BoardSource Leadership Forum 2014
Using Design Thinking to Enhance Your Organization's Impact

Theresa Reid, PhD

B|L|F|14
BOARDSOURCE LEADERSHIP FORUM

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Consulting

Welcome!

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Intro: Workshop Structure

Introduction (now) (3.5 minutes)

Part I (15 minutes): Introduction to six steps of design thinking

Part II (40 minutes): Practice in first two steps of design thinking

Part III (15 minutes): Review pre-design work

Closing (1.5 minutes)

Intro: Learning Outcomes

At the end of this session, you will:

- Be able to answer the question, "What is design thinking?" better when than when you walked in the door.

- Have begun to consider how you might use design thinking in your own organization.

- Have learned by practicing the first two steps.

Intro: Takeaways

- "Empathy notes" from a partner about something that's troubling you at work.

- A draft statement of the "design challenge" developed by your partner in response to your thoughts.
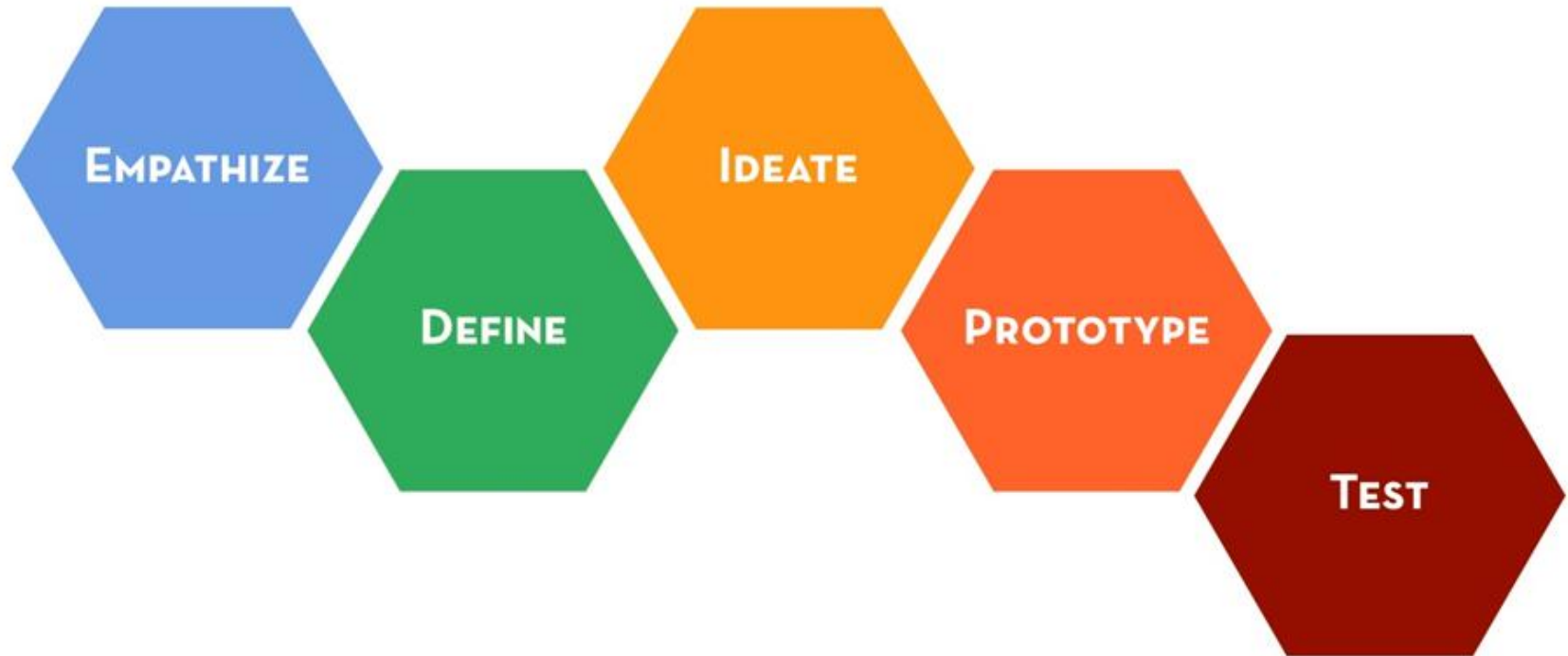
Part I

What is design thinking?

Part I

What is design thinking?

Design thinking is a six-stage, team-based process of product or program development rooted in **empathy** and characterized by **creative collaboration** and **rapid experimentation** and **revision.**
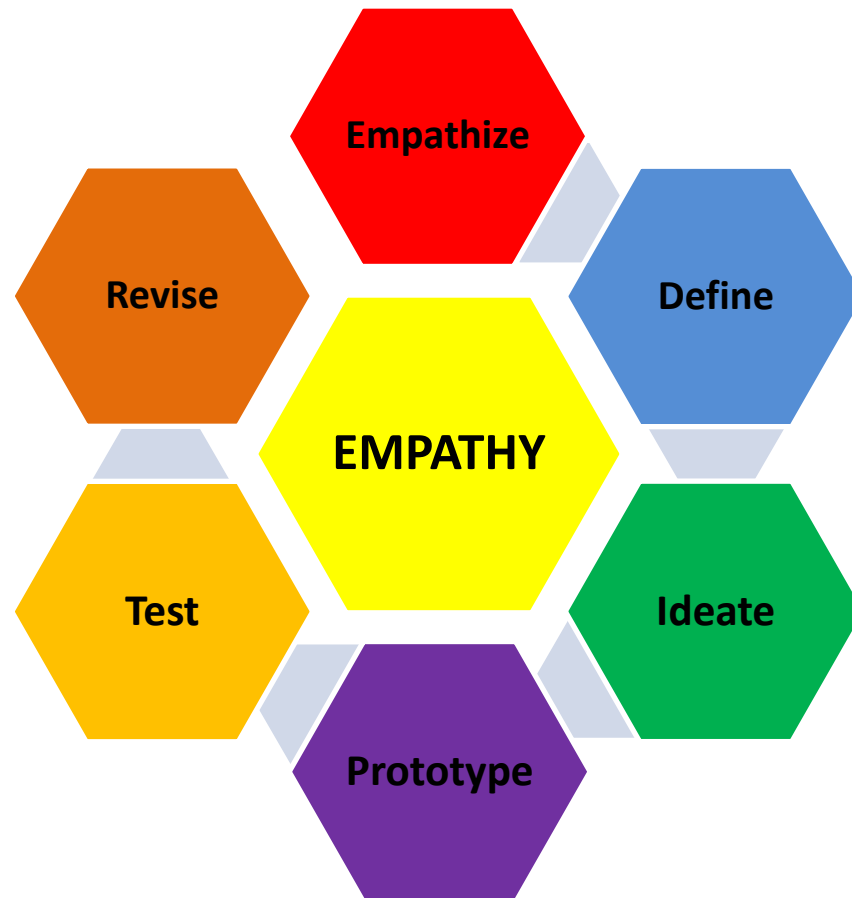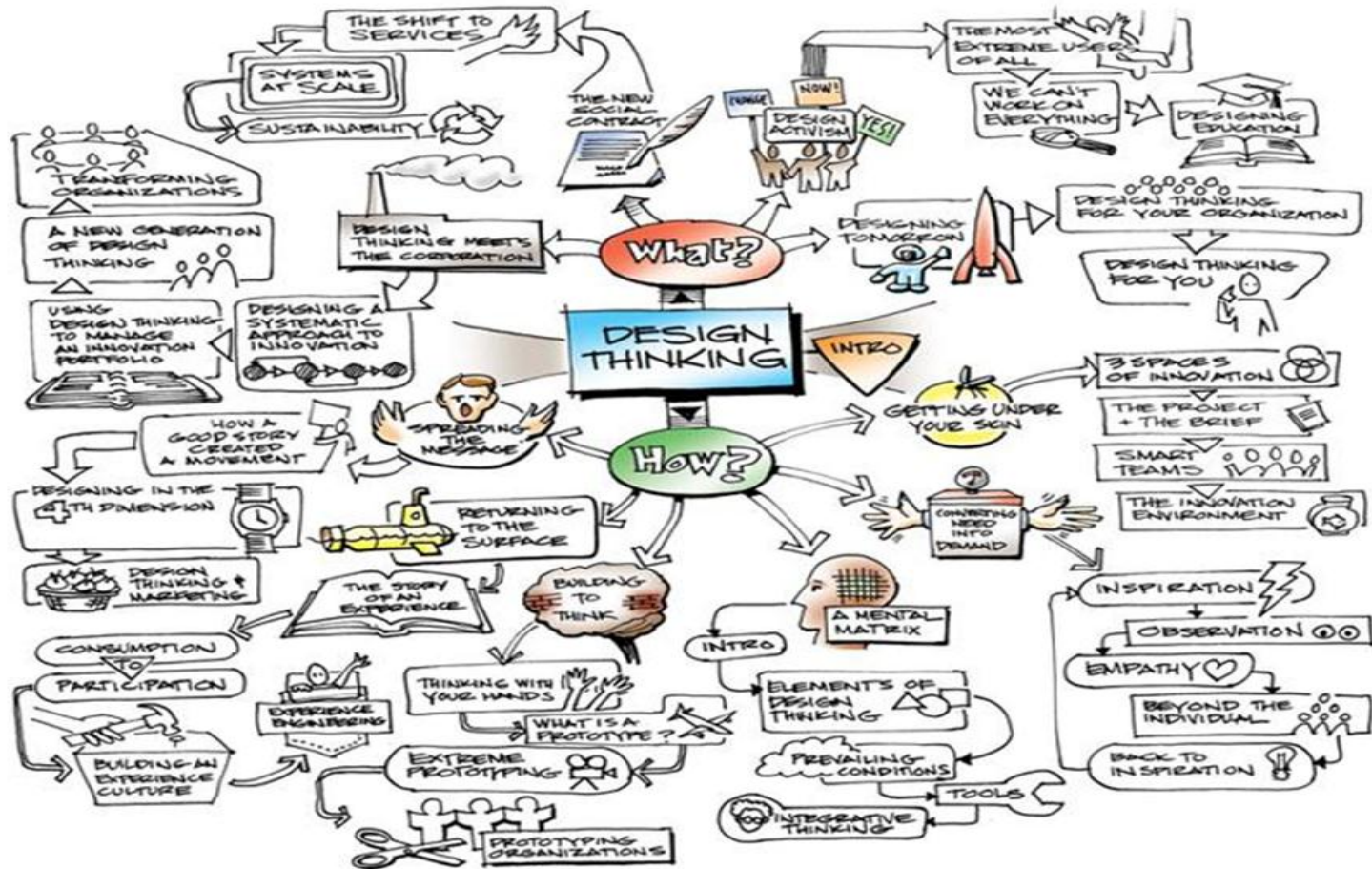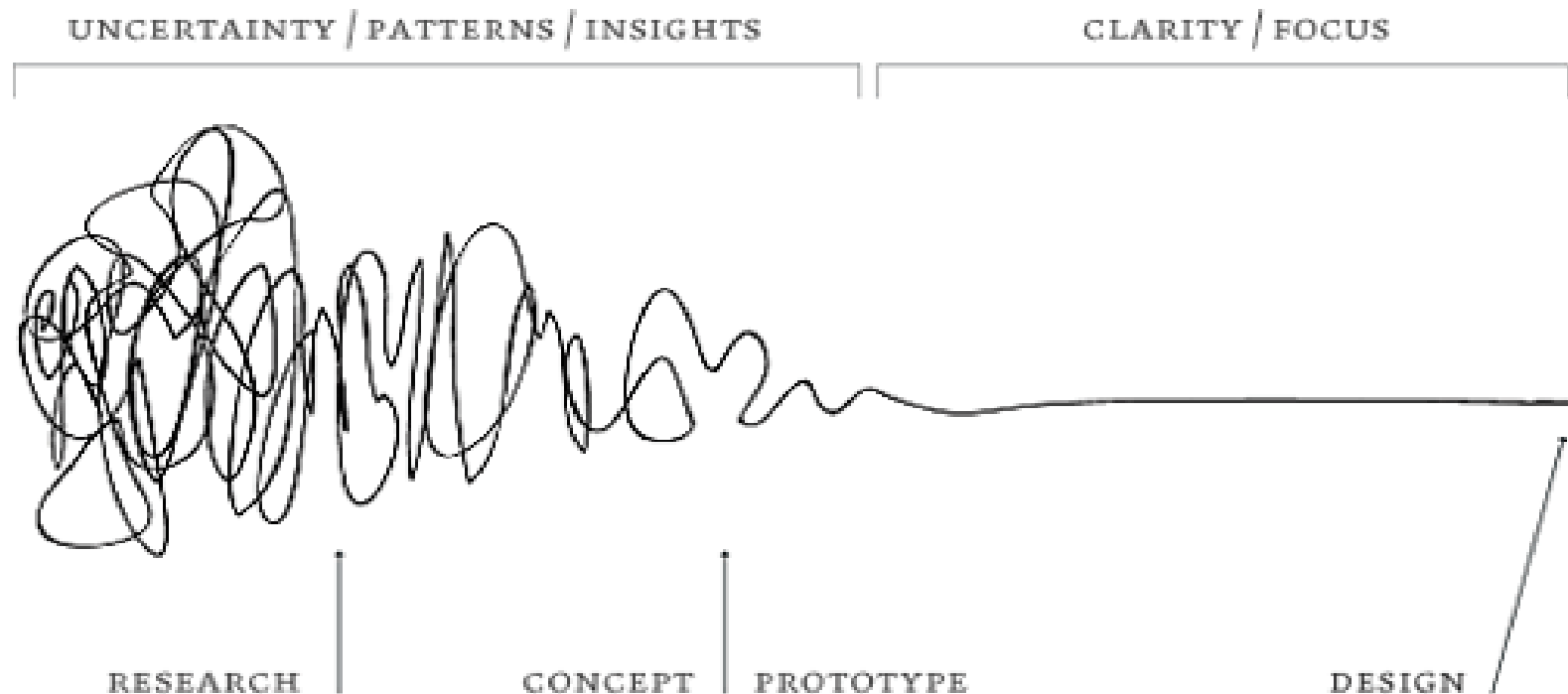
Stanford "dSchool" Version dschool.stanford.edu

Six Stages of Design Thinking

Experience of Design Thinking

Experience of Design Thinking

UNCERTAINTY / PATTERNS / INSIGHTS   CLARITY / FOCUS

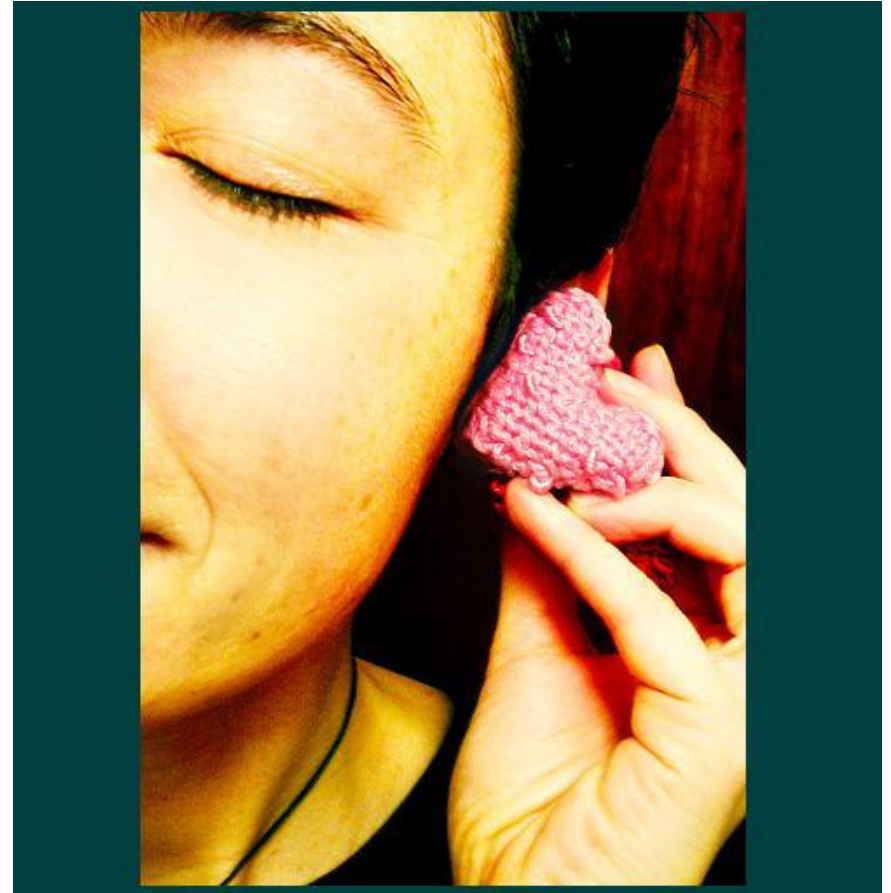RESEARCH   CONCEPT | PROTOTYPE   DESIGN

Caveat Emptor

DESIGN THINKING DOES NOT GUARANTEE SUCCESS

Stage 1: Empathize

EMPATHY is the foundation and touchstone of design thinking.

Most design flaws result from a failure of empathy with the lived experience of the end user.
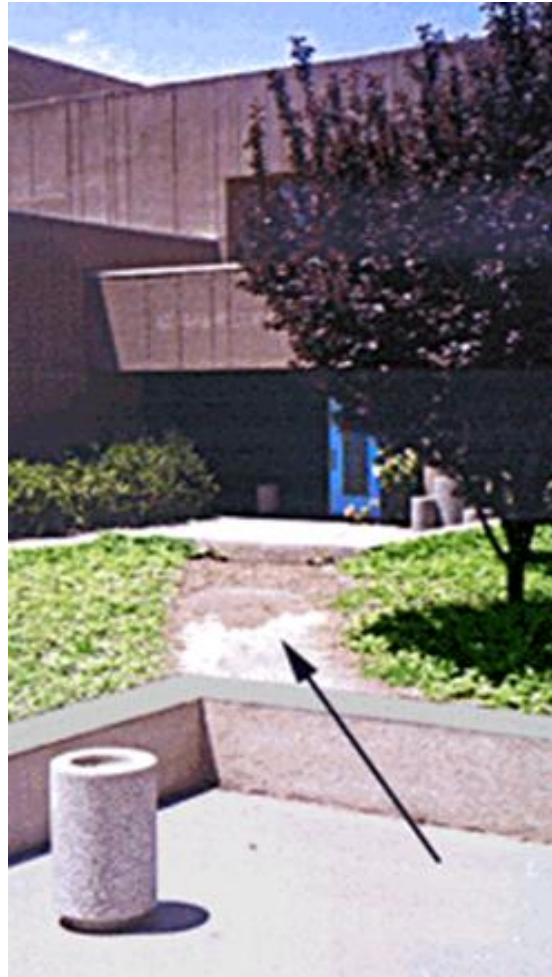
Empathy Failure #1

Empathy Failure #2

Empathy Failure #3

Empathy Failure #4

Empathy Failure #5

Empathy Failure #6

Empathy Failure #6, continued

Our Responsibility

Mid-century management guru Edwards Demming:

"A bad system will defeat a good person every time."

"First, do no harm." = Don't create bad systems.

Empathy Failure #7

Empathy Failure #7, retracted

Stage 1: Empathize

Empathizing means getting out of your office and interacting with end users, living in their shoes, *before* you begin designing programs, and throughout the process to make sure you're on the right track.

Stage 1: Tools for Empathy

- Interviews (individual and group).
- Observation / immersion. You're not looking for what they think they want – you're looking for what they need, based on what they do.
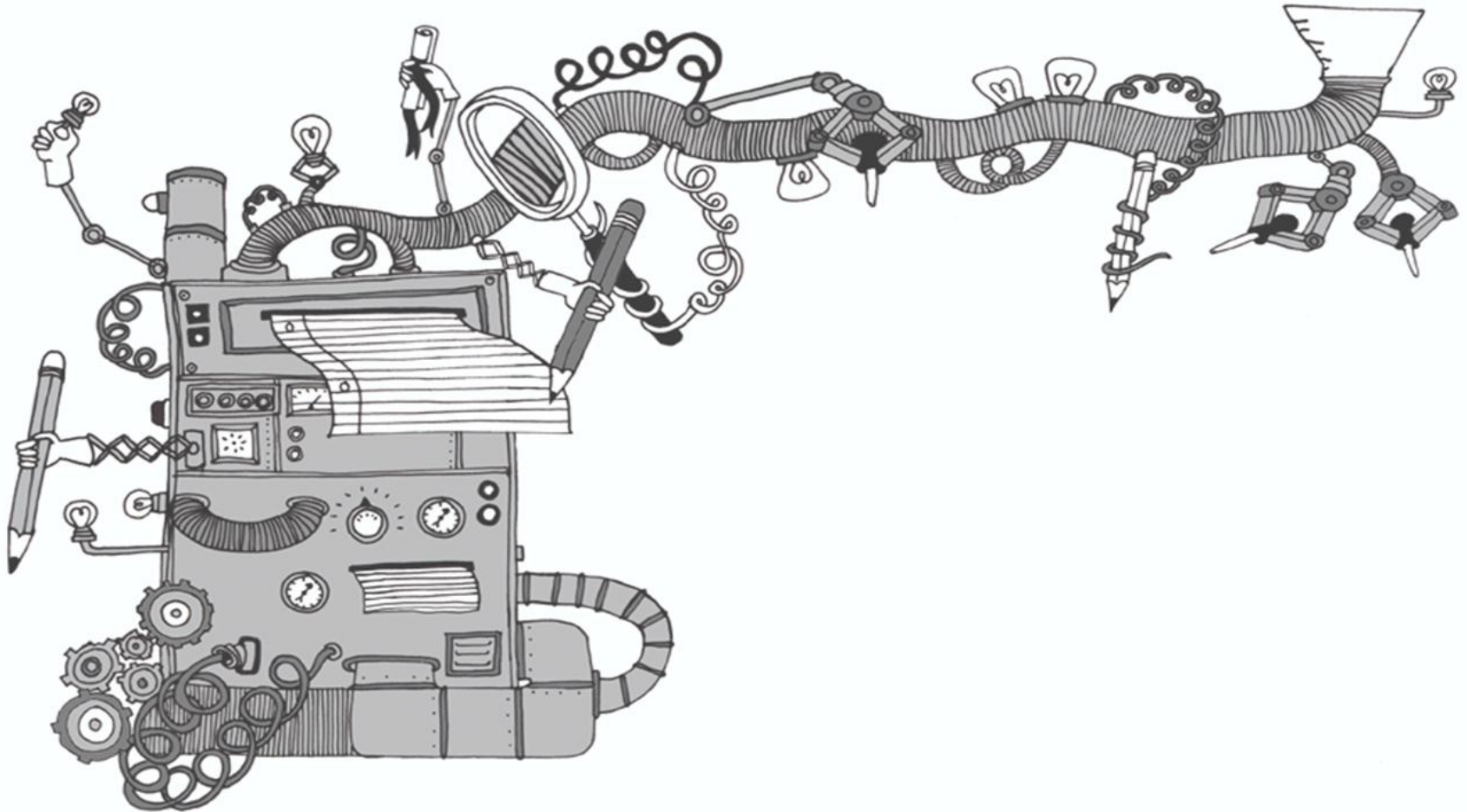
Stage 1: Tools for Empathy

- Engaging with your own and others' programs as an end user.

- "Beginner's mind" – free yourself from expectations & assumptions.

- Careful recording (taking notes and photos, making sketches, video & audio recording).

Stage 2: Define

Stage 2: Define

Define the "design challenge."

Distill your team's empathy research findings to answer:

What need do we intend to address?

Steps to Definition

- Collect impressions & images.
- Pay close attention to emotions, motivation, context.
- Post.
- Cluster.

Steps to Definition

- Notice patterns.

- Identify themes.

- Note disjunctions and contradictions.

- Discuss.

- Draft.

Evaluate Your "Design Challenge"

Is it:

- Human-centered (articulating a human need, with emotions attached).
- Framed with an action verb such as "create," "adapt," "develop," or with a question: "How can we . . . ?"

Evaluate Your "Design Challenge"

Further, is it:

- Broad enough to discover areas of unexpected value.
  ~~"Build a ladder to scale the wall."~~
  ☺ "Devise a safe, affordable means for getting over obstacles."

- Narrow enough to be manageable .
  ~~"Create strategies for ending child abuse and its causes."~~
  ☺ "Devise easy ways for parents at risk of abusing their children to get the supports they need."

Stage 3: Ideate

Use a range of ideation strategies, including but not limited to **brainstorming,** to generate lots of possible solutions.

This stage is generative, outward-flowing, proliferating, creative.

Sources of Ideation Techniques

http://www.innovationmanagement.se/2013/05/30/the-7-all-time-greatest-ideation-techniques/

http://www.cloverleafinnovation.com/blog/10-strategies-for-bringing-structure-to-ideations/

http://www.technologyforge.net/enma/6020/6020Lectures/Ideation/ENMA291IdeationReferences/ENMA291IdeationTechniques.pdf
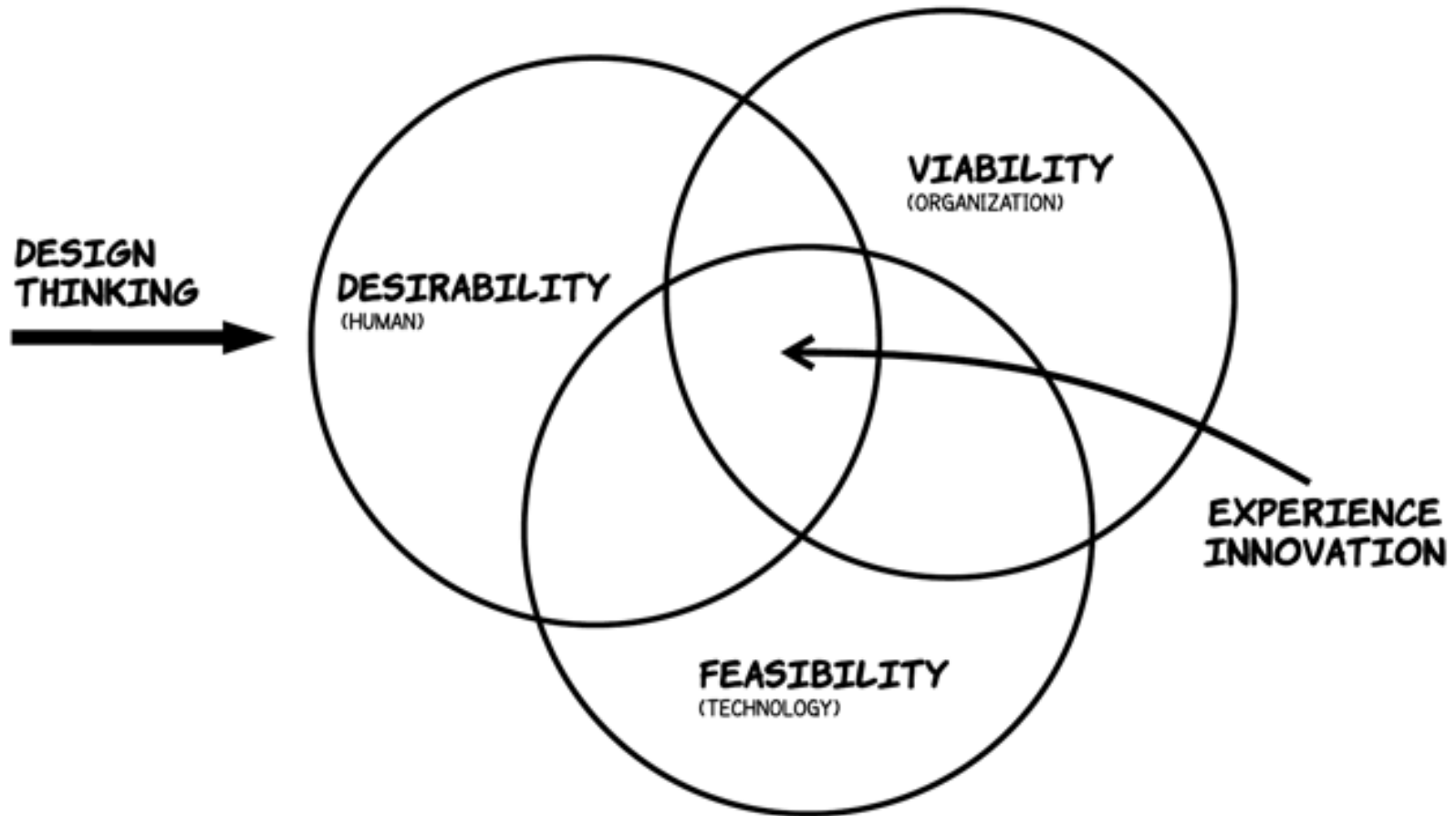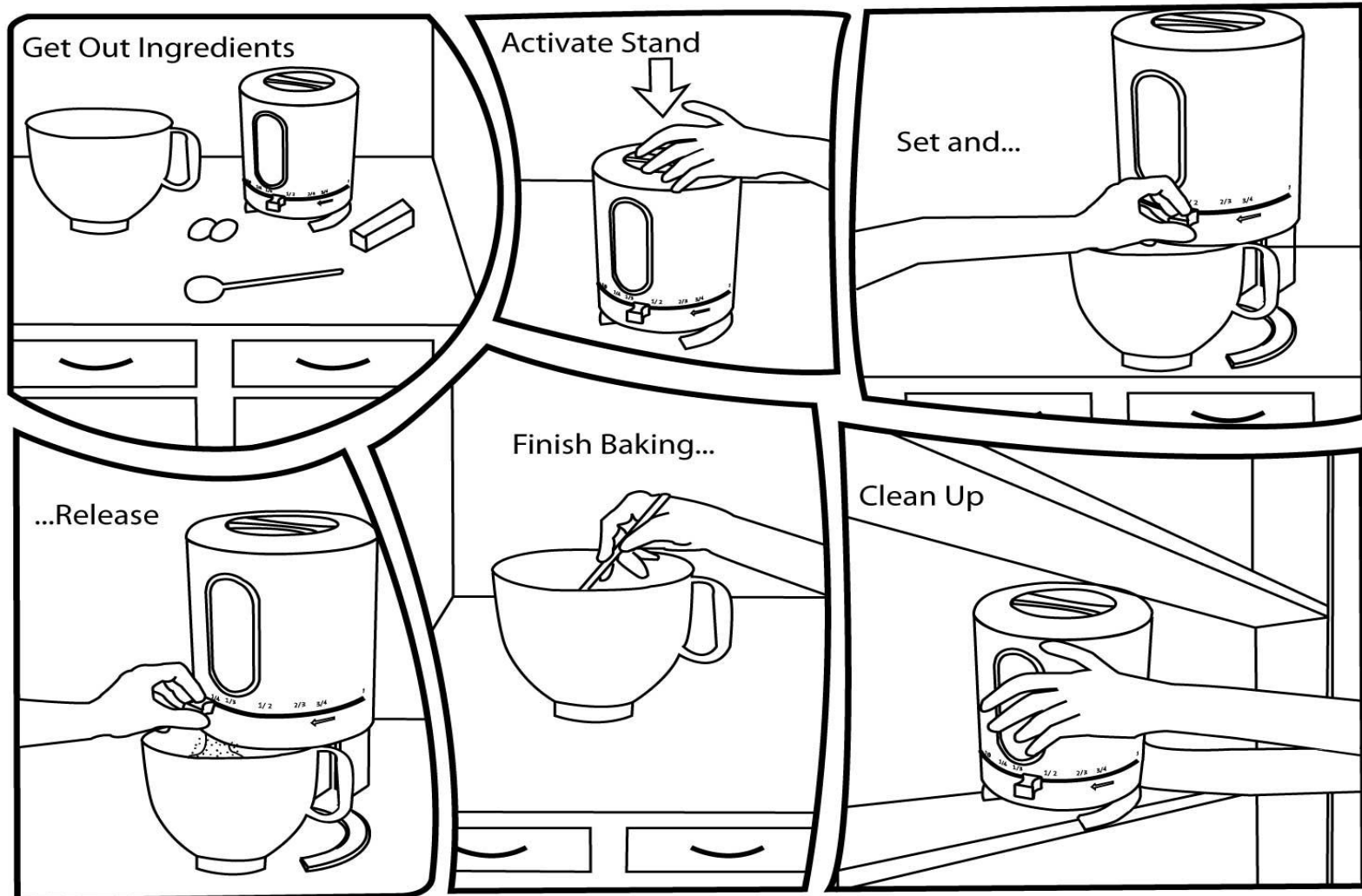
Stage 4: Prototype

Stage 4: Prototype

How to Prototype

- **Prototype to think. Build as a process of thinking.**

- Create a Minimum Viable Product (MVP): an early version of a product or service, containing only the features that need to be used and evaluated by early users.

- Using an MVP saves time & money by getting feedback from end users quickly.

A Prototype Can Be a Role-Play

A Prototype Can Be a Rough Model of a Prop for a Process

A Prototype Can Be a Cardboard Castle

A Prototype Can Be a Bodystorming Session

Key to Prototyping

Speed and openness.

Prototyping is *building as a process of thinking and learning*, not thinking, thinking, thinking . . . then building, building, building . . . then piloting.

Stages 5 & 6: Test & Revise

- Involve end users in evaluation of prototype, incorporate their feedback into revised prototype, test again with end users.

- Be willing to "pivot" – to significantly change direction if your prototyping and testing reveal that you need to reconceptualize the design challenge .

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Six Stages of Design Thinking
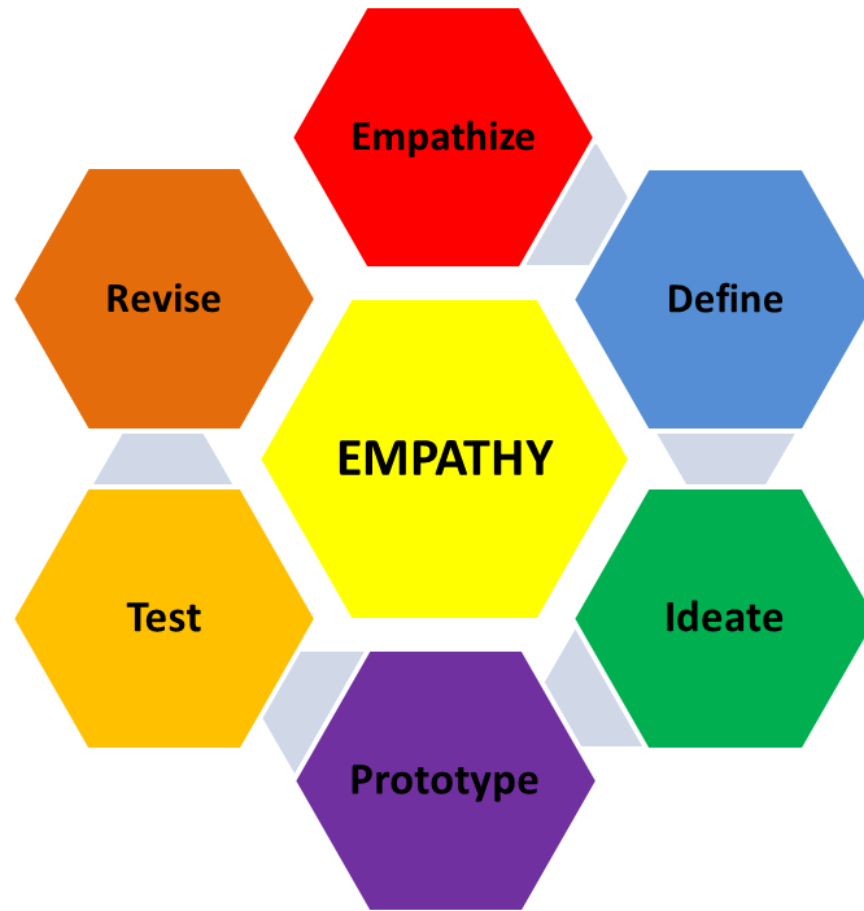
Part II: Practice

- Stand up.

- Find a stranger to partner with.

- Introduce yourselves.

- Give a genuine compliment.

(2 minutes)
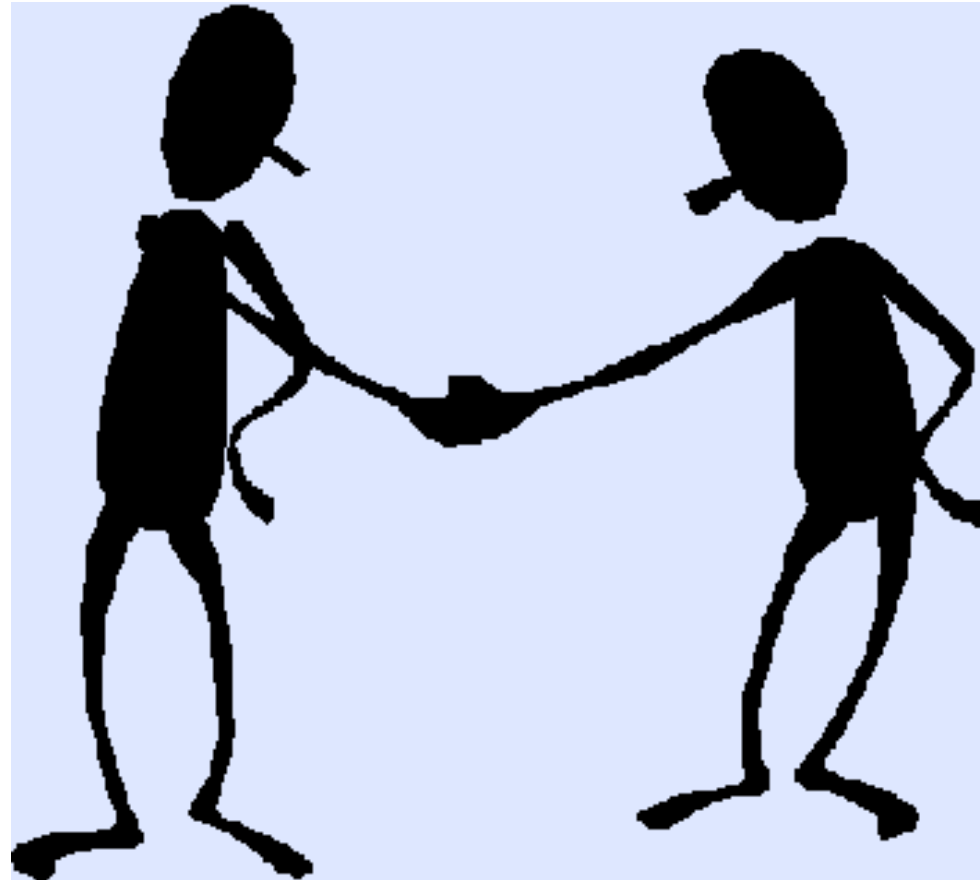
Part II: Practice
Goals

- **Empathy research**

Working in pairs, understand a work-related problem that's bothering your partner.

- **Definition practice**

Define it as a human-centered design challenge in a way that is clarifying for your partner.

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Part II: Practice
Stage 1: Empathy Research Ground Rules

- Complete confidentiality.

- **Interviewer:** Your goal is to understand your partner's thoughts, feelings, motivations, constraints, and needs. No judging.

- **Interviewees:** Give your interviewer something to work with. To the extent possible, allow yourself to be vulnerable. Be forthcoming, informative, frank.

- Take notes to share with your partner, but prioritize listening.

Part II: Practice
Stage 1: Empathy Research

- Ask questions that encourage stories: "Tell me about the last time you …"

- Why? How? What if? When?

- Allow for silence.

- Ask naïve questions.

- Ask questions neutrally. "What do you think?" vs. "Don't you think?"

Part II: Practice
Stage 1: Empathy Research

Some options:

What is bothering you at work right now? Why?

Tell me about the last time you saw it in action. How did you react? Others? Why?

What worries you? What part is in your control? What is not in your control?

What do you most want? What do you fear? Why?

Part II: Practice Empathy Research

1st round:

4 minutes each

2nd round:

2 minutes each
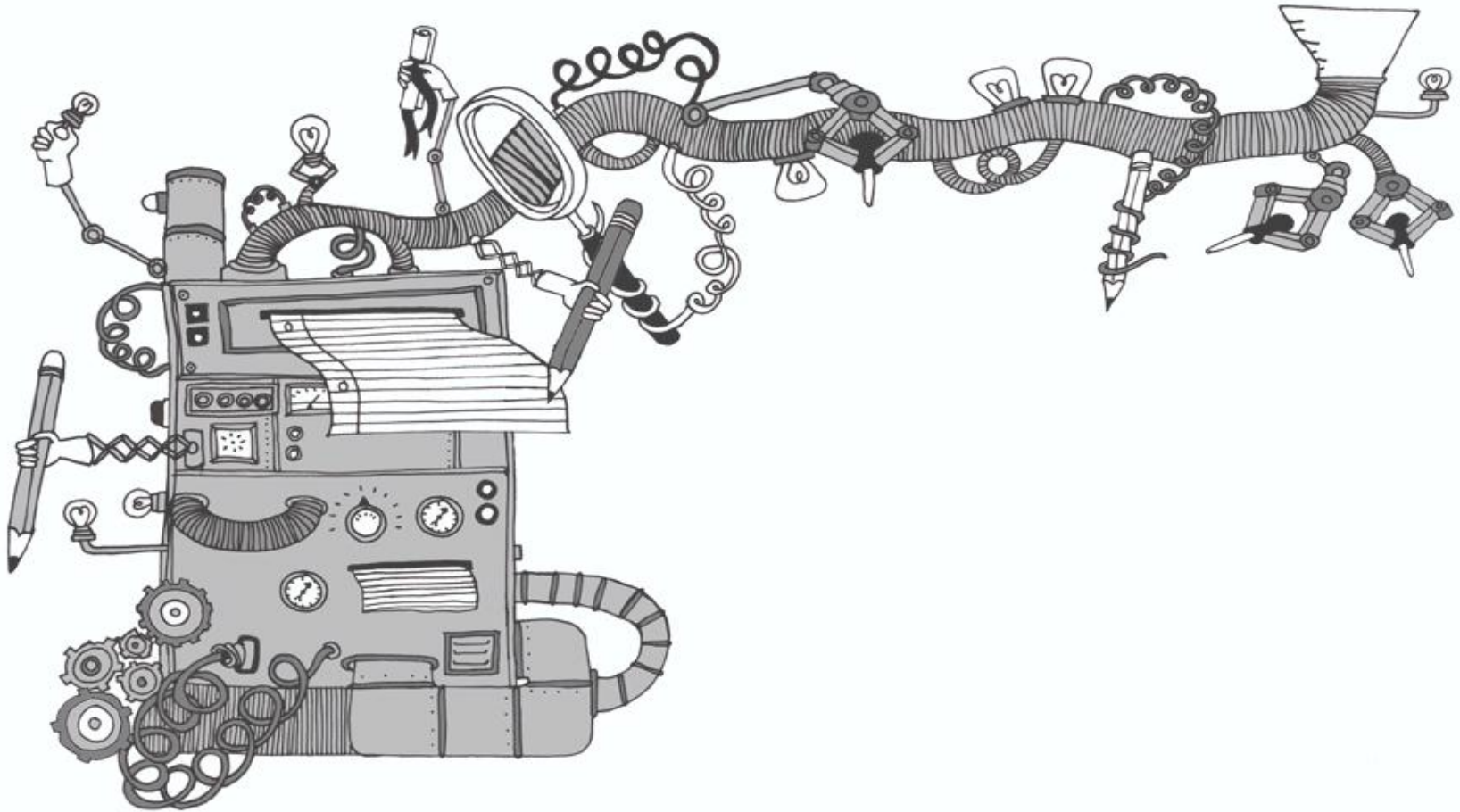
Part II: Practice
Stage 2: Define

What is the "design challenge"?

Define

A useful format for drafting design challenges:

[USER]

needs

[USER'S NEED]

because

[SURPRISING INSIGHT DERIVED FROM EMPATHY RESEARCH].

Part II: Practice
Stage 2: Define

MINIMUM EMPATHY

A teenage girl **needs** more nutritious food **because** vitamins are essential to good health.

Poor villagers **need** to adopt savings accounts early in life **because** otherwise they'll be impoverished in old age.

EMPATHIC

A teenage girl with a bleak outlook **needs** to feel more socially accepted when eating healthy food, **because** in her world a social risk is more dangerous than a health risk.

Poor villagers **need** an attractive, easy, socially approved way to create a financial safety net for their old age **because** they believe that only God will determine their future .

Part II: Practice Define

MINIMUM EMPATHY

Entities that maintain public restrooms **need** restroom designs that will eliminate graffiti **because** removing it is a high recurring cost that is passed on to the public.

Carol **needs** a way to talk with her Board president **because** her Board president is frightening.

EMPATHIC

People who deface public restrooms with graffiti **need** alternate modes of communication that are not costly to the public **because** they see bathroom graffiti as a right of self-expression.

Carol **needs** more strategies for engaging her Board as equals **because** Carol's overbearing father has made her chronically intimidated by authority.
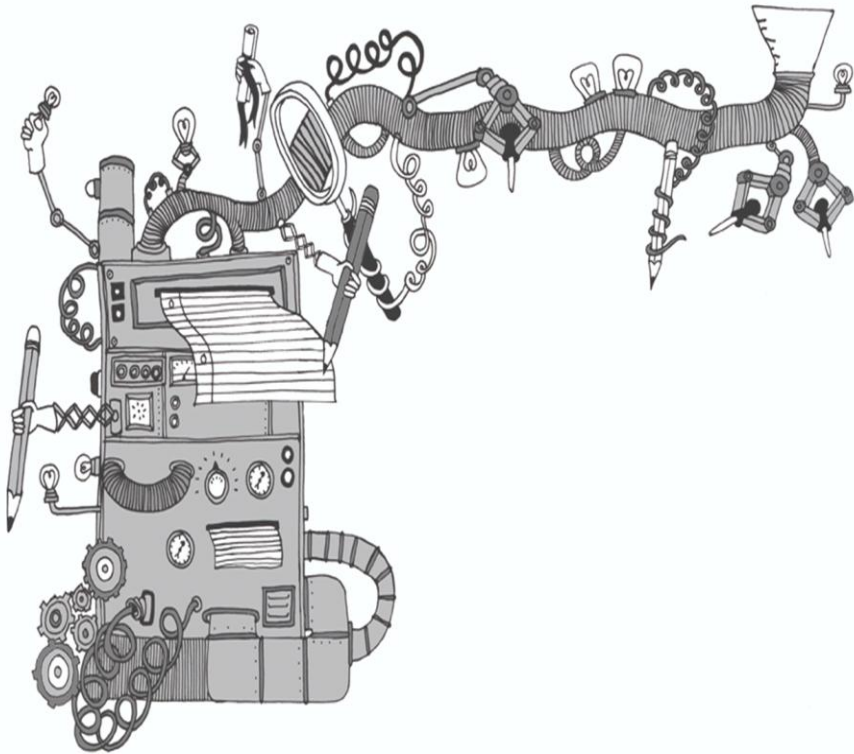
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Part II: Practice
Define

To demonstrate empathy, your statement should be

- Human-centered: based on your partner's needs.

- Responsive to your partner's emotions, motivation, context, & constraints.

- Attainable but not prescribed.

What is your partner's "design challenge?"

- 5 minutes, draft alone

- 6 minutes discuss & revise

Part II: Practice Debrief

- Examples of design challenges.

- Questions/comments about difficulties or pleasant surprises in process.

Part II: Practice
Looking Ahead

Quick review of next stages:

- Stage 3: Ideation

- Stage 4: Prototype

- Stages 5 & 6: Test & Revise & Test and Revise . . . .

Part III: Pre-Design Work

Questions to answer before you start:

- How long will the design-thinking process take?

- What are the constraints on the solution?

- Who should be on the design team?

- Where, how, with whom will we do our empathy research?

- What other tools will we need?

Part III: Pre-design Work
How long will this take?

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How long will this take?

- To answer this question, define your scope.

- The time you spend will depend on your resources, needs, and urgency.
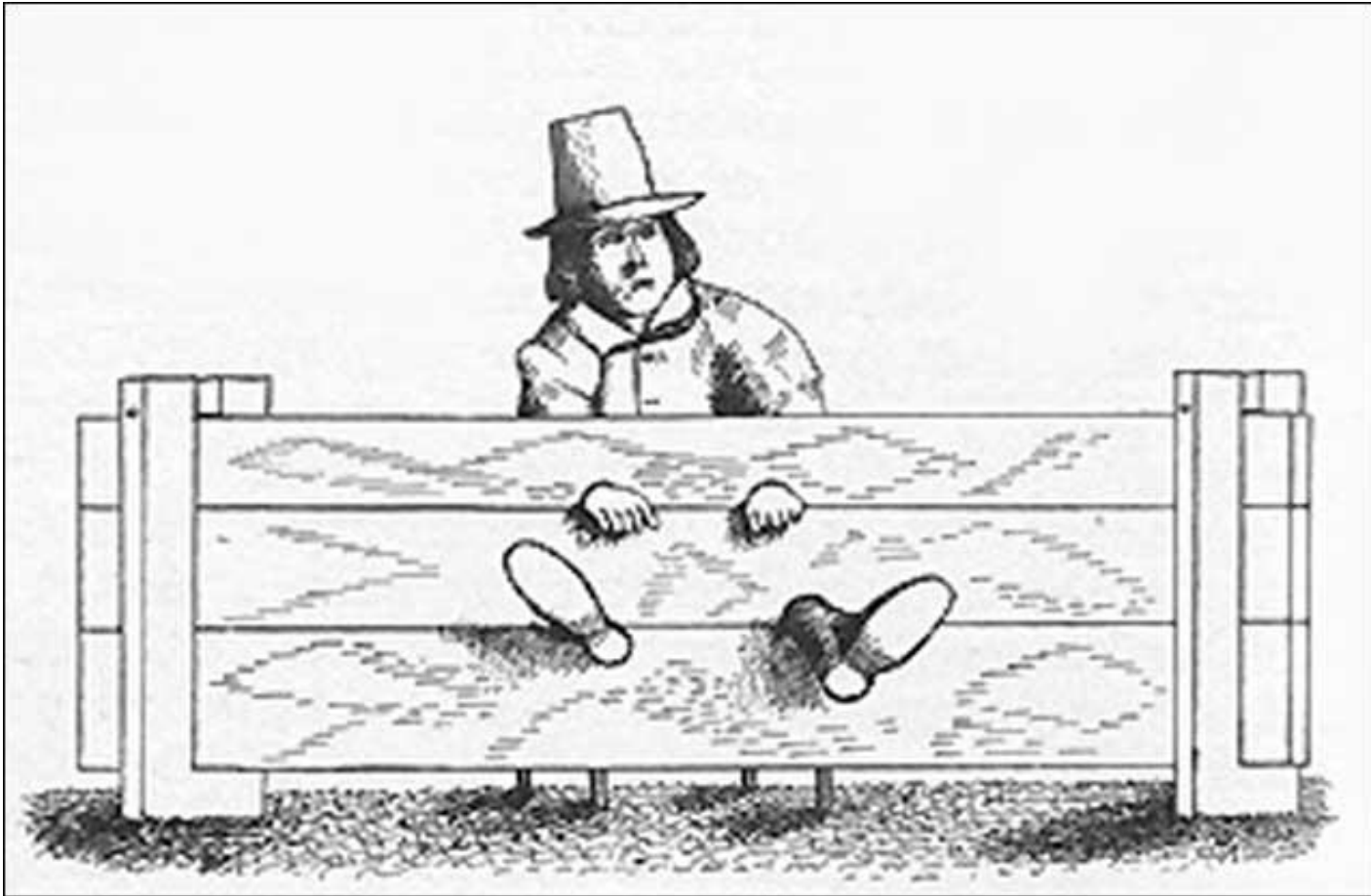
Part III: Pre-design Work
How long will this take?

Develop a timeline.

- Time allocated for each step will be determined by scope of the problem and total time and resources available.

- Everyone needs to know when the process ends, in order to maintain productivity, focus, urgency.

Part III: Pre-design Work
Clarify Constraints

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Clarify Constraints

It is unrealistic to say "Think outside the box!" when very real constraints will determine what is and is not possible. For instance:

- What are the constraints on usable design solutions?

- What level of authority does the design team have?

- To whom does it report, when, and with what data?

- What is the decision-making process for implementation?

Part III: Pre-design Work
Pick the right team.

- 5 – 8 people, including a facilitator.

- Diverse along the lines of gender, ethnicity, age, expertise, and position in the organization.

Part III: Pre-design Work
Pick the Right Team

Every member of the team needs to have following assets:

- Capacity for empathy and creative thinking.

- Interest in the design process.

- The ability to drop preconceived notions and think afresh about familiar topics (Zen practice, "beginner's mind").

- Commitment to the organization.

- Time to dedicate to the design project – time that needs to be budgeted for and granted by management.

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Part III: Pre-design Work Plan Ahead

Build in time for tasks such as

- Planning your empathy research methods.

- Selecting, recruiting, and scheduling interviewees and locations for observation.

- Researching and selecting idea-generation techniques .

- Securing a dedicated space for the design team to use throughout the process.

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Closing

When is design thinking useful?

- For human-centered problems.

- Value creation, delivery, and capture.

- When you feel stuck. When your ordinary processes aren't working. When you fear you aren't getting the bang for your buck. When effectiveness is falling off.

Conclusion

Design thinking is not magic, but it can be a valuable new tool for driving your organization to well-informed, empathic, and effective activities.

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Resources

Tim Brown, "Design Thinking," in *Harvard Business Review:*
http://www.ideo.com/images/uploads/news/pdfs/IDEO_HBR_Design_Thinking.pdf

Tim Brown, "What does design thinking feel like?"
http://designthinking.ideo.com/?p=51/#content

IDEO, the Human-Centered Design Toolkit,
http://www.ideo.com/work/human-centered-design-toolkit/

Stanford University dSchool "Bootcamp Bootleg":
http://dschool.stanford.edu/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/METHODCARDS-v3-slim.pdf

Thank You!

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