

4

Out-of-the-box thinking and creativity

I need to think “outside the box”
to come up with a creative design.



I push my chair into the hallway to
change my viewpoint and stimu-
late my creative juices.



Suddenly my
juice dried up.

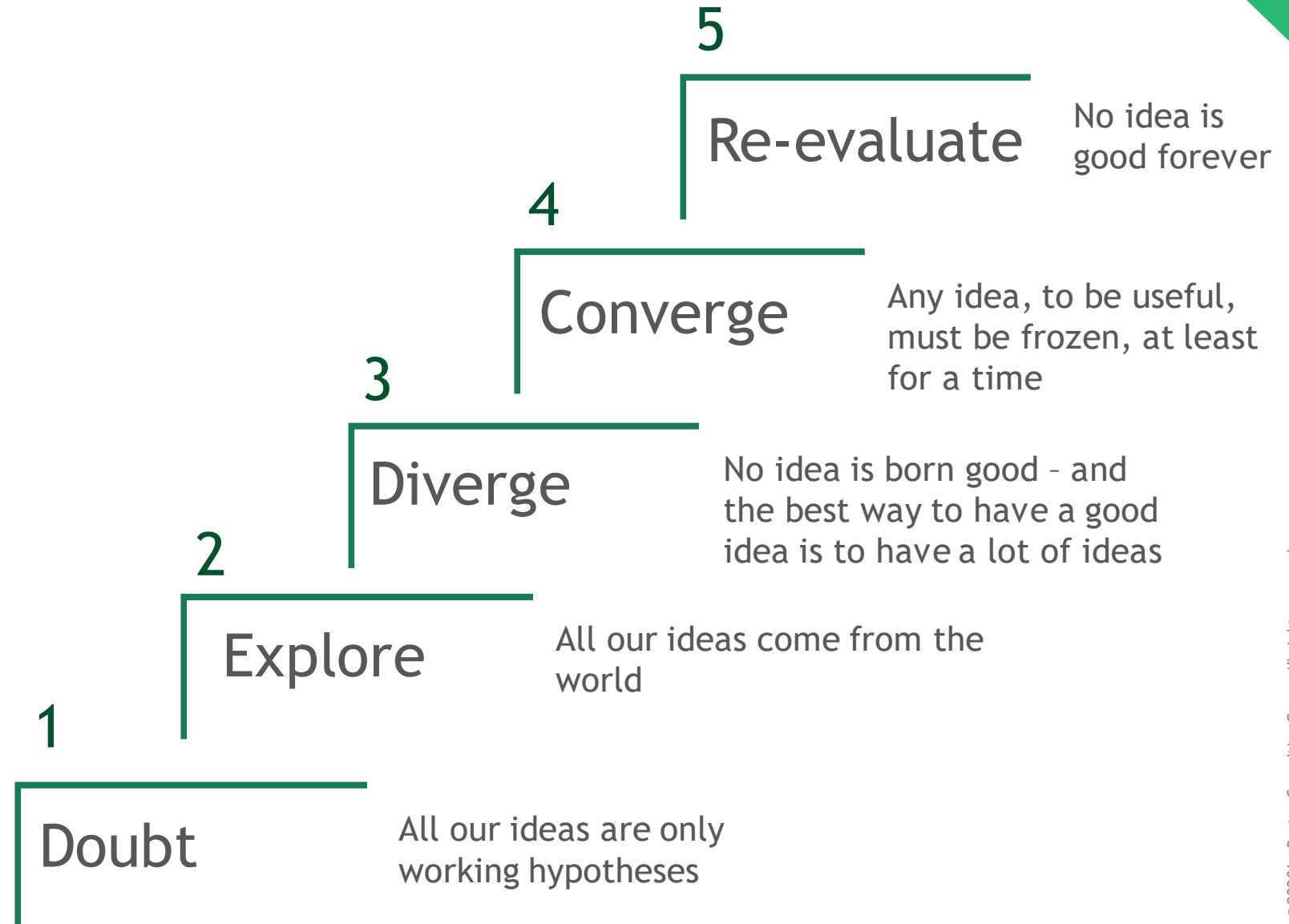


You're a fire
hazard. Do
your think-
ing in your
box.



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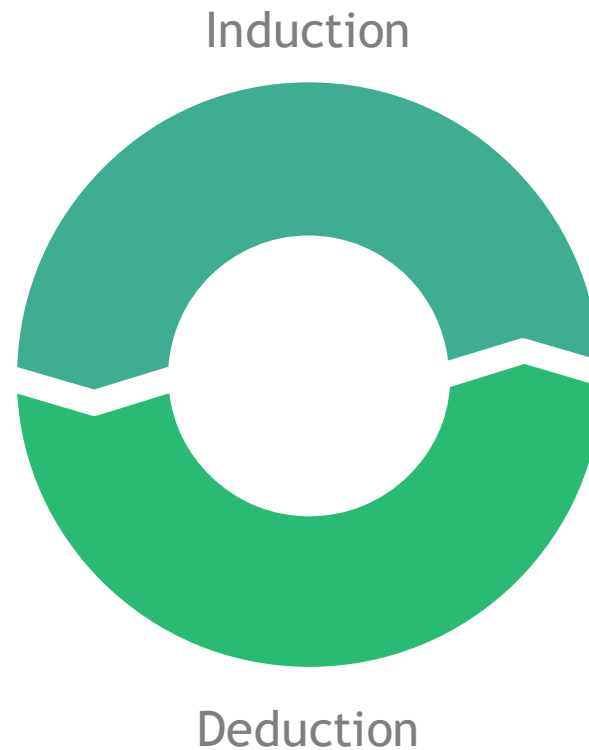
steps to practical creativity in business



Consider distinct modes of thinking - creating models via induction, and using them via deduction...

Within us

Concepts
Stereotypes
Judgments
Working hypotheses
Ideas
Frameworks
Paradigms
Boxes



In front of us

The society we live in...

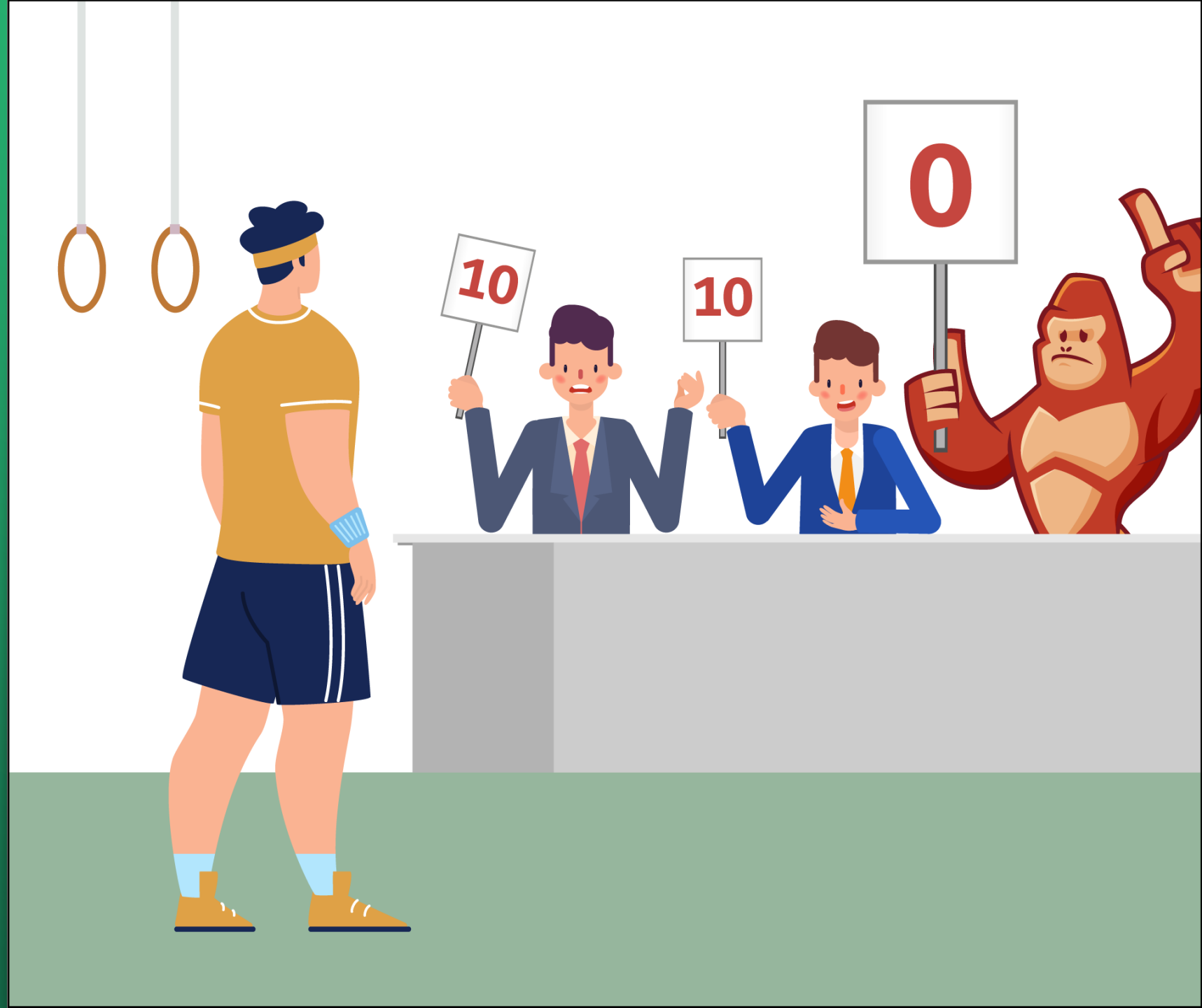
...our company, our
products, our
competitors...

...our customers and
their needs...

... opening
ourselves up to
the power of
induction,
embracing the
ambiguity
inherent in the
process as an
invitation to be
creative

Doubt

because we don't see
the world as it is,
we see the world as
we are



What if questions...to stretch perspectives and attempt new combinations

What if Disney were in charge of engaging with our customers?

What would a joint venture with Apple yield?

What if McDonald's leadership team switched places with ours?

What if our top competitor cut prices by 60% tomorrow?

What if CEOs could only be female?

What if an effective way were found to harness the sun's power?

The goal is to identify your models, and try to explore ways in which they might be adapted

Research

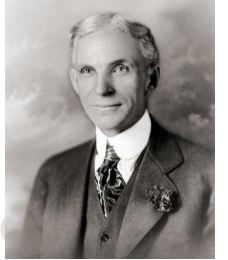
can help us
understand what
came before

e.g. megatrends,
customer insights,
competitive
intelligence

... but will never provide a purely deductive
answer

*"Horses will always remain while auto-
mobiles are but novelties that will disappear"*

CEO of Michigan Savings Bank, advising Henry Ford's lawyer
against investing in the automobile industry (1903)



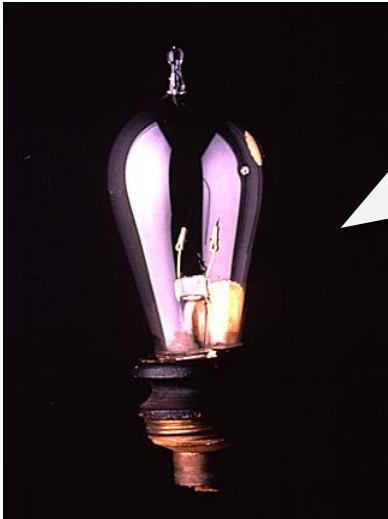
*"The Americans have need of the
telephone, but we do not. We have plenty
of messenger boys."* Sir William Preece,
Head of the British Post Office (1876)

*"There's no chance that the iPhone is
going to get any significant market
share. No chance."*

Steve Ballmer, CEO of Microsoft (2007)



The best way to have a good idea is to have a lot of ideas



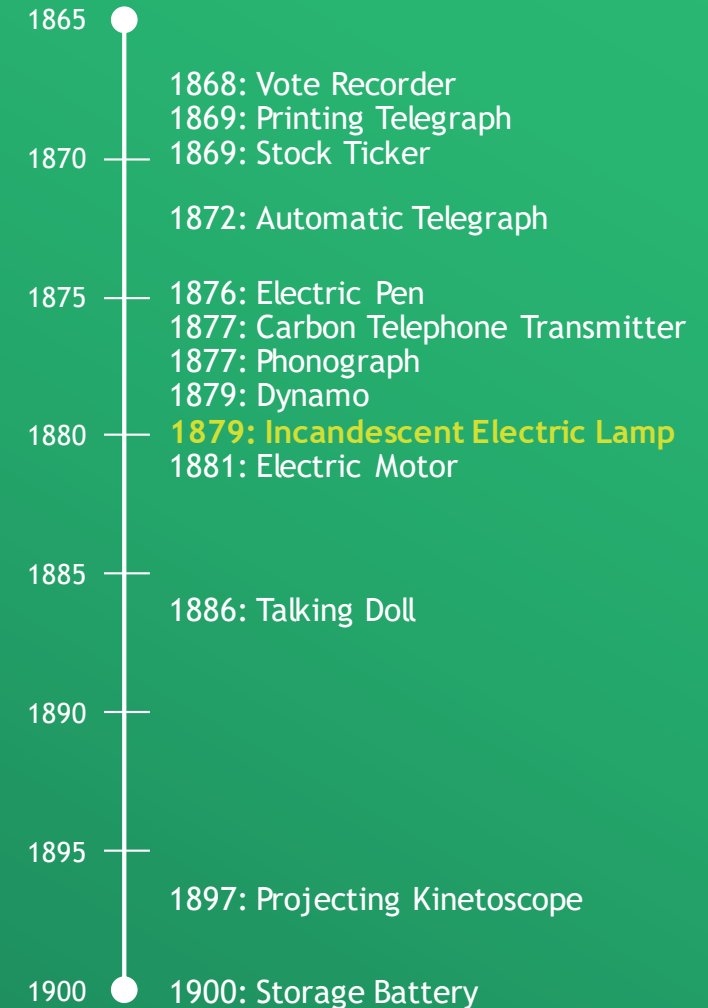
How did you have the idea of the incandescent electric light bulb?

Thomas Edison's answer:

"By having **999 ideas** of bulbs **that did not work!**"



Some of Thomas Edison's inventions - 999 ideas for each good one?



divergence and convergence

Phase 1: Divergence

Imagination "Hot"

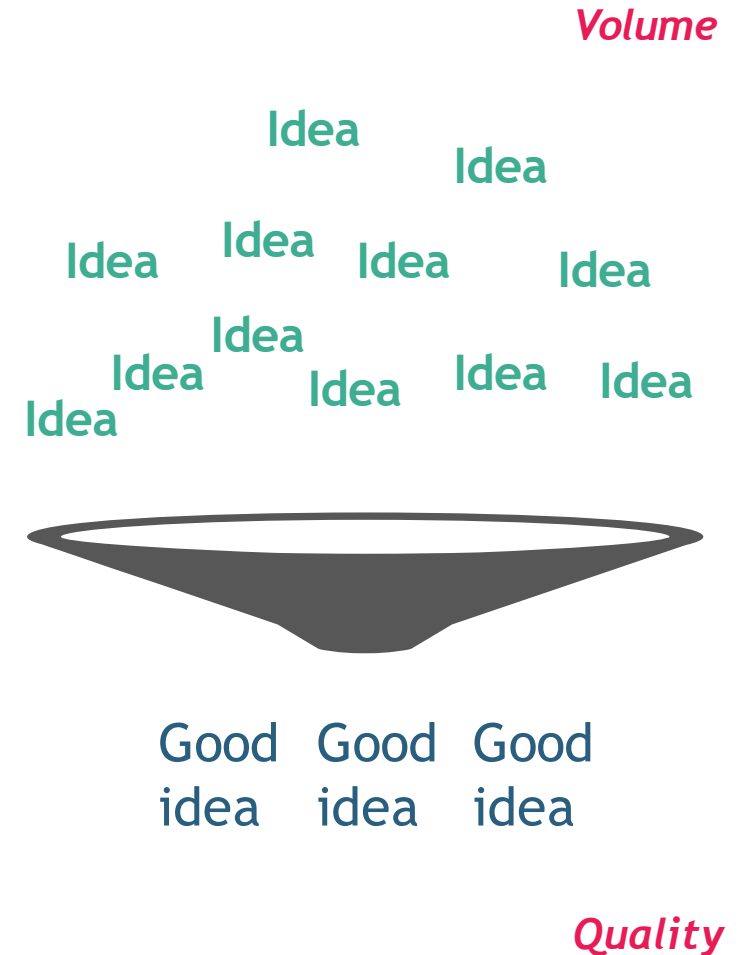
Opening up
Curiosity
Astonishment
Doubt
Questioning
Method

Phase 2: Convergence

Judgment "Cold"

Selection criteria

Analytical



We don't like it when we have to change our perspective



Ford: surviving success

After being terrifically creative at getting to Model T:

- Assembly line
- Lighter-weight
- Better underside
- Stronger suspension
- >15m cars

Almost went bankrupt by refusing to adapt like GM did: Cadillac vs Chevy, many colors



Reuters: noting weak signals

1850 - founded using pigeons to get stock prices across English channel

In 1865 broke news of Lincoln 12 days later

Then telegraph, telex, radio '23, satellites '62, internet...be open to weak signals!



Creativity techniques: what you need to know

Creativity techniques are not creative per se; they help **you** be creative!

- Take a fresh view on the issues
- Allow associations, ideas that you wouldn't have thought about
- Change your perspective, see things from a different angle

There is an infinite number of creativity techniques, but they all use the same underlying mechanisms

- Changing your perception
- Pushing for new associations, away from the "classical" answers

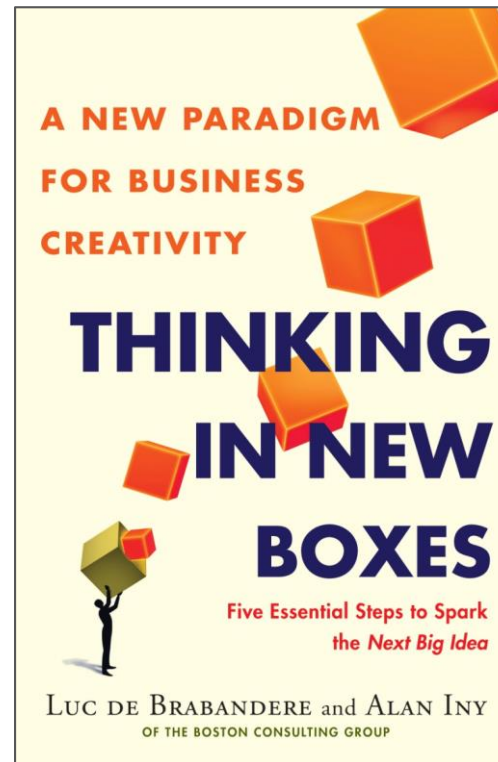
Before thinking about creative solutions, it is key to **ask a good question**

- Asking the right question can already be part of the answer
- The more concrete the question, the more ideas you will find
- There are creativity techniques for both "questions" and "answers"

And... bear in mind that constraints foster creativity!

Check "Thinking in new boxes" book and TED talks for further study

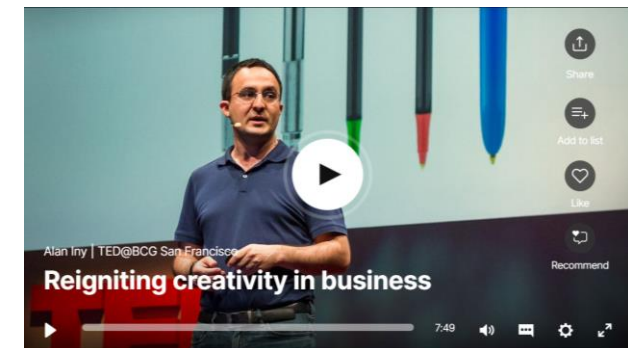
Book "Thinking in New boxes"



TED@BCG



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