



Japanese grocery stores had a problem. They are much smaller than shops in the USA and therefore don't have room to waste. Watermelons, big and round, wasted a lot of space. Most people would simply tell the grocery stores that watermelons grow round and there is nothing that can be done about it.

That is how majority of people would respond. But some Japanese farmers took a different approach. If the supermarkets wanted a square watermelon, they asked themselves, 'How can we provide one?' It wasn't long before they invented the square watermelon.

The solution to the problem of round watermelons was solved as the farmers did not assume it was impossible and simply asked how it could be done. They found out that if you put the watermelon in a square box when they are growing, the watermelon will take on the shape of the box and grow into a square fruit.

This made the grocery stores happy and had the added benefit that it was much easier and cost effective to ship the watermelons. Consumers also loved them because they

took less space in their refrigerators which are much smaller than those in the USA meaning that the growers could charge a premium price for them.

What does this have to do with anything in life or at your job? There are a few lessons that you can take away from this story which help you.

Lessons from the Story

- 1. Don't Assume:** The major problem was that most people had always seen round watermelons so they automatically assumed that square watermelons were impossible before even thinking about the question. Things that you have been doing a certain way your entire life have taken on the aura of the round watermelon and you likely don't even take the time to consider if there is another way to do it. Breaking yourself from assuming this way can greatly improve your overall life as you are constantly looking for new and better ways to do things. This was one of the most difficult things

for me to do because most of the assumptions I make, I don't even realize that I'm making them. They seem perfectly logical on the surface, so I have to constantly make an effort to question them.

2. **Question Habits:** The best way to tackle these assumptions is to question your habits. If you can make an effort to question the way you do things on a consistent basis, you will find that you can continually improve the way that you work. Forming habits when they have been well thought out is usually a positive thing, but most of us have adopted our habits from various people and places without even thinking about them. I have changed a large number of habits that I have had after taking the time to question them and continue to do so. Some of them I have know idea where they came from while others I can trace to certain people or instances in my life. It's a never ending process, but by doing this, you can consistently strive toward making all aspects of your life more enjoyable instead of defaulting to what you have now.
3. **Be Creative:** When faced with a problem, be creative in looking for a solution. This often requires thinking outside the box. Most people who viewed this question likely thought they were being asked how they could genetically alter watermelons to grow square which would be a much more difficult process to accomplish. By looking at the question from an alternative perspective, however, the solution was quite simple. Being creative and looking at things in

different ways in all portions of your live will help you find solutions to many problems where others can't see them. I am not a creative person, but I've found that the more that you look at things from different perspectives, the more creative I have become. It's a learned art and builds upon itself.

4. **Look for a Better Way:** The square watermelon question was simply seeking a better and more convenient way to do something. The stores had flagged a problem they were having and asked if a solution was possible. It's impossible to find a better way if you are never asking the question in the first place. I try to ask if there is a better way of doing the things that I do and I constantly write down the things I wish I could do (but currently can't) since these are usually hints about steps I need to change. Get into the habit of asking yourself, 'Is there a better way I could be doing this?' and you will find there often is.
5. **Impossibilities Often Aren't:** If you begin with the notion that something is impossible, then it obviously will be for you. If, on the other hand, you decide to see if something is possible or not, you will find out through trial and error. Take away the lessons from the square watermelons and apply them to all areas in your life (work, finances, relationships, etc) and you will find that by consistently applying them, you will constantly be improving all aspects of your life.

I am sure we can bring about change if we really want to. If we practice the above mentioned lessons, we will be more creative and innovative.

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“Innovation is life.
When there is no
innovation, there
is stagnation”

—Narendra Modi,
Prime Minister of India

Note: *This story has been reproduced from the website <https://sites.google.com> with due acknowledgment in the interest of developing positive thinking and creating the culture of innovation in the society.*

“Vulnerability is the
birthplace of
innovation, creativity
and change.”

- Brené Brown