

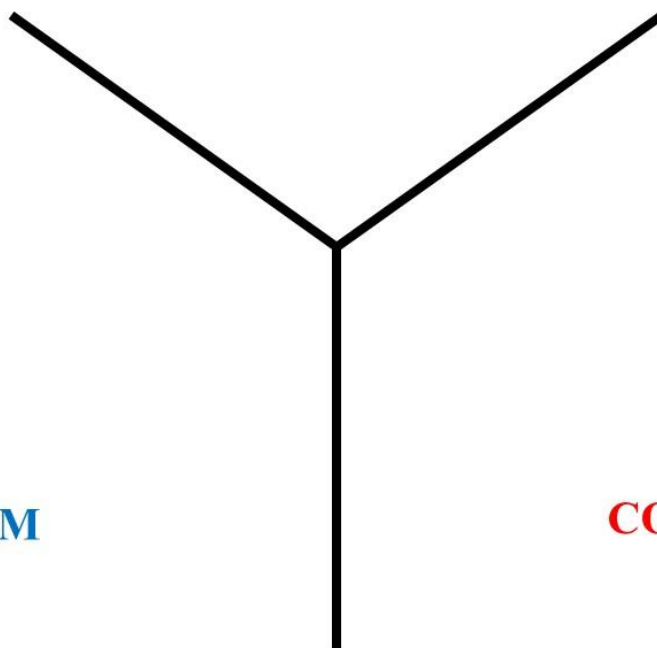
# ***Emails to a Young Entrepreneur***

Skip Walter  
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**SERENITY**

**WISDOM**

**COURAGE**



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## **Preface**

While mentoring, coaching and teaching thousands of entrepreneurs and aspiring entrepreneurs over the last fifteen years, one thing is clear: entrepreneurs don't understand the game they are playing or the "game board" on which they are playing. I am not surprised. I took forty years to understand the entrepreneurial game.

New entrepreneurs are so focused on their product and working *IN* their business, they forget to work *ON* their business. They never learn that as a founder your "product" is the business.

*Emails to a Young Entrepreneur* is a journey of discovery to understand the new venture game and to develop and trust your inner guidance system.

I can't guarantee that after reading this book you will completely understand the new venture game. I can guarantee that with this book, with our experiential seminars and working in a new venture, you will learn the game in a very short time. Creating a successful venture doesn't have to be hard or painful. It does take knowing the game.

While researching *Emails to a Young Entrepreneur*, I had lunch with two energetic and excited young entrepreneurs who founded [InCube](#) at Duke University. InCube is a selective social living group where the requirement is that you have to start a new venture. They were proud of being the first Duke undergraduates to start companies. They shared what their companies were about and how much they learned by living with other entrepreneurs.

After they ran out of steam describing their ventures and products and living group, they asked about my first company. I debated whether I should burst their bubble or not. I decided in favor of sharing my own history as a Duke undergraduate starting my first company. I wanted these young entrepreneurs to understand that while not being first, rather they were part of a proud tradition of new ventures sprouting from the Duke ecosystem. The young entrepreneurs' energy immediately waned as they realized they were no longer "the first." As my story unfolded, they quickly re-energized seeing their work as part of a long, proud Duke tradition of new venture creation.

Forty years ago I co-founded a software company with a set of terrific researchers for medical informatics at Duke University. We created a medical records system that was used by three departments in the Duke Medical Center. We formed a company, [GEMISCH](#), to sell our product to other university medical systems. I quickly figured out that I was the only founder that was interested in the business and the selling of the product. While I knew how to develop a software product, I didn't know anything about building a business, finding investors, or selling our product.

I started asking a lot of questions of anyone that I could find about business in general and starting a company in particular. I received a lot of expert advice with most of it focused on very large businesses. I knew I didn't know what I was doing, but I couldn't find any North Star to guide me. I needed to find someplace where I could learn about

business. Being a part of a respected academic institution, the answers all came back – go get your MBA. Yet, when I looked at the MBA curriculums of business schools in the early 1970s there was nothing to support learning how to start your own company.

After considerable deliberation, I decided to join Digital Equipment Corporation (DEC) which was our major hardware partner in bringing our software to market. While I could have applied to DEC's Central Engineering Group, I knew that building software wasn't what I needed to learn. I needed to learn how to discover customers, understand their needs, make proposals, sell them a solution, and support their use of our solution. The place to learn what I wanted was by joining DEC as a Software Services Consultant working hand in hand with the sales organization in an office in Charlotte, NC. This career decision would teach me far more about a new venture than I could conceive.

Within a year, John Churin and I came up with the idea for an office automation system, ALL-IN-1 (still in use today after thirty four years of evolution). Over the next five years we grew our idea through customer projects at RJ Reynolds Tobacco and DuPont. Before we knew it we had a \$1 billion a year international business. Every day was an exercise in jumping into situations that I had no idea how to navigate.

The invisible gift I received was the support of five senior executives at DEC who guided me by pointing me to the next step and the next and the next. I just followed the bouncing ball. I did not realize until thirty years later they were providing a rich set of experiences to develop my internal guidance system – my North Star. The innumerable hours on airplanes reading hundreds of business books, taking time to reflect on what was happening, and exposure to luminary consultants like Edgar Schein of MIT aided the making meaning out of the experiences.

With the success of ALL-IN-1, I jumped into my next internal DEC project, PC ALL-IN-1. It was a miserable business failure. The understanding of this failure compared to the spectacular success of ALL-IN-1 showed the importance of viewing each event and interaction as an experiment. The experiments let me constantly update and revise my theory of business and innovation. I discovered that I learned relatively little from success, but a real treasure trove from each failure.

With this experimental mindset, I became a serial entrepreneur and intrapreneur. I chose each opportunity based on what I needed to learn about every aspect of the evolution of a business. I was part of both private and public companies. By joining Primus Knowledge Systems, I experienced going from a private company to a public company through an Initial Public Offering ((IPO) at the top of the dot com bubble. My wayward journey led to the founding of Attenex in 2000. An intensive nine years went by quickly as we went from a glimmer of an idea to a successful exit.

After selling Attenex to FTI Consulting in 2008, I came across Jim Clifton's [\*The Coming Jobs War\*](#). Clifton asserts that over the next twenty years we need to create 1.5 billion sustainable living wage jobs. Clifton believes that the engine of job growth is entrepreneurs and small business. The book added a new impetus to my teaching and

mentoring. How could I help people who found and run companies reduce the friction – time, attention, and investment dollars – needed for a company to accelerate its growth? I explored what I could do to increase the success rate of new ventures (abysmally low at <1%).

Scaling up my mentoring and coaching of entrepreneurs to accelerate job growth became my new purpose. This book is one of the methods for contributing to the accelerated success of new ventures.

Developing professionally at a Global 1000 company in the early 1980s was a gift that I didn't appreciate until I left DEC and came to Aldus in Seattle. At DEC whenever we had a new management opening we could throw a tennis ball in any direction and hit ten well qualified candidates for that opening. At Aldus, I didn't have a single middle manager whom I would have hired or promoted at DEC. As I dug into why, I realized that somewhere in the 1980s corporations lost the commitment to developing the talent in their organizations. It was one of the first costs eliminated in the race to efficiency.

Today, the good news for entrepreneurs is a much richer new venture ecosystem than ever before. Excellent and experienced authors like Ash Maurya, Steve Blank, Eric Ries, and Alexander Osterwalder are producing a wide range of books, videos and seminars to engage the entrepreneur. Business schools are investing in entrepreneurial programs. Accelerators, incubators, and shared working spaces are popping up everywhere. Startup Weekend, Startup Lean Machine, and hackathons are providing experiential weekends to get exposed to the life of an entrepreneur and find co-founders. Meetups are exploding in popularity to explore all aspects of the entrepreneurial lifecycle.

Contrary to most entrepreneurs' expectations, an army of consultants, advisors, experienced entrepreneurs, angel investors and subject matter experts are ready to provide help. As you will see when you view Simon Sinek's video on "How Great Leaders Inspire Action", almost all of this help is about HOW to do things. Each mentor has a prescriptive set of steps ready for any question the entrepreneur could ask.

In forty years of immersing myself in the practice of innovating and new ventures, reading thousands of books, attending hundreds of seminars, and interviewing the masters, I haven't come across any resources that resemble the power of what those five executives did for me at DEC. They were kind enough to never answer any of my questions directly or with a prescription. They patiently listened to my questions (often disguised as ranting and whining) and suggested a customer opportunity to get involved with or a research project to take on or a conference to go present at.

*Emails to a Young Entrepreneur* is a "paying it forward" of the gift of the DEC executives along with a distillation of the meaning I've made of forty years of innovating experiences through new ventures. The topics are taken from thousands of emails I exchanged while I was learning the art of entrepreneurship and the many thousands I've exchanged with entrepreneurs and students who seek my counsel. Each topic is followed by exercises for applying the concepts to the entrepreneur's new venture.

Long time colleague, Barney Barnett, summarized a recent conversation with a young entrepreneur – “feeling lost is the new normal.” He reflected that “being lost (not knowing) is a beginning. It necessitates that wherever we are in our journey we stand in the presence of hope.” [David Robinson](#) expanded on this observation in “[Stand with Hope](#)”:

“Do you remember the last time you stood in uncertainty and whispered quietly to yourself, ‘I do not know what to do?’ Did you recognize the moment as a beginning? Why is ‘not knowing’ what to do so frightful? What assumption set requires us at all times to know? Knowing what to do is, at best, an illusion.

‘Not knowing’ is the beginning of learning. Learning has nothing to do with knowing. Learning has to do with exploration. Life has nothing to do with knowing. Life has everything to do with experience and engagement. Every educator, mentor, guide, and leader should listen to Barney’s thought.

“What if we understood that being lost was nothing more than a beginning and the gift of ‘not knowing’ was that, for a moment, we might stand silently in the warm presence of hope? What if we understood the role of student to be a long walk in the presence of hope? Can you imagine who we might be as a society (and as individuals) if we understood the need to test for the presence of hope before we run tests for knowing stuff?”

The text and the exercises in the book are aimed at discovering, developing and trusting your inner guidance system for your new venture. Your new venture is a unique creation in its own way and time. Your journey will encounter competing “helpers” disguised as customers, suppliers, mentors, subject matter experts and investors in a tug of war for influence over your path. The rest of us don’t know where your path will lead. The speed with which you develop your internal guidance system is directly related to your ability to “experience first and make meaning second.” The exercises that accompany each Email are designed to augment the stories and frameworks of each topic.

Each of us brings several “attentions” to any learning activity. Carlos Casteneda wrote extensively on first and second attention. He drew from [Toltec Wisdom](#):

“Warriors understand that our use of the first attention puts order into a chaotic universe; it creates the world of the tonal. The key is to realize that this order only represents a point of view and is not necessarily the absolute truth. The second attention is when we focus our attention on *what is*, rather than what we were taught about reality. It involves a shift of our assemblage point and state of consciousness into heightened awareness.”

Several of the passages within this book (for example the prayers in the Emails, the [Flip comics](#), and the Kusa-Hibari story) and the exploration of “The Cosmos of the New Venture” through the enneagram structure are aimed at the entrepreneur’s second

attention. These passages may not be understood with your first attention. Over time, these passages will make sense to your second attention.

The Emails provide relevant topics for the entire life cycle of a new venture. Most of us take several years to go from an idea to an exit. I suggest that no matter what stage you are in or whether you've been part of a new venture, read through the entire book as quickly as you can. Then figure out which chapters apply to where you are in your current venture. Re-read that Email and start working through the relevant exercises.

You will notice that only two of Mikhail's Emails are captured in the book. The absence of the other emails is intentional. At the start of each Email, I summarize in a couple of sentences what was in Mikhail's Email. The intent is for you to provide your experiences with your own venture as the substance of what Mikhail is writing about. Imagine what your life is like at each of the stages Mikhail is asking questions about. What questions do you have that you would like to bring to your understanding of a particular Email?

Mikhail is a fictional entrepreneur. However, he is a synthesis of three entrepreneurs from the United States and Russia with whom I worked intensely for two years.

To get the most value out of the book read it with the intention of understanding the new venture game you are a participant in and of discovering, developing and trusting your internal guidance system.

Use the Emails and exercises to find your deeper purpose (Why) and discover, develop and trust your North Star.

While the exercises are aimed at developing your inner guidance system, the results of the exercises are valuable for sharing with your founding team, lead customer and investors. Most learning is social so encouraging your stakeholders to engage with you in the exercises and share your insights accelerates your startup and company culture.

I look forward to exchanging Emails with you as you pursue your new venture.

Skip Walter  
[skip@emailstoskip.com](mailto:skip@emailstoskip.com)

## **Forward**

The first thing you notice about Skip is that he always carries a Moleskine notebook. It is usually open because he's scribbling a note, capturing an insight, observing an anomaly, or figuring out how to ask a better question. Skip lives to explore the bigger questions and the beautiful questions. He is in this world to learn. We started a company together so I had the good fortune of following him around for a year or so and it wasn't long before I was observing the world through Skip-esque eyes: scribbling notes, capturing patterns and group behavior. For Skip, everything is a learning opportunity and his titanic curiosity is infectious.

It's simple. Skip wants to learn so he can help make a better world. For most people, making a better world is a nice aspiration, something they might post on the refrigerator as a reminder or as a new year's resolution. For Skip, making a better world is an active pursuit. It is a daily mission. It's an imperative. He does not muddle himself with wondering whether or not he is capable of helping humanity walk into a brighter future; he just does it. He engages with ideas, steps into uncertainty as a true explorer should, challenges his perspective and checks his assumptions. In another era he'd sail his ship toward the horizon despite the community's certainty that he would sail off the edge of the earth. For Skip, sailing off the edge is the reason to sail. It is the attraction. He is the consummate entrepreneur, not through aspiration, but because he was born that way. He can't help it. If there is a horizon, Skip must set sail to see what is there.

In a world of goal-setters, people afraid to move until they've plotted a course and prescribed their path, Skip knows that a true entrepreneur only knows the answer to "how do I do it?" at the end of the journey. "How" is something you can only know after the Exit. It is counterintuitive to everything we've been taught or led to believe. An entrepreneur, like an artist, necessarily creates the process while they create the product. It is the opposite of what good MBA students are led to believe. An entrepreneur is in a creative relationship with a moving target, an idea that constantly rolls and transforms, so the entrepreneur must also roll and transform. The expectation of knowing "how" is, in fact, the single greatest obstacle for the entrepreneur to transcend. "How" presumes a prescriptive path and hampers the essential thing: a dynamic relationship with a possible future. "How" inhibits the transformation of an idea. It pretends that the way is already known. It screams, "Don't sail toward the horizon until you know where the edge is!" Asking "how" upfront is the reason most aspiring entrepreneurs fail.

If you expect this book to answer the question, "How?" you will be sorely disappointed. This book will, however, excite your imagination, challenge your assumptions, and flip your perspective. This book will help you ask yourself better questions. It will necessitate a clear relationship with your "Why?" It will help you stay fluid and pivot when you want to give up or seek the safety of fixing your fingers around the neck of a lesser idea. This book will blow open your idea of business so that you might recognize the bigger game that every entrepreneur must play if they want to succeed. It will help you keep walking when you fool yourself into thinking that you've arrived.

The second thing you will discover about Skip is that he loves wine. In a trip that I will always treasure, we drove from Seattle to Sonoma, CA, to do a workshop on strategic networking at the gorgeous Benziger Family Winery. We took our time on the journey, passing through the Willamette Valley while visiting several wineries. At each stop, Skip introduced me to a different aspect of winemaking: the growing and harvesting of grapes. I learned about soil and altitude. I learned about fermentation and blending. I learned about the different philosophies in grape growing and how the grower's philosophy becomes visible in the vines and the taste of the wine. While I thought I was learning about wine, Skip was actually mentoring me. I learned about myself and recognized my greater capacity as a leader and an entrepreneur. Like all great mentors, I did not recognize until late in the trip that Skip was consciously guiding me. The winemaking process was a metaphor. He was helping me see the whole system and not isolated parts. He was guiding me to a bigger picture, a deeper understanding of my capacity as a creator, and an ability to ask a better set of questions. In those few short days I learned more about organizational systems, creating whole systems as a design process, than I learned in a two-year master's degree I'd taken a decade earlier.

A good mentor never tells you how to do anything. A good mentor asks questions without investment in an answer. A good mentor knows the answer is as personal and unique as the student. In many indigenous story traditions, the meaning of a story is never discussed because the elders know the student must engage with the story from their unique point of view. A single story holds as many meanings as there are listeners to the story. The same story is told over and over again and each hearing brings new insight. The question changes as life progresses. The question changes as we gain life experience. There is no investment by the mentor in any single answer. There is no notion of 'expert' or of 'being right.' There is only a great story that opens great questions that bring personal insight. Skip is a great mentor because he understands the role of a mentor. He will not give you pat answers. He will guide you to a well of deep insight. You will find in his *Emails to a Young Entrepreneur* a great mentor.

Finally, when I was training in the theatre, I had a professor that taught us to seek the great artists. "Knock on their door!" he'd say. "You have nothing to lose." Find the great artists and ask them what makes them tick. Ask them to share their passion with you. "People like to talk about themselves and there is no greater gift you can give yourself than to be a good listener to someone who has a great story to tell." If I didn't know Skip already, I'd go knock on his door. I'd ask him to tell me about his life and to share his greatest lessons. He has a great story. This book is what he might say to you if you had the courage to knock on his door. You'll be relieved to know that he is warm and gracious and loves to talk about his passions, share his foibles, and laugh at a life spent sailing toward the edge. Enjoy your time with him. He is a treasure and this book is a gift for anyone who desires to walk the path of the entrepreneur.

David Robinson  
March 1, 2014  
Kenosha, Wisconsin

## ***Email from a Young Entrepreneur***

**Mikhail Rostov** [mikhail@id.iit.edu](mailto:mikhail@id.iit.edu)

Friday, June 14, 2013 at 12:54 PM

To: Skip Walter [skip@emailstoskip.com](mailto:skip@emailstoskip.com)

Professor Skip,

As I was sitting in front of my locker staring at the detritus of my three year combined MBA and Master of Design program at the Institute of Design, I was deep in thought when Patrick Whitney stopped and asked me “what’s next for you, Mikhail?”

How did Patrick know that is exactly what was on my mind? For three years, I’ve worked towards the goal of graduating. What’s next? I want to do a startup that builds on the multiple disciplines that I’ve learned – business and human centered design. I even have an idea that I’ve worked on during many of the class projects – a visual interface for organizing work on the new portable tablets that are coming to market.

But I don’t know how to get started.

“Thanks for asking, Patrick,” I shared. “This is the question that’s been plaguing me for months now. I want to do a startup. And I’m going back to Moscow where there isn’t much of an infrastructure or ecosystem for supporting high tech startups. Who can help me when I’m thousands of miles away from all the resources here in the United States?”

Patrick smiled his [Cheshire Cat](#) knowing smile and offered “you should contact one of our favorite serial entrepreneurs, Skip Walter. He taught here for ten years commuting from Seattle once a week. He calls himself a [pracademic](#) (practitioner academic) and enjoys ‘[paying it forward](#)’ with young entrepreneurs.”

Patrick was kind enough to give me your contact information. Skip, I’ve got this great idea for a new productivity tool to help knowledge workers visualize the project workspaces they are collaborating on.

I’ve just finished the three-year combined MBA and MDES program and I am ready to start my own business. Patrick wanted to make sure that I let you know that I am Russian and am headed back to Moscow. He thought maybe this would be something that would catch your interest. He also thought that you would be intrigued by the challenge of working with me remotely. I would be delighted to help you learn about the Russian entrepreneur ecosystem.

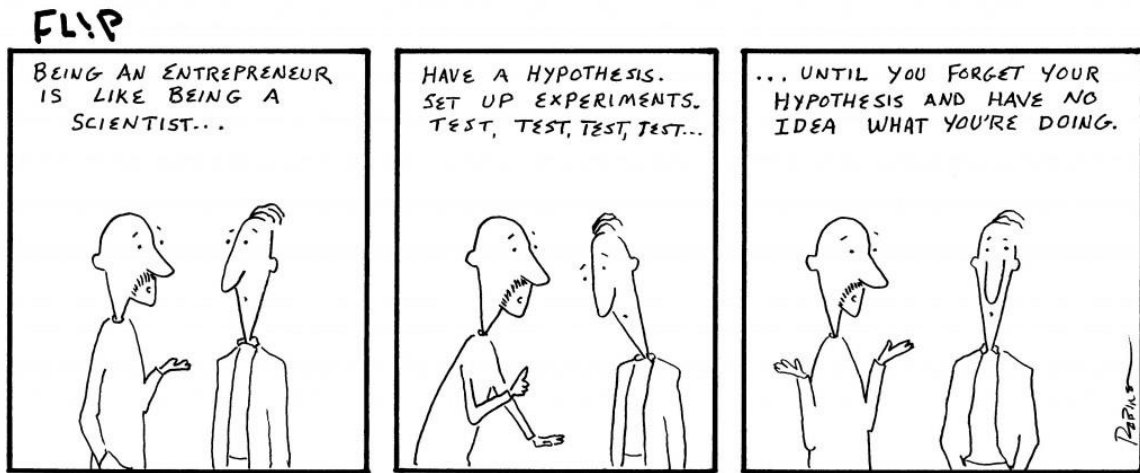
Attached to this email are some of the key artifacts from my final project. These artifacts include the design of the tool and a business plan to start the company. I would really appreciate your taking a look at these documents and offering your thoughts and comments on whether there is a viable product here.

Unfortunately, I am leaving for Moscow tonight, so I won't be able to come to Seattle and meet you in person.

Let me know what you think of my ideas and prototypes and whether you would be interested in helping me bring this prototype to market.

Yours sincerely,  
Mikhail Genrich Rostov  
Chicago, IL  
June 14, 2013

## Conceiving



“You are looking outwards, and of all things that is what you must now not do. Nobody can advise and help you, nobody. There is only one single means. Go inside yourself. Discover the motive that bids you write; examine whether it sends its roots down to the deepest places of your heart, confess to yourself whether you would have to die if writing were denied you. This before all: ask yourself in the quietest hour of your night: must I write? Dig down into yourself for a deep answer. And if this should be in the affirmative, if you may meet this solemn question with a strong and simple ‘I must’, then build your life according to this necessity; your life must, right to its most unimportant and insignificant hour, become a token and a witness of this impulse.”

Rilke, Rainer Maria. [\*Letters to a Young Poet\*](#) (Kindle Locations 167-172). Start Publishing LLC.

Seattle, WA USA, June 20, 2013

Mikhail,

Thank you for your kind Email seeking my thoughts on the quality of your ideas. With great fondness, I remember the joy of immersing myself in the Institute of Design and the wonders of late-night conversations with Patrick about the history and evolution of human centered design. Patrick is the piper of the design world wandering through Global 1000 corporations sharing his message of the power of design to make a real difference in the business world.

Before I share my entrepreneurial experiences, a reflection is appropriate. I've found the regular reading of the entrepreneur's [serenity prayer](#) to be a good practice (the use of God, Lord and other spiritual terms in these emails are in the sense of the Alcoholics Anonymous higher power or power greater than ourselves):

*God grant me the **serenity** to accept my team, my customers, my investors and my suppliers as bringers of opportunity;*

*The **courage** to change my understanding of what the customer truly needs;  
and*

*The **wisdom** to know the difference between what is right and what the investors, the board and the bankers want.*

I am not sure I have anything of specific value to you in your journey. Most entrepreneurs ask me very detailed questions like you did in your letter. On my good days, I make sure not to answer those questions. Each startup is its own journey. What I've done or observed in the past may or may not have anything to do with the journey that you are on. Mikhail, only you can know what is right for your new venture.

After forty years of entrepreneuring and [intrapreneuring](#), I realize that for most of my professional life I did not understand the game of business I was playing. I had the core processes backward. I learned that I needed to flip my perspective.

Shortly after we sold Attenex to FTI Consulting two concept shattering events occurred. The first event was sponsored by the Northwest Angel Capital Association and featured Basil Peters sharing his process for [Early Exits](#). As he described all the best practices that you should do as part of planning the venture exit process (getting acquired), I put my head down on the table and damn near cried.

Where was Basil's book, counsel and valuable resources when we were exiting? I quickly understood that Attenex was the poster child of what NOT to do when being acquired. His best practices illustrated why we lost \$35M in value from the initial FTI Consulting offer to our closing valuation six months later.

The second event was a surprise announcement from FTI Consulting, that based on the \$91M acquisition of Attenex, they were launching an IPO of the division that acquired us to raise >\$1B by selling 40% of the division. The FTI founders designed a way to turn a \$91M acquisition expense into raising \$1B of new capital. I was stunned at the innovative creativeness. We did not see it coming. Yet, upon reflection, if I had truly understood my Valuation Capture framework (described in the Exiting Email), the prediction of such a strategic move was embedded in the framework.

I am getting ahead of myself. I wanted to share with you that becoming an entrepreneur is a lifelong learning process. It never stops. The world of commerce is constantly changing. As a young entrepreneur, you need to learn just as fast. What worked yesterday has no guarantee of working tomorrow.

The above is a way of saying I am not qualified to pass judgment on your ideas or business plan or prototypes. Only you can do that. It is your idea and hopefully your passion.

A year ago, my daughter and her husband conceived their first child whom we know as Alice. The biological process of conception, birth, infancy, and parenting is close to this conceiving of an idea for a startup and bringing it into existence. Either by intention or serendipity you conceive of the idea for your new venture. As the idea matures in the womb of your mind, your life changes day by day. Your energies are focused on that idea and you start nurturing it and protecting it. And just as a mother's pregnancy process becomes visible to everyone she encounters, your enthusiasm for your idea will be increasingly visible to those you encounter through your excitement and passionate energy.

In the ideal state, you have a life partner (co-founder) to join you in the nurturing of your idea. With design or luck, you've gotten to know your co-conceiver through your working relationships. Now you prepare for the birthing of your idea. Many budding entrepreneurs take birthing classes (like Steve Blank's Launchpad classes) or find a wise mid-wife for a mentor. This pregnancy time is one of finding the professionals that can help you with the birthing of your conception. You need to find your lawyer, banker, and accountant who will take care of the administrative parts of the birth process.

You start seeking out other entrepreneurs either through your classes or Meetups. Peer learning is so valuable at this point with entrepreneurs who are in the same trimesters of pre-birthing.

The birthing day arrives on its own schedule. This day you formally start your new venture life. And like human births, where because of the size of the head, a baby is born about three months before it is really ready, you will quickly realize that you have jumped into something you weren't prepared for. That's OK. We all have to start somewhere.

Many first time parents ride an emotional roller coaster in those early months caring for their infant. Their lament is “nobody gave me a manual for what a parent is supposed to do!” Where is the manual for a startup mother? While there are thousands of books and an unlimited amount of expert advice, prior to your baby venture arriving in the world you can’t understand a word of it. Now the reality is right in front of you crying constantly – for food, for poopy diapers, for discomfort, for who knows why.

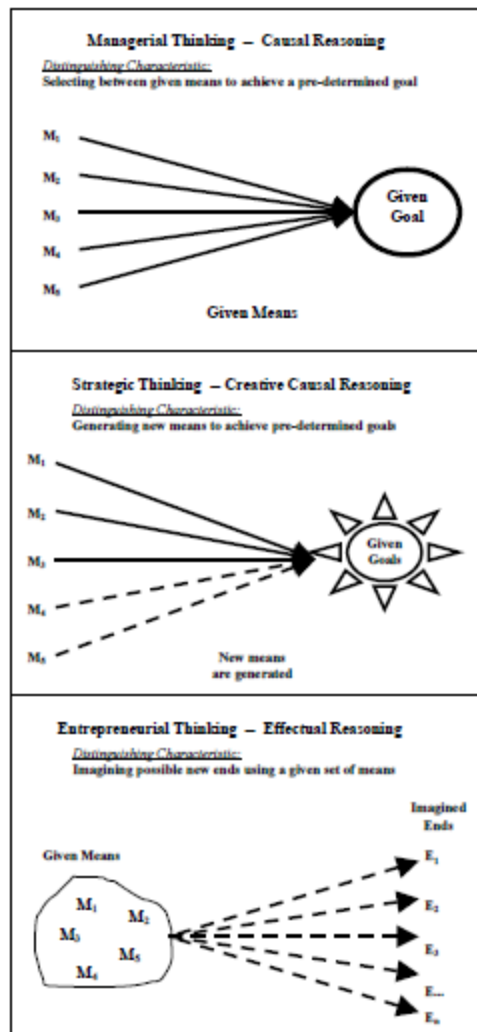
For the terminal analytics among us, the second lament is “this is not going according to my plan.” During the idea pregnancy, you made lots of plans. New venture babies are not like established companies. They require a different way of thinking.

Saras Sarasvathy calls this type of thinking effectual:

“The word ‘effectual’ is the inverse of ‘causal’. In general, in MBA programs across the world, students are taught causal or predictive reasoning – in every functional area of business. Causal rationality begins with a pre-determined goal and a given set of means, and seeks to identify the optimal – fastest, cheapest, most efficient, etc. – alternative to achieve the given goal. The make-vs.-buy decision in production, or choosing the target market with the highest potential return in marketing, or picking a portfolio with the lowest risk in finance, or even hiring the best person for the job in human resources management, are all examples of problems of causal reasoning. A more interesting variation of causal reasoning involves the creation of additional alternatives to achieve the given goal. This form of creative causal reasoning is often used in strategic thinking.

“Effectual reasoning, however, does not begin with a specific goal. Instead, it begins with a given set of means and allows goals to emerge contingently over time from the varied imagination and diverse aspirations of the founders and the people they interact with. While causal thinkers are like great generals seeking to conquer fertile lands (Genghis Khan conquering two thirds of the known world), effectual thinkers are like explorers setting out on voyages into uncharted waters (Columbus discovering the new world). It is important to point out though that the same person can use both causal and effectual reasoning at different times depending on what the circumstances call for. In fact, the best entrepreneurs are capable of both and do use both modes well. But they prefer effectual reasoning over causal reasoning in the early stages of a new venture, and arguably, most entrepreneurs do not transition well into latter stages requiring more causal reasoning. Figure 1 graphically depicts the different forms of reasoning discussed above.”

**Figure 1**



*Figure 1 Difference between Causal and Effectual Thinking*

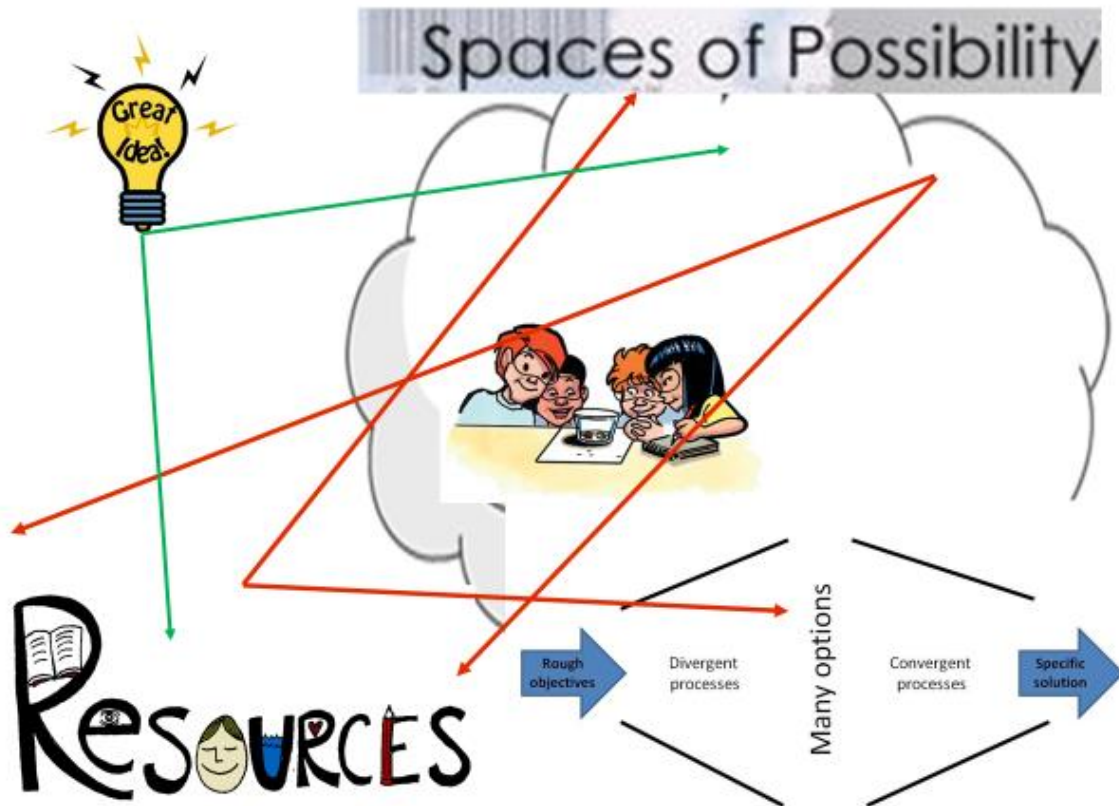
From “[What Makes Entrepreneurs Entrepreneurial?](#)” by Saras Sarasvathy of the Darden Graduate School of Business Administration, University of Virginia.

For many entrepreneurs, the strange word “effectual” is a road block to understanding. [David Robinson](#) in his “artist way” translated this for himself:

- Causal thinking – Ready. Aim. Fire.
- Effectual thinking – Fire. Aim. Ready.

Over the years I’ve found that managers in large corporations and academics do not see the distinction between causal and effectual thinking. They see both as being goal directed and miss the fundamental process of the entrepreneur. Another way to see how an entrepreneur thinks is in Figure 2. Through observations in the world or the emergence of an idea for a product and company, the entrepreneur has their great idea. They start

looking at the world as a range of Spaces of Possibility. As they identify potential customers in these spaces of possibility, they look around for what resources they have in their own skills and in their network of relationships. Through several iterations of convergence and divergence, the entrepreneur begins to focus on how their idea can come into being for their discovered target customers. There is no goal for the entrepreneur at the beginning. Rather there is this to and fro between possibilities and resources.

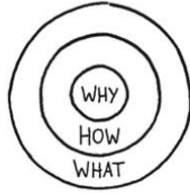


*Figure 2 An Entrepreneur's View of the World*

Just as one's predisposed plans for what being a mother with a new infant will be like are thrown out the window at the first bout of unstoppable crying, any plan for a new venture rarely survives the first contact with a prospective customer or investor.

You are still at the beginning of your journey. Now is a good time to step back for reflection and revisit your intentions. I recommend starting by watching the TED Video "[How Great Leaders Inspire Action](#)" from [Simon Sinek](#):

### THE GOLDEN CIRCLE.



Sinek points out that great leaders start with their personal “why” and their company’s “why.” Sinek flips the perspective of most executives and marketing professionals who proclaim the “how” and “what” of their products. He concludes his video by pointing out that Martin Luther King’s most famous speech didn’t start with “I have a plan,” rather it started with “I have a dream!” Sinek writes:

“There are leaders and there are those who lead. With only 6 percent market share in the United States and about 3 percent worldwide, Apple is not a leading manufacturer of home computers. Yet the company leads the computer industry and is now a leader in other industries as well. Martin Luther King’s experiences were not unique, yet he inspired a nation to change. The Wright brothers were not the strongest contenders in the race to take the first manned, powered flight, but they led us into a new era of aviation and, in doing so, completely changed the world we live in.

“Their goals were not different than anyone else’s, and their systems and processes were easily replicated. Yet the Wright brothers, Apple and Martin Luther King stand out among their peers. They stand apart from the norm and their impact is not easily copied. They are members of a very select group of leaders who do something very, very special. They inspire us.

“Just about every person or organization needs to motivate others to act for some reason or another. Some want to motivate a purchase decision. Others are looking for support or a vote. Still others are keen to motivate the people around them to work harder or smarter or just follow the rules. The ability to motivate people is not, in itself, difficult. It is usually tied to some external factor. Tempting incentives or the threat of punishment will often elicit the behavior we desire. General Motors, for example, so successfully motivated people to buy their products that they sold more cars than any other automaker in the world for over seventy-seven years. Though they were leaders in their industry, they did not lead.

“Great leaders, in contrast, are able to inspire people to act. Those who are able to inspire give people a sense of purpose or belonging that has little to do with any external incentive or benefit to be gained. Those who truly lead are able to create

a following of people who act not because they were swayed, but because they were inspired. For those who are inspired, the motivation to act is deeply personal. They are less likely to be swayed by incentives. Those who are inspired are willing to pay a premium or endure inconvenience, even personal suffering. Those who are able to inspire will create a following of people— supporters, voters, customers, workers— who act for the good of the whole not because they have to, but because they want to...

“What if we could all learn to think, act and communicate like those who inspire? I imagine a world in which the ability to inspire is practiced not just by a chosen few, but by the majority. Studies show that over 80 percent of Americans do not have their dream job. If more knew how to build organizations that inspire, we could live in a world in which that statistic was the reverse— a world in which over 80 percent of people loved their jobs. People who love going to work are more productive and more creative. They go home happier and have happier families. They treat their colleagues and clients and customers better. Inspired employees make for stronger companies and stronger economies. That is why I wrote this book. I hope to inspire others to do the things that inspire them so that together we may build the companies, the economy and a world in which trust and loyalty are the norm and not the exception.”

Sinek, Simon (2009-09-23). [\*Start with Why: How Great Leaders Inspire Everyone to Take Action\*](#) (Kindle Locations 177-183). Penguin Group US. Kindle Edition.

Get in touch with your essential why and your dream. And in true effectual fashion, the essential why is likely to evolve as you proceed along your effectual learning path. Put on your calendar to revisit your why and your dream at least once a month during the infancy of your conception.

A key part of your intention is making explicit the values that are important to you and your fledgling venture. As individuals we want to stand for something. This exercise is to clarify what are the most important values for you and your new venture's success. The exercise is taken from [\*Managing by Values\*](#) by Ken Blanchard and Michael O'Connor.

*The most important thing in life is to decide what is most important.*

“What should I stand for? What should be the values by which I operate? Look over the list of values below. Circle any values that ‘jump out’ because of their importance to you. Then write your top *three* values, in order of importance, below the list. Feel free to add values if needed.”

Truth	Persistence	Resources
Efficiency	Sincerity	Dependability
Initiative	Fun	Trust
Environmentalism	Relationships	Excellence

Power	Wisdom	Teamwork
Control	Flexibility	Service
Courage	Perspective	Profitability
Competition	Commitment	Freedom
Excitement	Recognition	Friendship
Creativity	Learning	Influence
Happiness	Honesty	Justice
Honor	Originality	Quality
Innovation	Candor	Hard work
Obedience	Prosperity	Responsiveness
Financial growth	Respect	Fulfillment
Community support	Fairness	Purposefulness
Integrity	Order	Strength
Peace	Spirituality	Self-control
Loyalty	Adventure	Cleverness
Clarity	Cooperation	Success
Security	Humor	Stewardship
Love	Collaboration	Support

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

After selecting the three top values to focus on, we need to bring the values into daily life. Brainstorm ways in which you already bring these values into action or ways in which you would desire to bring these values into action. Sketch an image for each of your selected three values as well as an integrated image that illustrates how you would bring the values into action.

One of the most elegant statements for a partial answer to an essential why and values is taken from DuPont's published corporate vision:

*"Our principles are sacred. We will respect nature and living things, work safely, be gracious to one another and our partners, and each day we will leave for home with consciences clear and spirits soaring."*

Just as conceiving a child and going through the journey to birthing and parenting is sacred and a soaring experience beyond all others, conceiving a new company is a sacred responsibility. As you invite others to share in your journey and bring your opportunity to customers and investors, they are expecting you to honor your commitments. As Simon Sinek further elaborates in "[Leadership is not a rank, it's a decision](#)," the role of the parent and leader is to create a safe environment for the "baby" to grow and develop in order that she may soar on her own.

Michael Gerber observes many myths surrounding entrepreneurs and the conceiving of their new ventures:

“There is a myth in this country—I call it the E-Myth—which says that small businesses are started by entrepreneurs risking capital to make a profit. This is simply not so. The real reasons people start businesses have little to do with entrepreneurship. In fact, this belief in the Entrepreneurial Myth is the most important factor in the devastating rate of small business failure today. Understanding the E-Myth, and applying that understanding to the creation and development of a small business, can be the secret to any business’s success...

“Then, one day, for no apparent reason, something happened. It might have been the weather, a birthday, or your child’s graduation from high school. It might have been the paycheck you received on a Friday afternoon, or a sideways glance from the boss that just didn’t sit right. It might have been a feeling that your boss didn’t really appreciate your contribution to the success of his business. It could have been anything; it doesn’t matter what. But one day, for apparently no reason, *you were suddenly stricken with an Entrepreneurial Seizure*. And from that day on your life was never to be the same.”

Gerber, Michael E. (2009-03-17). [\*The E-Myth Revisited\*](#) (pp. 11-12). Harper Collins, Inc.. Kindle Edition.

The way to raise the success of a new venture in Gerber’s experience is for the entrepreneur to spend as much or more time working **ON** the business versus working **IN** the business on the product. The conceiving of the new venture is more than just the product or service the entrepreneur creates. **Conceiving is a commitment.** The commitment is to yourself, to investors, to customers, and to the talent you recruit. As the urgent overwhelms the entrepreneur, it is critical to focus on the commitment to bringing a successful business into the world.

Scott Peck in [\*A Different Drum\*](#) relates a story he calls “[The Rabbi’s Gift](#)” that gets at the heart of the extraordinary respect that must be a part of all of our sacred commitments and valued relationships, including our relationship with self.

“There is a story, perhaps a myth. Typical of mythic stories, it has many versions. Also typical, the source of the version I am about to tell is obscure. I cannot remember whether I heard or read it, or where or when. Furthermore, I do not even know the distortions I myself have made in it. All I know for certain is that this version came to me with a title. It is called ‘The Rabbi’s Gift.’

“The story concerns a monastery that had fallen upon hard times. Once a great order, as a result of waves of anti-monastic persecution in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and the rise of secularism in the nineteenth, all its branch houses were lost and it had become decimated to the extent that there were only five monks left in the decaying mother house: the abbot and four others, all over seventy in age. Clearly it was a dying order.

“In the deep woods surrounding the monastery there was a little hut that a rabbi from a nearby town occasionally used for a hermitage. Through their many years of prayer and contemplation the old monks had become a bit psychic, so they could always sense when the rabbi was in his hermitage. “The rabbi is in the woods, the rabbi is in the woods again,” they would whisper to each other. As he agonized over the imminent death of his order, it occurred to the abbot at one such time to visit the hermitage and ask the rabbi if by some possible chance he could offer any advice that might save the monastery.

“The rabbi welcomed the abbot at his hut. But when the abbot explained the purpose of his visit, the rabbi could only commiserate with him. “I know how it is,” he exclaimed. “The spirit has gone out of the people. It is the same in my town. Almost no one comes to the synagogue anymore.” So the old abbot and the old rabbi wept together. Then they read parts of the Torah and quietly spoke of deep things. The time came when the abbot had to leave. They embraced each other. “It has been a wonderful thing that we should meet after all these years,” the abbot said, “but I have still failed in my purpose for coming here. Is there nothing you can tell me, no piece of advice you can give me that would help me save my dying order?”

“No, I am sorry,” the rabbi responded. “I have no advice to give. The only thing I can tell you is that the Messiah is one of you.”

“When the abbot returned to the monastery his fellow monks gathered around him to ask, “Well, what did the rabbi say?”

“He couldn't help,” the abbot answered. “We just wept and read the Torah together. The only thing he did say, just as I was leaving — it was something cryptic — was that the Messiah is one of us. I don't know what he meant.”

“In the days and weeks and months that followed, the old monks pondered this and wondered whether there was any possible significance to the rabbi's words. The Messiah is one of us? Could he possibly have meant one of us monks here at the monastery? If that's the case, which one? Do you suppose he meant the abbot? Yes, if he meant anyone he probably meant Father Abbot. He has been our leader for more than a generation. On the other hand, he might have meant Brother Thomas. Certainly Brother Thomas is a holy man. Everyone knows that Thomas is a man of light. Certainly he could not have meant Brother Elred! Elred gets crotchety at times. But come to think of it, even though he is a thorn in people's sides, when you look back on it, Elred is virtually always right. Often very right. Maybe the rabbi did mean Brother Elred. But surely not Brother Phillip. Phillip is so passive, a real nobody. But then, almost mysteriously, he has a gift for somehow always being there when you need him. He just magically appears by your side. Maybe Phillip is the Messiah. Of course the rabbi didn't mean me. He couldn't possibly have meant me. I'm just an ordinary person. Yet

supposing he did? Suppose I am the Messiah? O God, not me. I couldn't be that much for You, could I?

“As they contemplated in this manner, the old monks began to treat each other with extraordinary respect on the off chance that one among them might be the Messiah. And on the off, off chance that each monk himself might be the Messiah, they began to treat themselves with extraordinary respect.

“Because the forest in which it was situated was beautiful, it so happened that people still occasionally came to visit the monastery to picnic on its tiny lawn, to wander along some of its paths, even now and then to go into the dilapidated chapel to meditate. As they did so, without even being conscious of it, they sensed this aura of extraordinary respect that now began to surround the five old monks and seemed to radiate out from them and permeate the atmosphere of the place. There was something strangely attractive, even compelling, about it. Hardly knowing why, they began to come back to the monastery more frequently to picnic, to play, to pray. They began to bring their friends to show them this special place. And their friends brought their friends.

“Then it happened that some of the younger men who came to visit the monastery started to talk more and more with the old monks. After a while one asked if he could join them. Then another. And another. So within a few years the monastery had once again become a thriving order and, thanks to the rabbi's gift, a vibrant center of light and spirituality in the realm.”

***I unconditionally accept where you are,  
but respect you enough to help you strive for your ideal.***

Mikhail, I started this Email about “Conceiving” with a quote from Rainer Maria Rilke to a young poet about deciding whether he must write. To paraphrase Rilke:

“This before all: ask yourself in the quietest hour of your night: must I ***start a company***? Dig down into yourself for a deep answer. And if this should be in the affirmative, if you may meet this solemn question with a strong and simple ‘***I must***’, then build your life according to this necessity...”

Mikhail, thank you again for reaching out to me and trusting me with your sacred commitment of conceiving your new venture. Asking for help is an ongoing commitment to your growth and development. Receiving, synthesizing and integrating received wisdom is core to discovering, developing and trusting your guiding North Star.

Yours in entrepreneuring,  
Skip Walter

## Applying Conceiving

Starting a new venture is an experiential process as Sarasvathy describes. The good news of the effectual process is that you start with the resources that you have available to you. The bad news is that you become so overwhelmed with the urgent you forget to take time for the important.

The most critical skill to develop as an effectual entrepreneur is to constantly observe the world around you and easily flip perspective. To survive as an adult, we develop habits that tacitly guide our actions. It is those tacit habits that blind us to what is happening in the world. The flipping perspective exercise for applying the concepts in the book is aimed at breaking our hidden patterns of behavior so that we can see the world we inhabit with new eyes. By seeing differently, we can think outside the box and see opportunities that others cannot.

The core process throughout the book is to commit to a daily flip of perspective. The process has four components:

1. Identify a pattern of behavior to break
2. Break it by flipping your perspective
3. Take a photo which represents some part of the flipped perspective
4. Spend 7 to 10 minutes free writing about your flipped perspective

That is all there is to it. Just a few minutes each day spent breaking your tacit patterns.

We'll start with easy patterns to break and flip. With the "Applying" part of each Email, I suggest a theme for what kinds of perspectives to flip. These themes will echo the topic of the Email exchange with Mikhail.

This exercise is inspired by many years of mentoring entrepreneurs and working with graduate students at the intersection of design and business and with the core exercise in [\*The Artist's Way at Work\*](#). The *Artist's Way* authors describe the importance of their core exercise of writing three morning pages:

"We all suffer ambivalence about our simultaneous desires to be a part of, and apart from, groups, and many of our new tools are designed to explore this ambivalence. We have found that morning pages show us both our connectedness and our individuality.

"As you will soon discover, the inner self has a variety of voices. In doing morning pages, you will experience some of them. You will also learn to discern which voices of this 'self' are best heeded and which best disputed. You will discover many positive forces that might have become silenced over the years, including one we call the Inner Mentor.

"This Inner Mentor, which some of us characterize as an older sage, is not unlike the eldest dragon of [Chen Rong's](#) painting or Star Wars' [Obi-Wan Kenobi](#) in our popular

mythology. Knowledge of this and similar voices will eventually evolve into a guidance system you can depend on. But first you will meet a host of other voices, the voices most of us think of as ‘myself.’

“Realize that in just thinking about doing morning pages, you have already heard one of your inner voices. If you listen carefully, below the resistance you will probably hear the whisper of ‘hope,’ barely audible above the din of your other ‘rational’ voices, that might say, ‘What if this works? Wouldn't it be exciting?’

“Creativity expert Howard Gardner has noted three practices common to many ‘Big C’ creatives:

1. Some type of daily reflection
2. The ability to leverage their strengths
3. A way to reframe failures

“Morning pages and other techniques in this book help you do all of the above.”

Allen, Catherine; Bryan, Mark; Cameron, Julia (2012-12-01). [\*Artists Way at Work: Riding the Dragon\*](#) (Kindle Locations 381-384). William Morrow.

Start by making a short list of the patterns that you do on a daily basis that you don't think about. Here are some questions to help you get started:

- Do you drive the same way to work each day?
- Do you eat the same foods for breakfast each day?
- Do you do your emails first thing in the morning?
- Are all your emails textual?
- Do you eat lunch with the same people every day?
- Do you read the same newspaper or news source each day?
- Do you exercise the same way every day?
- Who is a colleague or friend or family member you haven't talked with in a long time?

You get the idea. What are your habits or patterns of behavior that you just do and don't think about?

Start with one of the easiest patterns to break like the way you go to work each day. Take a different path to and from work today. Or take a different mode of transportation to work. While you are breaking your pattern, take a photo or video of some aspect of the pattern that you are breaking. Notice what is different while you are breaking the pattern. Are you seeing, hearing or feeling objects or people from a new perspective?

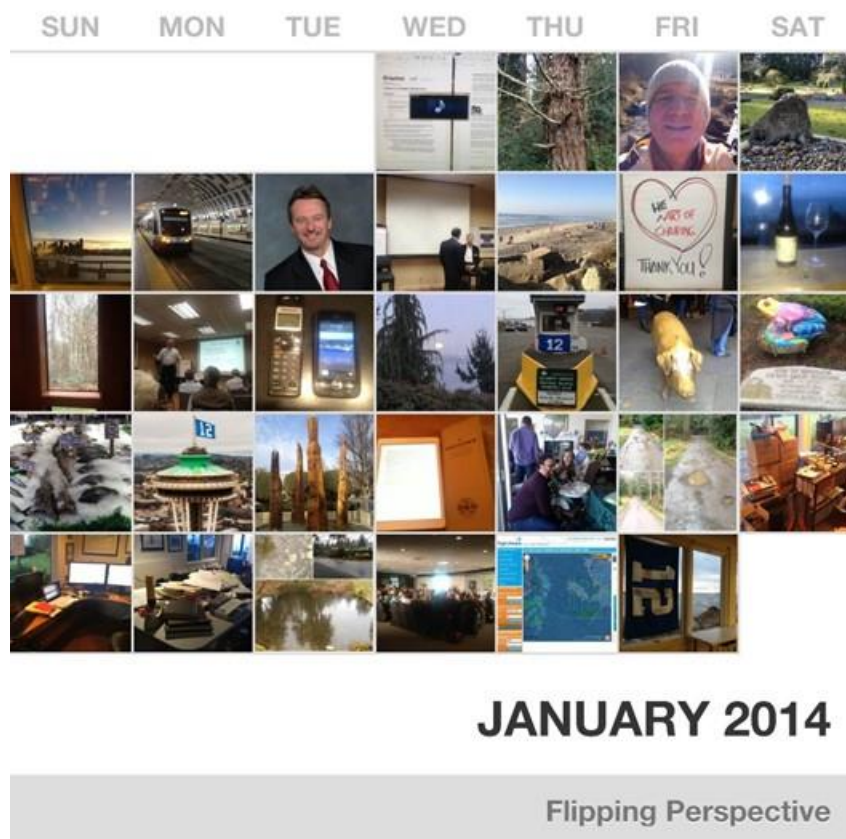
When you get back home or to a quiet place after experiencing the breaking of your pattern, do a free writing exercise as part of making meaning from the pattern break. [Free writing](#) involves:

“... continuous writing, usually for a predetermined period of time (often five to fifteen minutes). The writer writes without regard to spelling, grammar, etc., and makes no corrections. If the writer reaches a point where they can't think of anything to write, they *write* that they can't think of anything, until they find another line of thought. The writer freely strays off topic, letting thoughts lead where they may. At times, a writer may also do a focused freewrite, letting a chosen topic structure their thoughts. Expanding from this topic, the thoughts may stray to make connections and create more abstract views on the topic. This technique helps a writer explore a particular subject before putting ideas into a more basic context.

“Freewriting is often done on a daily basis as a part of the writer's daily routine.”

Using the picture or video that you took during your pattern break, start free writing about the experience. Write for seven (minimum) to ten minutes (maximum). Look at the picture and your writing, and reflect for a moment on what the experience of breaking the pattern means.

I find mobile apps like [Collect](#) or [Google Photos](#) an easy way to capture your flipped perspectives (here is a month of flipped perspectives recorded in Collect):



I keep a daily journal of my flips in perspective. Here are a couple of excerpts from my Flipping Perspective journal:

***January 2, 2014***

When I can, I like to walk a three-mile trail that is a loop from my house through a combination of roads and woods. I decided that for my flipped perspective today I would walk the route in reverse. I take this hike so for granted and have been doing it for so many years I rarely “see” what is in front of me. Just by reversing the path I see things that I haven’t noticed before. I can no longer walk on autopilot anymore as well. I have to pay attention to where I am stepping. And because I don’t know the path as well I have to look up and see what is around me. It is amazing what a tree that I pass from the other direction looks like from the reverse path. This tree is so gnarly and who knew it had so many trail markers on it. If I had just taken a picture a little differently, I would have seen two blue eyes instead of three. This forest primeval (well not really as Bainbridge Island has been clear cut at least three times) is a brief respite from the houses that surround me on all sides. But for a few minutes I am alone in the Northwest woods in the rainy Puget Sound. Should I walk backwards when I am traversing the trail backwards as well? But then I would see what I see from the regular direction of the path. So maybe another flipped perspective is to walk the path forwards but walking backwards. Maybe in the summertime because the trail is so slippery right now and even walking forward it is difficult with all the tree roots covered up by the leaves of fall now all brown and slippery. I love the way so many of the fir trees in the forest have the dead limbs just sticking out like a witch with unruly hair. So many metaphors are conjured up as I walk this path in reverse. What if I could walk my life in reverse? Would I really be interested in doing that? There is so much that is fun right now as I am writing again and enjoying the two granddaughters that have blessed our life. How can we help them learn the joys of flipping their perspective? How do I pass down the art of seeing and the art of flipping perspective? How many other paths do I need to reverse every day? How many paths have become as ordinary and unconscious as my walking of my woods path? Doing this flipping has also made me realize that I need to expand my horizons and walk many more of the wonderful Parks and Recreation paths on Bainbridge Island. It is just so nice to walk out my front door and not have to get in the car and drive to one of the trailheads. Walking these paths is also difficult right now with the problems with my right knee. I’ve taken walking and even jogging for granted for so many years and now the thought of not being able to walk freely because of the pain in the knee makes me a bit fearful about the future.



***January 5, 2014***

I always sit at the aft of the Seattle-Bainbridge Island ferry. This practice is about



not wanting to be at the front of the boat with the Type A extroverts who want to rush to get off the boat. I enjoy sitting at the back reading my Kindle books on iPad and sipping my coffee from Commuter Comforts. Yet, the most spectacular view on the ferry is at the front. Clearly, I've gotten too much in the habit of commuting versus flipping my perspective to SEEING. So this morning on the 7:05 as I head to the airport for my trip to a seminar in San Diego I sit up front. It is an interesting winter time of day as the sky is mostly dark black but you can start to see a faint streak of light on the horizon. And today the sky is crystal clear (and a cold 28 degrees). I was treated to an immediate glorious sight as we turned south out of Eagle Harbor – Mt

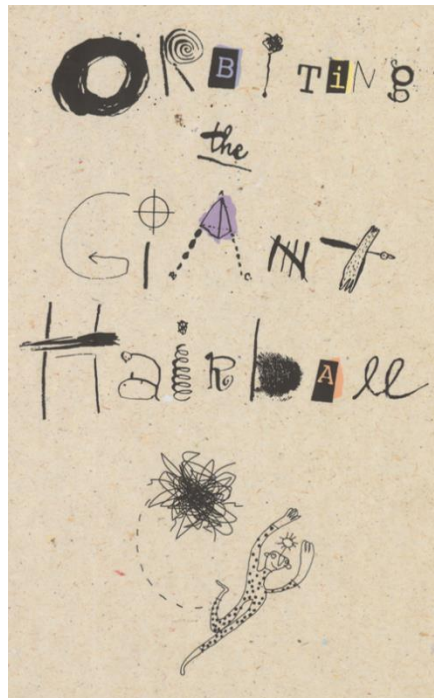
Rainier. I forget that sitting in the very front row, the window serves as a frame to see the world. Here was Rainier framed so beautifully in the Window – a silhouette. Then the ferry made the left hand turn to head to Seattle. The skyline of Seattle is a faint Christmas tree kind of blinking small line on the horizon. I look for a while and see the sky lightening and hoping that there would be a sunrise before I got to the Seattle side. As I looked out my “window frame” I decided it was time to continue reading Rilke's *Letters to a Young Poet*. I pulled out my iPad and got immersed in Rilke. After about five minutes, I folded the cover back and started chuckling. The whole point of the flipping perspective exercise was to get out of my habits. And here I was back in my habit of reading on the ferry boat, not noticing anything. I put the iPad back in my backpack and enjoyed the sights of getting closer to Seattle and see the silhouettes turn into real buildings as the sun's early morning light slowly emerged. I took several photos a few minutes apart hoping that I would get the buildings to fill up the height of the frame. Then as I looked at the image that was showing up on my iPhone I saw that the internal lights on the ferry were creating a mirrored effect and I was doing a selfie. So I got two perspectives in one – you can look through the glass at Seattle or you can see the reflection of myself and others in the first couple rows at the front of the ferry. As the ferry turns to the dock, I see another view – the condensation from the window on the outside sloshing back and forth in a mercury silver trickle – back and forth as we turn. Never seen that before.

I recommend doing the flipping perspective for your first week of daily habits that are not related to your new venture. For the first seven days, just do it.

As we progress through each future Email we will work on themes of different patterns to break.

## The Cosmos of the New Venture

One of the challenges of the entrepreneur is learning how to make progress even when feeling lost in the shift out of being in expert mode (causal thinking) and into an observing, discovering and exploring mode (effectual thinking). This “lost is the new normal” can feel like [\*Orbiting the Giant Hairball\*](#):



I find when I am feeling lost that it is because I don't see the bigger picture. J. G. Bennett in [\*Enneagram Studies\*](#) shares a powerful model of the “cosmos” to help us see the larger context that we are immersed in at any given moment.

“The enneagram is an instrument to help us to achieve triadic perception and mentation. Whereas our ordinary mental processes are linear and sequential, the world in which we live is threefold. According to Gurdjieff, three-foldness is one of the ‘fundamental sacred Cosmic Laws’ and must be studied by anyone who wishes to understand himself and the world in which he lives.

“We find it hard to look at the whole of what is happening in and around us because our thinking is linear, by which I mean thinking along one single line or by association. We miss significant episodes and cannot understand how it is that processes go the way they do. When things go wrong we seldom know where, nor how to put them right. This is not a serious handicap in thinking about processes that are themselves linear, such as most of those in the material world. However it breaks down when we try to think about man and his life, for these are not linear. Man is very complex and his life is always made up of different processes that cannot be separated without falsification. To think about man effectively we must get beyond linear thinking in order to see the inner cohesion. The spiritual world

is totally non-linear and this is why we cannot ordinarily think about it at all. We must therefore find a new way of thinking. In order to change our way of thinking we have first of all to recognize that it is not only a matter of looking along several different lines at once but recognizing that there is structure in what we are looking at. The structure may be imperfect, but if it were not there at all, we could understand nothing.

“To illustrate this, let us take the example of a meal being cooked in our kitchen at Sherborne. The obvious thing is to look at the food and to say that the process of preparing a meal is a process of transforming food. This is quite true, but it is not the whole story for something is also happening in the kitchen itself. The kitchen has to be in a certain state of preparation and things in it are going to change. Its state has to be maintained. It is not enough to have cooks: some have to play the role of kitchen boys and cleaners, whose task it is to maintain the conditions that allow the meal to be cooked. Help is needed in preparing the vegetables or other raw foods. We usually take all this for granted and do not notice its importance because our thoughts are flowing in a single line. We notice only when things go wrong, and then the cook begins to concern himself with the function of the kitchen boy and the kitchen boy begins to concern himself with the cooking process.



**Figure 8 The Kitchen as a Cosmos**

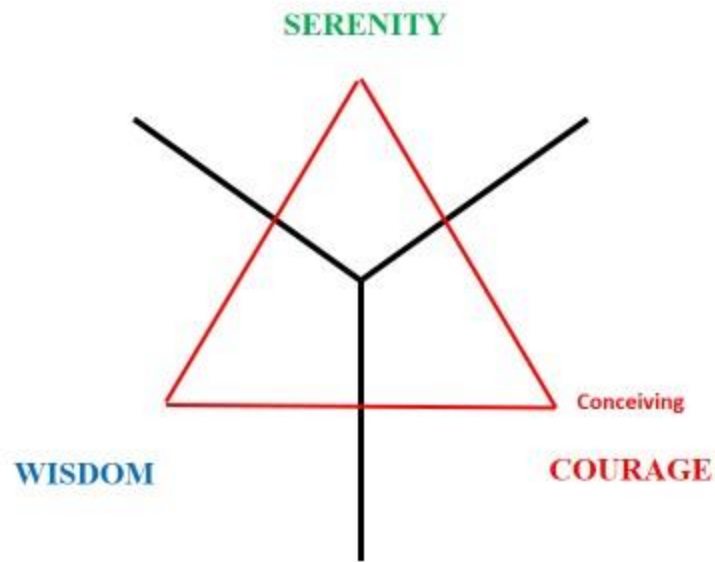
*Figure 3 Enneagram of kitchen work*

“Linear thinking will assume that only the cooking process is important and disregard the need to maintain order in the kitchen, the cleanliness of the utensils and the provision of what is required. However the whole process of cooking a meal is not confined even to these quite distinct series of events; the one being the changes that are happening in the kitchen itself and the other the changes that are happening to the food. There is also something happening to the people and it is necessary that this too should be taken into account. When a meal is being cooked, especially when it is on a fairly large scale, which makes these distinctions significant, many people have to be taken into account: the people who are cooking, the kitchen boys, the people who are preparing the table and the

entire community which is going to eat the meal. What is happening to them is also an essential part of the whole process; they have to be able to communicate with one another to understand one another's needs and, if necessary, to change their roles. Those who cook will in turn become those who eat. Again, we can see that this is obviously necessary and we do not attach special importance to it all unless something goes wrong, at which point we may say that there is a "bad relationship" between the cooks and the kitchen boys and so everything is going to pieces, or perhaps people have not taken the trouble to find out what is going to happen with the meal, who can eat what, who will be there or will not be there, so that too much or too little is cooked. Something has gone wrong, but we do not associate this "something has gone wrong" with the cooking of the meal. Now if you look at the preparation of the meal for the house as one whole event, you can see that each of these three processes can be thought about linearly, yet each of them is quite distinct in nature from the others. They do not replace one another. Looking at it in this way, if you ask "Could you cook a meal without a kitchen, without utensils, without fire?" the answer is "No, cooking would cease to be there at all if there were not all these things in some form or other." Even if you are camping in the open air you would still require certain conditions and implements with which to make it possible. It is obvious that you cannot cook without food, as you cannot or would not cook if there were no one to cook for. So food and guests are both independent of one another and also mutually necessary. There is no such event as cooking a meal unless the kitchen, food and guests are present. They are closely interdependent. How one goes will determine how the others go. But how they will affect one another is not at all obvious and in general it is by experience alone that little by little we learn what is required. With experience, it is possible to see that there are different rhythms. The order of the kitchen and its utensils goes in a cycle which completes itself. When everything is properly organized, the kitchen starts clean with all the utensils clean and in their own places and when the meal is finished it is brought back again to its initial condition. It has completed a cycle. Something has happened in the kitchen, but the kitchen has returned to its prime state. With the food something different has happened for the food has changed its nature from being raw to being cooked. It has not returned to its primitive state but instead has been through a variety of irreversible processes."

Bennett, John Godolphin (2012-04-02). [\*Enneagram Studies\*](#) (pp. 17-18). Bennett Books.

This first Email on Conceiving begins the first point on the core triangle of work for our Cosmos of the New Venture.

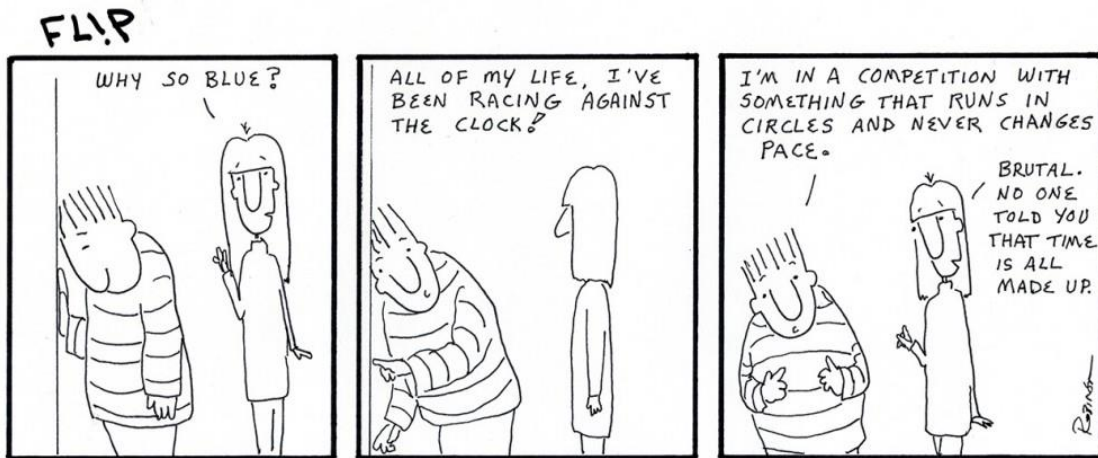


*Figure 4 Cosmos of the New Venture: Conceiving*

Conceiving sits within the courage cycle described in the Entrepreneur's Prayer of serenity, courage and wisdom. The navigation and interrelationships of the nine terms in the Cosmos of the New Venture meta-model aid the entrepreneur in discovering, developing and trusting your inner guidance system.

Conceiving is COMMITTING.

## Flipping Perspective



“When you travel, you experience, in a very practical way, the act of rebirth. You confront completely new situations, the day passes more slowly, and on most journeys you don’t even understand the language the people speak. So you are like a child just out of the womb.

“At the same time, since all things are new, you see only the beauty in them, and you feel happy to be alive. That’s why a religious pilgrimage has always been one of the most objective ways of achieving insight.”

Coelho, Paulo, [\*The Pilgrimage \(Plus\)\*](#) (p. 35). HarperCollins.

Orcas Island, Washington USA, July 4, 2013

Mikhail,

Thank you for your kind response to my previous email. I understand that it can be frustrating when someone doesn't respond to specific questions. One of my colleagues, Professor [Ed Lazowska](#), Computer Science Professor at the University of Washington, was kind enough to share his major insight when teaching – “I never answer the question that a student asks. Rather I seek to understand the misunderstanding or lack of relevant experience that is behind the asked question. I still don't answer the question that was asked. Instead I give them an exercise (which usually includes a thinking framework) so that they can discover their own answers in their own context.”

What Ed was pointing out is a dysfunction in the gestalt of teacher and student that often inhibits learning. When the teacher is viewed as the source of all answers learning is stopped. [Sir Ken Robinson](#) through his many books and [TED videos](#) shares the roots of this dysfunction and how we transform dysfunction into vibrancy by shifting from the teacher/student framework to creating rich environments for lifelong learning.

My own mentor, [Russ Ackoff](#), had the gift (or curse) of never answering a single one of my questions. Rather, he would be thoughtful and then ask me a much better question back. Frustrating? Yes, very. Yet, it was just what I needed to more fully develop my skills of synthesis to complement my analytic skills.

I enjoyed the first seven of your flipped perspectives and the thoughtfulness you demonstrated in looking beyond the easy tacit patterns of daily life.

I am delighted that you connected the perspective shift that a new mother goes through with her newborn and the shift from causal thinking to an observing spirit of inquiry (effectual thinking). I want to talk some more about *flipping your perspective* in the context of developing an entrepreneurial and effectual mindset.

My daughter experienced what every new mother does when she arrived home and was confronted with her crying bundle of wonder. She quickly realized that Alice can't tell her what is wrong or what is needed. She shifted from communicating with language to deep observation and listening to the distinction of the meanings of the different cries. She stepped into the first of the essential perspective flips – experience first, make meaning second.

In the beginning, Alice's crying was just noise. There is only the raw experience and a mother's jangled nerves experiencing her newborn in distress. Not having discovered the patterns yet, each cry leads to changing everything – changing the diapers, feeding her, holding her, talking to her – anything and everything to get Alice to stop crying. Slowly

through many sleepless nights and days the patterns and distinctions of the cries become clearer. That cry means Alice is hungry. This cry means that Alice needs her diaper changed. And sometimes the cry is just about Alice exercising her lungs.

Through observation and many small experiments, mother and daughter begin to communicate. The needs are observed and discovered along with the solutions. Yet, the solutions keep changing as the baby rapidly develops. What worked yesterday to calm her isn't working today. Pretty quickly a mom changes from the causal thinking of being able to predict, to effectual thinking of what resources do I have ready to hand? What experiment can I run this moment to figure out how to satisfy Alice's changing needs?

As you learned during your years at the Institute of Design, people are very inarticulate when you ask them what they need or when you talk to them about your cool product idea. They have this disease called MSU (Make Stuff Up). As humans we never want to look or sound stupid, so we MSU. As a result, it is very difficult to find any patterns when we interview and talk to other humans. When we observe humans in their natural environments, they can be very articulate.

The creativity is in finding those natural environments where you can observe humans who have a problem close enough to what you want to solve for. Once you've experienced (observed) the pattern, then you are ready to solve for it. Experiencing first is the foundation of flipping your perspective.

My introduction to this human centered design process occurred on my first visit to the Institute of Design. Instead of having me meet with faculty members, Patrick Whitney had students present their class projects. I was stunned at the breadth and depth of the insights that these first year students generated. It occurred to me that if the students could learn this quickly there were powerful frameworks and ways of thinking that the Institute of Design had learned how to transfer to students.

One of those students twenty years ago was one of your professors, Kim Erwin, author of [\*Communicating the New\*](#). As I listened to Kim on her book lecture tour, I remembered her student project research. She wanted to design a completely new way of searching (remember this was twenty years ago before Google existed). She thought about where people had to search and navigate a complex space. She realized that she could observe patrons of the university library, a video store, and the [Field Museum of Natural History](#). Brilliant.

***Experience first; make meaning second.***

An example of this core flipped perspective occurred at Attenex when we were researching our [next product development opportunity](#):

After we'd gotten cash flow positive at [Attenex](#), we were looking for additional markets. One of the many reasons I was interested in creating [Attenex Patterns](#) was so that I could have a personal version to make meaning out of my 8

TB (terabytes = 1000 gigabytes) of digital objects (text, photos, videos) on my desktop computer. While we knew that we couldn't do a stripped down version of our enterprise level product, we didn't know what the necessary and sufficient features were for a Personal Patterns.

I pulled in my lead architect, Eric Robinson, to spend a month researching and building a personal patterns prototype. Eric was the hacker (architect) and UX designer. I filled the roles of visionary, UX researcher and hustler. We made good progress in three weeks and a part of my hustler role was talking about and demoing the prototype to anyone I could grab (trying to find a lead customer). Everyone nodded and patted us on the proverbial heads and said "that's nice," but there was no energy in the engagements.

We went back to the drawing board and I did a little user research with Marty Smith (one of the lead customers for our [Attenex Structure](#) product), a contracts and [Intellectual Property](#) attorney at Preston Gates. Not really knowing what I was looking for, I asked Marty if I could just sit and observe him working on contracts for a couple of hours.

One of the lessons I learned at the [Institute of Design](#) is that [observing people](#) in the wild (their actual work or living environment) is far better than trying to interview them. People make stuff up (mostly because they don't want to appear stupid) when you interview them and most of the time they don't really understand what they actually do ([tacit knowledge](#)). However, they are incredibly "articulate" when you can just observe them in their natural work habitat.

Marty was working on his third draft of a licensing contract for a very large software company headquartered in our area. There was a lot of client discussion around a patent indemnity clause. He knew that he'd had to rework that clause for a couple of different clients in his previous ten years, but he couldn't remember which clients nor the nature of the modifications.

Marty's primary tools are Microsoft Word and Outlook/Exchange. He organizes his file foldering systems (both on the hard drive and in Outlook Exchange) by client and then by year and then by the company name of who a contract was with. He has one giant hierarchical mess. He could have used a primitive Boolean search engine (but his law firm IT group wouldn't allow such a thing due to corporate security concerns). Even if he'd had a search capability, by searching for "patent indemnity" he would have gotten thousands of hits.

So I watched for thirty minutes as he navigated up and down the folder hierarchy, trying to use the client folder names and the contracting party names to jog his memory for one of the three or four contracts he'd modified in the past. He'd drill down through folder after folder; select a contract; scan through the contract in MS Word to see if there even was a patent indemnity clause; find nothing; and

then go back to the folder hierarchy. No joy. So after thirty minutes, he gave up and went back to crafting a new clause from scratch.

I knew I was seeing something important here, but didn't know quite what. I asked a few business model questions.

Skip: How many times a week does this happen to you where you can't find a clause you are looking for?

Marty: 3-4 times a week.

Skip: How many times a week does it happen to the other 20 IP attorneys in the firm?

Marty: Probably the same amount for each of us. And we never find what we are looking for so we have to draft from scratch. We try for a while, but never find anything.

My back of the envelope business calculation was the extra cost to clients of \$500 per hour \* 20 attorneys \* 2 hours (search plus redrafting time) \* 3 times per week = \$60,000 per year. In this one law firm we had \$60,000 per year of savings for what I was thinking we might price at \$20 per seat. Oops, missed the value equation on this one.

I bounced down the stairs to share my findings with Eric. I described what I'd seen (unfortunately because Marty was doing client legal work I couldn't use [video ethnography](#) to record and analyze his interactions). We realized that the [difference that would make a difference](#) was if Marty could do clause level searching rather than try and guess at a couple of keywords that might be needed.

The insights generated from these few hours of relevant observation resulted in a software prototype which generated exciting enthusiasm for a "Personal Patterns" across a wide range of potential customers.

What I am describing is nicely captured in Warren Berger's [A More Beautiful Question: The Power of Inquiry to Spark Breakthrough Ideas](#). Berger defines a beautiful question as:

"A beautiful question is an ambitious yet actionable question that can begin to shift the way we perceive or think about something—and that might serve as a catalyst to bring about change...

"Through the years, companies from Polaroid ( Why do we have to wait for the picture? ) to Pixar ( Can animation be cuddly?) have started with questions.

However, when it comes to questioning, companies are like people: They start out doing it, then gradually do it less and less. A hierarchy forms, a methodology is established, and rules are set; after that, what is there to question? ...

“Sometimes questioners go out looking for their Why —searching for a question they can work on and answer. The term problem-finding is used to describe this pursuit, and while it may seem odd to go looking for problems, according to the business consultant [Min Basadur](#) - who teaches problem-finding skills to executives at top companies— it’s one of the most important things to do for an established business, large or small . As Basadur notes, if you are able to “find” a problem before others do, and then successfully answer the questions surrounding that problem, you can create a new venture, a new career, a new industry. Here again, as Basadur attests, it applies to life, as well— if you seek out problems in your life before they’re obvious, before they’ve reached a crisis stage, you can catch and address them while they still offer the best opportunities for improvement and reinvention.

“Just asking Why without taking any action may be a source of stimulating thought or conversation, but it is not likely to produce change. In observing how questioners tackle problems, I noticed a pattern in many of the stories:

- Person encounters a situation that is less than ideal; asks Why.
- Person begins to come up with ideas for possible improvements/ solutions—with such ideas usually surfacing in the form of What If possibilities.
- Person takes one of those possibilities and tries to implement it or make it real; this mostly involves figuring out How.”

Along with asking actionable “Why” questions and observing humans in their natural environments, participatory research is a good way to experience first and make meaning second. In participatory research, you do the work that you would otherwise be observing. At Attenex, we would regularly have the software developers and product marketing team do the simulated work of an eDiscovery review attorney. They directly experienced the work and the use of our Attenex Patterns tool. Then in debriefing sessions we “made meaning.” We captured the insights from using the tool in order to understand how we could improve the product and the user experience.

The second major perspective flip for the entrepreneur is to reverse the steps of the normal product development process. Most entrepreneurs start with developing their product first and then look around to see if there might be some customers willing to buy their product. [Steve Blank](#)’s customer discovery process recommends that you do the customer research in parallel with the product development.

The traditional product development process looks something like:

- Develop a product

- Find some early adopter customers
- Find a larger audience (prospects, the early majority of Geoff Moore)
- Discover that your causal mindset, thinking and product are not getting you across the Chasm from the early adopters to the early majority

The use of the traditional product development process creates the chasm that [Geoff Moore](#) describes. Since the entrepreneur is so focused on the product and not on understanding that the economic buying customer is the Early Majority, the first customers reinforce what the entrepreneur already knows. By not building the product for the early majority, the new venture collides into a wall of customer indifference. Most traditional ventures fail at this stage unless they have very understanding investors who can fund the rebuilding of the product to address Early Majority needs.

### Technology Adoption Life Cycle: Diagnose and adapt as markets evolve

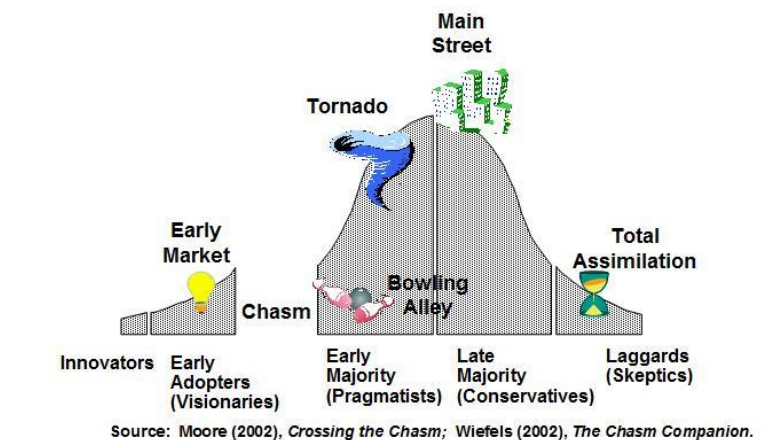
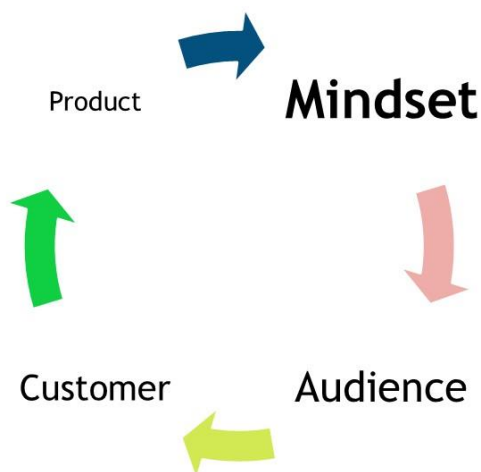


Figure 5 Geoffrey Moore's Technology Adoption Life Cycle

[David Robinson](#) and I realized that the entrepreneur must stand the traditional product development process on its head and reverse the steps. In his book [The Seer](#), David describes the progression through the Nine Recognitions to develop the Entrepreneur's Mindset:

"The tasks (a study, an action, an exercise) will help you develop new patterns of thinking and seeing. To that end, you will also find within the narrative a few related practices. The practices are useful in preparing your mind for the flip to a new way of thinking. This process is like riding a bike: you can read about it and think that you know or you can get on, start pedaling and learn to ride. The practices and tasks will only help if you do them; they can't help if you don't engage with them. To reiterate: perspective shifts are not an intellectual exercise; they are dynamic processes. Shifts in perspective are intuitive, experiential *engagements* made conscious through action and reflection. Effectual entrepreneurs are like artists: engaged in dynamic, fluid creative practices. Get on

the bike and ride. Challenge what you think you know. Open your eyes to possibilities. Allow yourself to make meaning of your experiences *after* you have them. It is, after all, how your brain works so you might as well begin by dropping the illusion that you know something before you encounter it – it's an important skill for an entrepreneur.”



You need to reverse the traditional product development steps to:

- Develop a questioning, observing and inquiring MINDSET (flip your thought process to effectual)
- Find and create the AUDIENCE for your product or service
- Identify which members of the audience will be your paying CUSTOMERS
- Develop the PRODUCT

The next step in the entrepreneur's flipped perspective is creating your audience.

An audience is the superset of the humans that might eventually become customers. I am part of a huge audience of fans who are excited about the 2014 Super Bowl winning Seattle Seahawks football team. I talk about them all the time with my family and friends. Yet, I am not a customer of the Seahawks – I don't purchase tickets to their games nor do I purchase any of their jerseys or clothing. There are millions of us who are in the Seahawks audience and only 100,000 or so who are direct customers buying tickets for a game.

[Linda Holliday](#), CEO of [Citia](#), describes their challenges innovating in the traditional publishing industry by repurposing business books. They did some wonderful work with their reimagined books, but couldn't find any customers. And the publishers didn't help them find customers because publishers have no idea who actually buys their books. They pivoted and realized they needed to find authors who already had a large audience. Their first foray with Snoop Dog led to a very successful relaunch of their technology. It

was very easy for Citia and Snoop Dog to make Snoop Dog's audience aware of the new interactive book.

Your first task as an entrepreneur is to discover or create your natural audience.

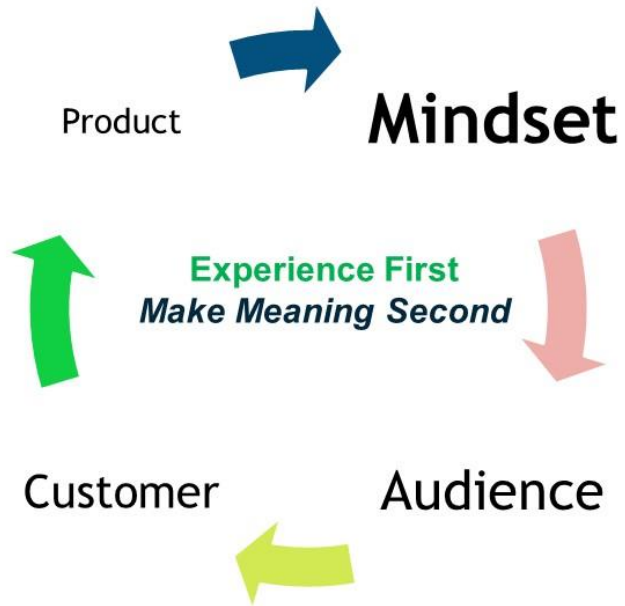
At a recent Meetup on Lean Content, [Kelsye Nelson](#) described her flipped perspective process of creating her company, [Writer.ly](#). Kelsye and her co-founder met at the "Seattle Daylight Writer's Group" Meetup that Kelsye had started to peer encourage other writers. The format of the Meetups is that the group would gather (20 to 100 writers) and write together silently for 45 minutes. At the end of the time, the writers could elect to share their work. Sometimes no one shared and at other times everyone wanted to share.

In the networking sessions that followed, the writers discovered that they had different strengths, weaknesses, likes and dislikes for different parts of the writing and self-publishing process. Pretty soon participants were discovering that somebody really liked to edit others work and another liked to do cover art. They realized that within the group were all of the skills and resources needed to create the online resource exchange for self-publishing authors.

The concept of Writer.ly was born. While they had a built in community to support them, Kelsye needed to build an audience with her limited resources before starting a company. Using her marketing expertise she started a social media Lean Content (content as a process) effort to build her audience. She started posting ten to twenty curated inspirational quotes a day about writing through Twitter and Facebook. About every ten posts she would send out a sign up for her writer.ly mailing list.

Within a few months she had 2000 active readers of her posts and she had her audience to pre-launch Writer.ly where authors can hire out the skills they don't possess. Their product was a simple brokering of talent that required minimal development. As her customer base and revenue stream grew she was able to hire developers to build the real product.

What is important in your journey with your newborn venture is to regularly practice the first two flips:



Yours in entrepreneuring,  
Skip Walter

## Applying Flipping Perspective

As “human doings” we quickly move our day to day actions to habits or tacit behaviors. Habits are those things we do without thinking about them. Getting good at flipping perspective is the primary way for developing your discovering and inquiring mindset.

With Applying Conceiving, we used the habits of everyday life to flip our perspective.

With Applying Flipping Perspective, we shift our focus to observing your potential audience and customers. Like Kim Erwin did for her class project, where are the similar environments in the physical world that you can observe potential customers. Each day for seven days find ways to observe (not interview – not interviewing is the fundamental flip for this chapter).

As you search for environments to observe customers, also look for places where you might volunteer and perform participatory observation. When I was doing research for a wine ecommerce site, I realized that I didn’t understand how normal consumers went about buying wine. So I volunteered to work in the tasting rooms of several wineries to interact with a wide range of novice to expert wine consumers.

As you look at your product or service, what are the steps a customer follows in your workflow? Experiment with reversing the steps in the process. What do you observe? What are your reflections on the results that occur with flipping the steps?

One of my flips in perspective in writing these Emails is to use Guy Kawasaki’s [\*APE: Author, Publisher, Entrepreneur – How to Publish a Book\*](#) as my North Star. The primary flip is to see creating a book not as an authoring exercise, but as a new venture. I am creating both the book as an asset and a company as an asset surrounding the book with speaking engagements, workshops, seminars and mobile applications.

As part of my flipping perspective while writing the book, I had these observations:

*January 1, 2014*

I finally kept my butt in the seat long enough to write a full draft of my first book. I can’t believe it. It is done. While talking to David, he shared that he’d been revising *The Seer* by having Kerri read him the chapters of the book. It hit me in an instant that what I need to do is voice record each chapter and then play it back in my own voice. This will be a completely different way to hear what I am writing. Possibly it will help me to understand what my writing voice actually is. This is the method that poets use to hear their poems. I’ve never done “the hearing” with my own poetry. As I experimented with this today, I realized there are two benefits to this



process. Just the exercise of trying to speak all that is written helps me to hear which sentences are most difficult and need rewriting. Then listening to the words in my own voice is really helpful in getting a sense of how it will come across. Oh, if only I had a deep magical voice like [David Whyte](#) when he is telling his stories and reading his poetry and giving us a sense of what was behind the poem that he wrote. I know how much more meaningful the business books I read are when I had a chance to meet and interact with the author. Russ Ackoff was the first author I did this with. I read [Creating the Corporate Future](#) in a made up neutral voice. After meeting Russ, all of his other books were now coming through my head in Russ's inimitable style. Should I go ahead and get serious about these recordings and do an audio version of the book as well as the written version? Certainly, this is a flipped perspective for me – listening to what I write rather than seeing what I write. Maybe I can develop my auditory sense as well as my visual sense. Can this be something I write in a blog post? Can I capture what edits I make after I do the speaking of the chapter so that I can see what patterns are coming from the auditory edit rather than just the visual edit? Reading versus hearing – what are the essential differences in these two modalities. I wonder if Elizabeth has some pointers to our comprehension or response based on whether we hear the same information or read the same information. Could this be another revenue stream which is selling the audio books as well? The juxtaposition of the audio player on the written text is interesting as well. What if we could develop an iPad app like [T.S. Eliot's Wasteland](#) where somebody reads the poem and the color of each line changes as you read through – the experience of hearing and seeing at the same time.

January 22, 2014

I am in the middle of going back to basics on the experience and meaning of the enneagram. I remember that I have one of the best sources which is Bennett's [Enneagram Studies](#). I sort of read it through quickly 20 years ago when I was sitting in [Charley Krone's](#) monthly consultants' study sessions and as part of the Bennett reading group seminars that Barney Barnett does with the [Benziger Family Winery](#). It was interesting but not enough to pursue really understanding the enneagram as a cosmos. Now that I am playing with the enneagram as the organizing principle for *Emails to a Young Entrepreneur*, I am finding the book a must read. The first chapter is looking at the workings of preparing a meal at a seminar center from the three layered cosmos view of the enneagram. What a great way to exhibit a cosmos in the formation of the meal (the dynamic) with the expertise of the chef in the context of the kitchen and the recipients of the meal. As I read through this chapter while waiting for my lunch to begin with a colleague at the Local360 restaurant in Seattle, I realize that I am in the midst of an interesting cosmos. The

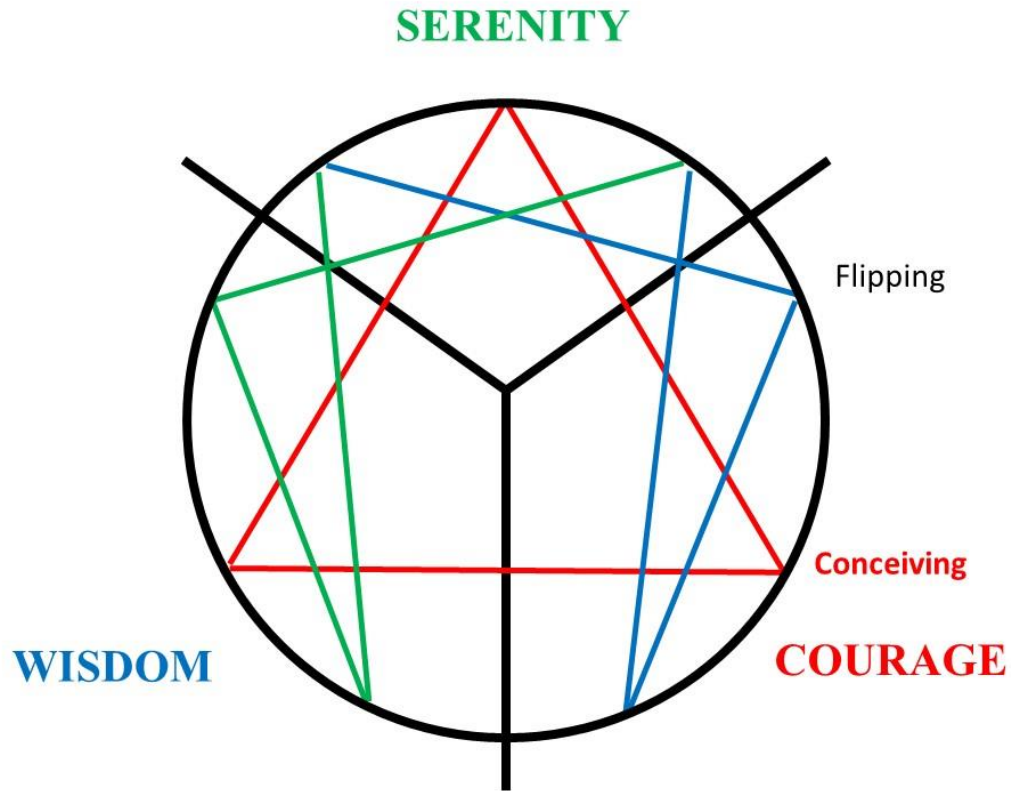


juxtaposition of the Bennett book on my iPad with the menu for the Local360 restaurant while the smells and perpetual motion of the cooks and kitchen boys are just a glance away. What a joy to wake up to the cosmos of my surroundings and see the dynamics of the whole local environment, rather than just the restricted view of the table awaiting my lunch meeting. As I “see” the restaurant in this different light, I reflect on the goal of the Local 360 which is to source all of its food within a fifty mile radius of the restaurant. That goal necessarily restricts the food choices, but makes it easy to select the vegetable pot pie for my lunch. Lost deeply in thought as I await my meeting with Tim, I look up to see Tim and his lovely bride, Sarah. I jump out of my seat to give both big hugs at the unexpected pleasure of being able to interact with the both of them. As the Bennett book is just words on an electronic page until sitting in a kitchen, the meeting with Tim was just an entry in a calendar until Tim and Sarah show up. What if I could view each meeting in the context and cosmos of the enneagram? Would I prepare differently? Would the results be different? Sounds like a new idea for an applying exercise.

These two observations of the process of authoring are expanding my view of what my product is. While I used the recording of my book as a way to better edit the book, I reinforced the importance of having an audio recording of the book as a product for some “readers.” Thinking through the enneagram in context of the startup experience is leading me to ideas for mobile apps to provide a viewing portal into the book. Several reviewers of the book point to the importance of having key parts of the book always available as a mobile app. Should I start with the enneagram and reverse the “Emails” I am sequencing in the book?

## **The Cosmos of the New Venture**

With the Flipping Perspective Email we introduce all of the geometry of the enneagram model of the cosmos of the new venture:



Flipping Perspective is at the heart of all that an observing and inquiring entrepreneur does. Flipping Perspective sits in the Courage cycle as it takes courage to see the world differently. You have to be intentional about stepping away from the habits and “expert mode” of behavior that is required when working for larger companies.

Along with flipping your point of view is reversing the steps in your product and business development and helping your customers reverse their steps to see more productive ways of working.

Flipping Perspective is OBSERVING with a spirit of inquiry.