Design Thinking for Our Professional & Personal Lives

Paulette Risher

Major General, U.S. Army Reserve (retired)
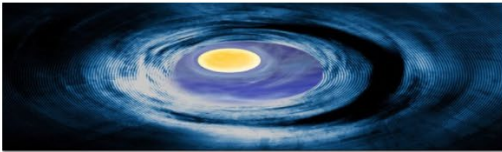
Learning for the Journey, LLC
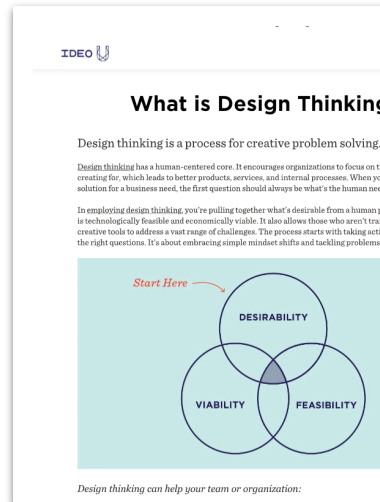
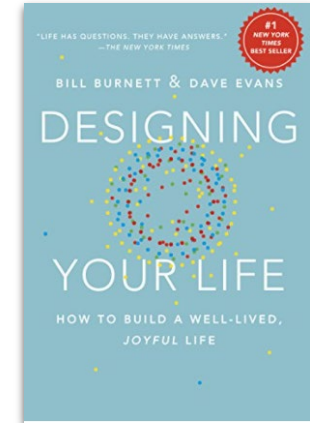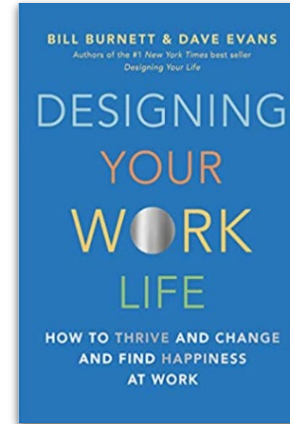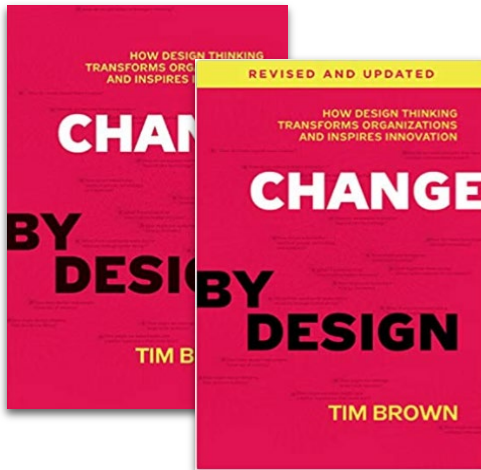**paulette@learningforthejourney.com**

Learning
for the
Journey, LLC

Topics

- Introduction
  - Information Sources
  - Design Thinking – a human-centered, whole-brain approach to solving problems and creating innovation
- The Design Thinking Process
- Life Design
- Thoughts and Questions

Introduction – Sources
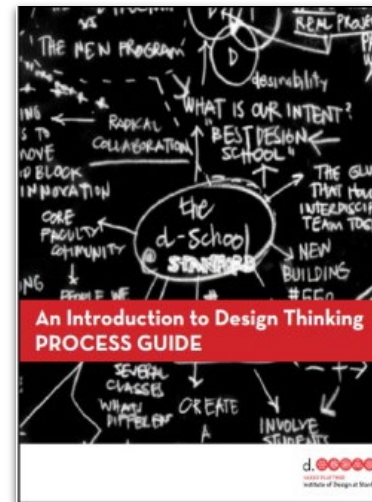

IDEO

HASSO PLATTNER
Institute of Design at Stanford

The "<u>d</u>-School"

https://www.ideou.com/blogs/
inspiration/what-is-design-thinking

https://web.stanford.edu/~mshanks/
MichaelShanks/files/509554.pdf

My Lens of Neuroscience

Learning for the Journey, LLC @ https://www.learningforthejourney.com/

Our "Two Brain" Systems

| Right Hemisphere | **90%** | **10%** | Left Hemisphere |

Intuition & Instinct

– *Subconscious and fast*
– Seat of beliefs, emotions, habits, values, intuition, imagination, connects new learning with old
– Looks at the world holistically
– Automates much of daily life
– Non-verbal
– Always "on" 24/7
– Scans for "danger" (physical or psycho-social) and alerts us to fight, flee, or freeze
– Manages scarce mental energy by streamlining decisions

Autopilot | Guardian | Dot Connector | Energy Manager

Executive Thinking

– *Conscious and slow*
– Seat of higher-order reasoning, social intelligence, feelings, and "adult" self-disciplined behavior
– Looks at the world incrementally – fixed and named
– Smart – but small, sequential, and slow
– Heavily dependent on working memory only 3-4 "chucks" at a time
– Easily distracted & tired

Higher Order Thinker | Adult | Planner | Social and Emotional Navigator

Traditional Approach

- Traditional program/project management is left hemisphere dominant
  - Complexity is broken down and made "manageable" and "talkable"
  - It gives us the illusion of control over what is characteristically a messy, human process

Leverages left hemisphere while ignoring the right

The Basic Project Management Process
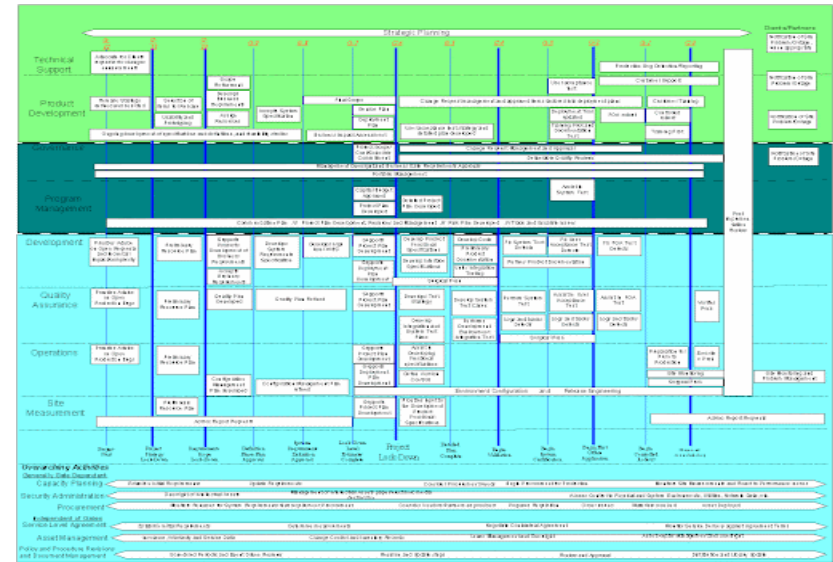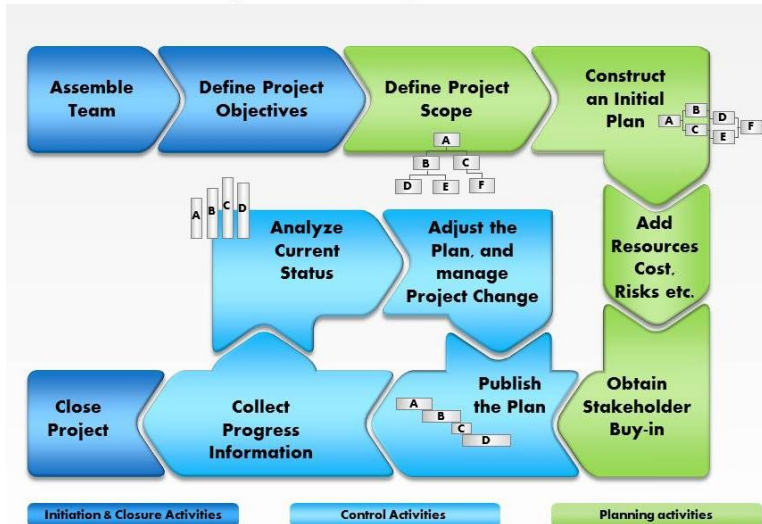
System Engineering and Software Development Life Cycle Program Project Management Framework

Design Thinking

- Whole-brain approach
  - Human-centered
  - Room and respect for intuition and emotion
  - Divergent and convergent thinking
  - Collaborative, inclusive, multi-disciplinary
  - Learn and iterate faster
  - Greater potential for revolutionary, not just incremental change

Intentionally engages both left & right hemispheres

EMPATHIZE
- Interviews
- Shadowing
- Seek to understand
- Non-judgmental

DEFINE
- Personas
- Role objectives
- Decisions
- Challenges
- Pain Points

IDEATE
- Share ideas
- All ideas worthy
- Diverge/Converge
- "Yes and" thinking
- Prioritize

PROTOYPE
- Mockups
- Storyboards
- Keep it simple
- Fail fast
- Iterate quickly

TEST
- Understand impediments
- What works?
- Role play
- Iterate quickly

https://dschool.stanford.edu

An Introduction to Design Thinking PROCESS GUIDE

Stanford d.school Design Thinking Process

Design Thinking Process (d-School)

- **Step 1 - Empathize.** *"Empathy is the centerpiece of human-centered design process."*
  - Work to understand people…
    - How and why they do things
    - Their physical and emotional needs
    - How they think about the world
    - What is meaningful to them
  - The problems we are trying to solve are rarely our own
  - Best solutions come out of the best insights into human behavior
  - *How to empathize…*
    - Observe
    - Engage
    - Watch and listen
    - Research

Empathize
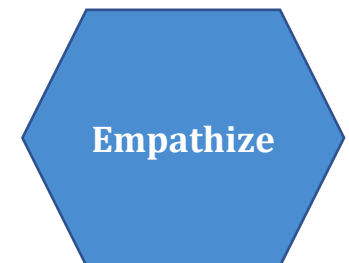
Design Thinking Process (d-School)

- **Step 2 - Define.** *"Framing the right problem is the only way to create the right solution."*
  - Goal is to craft a "meaningful and actionable problem statement" or *point-of-view (POV)*
  - The POV is the explicit expression of the problem we are striving to address
  - *How to define…*
    - Develop an understanding of our USER
    - Synthesize and select a limited set of NEEDS (maybe only one) to be addressed
    - Express INSIGHTS gained from empathy and research
  - A good Point-of-View
    - Provides focus and frames the problem
    - Inspires our team
    - Informs criteria for evaluating competing ideas
    - Captures the hearts and minds of people we meet
    - A discrete POV keeps us from the trap of trying to be "all things to all people"

Define

Design Thinking Process (d-School)

▪ **Step 3 - Ideate.** *"It is not about coming up with the 'right' idea, it's about generating the broadest range of possibilities."*

- Move from identifying problems to creating solutions for our users/target audience
- Focus on idea generation – "go wide"
- *How to ideate…*
  – "Combine our conscious and unconscious mind" – our rational thoughts with our imagination
  – Surround yourself with creative and interesting things
  – Brainstorm, mindmap, sketch – build on ideas – both our own and others
  – *Defer judgement – separate the generation of ideas from the evaluation of ideas*

Ideate
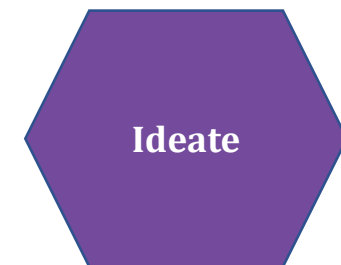
Design Thinking Process (d-School)

- **Step 4 - Prototype.** *"Build to think and test to learn."*
  - The iterative generation of artifacts intended to answer the questions that get us closer to our final solution
  - A prototype can be anything a user can interact with – from a wall of post-its, to a role-playing activity, or if you must a storyboard
  - Why prototype?
    - To communicate – "if a picture is worth a thousand words, a prototype is worth a thousand pictures"
    - To start a conversation
    - To fail quickly and cheaply
    - To test possibilities
    - To manage the solution-building process
  - *How to prototype*
    - Start building, even if you aren't sure what you are doing – get going
    - Don't spend too long on one prototype
    - Start cheap – quick and dirty
    - Identify a variable – what is being tested in each prototype
    - Build with the user in mind

Prototype

Design Thinking Process (d-School)

- **Step 5 - Test.** *"Testing is an opportunity to learn about your solution and your user."*
  - Solicit feedback about the prototypes from users (and build more empathy)
  - "Don't reduce your 'testing' work to asking whether or not people like your solution. Instead, continue to ask "Why?" and focus on what you continue to learn about the person and the problems as well as your potential solution."
  - Why test?
    – To refine prototypes and solutions
    – To learn more about your user
    – To refine your Point-of-View
  - *How to test*
    – Show don't tell
    – Create experiences
    – Ask users to compare

Test
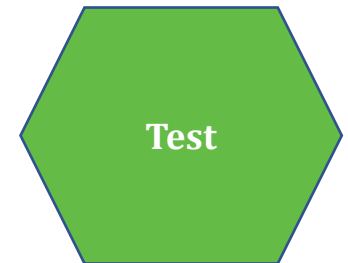
Design Thinking & Project Management

- IDEO is a 30-year old international design **business** with an annual revenue of $21.6M and 700+ global employees

- IDEO focuses on projects, not processes

- Projects have a beginning, middle, and end and "it is precisely these restrictions that anchor it to the real world."

- "The clarity, direction, and limits of a well-defined project are vital to sustaining a high level of creative energy."
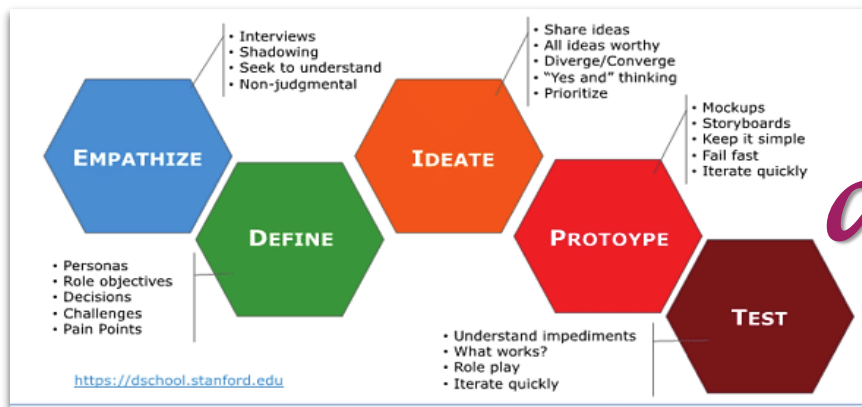
and
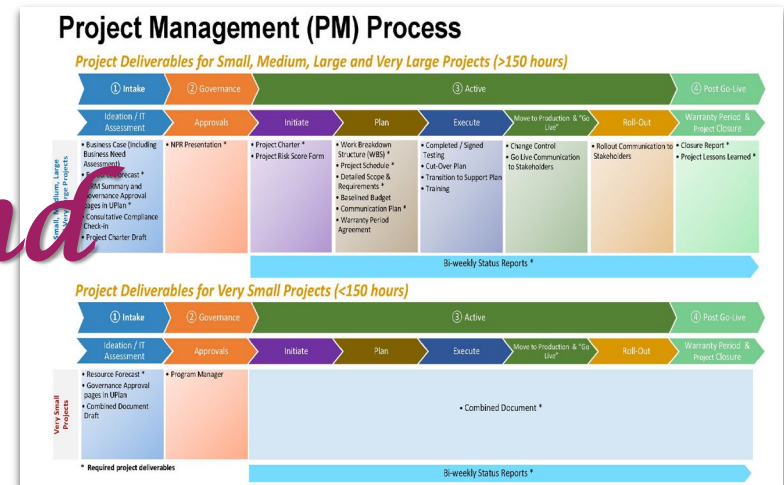
* Quotes from Change by Design: How Design Thinking Transforms Organizations and Inspires Innovation (Revised & Updated, 2019) by Tim Brown

Design Thinking Process (d-School)

- **EMPATHIZE**
  - Interviews
  - Shadowing
  - Seek to understand
  - Non-judgmental
- **IDEATE**
  - Share ideas
  - All ideas worthy
  - Diverge/Converge
  - "Yes and" thinking
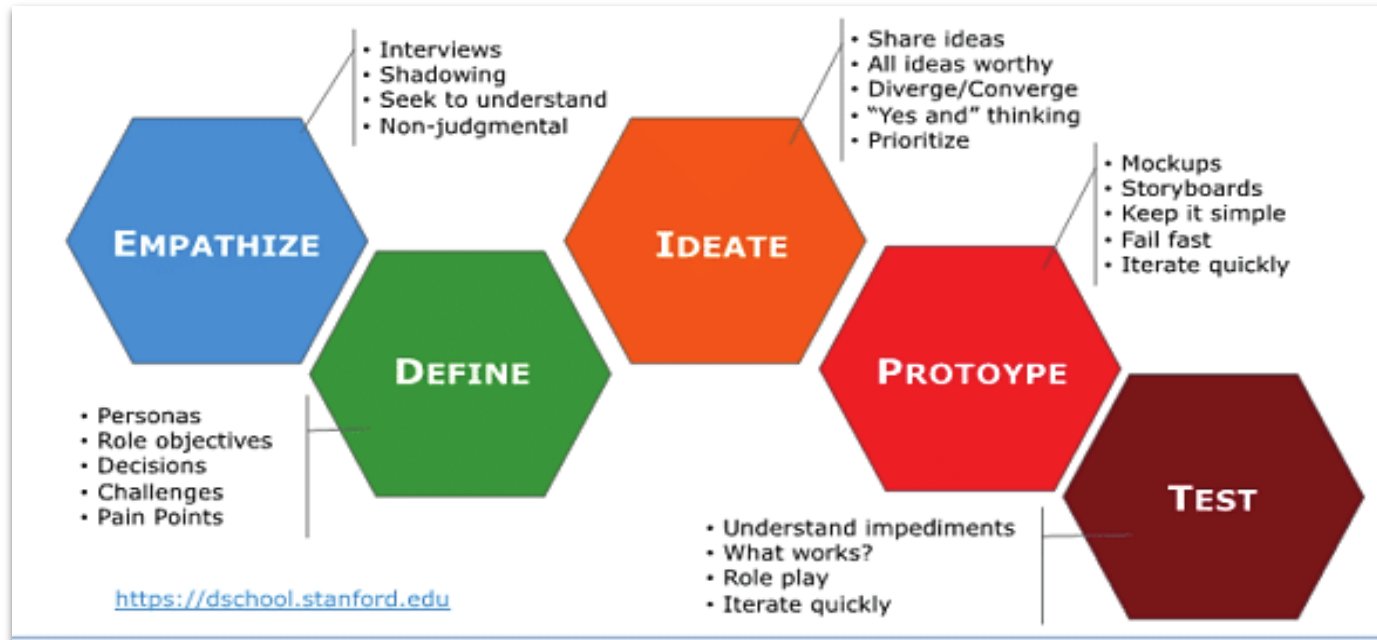 - Prioritize
- **PROTOYPE**
  - Mockups
  - Storyboards
  - Keep it simple
  - Fail fast
  - Iterate quickly
- **DEFINE**
  - Personas
  - Role objectives
  - Decisions
  - Challenges
  - Pain Points
- **TEST**
  - Understand impediments
  - What works?
  - Role play
  - Iterate quickly

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- Parting advice from the d-School
  - "Ultimately you will make the process your own and adapt it to your style and your work.
  - Hone your own process that works for you.
  - Most importantly, as you continue to practice innovation you take on a *designerly mindset* that permeates the way your work, regardless of the process you use."

The Design Thinking Mindset

- We can integrate a design thinking mindset into our work and our lives

- If a lawyer can do it – anyone can! 😉

Design Mindsets are the lenses that we wear to be more creative, user-centered, and agile.

BUILD TO THINK once you start to try to create a rough version of your great idea, you think it through— & can test it out too

CENTER YOUR WORK AROUND YOUR USERS Know who you Are WORKING For, & make Their NeeDs and GOALS your LODESTAR FOR DECISION MAKING

Selectively PAUSE FEASIBILITY think wildly about what might be possible, disregarding constraints + practicalities

EMBRACE CONSTRAINTS set limits on your time, & on your work targets, to come up with more grounded solutions more efficiently

DESIGN MINDSETS

TAKE A BEGINNER'S MINDSET Be OPEN-MINDED, Naive, CURIOUS— QUESTION your ASSUMPTIONS

BE VISUAL get your ideas sketched out, to make them clearer, & engaging

WORK WITH INTERDISCIPLINARY TEAMS mixing diverse mindsets, ways of solving problems & skillsets

EVERYTHING IS A PROTOTYPE Bias Towards creating Rough, NON-Precious versions of your CONCePTs, Then Be reaDY TO scraP & CHaNGe THem

by Margaret Hagan

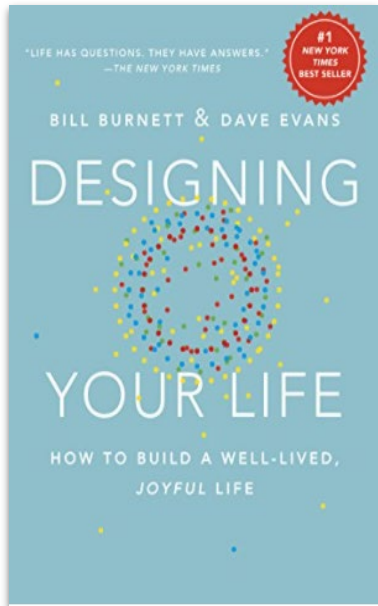Director of the Legal Design Lab, Stanford Law School & Lecturer at the Stanford (d.school), author of Rituals for Work

Design Thinking - for Our Own Lives
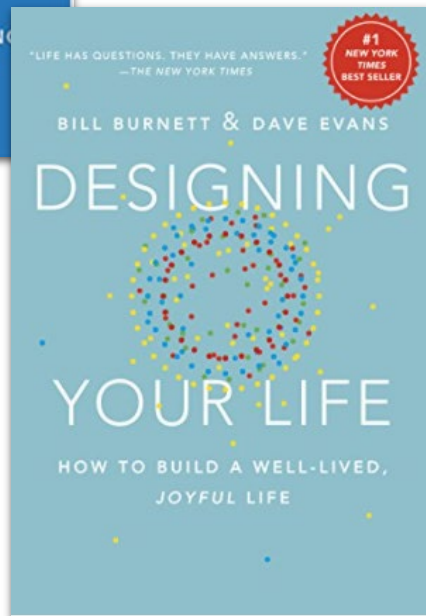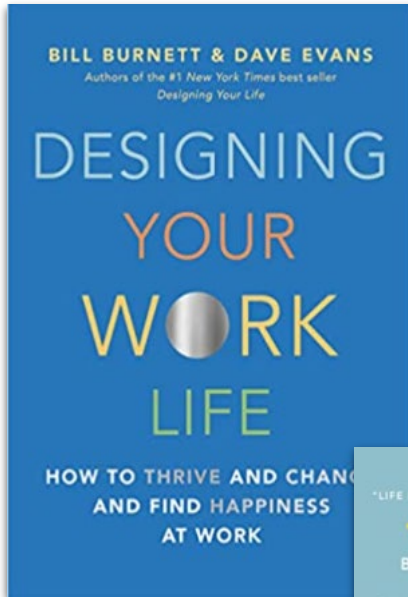
Bill Burnett, Executive Director of the Stanford Design Program and cofounder of Life Design Lab

Dave Evans, Cofounder of Life Design Lab, a lecturer in the Stanford Design Program

Premise & Table of Contents

Book Highlights

- A designer's approach to exploration and change

- Five key mindsets of life design:
  - **Curiosity** – get curious, open the lens, wonder "why"
  - **Bias to action** – try it, act, experiment, fail fast, prototype, build – not think and plan – your way forward
  - **Reframing** – reframe assumptions, reframe questions, stand-back, open the decision space
  - **Awareness** – know it is a process, often a messy process
  - **Radical collaboration** – ask for help

| Empathize | Define | Ideate | Prototype | Test |
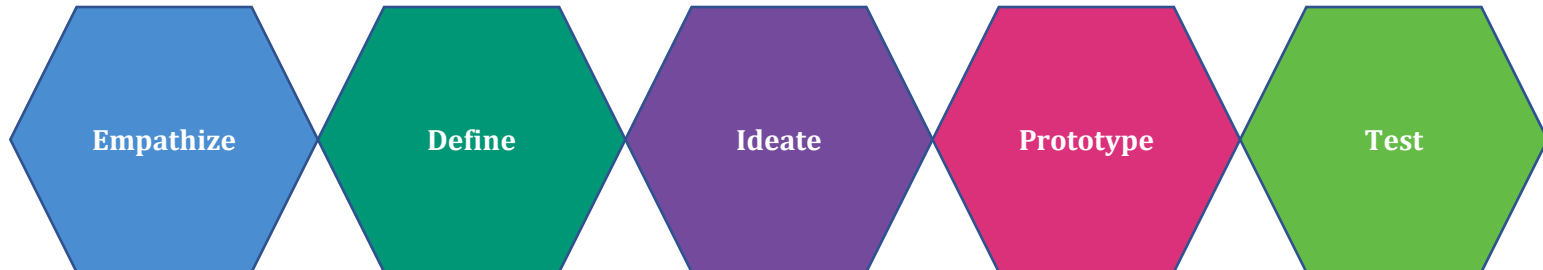
Extract 1: Well-Being Assessment

- **Life Satisfaction – where are you really?**

1. Well-Being Dashboard

Extract 1: Well-Being Mini-Project

2. What do you observe (and are you being fair, non-judgmental, and self-compassionate)?

3. In you could make one incremental adjustment what would it be? How would your revised dashboard look now?

DASHBOARD

Work	0	FULL
Play	0	FULL
Love	0	FULL
Health	0	FULL

Extract 1: Well-Being Mini-Project

4. What would you get if you could attain this revised level of balance? How would life (really) change for you?

5. What incremental change could you attempt to move in this direction? What would it take for you to live this way for two weeks?

Design Mindset: You don't have to walk this path alone! Ask for help – radical collaboration

Extract 2:
Considering Alternative Futures

Alternative Future Exercise

- These are **exploratory** – written in pencil with an eraser
- This is **private** work – no requirement to share
- Open the lens wide
- Project about **3 years into the future**
- What are at least three **substantially different** lives that you might create?

- For each …
  - Give it a short, meaningful (~6 word) title
  - Write a brief description
  - List 2-3 questions this alternative is asking
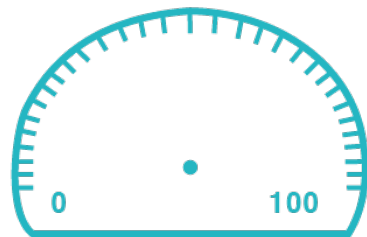 - Complete a dashboard for each
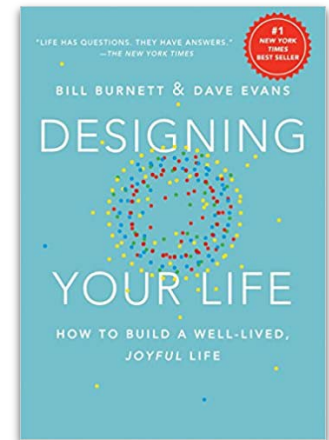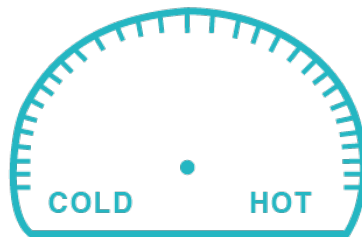
Alternative Future Exercise

Title:

Brief Description of Alternative:

Questions to Be Explored:

| RESOURCES | I LIKE IT | CONFIDENCE | COHERENCE |
| 0 — 100 | COLD — HOT | EMPTY — FULL | 0 — 100 |
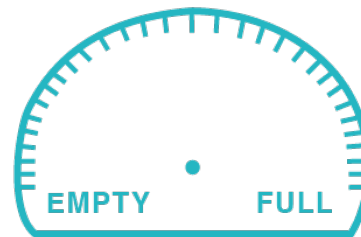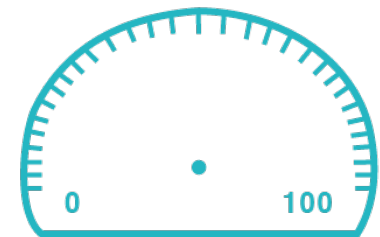
Alternative Future Exercise

- If you are struggling to identify three distinctly different alternative futures then, start with these...

  1. If you were to continue to do what you are doing now, what would that job be?

  2. If what you are doing now was closed off to you, what would be your Plan B?

  3. If money were no object and no one would laugh at you, what would you do?

Five Signposts You Are on the Right Path

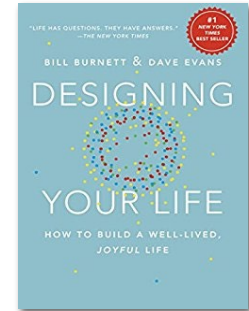1. **Engagement:** Do you feel emotional involvement and commitment? Do you feel connected or in gear with the activities or idea?

2. **Energy:** Are you energized or just depleted by the activity, effort or even the idea?

3. **Joy:** Do you sense joy in what you doing or considering?

4. **Meaning:** Does this choice make a difference to the world?

5. **Alignment:** Does what you are doing or considering align with your real and personal values and strengths?

Does the choice you are considering feel right ... really?

Practical Advice ...

Create Time & Space to Think | Write Down Your Thoughts | Listen to Your Inner Voice | Open the Lens Then Narrow the Choices | Decide and Explore the Path

- **Take care of yourself – body, mind, and spirit**
  - **Routine of self-care.** Regular schedule, adequate sleep, healthy diet, exercise
  - **Self-compassionate.** Explore practices of mindfulness, savor the good and be grateful, take a deep breath
  - **Connection.** Stay connected to others and to nature. Moderate social media use. Start creating an extended tribe
  - **Own your transition.** Focus on creating – thoughtfully and with intention – the next chapter in *your* life!

A Personal Story – Framing & Reframing

- How this book changed my life…
- Setting the Stage…
  - 2017 – in *much* need of vacation …
  - "Bucket List" desire to see Yellowstone National Park
  - Motor Home – from 33 years of marriage and my husband's passing in 2010 – the one thing that was/is a thorn in my side
  - I started to plan my trip – part of the fun of traveling! 3,200+ miles round trip from Huntsville AL to Yellowstone National Park; about 300 miles per day for a person of my age, 20+ days on the road; a month away from home and work; 3 weeks of pain for 1 week of gain (maybe).
  - I closed my Rand McNally Atlas and wrote off this trip!

A Personal Story - Continued

- Listening to **Designing Your Life** and the story of "John" who aspired to take the mule train down the Grand Canyon etc. but couldn't get to 200 lbs.

- The moral of the story is that **John was working the wrong problem** i.e., his weight not seeing Grand Canyon from top to bottom

- Listening to this story I had a huge "aha" moment – I too had been working the wrong problem! We have airplanes and rental cars!

- In June 2017, I spent a week alone in Yellowstone – one of the most memorable times in my life
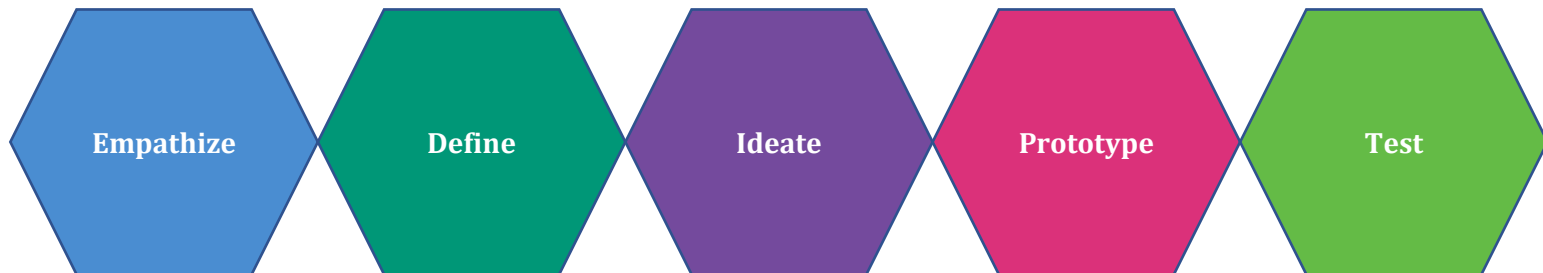
In Conclusion…

Summary

- Design Thinking is …
  - Human-centered and whole-brained
  - Applicable to the creation of things, spaces, experiences, and social change
  - Valuable professionally *and* personally
  - Project based and complimentary to traditional project management
  - Adaptable to our own style and context
  - **Fun, interesting, and creative!**

| Empathize | Define | Ideate | Prototype | Test |

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