass and sort of long grass. You can have a blend of short grass and long grass, and there's gradations between rough and short grass. However, if you have something like a sand trap or water trap that would never exist in the same place as grass. So if you think of opponent process theory, the rough and green are kind of like blue and green in our colors. You can have gradations between them, you can have blue and green. However the sand trap and the green are like red and green in that you can only have the sand trap or the green. You can never have sort of a sandy green; it's either one or the other.

So this is a little bit of a trivial example, and it's maybe not the best metaphor. But it is an example of two subjects, you can almost always find a connection between those ideas. Sometimes it won't be the perfect metaphor, but if you're really struggling you need to really cultivate the attitude that metaphors exist in anything. You can use almost anything as an analogy, as a starting point for reasoning. Now whether or not it's the best analogy is another issue. But simply thinking about ideas and thinking about the connections between ideas forces you to really understand the idea deeply and create that contrast, that mental model of the idea which allows you to do well in tests and exams. So

try this idea, take the idea you're trying to learn, and then pick an idea that's similar but maybe a little bit different and try to force yourself to think of ideas in terms of connections and metaphors between those two.