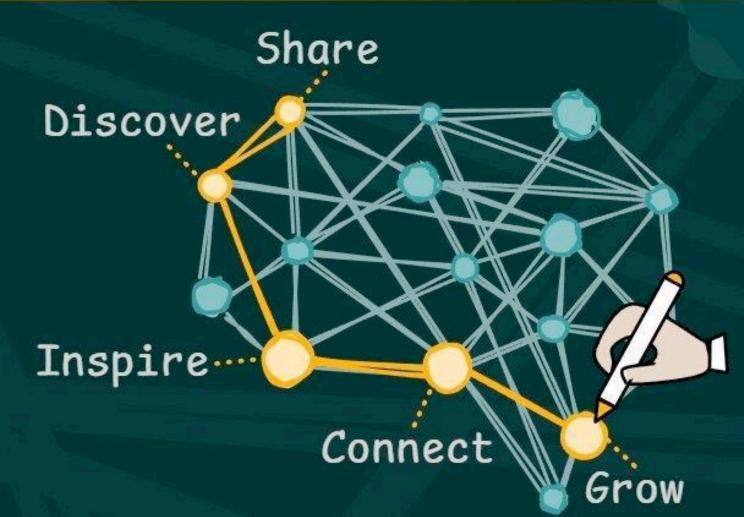
### SKETCH YOUR MIND CONFERENCE

https://sketch-your-mind.com/2025





From Blank Page to Big Picture

Paris

18:00



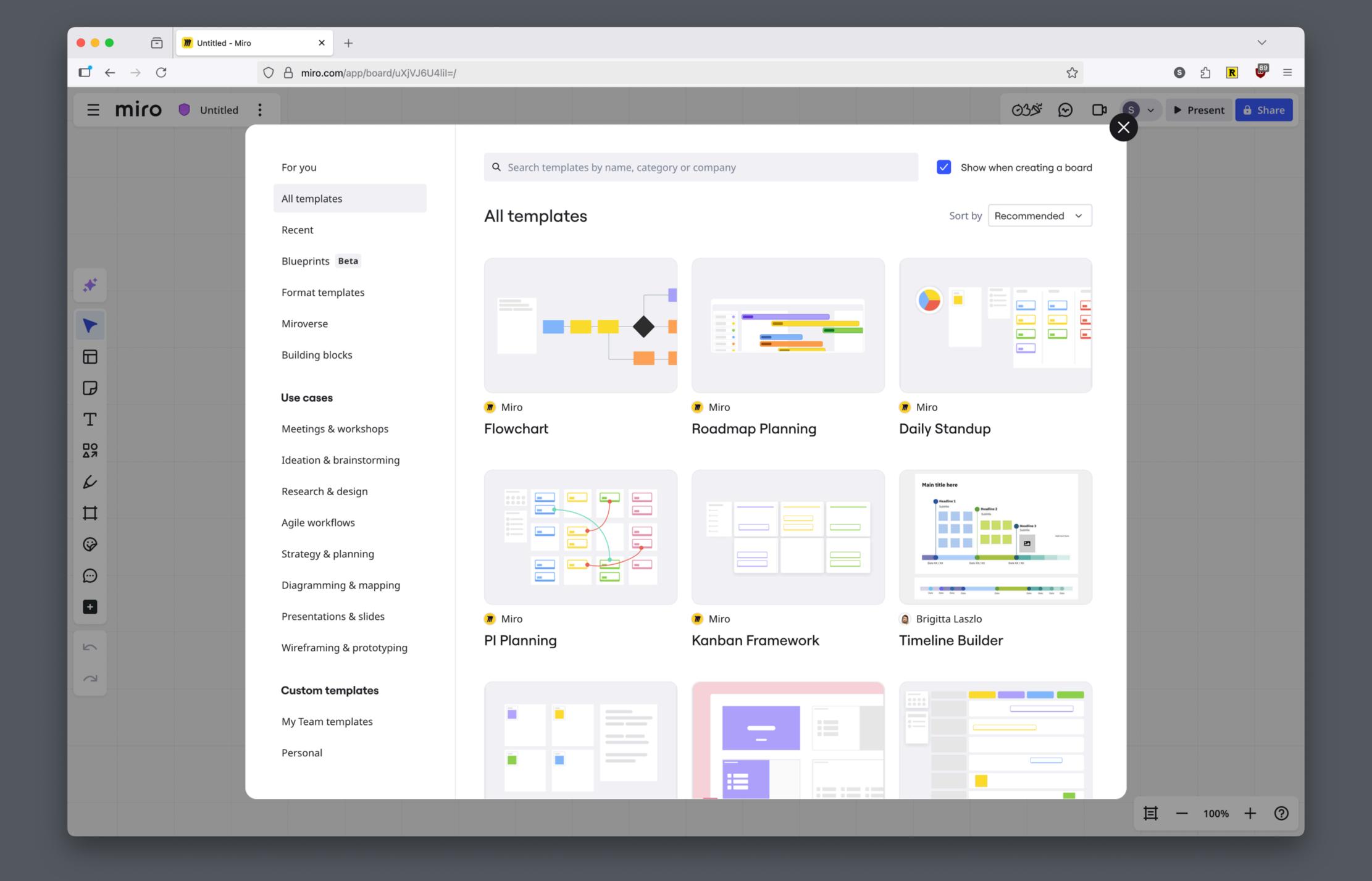


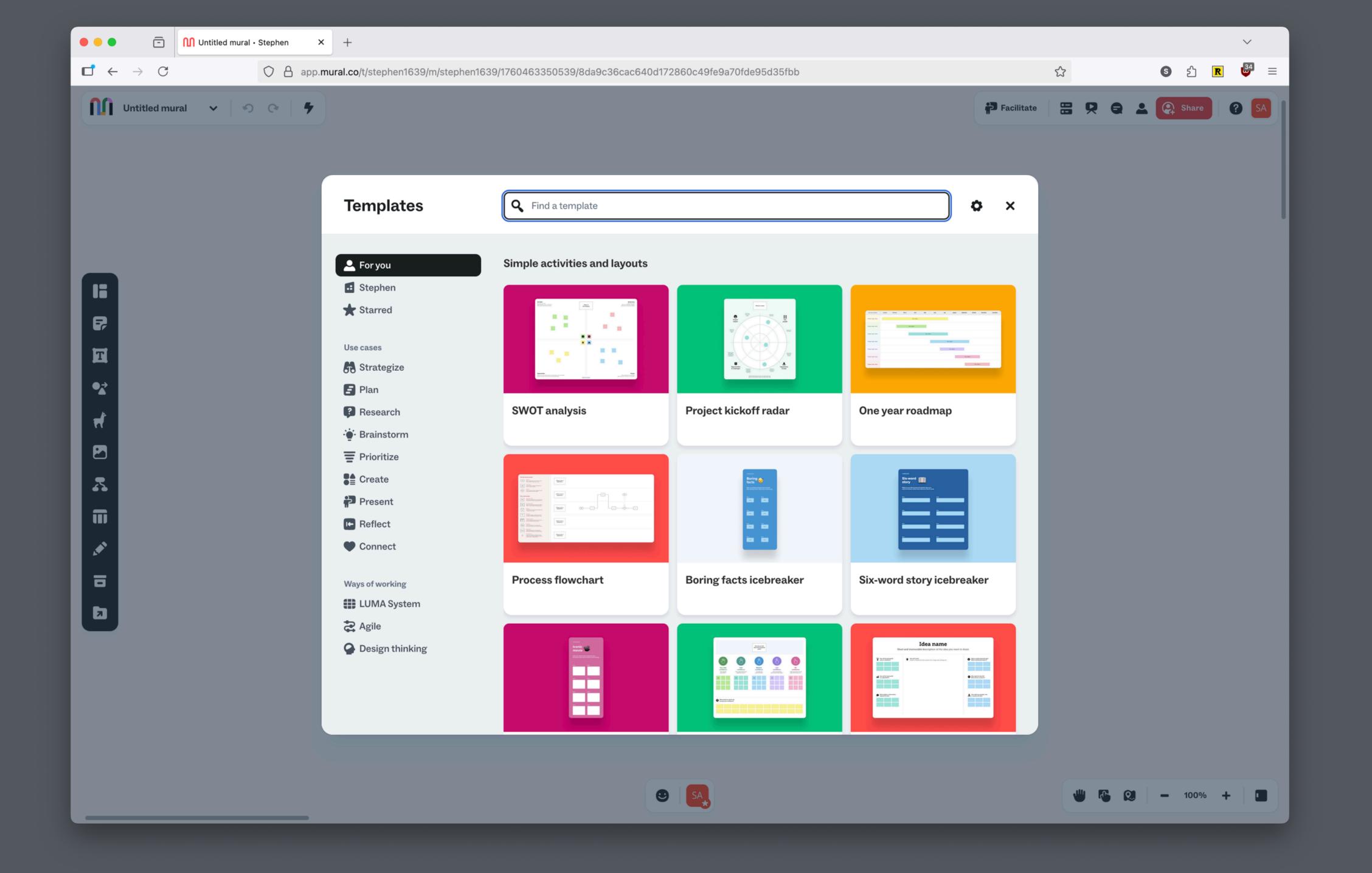
Tuesday, October 14, 2025

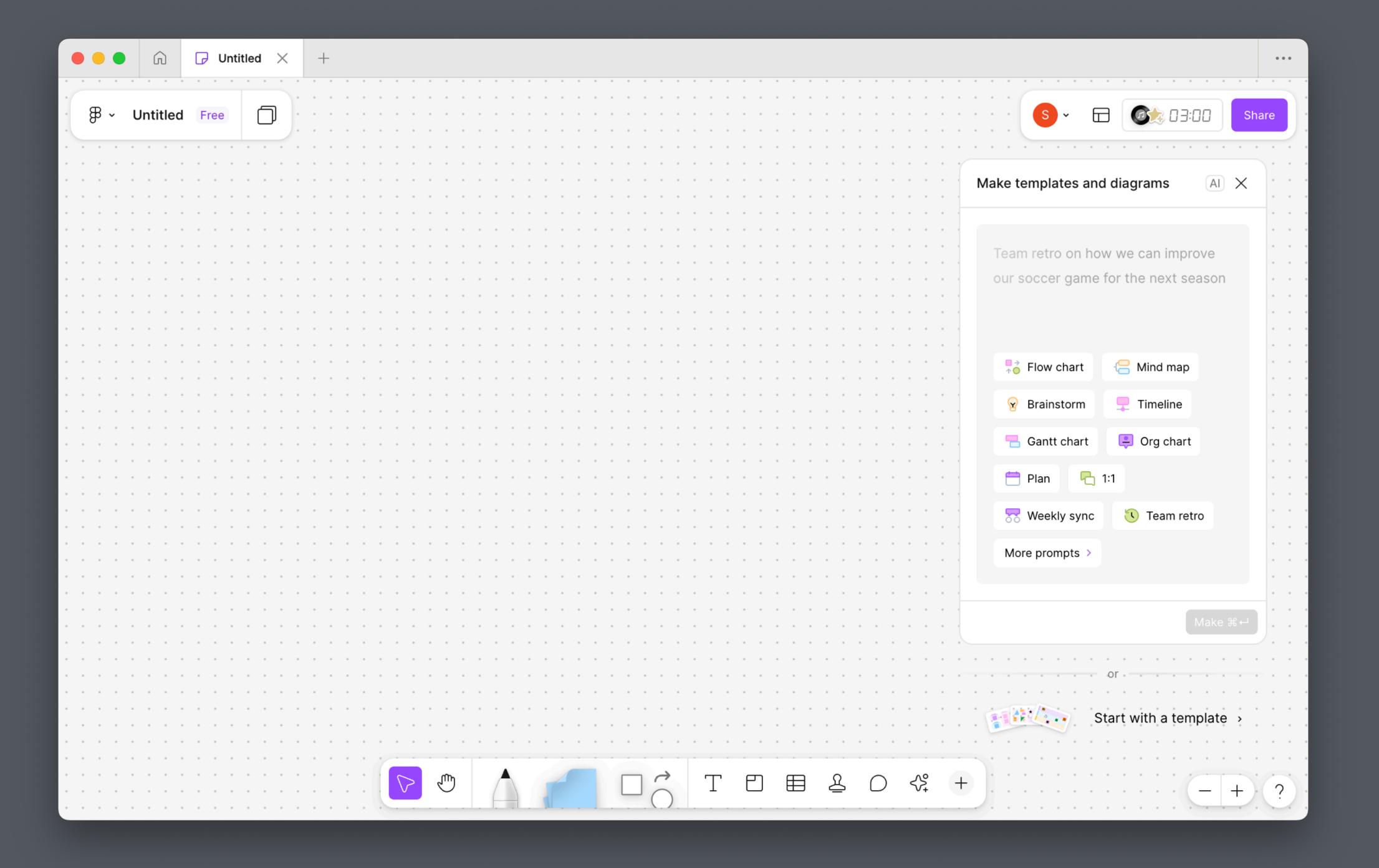




#### I WANT TO SHOW YOU SOMETHING...







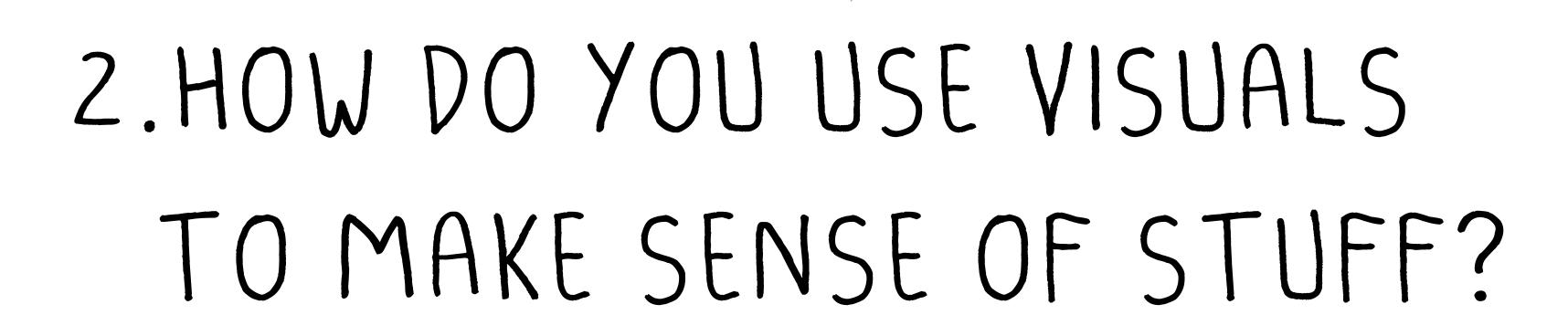
MOST\* PEOPLE, WHEN THEY ENCOUNTER A BLANK SCREEN, NEVER COME BACK.

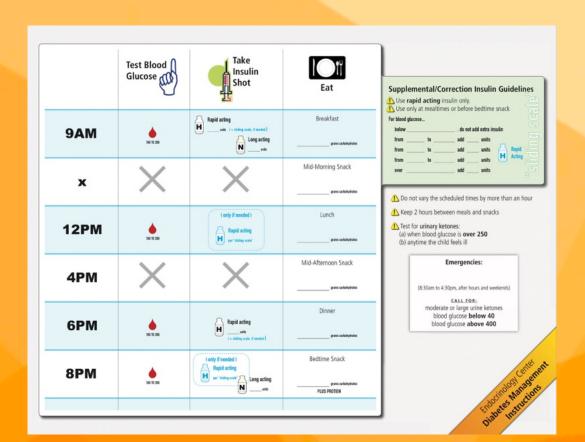
#### BLANK SCREENS ARE SCARY!

(FOR MOST PEOPLE)

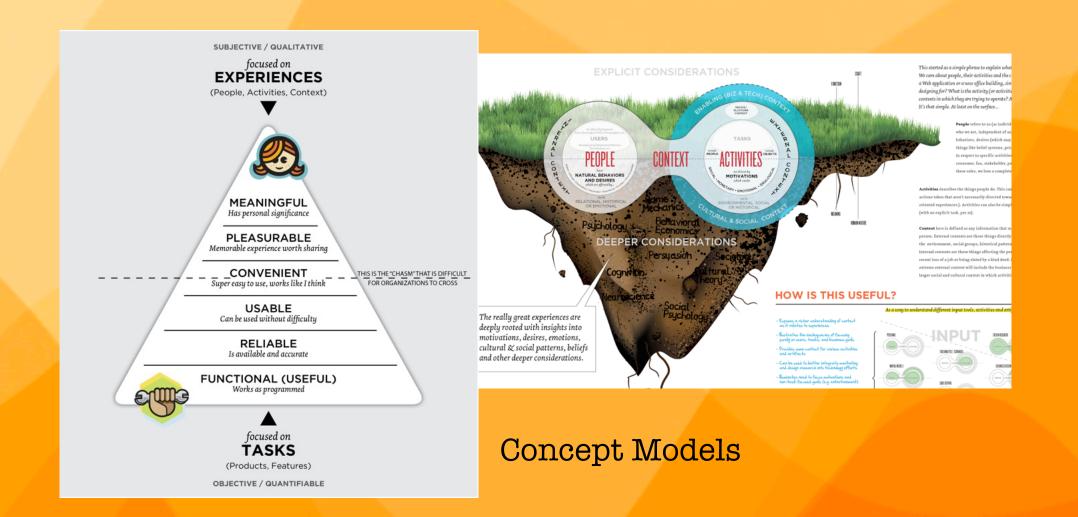
"The 'blank canvas' problem isn't just about the absence of content, but about the lack of initial direction. When users are faced with a completely empty starting point, they're forced to invent both the material and the structure in order to make progress. This often creates hesitation, slows momentum, and makes starting a task the most difficult part. We can reduce this friction by designing tools that scaffold users' early steps, enabling them to efficiently find the direction towards their goal."

### 1. THE "BLANK SCREEN" PROBLEM





Medical charts



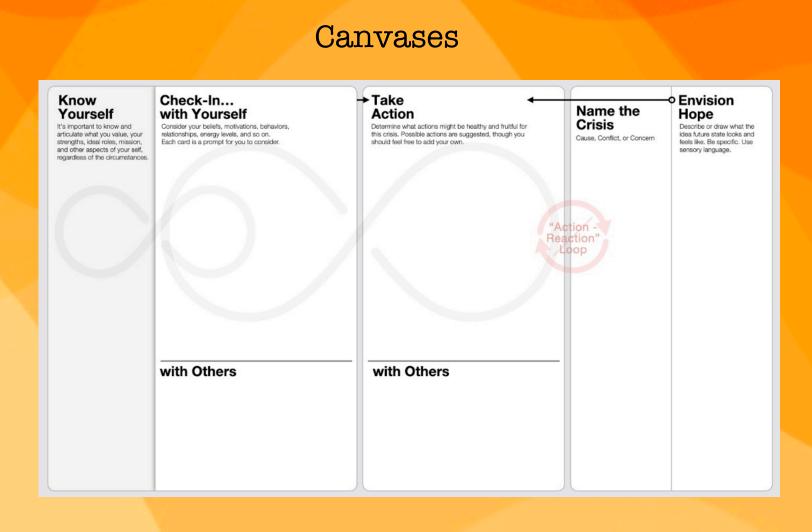


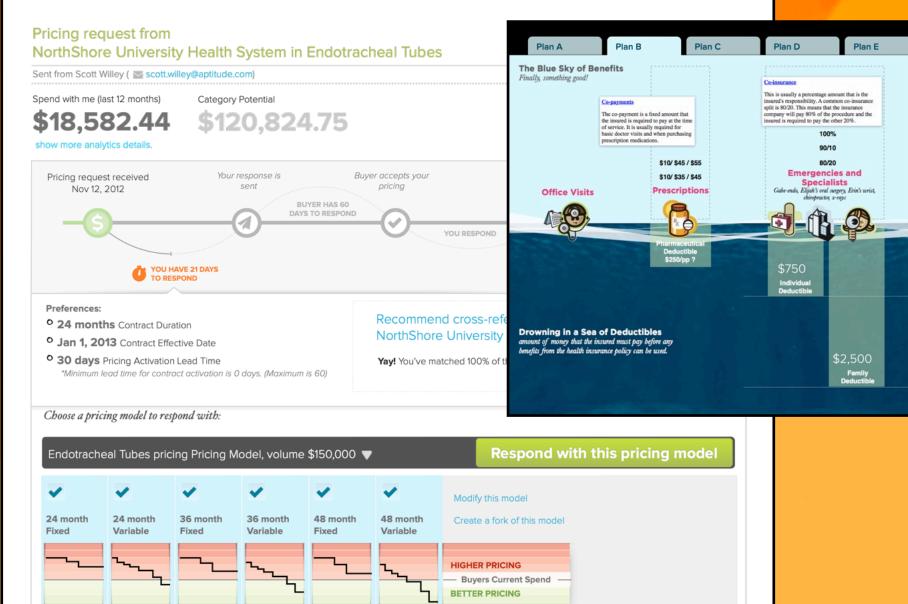
Shopping!

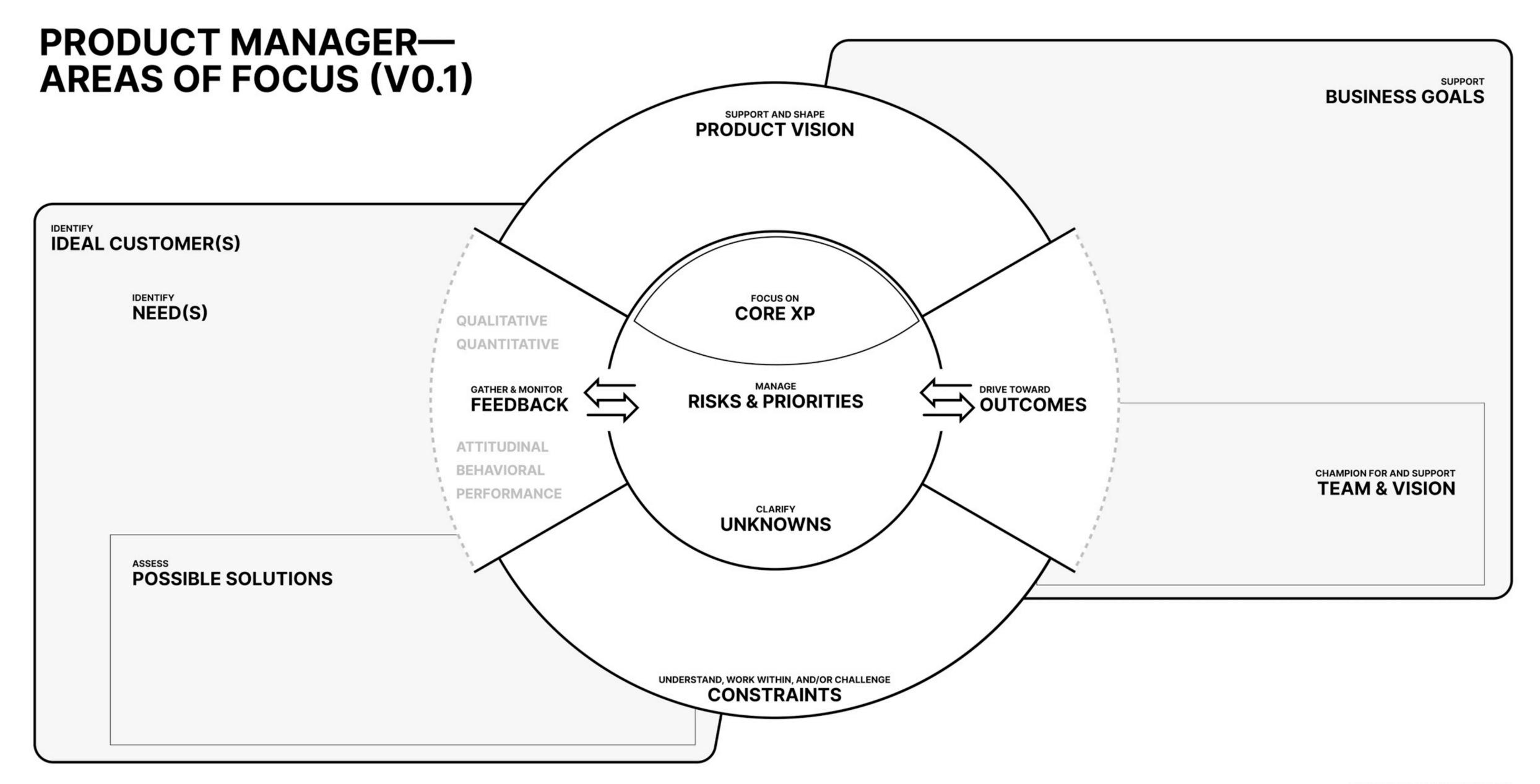
#### I AM A VISUAL SENSEMAKER!

User Interfaces



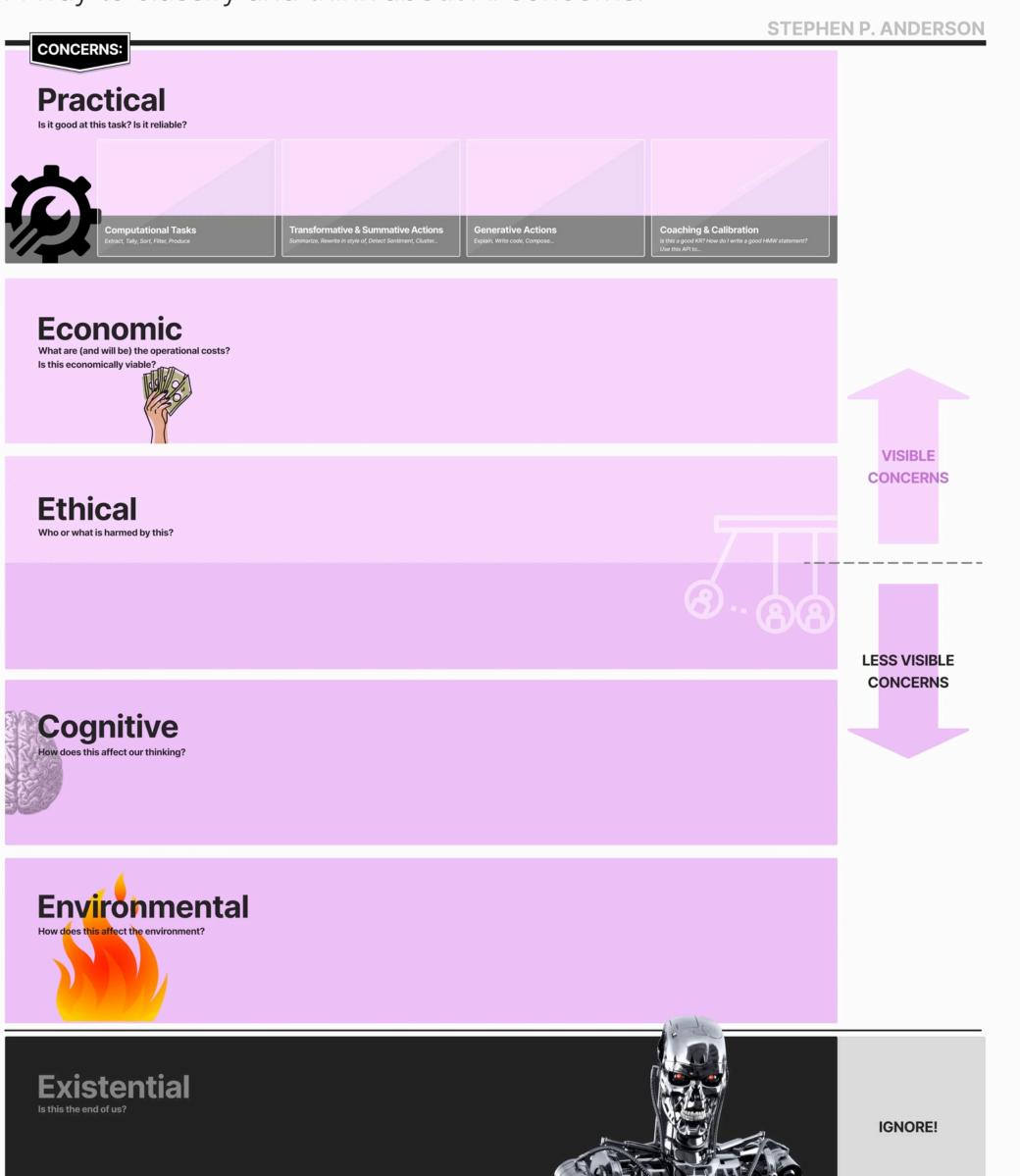


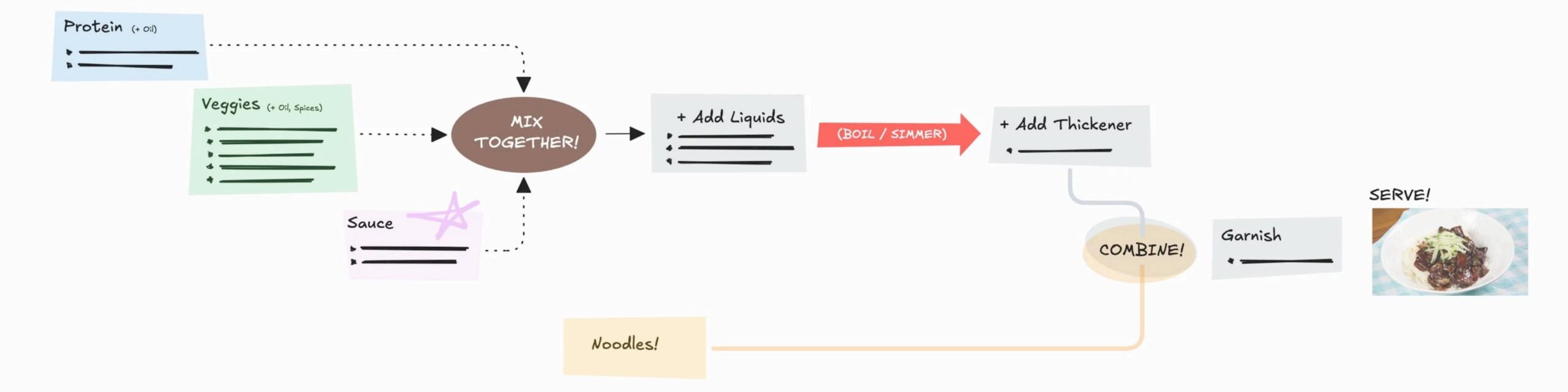




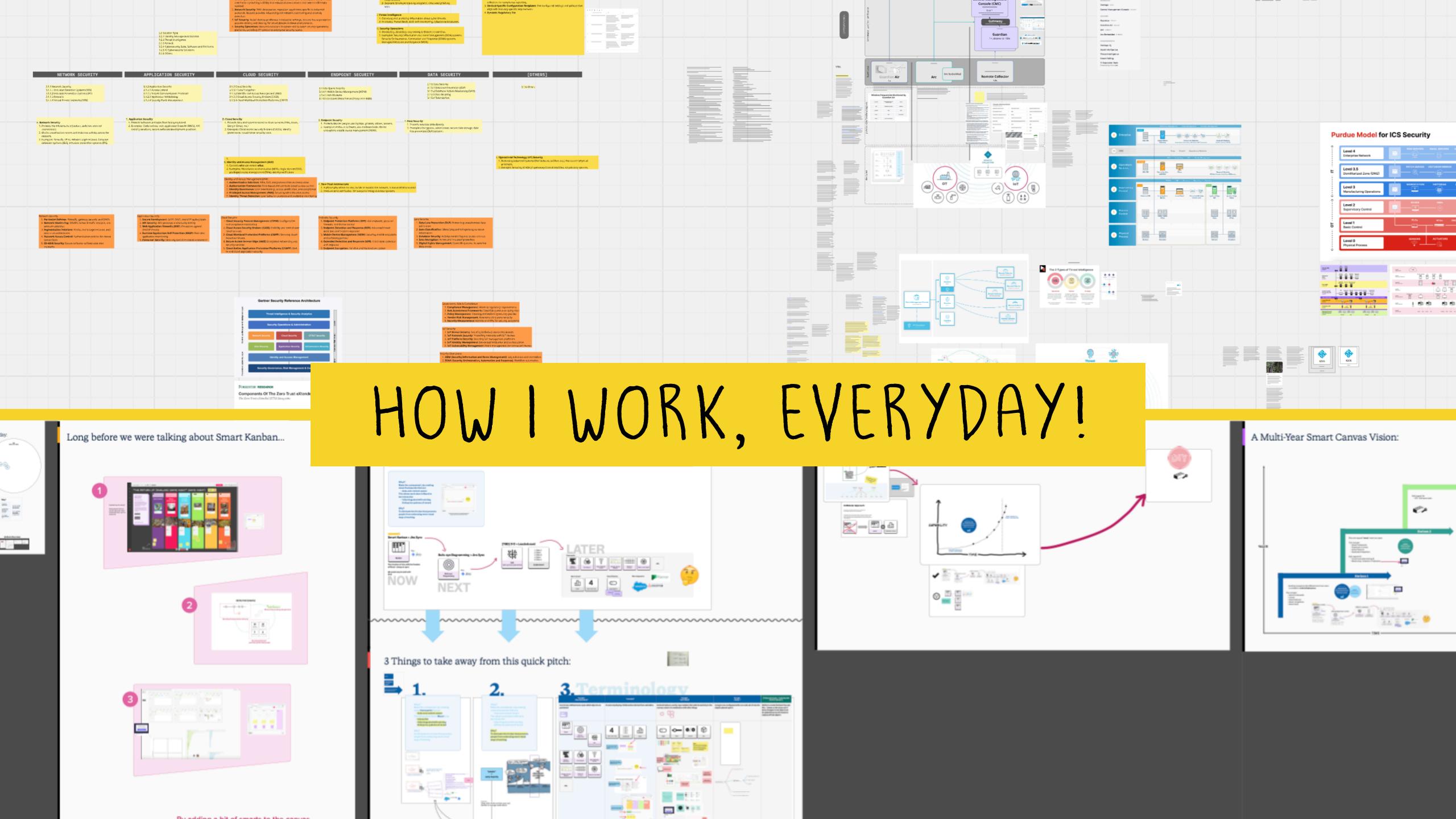
#### The P.E.E.C.E. Framework

A way to classify and think about Al concerns.





TIME-



# EVERY ONE OF THESE VISUALS BEGAN WITH QUESTION(S) AND A BLANK SCREEN.

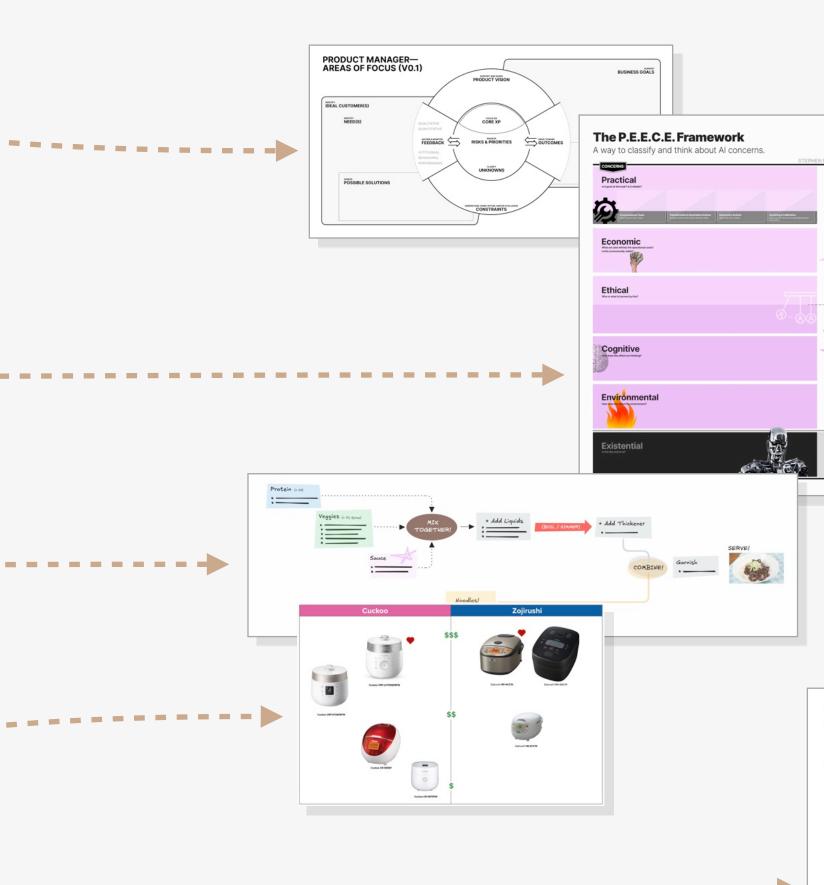
"WHAT DOES A PRODUCT MANAGER ACTUALLY DO?"

"IS THERE A USEFUL WAY TO ORGANIZE MY AI CONCERNS?"

"HOW DO I MAKE JJAJANGMYEUN?" -----

"WHICH RICE COOKER SHOULD I BUY?" -

"WHAT DOES OT CYBERSECURITY MONITOR?" -----





## START WITH A FRAMING QUESTION (OR QUESTIONS)

# EVERY ONE OF THESE VISUALS BEGAN WITH QUESTION(S) AND A BLANK SCREEN.

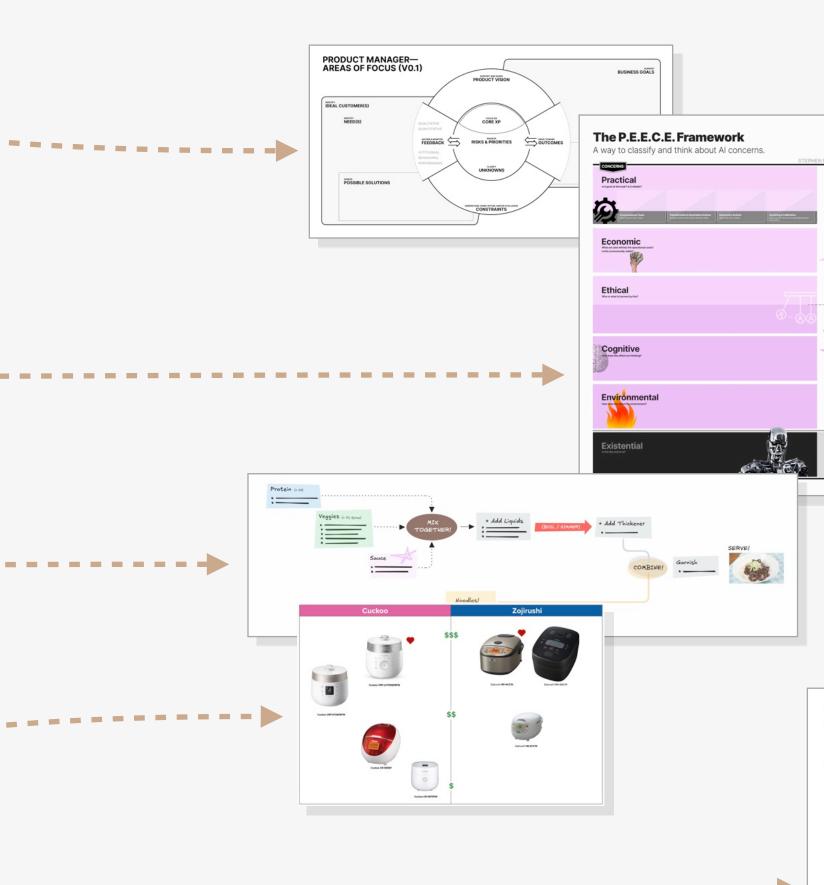
"WHAT DOES A PRODUCT MANAGER ACTUALLY DO?"

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"WHICH RICE COOKER SHOULD I BUY?" -

"WHAT DOES OT CYBERSECURITY MONITOR?" -----



# EVERY ONE OF THESE VISUALS BEGAN WITH QUESTION(S) AND A BLANK SCREEN.

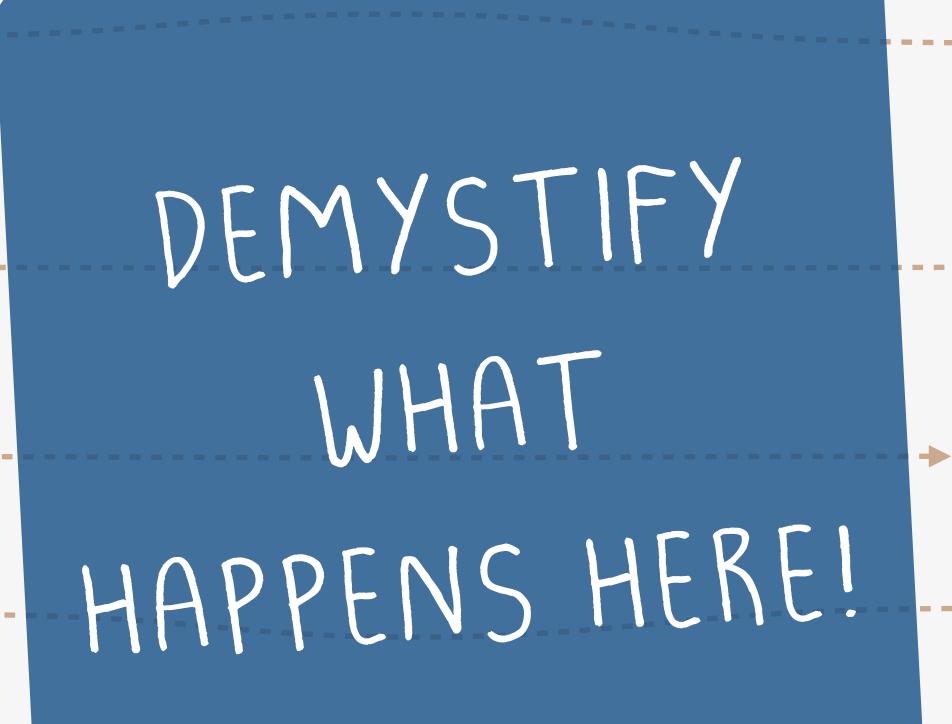
"WHAT DOES A PRODUCT MANAGER ACTUALLY DO?"

"IS THERE A USEFUL WAY TO ORGANIZE MY AI CONCERNS?"

"HOW DO I MAKE JJAJANGMYEUN?"

"WHICH RICE COOKER SHOULD I BUY?"

"WHAT DOES OT CYBERSECURITY MONITOR?



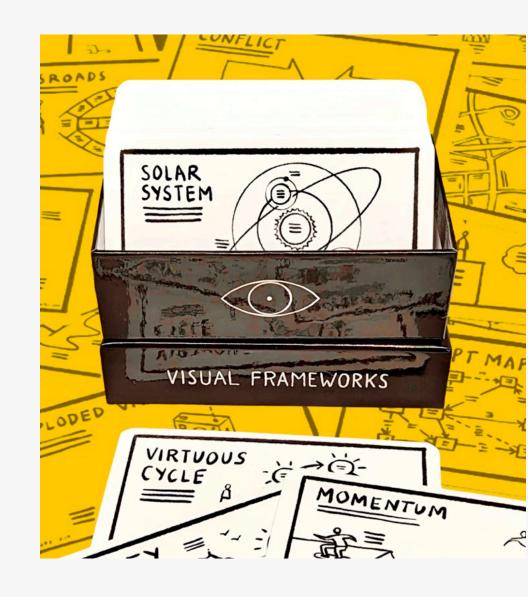


IDEAS FROM DATA
VISUALIZATION (+ ELSEWHERE)

\*

\* SPATIAL ARRANGEMENT VISUAL ENCODINGS

...BUT FOCUSED ON CONCEPTS

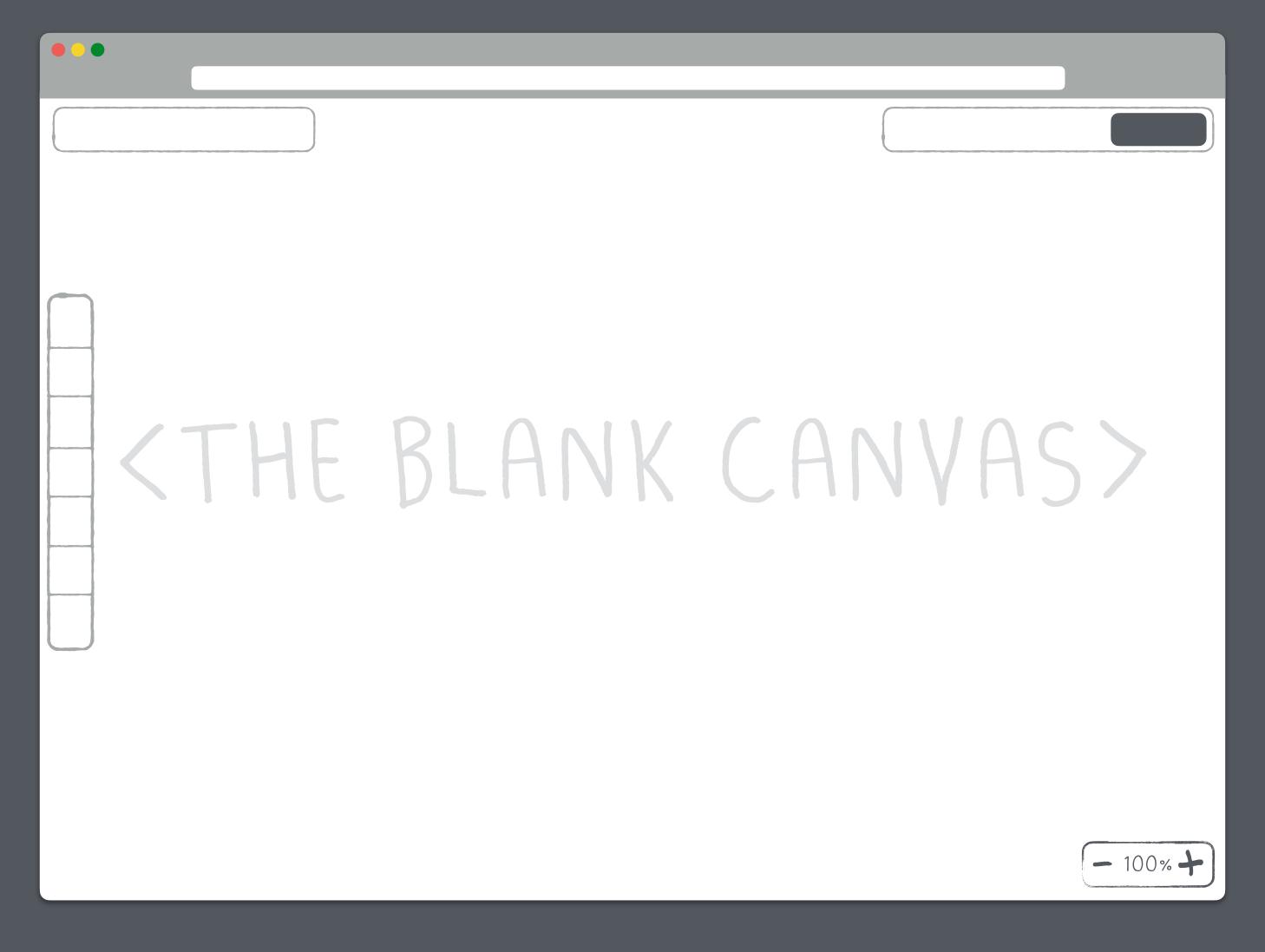


NOTE: NOT SKETCHNOTING

#### STATED DIFFERENTLY,

#### MY GOAL FOR THIS TALK...

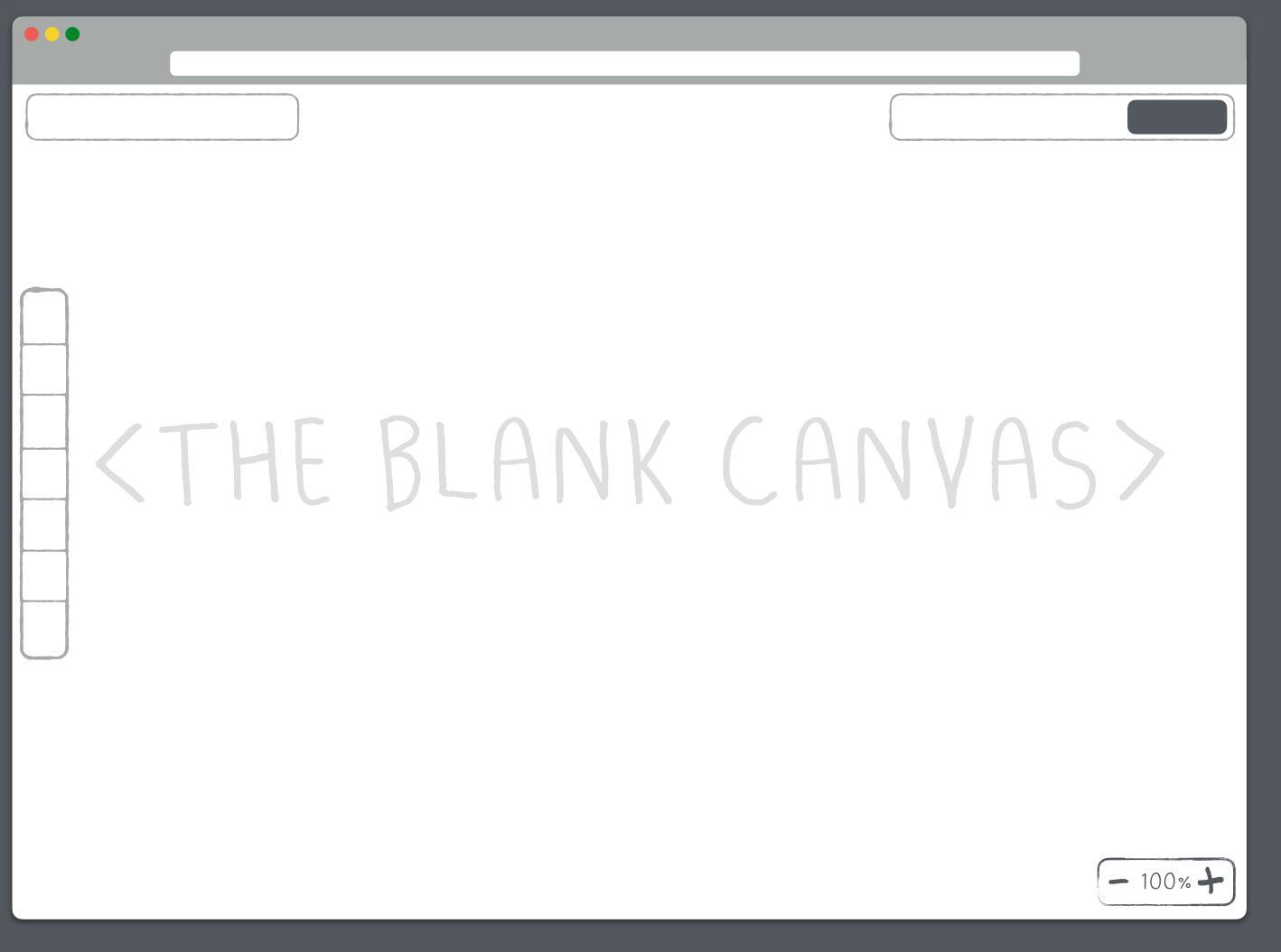
#### TO MAKE THIS...





LESS SCARY!

#### TO MAKE THIS...



MIRO MURAL FIGJAM TLDRAW EXCALIDRAW OBSIDIAN CANVAS HEPTABASE KOSMIK NOTEEY FREEFORM ETC!



#### TO MAKE THIS...

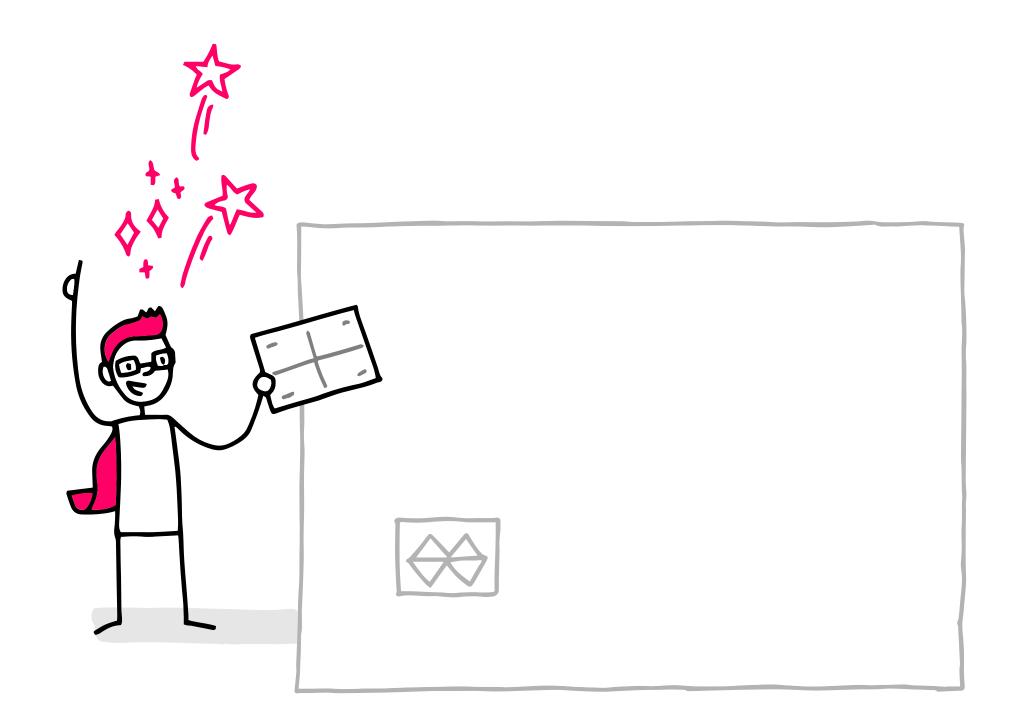
KTHE BLANK CANVAS>

A BLANK
SHEET OF
PAPER!



LESS SCARY!

# BUT NOT JUST LESS SCARY!



## EXCITING!



"The 'blank canvas' problem isn't just about the absence of content, but about the lack of initial direction. When users are faced with a completely empty starting point, they're forced to invent both the material and the structure in order to make progress. This often creates hesitation, slows momentum, and makes starting a task the most difficult part. We can reduce this friction by designing tools that scaffold users' early steps, enabling them to efficiently find the direction towards their goal."

"The 'blank canvas' problem isn't just about the absence of content, but about the lack of initial direction. When users are faced with a completely empty starting point, they're forced to invent both the material and the structure in order to make progress. This often creates hesitation, slows momentum, and makes starting a task the most difficult part. We can reduce this friction by designing tools that scaffold users' early steps, enabling them to efficiently find the direction towards their goal."

"The 'blank canvas' problem isn't just about the absence of content, but about the lack of initial direction. When users are faced with a completely empty starting point, they're forced to invent both the "CONTENT" and the structure in order to make progress. This often creates hesitation, slows momentum, and makes starting a task the most difficult part. We can reduce this friction by designing tools that scaffold users' early steps, enabling them to efficiently find the direction towards their goal."

### BUT FIRST, WHY ARE THESE OK? (5)

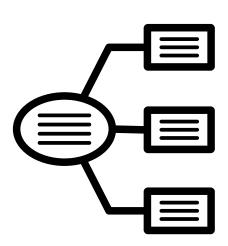


ALL OF THESE START WITH NO CONTENT AND BLANK SCREENS. OR PAGES / WALLS!

(OR BLANK-ISH)

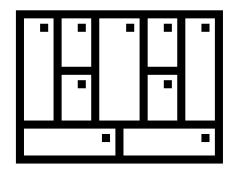
TEXT EDITORS







(CANVASES, FRAMEWORKS, ETC.)



#### FACILITATION ACTIVITIES

(EXAMPLE, EXAMPLE, EXAMPLE)



### BUT FIRST, WHY ARE THESE OK?

ALL OF THESE START WITH NO CONTENT AND BLANK SCREENS (OR PAGES / WALLS!)

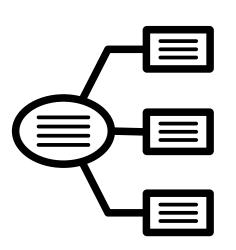
(OR BLANK-ISH)

TEXT EDITORS



LIMITING STRUCTURE:
-LINEAR

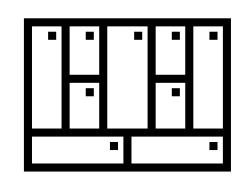
MIND MAPPING TOOLS



-BRANCHING

TEMPLATES!

(CANVASES, FRAMEWORKS, ETC.)



-GUIDED

FACILITATION ACTIVITIES

(EXAMPLE, EXAMPLE, EXAMPLE)



LIMITING STRUCTURE:
VARIES / INVOKED
(BY FACILITATOR)

IN CONTRAST, THE BLANK CANVAS STARTS WITH BOTH NO CONTENT AND NO PRE-DEFINED STRUCTURE!



## IN CONTRAST, THE BLANK CANVAS STARTS WITH BOTH NO CONTENT AND NO PRE-DEFINED STRUCTURE!

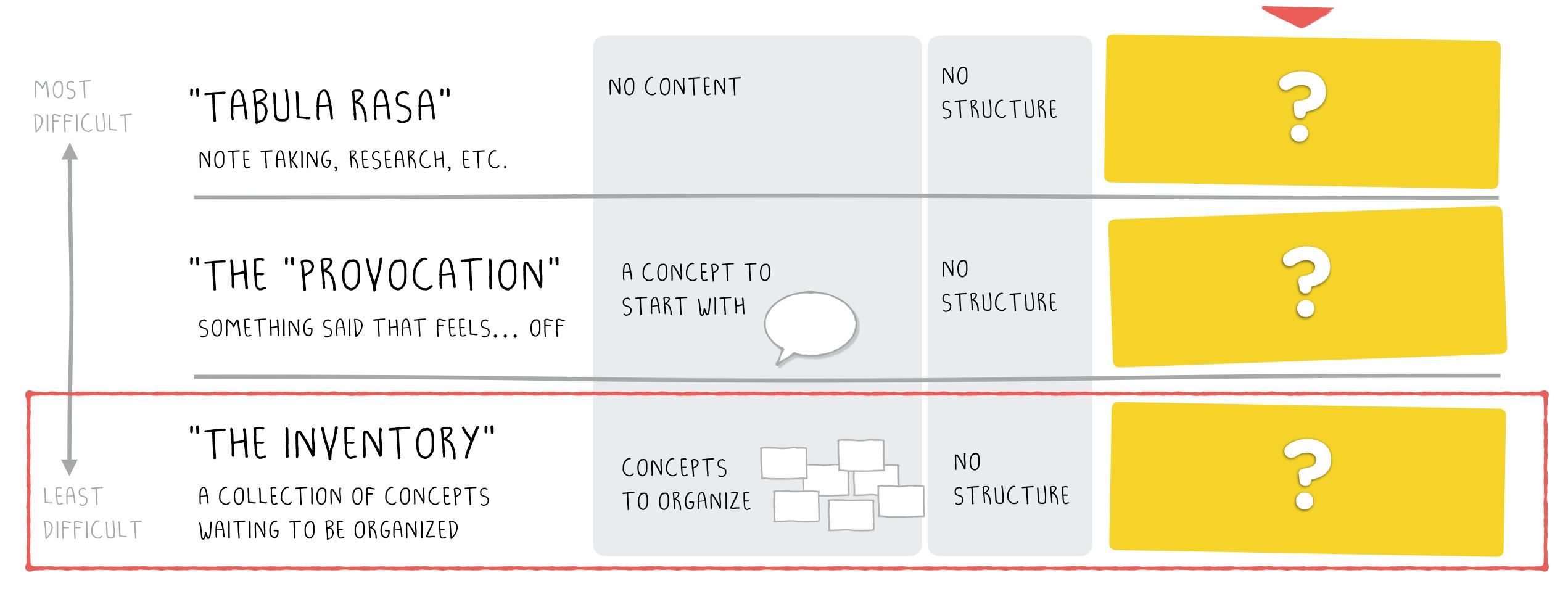
#### 3 KINDS OF "BLANK CANVAS" SITUATIONS:

NO NO CONTENT MOST "TABULA RASA" STRUCTURE DIFFICULT NOTE TAKING, RESEARCH, ETC. "THE "PROVOCATION" NO A CONCEPT TO STRUCTURE START WITH SOMETHING SAID THAT FEELS ... OFF "THE INVENTORY" NO CONCEPTS STRUCTURE A COLLECTION OF CONCEPTS TO ORGANIZE WAITING TO BE ORGANIZED DIFFICULT

AND HOW TO RESPOND:

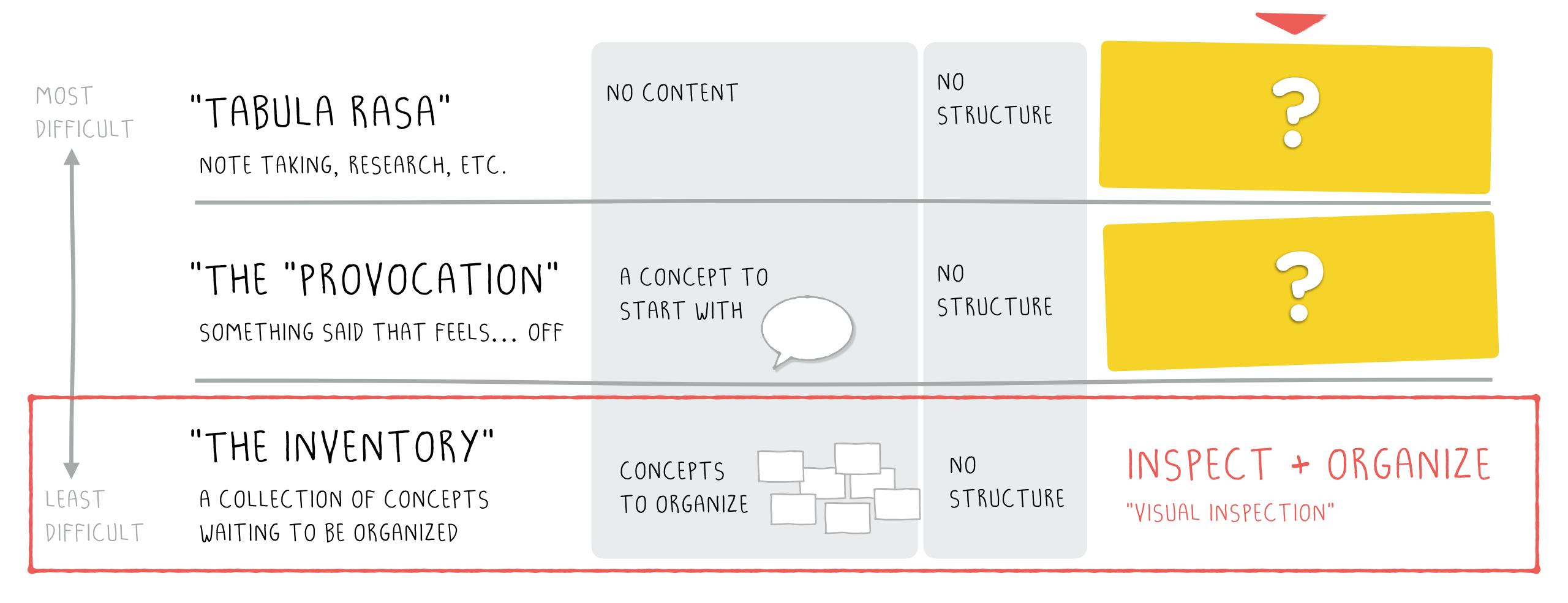
#### 3 KINDS OF "BLANK CANVAS" SITUATIONS:

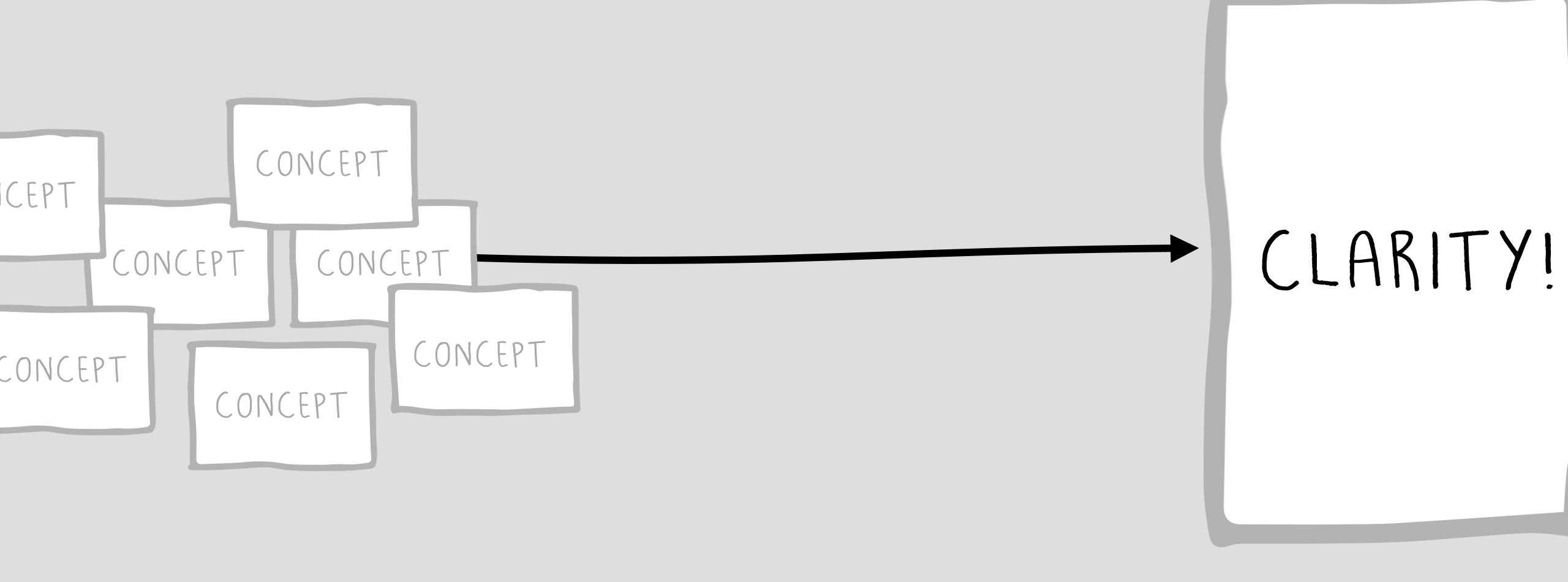
AND HOW TO RESPOND:



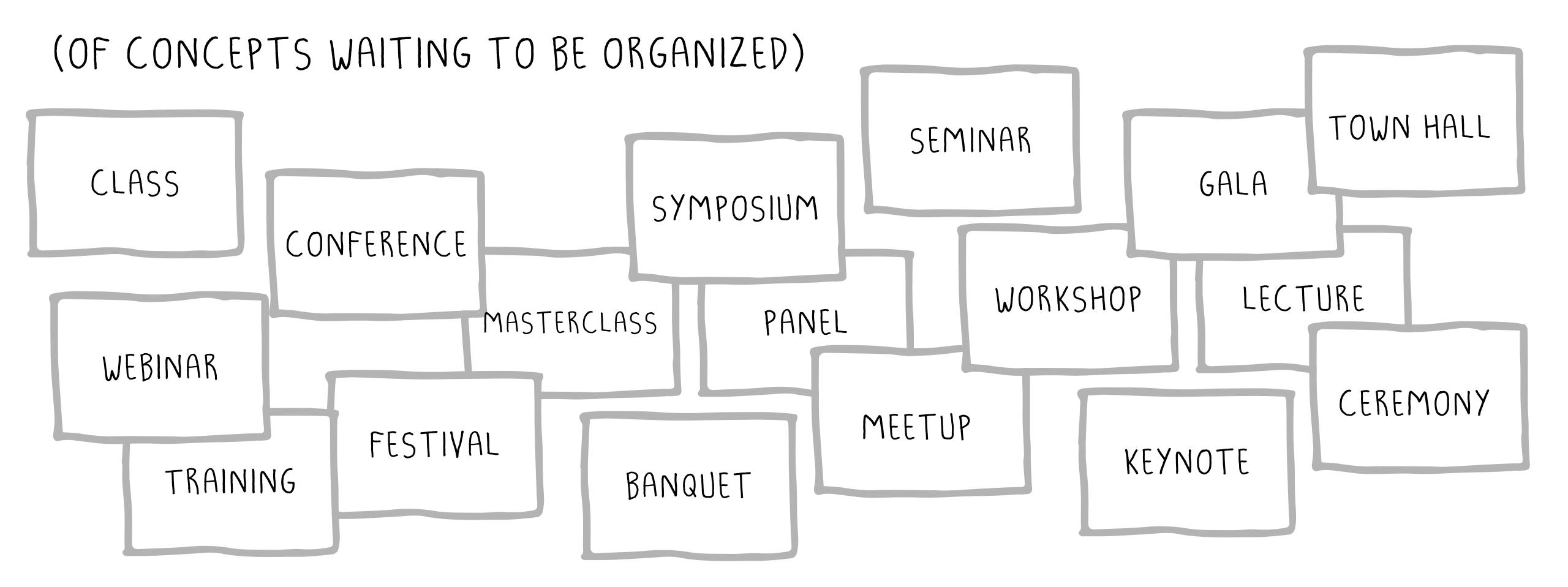
#### 3 KINDS OF "BLANK CANVAS" SITUATIONS:

#### AND HOW TO RESPOND:





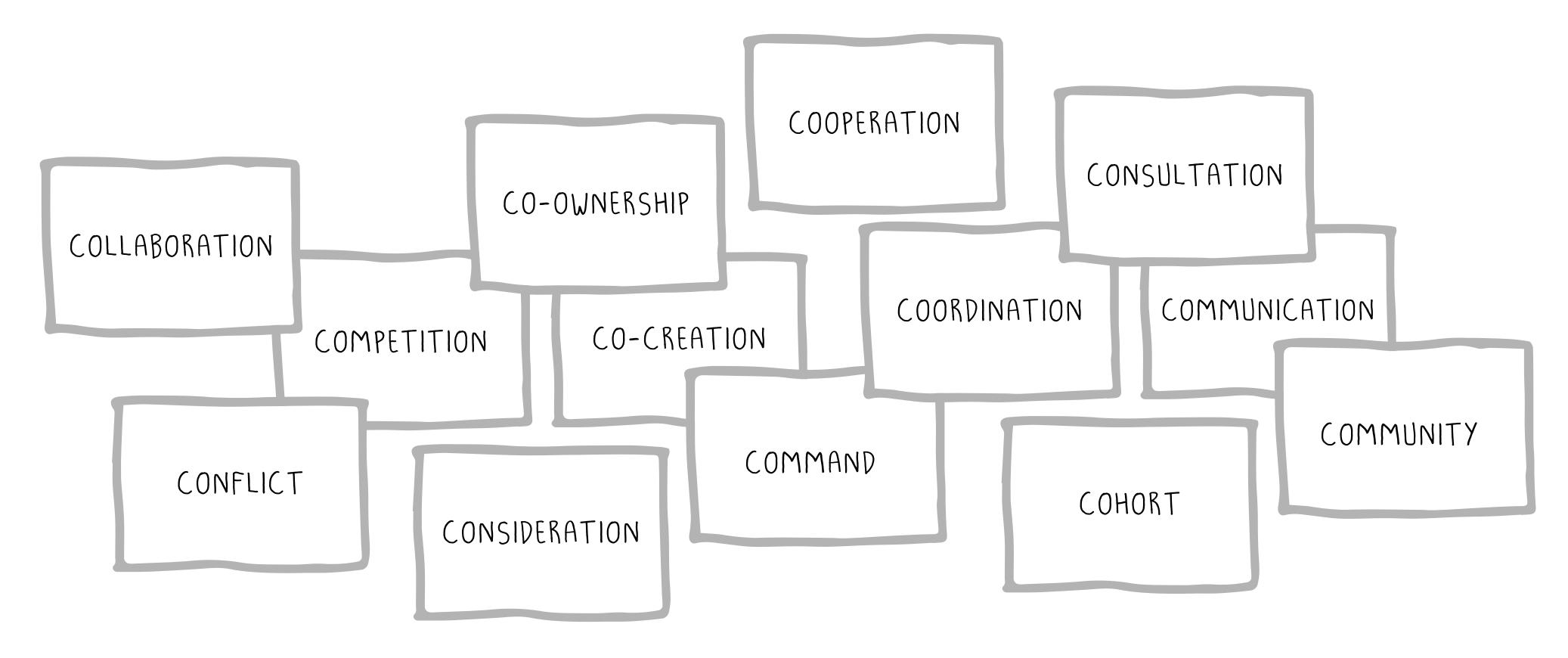
#### SOME EXAMPLES...



TYPES OF GATHERINGS

#### SOME EXAMPLES...

(OF CONCEPTS WAITING TO BE ORGANIZED)



#### SOME EXAMPLES...

(OF CONCEPTS WAITING TO BE ORGANIZED)



CAN I EAT THIS?

#### SOMETHING I'M WORKING ON...





Conceptual Blustrations -

Graphic / Comic Artists - Nick Sousanu

Visual Communications - graphic arts, advertising







Business Consulting

Political Cartoons

Information Design

Visual Notetaking Visual Notetaking / PKM stuff

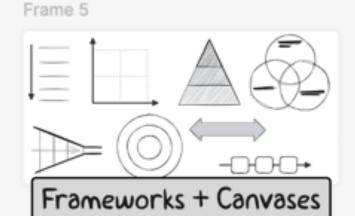
Visual Thinking...?

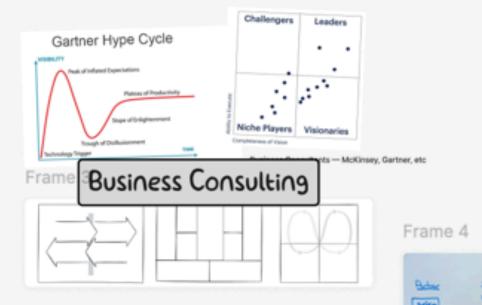
They are all giants in the field of visual thinking

Scott McCloud

Facilitators / Canvas Creators -





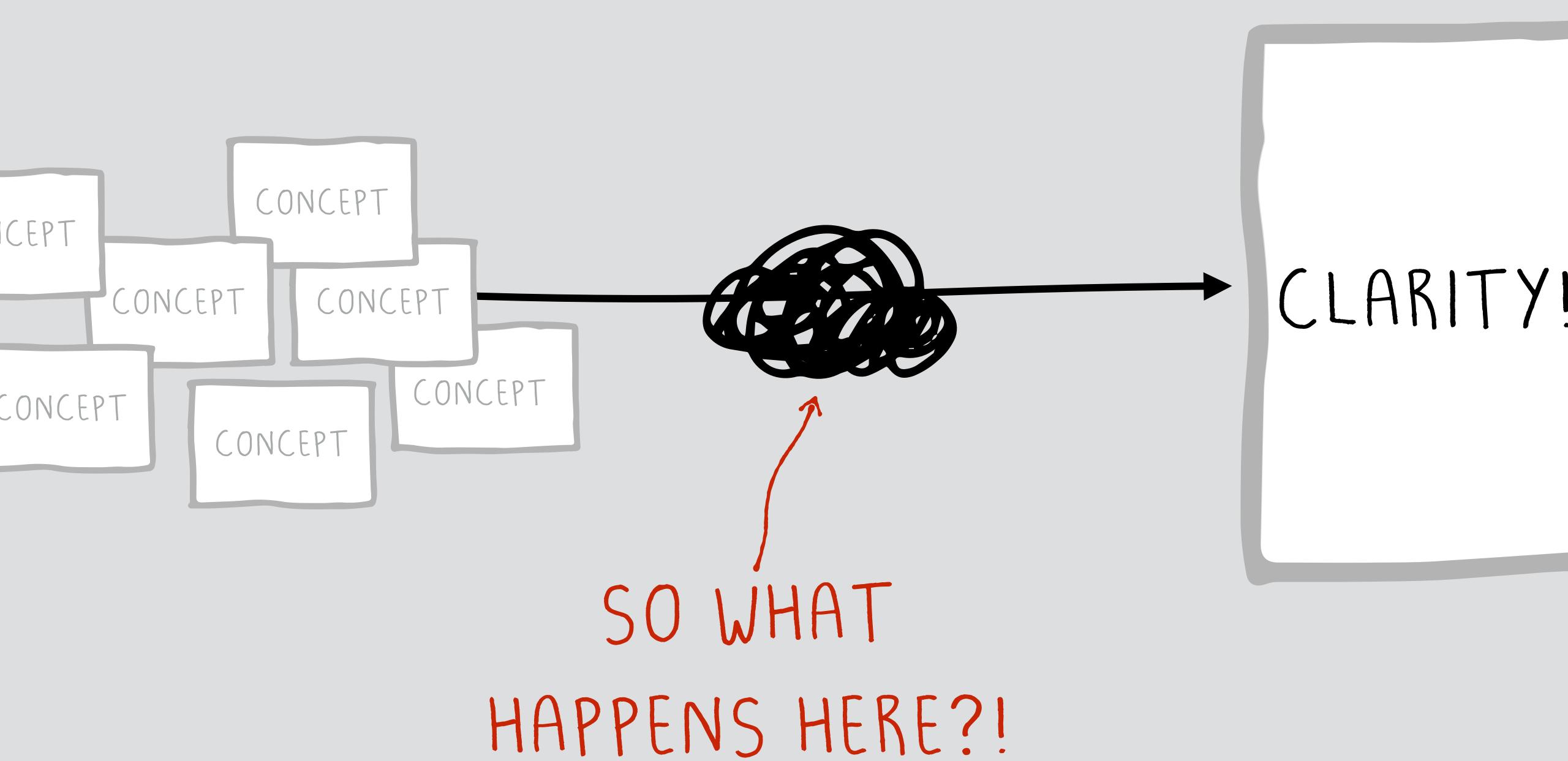




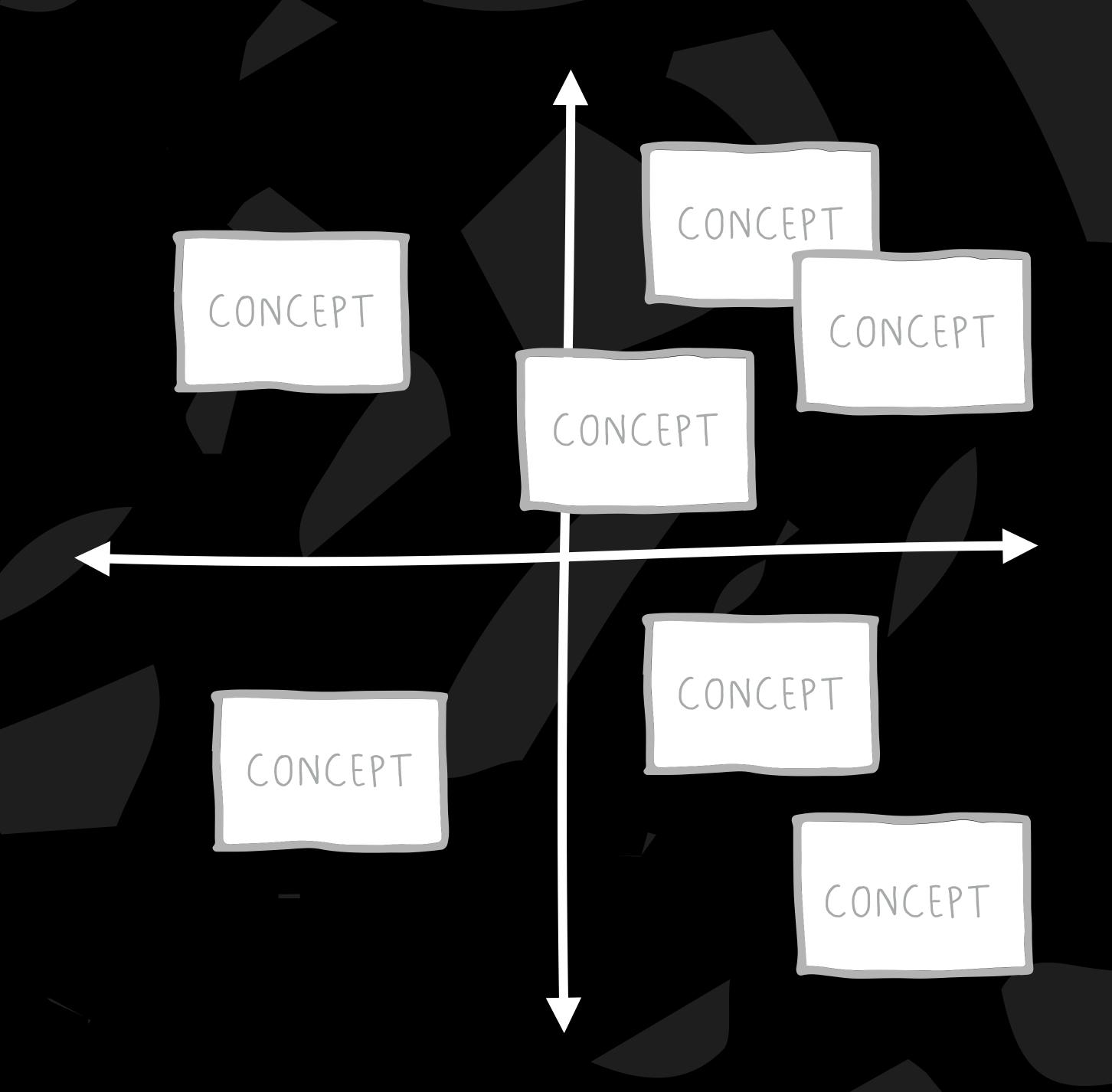
Technical Illustrations - scientific illustrations

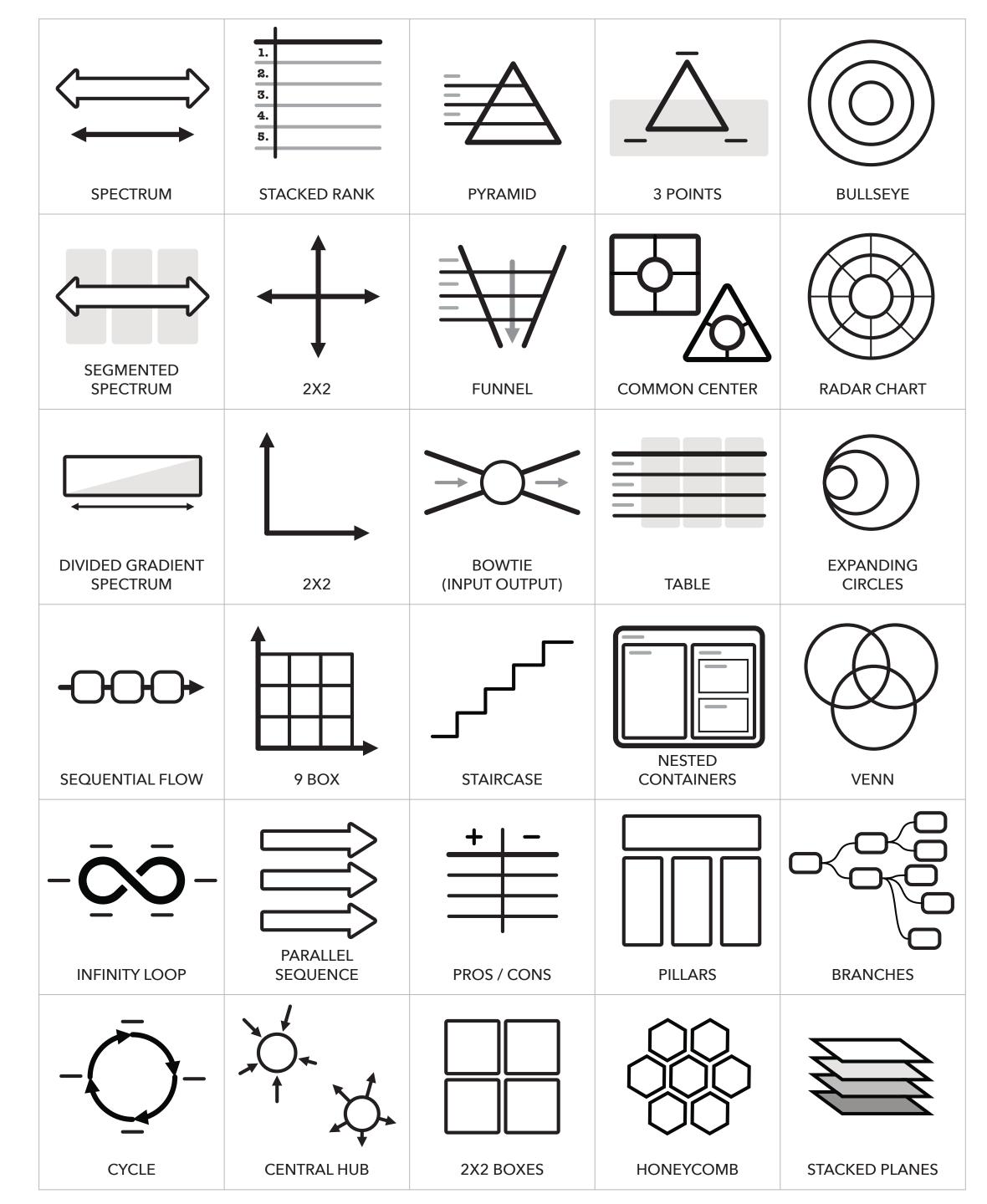
Modelers — engineers who draw systems diagrams, or Wardley

Engineering Models



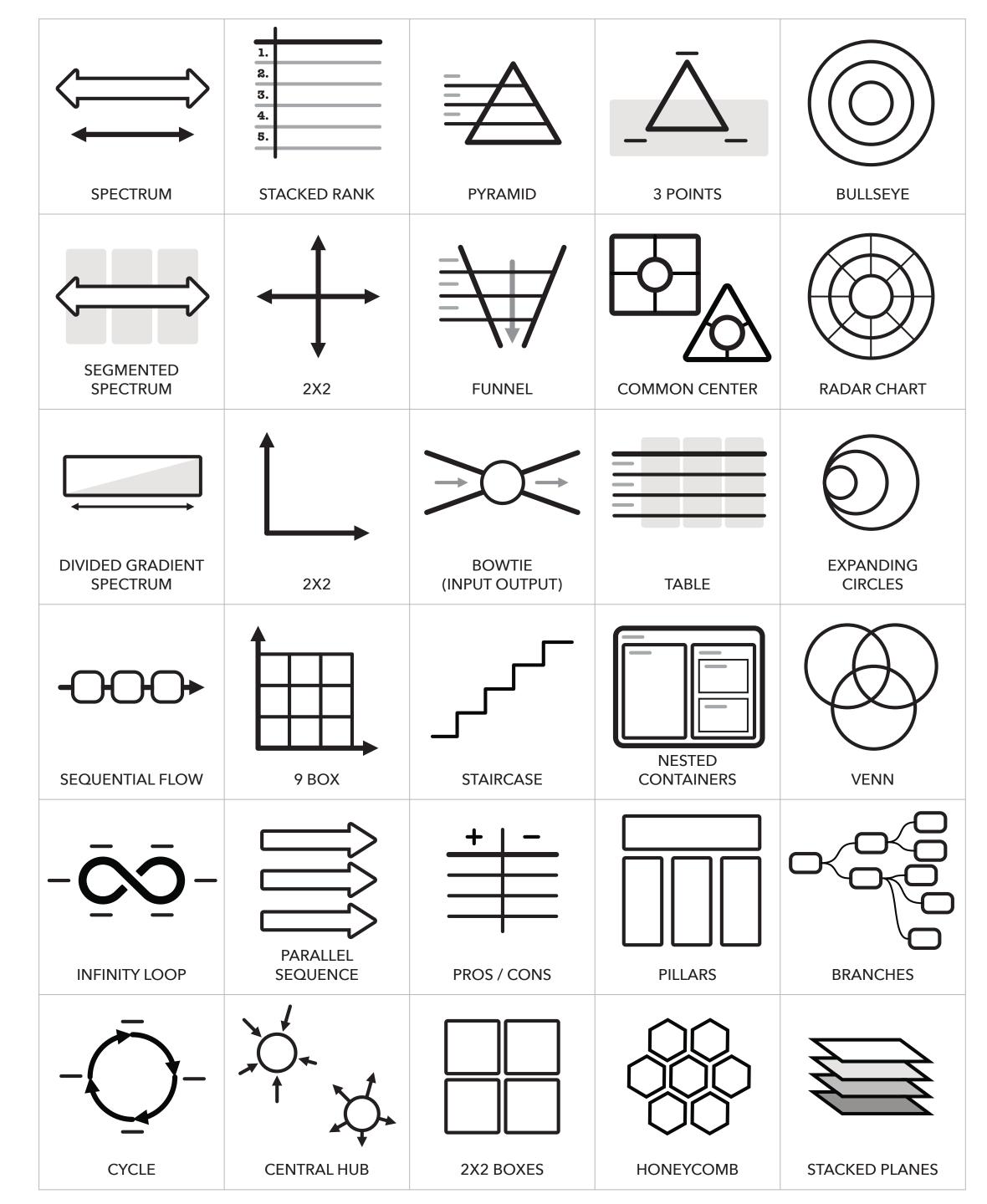
WHAT MOST PEOPLE TRY:

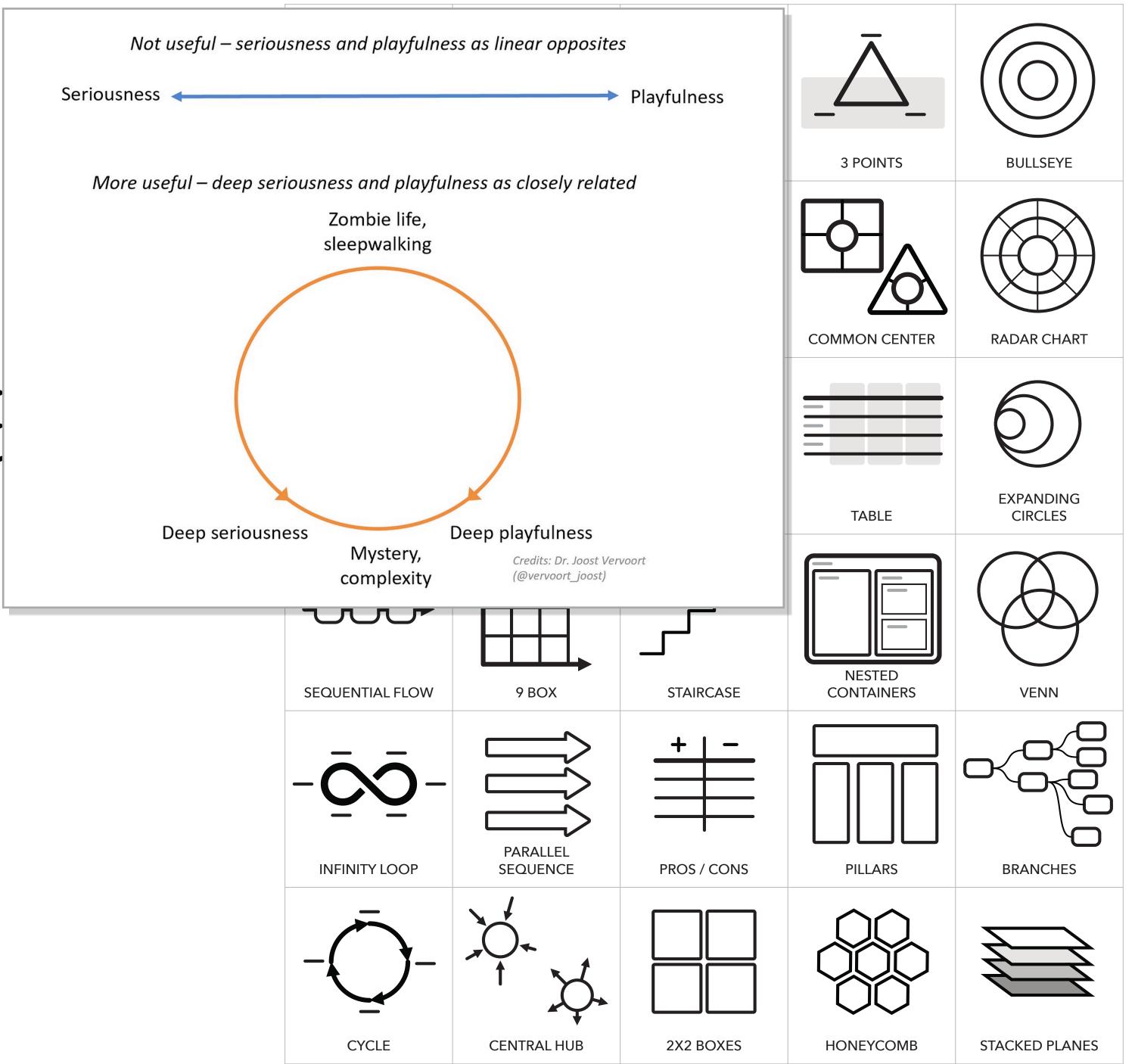


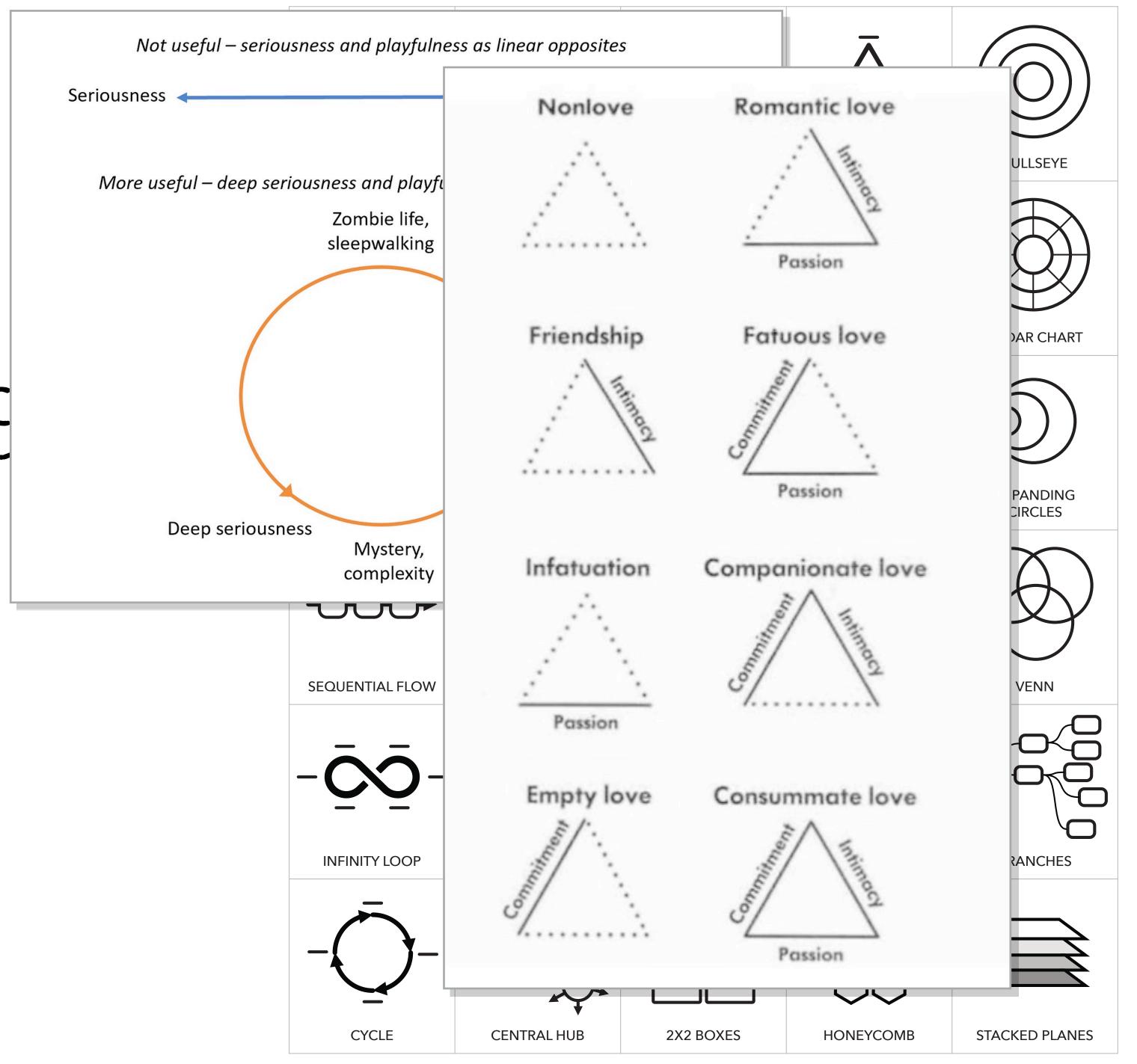


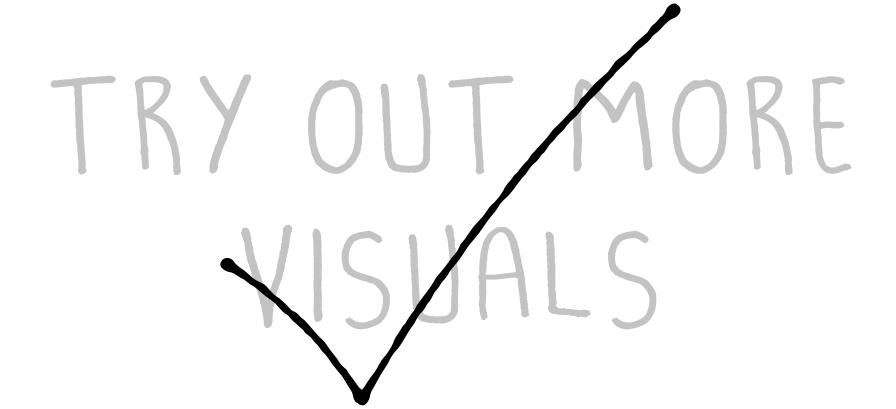


#### BUILD UP A BANK OF VISUAL PRIMITIVES

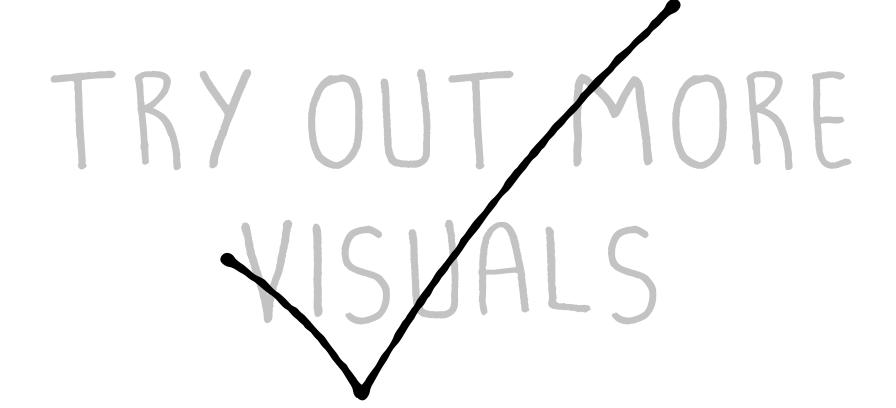












#### ROUND 1...

### PHYSICAL OBJECTS







#### EXERCISE!

#### **INSTRUCTIONS:**

- 1. Place the objects on a flip chart sheet.
- 2. Organize the objects in some meaningful way\*
- 3. Add markings and labels to the flip chart sheet to clarify your arrangement

\* Some pattern of organization that at a glance reveals something about the collection of objects. Be prepared to share what question(s) your arrangement answers.





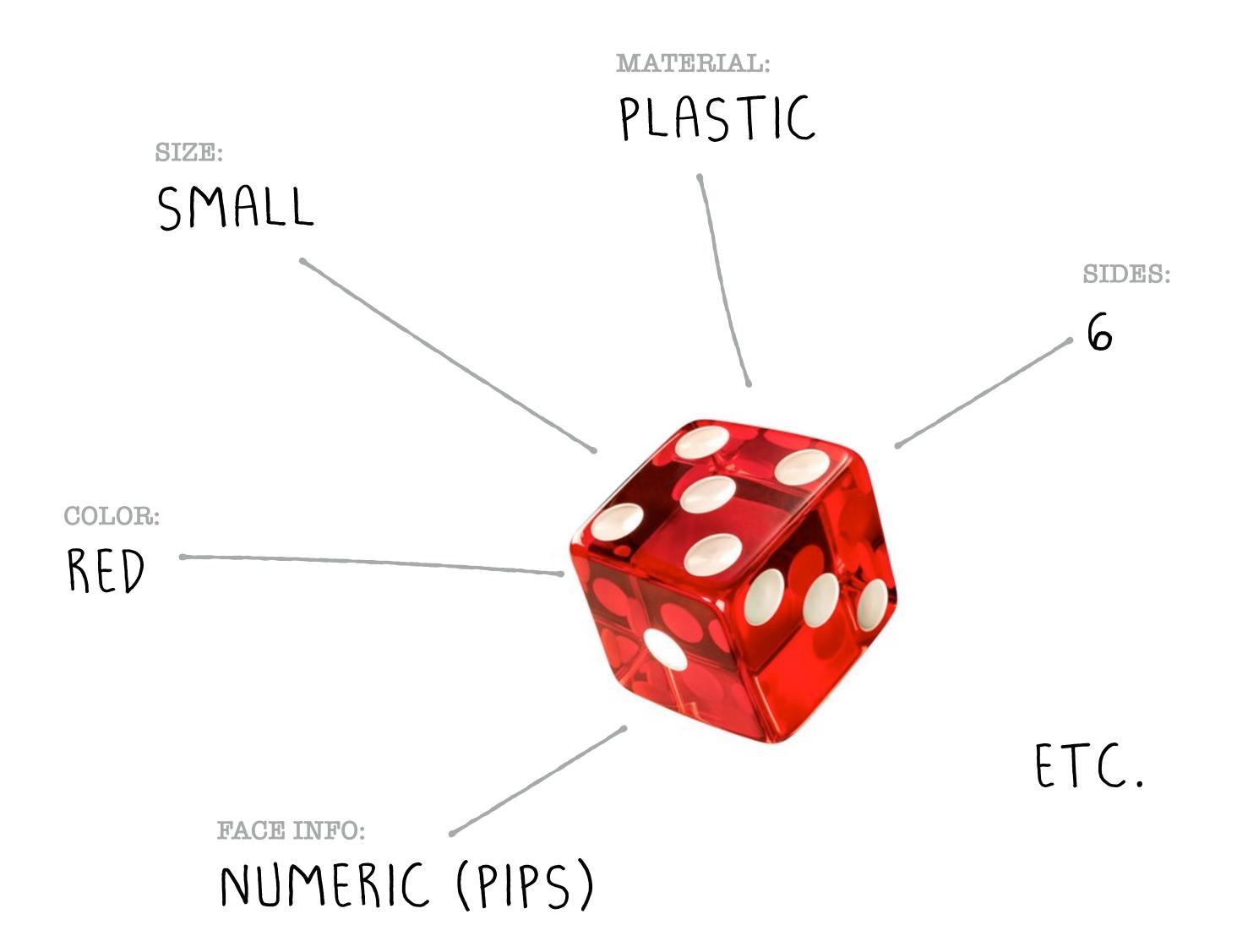
## Session Chat

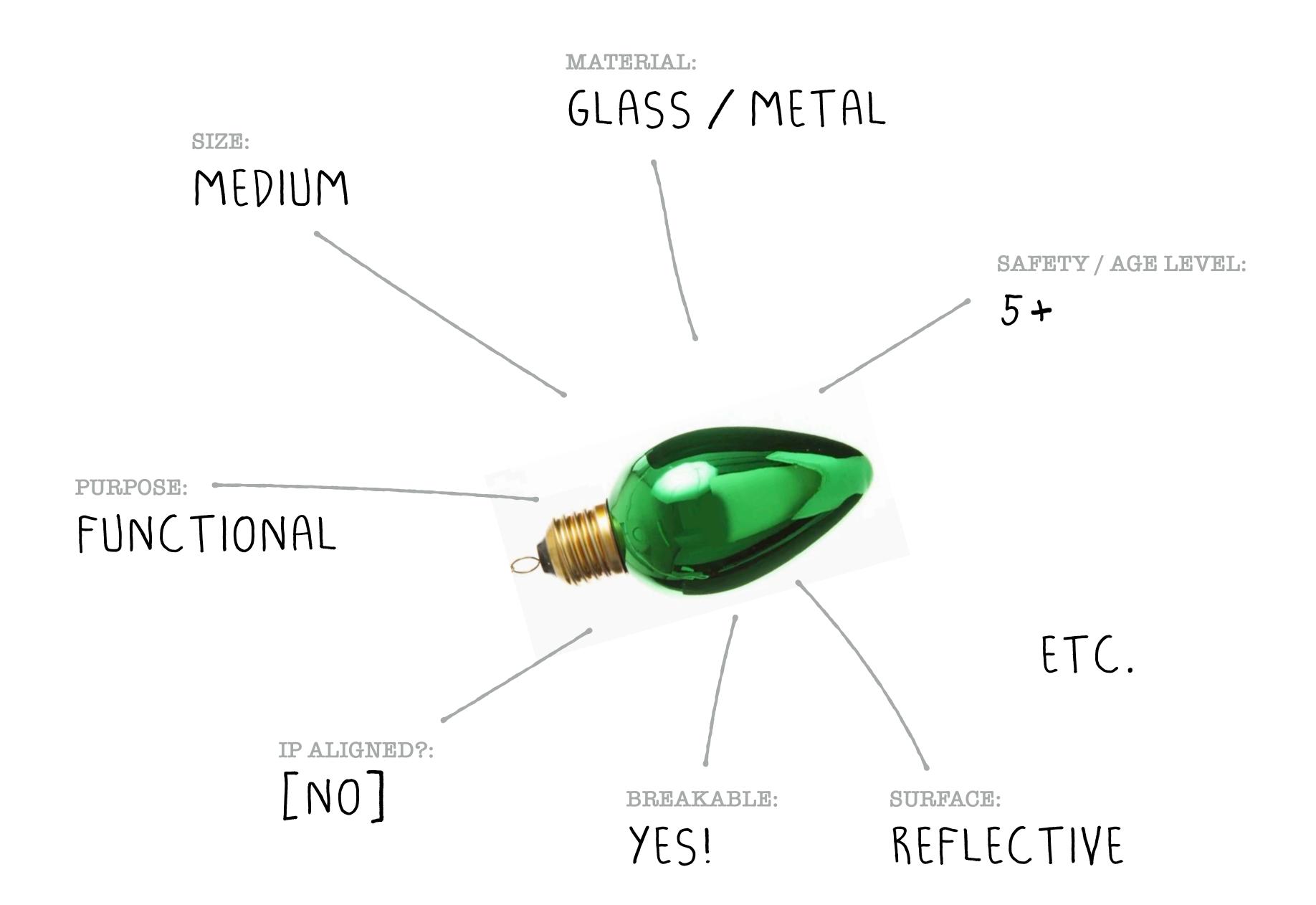
WHY DO YOU THINK I START WITH PHYSICAL OBJECTS?
(INSTEAD OF CONCEPTS)

# YOU ALREADY ORGANIZE THINGS IN YOUR WORLD ALL THE TIME!

- -FOOD IN YOUR PANTRY / FRIDGE
- -CLOTHES IN YOUR CLOSET
- -BOOKS ON A SHELF

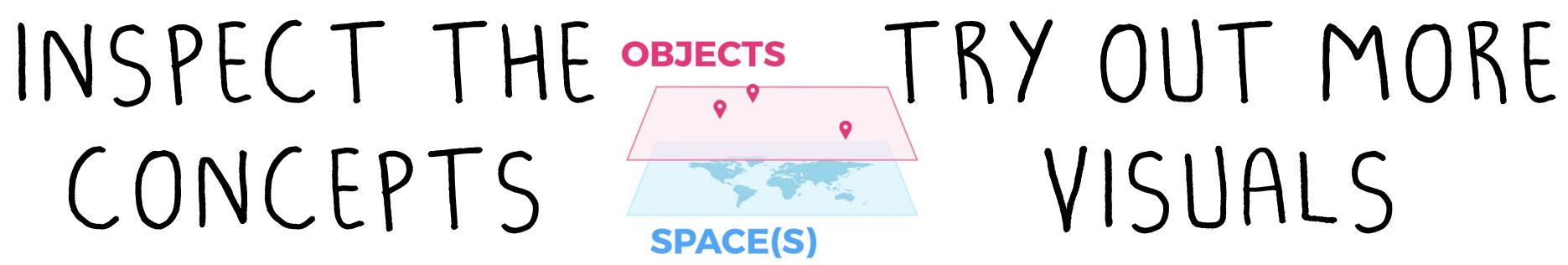
... YOU HAVE THE SKILLS TO ORGANIZE CONCEPTS.

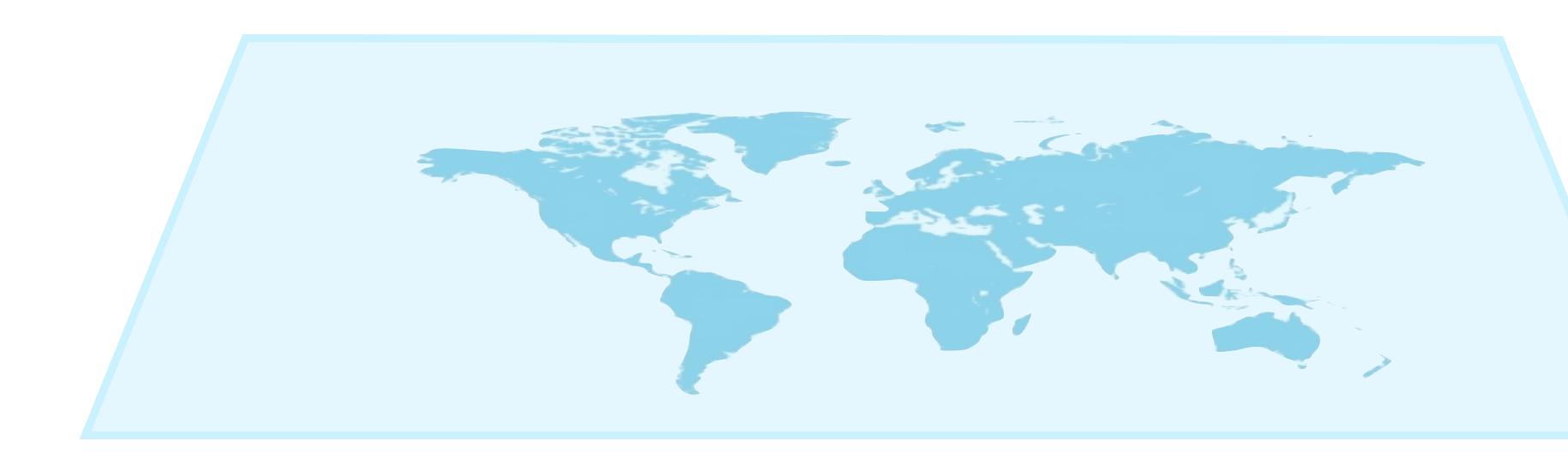






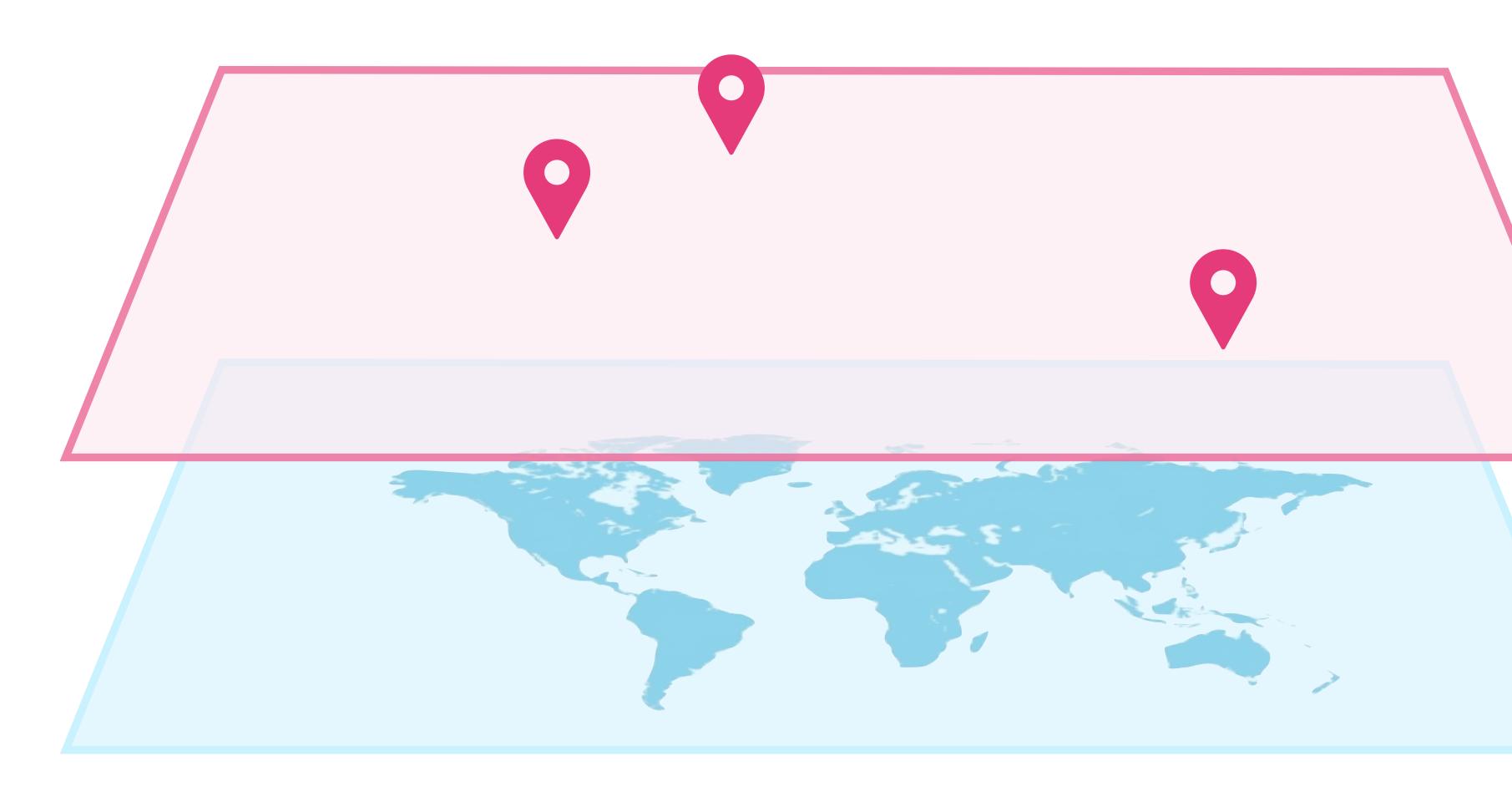
# CONCEPTS







#### OBJECTS



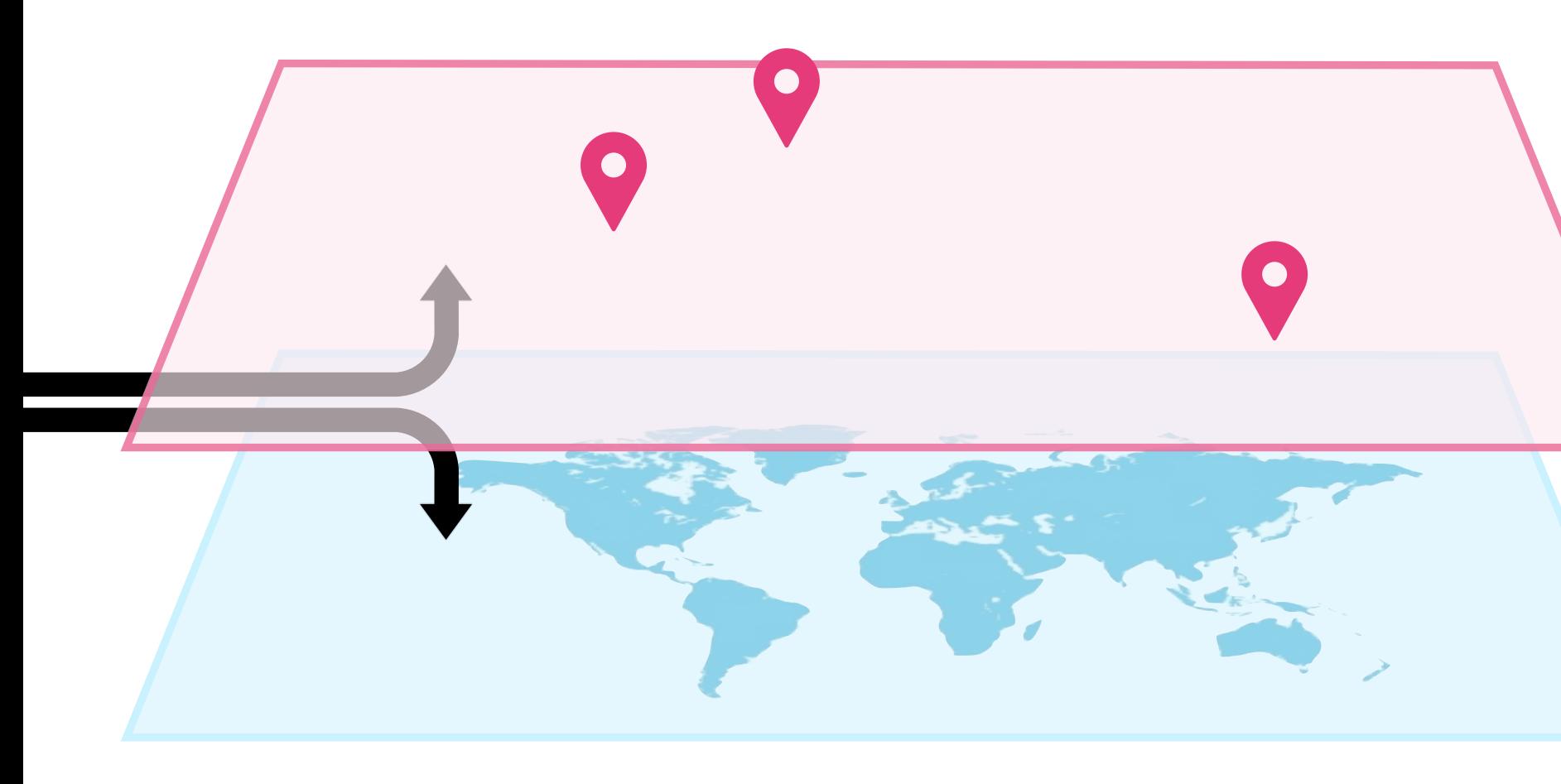
### SPACE(S)

#### WHICH DATA WHERE?

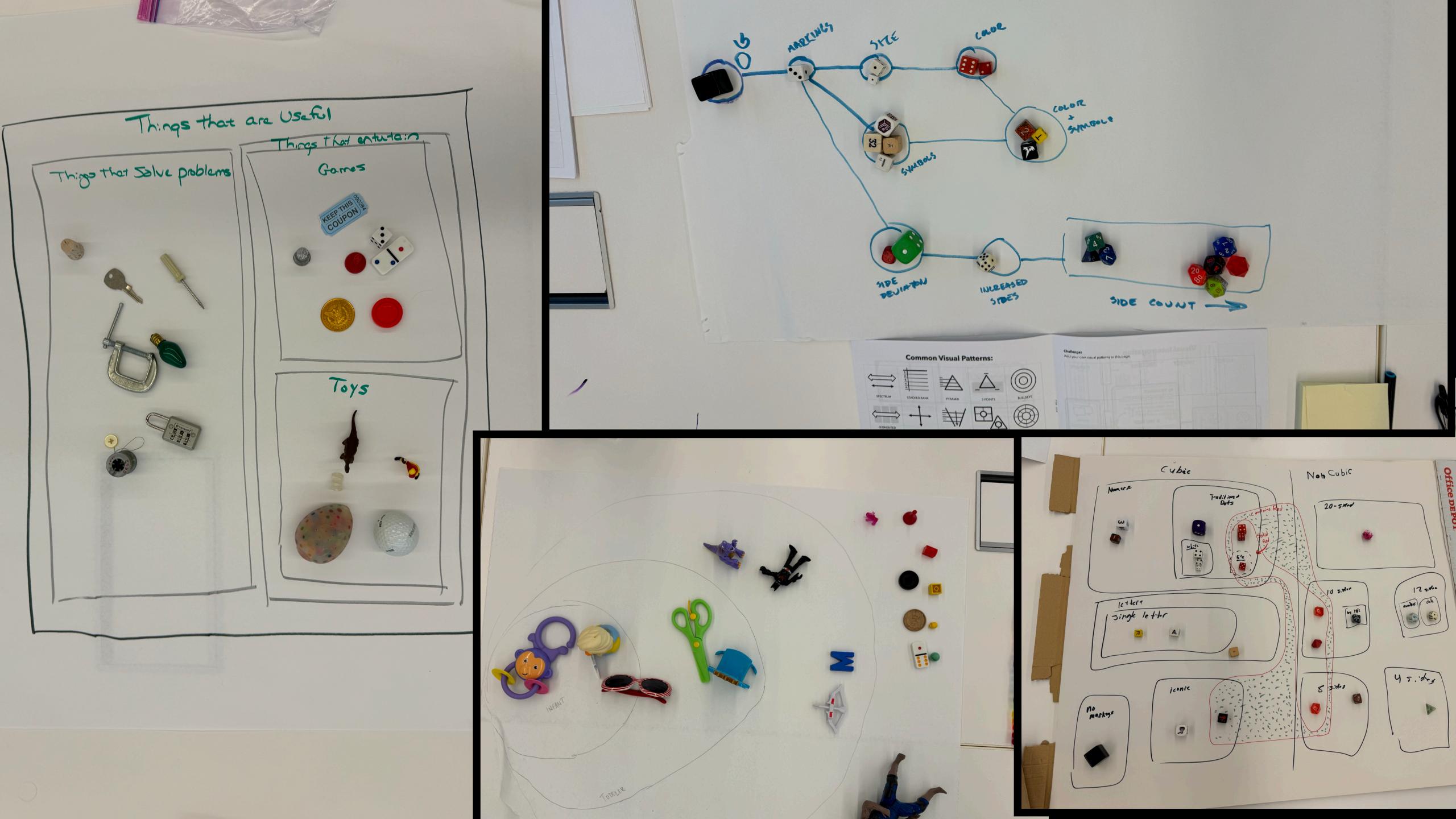
- Are any of these data points more important than the others?
- Based on what we're showing, do one or two of these map better to Space(s) than other(s)?
- Should any of this information be aggregated or averaged together?
- Does information need to be compared?
- etc.

TIP: Put your most important data point(s) in the space(s)!

#### OBJECTS



SPACE(S)



Coordination

Communication

Collaboration

#### ROUND 2...

#### CONCEPTS

Workshop

Conference

Webinar

MATERIAL:

PLASTIC

FACE INFO:

NUMERIC (PIPS)



MATERIAL:

GLASS / METAL



PURPOSE:

FUNCTIONAL

BREAKABLE:

YES!

Workshop

PARTICIPANTS:

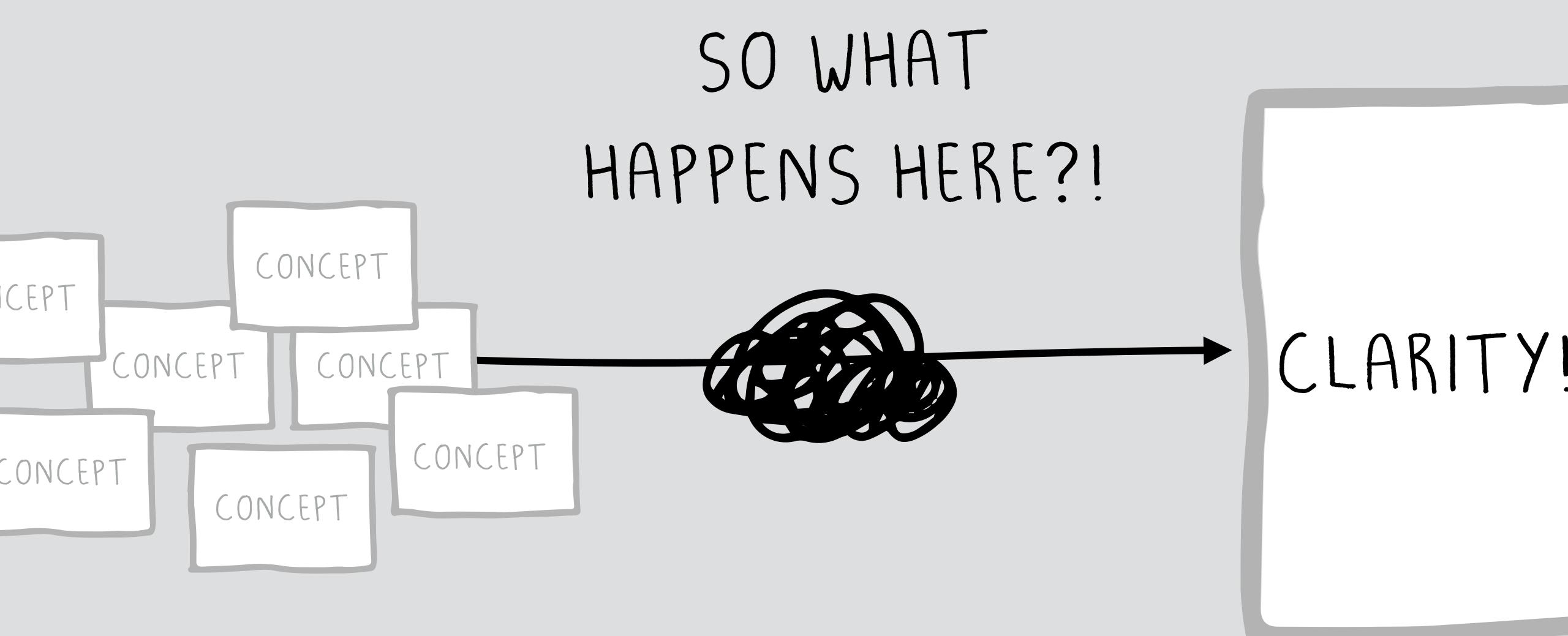
A FEW DOZEN?

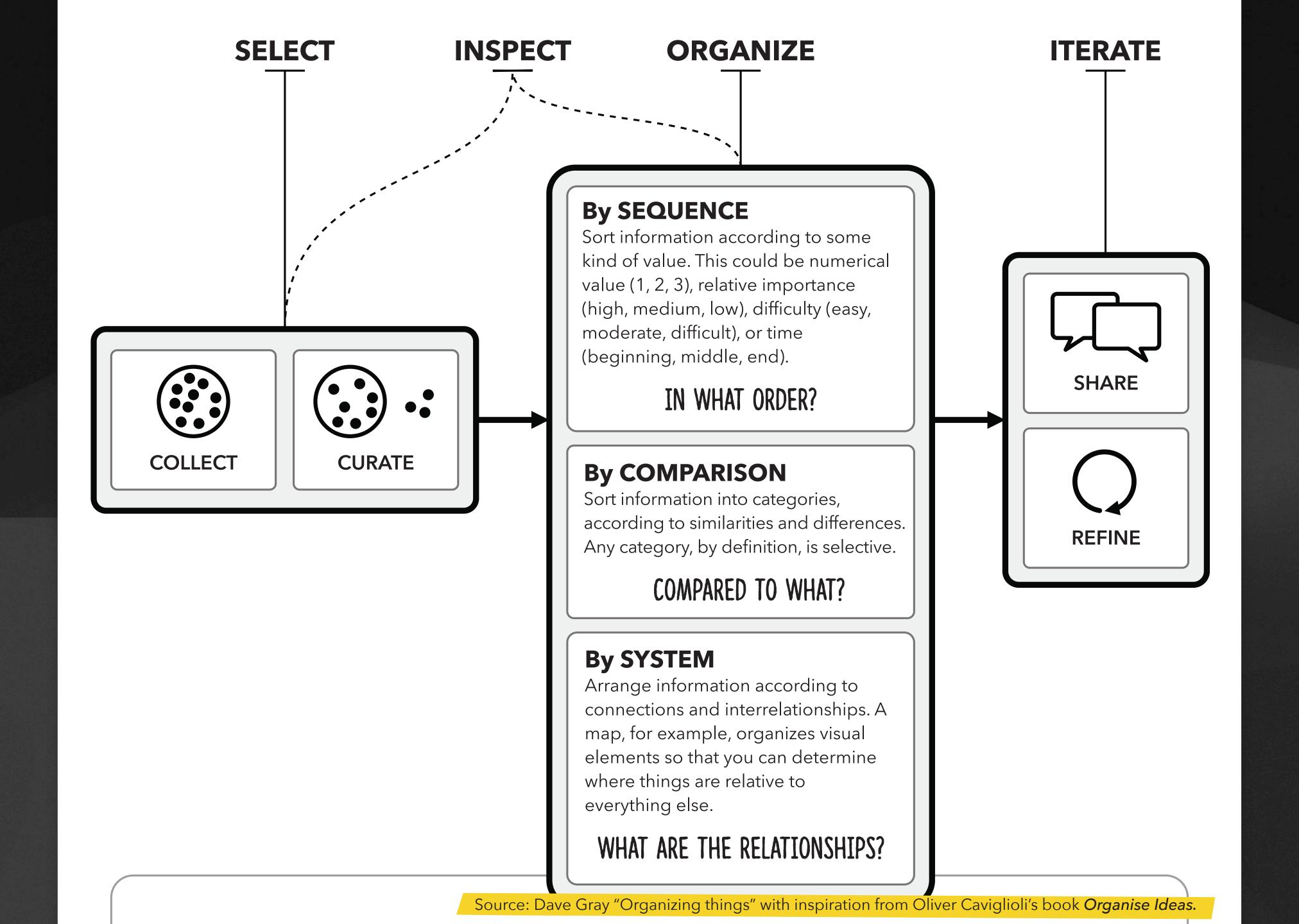
FOCUS:

ACTIVITY

LITERAL

CONCEPTUAL





## Session Chat

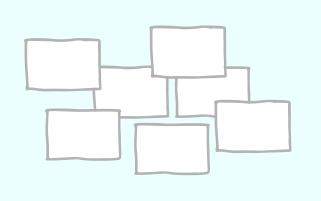
#### ONE MORE THING...

(WHAT'S DIFFERENT ABOUT THIS CURATION?)



(BREWING COFFEE)

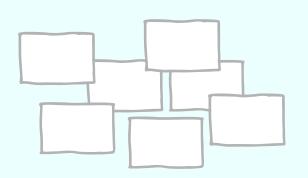
# VISUAL INSPECTION APPLIES TO BOTH:



# COMPARABLE THINGS

(TYPES OF X)

-AND ALSO-



# PARTS OF A WHOLE

(INTERRELATED PARTS)

#### **Brewing Pour Over Coffee**

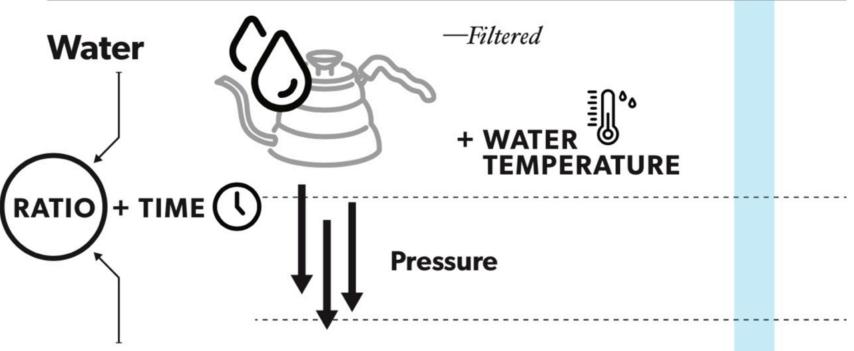
LOVINGLY CRAFTED BY: Stephen P. Anderson

#### **Beans**





- —Light, Medium, or Dark Roast
- Single Origin or Blend
- —Freshness / Roast Date
- —Roaster
- Unique Flavors / Notes



#### **Grind Size**



- Coarse
- —Medium
- —Fine
- Very Fine

#### **Filter**



- —Hario V60
- —Kalita Wave
- Chemex
- —Drip

--etc.

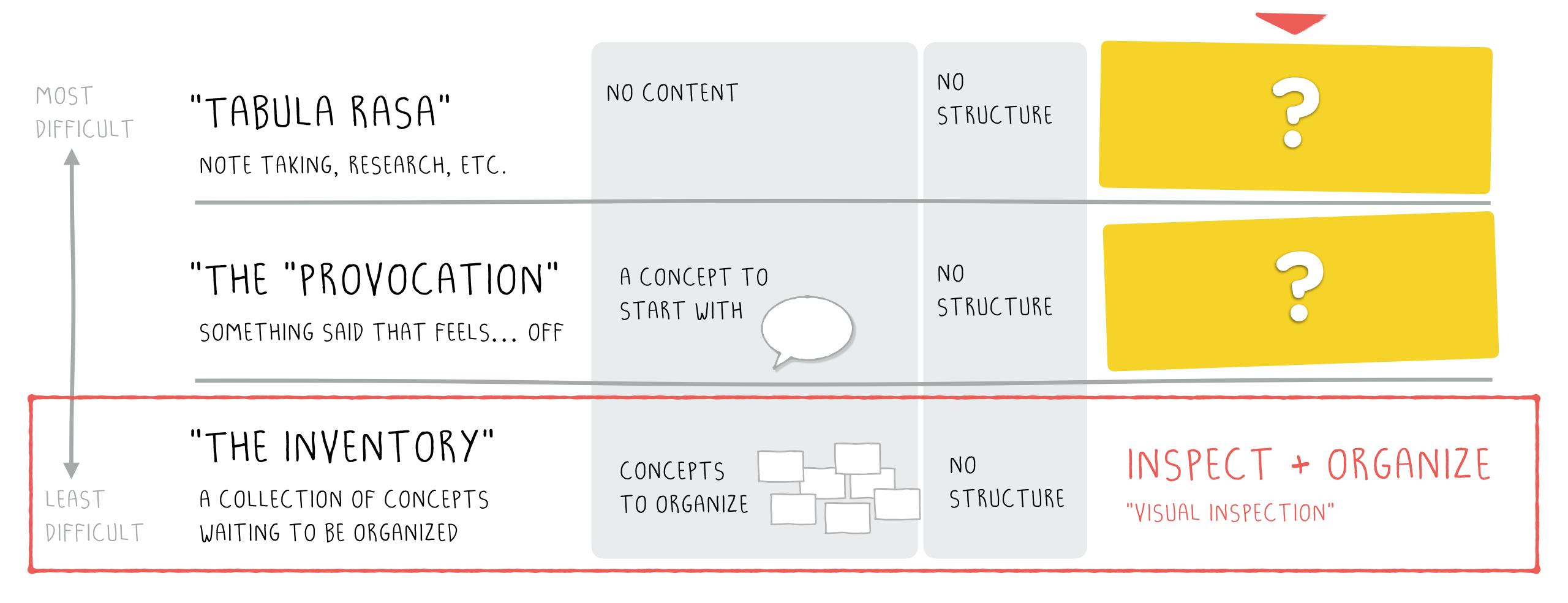
#### Brew Method

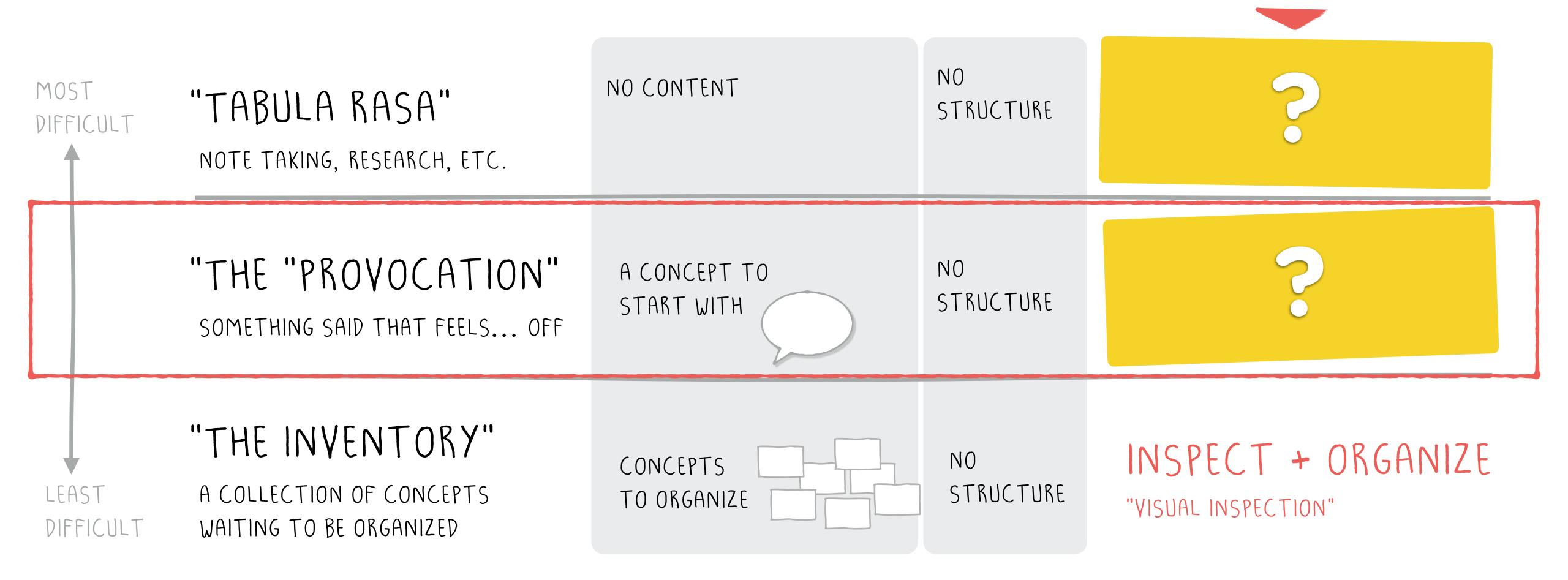


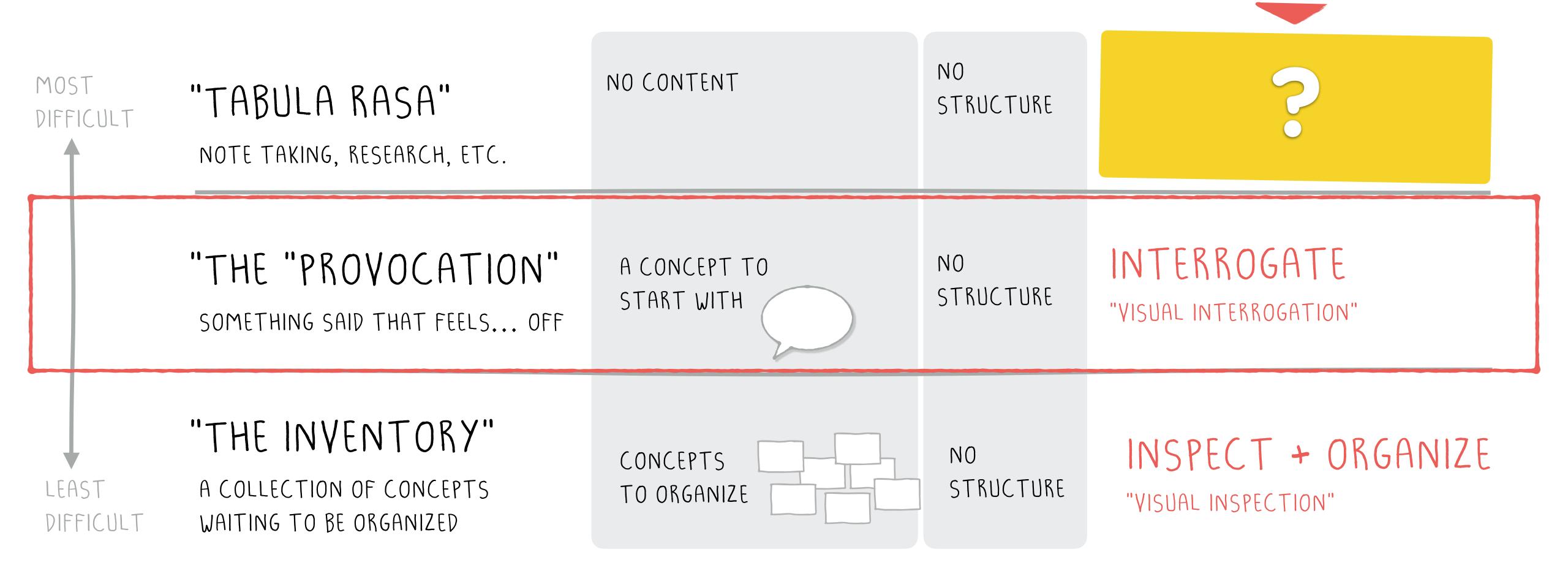
#### Mmm. Coffee.



- + sugar?
- + cream?
- + salt?
- + butter?











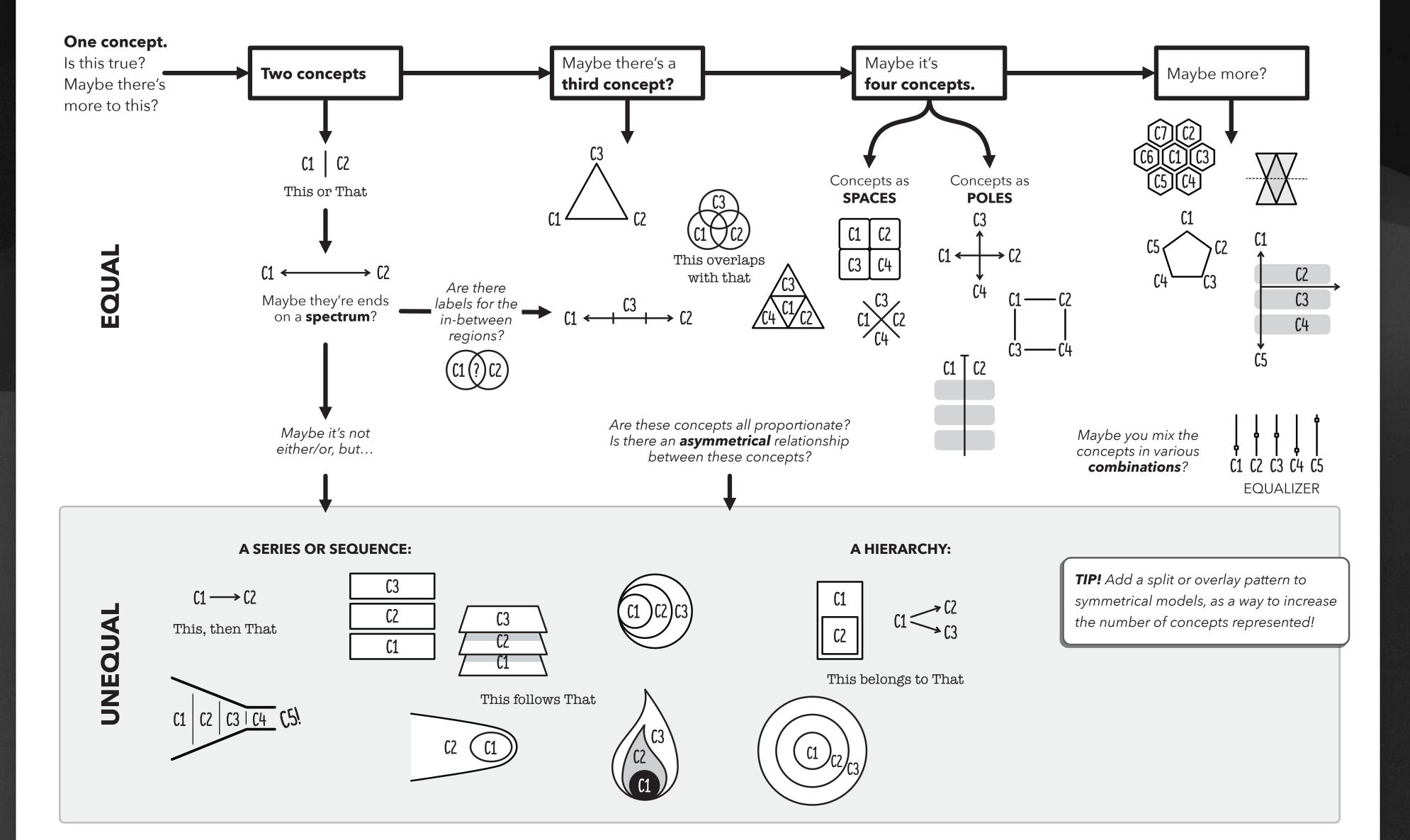
# CLIVE DEMO>

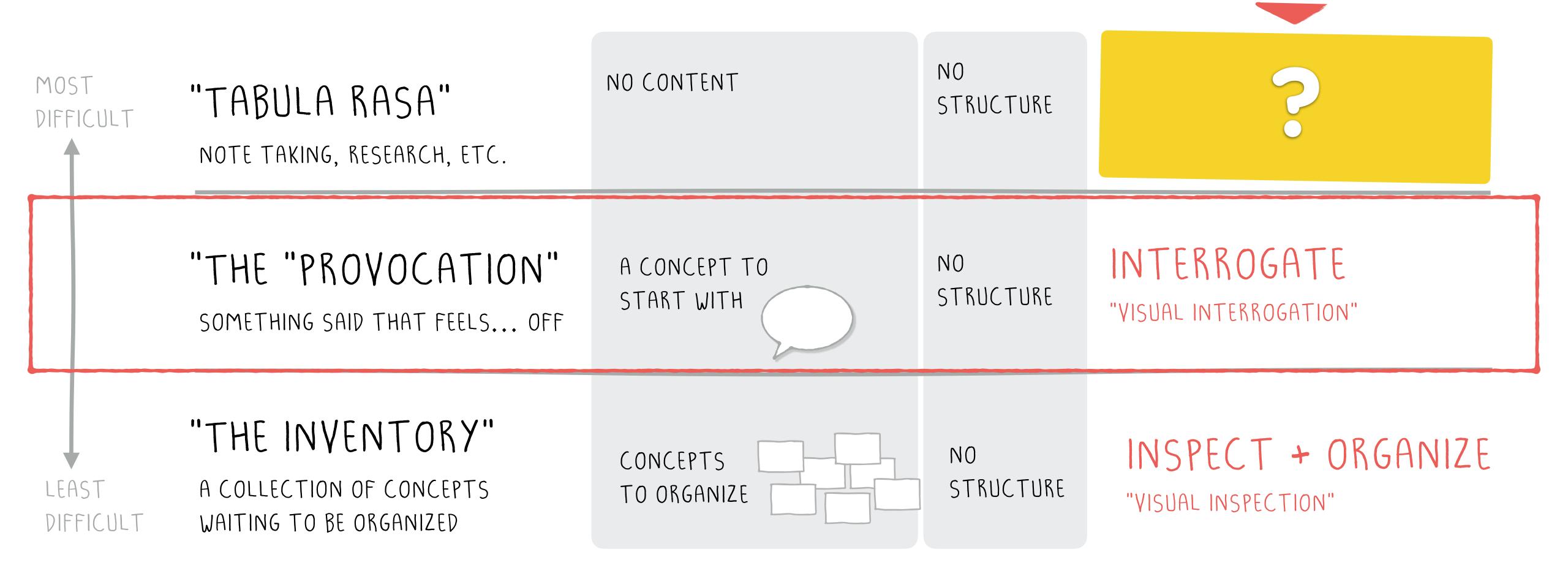
IS COMPETITION
GOOD OR BAD?

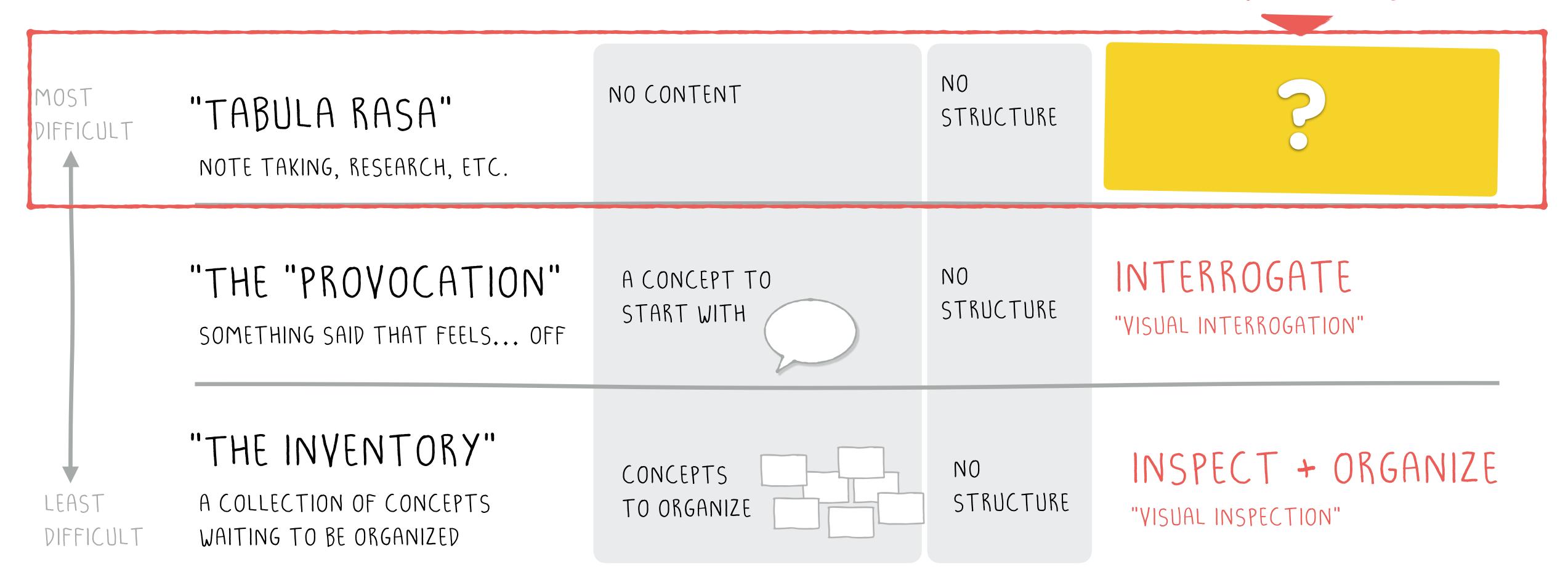
#### A Visual Interrogation Flowchart (Version 0.1)

Arriving at a good visual representation of an idea is a process of inspecting (1) concepts, (2) examples that align to these concepts, and (3) visual ways to represent the relationships between these concepts. Here's a example thought process you can follow for your visual interrogation:

**TIP!** Explore many "examples" of each concept—these examples will often refine or reveal additional concepts!







MOST DIFFICULT	"TABULA RASA" NOTE TAKING, RESEARCH, ETC.	NO CONTENT	NO STRUCTURE	CAPTURE, ENCODE, & ARRANGE
	"THE "PROVOCATION" SOMETHING SAID THAT FEELS OFF	A CONCEPT TO START WITH	NO STRUCTURE	INTERROGATE "VISUAL INTERROGATION"
LEAST DIFFICULT	"THE INVENTORY"  A COLLECTION OF CONCEPTS WAITING TO BE ORGANIZED	CONCEPTS TO ORGANIZE	NO STRUCTURE	INSPECT + ORGANIZE "VISUAL INSPECTION"

CAPTURE + ENCODE

ARRANGE

# CAPTURE + ENCODE

ARRANGE

# CLIVE DEMO>

#### Don't do this:



#### or this:

Notes

Notes

Notes

#### TIPS:

- [One idea per sticky note!]
- Use the rectangle sticky note.
- Left and top align the text
- Use one color, initially
- Stick one default size (w/ exceptions)

Notes

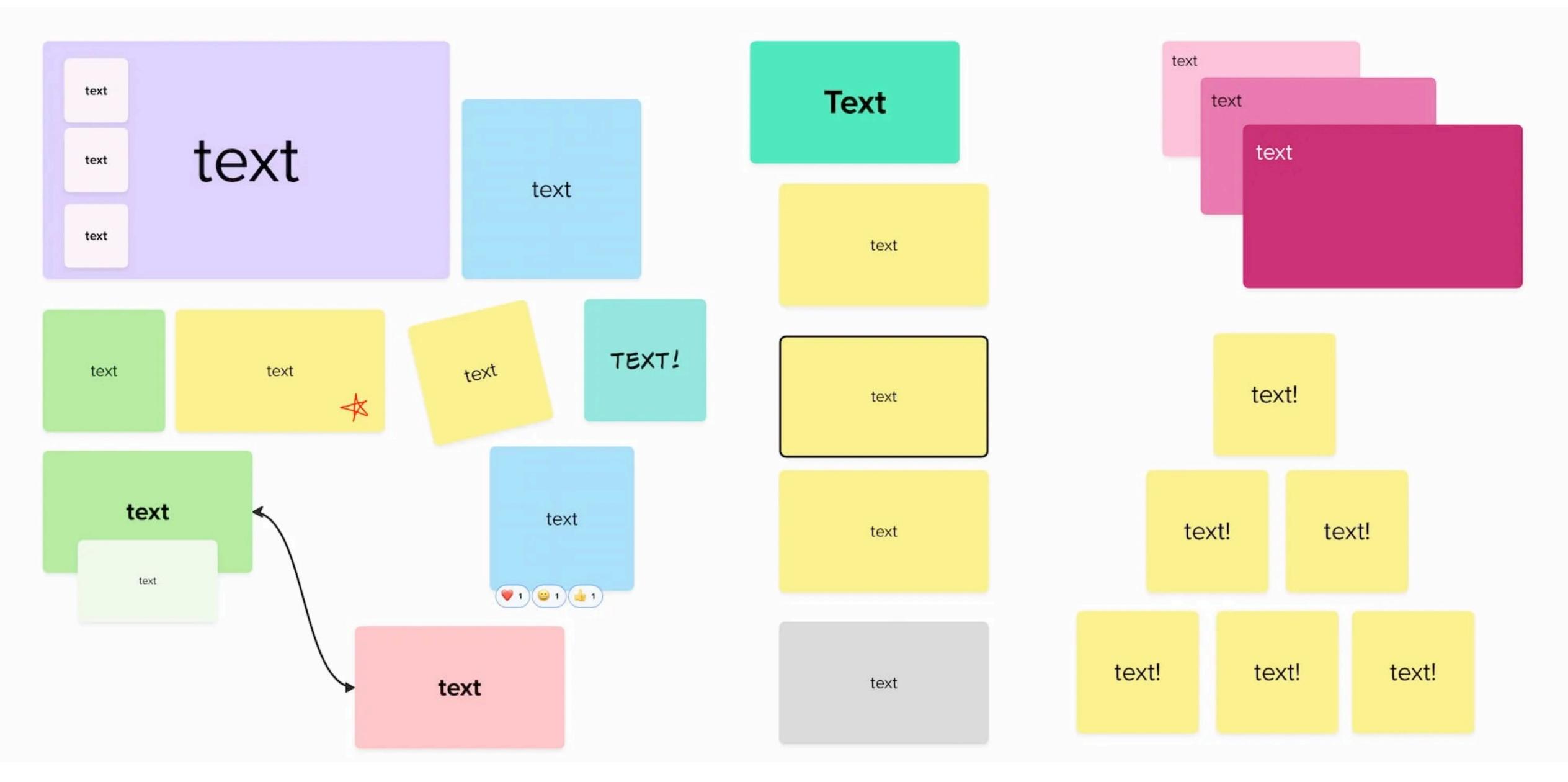
Do this: Notes 8 Notes Notes Question 1 Notes (Follow up question) Notes Notes Question 2 Notes Notes Notes Question 4 Notes Question 3 Notes Notes Notes Notes



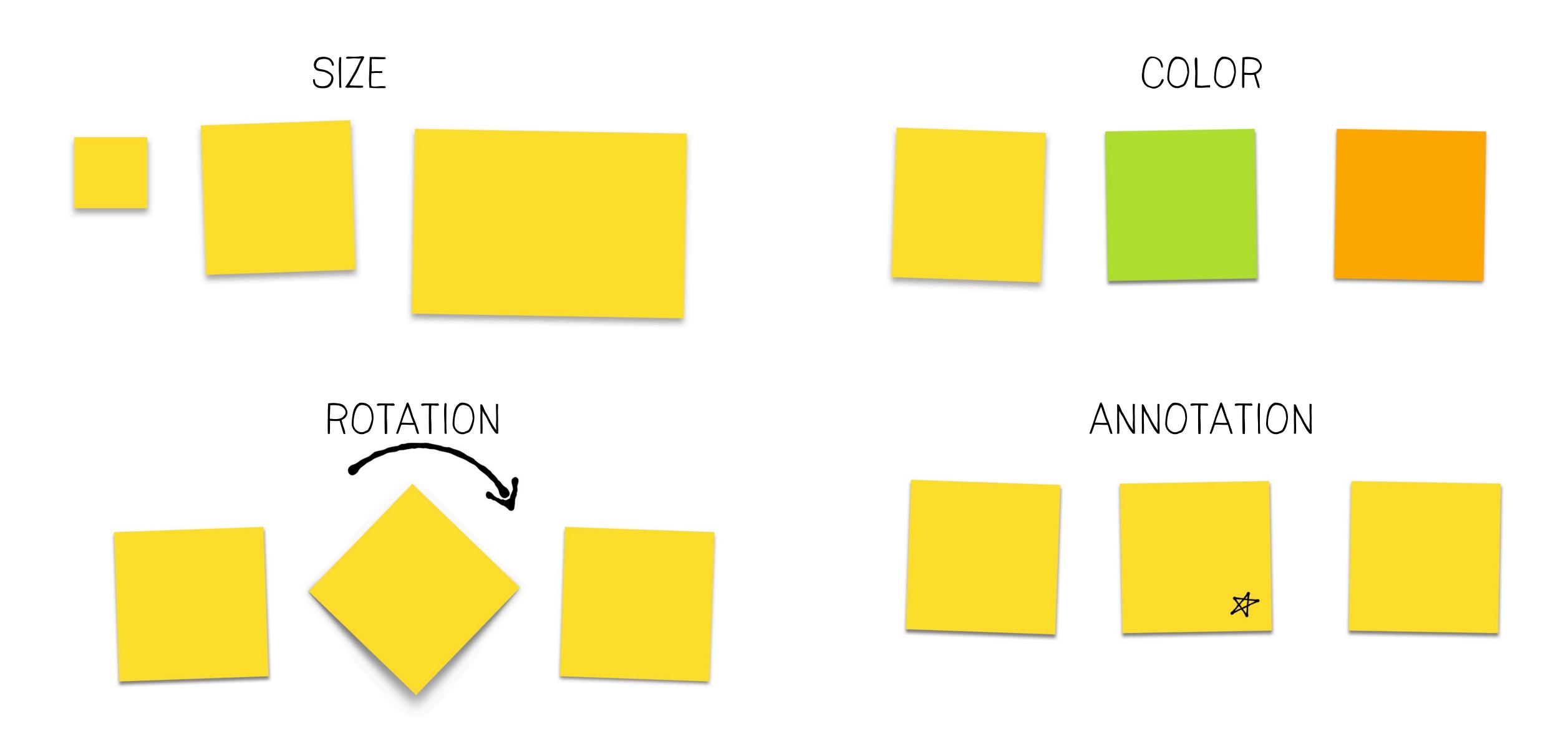
# USE COLOR, SIZE, GROUPING, BORDER, CONNECTORS, ETC.

(AND BE INTENTIONAL WITH THE USE OF THESE THINGS!)

### STICKY NOTES AND VISUAL ENCODINGS:



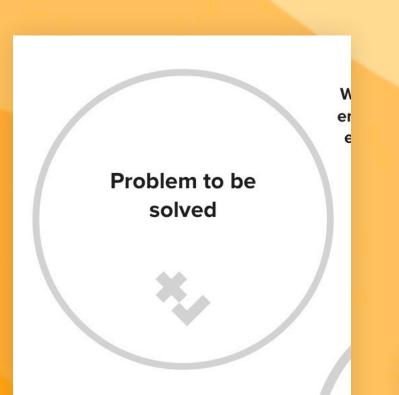
### STICKY NOTES AND VISUAL ENCODINGS:

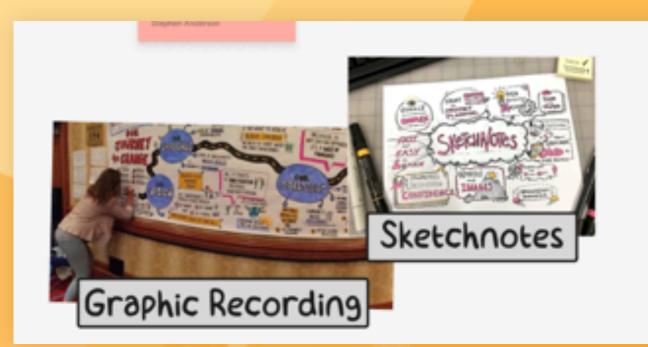


		To show CATEGORY	To show PRECISE QUANTITY	To show GENERAL QUALITATIVE INFORMATION	To show SEQUENCE
Form: Orientation	-// \	V	V	limited	V
Form: Line Length	=		V		
Form: Line Width	0000	V		V	limited
Form: Size / Area	••••			V	V
Form: Enclosure		V			
Form: Shape	•▲■◆★●	V	limited		
Form: Curvature	11(1			V	
Form: Proximity	••••	(♥)		<b>(</b> ▼)	
Form: Added Marks	# # # # #	V	limited		
Pattern Density		V	limited	V	limited
Line Pattern		V			
Line Endings	<b>⇒</b> –	V			V
Color: Hue	• • • •	V		V	
Color: Intensity (Saturation, Brightness, Opacity)				V	V
Spatial Position: 2-D Position		V	V		V
Motion				limited	(♥)
Texture		V	limited		
Rotation	<b>640 144</b>	V	limited		limited
Perspective				V	limited
Iconography		V			<b>~</b>
Outline or Solid	000	limited			
Overlay	<b>F</b>			limited	<b>~</b>
Overlap		V		limited	
Join				limited	V
Aspect Ratio		limited		limited	
Labels	1, 2, 3; A, B, C	V	V		V
Transformation	<b>●●★★</b>	V		limited	V
Quantity	•••••		limited	V	V

		To show CATEGORY	To show PRECISE QUANTITY	To show GENERAL QUALITATIVE INFORMATION	To show SEQUENCE
Form: Orientation	— / / I \			limited	
Form: Line Length					
Form: Line Width	0000				limited
Form: Size / Area					
Form: Enclosure					
Form: Shape			limited		
Form: Curvature					
Form: Proximity				<b>(</b> ✓)	
Form: Added Marks	<b>МММ</b>		limited		
Pattern Density			limited		limited
Line Pattern					

# ADD ILLUSTRATIONS / ICONS TO TEXT ("DUAL CODING!")











**Brewing Pour Over Coff** 





Competing with SELF (personal best)



Competing against OTHERS (PvP)



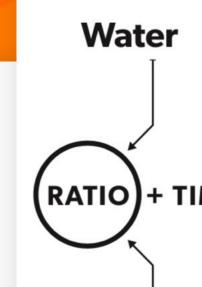
**Team Competition** 





## **Probability**





**Beans** 



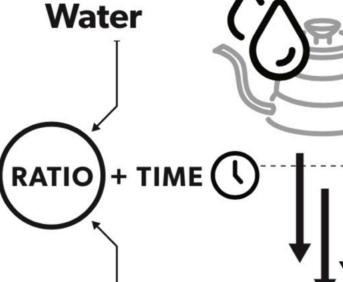
—Filtere

+ WA

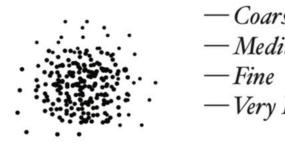
—Hario

—Kalit

**Pressure** 



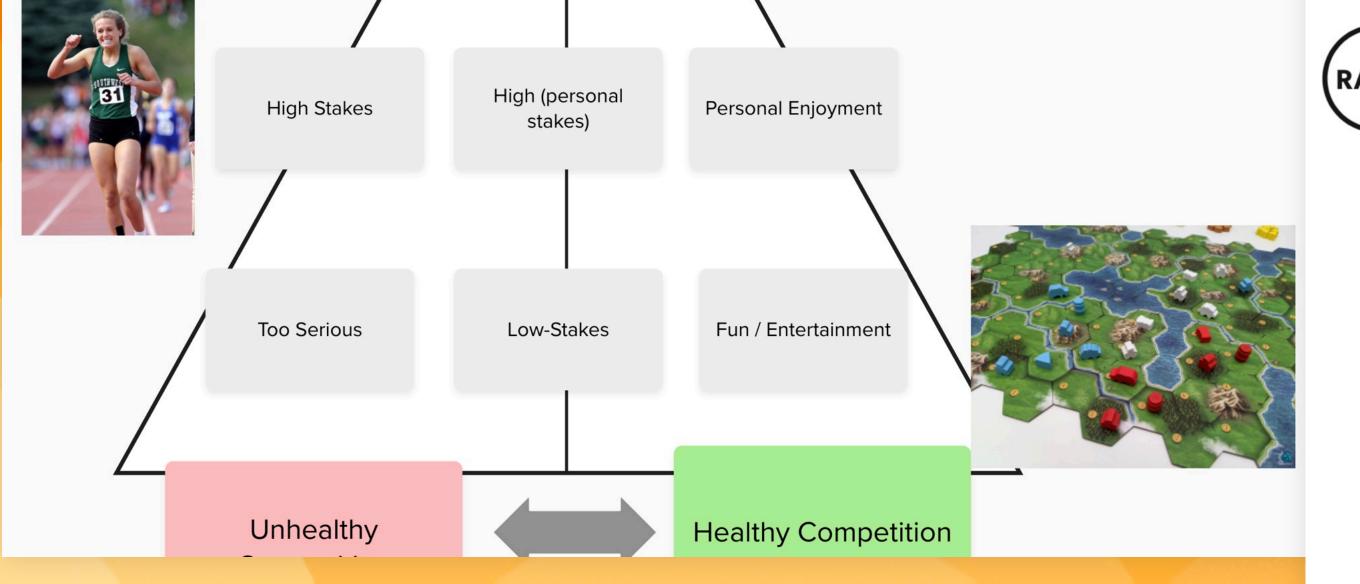




**Filter** 







Panasonic Lumix G 25mm f/1.7 ASPH. Lens



\$148

Minimum focus distance?

9.84" / 25 cm

Panasonic Lumix G 20mm f/1.7 II ASPH



\$268

Minimum

distance?

focus

7.87" / 20

cm



Panasonic 20mm f/1.7 II vs.
25mm f/1.7 review
25mm review: https://
www.youtube.com/watch?v=
M\_RODgRp6qk Focus shift
explained: https://
www.youtube.com/watch?v=
kBLQvpgfc2Y Support my
channel and buy these lenses
using links below: 20mm f/1.7 II
pancake: Arnazon US: http://
amznto/2266Q9K Amazon US:
http://amzn.to/2nzf3J9 Amazon
DE: ...



Sigma 30mm f/ 1.4 DC DN Contemporary Lens (Micro Four Thirds)

\$289



\$300

Meike 25mm T2.2 Manual Focus Cinema Lens



\$400

Panasonic Leica DG Summilux 25mm f/1.4 II ASPH

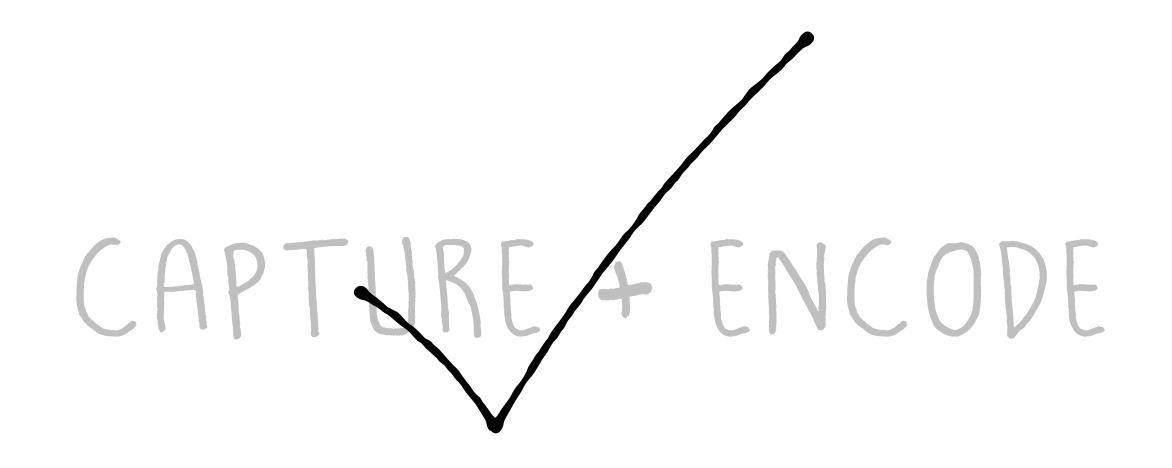


\$548

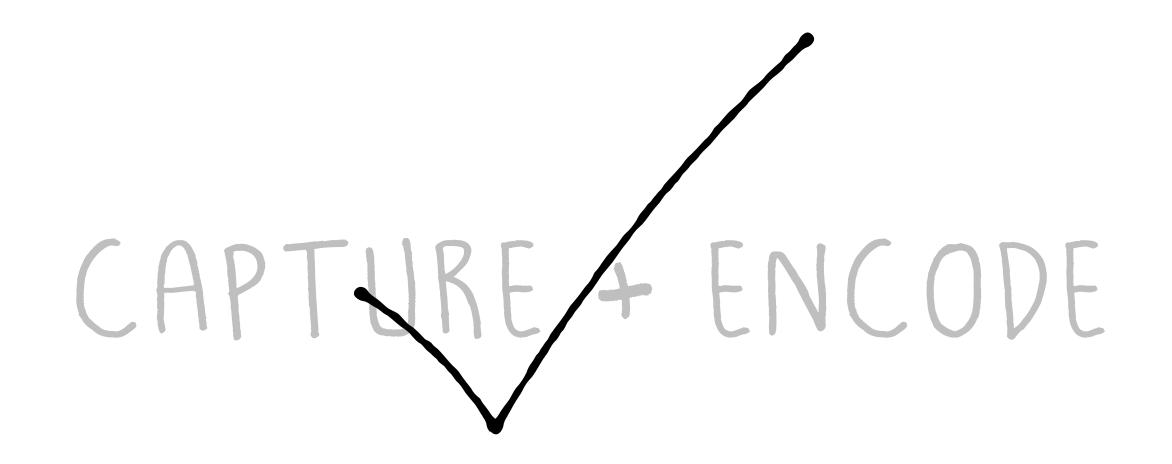
9.4" / 23.88 cm

From: 9.8" / 24.9 cm

11.81" / 30 cm

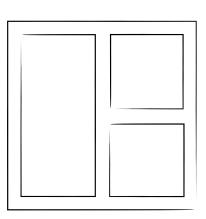


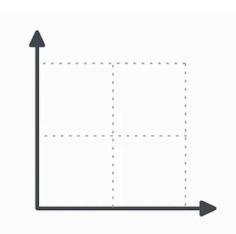
# ARRANGE

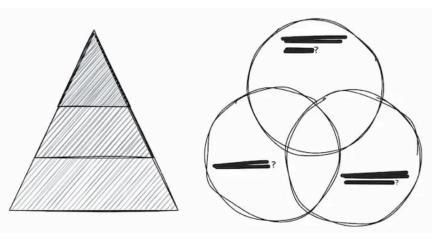


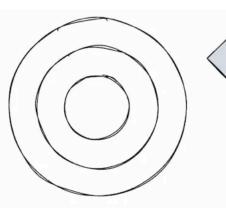
# ARRANGE

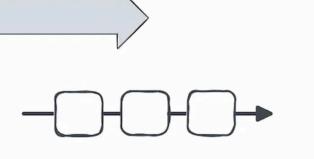
## ARRANGE:





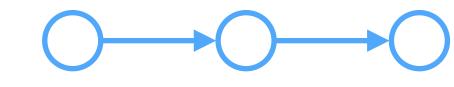




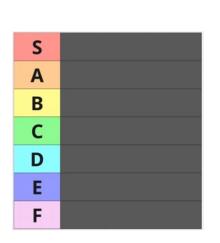


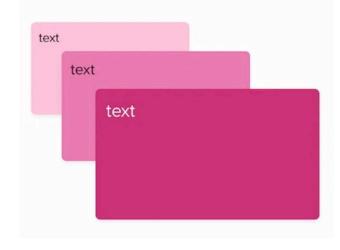
GROUP, PLACE INTO, NEST WITHIN, PLACE IN PROXIMITY TO...

# SEQUENCE:



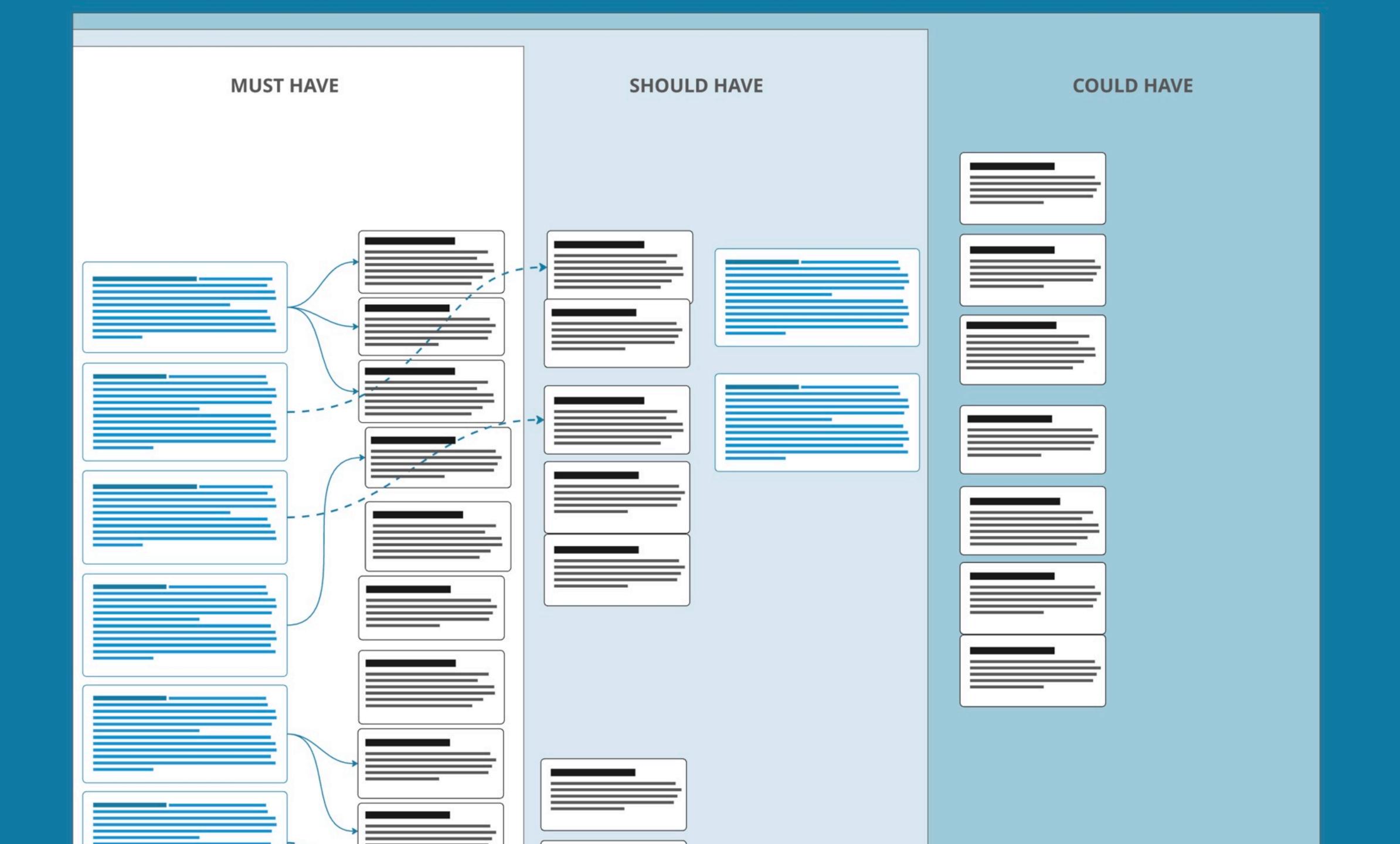
BY RANK, TIME, DEPENDENCIES, ETC.





# - CONNECT

RELATED, FLOW, TO ALIGN/RECONCILE

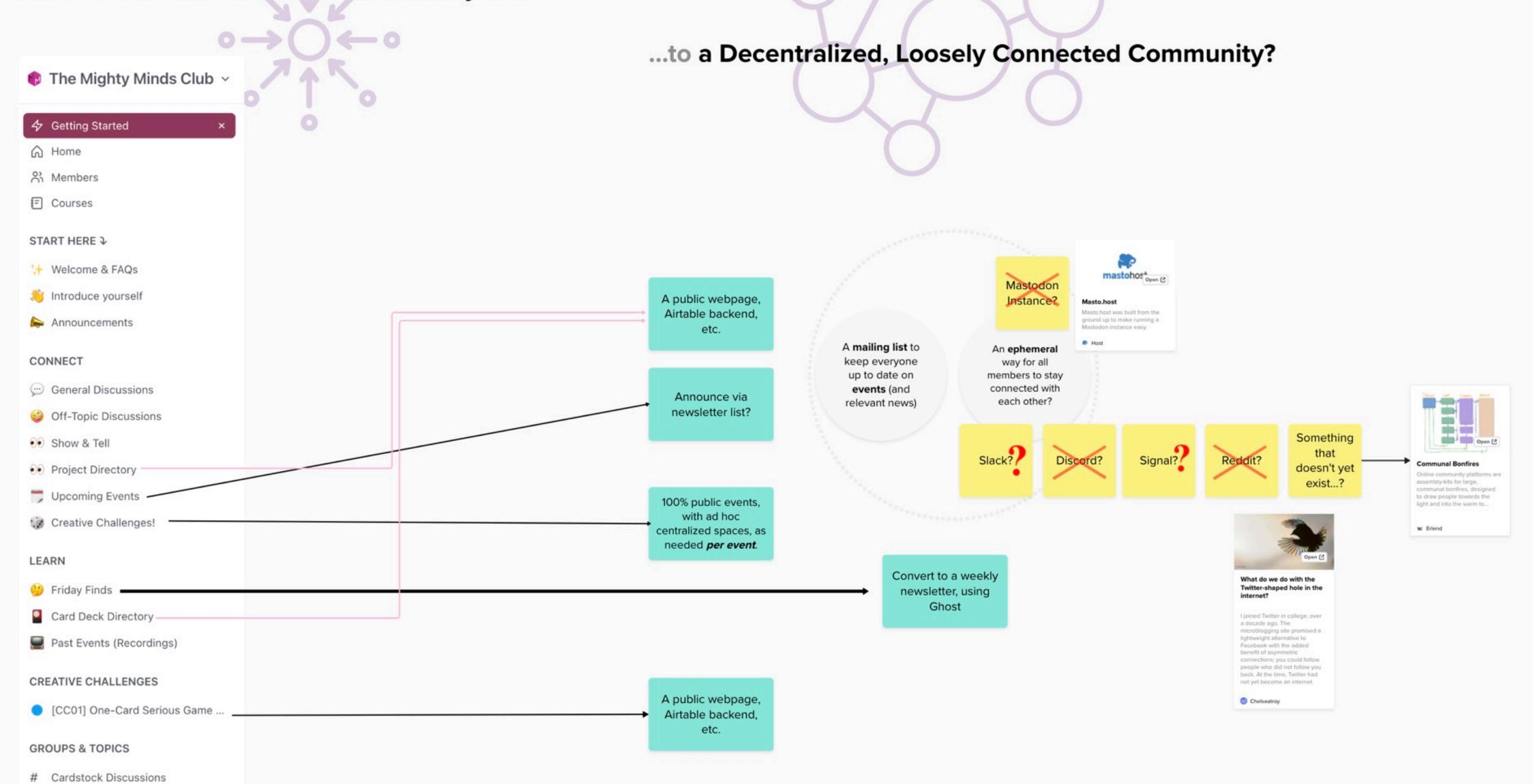


#### **CURRENT THINKING...**

Links

+ Add link

#### From A Centralized Private Community to...

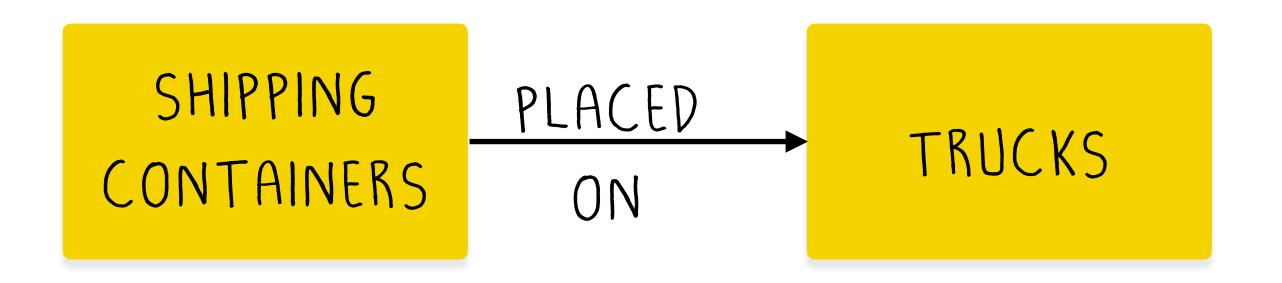




# LISTEN CLOSELY TO YOUR LANGUAGE.

WRITING OUT YOUR THOUGHTS CAN REVEAL HOW TO DRAW YOUR THINKING.

### "SHIPPING CONTAINERS GET PLACED ONTO TRUCKS"



(NOT THIS!)

- THE PEOPLE HERE ARE...
- THE STEPS TO DO THIS ARE ...
- · AT THE BOTTOM IS...
- THIS DRIVES THIS OTHER THING ...
- THIS UNLOCKS THAT ...
- · ALL OF THESE ARE BLOCKED BY THIS ...
- · SITTING BEHIND ALL THIS ...
- · AND THIS IS PART OF ...
- THE BARRIER TO THIS IS ...
- THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE IS ...
- THIS MIGHT LEAD TO ...

#### COMMON PRACTICE:

#### A phrase like

 shipping containers get placed onto trucks becomes:



#### **DUAL CODING**

The core, named concepts—are the easiest to identify.

- The school offers an open house for parents.
- the **people** here are...

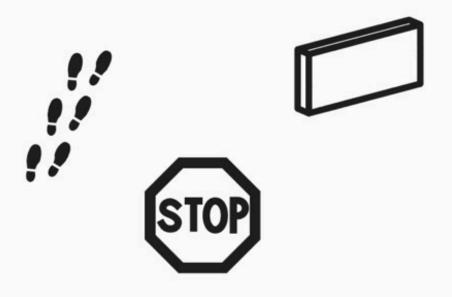






Sometimes, the metaphorical language can (and should) interpreted literally:

- the **steps** to do this are...
- All of these are blocked by this...
- The barrier to this is

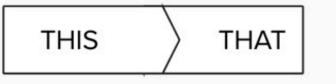


#### VISUALIZING RELATIONSHIPS

Showing **relationships** is a bit harder.

- this drives this other thing...
- this unlocks that...









Something

Something

Something

#### **OBSESSING ON VERBS**

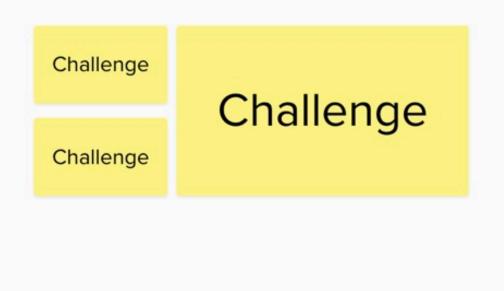
The school offers an open house

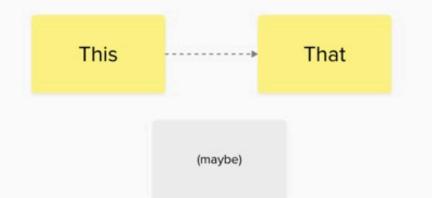
# WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE TO NOFFER'S SOMETHING? School Offers Open House Something Something

#### **MODIFIERS**

Words that *characterize* other things (Adjectives or modal auxiliary verbs). Listening for these tells us something about *how* we might represent these things.

- The **biggest** challenge is
- This might lead to



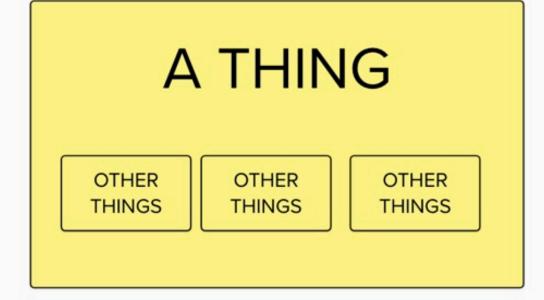


#### **PLACEMENT**

You can also listen for words that describe placement or relative positioning:

- Sitting behind all this...
- And this is part of...
- at the bottom is

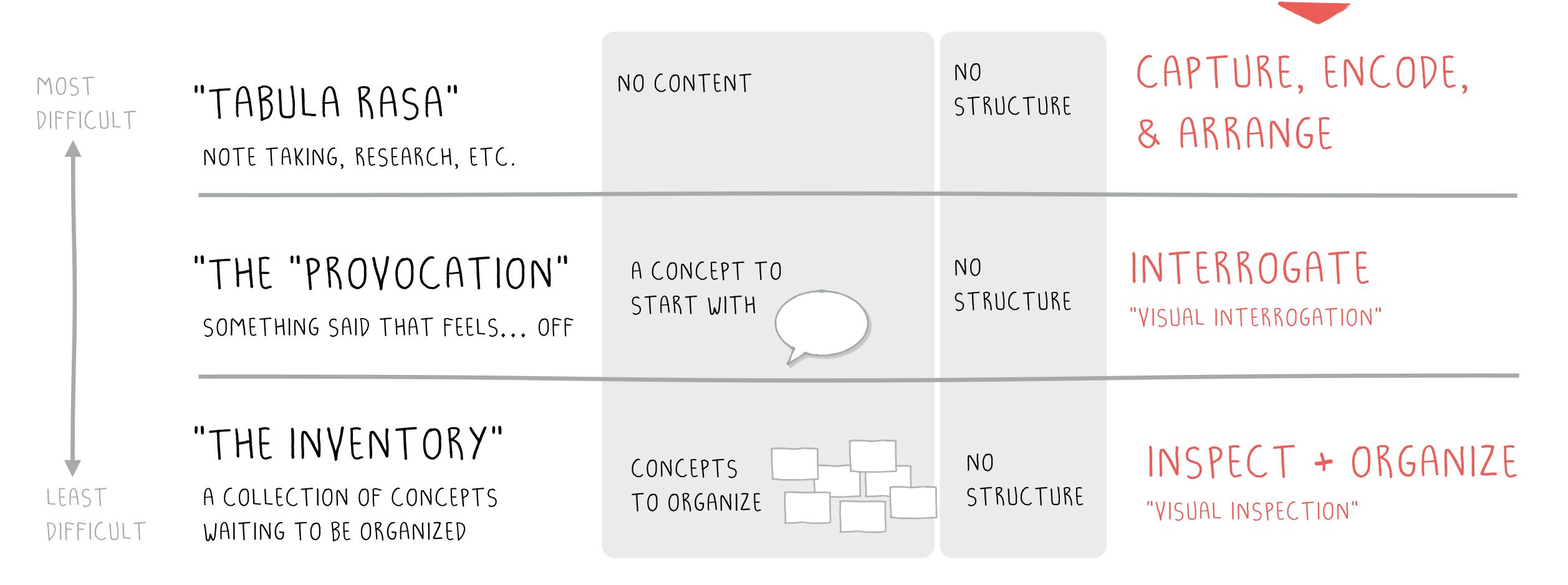




A THING

A THING

A THING AT THE BOTTOM



# HANK



STEPHEN P. ANDERSON