The Inner Designer: Mindset

Unlocking fresh approaches to complex challenges with non-linear thinking

Systemic Design Community of Practice

Our Aspirations:

- **Build** the field of practice around systemic design and social innovation approaches in the GoA.

- **Catalyze** and **inspire** new ways of working on old problems.

- **Provide** a safe space for GoA staff to learn from each other, with each other.

We do this by:

- **Designing** sessions with a mix of theory and learning by practicing.

- Being **open** and willing to **share** our experiences with others.

- Having **fun** —we take our work seriously, not ourselves.

Learning Objectives

- Participants gain an understanding of the Designer Mindset and its key traits.

- Participants are able to identify characteristics of their own mindset and how it shows up in their life and work.

- Participants understand the benefits of a Designer Mindset and gain some techniques to begin nurturing their own.

- Participants gain experience exploring how constraints can positively influence outcomes.

What does 'mindset' mean to you?
Is 'mindset' something you think about – your own or others?

Rapidly Build New Connections | 3 Conversations X 3 Minutes

- Mindset types
- The Design Mindset
- Shifting mindsets
- Exploring constraints
- Reflection

Growth Mindset

"Failure is an opportunity to grow"

GROWTH MINDSET

"I can learn to do anything I want"

"Challenges help me to grow"

"My effort and attitude determine my abilities"

"Feedback is constructive"

"I am inspired by the success of others"

"I like to try new things"

Fixed Mindset

"Failure is the limit of my abilities"

FIXED MINDSET

"I'm either good at it or I'm not"

"My abilities are unchanging"

"I don't like to be challenged"

"I can either do it, or I can't"

"My potential is predetermined"

"When I'm frustrated, I give up"

"Feedback and criticism are personal

"I stick to what I know"

Fixed Mindset

Status quo

Plan & execute

Failure is unacceptable

Anxiety over the unknown

Time capsules

Growth Mindset

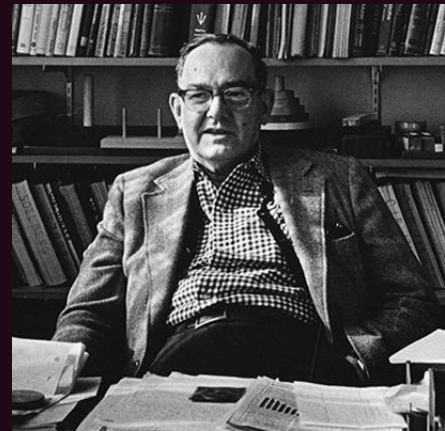Cultivation of ability

Continuous improvement

Challenges as opportunity

Failure as springboard

Effort required

The Design Mindset

"Anyone is a designer who devises a course of action to turn an existing situation into a preferred one."

● Herbert A. Simon

Design mindset ⇎ Being a designer
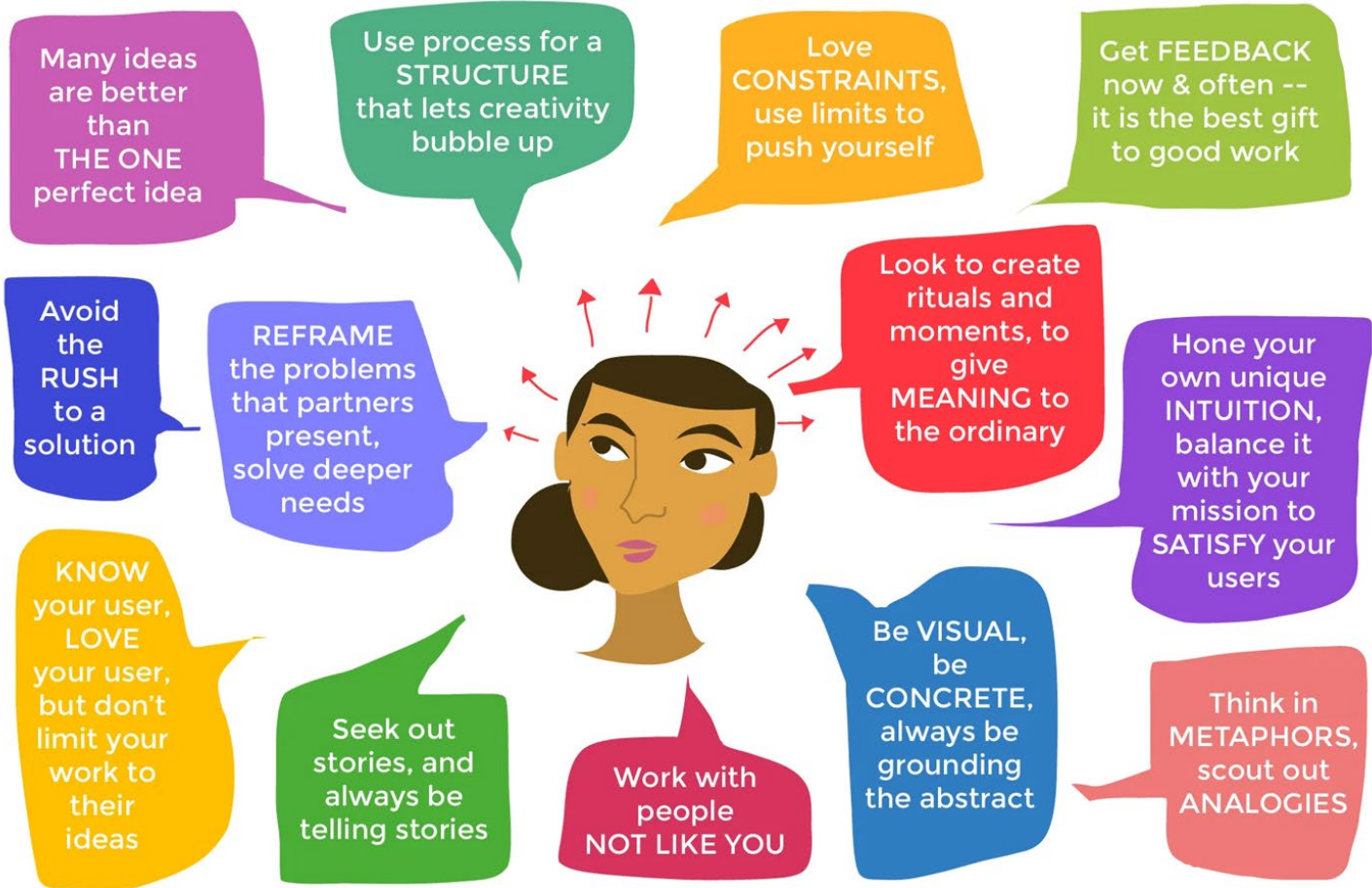
Design mindset ⇔ Capacity to design

Design Mindset

Hopefully optimistic

Human-centred

Work in the open

Constraints = opportunity

Imaginaction*

(c) Margaret Hagan 2014

Fixed

Abilities and attributes are inherently fixed - I am either good or not good at something based on my inherent nature.

- I avoid challenges because I know I won't succeed.
- Failure is not an option. I'll give up before that happens.
- I ignore feedback that is negative.
- I did not receive enough guidance.
- I was not given direction.
- I feel threatened by success of others.

Growth

My talents and skills can be developed through learning, and feedback. I can master new skills with the necessary effort and work.

- I accept challenges and will learn from mistakes.
- I can master this skill with dedication and effort
- I can learn from criticism.
- I will learn how to be comfortable being uncomfortable.
- I'll try to figure this out.
- Success of others is inspiration.

Design

I embrace ambiguity as opportunities to explore problems deeply, experiment, and learn from failure.

- Challenges are opportunities to make things better.
- Criticism is encouraged often.
- I embrace ambiguity and exploration.
- Avoid rushing to a solution, but biased towards experiments.
- I acknowledge the past to create the future.

Shifting mindsets

Circles of Mindset

Exploring your mindset and associations
(adapted from the Paseo Protocol)

CIRCLES OF MINDSET: When facing a new challenge, how do you show up?

CoLab.

What are you currently feeling?

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What attributes are serving you well?

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What attributes are hindering you from achieving what you want?

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Associations w. Attribute

Attribute

Who are you?

When might have a change in mindset served you well?

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What conditions would enable you to be in a growth mindset?

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What impact would a growth mindset have on your work?

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MINDSET SPECTRUM | FIXED ← ——————————→ GROWTH ← ——→ DESIGN

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Perfectionist

Very detailed-oriented

Critical of others

Work faster on my own

When might have a change in mindset served you well?

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What conditions would enable you to be in a growth mindset?

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What impact would a growth mindset have on your work?

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| MINDSET SPECTRUM | FIXED ◄ | | GROWTH ◄ | ► DESIGN |

CIRCLES OF MINDSET: When facing a new challenge, how do you show up?

CoLab.

What are you currently feeling?

Excited

Intrigued

A bit uncertain

What attributes are serving you well?

Work faster on my own - If I do it myself, I can avoid mistakes and looking bad.

What attributes are hindering you from achieving what you want?

Perfectionist - put a lot of effort in to get the thing right, so that I don't fail.

Very detailed-oriented

Associations we have...

Perfectionist

Critical of others

Work faster on my own
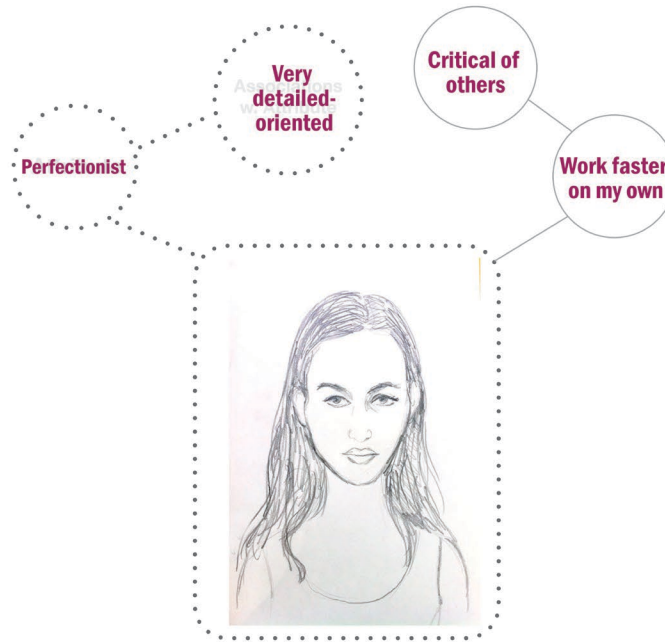
Feels like this is me.

When might have a change in mindset served you well?

Was asked to produce a briefing note on a subject that I'm not familiar with. Had a really tough time - this isn't my job and there wasn't enough direction. Growth mindset would've enabled me to ask for help, see an opportunity to learn.

What conditions would enable you to be in a growth mindset?

Seeking feedback and learning to accept criticism, instead of expecting perfection every time I do something.

What impact would a growth mindset have on your work?

Value progress over perfection

Be more of a team player

Feel less pressure to constantly prove myself

| MINDSET SPECTRUM | FIXED ◄ | | GROWTH ◄ | ► DESIGN |

Source: Paseo Protocol, adapted by Alberta CoLab

Exploring constraints

Constraints

Time

Resources

Money

Authority

Geography

Reality

"Always design a thing by considering it in its next larger context – a chair in a room, a room in a house, a house in an environment, an environment in a city plan."

- **Eliel Saarinen**

Pausing Feasibility

Exploring the effects of constraints on what is possible

The Challenge: Current State

- Globally, 30-40% of food produced for consumption is wasted per year.

- If food waste were a country, it would rank third in the world for harmful greenhouse gas emissions. Yet 800 million people are undernourished.

- When we dramatically reduce food waste, we're also addressing hunger, harnessing economic potential, and being good to the earth.

How might we drastically reduce food waste in Alberta?

Round 1: No constraints

- Working in teams of 2, develop an **ideal** state without constraints of time, budget, and resources, etc.

- **Think big! Be bold! Think systemically!**

- The only limits are the materials you've been provided (use as much or as little), and **30 mins** to complete.

Round 2:
Budget & Time

- Combine with another pair to make a team of 4.

- Budget constraints dictate a **reduction in half of your resources.** Set aside half of your building materials.

- Devise a new solution using the remaining materials.

- You have **20 minutes.**

Answer the following:

Given your previous ideal state, how might you maintain the advantages and benefits?

What approach(es) might you take to address the constraint?

How will your solution maintain the core idea from your ideal state?

Round 3: Priority

- An urgent request requires your team to shift focus to reducing food waste **and single-use plastics.**

- **How might we drastically reduce food waste and single-use plastics from food packaging?**
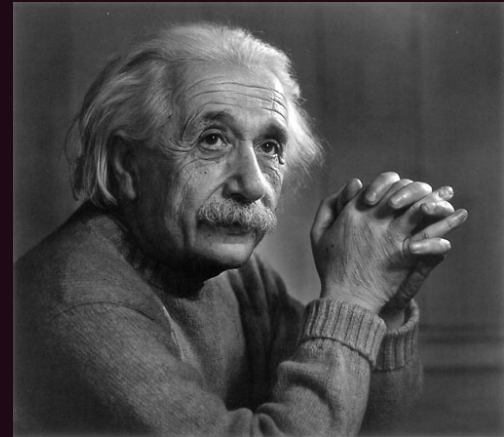
- You have **10 minutes.**

"We cannot solve our problems using the same thinking we used when we created them."

- Albert Einstein

Reflection

What is one of your design mindset muscles you'd like to start flexing more?

How might you get started when you go back to work tomorrow?

Coming Soon

Policy as a Service

Exploring policymaking as a form of service

December 10, 2019

Hacking Service Design

Exploring formal & informal workarounds to implementing service design

January 21, 2020