

# Embracing Failure

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# Objectives



- Evaluate perceptions of Creativity
- Explore the role of failure within creativity
- Learn how creativity and failure are central to iterative design

# 1. Creativity

# Activity

When I say scribble!, scribble on a post-it and pass it onto the person on your left.

You will then have 60 seconds to make a drawing out of the post-it given to you.



# Who here is creative?



Menti: xxxx-xxxx



# We are all creative

- Many of us have got used to being told we are not
- Creativity can be taught and developed
- Creativity is a skill that should be valued & practiced

# What is creativity?



Menti: xxxx-xxxx

# Creativity

*“The process of having original ideas that have value”*

**Ken Robinson**



# What is ideation?

*“Ideation is the process of generating a broad set of ideas on a given topic with no attempt to judge or evaluate them”*

**Nielsen Norman Group**





# What is ideation?

*“Ideation is the process of generating a **broad set of ideas** on a given topic with **no attempt to judge or evaluate them**”*

**Nielsen Norman Group**

# Worst Possible Idea...

NomNom Foods want to enter the canned soup market. What is the **worst possible idea** you can think of...

Menti: xxxx-xxxx



# Don't Fear Failure

*You tried your best & you failed miserably.  
The lesson is 'never try'*

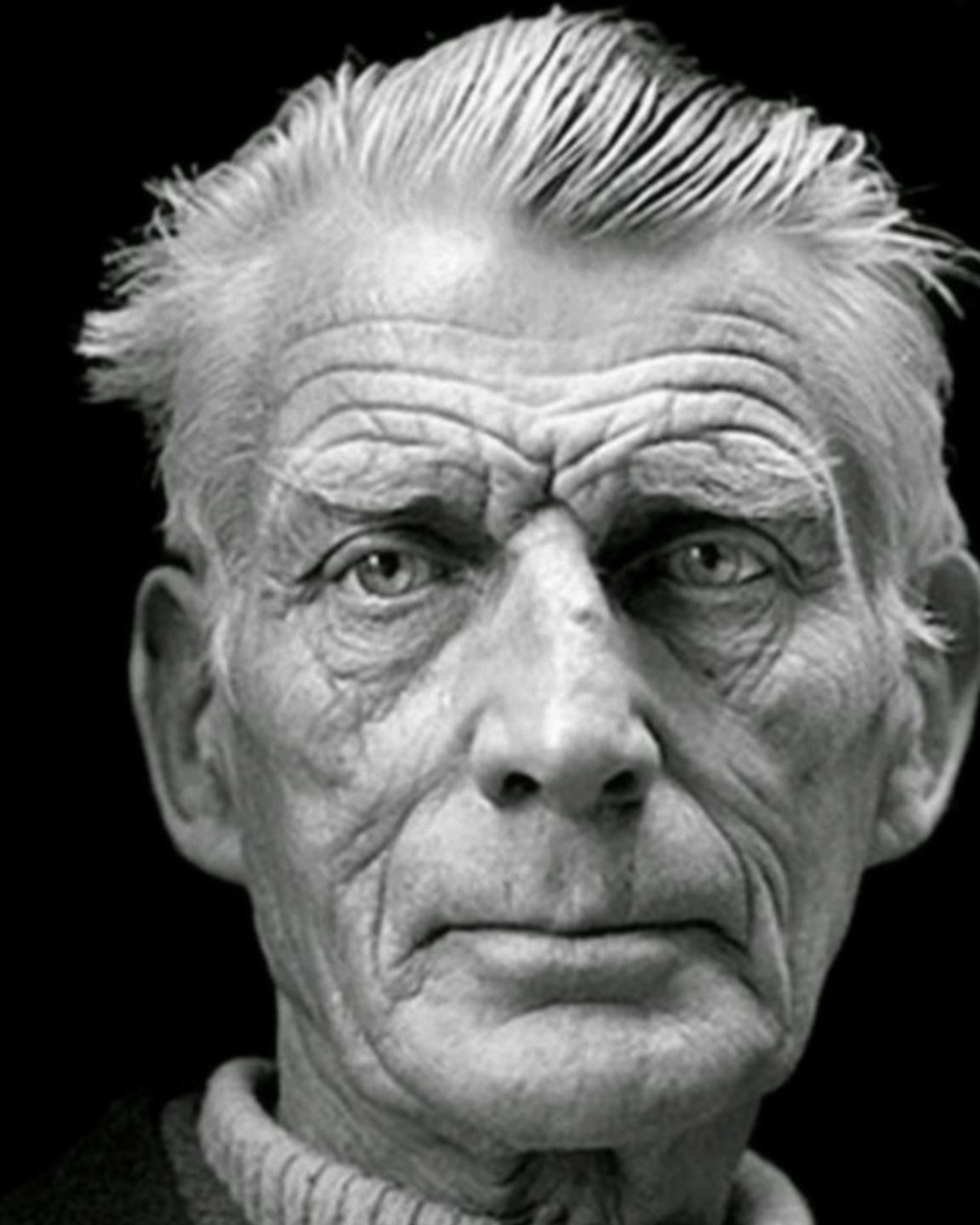
**Homer Simpson**



# Be prepared to mae mitakes...

# Be prepared to make mistakes...

*The person who never made a mistake, never made anything*

A black and white close-up portrait of the Irish writer Samuel Beckett. He has thin, light-colored hair that is slightly messy at the top. His forehead is deeply wrinkled with many fine lines. He has a serious, contemplative expression, looking slightly off-camera to his left. The lighting is dramatic, casting deep shadows on one side of his face while highlighting the other.

**Try again,  
Fail again,  
Fail better!**

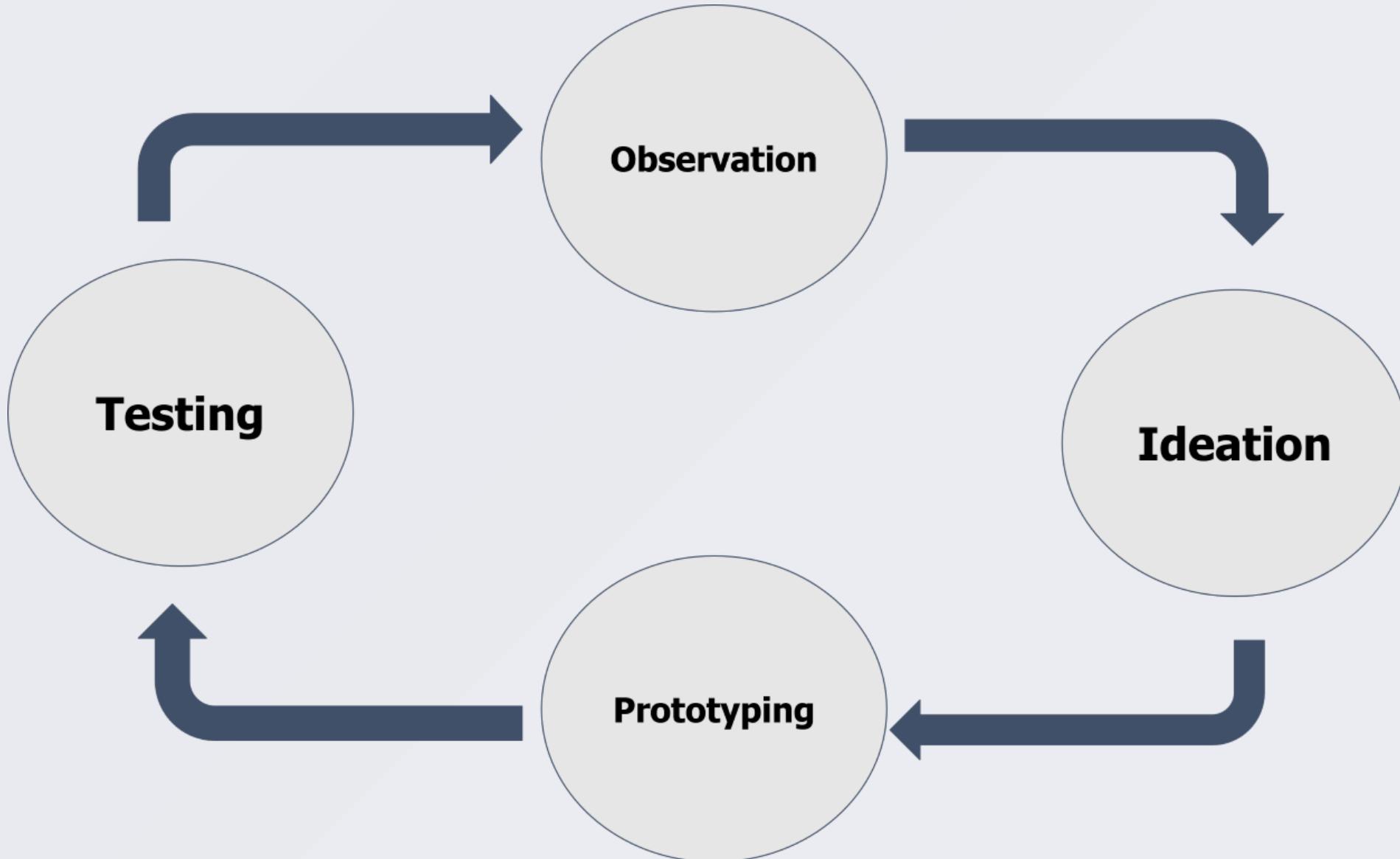
**Samuel Beckett**

# Creativity is a process

- Sometimes things go wrong - Creativity is a process of iteration.
- Try something, evaluate it, refine it, try it again...
- Many of the projects through your degree are as much about the process as it is the product
- It doesn't matter if the thing you make 'works' it's the journey that's important

# Break

## 2. Iterative Design Cycle



# Every phase invites failure

- **Observation:** Discovering what is failing with the current solution, what is the problem we are addressing
- **Ideation:** Invites quantity and encourages bad ideas.
- **Prototyping:** Provides a safe space to fail, prototypes are meant to break as this provides new data to move forward
- **Testing:** You are not seeking praise, but criticism. Failure in testing highlights disconnect between the design intent and user reality
- **Iteration:** Failure drives each cycle of iteration and leads to success

# 3. Case Studies

# Infant Baby Warmer

The Embrace infant baby warmer is a low cost incubator designed for use in developing countries where access to traditional incubators is not feasible.

The product was designed by students at Stanford as part of a design for extreme affordability module.





# Infant Baby Warmer

## The Problem

20 million premature or low-weight babies are born each year. In developing countries deaths rates are high due to lack of access to incubators. Students were tasked with creating a low-cost alternative

# Infant Baby Warmer

## Observation

By travelling to Nepal to observe the actual users the team observed two key things.

- Majority of babies born in rural areas
- Majority of babies never reached hospital





# Infant Baby Warmer

## The Product

After realising the product would need to be transportable, sanitizable and work without electricity the team prototyped a sleeping bag style incubator.

This was warmed by pouches heated in boiling water and could maintain heat for four hours.

# Infant Baby Warmer

## The Impact

The teams solution costs on \$25 dollars compared to \$20,000 for a traditional incubator, has won multiple design awards and helped hundreds of thousands of infants survive.



# AirBnB

AirBnB has a valuation of over \$30 billion, operates in over 81,000 cities and has over 150 million users. But this wasn't always the case, in 2009 a year into operation the company nearly went bankrupt....





# AirBnB

## The Problem

In 2009 the company is losing money, fast! With few bookings being made revenue struggled to break \$200 per week.

After analysing listings for places to stay in New York the discovered the problem:

## Bad Photos

# AirBnB

## Observation

By observing the problem from the perspective of users the founders realised the bad photos meant you couldn't see what you were going to pay for.





# AirBnB

## The solution

Go to New York visit all the listings and take better pictures.

# AirBnB

## The Impact

Within a week the site double its revenue making \$400 dollars instead of \$200. A small tweak based on empathy made the difference that continued over the following decade...



# Can you think of any examples?



Menti: xxxx-xxxx

# Takeaways

## **Failure is the driver for success**

- To enhance creativity we must embrace failure
- Failure = Feedback
- Prototyping = Permission to fail
- Iterative Design & Design Thinking = Experimentation Framework

# Thank You

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