

# fantasticat

**Fantasticat - ideas for developing, teaching and learning - especially children, and for open-minded grown-ups too**



There's this cat character - Fantasticat - he can do anything...

If you think like Fantasticat does - then you can do anything too.

Fantasticat is a concept for teaching and learning and for helping people - particularly children, but grown-ups as well - to identify, express and focus on their own unique personal talent and potential.

Sometimes it's easier to see your dreams through someone else - like a funny cat character who can do anything.

Fantasticat provides a platform for various ideas for teaching and developing people's self-belief and confidence. It's a simple method for self-reflection and visualisation.

Fantasticat helps liberate people from limits and negative conditioning, which in many of us - adults and children of all ages - are typically imposed by other people and other external factors.

Using a simple abstract idea like Fantasticat can help bring new clarity to personal aspirations, improve self-awareness, lift self-limiting beliefs, and contribute towards defining new personal directions, purposes and goals.

**Please note - Fantasticat is essentially an activity for young people and children. The concept will not suit some adults who prefer to adopt a more conservative or structured view of life and work. If using Fantasticat with grown-ups please consider the group and how you position the activity.**

"They who dream by day are cognizant of many things which escape those who dream only by night." (Edgar Allen Poe)

" 'Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate. Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure. It is our light, not our darkness, that most frightens us.' We ask ourselves, Who am I to be brilliant, gorgeous, talented, fabulous? Actually, who are you not to be?... Your playing small doesn't serve the world. There's nothing enlightened about shrinking so that other people won't feel insecure around you. We are all meant to shine, as children do... It's not just in some of us; it's in everyone. And as we let our own light shine, we subconsciously give other people permission to do the same. As we're liberated from our own fear, our presence automatically liberates others." (Marianne Williamson, author, from A Return To Love, 1992. Ack C Wilson and J Cooke. The full version includes a couple of references to God, which some people prefer; others not. Use whichever is appropriate. The other version is on the [quotes page](#).)



Fantasticat is simply the idea of being fantastic at something: having natural ability and potential - visualised and expressed through a cat character: Fantasticat.

The reason for thinking about and expressing personal talent and potential in the form of a cat character is to bring fresh objectivity - a new perspective.

Some people find it hard to think and say that they are fantastic - or even remotely good - at anything.

As a reflective tool, Fantasticat can help someone to see what's good in themselves, as if they were Fantasticat, which for some people is a lot easier than seeing it in themselves.

Fantasticat is primarily a teaching and development concept for young children but it's fine to use it with grown-ups too, if people are happy to relax and have fun.

There are [lots of ways](#) to use the Fantasticat idea.

**There is no definitive Fantasticat image** - Fantasticat can be anything people want him/her to be - the pictures on this page are examples of how [one school class](#) has interpreted it.

If using Fantasticat to encourage people to visualise and express their own potential, talent, passion, etc., it's important that people can represent Fantasticat however they want to - whether a written or spoken description or a drawing, or any other representation that is personal and meaningful about individual potential.

Young children should immediately relate to Fantasticat, however for older people and teams for who maybe don't fancy participating in creating and expressing their own Fantasticats (people who don't want to play, basically) you can use the Fantasticat concept by referring to its use as a tool for younger people, and to illustrate the principles of lifting self-limiting beliefs and making positive personal change: detaching from day-to-day pressures - finding time and space to imagine what might be - to visualise and dream - to connect again with one's personal passions and natural talents. Liberating one's thoughts is often easier using a technique like Fantasticat. Detachment brings objectivity - which helps to remove subjective self-doubt; it helps to imagine what **could be**, rather than what is (usually conditioned, 'owned', and subjective).

People of all ages tend to live according to the imposed conditioning of others - from schools, parents, society, peers, whatever - instead of focusing on their own individual special talent, dreams, and potential. Fantasticat can help people see things differently.

Imagine you are Fantasticat - what would you be like? If you were Fantasticat, what would you be doing?

- What can you do?
- What do you love?
- What is your talent?
- What can you become?
- Visualise your Fantasticat.

## fantasticat for grown ups..

I'm not necessarily suggesting you run a fully participative Fantasticat session at your next regional management conference, however the underlying principles are relevant to personal growth and development for everyone.

Where grown-ups are concerned, some people discover later in their life that they've been living their father's life or their mother's life - living out the dreams and expectations of someone else.

"Why the hell am I accountant?... I wanted to work in music..." (no offence to the accountancy profession - it could be anything) or "I always wanted to work with animals - how come I've ended up in an office doing work I hate?" or "I've spent half my life moaning about my job... I wanted to work at something I love doing... where did I go off track?"

People go off track and begin to [falsify](#) their own selves because of external influences (often other people's expectations and pressures) and also because of a lack of belief and support.

When we go off track, or get stuck on a wrong one, it's helpful to look outside of ourselves - to break the cycle - to revisit and rekindle the things we are truly good at and which we truly enjoy (which almost always go hand-in-hand since no-one ever made a million doing something they hate..)

Other factors mean that it makes sense to review our purpose and potential - to find new enjoyable ways of working and earning a living, and maybe to create or build something of lasting significance:

- we're living longer
- we're staying healthier and fitter
- we no longer have a job or career for life - we can change our careers quite fundamentally
- we learn lots more new things and develop lots more new capabilities than we used to (although we commonly don't see the resulting opportunities for positive change - see [Campling's Age Work Arc theory](#) for example)
- we probably could do with finding useful profitable rewarding things to do instead of retiring
- retirement from work for many people is not long followed by retirement from life

Fantasticat - and this page - are just a simple little idea to help us (and to help others) to focus on what we love and enjoy and what we are naturally fantastic at - or would love to be fantastic at.

Where you take it and how you build on it is up to you.

## fantasticat in schools - some suggestions and notes

The positive influence and encouragement we receive from great teachers at school is the most significant influence we ever receive.

Parents are important of course, but in a different way - besides which, what kid ever listens to their parents even when they do say the right things?..

Most of us remember certain teachers from our school years who inspired us and gave us belief.

Teachers who helped us recognise and take a pride in something we could do well and become fantastic at.

When people are helped to focus on what they are good at, their self-belief and confidence grow.

Aside from finding a meaningful purpose, the resulting confidence and belief then helps people to address some of the things they are not so good at.

When you help someone to that there is something they are fantastic at - whatever it is - you give them a foundation for becoming fantastic at other things too. Belief is the mother of achievement.

## some suggested words of explanation

(You'll know far better than me how to position this for your own situations - these are just some ideas to get you started.)

Fantasticat is a cat who can do anything he/she chooses.

If you were Fantasticat - what would you be?

If you were to describe your own **unique talent and potential** - what you **love to do** and **dream to be** - what would it be - what would you be?

How would you **draw** your own **Fantasticat** or **write about** or **talk about** your **Fantasticat**?

Expressing your **dreams** and **self** through a **Fantasticat** can be **easier** and more **liberating** than trying to imagine it as yourself.

We are all conditioned by external expectations - but your **Fantasticat** can do **anything**.

## other thoughts and notes

One of the big challenges for young people's education - and adult development too - is to find ways to 'motivate' people to learn and train and grow; so that they are truly interested in learning and developing themselves. For themselves, not just because someone says so.

Everywhere teachers and trainers and managers struggle to 'motivate' people to train and learn.

Much education and training is wasted, just going through the motions, and in this respect children are no different to adults.

Moreover, people's behaviours and attitudes and limits can commonly be traced back to their experiences as children at school. Many grown-up people have difficulty in seeing themselves outside of received or conditioned roles and limits, and their reluctance to imagine that their own limits might be lifted, or that their purpose and direction can be changed, is often formed when they are very young.

Being able to express and develop personal dreams, and to visualise progression towards something personal and meaningful helps young people create a positive outlook for life, and helps both old and young to liberate their imagination and break out of conditioning.

This is where 'motivation' comes from. Not from outside. Motivation must be connected with something meaningful and personal, and this can only come from inside the person.

Teaching and developing people should be about **bringing out**, not putting in.

Young people particularly need help to focus on what they love and are good at, whatever it is - it really does not matter - anything - rather than be bombarded and disillusioned by stuff that holds no meaning for them.

People of all ages want to learn about the things that they are naturally good at, and which they love and enjoy. Tapping into this motivation, and then, later, carefully building onto it other aspects of development which might not initially be so important in the person's mind, is the way to develop people. Start with the person - where they want to go and what they want to do - and then you've a basis for development.

Teaching and training should be firstly about helping people to grow and to develop their own personal potential. This is the platform onto which all else is built.

With no foundation there can be no development.

On the other hand, when you foster self-belief and a sense of value and purpose, you enable unlimited development.

A caring positive teacher, trainer, mentor, coach or manager - or friend - can open up the world for another person by using the principles which underpin the Fantastical idea.

You cannot put in. **You can only bring out.**

# ideas for using fantasticat in teaching and personal development

Here are some suggestions for using the Fantasticat idea. Just a few pointers. You'll think of others. Obviously some of these ideas are more appropriate for younger people than adults, however bear in mind that grown-ups like to play too.

- Ask people to create (written/drawn/modelled, whatever) their own personal Fantasticats as a way of visualising/expressing/developing their own passions/strengths/aspirations.
- Have people create story-boards (step-by-step cartoons or diagrams or pictures) showing how their Fantasticats become/became what they are (development is often easier to imagine if you start with where you want to end up and work backwards to where you are today).
- Make a really big Fantasticat picture and have everyone decorate it with items, or symbols that represent their own personal Fantasticats.
- Create a big Fantasticat on a notice-board or bulletin-board and surround it with writings and drawings of people's own Fantasticats. (Ack Andrea Phillips).
- Write and perform a Fantasticat play or video in which everyone appears playing the part of their own Fantasticat. The aim is to work together to script a story that utilises everyone's strengths, and has people acting their dreams also.
- Ask people to write a learning plan or training plan for their own Fantasticat.
- What was Fantasticat like as a kitten and what did he/she do to become the expert Fantasticat that he/she is today? This could be an individual exercise or a group debate, or a team exercise to help understand about early capabilities and talent which can be nurtured and grown with the proper care and support and belief, etc.

If you come up with variations that work well and you'd like to share them please [get in touch](#).

If you use Fantasticat in your school and have some pictures and written descriptions that you'd like to share, again please [get in touch](#).

People's ideas and feelings about what they are fantastic at, or want to be fantastic at, of course change over time. And some people's dreams and passions might not be fantastic in our eyes, but what's important is giving people the encouragement and opportunity to think about themselves in these terms - without external persuasion or influence - and to encourage them to develop their ideas and dreams for themselves.

While chiefly for children and young people, the principles and ideas within the Fantasticat teaching and development aid can be used with people of all ages.

Fantasticat can be used in conjunction with self-discovery tools such as the [Gardner Multiple Intelligences model](#) and [tests](#), and also VAK learning style tests.