

THE MINDSHIFT ISSUE:

SOFT engineering

RESEARCHLAB
BY SORRYWECAN



0001 // PART 1

OPENING THOUGHT

Technology evolves faster than our nervous systems can adapt, and yet the real transformation happens not in machines, but in the way we learn to move with them.

In this sense, everything matters — from our techniques of emotional hygiene, to the spaces we inhabit, to the ways we communicate with one another.

The Mindshift issue explores the essence of Soft Engineering, a field that we are developing across all our projects to cultivate a new tempo, sensitivity and dynamic adaptability.

It is a basic principle of spiritual life that we learn the deepest things in unknown territory. Often it is when we feel most confused inwardly and are in the midst of our greatest difficulties that something new will open. We awaken most easily to the mystery of life through our weakest side.

— Jack Kornfield

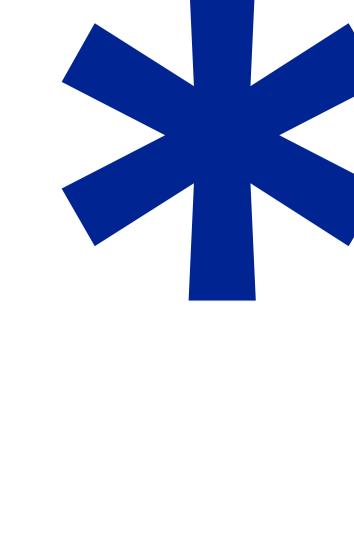
Soft Engineering

Soft Engineering is the practice of designing with awareness, combining systems thinking with empathy, observation, and imagination. Rooted in presence and human-centered, this approach brings you from confusion back to a state of creativity and aliveness.



The measure of intelligence is the ability to change.

— Albert Einstein



Neuroplasticity and Cognitive Restructuring

The mind that observes itself changes itself.
Each moment of awareness becomes an act of redesign.

A practice in bending perception before it becomes thought.

Purpose:

To observe how the brain's predictive model constructs "reality" — and how, through subtle awareness, this model can be rewritten in real time.

Duration:

10–15 minutes (preferably in silence or in motion — walking, commuting, observing space).

01 / ANTICIPATE

sense before you see → notice the forecast your mind makes about space

02 / INTERRUPT

add a small disruption → slow down, change rhythm, do one thing differently

03 / DISORIENT

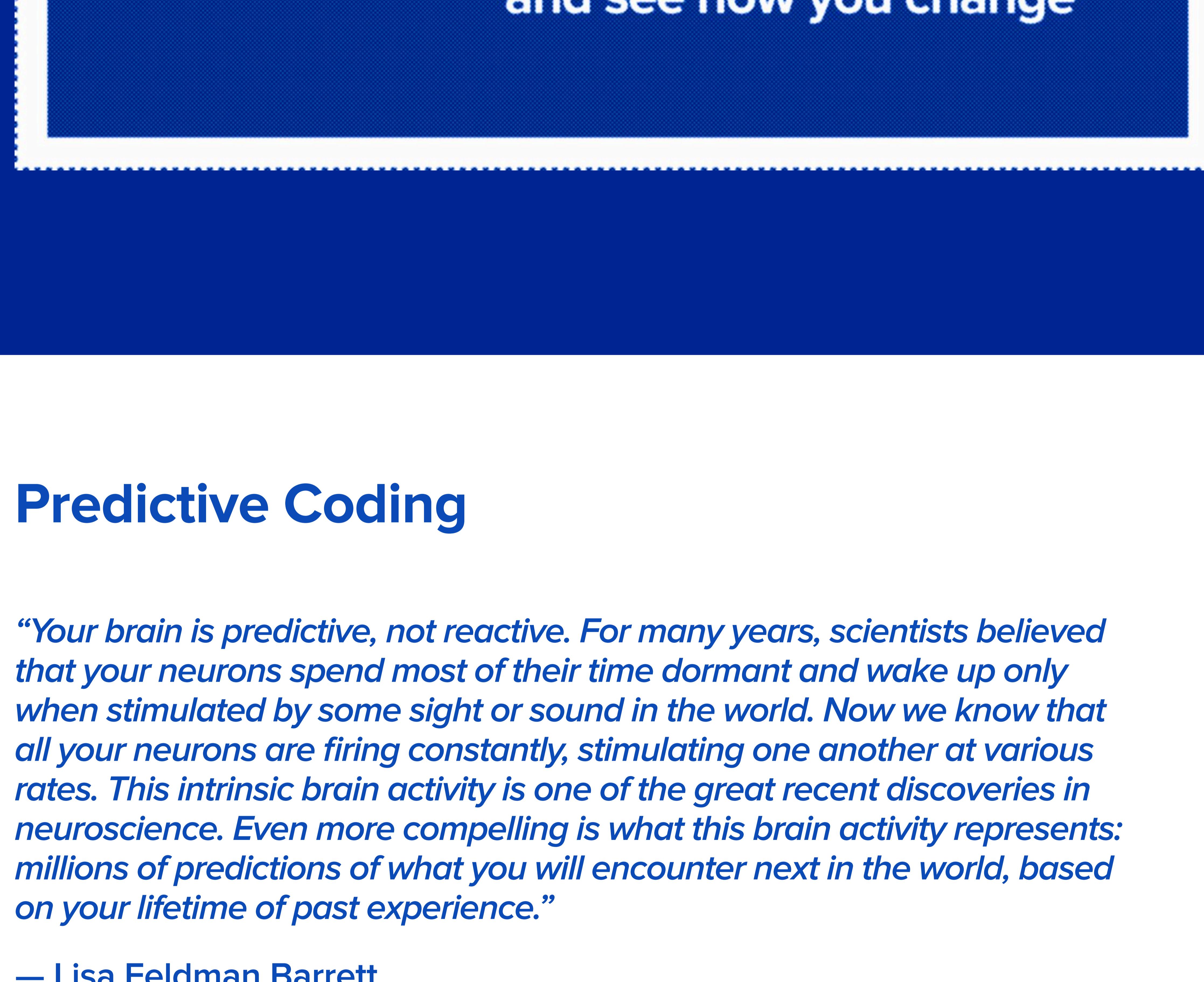
stay with the brief confusion → this is the opening, the fold itself

04 / RECODE

ask: *what else could this be?* → let a few meanings coexist

05 / ANCHOR

breathe → picture the moment slightly changed → feel it settle inside you



Predictive Coding

"Your brain is predictive, not reactive. For many years, scientists believed that your neurons spend most of their time dormant and wake up only when stimulated by some sight or sound in the world. Now we know that all your neurons are firing constantly, stimulating one another at various rates. This intrinsic brain activity is one of the great recent discoveries in neuroscience. Even more compelling is what this brain activity represents: millions of predictions of what you will encounter next in the world, based on your lifetime of past experience."

— Lisa Feldman Barrett

<https://www.edge.org/response-detail/26707>

The Plasticity Window

What we perceive is not raw sensory data but a **fusion of predictions and incoming signals** — a best guess about what's happening.

When something unexpected happens, the brain's prediction error spikes. At first, this feels like **uncertainty or disorientation** — but it's also the key moment of **plasticity**.

- ✿ If the system can tolerate the ambiguity, it **updates its internal model**, forming new patterns of expectation
- ✿ If not, it may **resist change**, trying to reinterpret the new input through old frameworks

What happens in the moment between sensing and naming?



Adaptability = Prediction-Error Tolerance

Predictive processing research shows:

- The brain only updates its internal models when a strong enough prediction error occurs
- Highly adaptable individuals tolerate prediction error without shutting down or defending old assumptions

This explains:

- why some teams collapse under uncertainty
- why others recalibrate quickly
- why psychological safety directly increases adaptive capacity

Conclusion:

Adaptability is a cognitive skill, not a personality trait.

Teams with high cognitive flexibility make decisions 25–40% faster and recover from errors more effectively. At the individual level, adaptability correlates with prediction-error tolerance — the ability to update mental models without shutting down when reality contradicts expectations.

This means adaptability is **designable**: it emerges where psychological safety reduces threat, where reflection rituals create stable learning loops, and where environments support rapid reframing.

if NOT CHANGE
then MOVEMENT

Self-As-Process



The “self is flexibly various”, “it is the system of responses”, “[it] is the contact boundary at work, its activity is forming figure and ground.”

Perls, F. S., Hefferline, R. F., & Goodman, P. (1951). Gestalt Therapy: Excitement and Growth in the Human Personality. New York: Julian Press, p. 284.

There is no previously existing ‘I’ to do the experiencing. The only self that exists is the one in the process of contacting the environment.

Implications:

- Identity is fluid, not fixed
- Change happens at the boundary of contact
- Resistance emerges when we cling to outdated self-concepts
- Growth requires letting the old self dissolve

IN SYNC

Mindshift is not a destination; it is an ongoing stance: the moment you realise your perception is editable — and even within all constraints — the future stops being something that happens to you and becomes something you can soft engineer.

What we call change is often nothing more than perception learning to move.

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