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For the Better Good: The Role of Creativity in Making a Difference

From accidental to intentional creativity through deliberate practice

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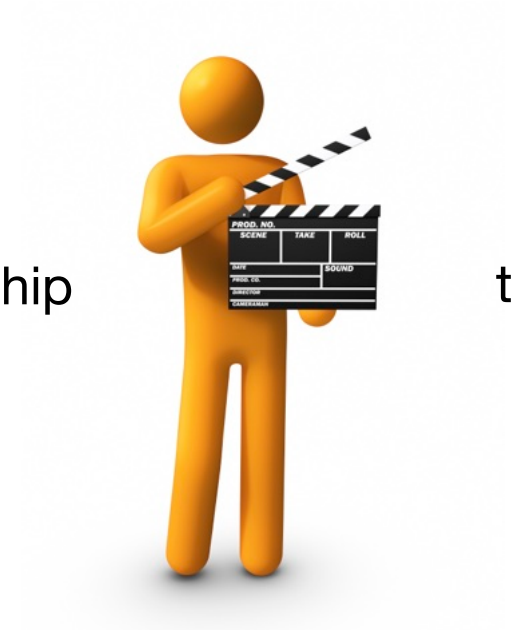
Organizing Creativity and the Art of Possibility in 2026

Do/Discuss

UPBI

training-based entrepreneurship



Today

training-based creativity

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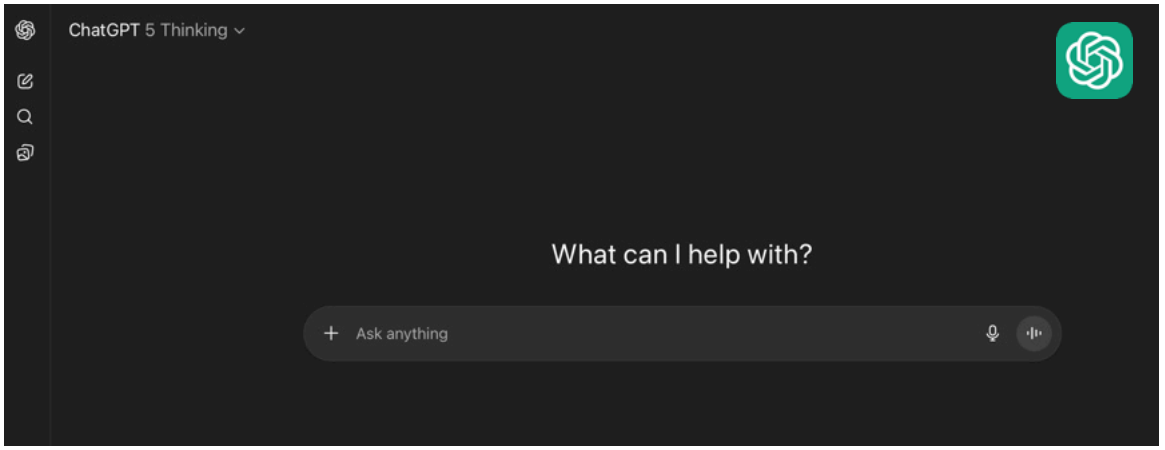
The Creativity Challenge Then & Now



Assignment: In this class you need an idea for a new ( ) venture!



In a world of infinite information…

In a world of one-click creativity…

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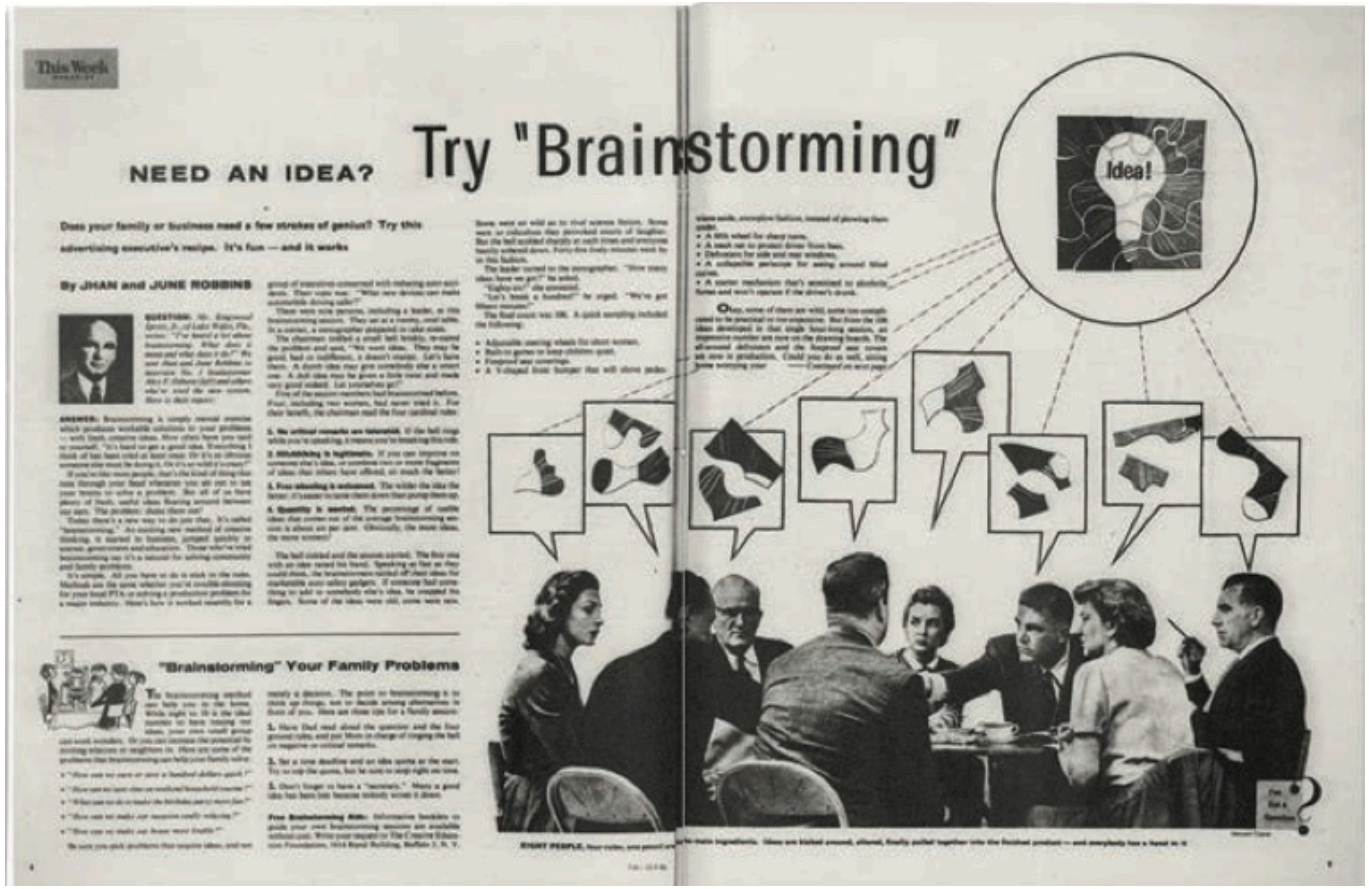
Being "Creative" is a new human paradigm

- The word **creative** as a term to describe a human ability didn't appear until 1875
- Before 1950, there were zero books, research, or essays on creativity
- 1960's brought on the creativity generation



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Creativity as a Practice



1960 - Dupont - Think Up (Brainstorming) 2-3 weeks

Creative thinking occurs when a problem solver invents a novel solution to a problem. - J.P. Guilford (1950)

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Classical Creativity

Step 1: Gather new materials

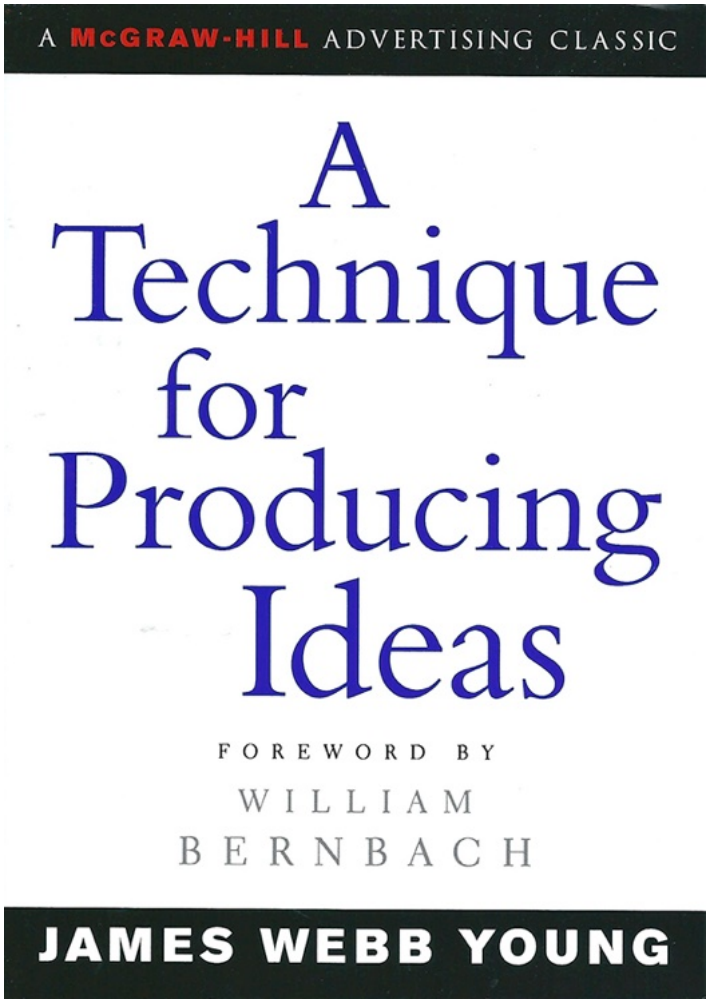
Step 2: Digest these materials

Step 3: Incubation

Step 4: Collect new A-ha! insights

Step 5: Validate your ideas

Step 3: Intentional Incubation



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Creativity as a Practice



1960 - Dupont - Think Up (Brainstorming) 2-3 weeks

Creative thinking occurs when a problem solver invents a novel solution to a problem. - J.P. Guilford (1950)



1999 - IDEO - Deep Dive - Human Centered Design 2-3 days

Creativity is the interaction among aptitude, **process**, and environment by which an individual or group produces a perceptible product that is both **novel** and **useful** as defined within a social context. - J.Plucker (2001)



2023 - Student - AI-generated Ideas 2-3 minutes

Creativity is all about the **flow** of ideas, using your **imagination** and **trying** new things. - Penn State Career Center

Creativity is an idea probability game - superior outcomes

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Entrepreneurship Framework

Central to entrepreneurship is the notion that entrepreneurs *create* value.

What entrepreneurs think about:

The process of creating value by bringing together a unique combination of resources to pursue an opportunity.

Morris et al, 2002

Creative's Translation: The process of turning ideas into assets.

(transactional)



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Creativity Framework

Central to creativity is the notion of *novelty and utility*

What creatives think about:

The process of assembling choices by sense-giving a unique combination of stimuli to form an idea.

Mitchell, Smith, Stamp and Carlson, 2015



Training yourself to notice possibilities (building awareness)

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Creativity starts with a ?



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Curiosity for Ambiguity

be comfortable and curious in dealing with uncertainty, ambiguous situations, and unresolved problems

What do you see?



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This isn't a puzzle

Is this glass:

A. half-full

B. half-empty

C. 100% full



This is a data issue

Test Your Data

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Catalyzing Creative Collisions

Aha Moment

a point in time (experience) when one has a sudden insight or realization.



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What does ChatGPT see?

I want to ask you a quiz question, do you want to play?

Absolutely, I'm ready for your quiz question! What do you have for me?



What do you see in this picture?

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ChatGPT vs. Stamp



In the picture, there's a glass that appears to be half filled with water. Is there a specific question or topic you're thinking about in relation to this image?

Yes. Answer the following question: Is the glass in this picture A.) half full or B.) half empty?

The glass in the picture can be described as both A.) half full and B.) half empty, depending on the perspective one chooses to adopt. This often serves as a classic illustration of optimism (seeing the glass as half full) versus pessimism (seeing the glass as half empty). How would you describe it?

I see it as 100% full. Do you?

That's an interesting perspective! If you consider the glass as being 100% full—half with water and half with air—that's a thoughtful way to look at it, emphasizing that everything occupies space with some substance, even if it's invisible like air. It's a scientific and optimistic viewpoint, seeing full potential in every situation. What led you to see it this way?

I'm a scientist and I have an abundance of human curiosity.

What gets in the way of your creative thinking?



Your memory

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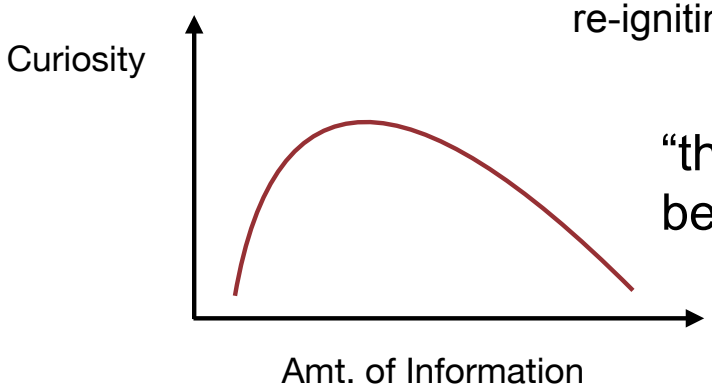
AI Pivots Creativity to _____ Skill Focus

dramatic impact in the learning bandwidth available for many students

Curiosity

re-igniting the essential capacity for curiosity



Information Gap Theory
(Loewenstein, 1994)

"the cognitive itch we feel when we perceive a gap between what we know and what we want to know"

Incuriosness is a habit!

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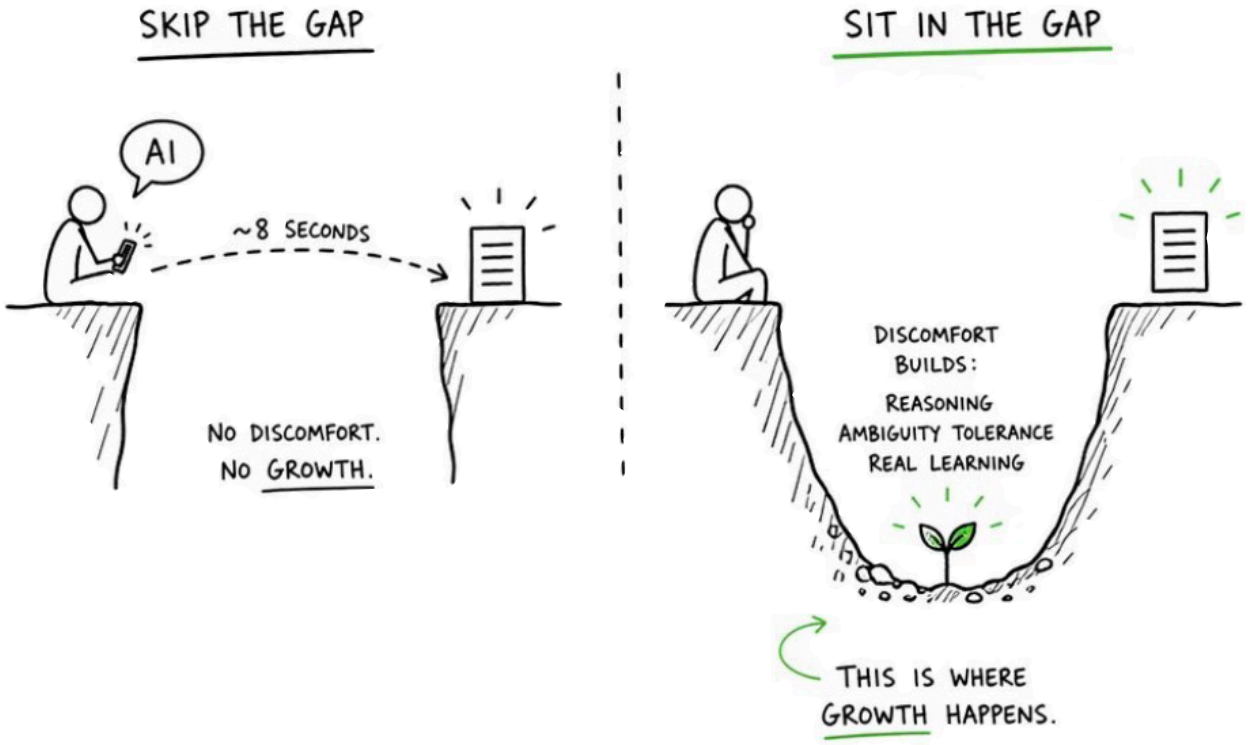
AI Usurps Creativity & Discovery Thinking



Discernment Skills

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The 5 Types of Curiosity Impacted by AI

"Creating an adventure as I go is much more appealing than a planned adventure."



Perceptual Curiosity

seek out new sensations or experiences



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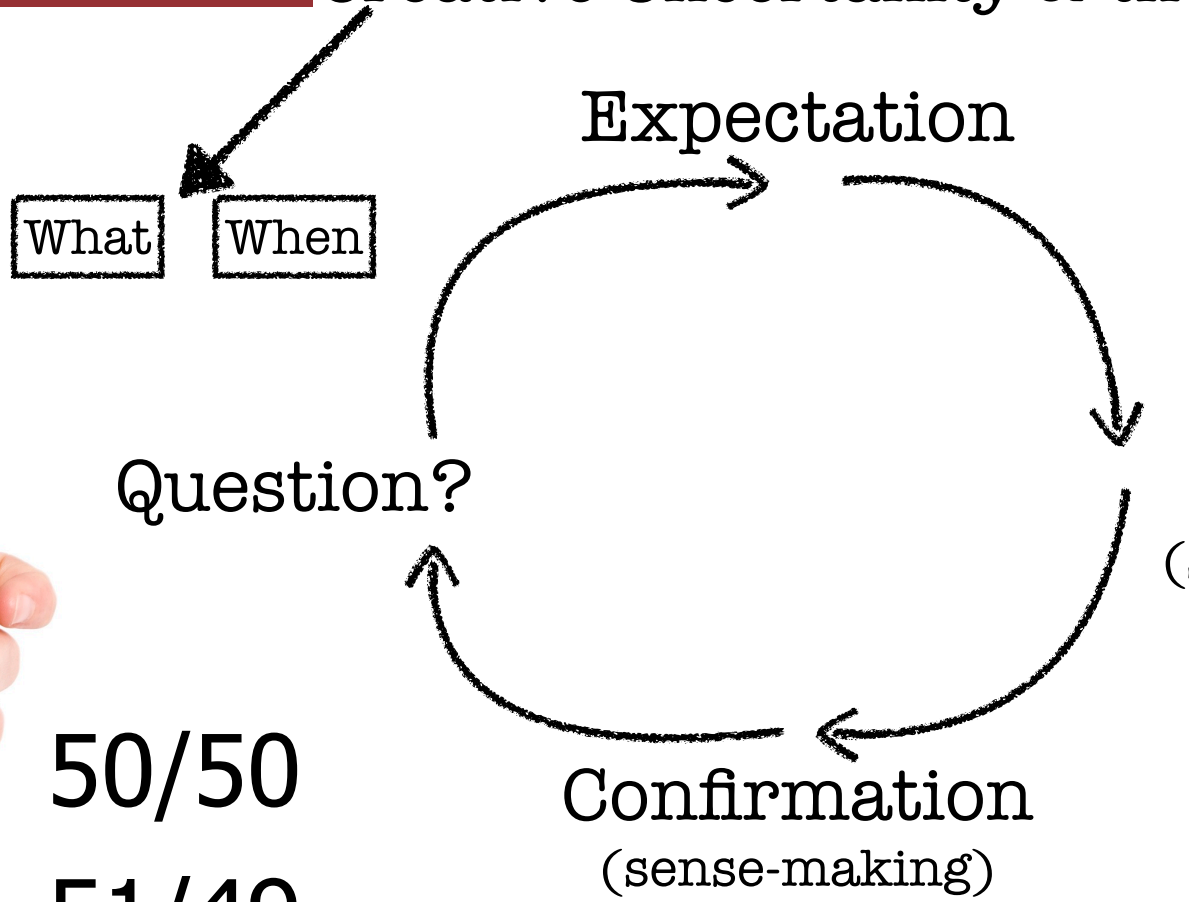
Creative Uncertainty & the Curiosity Cycle





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The 5 Types of Curiosity Impacted by AI

Curiosity for Ambiguity

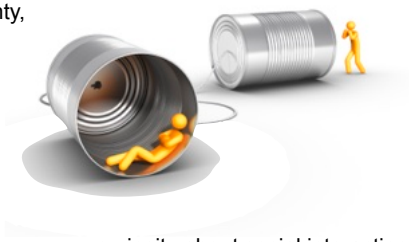


be comfortable and curious in dealing with uncertainty, ambiguous situations, and unresolved problems



Perceptual Curiosity

seek out new sensations or experiences



Social Curiosity

curiosity about social interactions, relationships, and dynamics among individuals or groups

Epistemic Curiosity



be motivated to acquire new knowledge and a willingness to invest effort in seeking information and understanding complex concepts

Empathic Curiosity



understand and appreciate others' feelings, perspectives, and experiences

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Can an entrepreneur be...
too creative?



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The Most Difficult Business Skill?

Recognizing a good idea when you see one.

Designing Better Decisions



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“There are no bad ideas”

THE PROVING GROUND

“I don’t want to cut my grass - I want tech to do it for me.”





as envisioned by ChatGPT

“Every idea deserves to exist, but not every idea deserves to be in a marketplace.”

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Ideas need opportunities

THE PROVING GROUND

"I don't want to cut my grass - I want tech to do it for me."



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What do creative entrepreneurs do?

Use a method of creating value by bringing together a unique set of resources in order to pursue an opportunity.

And use a method of assembling choices by sense-giving a unique combination of stmuli to form ideas.



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Ideas Are Creative Currency

Issues

Context

Connection

Consequence

People produce results!

Issues produce results. **People work the issues.**

People work the issues that produce results.

Issues arise from events



Issues are both problems & opportunities

Creativity is an idea probability game - produce more choices to achieve superior outcomes

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Skeet'r Gone!

Turn your irrigation system into wide-yard mosquito control—without the fog, hassle, or guesswork.

Skeet'r Gone! is a DIY mosquito-control kit that helps homeowners turn a new or existing irrigation system into a smarter, more convenient way to protect their yard. Instead of relying on noisy foggers, short-term sprays, or small-area plug-in devices, Skeet'r Gone! uses the reach of your irrigation setup to distribute mosquito-control concentrate more evenly across the outdoor areas where mosquitoes hide and linger. The result is broader coverage, easier treatment, and more confidence when it is time to enjoy your backyard.

Designed for homeowners who host family and friends, have kids and pets in the yard, and want a better answer than waiting for a lawn-care service—Skeet'r Gone! is built to be installed in 30 minutes or less.

The kit includes a controller, 1-gallon tank, tubing, PEX fittings, and a 3-way valve, plus a QR code for installation videos and app setup. The system works automatically with standard irrigation equipment, requires no pre-mixing of concentrate, and makes refills easy to order online or through the app. The ecologically and biologically friendly formula is designed to be safe for humans and pets, helping make mosquito control feel simpler, smarter, and easier to adopt.

Take back the backyard with Skeet'r Gone!

Product Format: Starter kit includes 1-gallon tank, 120V controller, tubing, PEX fittings, 3-way valve, QR-linked installation support, app connection, and 1 gallon of Skeet'r Gone! concentrate. Compatible with new or existing irrigation systems. Refill concentrate available in 1-gallon jugs.
Pricing: Starter kit: **$99.99** | 1-gallon concentrate refill: **$119.95**

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Curiosity leads to questions that lead to ideas...

now what?



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Generate Stimulus - Issues Map

#1



#2



#3



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What do you see?

Stimulus-Response Method



Step 1: Perceive

List 10 things you see in this picture

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What do you see?

Stimulus-Response Method

Prompt: I have a picture I want to share with you. List 20 things that you see in this image.

Here's a detailed breakdown of 20 things visible in this image:



1. A hand gripping the body of an airplane model.
2. The airplane appears to be a toy glider or model plane.
3. The airplane is yellow with red detailing on its tail fin.
4. The hand is holding the airplane at the bottom, near the tail section.
5. The wings of the airplane are wide and extend towards the camera.
6. The sky in the background is a vivid, cloudless blue.
7. The photograph has a slight grainy or vintage effect, likely due to the image processing or medium.
8. The sunlight is bright, casting shadows on the hand and airplane.
9. The nose of the airplane is pointed, indicating it's likely a glider type.
10. The wings have a rectangular shape with sharp edges.
11. The tail section of the airplane has a red stripe or design.
12. The fingers of the hand seem to be well-defined, as they are gripping firmly.
13. The shadows of the airplane's parts are cast onto its wings, particularly noticeable due to the sunlight.
14. The overall image seems to convey a sense of flight or freedom.
15. The horizon or lower part of the image suggests some distant landscape, though it is not clearly visible.
16. The image has a minimalistic composition, focusing mainly on the hand and the airplane.
17. The plane's cockpit appears to be small and simple, likely non-functional in this model.
18. The contrast between the blue sky and the yellow plane makes both elements stand out.
19. The position of the airplane suggests that the person holding it is about to launch it.
20. There is a white rectangular box or area in the bottom right corner of the image, possibly for adding text or a title.

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What do you see?

Stimulus-Response Method



Step 1: Perceive

List 10 things you see in this picture

List 10 imaginative, sensory, emotional, memory, story elements you see in this picture

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What do you see?

Stimulus-Response Method

Prompt: Let your mind's eye be creative, list 20 more things that you see in this image from any perspective you choose.

Let's dive into a more creative interpretation, using imaginative perspectives to add depth and meaning to what's seen:

1. A sense of childhood nostalgia – The simplicity of a hand-held toy airplane evokes memories of carefree summer days.
2. The anticipation of flight – The slight upward tilt of the plane suggests the excitement before the launch, a moment suspended in time.
3. A metaphor for dreams taking off – The plane, small in a vast blue sky, could symbolize ambitions ready to soar.
4. The warm, golden glow of the sun – The way the light hits the plane and hand gives a feeling of warmth, like the late afternoon sun.
5. The hand of creativity – The act of holding and launching the plane symbolizes someone shaping or directing their ideas into the world.
6. A representation of human ingenuity – Even in its simplicity, the plane reflects mankind's desire to replicate nature, to defy gravity and touch the sky.
7. The blue sky as infinite possibility – The vastness of the sky could symbolize the endless opportunities and unknowns that lie ahead.
8. A gentle breeze – Though unseen, one could imagine a light breeze, perfect for gliding a paper or wooden plane on a long, effortless flight.
9. A snapshot of freedom – The scene captures a brief moment that feels liberated, with the open sky and the plane as a vessel of freedom.
10. The contrast between nature and invention – The natural expanse of the sky meets the human-made toy plane, showing the intersection of the organic and the artificial.
11. The feeling of curiosity and wonder – Like a child holding the plane, the image stirs curiosity about where the plane will go, much like life's uncertainties.
12. The simplicity of joy – There's no complexity, just pure, simple joy found in a playful interaction with a toy.
13. A rite of passage – The plane may represent the symbolic journey of growing up, launching from the safe ground into the unknown skies.
14. The fleeting nature of moments – The frozen moment suggests how quickly time can pass, much like the plane that will soon leave the hand.
15. Hands of experience – The hand could represent the hand of an adult, reliving a cherished memory from their youth.
16. Connection to the wind – Though not visible, one can imagine the feeling of air on the skin, a breeze that will carry the plane further.
17. The simplicity of invention – The toy itself is a marvel in its simplicity, designed to mimic flight without modern complexity.
18. A lesson in aerodynamics – The angle of the plane and hand implies a deeper understanding of how flight works, even in this toy form.
19. The fragility of ambitions – Just as a toy plane can crash or glide, the image could symbolize the delicate balance of dreams either soaring or failing.
20. A timeless metaphor for exploration – The plane points forward, hinting at the human desire to explore uncharted territories

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Stimulus-Response Method

Curiosity Lab: Perceptual Association

Creative Target: TBD



?

Moving from observation to sense-giving intrepretation to association

Thematic clusters: physical, metaphor, emotion, memory, story, philosophical assocations

Step 1: Perceive

Step 2: Cluster

Step 3: Bridge

Step 4: Respond



Themes

- Letting go
- Small things, big dreams
- The unknown journey into the abyss
- The thrill of flight, freedom, adventure
- Fear of crashing

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Stimulus-Response Method

Curiosity Lab: Perceptual Association Step-by-Step

Step 1: Perceive

Ask: “What do you see (sense)?” On your sticky notes, write down as many observations, feelings, and thoughts as you can—one thought per note. Don't filter anything. Capture both the literal (what you see) and the abstract (what you feel, sense, imagine, infer, speculate what it reminds you of).

Step 2: Cluster

Ask: “What are possible **themes** here?” Group sticky notes into related **themes** or clusters. You don't need to name the clusters yet, just group the notes that feel like they belong together. When clustered, interpret **themes** by analogy, metaphor, or association. There are no right or wrong themes. They can also be literal or perceptual. Naming a cluster with a **theme** is an essential sense-giving step that produces memes (sense-giving).

Step 3: Bridge

Our goal is to create (insert product/service goal here). Select one cluster from the board. Now, use curiosity to connect those concepts to our product. Ask 'How might...?' or 'What if...?' questions. (sense-making)

Step 4: Respond

Pitch your new idea concept out loud. Tell us the name, what it does (storyline), its core function, key features, user benefit(s) and target audience. Explain how your ideas were sparked by the airplane image.

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Stimulus-Response Method

Curiosity Lab: Perceptual Association

Creative Target: A nutrition/culinary education company



?

Step 1: Perceive

Step 2: Cluster

Step 3: Bridge

Step 4: Respond



Are we looking at a picture of an airplane, or are we looking at a picture of someone about to change what is possible?

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Stimulus-Response Method

Step 3: Bridge — Human Curiosity Prompt Engineering

Example Creative Objective: How might we help a nutrition/culinary education business engage underserved communities in ways that reduce fear and anxiety, build trust, and make participation feel inviting, empowering, and worthwhile?

Let's assume the business offers nutritional and culinary education, food preparation knowledge, and practical guidance for healthier eating. Its potential customers may face financial constraints, limited transportation, unfamiliarity with nutrition concepts, language barriers, or negative experiences with institutions.

The business challenge is not simply transferring nutritional/culinary knowledge. It is helping people feel comfortable enough to begin engaging, confident enough to experiment, and motivated enough to return.



Note: The challenge is to resist jumping immediately to conventional ideas like nutrition classes, informational brochures, or social media campaigns. Those might be useful, but our stimulus should push us somewhere less obvious.

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Stimulus-Response Method

Step 3: Bridge — Human Curiosity Prompt Engineering

Example Creative Objective: How might we help a nutrition/culinary education business engage underserved communities in ways that reduce fear and anxiety, build trust, and make participation feel inviting, empowering, and worthwhile?

"If our content was inspired by **[Cluster Theme]**, what would its primary function be?"

"What experiences would make you *feel* **[Cluster Theme]**?"

"Who is the target customer that deeply desires the feeling of **[Cluster Theme]**?"

"What would we name an process that delivers the benefit of **[Cluster Theme]**?"

"How would the packaging of our programs reflect **[Cluster Theme]**?"

Themes Are Sticky

- Engage Cognitive Chunking
- Activate Schemas
- Stimulate Analogical Reasoning
- Memetic
- Emotional Resonance

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The Elements of an Issue
The Keys to Asking Bridge Questions

Stimulus-Response Method

Context
Who, What, Where, When, Why (Events)

Connections
How

Consequence
Δ(Who, What, Where, When, Why)



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Stimulus-Response Method

Curiosity Lab: Perceptual Association



Creative Target: A nutrition/culinary education company



IDEA 1 · Theme · SMALL THINGS, BIG DREAMS

The One-Bite Invitation

Provocation: What if the first step toward nutrition literacy were only one bite?

Instead of asking residents to register for a class, the business sets up small tasting stations at community events, housing complexes, libraries, and neighborhood markets.

Participants taste a delicious, inexpensive food sample, guess the ingredients, and discover one useful nutrition insight. They leave with a recipe and an invitation to another experience.

Business innovation: Replace the commitment of attending a class with a low-pressure, two-minute encounter that creates curiosity.

Step 1: Perceive

Step 2: Cluster

Step 3: Bridge

Step 4: Respond



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Stimulus-Response Method

Curiosity Lab: Perceptual Association



Creative Target: A nutrition/culinary education company



IDEA 4 · Theme · LETTING GO

You Choose, We Cook

Provocation: What if the customer, not the nutritionist, decided what was worth learning?

Invite residents to bring a favorite meal, a food challenge, or a family recipe. The educator works alongside them to explore affordable, practical modifications while respecting cultural preferences.

A participant might ask, "How can I make my family's favorite dinner for $12?" rather than being assigned a lesson on dietary guidelines.

Business innovation: Shift from expert-directed education to customer-directed problem solving.

Step 1: Perceive

Step 2: Cluster

Step 3: Bridge

Step 4: Respond



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Stimulus-Response Method



Curiosity Lab: Perceptual Association

Creative Target: A nutrition/culinary education company



IDEA 7 · Theme · THE UNKNOWN JOURNEY

The Food Explorer Passport

Provocation: What if learning nutrition felt like collecting adventures?

Participants receive a food explorer passport with small optional challenges: try a new vegetable, compare two food labels, cook a low-cost meal, or teach someone a new technique.

Each completed challenge earns a stamp, with milestones celebrated through community recognition or modest practical rewards.

Business innovation: Replace a fixed course sequence with flexible micro-experiences that reward experimentation and repeated engagement.

Step 1: Perceive

Step 2: Cluster

Step 3: Bridge

Step 4: Respond



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The Consumer Concept

Share your a-ha! moment

1. Share the airplane inspired theme
2. Share your target user or recipeint
3. Share the idea (a paragraph)
4. Share name and email



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What do you see?

The Power of Unrelated Stimulus

Moving from observation to sense-giving intrepretation to association

Thematic clusters: physical, metaphor, emotion, memory, story, philosophical assocations

Removes need to find the “correct" answer to the business challenge

Themes Are Sticky

- Engage Cognitive Chunking
- Activate Schemas
- Stimulate Analogical Reasoning
- Memetic
- Emotional Resonance



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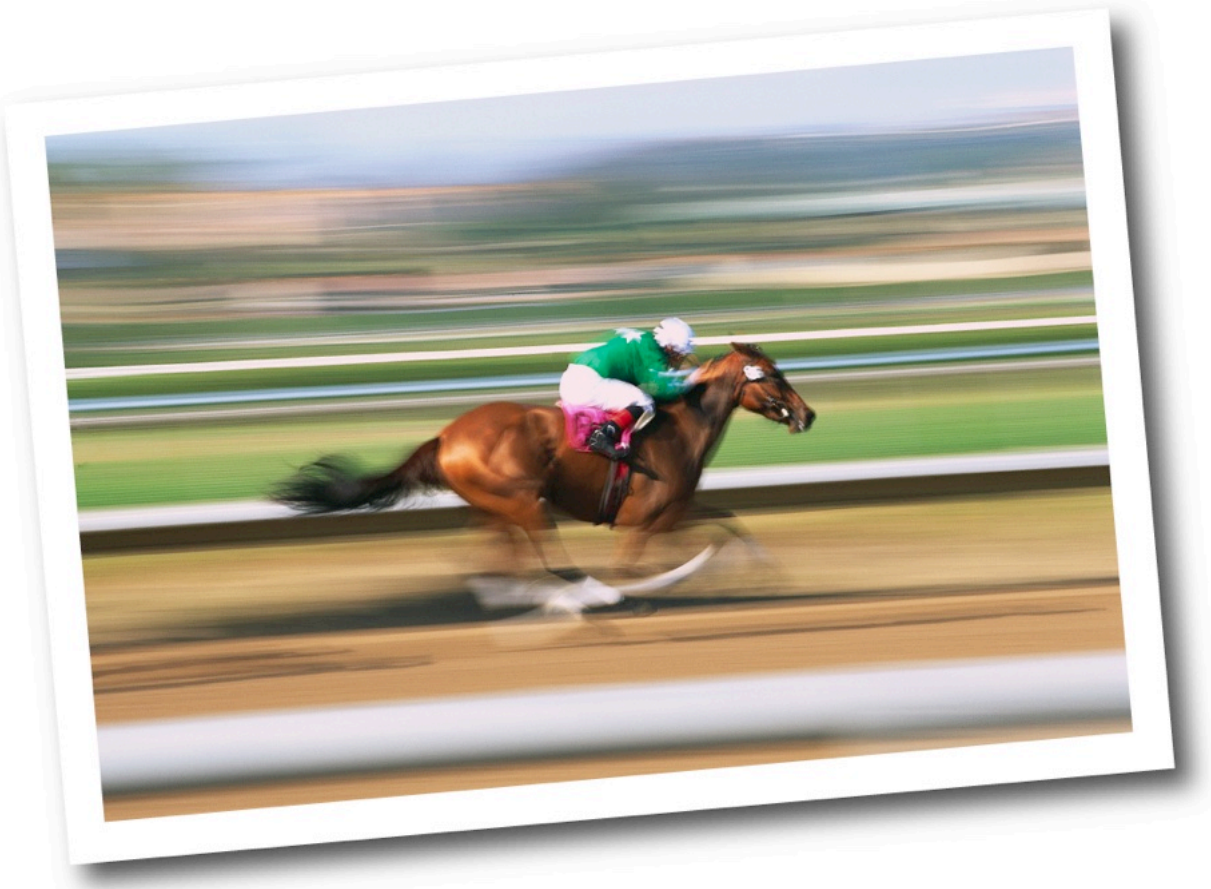
What do you see?



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ChatGPT vs. Stamp

What do you see?

“Surfer catching the wave tube.”



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ChatGPT vs. Stamp

“Surfer catching the wave tube.”



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Can an entrepreneur be...

too creative?



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GPT Resource



CURIO: Assess Your Curiosity! (5DCR)

By Jeffrey Stamp

See your curiosity profile across the five dimensions of curiosity and learn how to build and exercise your curiosity powers.

Take the curiosity assessment!

What is curiosity and how do I experience it...

Test my curiosity!

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