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**“STEAL LIKE  
AN ARTIST”**

Says Austin Kleon. That's why we have  
pretty much stolen all of his book's design.

Haha.

And improved it, as one should.

# 1. Creativity works

May we ask you three questions?

1. How often do you pick up cash from the bank counter?
2. How often do you pick up a video from the video store?
3. How often do you go to a travel agency?

It's likely that you answered 'never' three times. You're only three mouse clicks away from paying for your new car, you binge watch series to the max on Netflix and you use your smartphone to book your holiday to the Seychelles. That's all great for you, but not for the people who used to work at the bank, the video store and the travel agency.

We live in novel times. Never before has technology developed at such a fast pace. In many instances this technology makes life easier. Hurrah. But there is also a downside to all of this. It can turn the job market upside down. Because technology has the propensity to obliterate jobs. Imagine it's your job, then it's bad news. Suddenly, you find yourself unemployed.

**Do you hate working?  
That's great.**

**Because soon you will find  
yourself out of a job.**

**Or you will be creative.  
And that's even better.**

## 5. Six skills

Daniel Pink is our big hero. We were blown away by his book *A whole new mind*. It offers tons of insights into how you can make an impact on people and how you can create value for them.

In his book, Pink lays down six essential skills to become creative and with it be more successful. Or to put it differently, to not be unemployed. He encourages you to keep improving these skills. We are doing our best not to be guilty of plagiarism here, so all the credits in this chapter principally go to Daniel H. Pink. Especially for you we have described his six skills in a straightforward way and have added our own experiences and examples here and there.

So, six skills. Here they come.

### Empathy

Ideas are always devised by people for people. This means creativity is a very human thing. When you have an exciting idea, you want to get people around you excited too. You want to have an emotional impact on them.

In order to do this it's very important that you learn who somebody is, what this person feels, thinks and experiences. This is not easy, but certainly not impossible.

**Empathy is not only hard to outsource and automate.  
It also makes the world a better place.”**

Daniel H. Pink

To put it succinctly and punchily, empathy is the capacity to feel what others feel. It's the art of looking through another person's eyes and feeling from another person's heart. When you master this, you are king! Because then you can really come up with great ideas that really touch others emotionally. In summary, it's worth the effort to learn to understand people, so that you can devise good ideas for them.

Empathy is very useful in education, sales, management, communication and love. You may not accept it coming from us, but even Oprah Winfrey once said the following: “leadership is all about empathy”.

entertained for an hour or three. You even have people who read virtually non stop for 18 days. 18 days? Indeed, this is how long it takes to read all four books of The Lord of the Rings series.

Us people love stories, we were born for them. Roger C. Shank, an American all-rounder, roughly phrased it like this. Humans are not 'wired' to understand logic, they are 'wired' to understand stories. This is not without a reason. Stories teach us how the world works. They contain an important social component. They teach us which behaviour takes us further in life. For both small kids and adults this is very useful.

A good story touches people and motivates them to act. This is exactly what we want when we're trying to be creative. Our original field of work, advertising, can only exist by the grace of stories.

Just pay some more attention when you're watching television. Stop flicking through the channels, and really look closely at those adverts. Brands take you on board in the story of a product. It's the story which makes the message stick.

**“We all love stories.  
We are born for  
them.”**

**Andrew Stanton**

**“WE LIVE IN  
THE WORLD  
OUR QUESTIONS  
CREATE.”**

**David Cooperrider**

So, for a good solution you need a good starting question. To develop a good starting question, you need to start off by looking at the problem you want to solve or the situation you want to improve. Without immediately going into thorough research (this will come at a later stage), it's good to try and answer several standard questions. We think that these are interesting questions because they usually lead to more clarity straight away.

- *What is the problem?*
- *How is that possible?*
- *And how is that possible then?*
- *What is the problem behind the problem?*
- *And why is that a problem?*
- *And where will this lead to in the end?*
- *And who will that bother in the end?*

In the case of the Ministry the answers could be as follows. Be aware though, the answers below contain several assumptions. When you have a client, you can best check the answers together armed with a latte macchiato in your left hand.

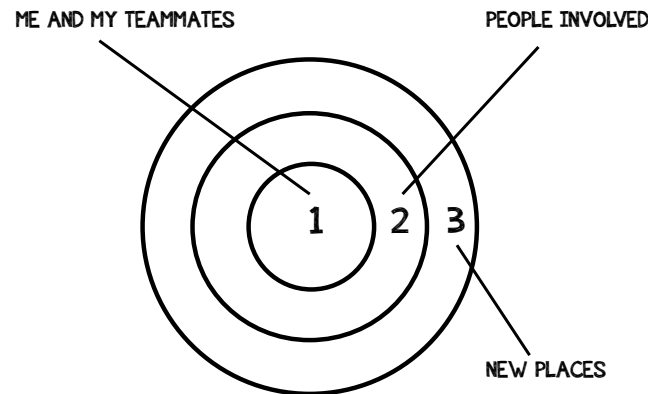
*What is the problem?*

The problem is that civil servants sit too much and too long. They don't exercise enough.

# 11. The exploration phase

Ok, let's go. Your starting question has been formulated. The next step is to carry out research. The exploration phase is about gathering as much information as possible, which will help you answer your starting question later in the process. You are going to look for inspiration and insights. Both will help you later on to easily come up with ideas. You need inspiration to think of something out of the ordinary. Insights, on the other hand, are essential to make it useful. Through thorough exploration you ensure you are fully equipped in both areas.

But, how do you do this? Which questions do you ask? And where do you start looking? We advise you take the three circles of research as a starting point. The three circles look like this:



Let's return to the deskcycle case of the previous chapter to illustrate how it works.

You start off in the heart of the circle. Thus, with yourself and your team members. Ask yourself what your own experiences are with working in a static position for too long. Relive the trauma of the mouse arm. Listen to your team member's story about his back pains. Think back to moments when you really worked too hard. Why was that? What helped you? What can you do to prevent it happening again? Have you heard stories of friends working at organisations where they do know how to effectively tackle such problems?

You ask yourself and each other the same questions on organisational cultures. What experiences have you had in the past? Has any of you ever experienced a change management trajectory, had a course in it or even facilitated it? Have you seen a news item on it recently or perhaps a documentary?

Ensure that you keep an open discussion. The questions and answers can be truly diverse. But do stay sharp. If you think you have gained significant insights, write these down, on a post-it for example. This can be of use later on in the creative process.

A good idea is a simple idea. Really, believe us, people are surprisingly stupid. They really don't understand jack shit. And if they don't understand something, they tune out. Only simple ideas survive.

Simplicity, however, is not so easily achievable. Developing an idea is a journey past a thousand and one pitfalls that make the idea more complex. It's so tempting to add things. Be aware when someone in your team says: "Can't we then also...?" Sometimes it's a great addition to your idea, but usually as a team you become trapped in the complexity, eh, trap. The complexity trap? Yep. By this we mean that people often tend to add all sorts of things to something, which makes it unnecessarily hard and illogical. It's better to go through the trajectory every now and again in the implementation phase and ask yourself the question: what can you take away from the idea without it falling apart?

Check if people immediately understand your idea when you tell it to them, because a simple idea is a good idea.

### **Unexpected**

People are sensitive to surprises. When something happens that they don't expect, their senses are stimulated to the max. Must be a leftover from the Stone Age, when a surprise pretty much meant danger by default. When at

**“Make it simple  
but significant.”**

**Don Draper**

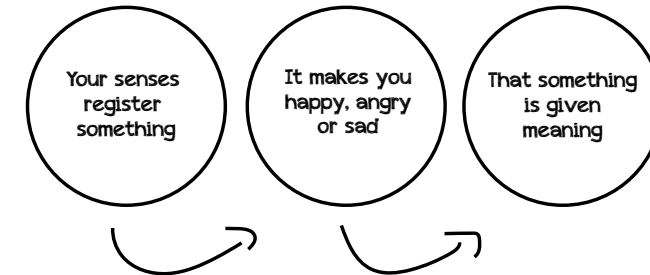
There are four tips to make the idea more credible. If you find it believable that they are down here, just keep reading.

1. The first tip is you. Have you thought of good, working ideas before? Then you have more chance that your intuition is right this time too. You can trust on it and your team members can too.
2. Present your ideas to an expert with an open mind. If that expert doesn't see any good reason why something wouldn't work, it could definitely work.
3. Study your idea closely. If it contains principals that would work in other places under different circumstances, they could work for your situation too.
4. Are there supporting statistics which make it more believable? Good. Nothing is more helpful in persuading your team members than hard figures.

A credible idea is a good idea.

## Emotional

A good idea causes people to have certain emotions. It makes them emotional. As we saw before with the COCD Box, good ideas have impact. They produce meaningful experiences. The route from experience to meaning runs via emotions. Like this:



Does your idea contain something which can cause other people to react strongly? Does it make them happy, angry or sad? Then you're on the right track and you proceed. If this is not the case yet, you can still add something to your idea in this phase, which will unleash the emotions. If this isn't successful either, then we suggest that your idea takes a short trip to the round archive. And for you and you team: back to the drawing board.

An emotional idea is a good idea.



## 15. Pitching

The final prototype is finished. Great. You have, alone or with your team, come up with a cool solution for a starting question and also made an interesting prototype. Bunting, cake, champagne! Stop, don't pop the cork yet. You have gotten very far, but you are not done yet. You still have to persuade others. This stage is as important as the previous stages. Take your time for it. Some people think that a good idea sells itself. Unfortunately, we do not think this is true. Too often we have seen that mediocre ideas beat top ideas during the final presentation. They were simply sold better. The pitches were miles apart.

All people, also people you want to sell your concept to, are everything but rational and objective. They can be manipulated, even if this may sound bad. Therefore, make sure you have an amazing close to your pitch. Put together an amazing pitch, that lets your audience cry tears of joy. This is a good moment to make use of the six skills. Empathise, tell a good story and support this with a well-designed presentation.

Here, we give you a couple of tips for putting together a fantastic pitch. We have divided them into the four phases of the pitch. They are *attention*, *problem*, *solution with prototype* and *finishing*.



**“Nobody likes to hear it, because it’s dull. But the reason you win or lose is darn always the same – pitching.”**

**Earl Weaver**