

# Creativity in research



Designing your own methods when the usual ones won't cut it



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$$\frac{dN}{dt} = \frac{1}{qV_{act}} - q_0(N-N_0)(1-\epsilon S)S + \frac{N_e}{\tau_n} - \frac{N}{\tau_p}$$

$$\frac{dS}{dt} = T_0 q_0(N-N_0)(1-\epsilon S)S + \frac{q_0 N}{\tau_n} - \frac{S}{\tau_p}$$

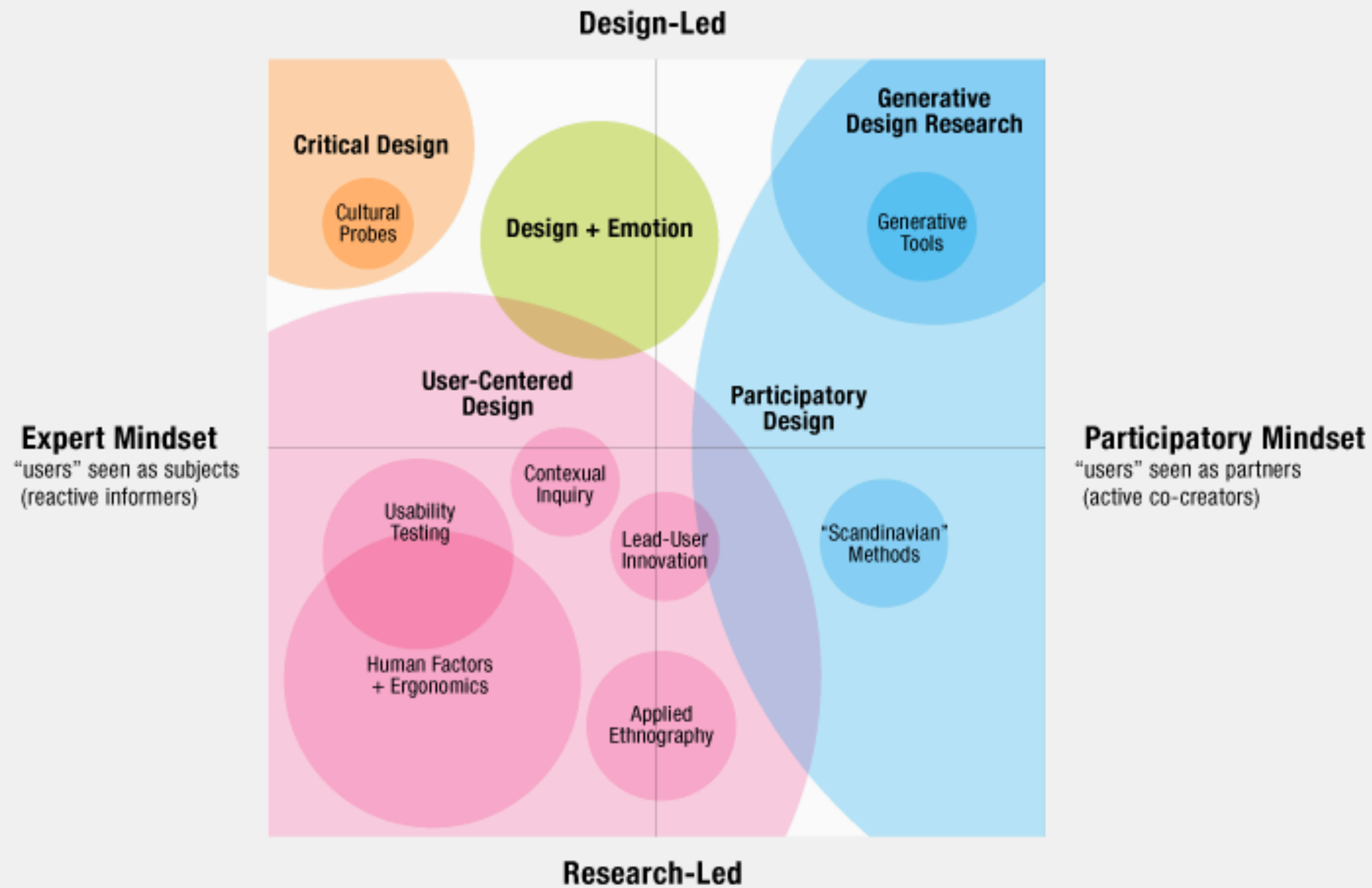
$$\frac{S}{P_k} = \frac{\tau_p \chi_0}{V_{act} \eta_{hc}} = \odot$$

$$S \leq \frac{1}{\epsilon}$$

$$N = N_0$$

$$P_k = (m$$





Liz Sanders. "An Evolving Map of Design Practice and Design Research"

<http://www.dubberly.com/articles/an-evolving-map-of-design-practice-and-design-research.html>

**How come, sometimes, we can't find a  
method that fits?**

## I've seen this happen when...

- You need more ecological validity than a test setting can afford
- The subject matter you're exploring is too hypothetical to talk to participants about directly
- The user's journey is too complex or dynamic to be explored as static or linear



**This is when we think about  
getting creative.**

## But creativity in research comes at a price

- User research has roots in ethnography, ergonomics, human-computer interaction, and much more.
- We can't just go around changing things at will:
  - You risk compromising rigour
  - You risk compromising validity





**So how can we be creative when it  
comes to research?**

**First, let's talk about what  
it means to be “creative”.**









## The creative mind

- H-creative: historically creative, or someone who came up with an idea, concept or product that no one has ever thought of before
- P-creative: psychologically creative, where someone borrows an idea from one domain and applies it to another.

— Boden (1990)



**P-creativity is also everyday creativity.**

**(It's the one we care about.)**

# A framework for P-creativity

Level	Motivation	Accomplishment	Example
Doing	Productivity	Getting something done	I buy Pillsbury cookie dough
Adapting	Appropriation	Making things my own	I add more chocolate chips to the dough
Making	Asserting ability	Making things with my own hands	I make my own chocolate chip dough
Creating	Curiosity	Expressing my skills	I make a cornflake-crunch-chocolate-chip-pecan cookies

— *Sanders and Stappers (2013)*







# A framework for P-creativity

Level	Motivation	Underlying desire	Example
Doing	Productivity	Getting something done	I look up and execute an existing plan for a usability study
Adapting	Appropriation	Making things my own	I change parts of the plan to better fit my questions
Making	Asserting ability	Making things with my own hands	I write my own usability study plan from scratch
Creating	Curiosity	Expressing my skills	I design a custom scale for my usability testing tasks


— *Sanders and Stappers (2013)*



**It's all about borrowing and applying.**

**Let's walk through some examples...**





# **Example 1: Adapting**



[Cart](#) > [Customer information](#) > [Shipping method](#) > [Payment method](#)



OR

Continue below to pay with a credit card

### Contact information

Already have an account? [Log in](#)

Email

☒ Keep me up to date on news and exclusive offers

☐ Sending a gift? Leave a note

### Shipping address

First name

Last name

Address

Apartment, suite, etc. (optional)

City

Country  
United States

State  
Illinois

ZIP code

Phone

[Return to cart](#)

[Continue to shipping method](#)



<sup>1</sup> 24/7™ Classic  
Contour Plunge Bra  
mocha-mousse / 32A

\$68.00

Gift card or discount code

Apply

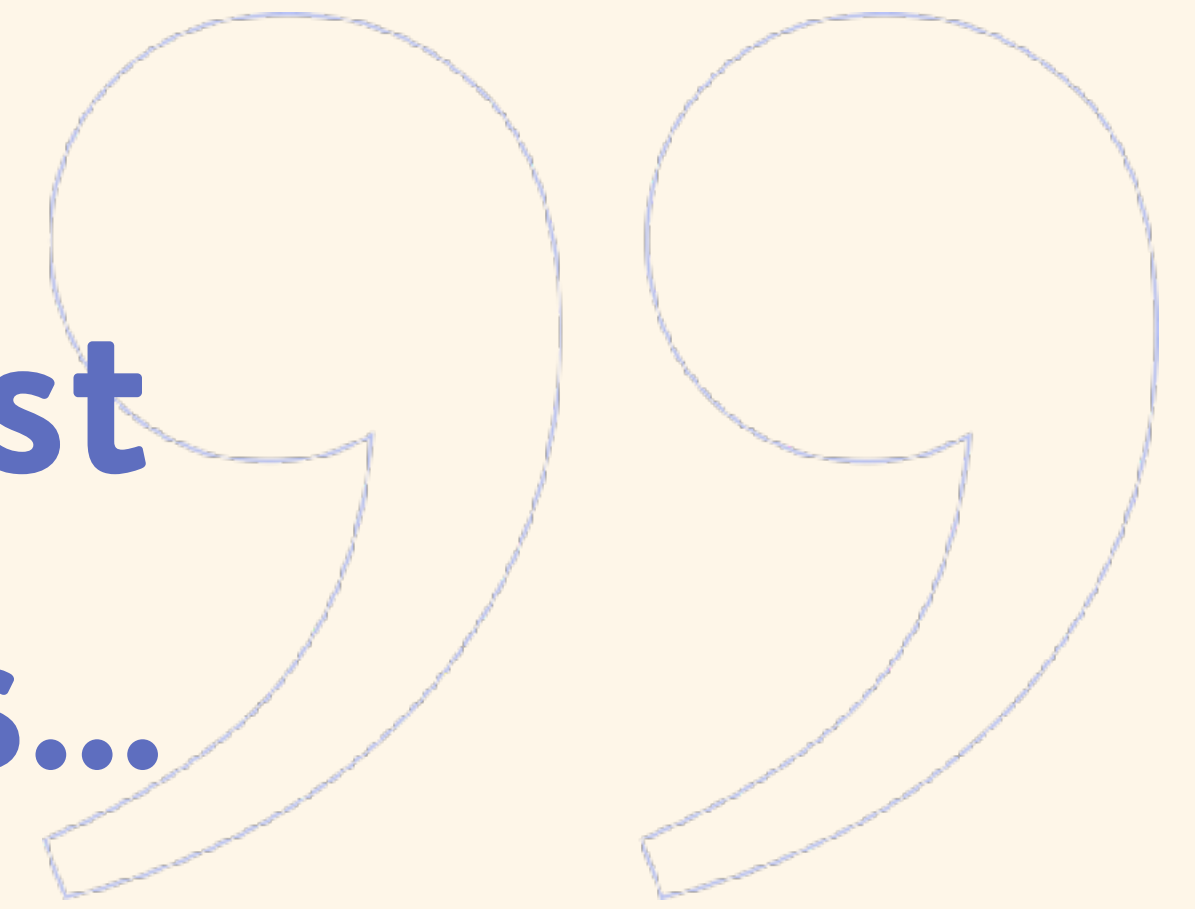
Subtotal \$68.00

Shipping —

Total USD **\$68.00**



**The problem:  
We wanted to test  
purchasing flows...**



**... but traditional methods  
don't account for purchase  
intent.**



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Adapting

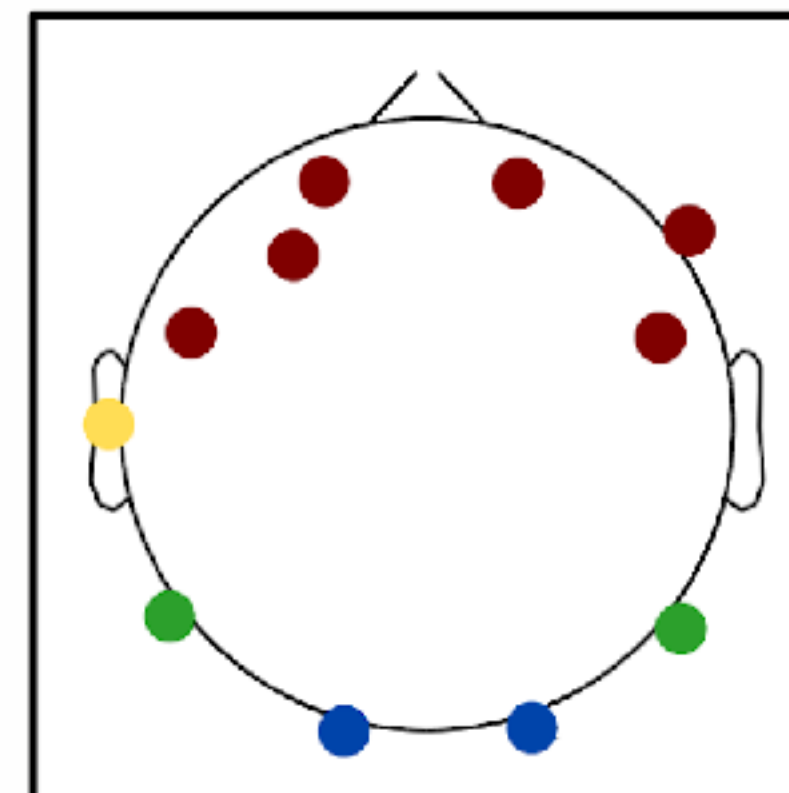
Appropriation

Making things my own

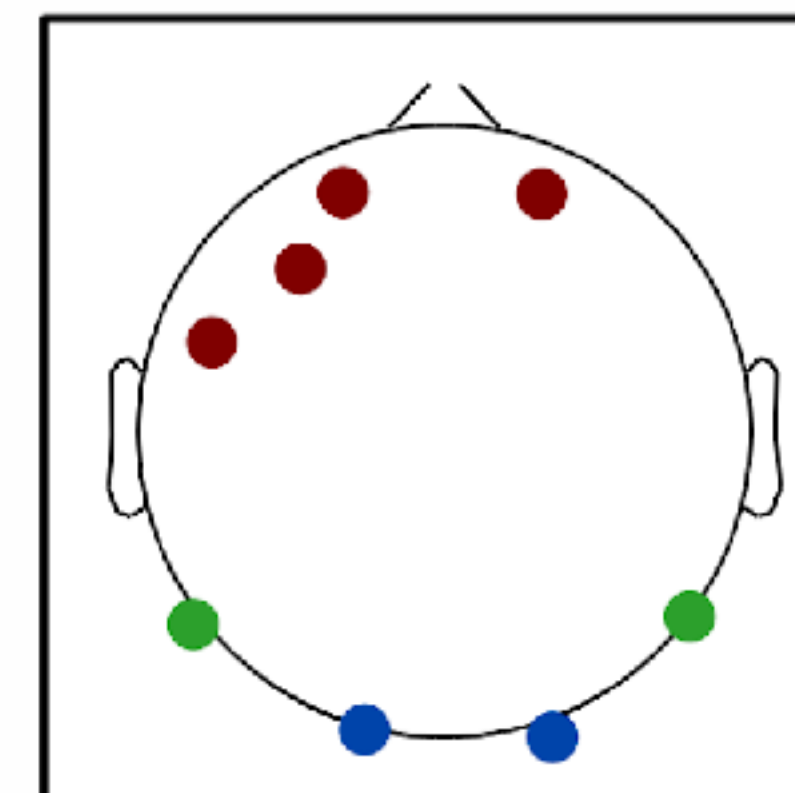


Channels  
Location

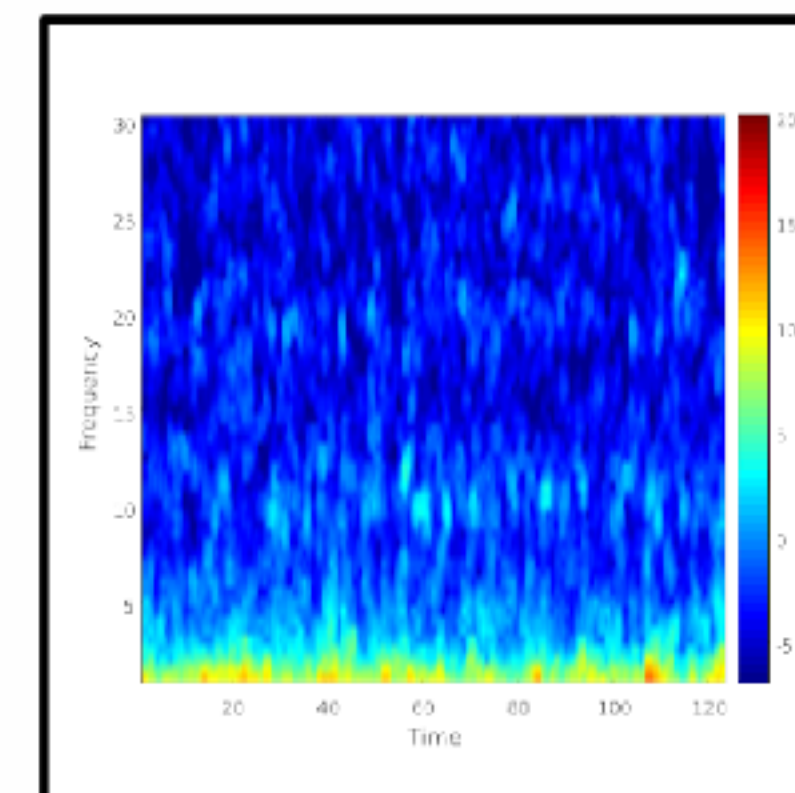
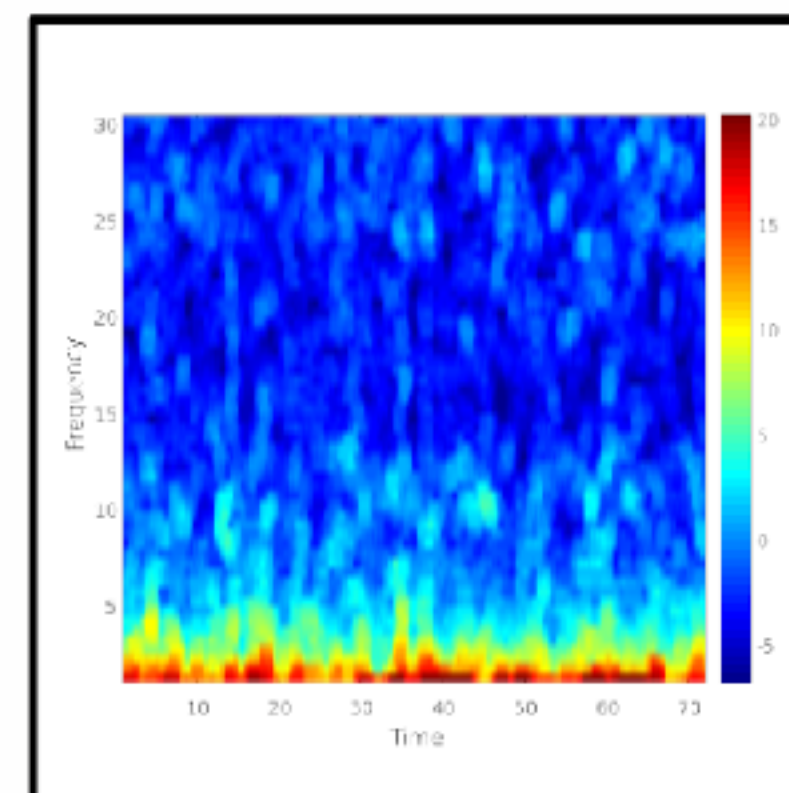
Condition 1



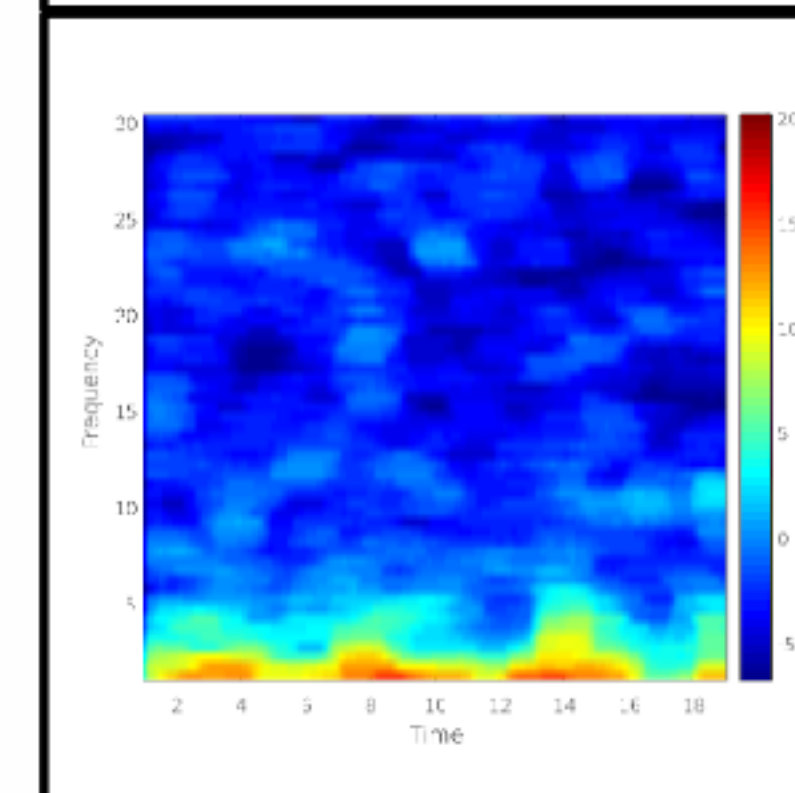
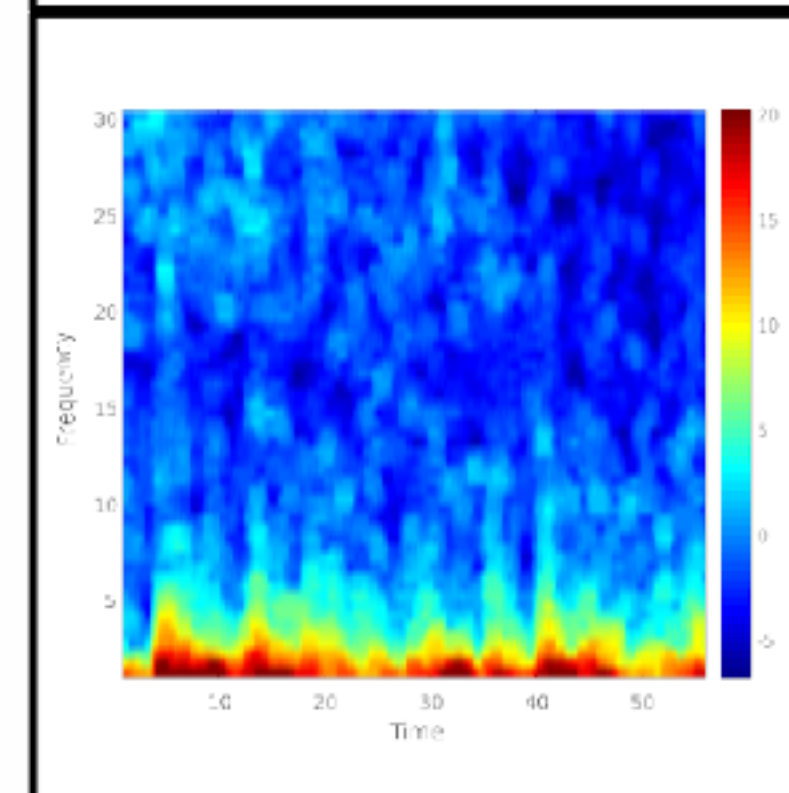
Condition 2



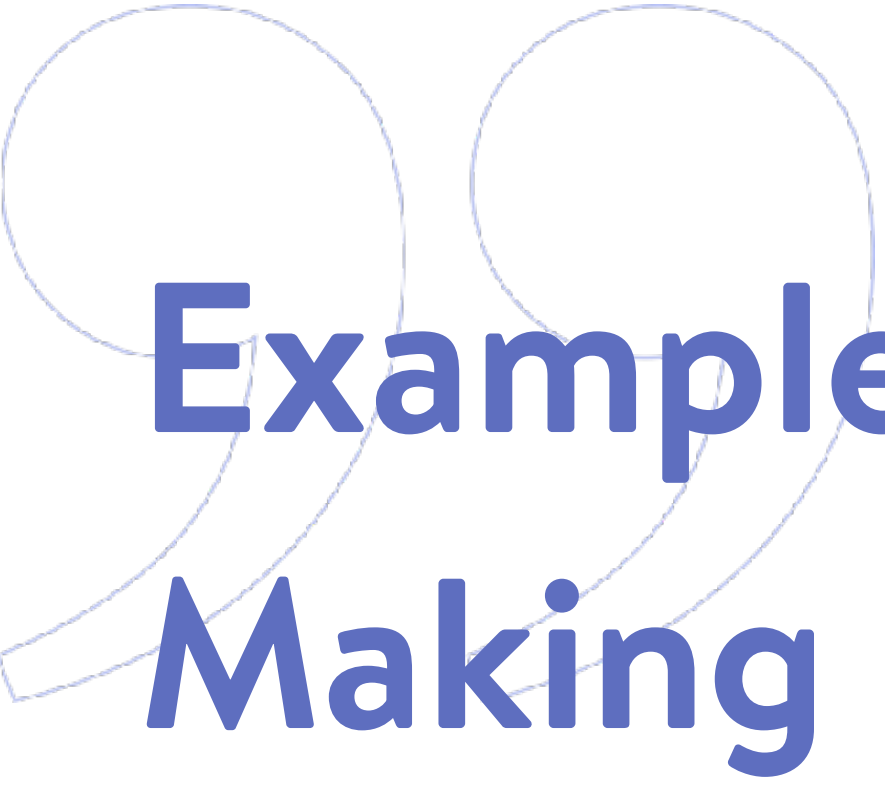
Spectrogram  
(Pre-Checkout)



Spectrogram  
(Checkout)







## **Example 2: Making**



Start ▾

Sell ▾

Market ▾

Manage ▾

Pricing

Learn ▾

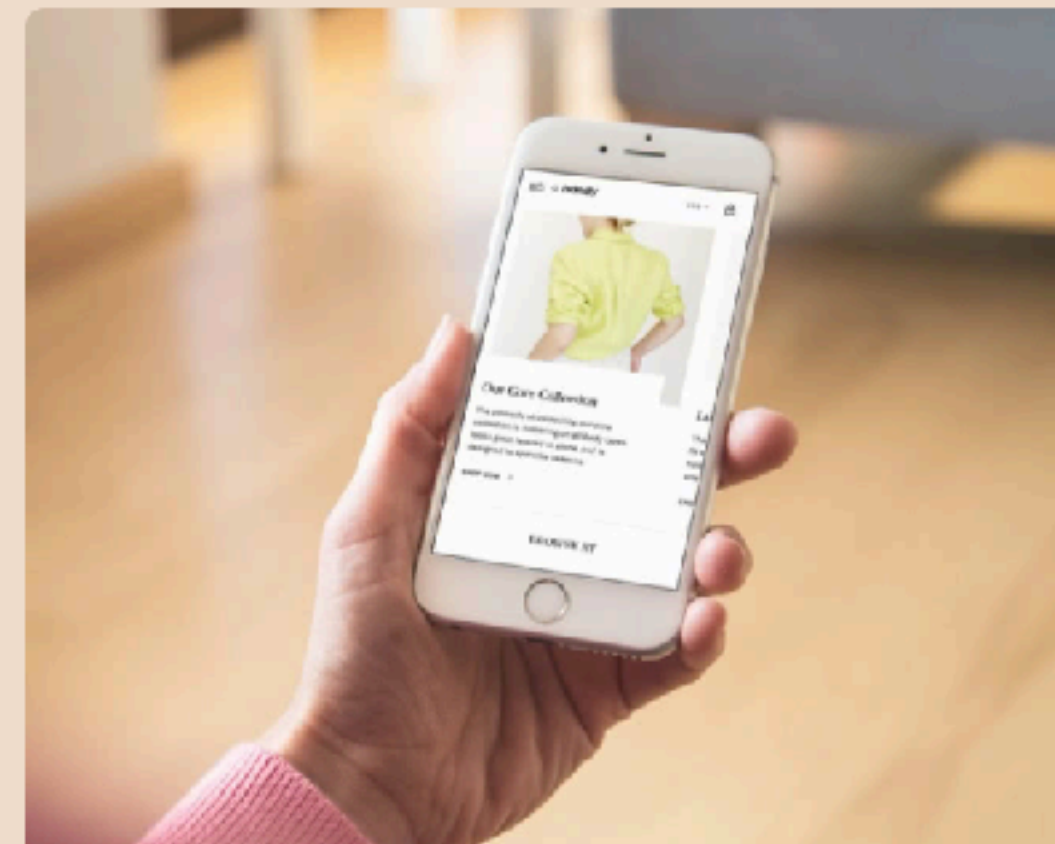
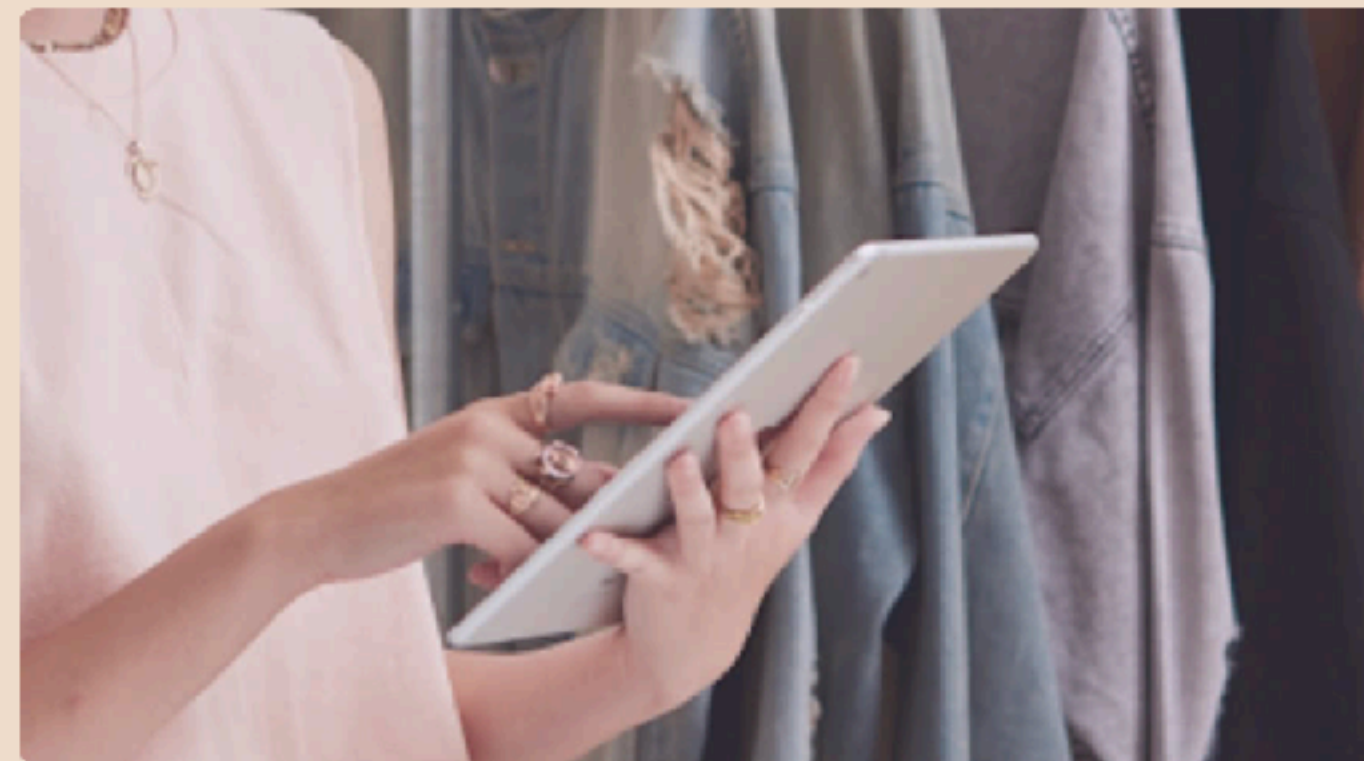
Log in

Start free trial

# Build your business

You've got the will. We've got the way.

Start free trial











**The problem:  
We wanted to build a  
journey...**

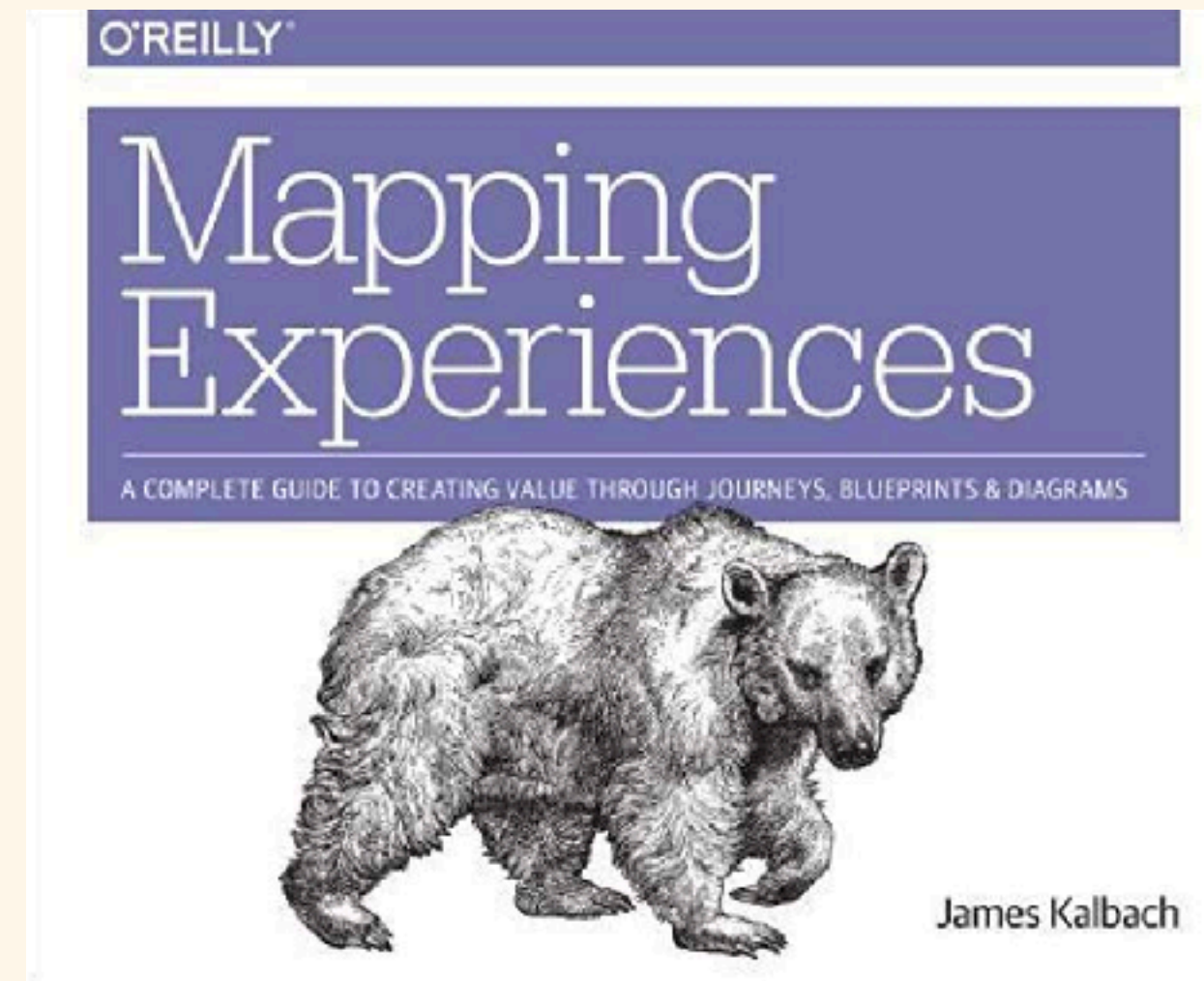


**... but linear maps are  
limited at convey breadth  
and complexity.**

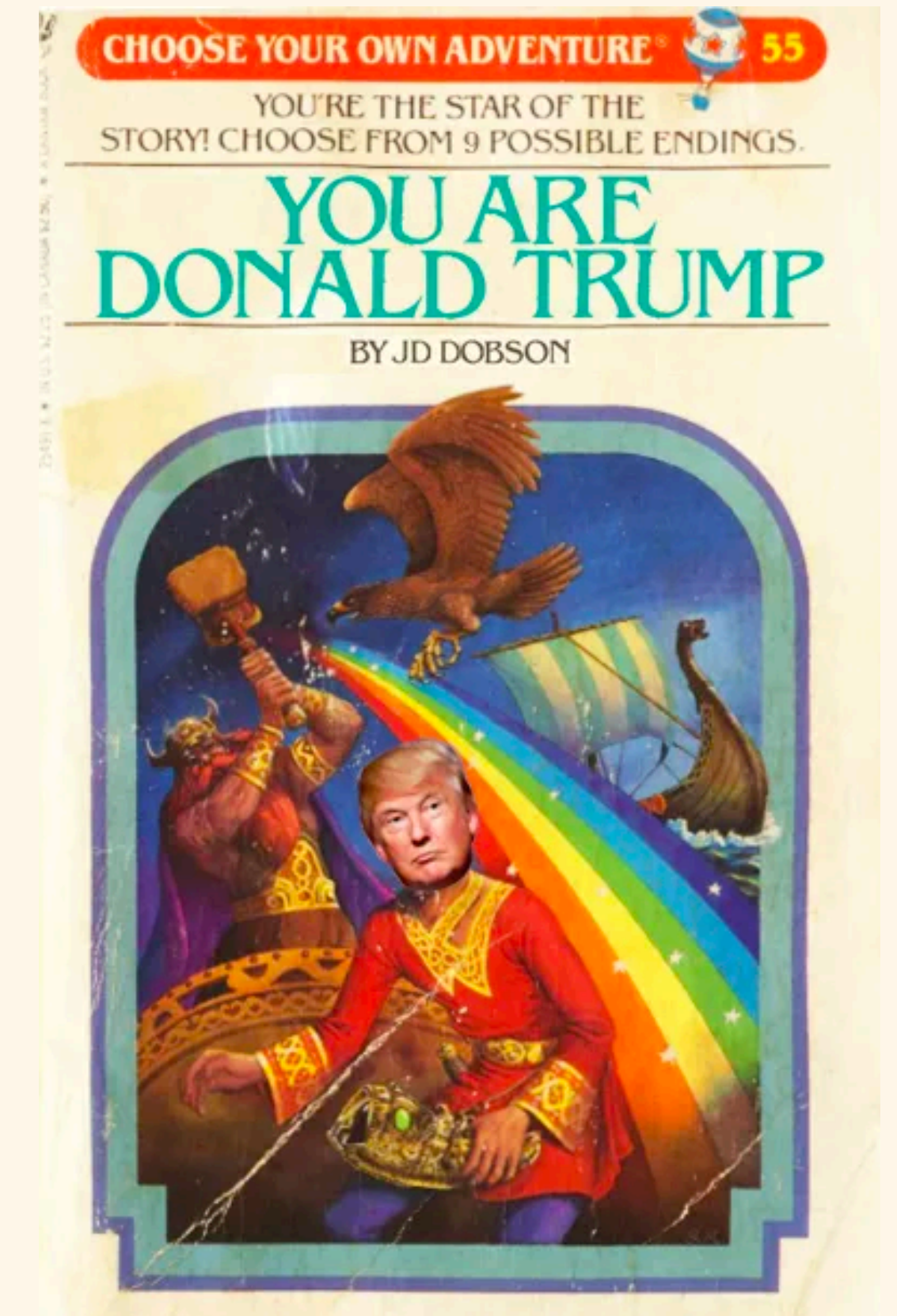




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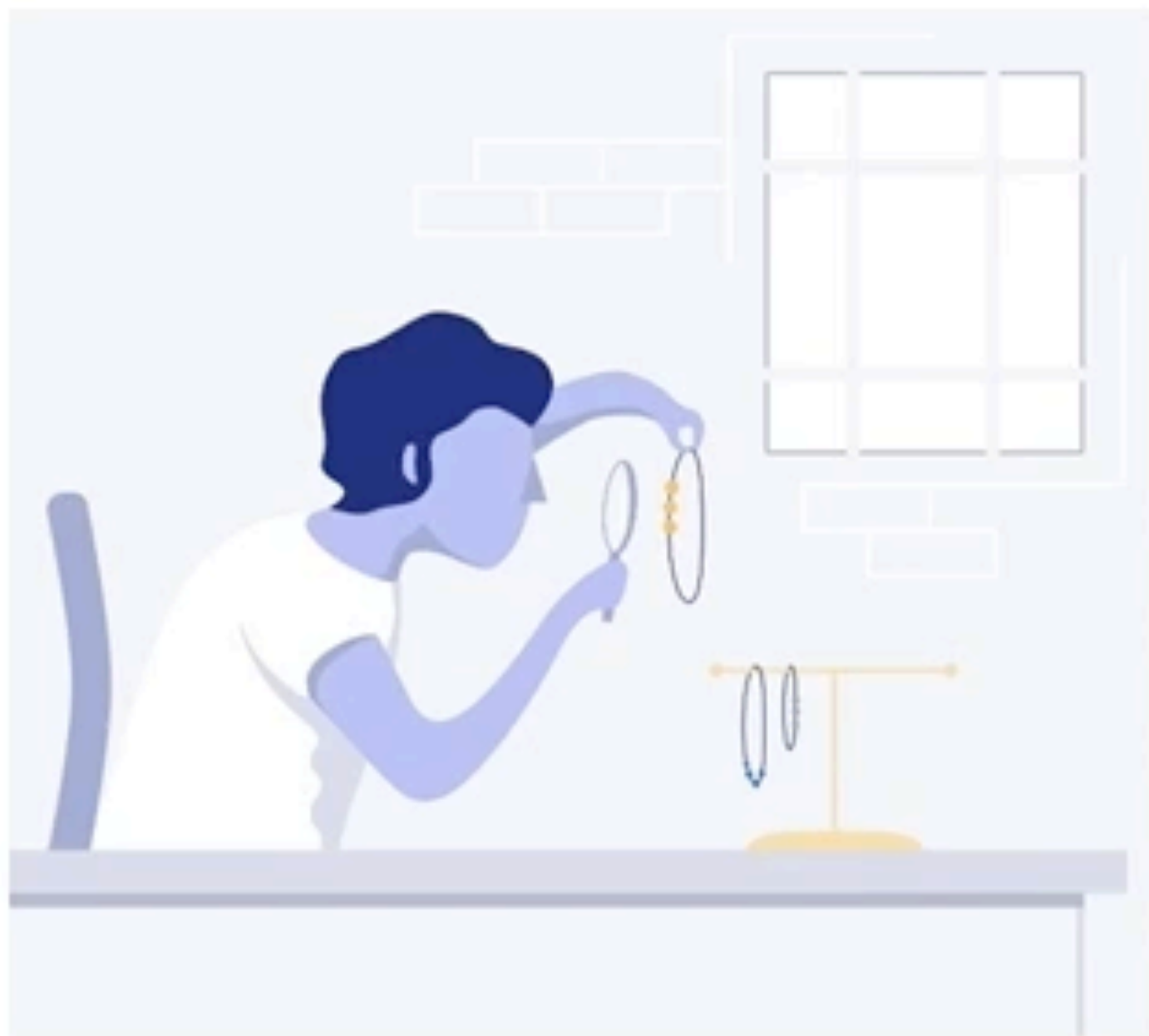




Making

Asserting ability

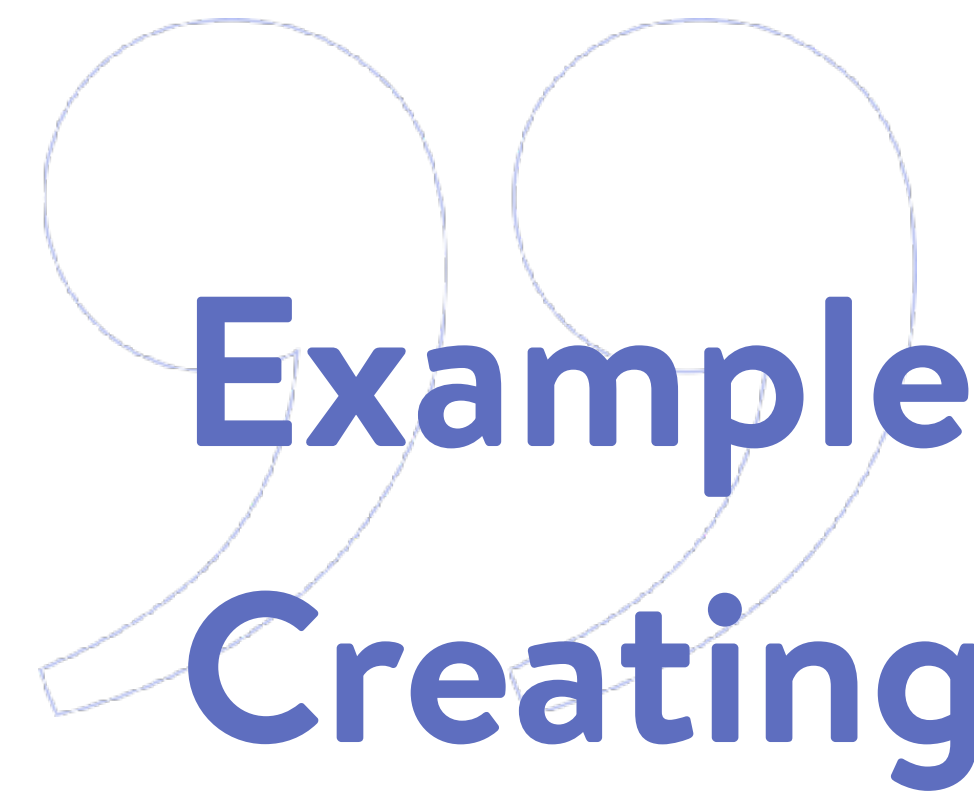
Making things with my own hand



One of Zel's friends thinks the charms are so unique, they might want to consider [selling them](#).

Next





# **Example 3: Creating**



## Create discount code

### Discount code

[Generate code](#)

e.g. SPRINGSALE

Customers will enter this discount code at checkout.

### Options

Discount type

Percentage

Discount value

%

### Applies to

- ☒ Entire order
- ☐ Specific collections
- ☐ Specific products

### Summary

No information entered yet.

### PERFORMANCE

Discount is not active yet.

### CAN'T COMBINE WITH OTHER AUTOMATIC DISCOUNTS

Customers won't be able to enter a code if an automatic discount is already applied at checkout.



**The problem:**

**We wanted to build a  
mental model...**

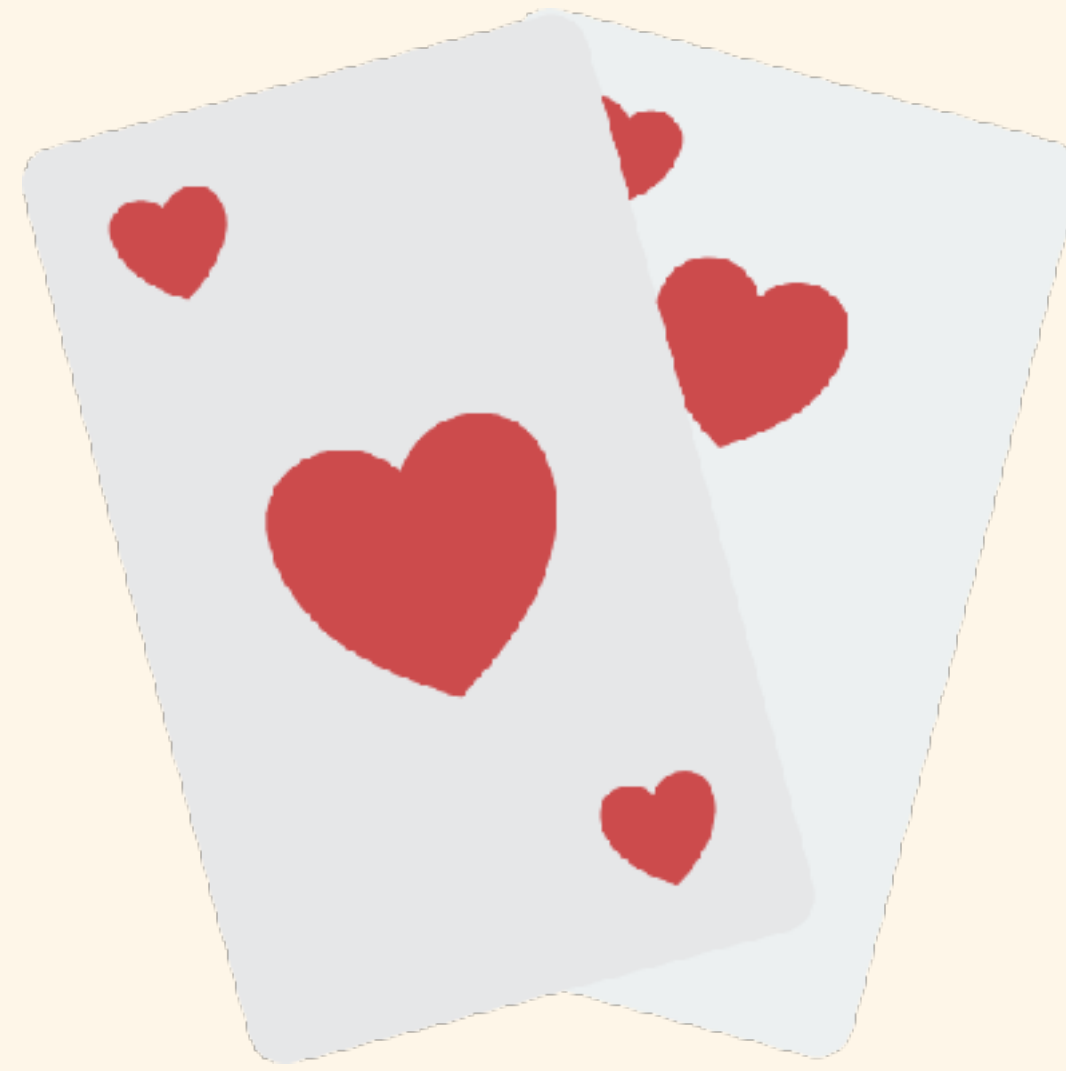


**... but couldn't interview  
people about something  
they'd never thought about.**





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Creating

Curiosity

Expressing my ability



Shoe  
Chi

Shopf-inn Car



Décor

Décor &  
Cie.



Red Velvet  
Cupcake



\$2.75

\$10 gift card



Shopping Cart

Don't you just love cupcakes? Especially when they're on sale? Well, it just so happens your favourite pastry shop, Sweet Deli, is celebrating its 4-year anniversary by having a "Buy 4, Get 1 Free" promotion on their all-time favourite flavour: a strawberry cupcake with chocolate icing. Hurry up and grab some of these delicious cupcakes for yourself!

shopping cart:  
chocolate cupcakes

1A

Dapper  
Gents

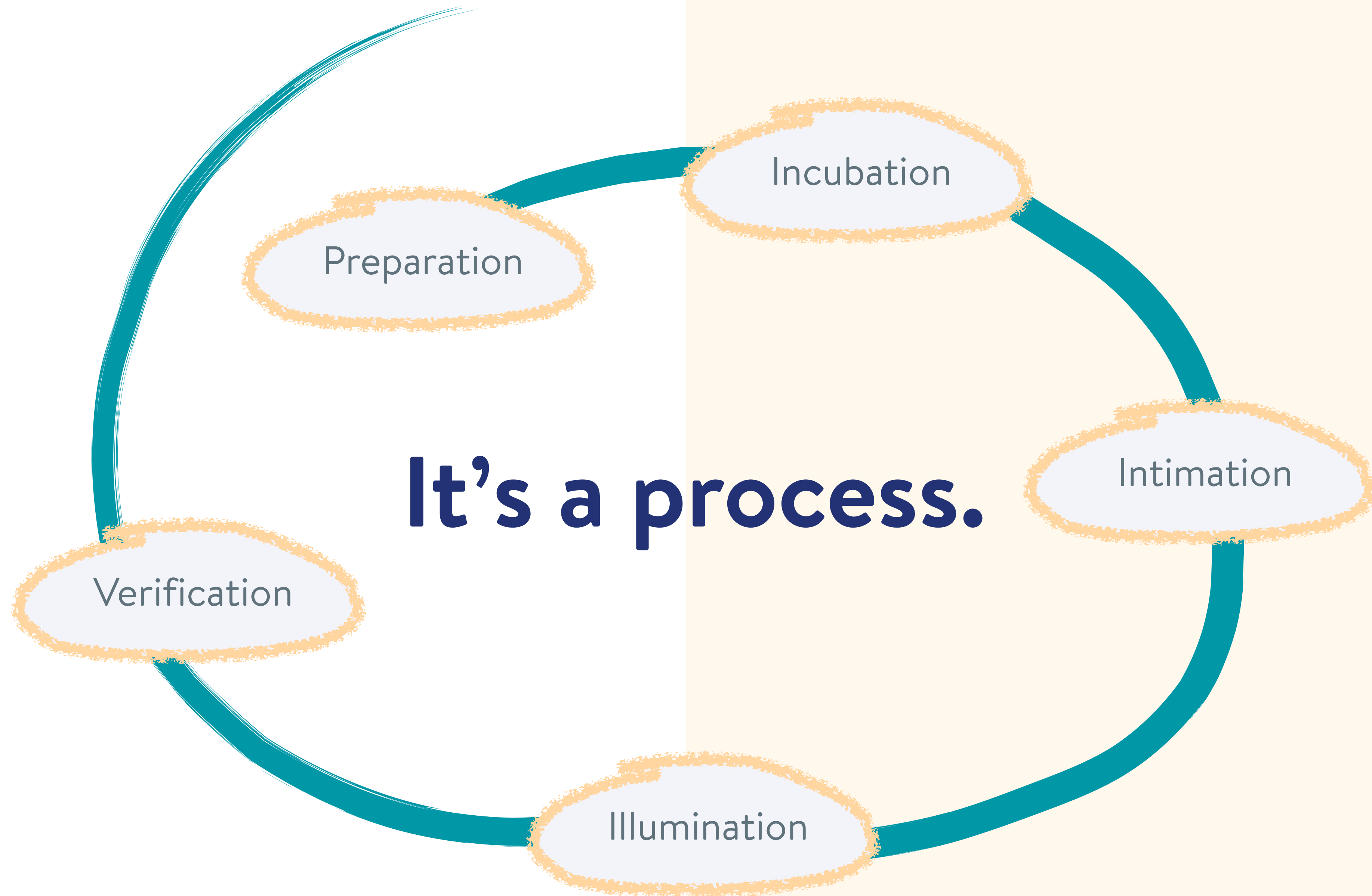


**We're not “inventing”  
new research methods.**

**We're adapting, connecting, and  
combining.**



**We maintain rigour by building on top  
of what's already established.**





**All people are creative.**

**People pass through the levels of  
creativity through experience.**





## Help them as they go along

- Lead people as they do
  - Guide people as they adapt
    - Provide support as they make
      - Offer a clean slate as they create

— *Sanders and Stappers (2013)*

# Thank you!

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