On Desirability

California Conference on Library Instruction

June 1, 2018

Presenter notes included

I'm a terrible public speaker.

First off, I'm a terrible public speaker. It's true.
My mentors have done everything they can. I've rehearsed and rehearsed, gone to several speech skills workshops. I have all the data in my head.

The best metaphor for my career (and life) is Quasimodo, quietly working in darkness in a bell tower. I loved it—you know, being left alone—until I was birthed, kicking and screaming—into the world of design consultancy.

The best metaphor for my career (and life) is Quasimodo, quietly working in darkness in a bell tower. I loved it—you know, being left alone—until I was birthed, kicking and screaming—into the world of design consultancy.

And so here I am now—in front of all of you. I'm no longer terrified. Also, I'm talking to a large group of librarians…

…and no one is shushing me! It's fabulous! …So you've probably figured out by now that I'm not an expert in library instruction. And by the end of this conference I'll know only very slightly more about this topic and all the good work you-all do.

So why am I doing this?

Well, as Annette mentioned I was a library intern at UMASS as part of work-study. I'd create research guides for popular topics (and some not-so-popular ones). Students would make appointments with me and I would introduce them to resources and services in the library. Librarians were the first enlightened, empathic people I ever met. People often cite influential teachers. Not me. The librarians are where it's at!

I feel that I have a similar career—or calling, as I like to call it. Like monks we pitter-patter quietly (and often anonymously) contributing.
(Note: I use the term monks and not nuns because it invokes an entirely wrong metaphor!)

This is Paige Gibbs, who was the librarian liaison to the engineering school during my tenure, who—in addition to pitilessly shaming me for not voting in a primary election at the time—once told me, "You get the kind of education you want to get."
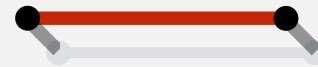
"You get the kind of education you want to get."

I carry this statement with me still and it's been (in part) a driving force in my life, both personally and professionally. To me, an education isn't a passive, lectured, lean-back experience, but an active, assertive, lean-forward one. It's not isolated. It's a sensitivity or a way of being. It's endless curiosity. Being open-minded and non-judgmental (or at least trying to be).

...but what makes something desirable?

This is something I've thought about a lot. I'm concerned with desirability. I feel like it's the central goal for all the design I've done.

Digital Books

Awareness Campaigns

Earthquake Readiness

Credit Card Branding

Parametric Insurance

Online Education

Nursing Scheduling

Future Vision

Veteran

Financial Readiness

Reproductive Health

Incarceration Re-entry

Savings Products

Navy Human Resources

Near-Field Communication

Homeless Shelters

TRANSPORT SECURITY

School Systems

Teen Pregnancy

Electronics Recycling

Signals Intelligence

Developing World Farmers

Dashboard Interactions

Financial Inclusion

Hedge Funds

Office space

TELECOM

Automobility

As I said I'm not an expert in anything, really—except in a methodology—a design process with a set of basic tools—that anyone can understand and adopt to suit their needs. Here are the domains I've been able to apply this process to—from Nursing scheduling to reproductive health—and nearly everything in between.

Now remember, there's nothing up my sleeve. I have nothing to sell and I'm not here on any official business.

Who here is familiar with IDEO? Anyone? (Makes my job easier) No?

IDEO is a global design and innovation firm, founded nearly 30 years ago in Palo Alto. We're approximately 650 people worldwide. What originally started as a focus on physical products (e.g. electronics, furniture, household items) eventually expanded to include consumer and enterprise experiences, including digital ones, which is where I come in. It's a funny aspect of contemporaneity that you can't design a bottle of shampoo without a companion web site—or in some cases an app!

The founders of IDEO designed the first commercial mouse for apple and also the first laptop, and now we're doing things like redesigning the way people access their medicine, imagining the future of mobility, and designing whole school systems.

I'm a senior design lead at IDEO. My specialization is visual interaction design and storytelling. What this means is that I design interactions (be it products, services, experiences, spaces, anything you can think of) but my specific contribution to the craft is visual story. So I develop user interface and stories, and articulate experiences for things that don't exist—yet.

It's cheaper for me to prototype a story for how a person might experience something than it is to build it—only to find out it stinks.

So this evolution from physical products to experiences has further evolved into organizational and systems design. I'm in IDEO's Design For Change studio. This studio was formed from the basic insight that nearly every design problem has an organizational component. That is, the reason organizations don't innovate is often due to barriers within the larger culture.

"It's less about physical products and more about changing people's behaviors"

The ultimate goal is to drive a customer focus deep within an organization. This includes a culture open for sharing knowledge and collaboration between all departments within and outside the company. As a result, you get a product that resonates with the user and exceeds her needs.
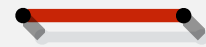
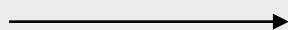## Design Thinking
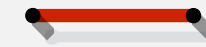
Human-Centered Design

I'd like to address these two terms. I did a lot of research and talked to folks in and outside of IDEO about this. In the end, we sorta use the terms interchangeably. So you should feel free to also. They both have different legacies and are at slightly different scales.

Design Thinking is simply a process of designing, iterating, and evaluating ideas in a loop-like fashion that constantly improves on an idea.

Human-Centered Design is a more general process (of which Design Thinking is a tool). HCD simply means putting people at the center of the inquiry with the result being more useful experiences and products.

Inspiration

Distilled down to its essence, Human-centered design consists of three phases:
the Inspiration Phase
the Ideation Phase
the Implementation Phase

Inspiration ⟶ *Ideation*

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Inspiration ⟶ *Ideation* ⟶ *Implementation*

- *Learn directly from the people for whom you're designing*
- *Immerse yourself in their lives*
- *Deeply understand their needs*

Inspiration ⟶ **Ideation** ⟶ Implementation

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- *Make sense of what you learned*
- *Identify opportunities for design*
- *Prototype possible solutions*

Inspiration → Ideation → **Implementation**

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- *Immerse yourself in their lives*
- *Deeply understand their needs*

- *Make sense of what you learned*
- *Identify opportunities for design*
- *Prototype possible solutions*

- *Bring your solution to life and, eventually, to market*

INSPIRATION   IDEATION   IMPLEMENTATION

divergent thinking

convergent thinking
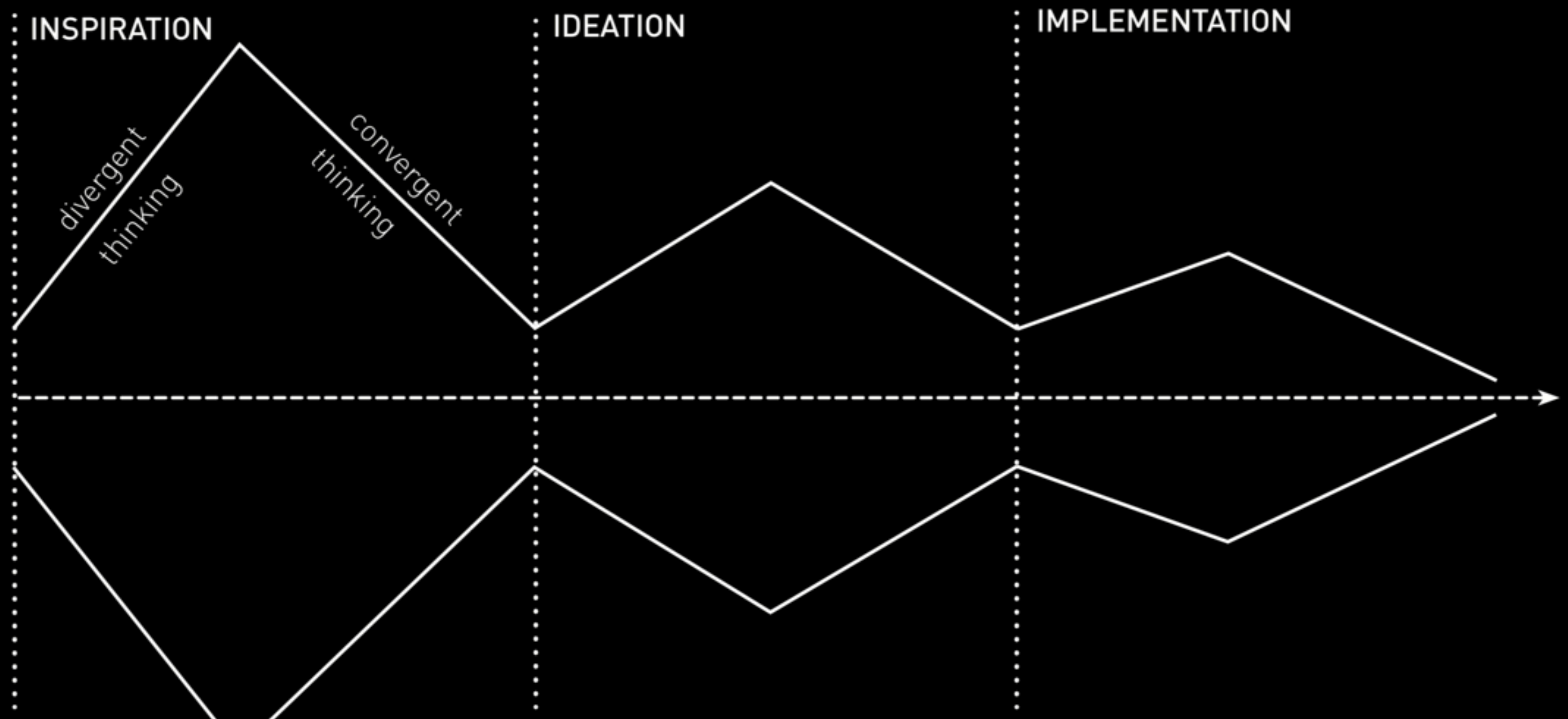
At a high level, this is what the scope of each phase looks like. As you can see what starts out as divergent, eventually converges into a single, distilled output. …But what's interesting to us today is approaching design problems in a divergent way, especially at the beginning. It takes a little practice to maintain the ambiguity of divergent thinking, especially when problems are pressing. But it's important.

What is good design?

What is bad design?

Here's another way to think about it. Let's remove any unusual language and speak in more human language. Anyone who uses things (any thing) can be an interaction designer. So what is good design? And what is bad design?

Good

- Designed around _your_ needs.

- Allows you to _shape it_.

- Invisible, or leaves you feeling _good_.

Bad

- Designed around _their_ needs.

- Forces you to _conform to it_.

- Leaves you feeling _bad_.

Thinking about yourself as the end user of a product, service, or experience: good design is…
…and bad design is… ("They" could refer to the developers, designers, and/or product managers)

Everything is designed.

Everything around us is something someone designed. they can design it well, or poorly.

Products

Processes

Services

Financial Plans

Spaces

Systems

Tools

Experiences

Operational Plans

Everything is designed.
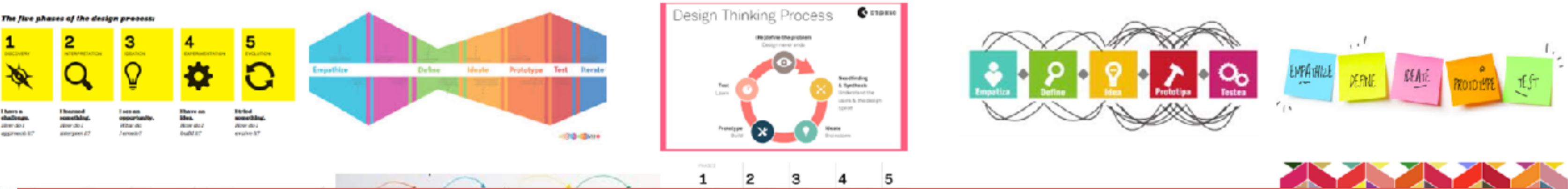
Interactions

Policies

Communications

Curriculum

Measurements

Programs

Strategies

Business model

Everything around us is something someone designed. they can design it well, or poorly.

Often, the way design is talked about would make you think that it's simply a set of methods.
this is what happens when you do a google image search for "design thinking". it seems that design thinking is all about process. which is an incomplete picture

We tend to focus on what people say and do. The things we can see and hear. What's obvious.
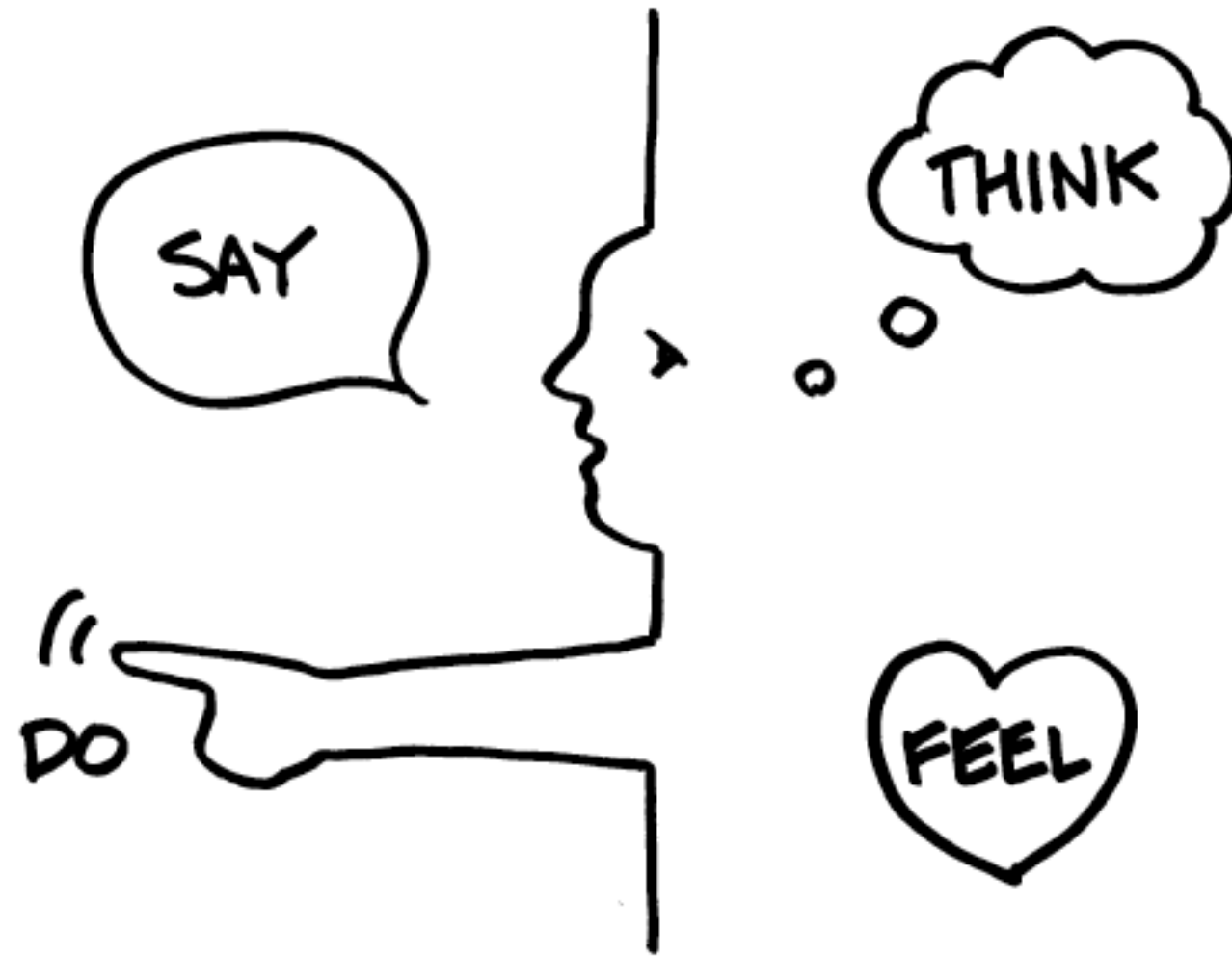
But if you're looking to increase desirability of your product, you also have to uncover what they think and feel.

We want to get personal, to be inspired by people's challenges and workarounds to everyday problems. When you do this, you discover small things—clever solutions. Like this one: using a power supply to keep coffee warm. People are endlessly amazing!

But here's a story that helps clarify Design Thinking/HCD.

A few years ago at GE Healthcare, a guy named Doug Dietz finished working on a brand new fancy MRI machine. One day while he was proudly waiting to see his work in action in a hospital, he saw a young patient heading towards the scan room with her parents. She looked terrified, and was in tears.

The MRI technician instantly called for the anesthesiologist. so in order to use his machine, the girl needed to be drugged up.

Doug realized, he'd created something technically solid, but miserable to experience.

So he went to visit a day care center to get to know children. He talked to child specialists, and pediatric doctors. He recruited a small volunteer team to collaborate with him. Folks from GE, a local children's museum, and staff from a few hospitals worked together to create a prototype of what would eventually become GE's "Adventure Series" scanner.

It looks like this. Sure, it's the same machine inside, but it feels totally different, doesn't it? There's even a role playing process for kids where they are given a character and a scenario to act out.

As you might imagine, the patient satisfaction scores went up 90 percent.

For the most part, children do not suffer of anxiety anymore… Instead some of them even ask their parents if they can come back!

And it's better for the hospital too. Because it is easier for children to hold still during the procedure, they're more likely to get it right on the first try so it saves the hospital $ from having to repeat the scan.

And, there is less need for anesthesiologists, so more patients could get scanned each day, which heavily impacts the financial side of the equation.

That's design thinking in a nutshell.

Realizing there's a problem or a need

Getting inspiration

Learning about people's needs

Collaborating with people with diverse talents

Imagining creative solutions

Trying ideas out to learn
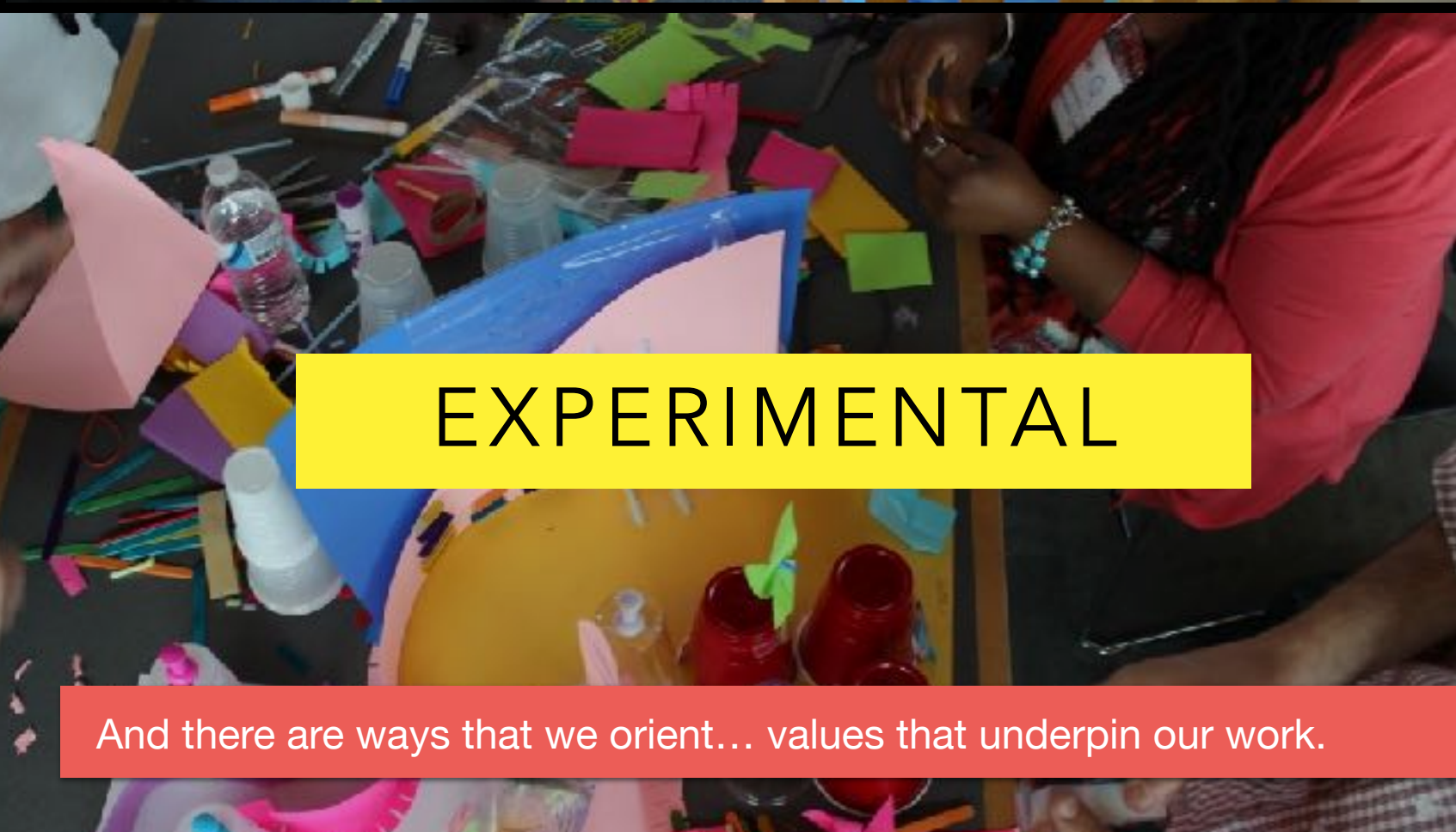
Iterating

and...

Again!

EMPATHIC

OPTIMISTIC

EXPERIMENTAL

COLLABORATIVE

And there are ways that we orient… values that underpin our work.

All of our work is based on a grounded approach that considers three intersecting values as a source of creativity:

· **desirability**
  (what do people really care about?)
· **viability**
  (what are the market realities and possibilities?)
· **feasibility**
  (what is technically possible now or could be in the future?)

As you can see, Design Thinking begins with people—or the pursuit of desirability.

It's still pretty common to NOT do this.

For example, to start with an existing or emerging technology or to begin with a business model or idea and THEN try to make it desirable.

I call this lipstick on a pig.
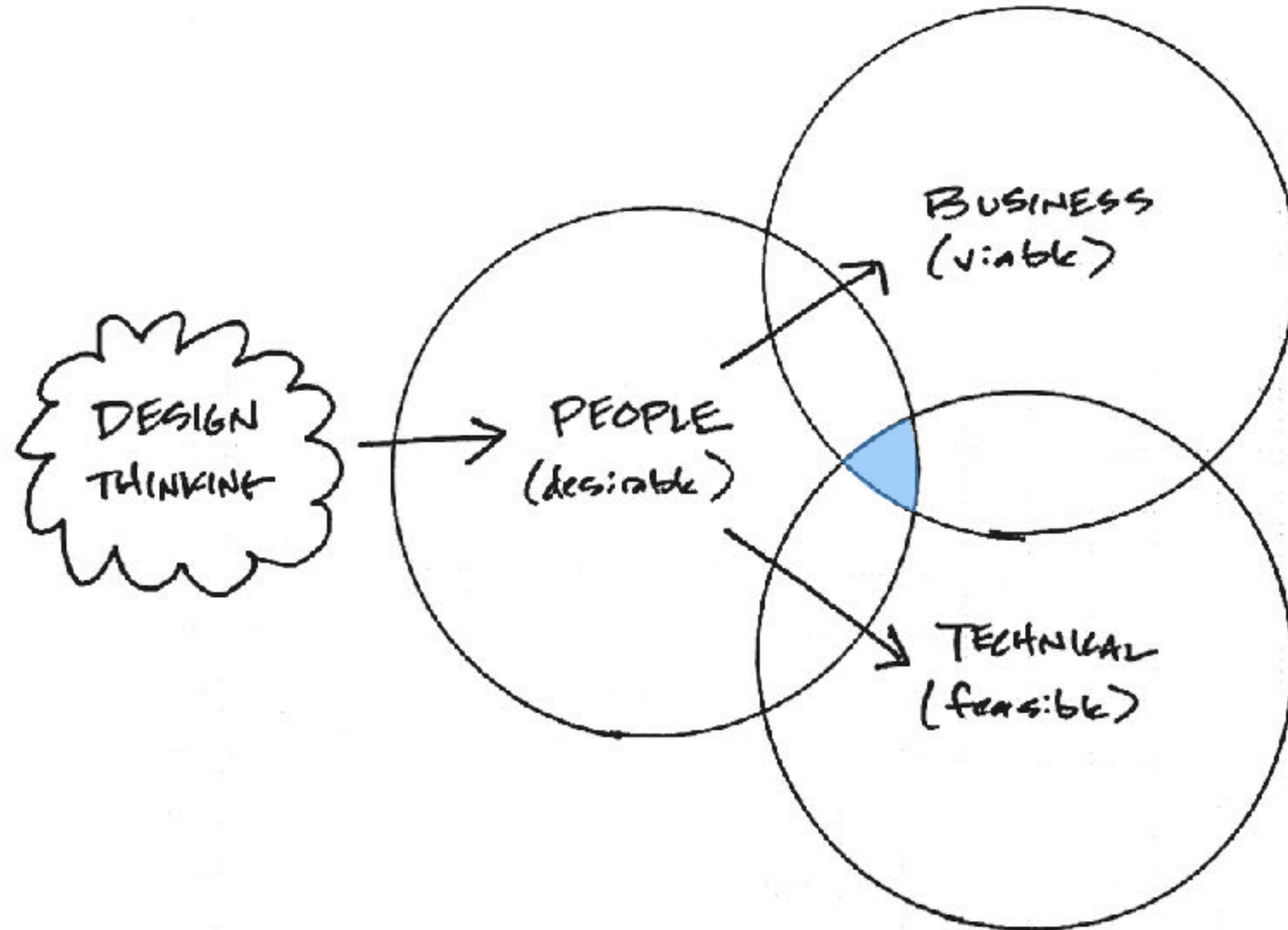
How might we better design
the tools, systems,
behaviors, communications, processes,
policies, organizations...
that create the experiences
that shape people's lives?

We are always asking ourselves:
How might we better design the tools, the systems, the behaviors, the communications, the processes, the policies, the organizations, that create the experiences that shape people's lives?

We are *inspired* by people.

Three things to know about our approach — first, that we are inspired by people.
This image is quite old now, but i think it shows this point well. When designing for how a hospital could improve its emergency center, we didn't just sit in a room and engineer a process... one of the designers on the team checked himself into a hospital and filmed every moment of it to understand what it felt like through the eyes of the patient.

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We *build* to think.

We build or prototype just enough to learn and no more—and then iterate. There are many things you can learn with some post-its and foam core. Or even just paper. I use story as a build-to-think. I often write a story about how a user might interact with a product. The story should flow easily. If it doesn't, it's a warning sign that we missing something or avoiding some reality.

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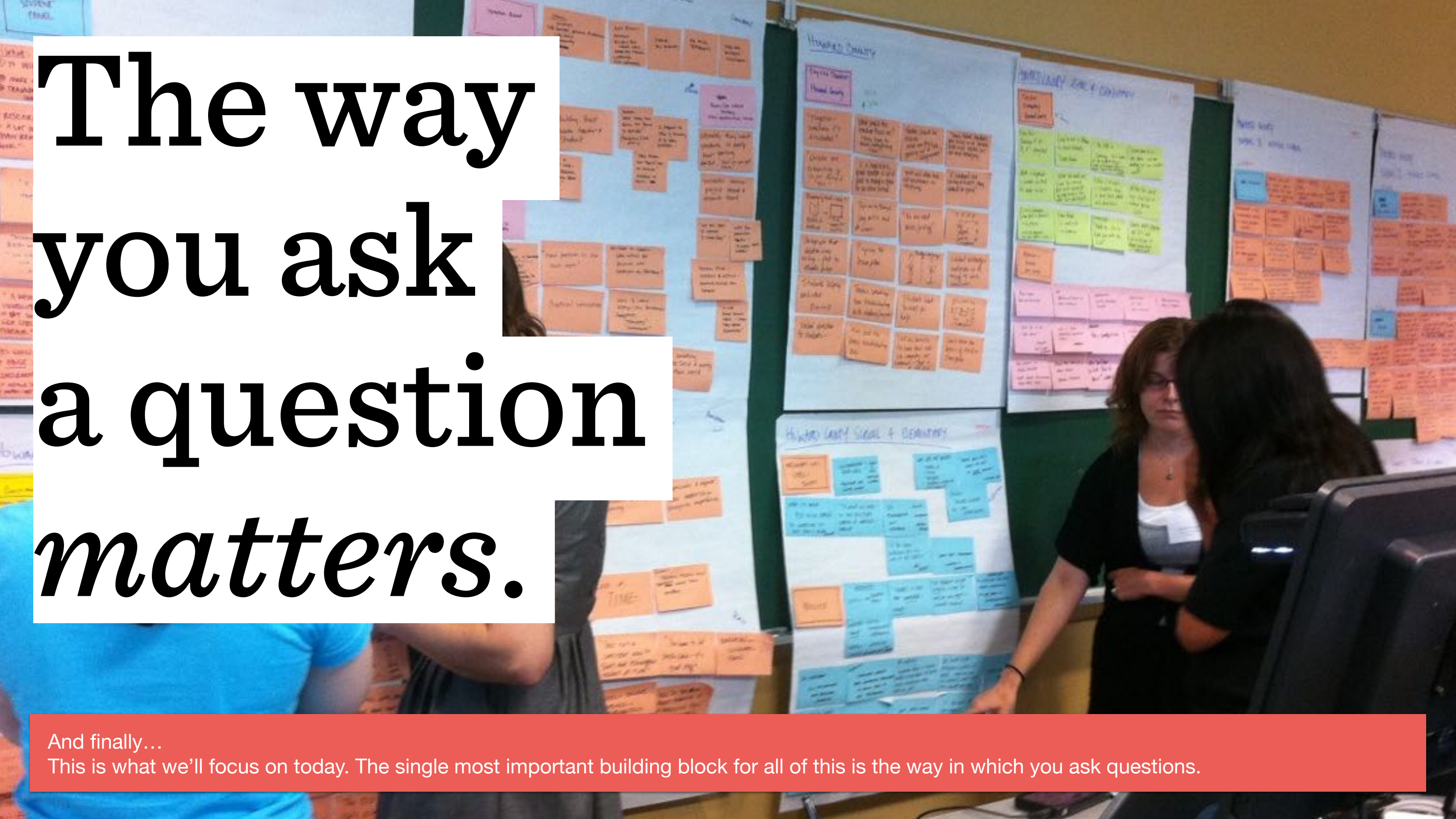
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The way you ask a question *matters.*

Let's try applying
some of this to your world.

The way you ask a question *matters*

Be inspired by *people*

There are two takeaways I'd like you to leave with today. We'll dig into both for the remainder of our talk.

aka: Turn that frown upside-down

The way you ask a question *matters*

Be inspired by *people*

"School schedules don't align with teaching and learning rhythms."

"Communication with parents isn't effective."

"Effectively managing multiple learning-levels in one classroom feels impossible."

"Everyone is exhausted."

"Parents don't support home learning."

"Students just aren't interested in learning about fractions."

"We're not preparing our kids adequately for the future."

"The pick-up and drop-off process at school is a nightmare."

"Students come to school hungry and can't focus on the work."

"I feel so alone in my work."

"The assessment rubric doesn't accurately represent learning."

"The classroom organization doesn't accommodate different learning modes and shifting class sizes."

"Current communication between administration and teachers doesn't give everyone a voice."

"Too many students are dropping out."

Here are some challenges collected from teachers.

How might we rethink our schedule to center around student and teacher needs?

How might we better communicate with parents?

How might we better personalize learning around the needs of each child?

How might we help our community be well?

How might we engage parents in their child's learning?

How might we teach math in ways that engage today's student?

How might we design schools to set kids up well for the future?

How might we redesign pick-up and drop-off to be more efficient?

How might we ensure all of our students are fed?

How might we collaborate more?

How might we re-design our assessments toward the things we value?

How might we re-design our classrooms to better support variance of learning needs?

How might we create better ways to communicate and collaborate across different roles?

How might we make school a place youth want to be?

(Turn that frown upside down!)
And here are those challenges transformed into How Might We? Statements.

The way you ask a question matters

Capture a few challenges.

Finding opportunities for design often begins by noticing problems. Sometimes it comes out as wishes ("I really wish we _.") Sometimes it comes out as complaints ("It annoys me that we're not _.") Either starting point is fine — sometimes good old fashioned complaining is the easiest. Pair up with someone... share your gripes or dreams and ask them to reflect back design opportunities.

↓

How might we

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I WISH MORE TEACHERS WOULD USE DATA TO IMPROVE THEIR INSTRUCTION.

↓

How might we

"Coordinating on Information Literacy across the curriculum doesn't happen"

"I feel like I have no authority in someone else's class"

"Professors and librarians don't coordinate on learning outcomes or assignments"

"The classroom spaces and furnishings limit collaboration or inspiration"

"Students often don't do outside work assigned before of after library classes"

"Students aren't using the handy tools we instruct them on"

"We don't have enough time to teach everything we want to"

"Assessing student learning is difficult"

"Too many students don't retain or apply the lessons"

"Effectively managing multiple learning experiences and levels in one class feels impossible"

"Students don't ask for help or even recognize when they need it"

"Faculty are not aware of information literacy and how to integrate it into their curriculum/ assignments"

We collected some scenarios and challenges from your colleagues.

↓

How might we...

A good challenge is phrased with a sense of possibility.
Make it broad enough to allow you to discover areas of unexpected
value, and narrow enough to make the topic manageable.

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IDEO

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HOW MIGHT WE HELP MORE STUDENTS ATTAIN THEIR EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVES AT OUR INSTITUTION?

IDEO

A good 'How Might We' question...

DOESN'T ASSUME AN ANSWER

GENERATES LOTS OF POSSIBLE ANSWERS

OPTIMISTIC AND ENGAGING

"NON-OPPRESSIVE" LANGUAGE

NOT TOO BIG OR TOO SMALL

Let's hear some of your questions.

The way you ask a question *matters*

Be inspired by *people*

aka: You need to get new input
in order to create new output

Connect with the people that you are designing for – their lives, their interests and their motivations.
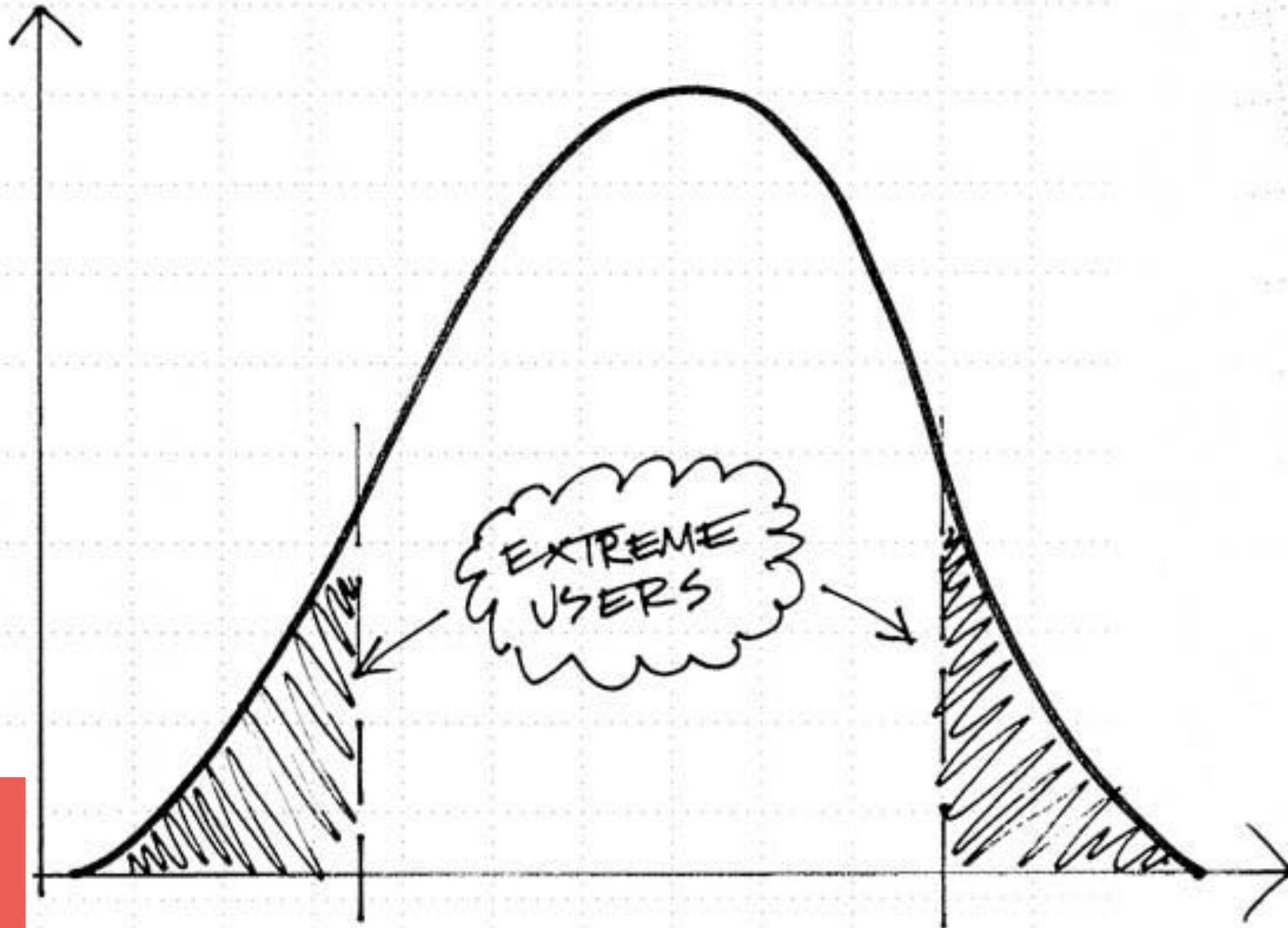
Design from there.

Find ways to create empathy for the person.

Walk in their shoes.

I can't say enough what a privilege it is to be invited into someone's life, whether it's their home, or work, or some other personal context. I don't think I could create good design without it.

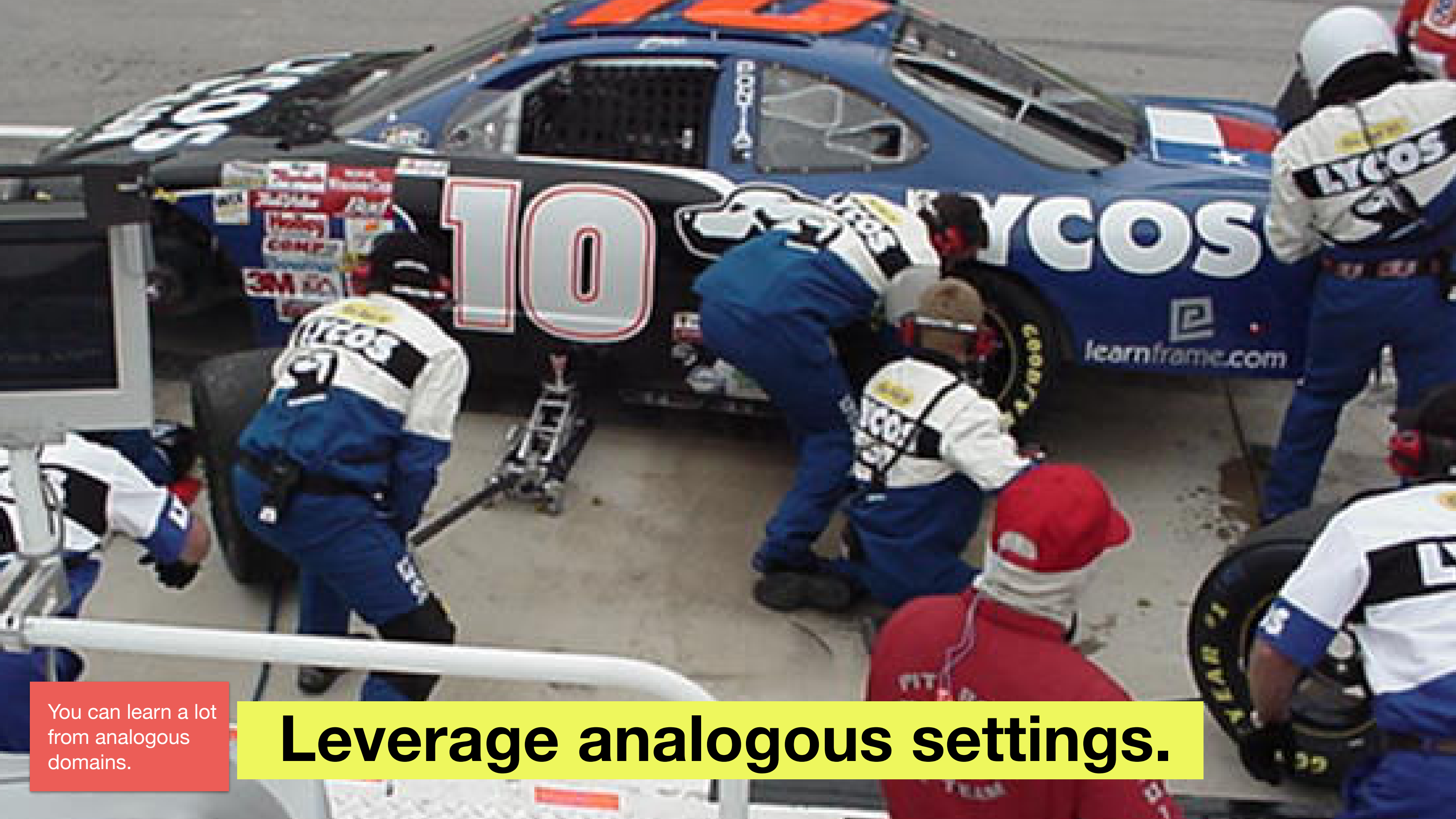**Be an anthropologist.**

EXTREME USERS

Qualitative research means you can't speak to everybody. Not even close. However, you can learn a lot about the middle by speaking to extreme examples.

Find extremes.

You can learn a lot from analogous domains.

Leverage analogous settings.

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Be inspired by people

Seek inspiration

What are some ways you can get inspiration about who (or what) you are designing for?
Develop a quick list of ideas that can help you think in new ways about the challenge you are working on.

Walk in their shoes.

Remember what it feels like to be the person you are designing for. What does the world look like through their eyes? Consider the things these people do each day. What can you do to see the world through their eyes?

Find extremes.

"Extremes" help us see beyond what we could have imagined. Consider which people might be considered extreme for your challenge... at either end of the bell curve.

Be an anthropologist.

Who are you designing for? You may think you know a lot about them already, but getting out to meet them will keep your mind fresh on their interests and concerns, and help you learn new depths of their lives. Consider what interesting questions

Leverage analogous settings.

What analogous situations might you be able to learn from? Who, outside of your field, has similar challenges to yours? What have they created that could inspire your work (aka: you could steal)? Consider what some of the emotions and behaviors

This second exercise is an inspiration brainstorm. This exercise would form the beginning of what could become a research plan. And remember, when I say "research" I don't mean research with a "capital R." This is research in aid of DESIGN INSPIRATION!

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GO THROUGH THE ADMISSIONS PROCESS OF MY OWN INSTITUTION.

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SPEND TIME IN PLACES STUDENTS HANG OUT AT AND OBSERVE THEIR INTERACTIONS. HOW DO STUDENTS CONNECT WITH EACH OTHER? SUPPORT EACH OTHER?

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A STUDENT WHO HAS OVERCOME TREMENDOUS STRUGGLE AND STILL STAYED IN COLLEGE.

A STUDENT WHO HAS TRANSFERRED MULTIPLE TIMES.

HOW MIGHT WE HELP STUDENTS OVERCOME OBSTACLES IN THEIR JOURNEY TO COLLEGE COMPLETION?

Be an anthropologist.

Who are you designing for? You may think you know a lot about them already, but getting out to meet them will keep your mind fresh on their interests and concerns, and help you learn new depths of their lives. Consider what interesting questions you might ask them to better understand their motivations.

SPEND TIME IN PLACES STUDENTS HANG OUT AT AND OBSERVE THEIR INTERACTIONS. HOW DO STUDENTS CONNECT WITH EACH OTHER? SUPPORT EACH OTHER?

Leverage analogous settings.

What analogous situations might you be able to learn from? Who, outside of your field, has similar challenges to yours? What have they created that could inspire your work (aka: you could steal!)? Consider what some of the emotions and behaviors are in your question, and think about analogous settings that employ those same emotions and behaviors.

Walk in their shoes.

Remember what it feels like to be the person you are designing for. What does the world look like through their eyes? Consider the things these people do each day. What can you do to see the world through their eyes?

FILL OUT A FAFSA FORM MYSELF.

GO THROUGH THE ADMISSIONS PROCESS OF MY OWN INSTITUTION.

Find extremes.

"Extremes" help us see beyond what we could have imagined. Consider which people might be considered extreme for your challenge... at either end of the bell curve.

A STUDENT WHO HAS OVERCOME TREMENDOUS STRUGGLE AND STILL STAYED IN COLLEGE.

A STUDENT WHO HAS TRANSFERRED MULTIPLE TIMES.

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HOW WEIGHT LOSS PROGRAMS ENGAGE PEOPLE TO HELP THEM STICK WITH IT.

HOW YOUTH DISCOVER AND CHOOSE NEW MUSIC, FILMS OR BOOKS.

1
DEFER JUDGMENT

2
ENCOURAGE WILD IDEAS

3

BUILD ON THE IDEAS OF OTHERS

4

BE VISUAL

5
STAY FOCUSED ON THE TOPIC

6

ONE CONVERSATION AT A TIME
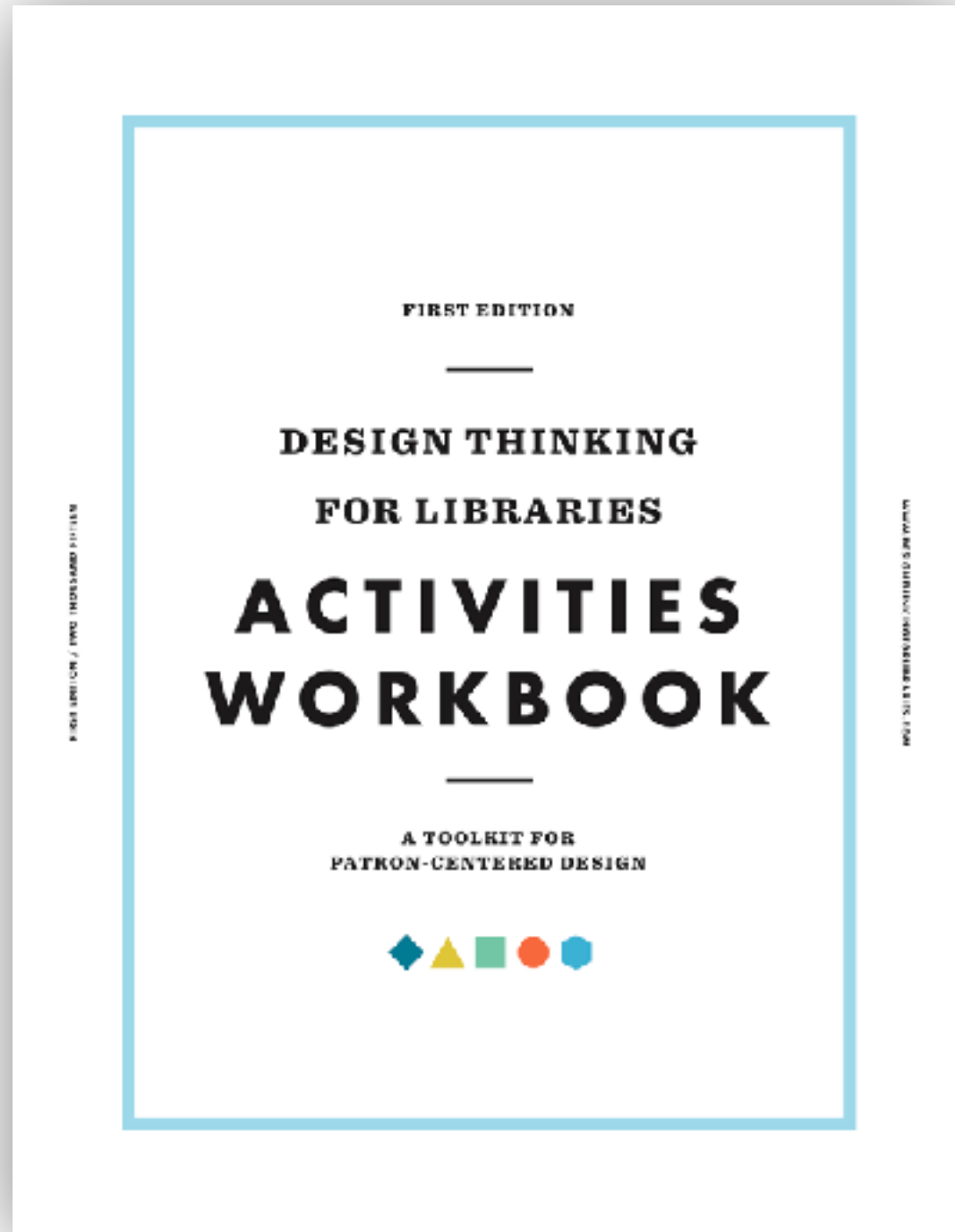
7

GO FOR QUANTITY

Let's hear some of your ideas.

So what would happen next?

Realizing there's a problem or a need

Getting inspiration

Learning about people's needs

Collaborating with people with diverse talents

Imagining creative solutions

Trying ideas out to learn

Iterating

and...

Again!

FIRST EDITION

DESIGN THINKING
FOR LIBRARIES

ACTIVITIES
WORKBOOK

A TOOLKIT FOR
PATRON-CENTERED DESIGN

THE
FIELD GUIDE
TO HUMAN-
CENTERED
DESIGN

DESIGN KIT

We're going to compile some online resources for you. So please share your email address. There's even a toolkit designed specifically for librarians.

Thank you!

mark@ideo.com

Please don't hesitate to contact me with any questions!