

EXPANDING CREATIVITY

COLLECTIVE CREATIVITY REMAINS UNTAPPED IN THE
PURSUIT OF GREATNESS.

NO LONGER.

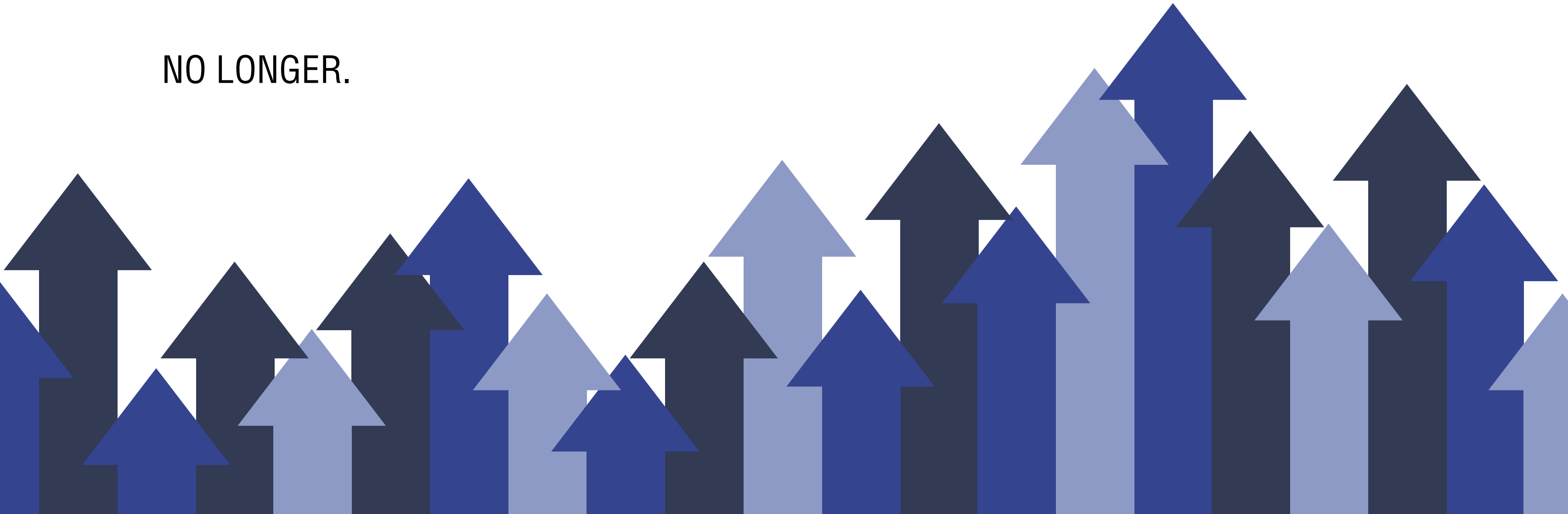
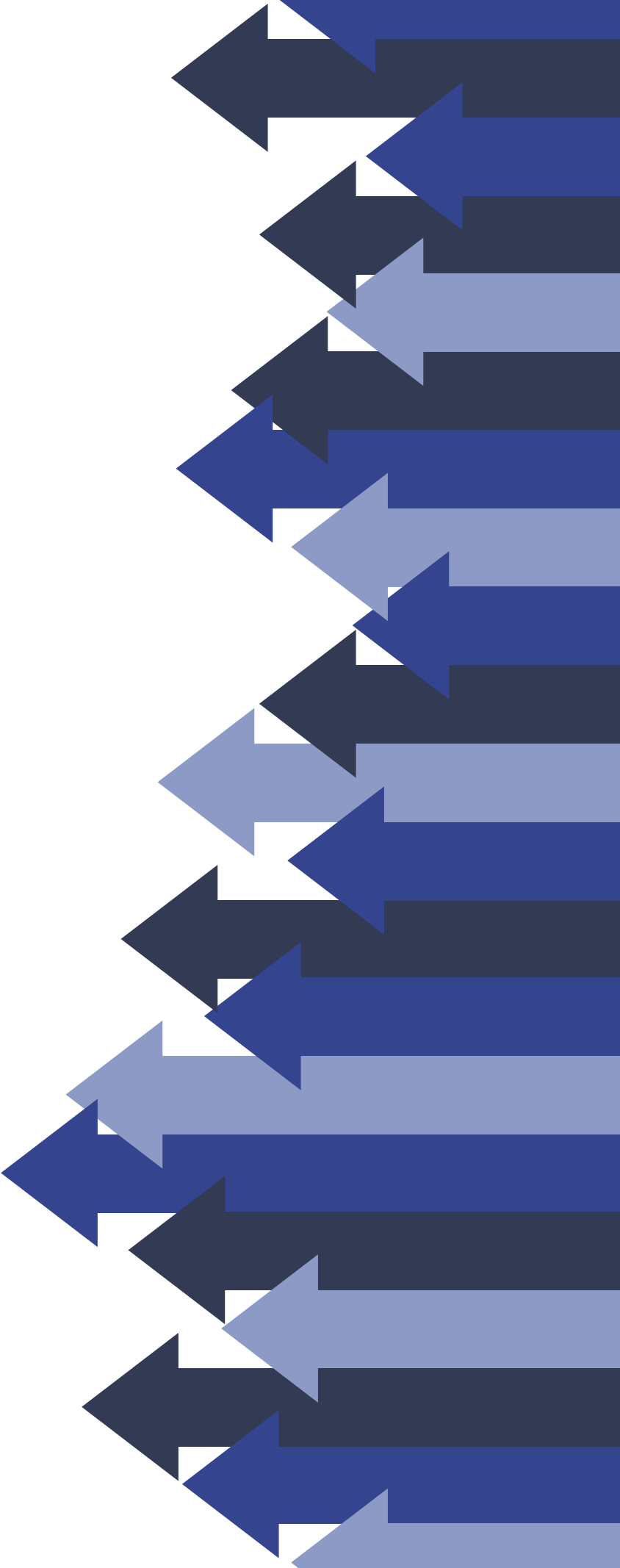


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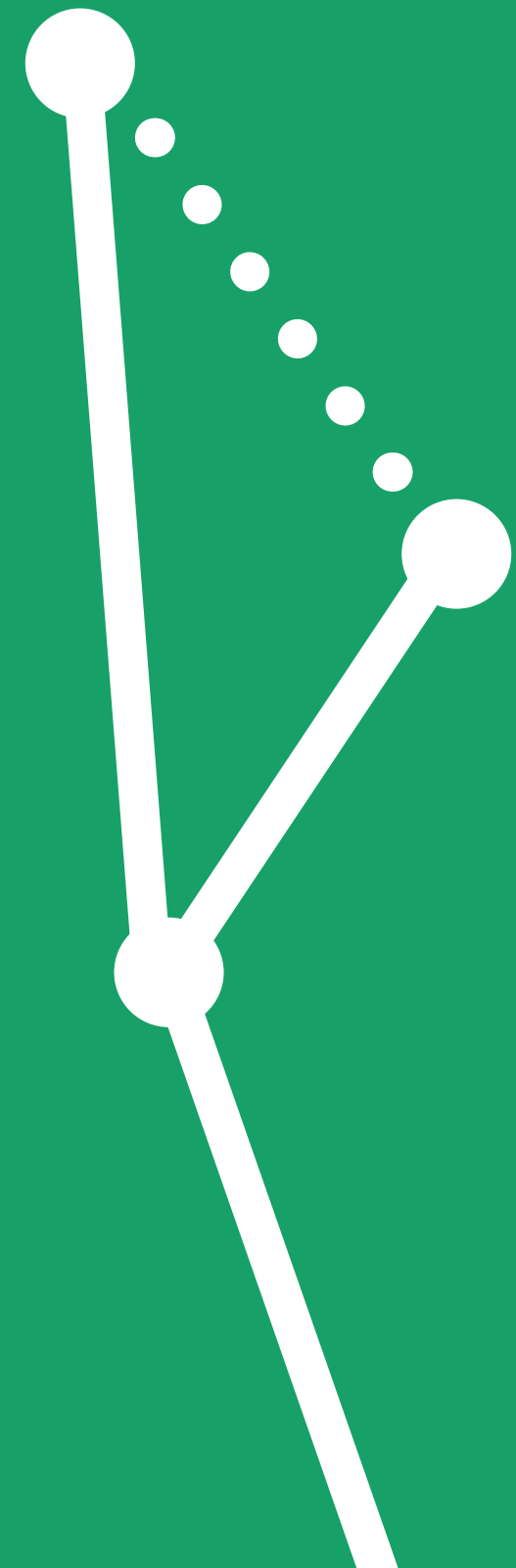


PROLOGUE

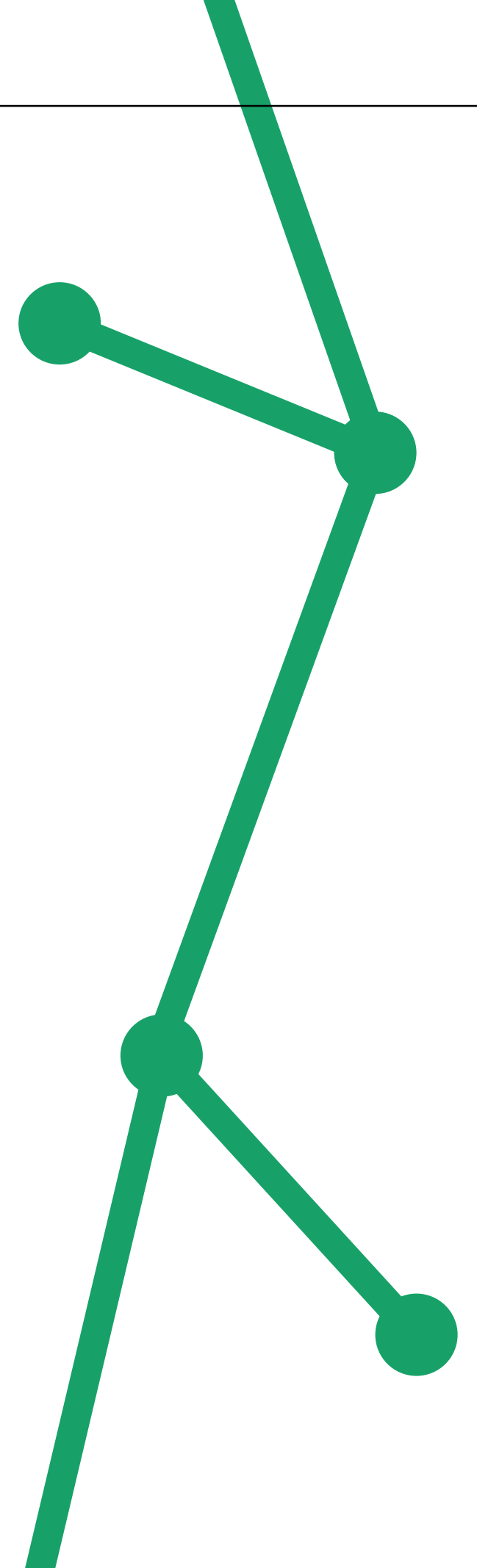
Collective Creative Canvas. Expanding Creativity. What? Let's begin by defining a key meta concept.

The Collective Creative Canvas of humanity is our single most powerful resource on our journey into the future. It is the idea that innovation is driven through the combination of existing concepts.

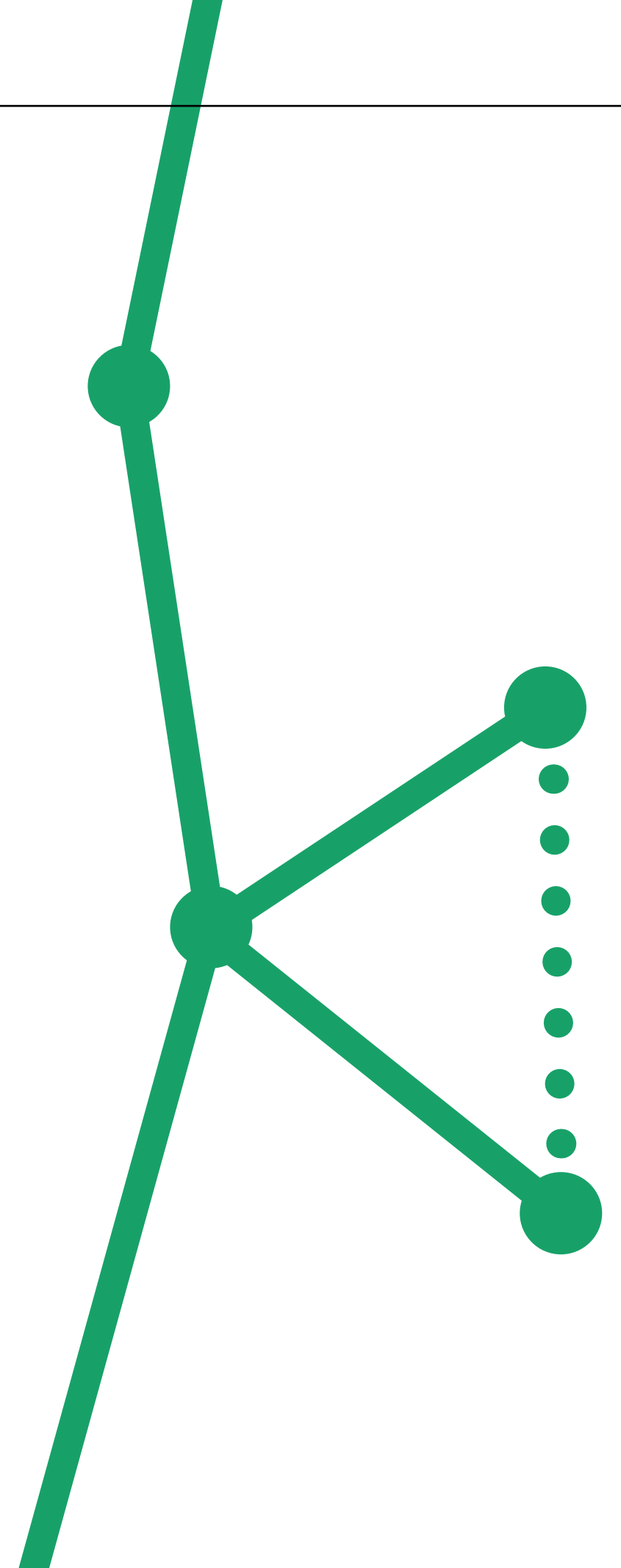
It is the idea that our creative potential as a species is inherently an exponential function.



Name an innovation that doesn't build upon other technologies. You probably can't, unless it's something pretty basic like "snap sticks at an angle to make them stabby and lethal". Even most of the concepts that you would consider fundamental, like hunting for food, getting dressed to stay warm, or settling in permanent residences, when examined more closely, all contain a myriad components without which they could not exist. Try hunting without weapons, for example. At the very minimum you'll want the stabby stick we invented first!



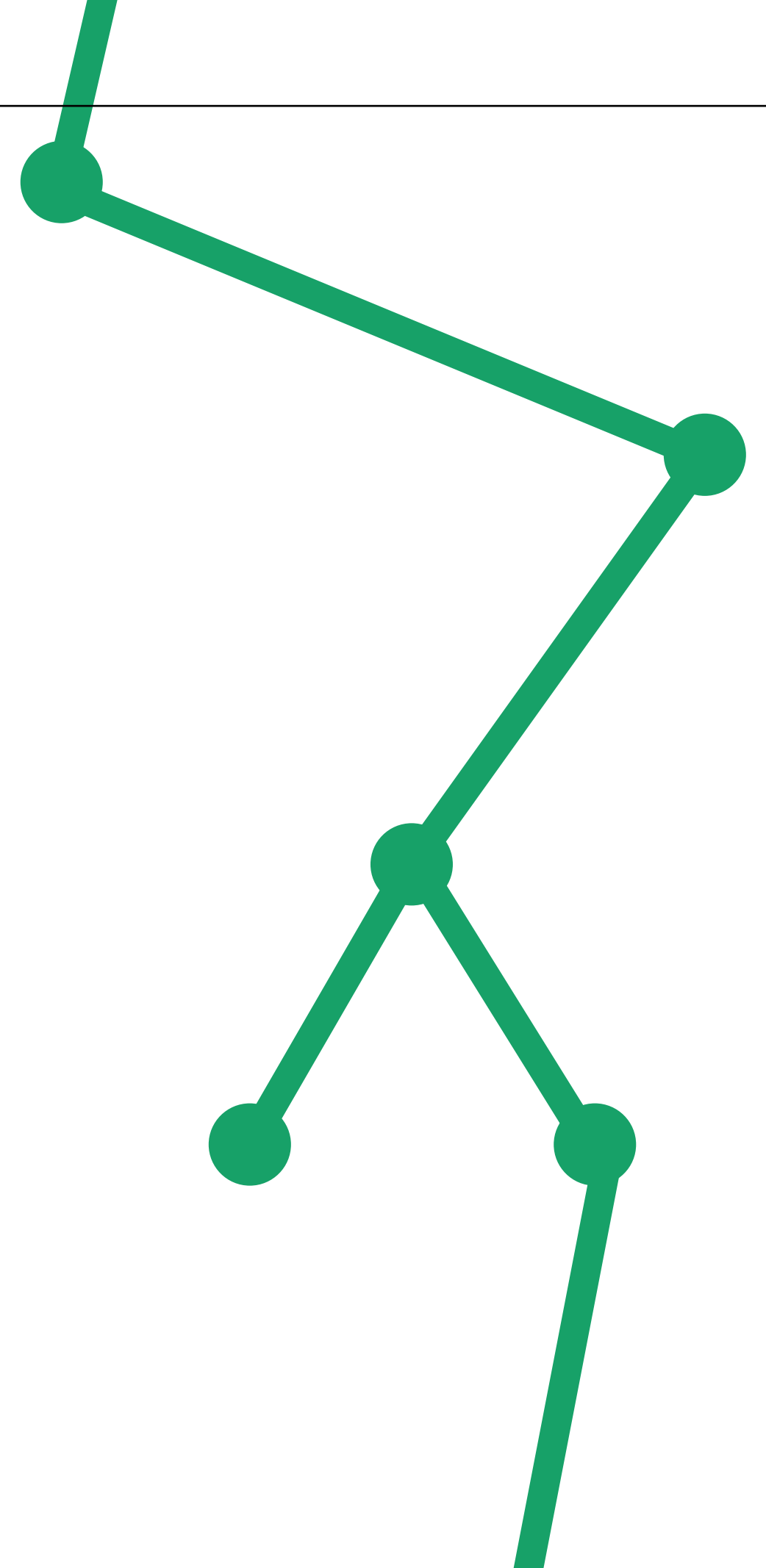
This is not a novel observation. Most people are well aware that the combination of existing ideas to create new solutions can be a powerful cocktail. However, knowing that a concept exists, and using it optimally for the greater good are two very different things. This e-book is dedicated to examining the dynamics of how ideas are born, with the aim of equipping you with the knowledge to collaborate on the Collective Creative Canvas!



To condense the meta idea of the CCC into a metaphorical concept, it can be helpful to think of it like this:

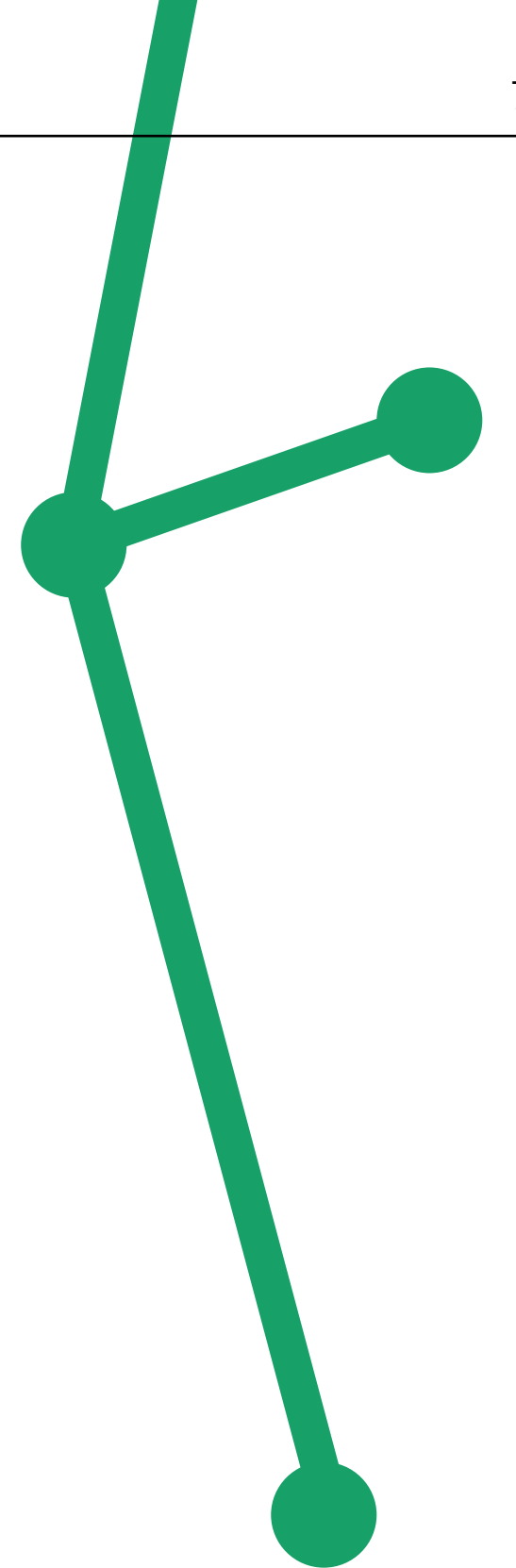
The combination and recombination of ideas into new ideas and innovation is a process of combining blocks into greater structures. A similar system exists in nature in the form of atoms combining into molecules, which then have chemical reactions and fuse or split into new molecules.

A major difference is difficulty. It's hard to invent or discover a new molecule. It's easy to combine ideas. The power, relative to the effort involved, is immense.



In the following chapters, you'll be challenged with a few tasks to complete in order to make the most of this e-book. You may read ahead if you so desire, but the tasks themselves are designed to be completed in order.

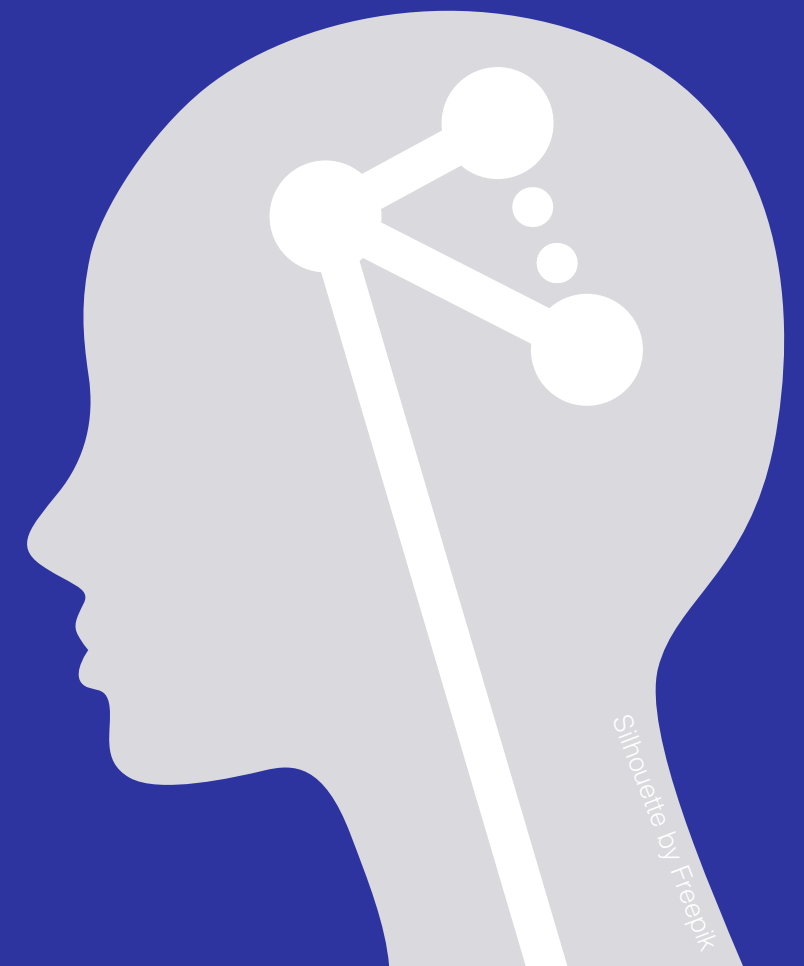
Change doesn't happen just by reading, it happens through effortful work.



EXPLORING PERSONAL CREATIVITY

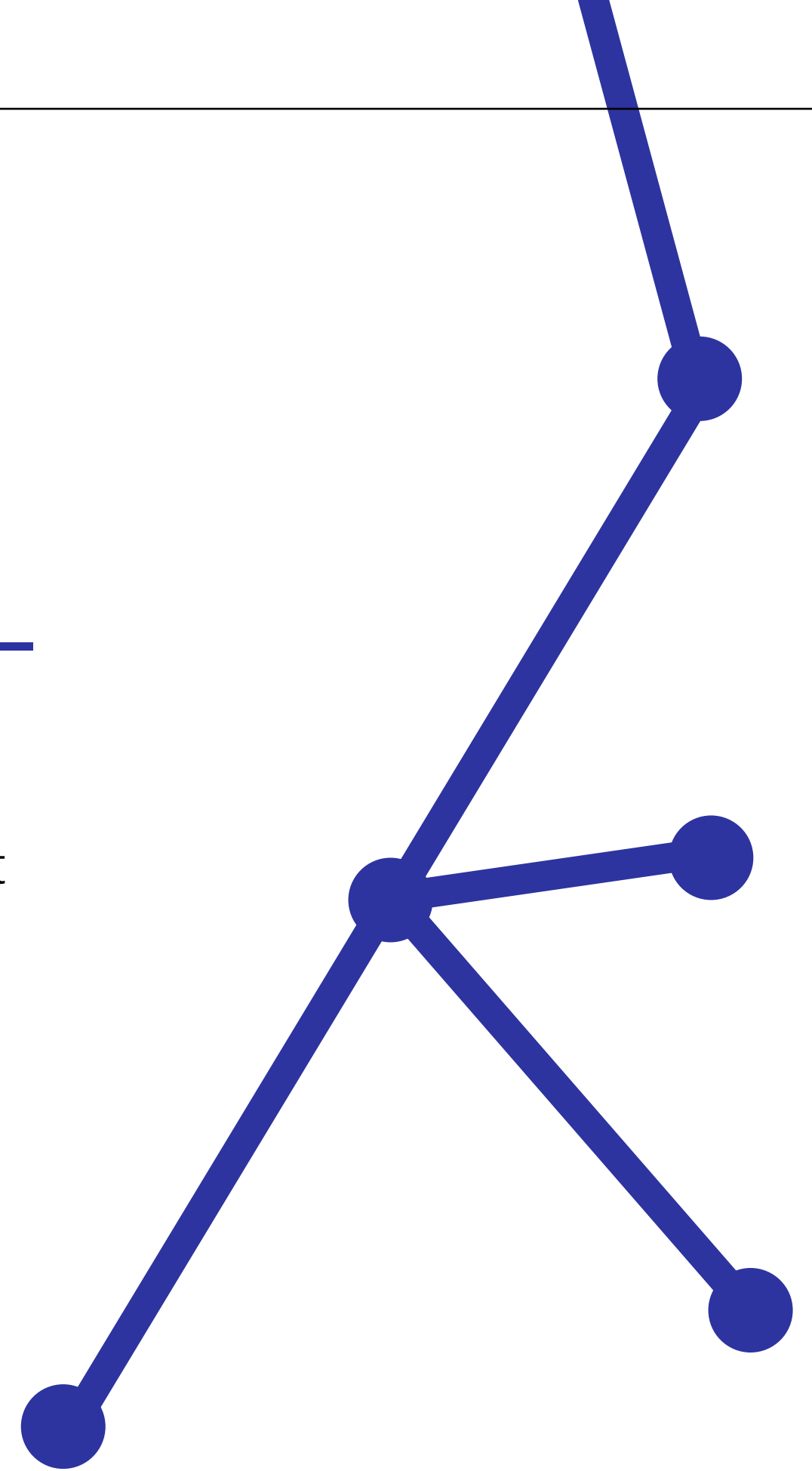
At the core of collective creativity lies individual creativity. This is the foundation that collective creativity builds on, and without it there can be no Collective Creative Canvas.

Learn it. Live it.



Silhouette by Freepik

Personal creativity is the subject matter of countless self-help articles, blog posts, poems, films, news articles, books... The goal is always self-improvement, self-realisation, and selfish. It is time to talk about the real reasons to grow and explore our personal creativity; to further the collective creative canvas.

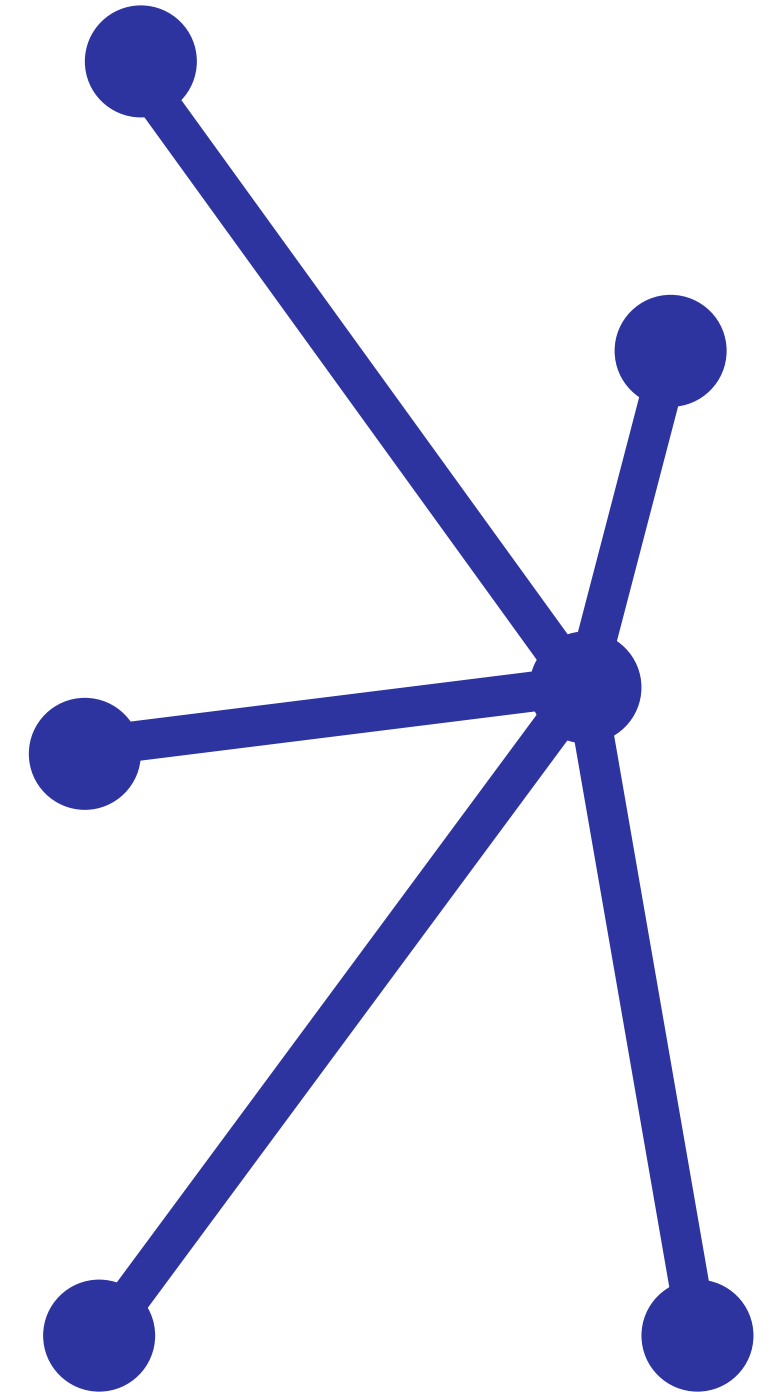


Before any contribution can be made to the collective creative canvas, it is necessary to train the skill of personal creativity. This is not a detailed guide, so consider the following inputs as starting points that you might explore to gain a greater confidence in your creative capacities.

1. Map out your current creative practices. Do you play an instrument? Dance? Draw? Present at work? Design slide decks? Argue with people? Cook food? Become aware of what you're already doing that is inherently a process of creation.
2. Pick up a new creative activity. Anything you've always wanted to be able to do? Play guitar/piano? Paint? Learning a skill is always healthy, and exploring your creativity, doubly so.
3. Is anything bothering you? Is your life perfect? Try to find the things that itch, and imagine ways that you could scratch that itch, given unlimited resources. Find problems, imagine solutions.

Don't reject stupid ideas, just practice finding solutions for stuff that bugs you! Lots of great business ideas come from scratching your own itch.

“Collective creativity is the key to the future. Personal creativity is the foundation of collective creativity. Build it.”



TASK 1

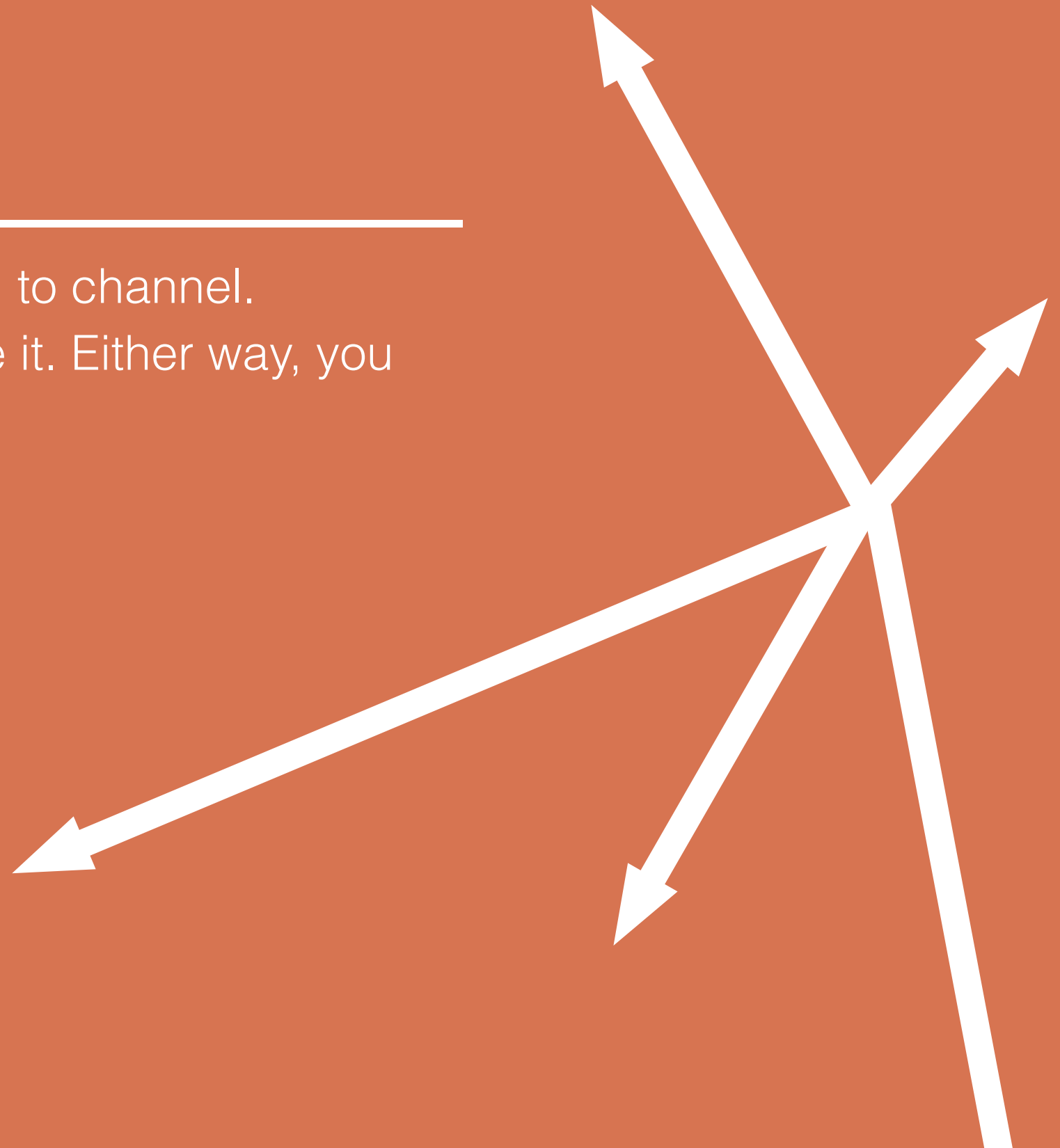
FIND YOUR CURRENT CREATIVE PRACTICES, AND PICK 1 NEW CLICHÉ CREATIVE PRACTICE TO BEGIN IMMEDIATELY (YES, PLAY THE GUITAR, OR START DANCING)

TASK 2

START SPOTTING BAD DESIGN; DESIGN THAT PUTS PRODUCT BEFORE HUMANS. DESIGN THAT ISN'T INTUITIVE. DESIGN THAT GETS ON YOUR NERVES. TAKE NOTE!

EMBRACING PURPOSE

Creativity with no purpose is chaotic, hard to channel.
You may find purpose, or you may choose it. Either way, you must embrace it.



Purpose gives you motivation to focus on creative pursuits. Some people refer to this as “finding your calling”. Whether you find a purpose or create your own matters little - the power of a purpose is the same as long as you embrace it and use it as a driver; as your reason for making change.



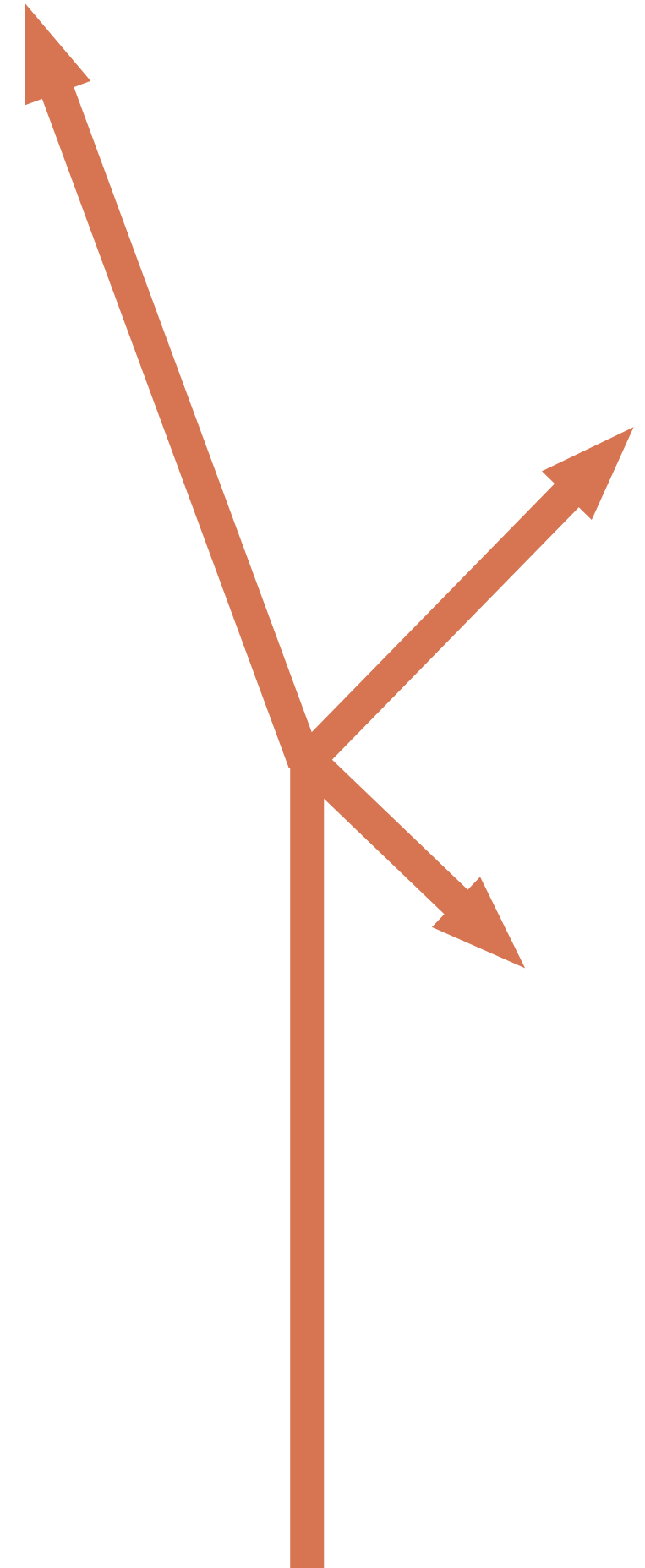
It's common advice for start-ups and entrepreneurs that finding a deep motivation can make the difference when the process starts to get tough. You might not consider yourself that much of a trail-blazer just yet. Indeed, most people equate creativity to imagination, a relaxing introspective process. The reality is different.



Creation is the most impressive, incredible, and monumental thing we humans can dream up! It's so impressive that we base the ultimate achievements of our idols on it

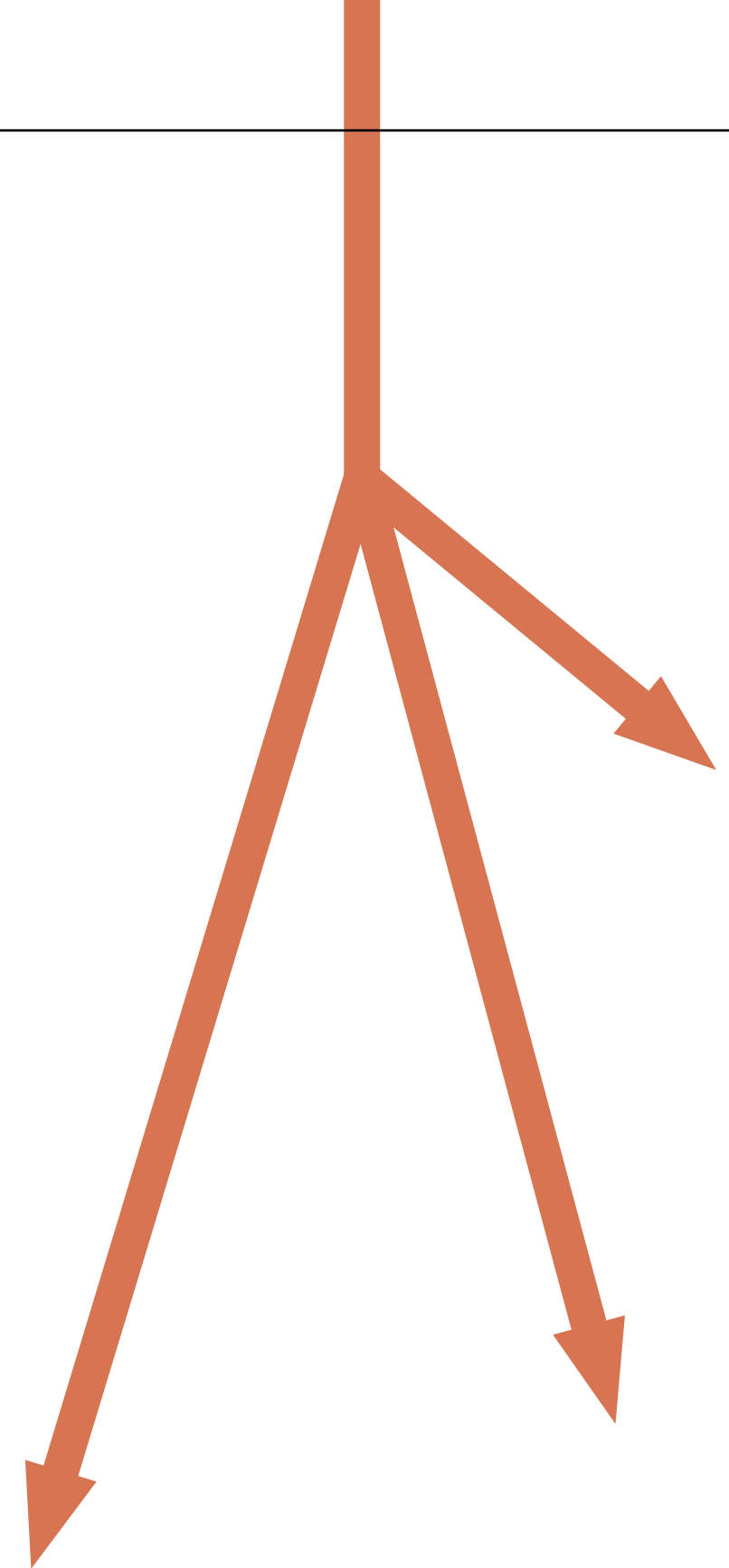
...AND GOD SAID,
“LET THERE BE LIGHT”...

If it was easy, there would be no mysterious title of “creative genius”. Are you a creative genius? No? Then you need to grab on to a purpose to keep you motivated through the slog of actually coming up with good ideas!



Your purpose can be anything you care about. It can be self-ish, or it can be selfless. Desperately want to solve world hunger? Awesome. Desperately want to remove all chores in your daily life? Also awesome. Whatever you care deeply about, and can trust to keep you on track in your quest for a better tomorrow.

What is a creation that serves no purpose?



TASK 3

DIG DEEP. FIND SOMETHING YOU CAN BE PASSIONATE ABOUT, THAT CAN DRIVE YOU TO SOLVE REAL PROBLEMS. THIS STEP CAN TAKE WEEKS OF FOCUSED EFFORT, AND PURPOSE CAN CHANGE OVER TIME.

TASK 3.5

IGNORE POPULAR OPINION. IF YOU ARE DEDICATED TO SHOWING THE WORLD HOW UNBRANDED FROZEN WAFFLES ARE THE KEY TO THE FUTURE, PEOPLE WILL SCOFF AT YOU. UNTIL YOU BUILD A WAFFLE-POWERED RAY GUN AND VAPORISE THEM.

GOALS AND CREATIVITY

Goals smell like management. And management kills creativity, right? Right!?



Just as motivation and purpose are often deemed unnecessary in personal creativity, goals are ignored, and valuable tools left alone, because of old fashioned associations or preconceptions about the nature of creativity.

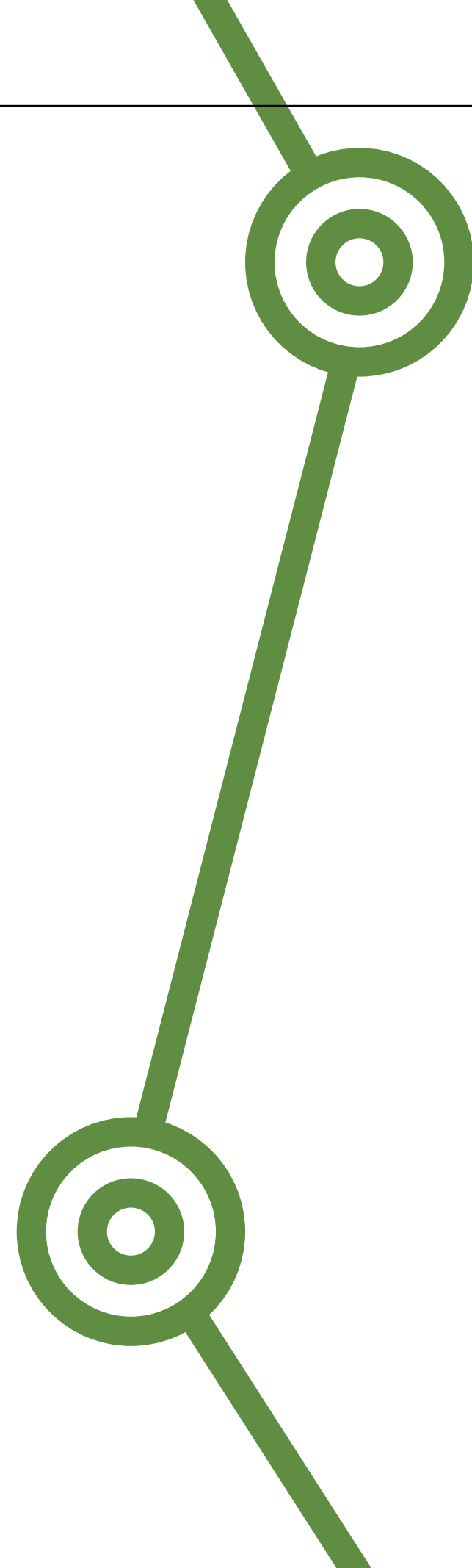
Setting an overarching goal is the first step in a strict creative process. It's taught in educational institutions all over the world under a different name: The ubiquitous problem statement.



If the overarching goal is any good, and has some depth, it'll readily lend itself to milestones - targets you can hit to let you know you're on the right path to meeting your core goal. Those milestones, when properly defined, are goals in their own right.



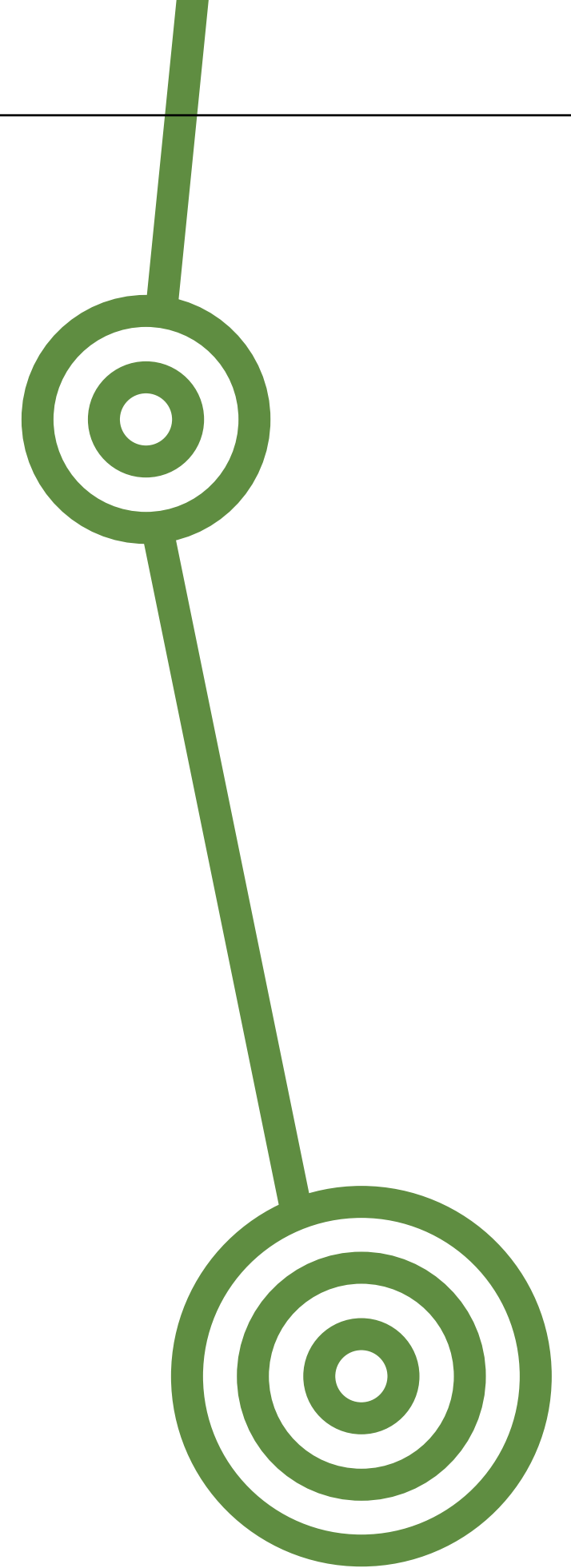
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FOR GOALS TO FOSTER CREATIVITY, THEY HAVE TO BE SET UNDER A CREATIVE PARADIGM. MOST IMPORTANTLY, THEY HAVE TO ALLOW FOR AN EXPLORATION OF THE UNKNOWN.



Setting a goal of “vacuum the house once per week for 2 months” is cool, but it’s not a creative goal. Setting a goal of “find the fastest way to vacuum the house” and constraining your efforts to one attempt per week for the next 2 months. That’s liable to spark some creative processes. Engineers might look at how to make the machinery more potent, while management students might explore optimal routes, or lean approaches to cleaning.

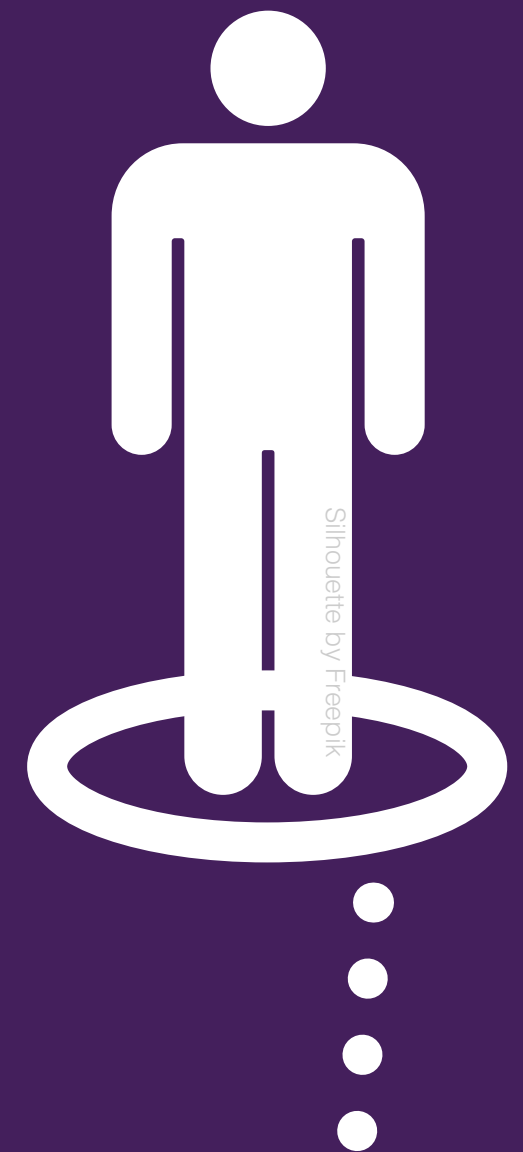


TASK 4

SET A GOAL THAT LETS YOU EXPLORE A SIMPLE UNKNOWN. SET YOUR DEADLINE FOR 1 WEEK FROM NOW. BE STRICT WITH YOURSELF. THIS IS NOT THE TIME TO CHANGE THE WORLD, THIS IS THE TIME TO GET A FEELING FOR EXPLORATION!

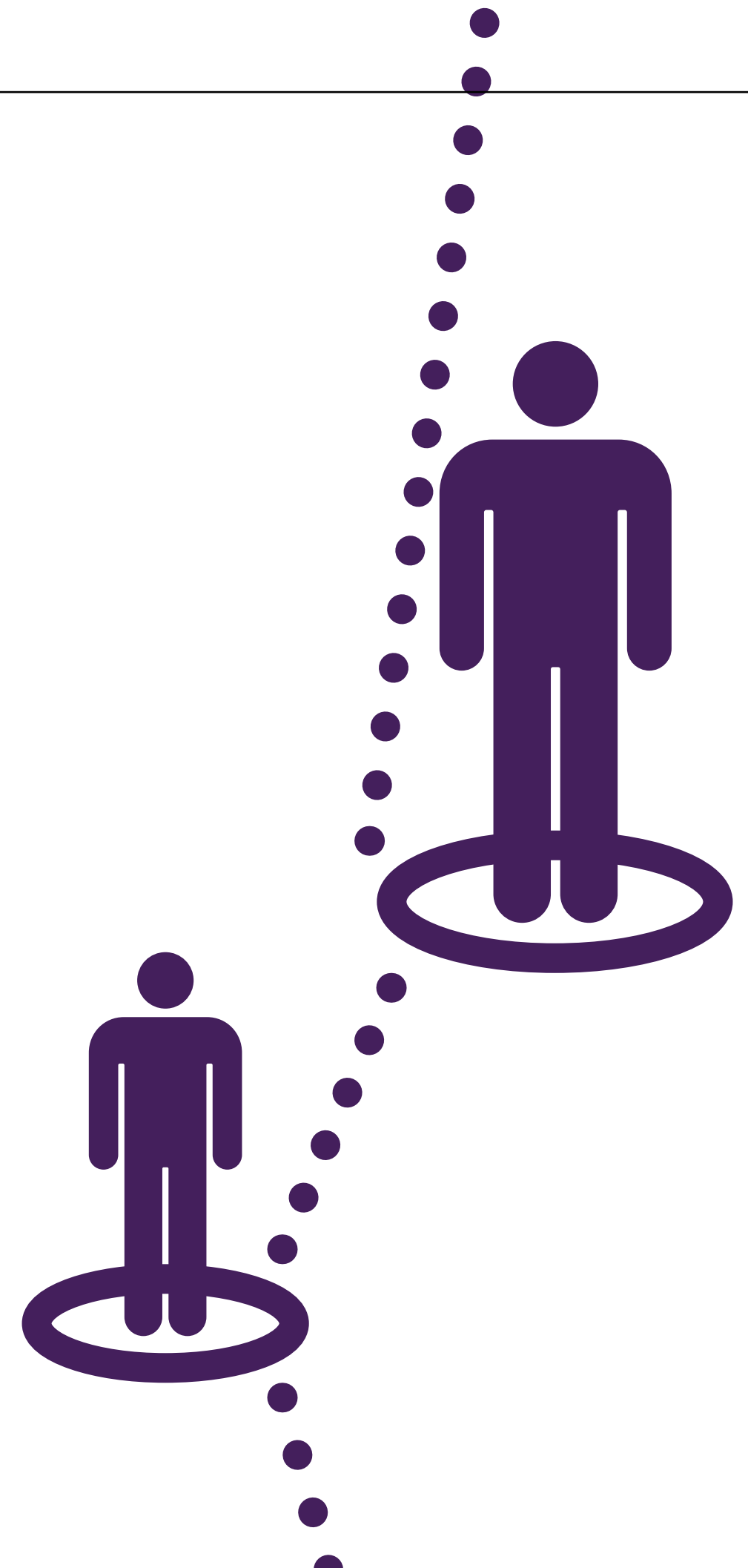
CROSS-FUNCTIONAL SYNERGY

If you want to be inspired, challenged, and forced to grow, talk to someone who is not like you.

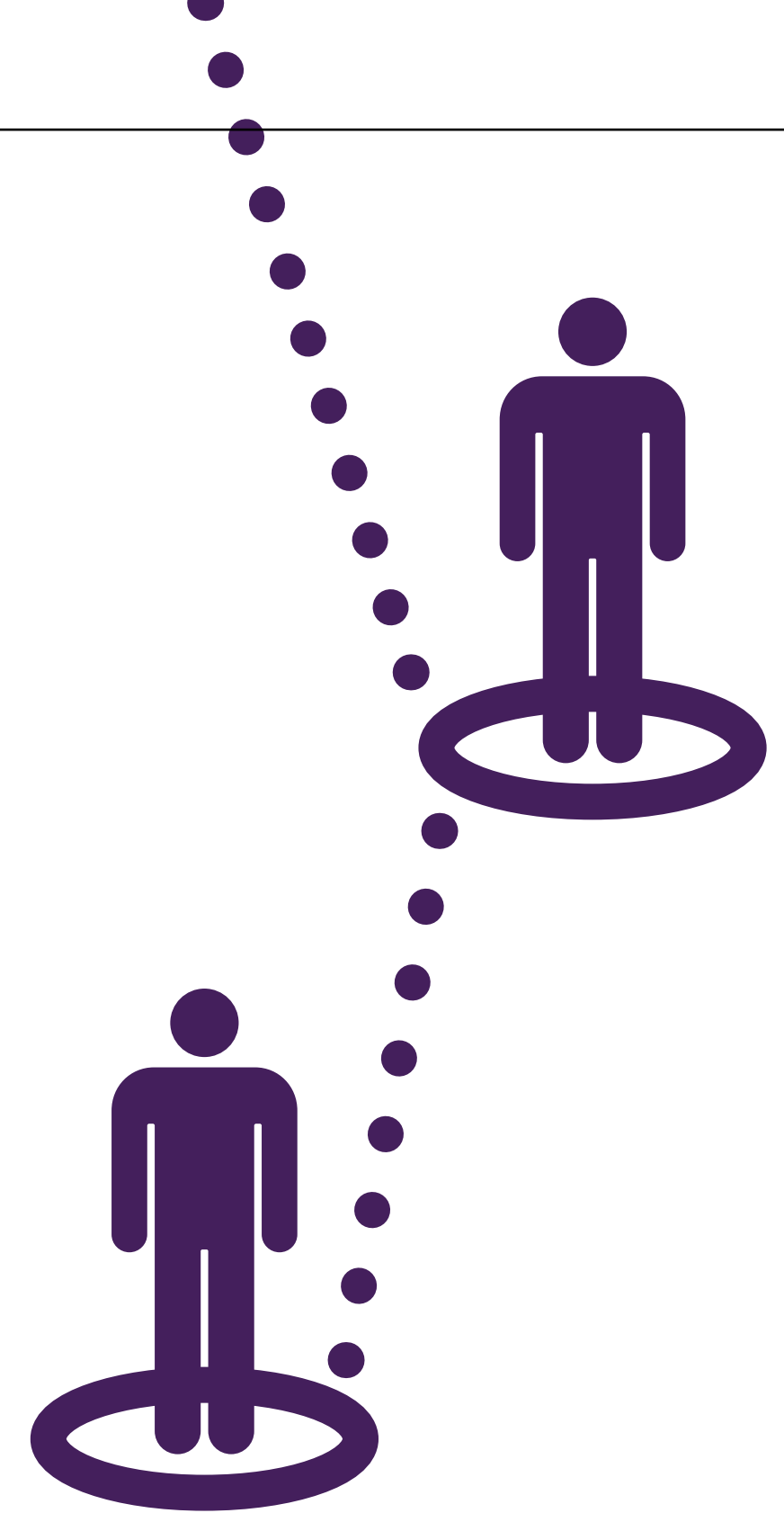


Great ideas tend to show up on the boundaries between fields. Excellent thinkers in business and communication are convinced that thinking “on the edge of the box” is how creativity thrives, rather than thinking “outside of the box”.

The best way to get to the edge of your box?
Let someone pull you!



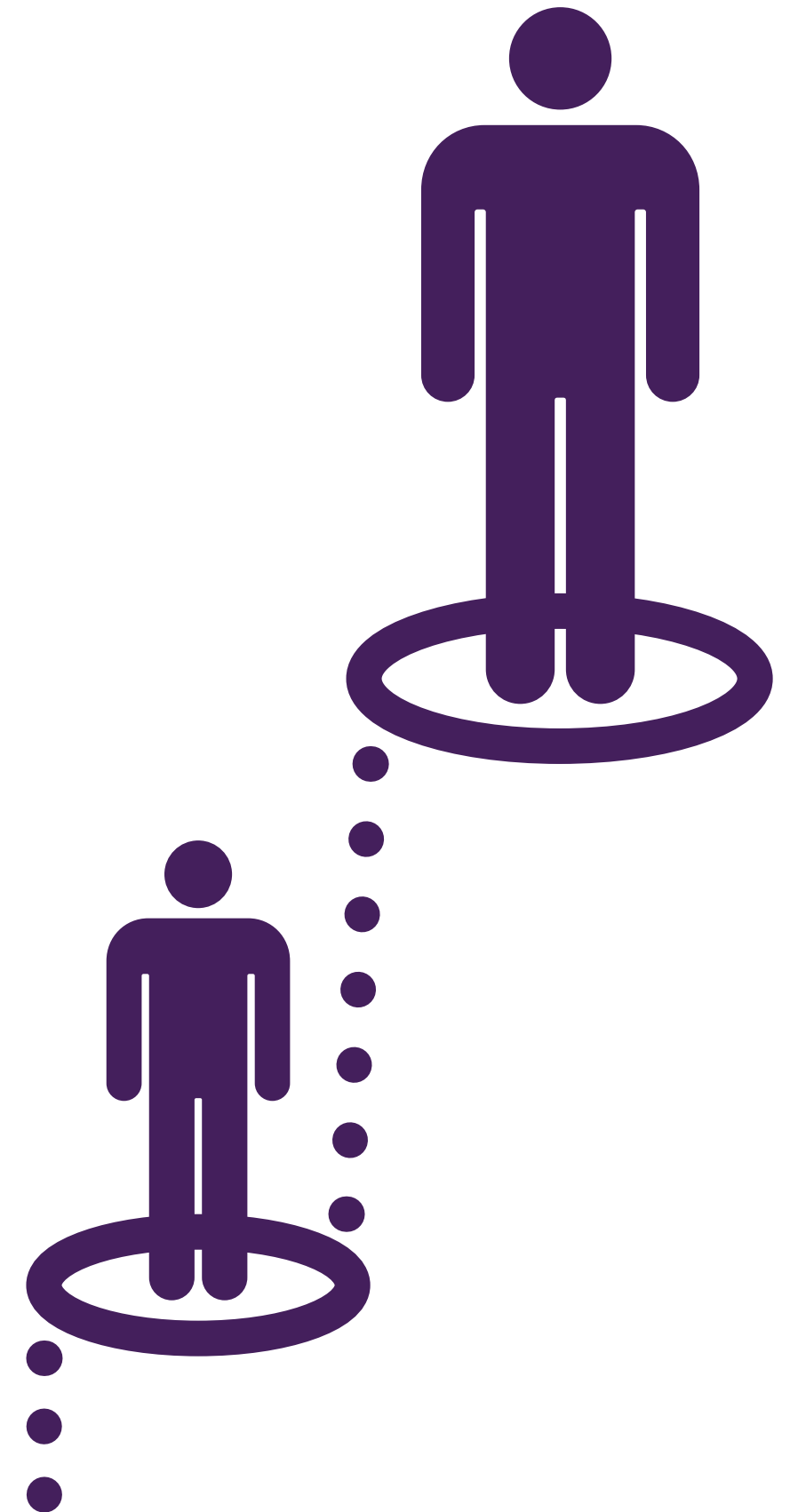
Cultural divergence is an excellent catalyst for challenging regular thinking patterns. This can be a violent process, but provided you don't totally immerse yourself in a strange culture, you won't be going out of your mind. Speaking one-to-one with a person from a different professional culture is a good, safe approach. You'll both move to the edges of your boxes, and good things will start happening.



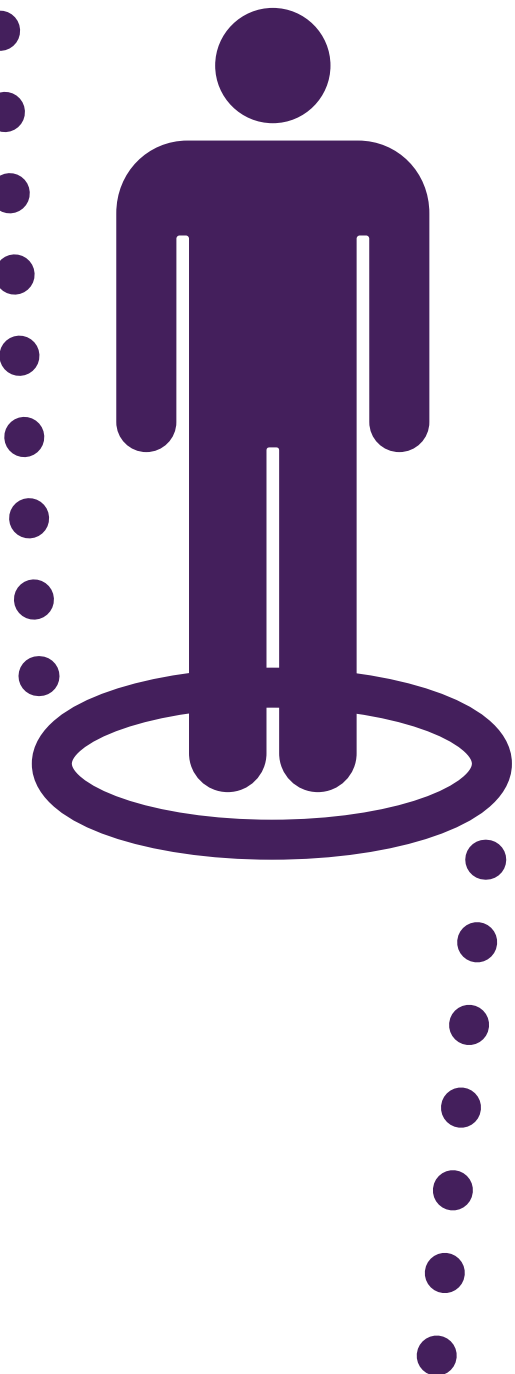
CULTURAL DIFFERENCES CAN MAKE FOR DIFFICULT COMMUNICATION, BUT ON THE FLIP SIDE THEY DEFINITELY AND ABSOLUTELY ALLOW FOR AMPLIFIED RESULTS IN ANY CREATIVE PROCESS. AND ON A PERSONAL LEVEL, MEETING PEOPLE WITH DIFFERENT BACKGROUNDS TEACHES YOU A LOT ABOUT YOURSELF!

Hopefully, by talking to different people, you'll find something amazing: People who see problems that you also see. People who share your purpose. People who, just like you, want to change the world.

People you can enter into creative synergy with.



In fact, whenever innovations wash across the globe, there tends to be exactly this sort of synergistic and cross-functional team at the roots. People who share a vision, want to change the world, and share a solution to a problem. Just look at the founding stories of Apple, Facebook, Google, Microsoft...



Before completing this chapter's task, stop and think; where are the edges of your skills and knowledge? How have they changed over the past year? The past 5 years? Keep this in mind when finding someone "different" to talk to.



TASK 5

TALK TO SOMEONE WHO WORKS WITH SOMETHING VERY DIFFERENT FROM YOU.

EXPLORE HOW PRINCIPLES OVERLAP BETWEEN YOUR PROFESSIONS.

EXPLORE HOW YOU EACH VIEW THE PROBLEMS THE WORLD FACES.

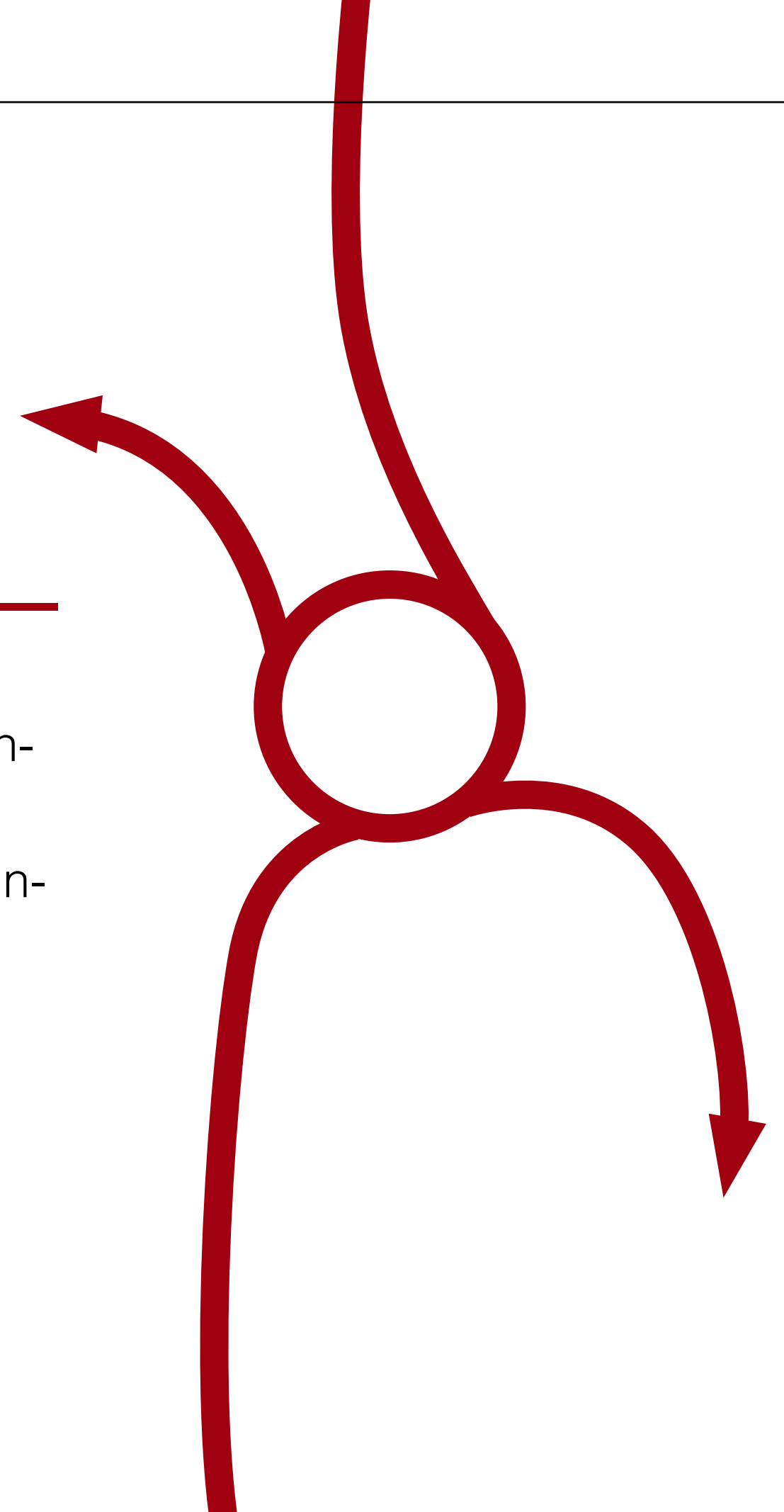
CREATIVITY FOR CHANGE

“No problem can be solved from the same level of consciousness that created it.” – Albert Einstein



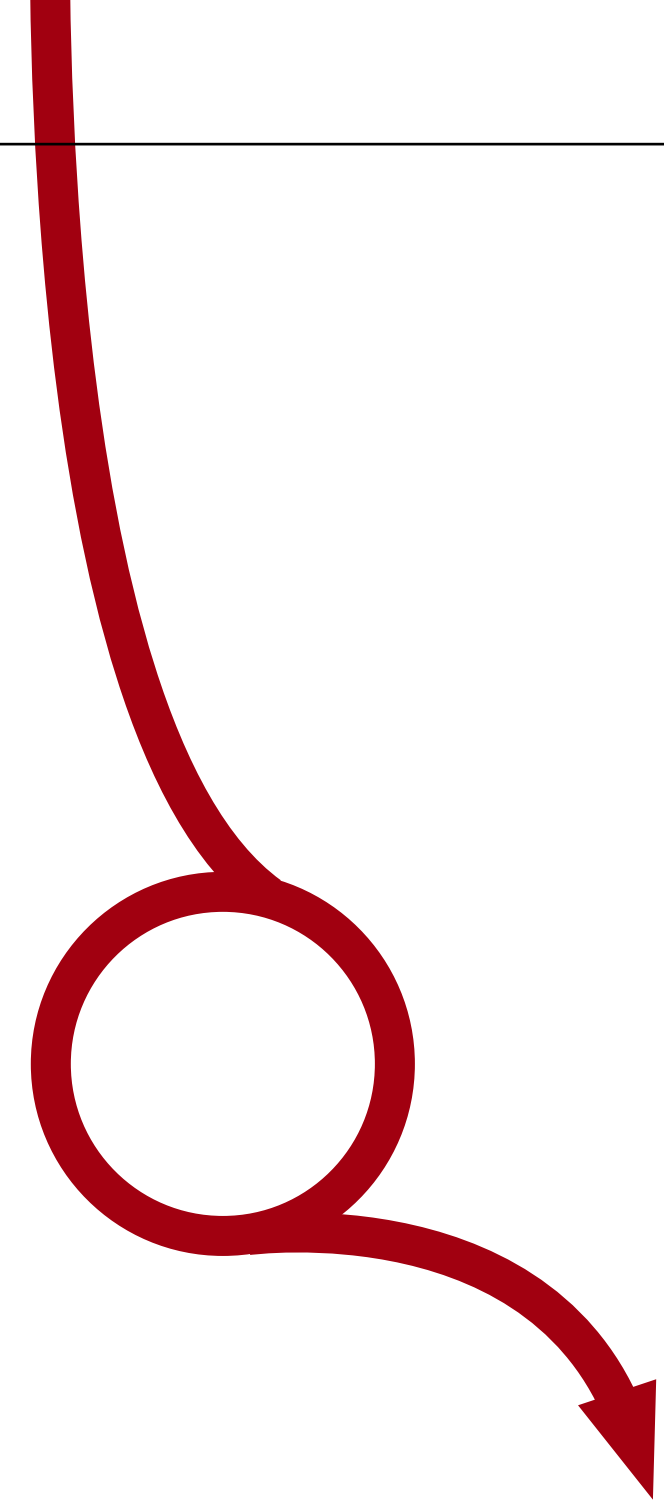
Provided that you have challenged yourself with the tasks in the previous chapters, you are currently developing your foundation for creating real change. “No problem can be solved from the same level of consciousness that created it,” said Einstein.

Well, congrats, you’re on a journey of expanding consciousness!



Equipped with a base of purpose, goals, and a strong cross-cultural and cross-functional network, you are ready to do amazing things.

Creating a new future might seem a daunting task. Worry not! A new future doesn't require anything more than the methods loosely outlined in previous chapters, combined with the will to actually make change.



A new future doesn't require you to think up complex systems innovations. On the contrary, look at a few simple ideas that made quite successful businesses as well as major global impact.

Post-it notes:

Invented by accident by a 3M engineer. Paper with reusable sticky stuff on it.

LifeStraw:

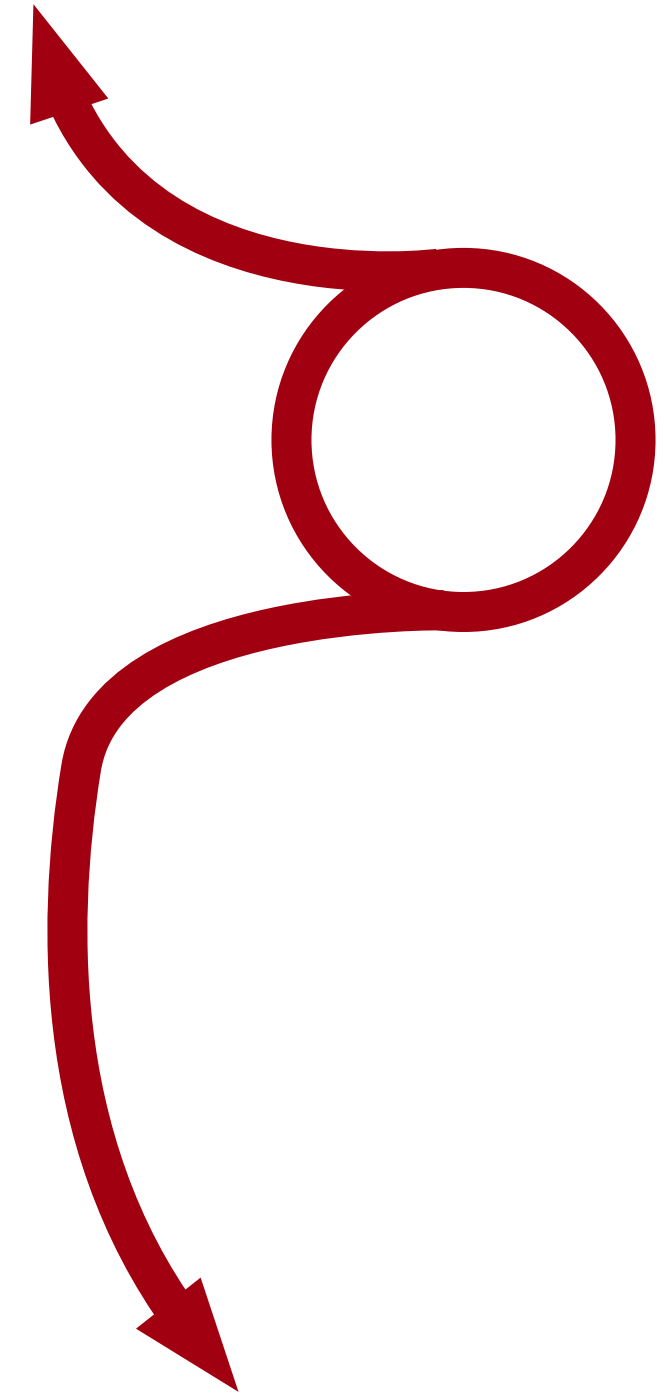
"I wish I could give everyone in the world access to clean water with a magic drinking straw!"

AirBNB:

"What if everyone could rent out spare rooms to anyone?"

Having an idea is not the problem. In fact, you probably often come up with “good” ideas. However, their value remains unproven unless you test out your creative substance in the real world! An idea you don’t share is just a passing thought.

Making change might seem impossible. An insurmountable test. In the next chapter, we’ll explore one way (among many) to take the weight off of your shoulders.



TASK 6

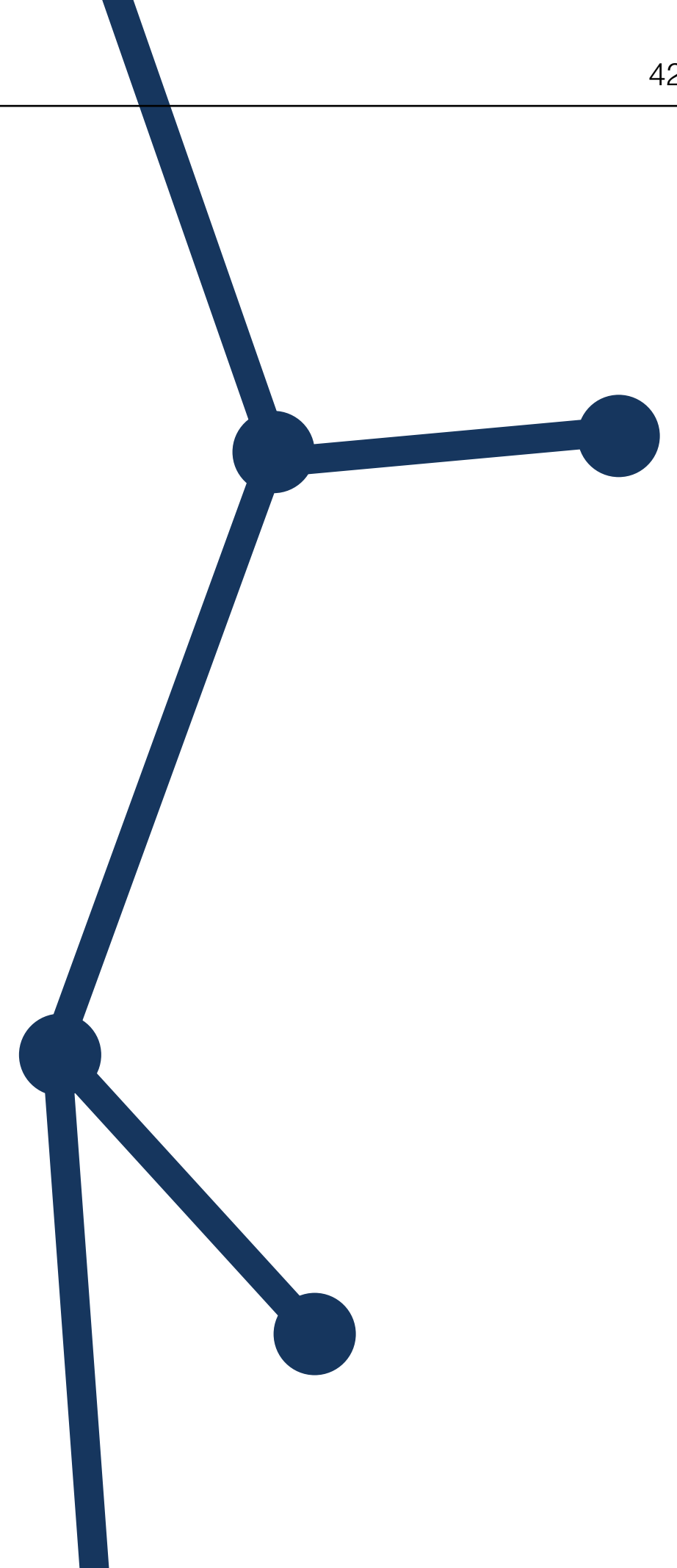
LIST WAYS THAT YOU WOULD LIKE TO SEE THE WORLD CHANGE. EVALUATE YOUR LIFE CHOICES. WHY ARE YOU NOT LEADING THE WAY FOR CHANGE?

EXPANDING THE COLLECTIVE CREATIVE CANVAS

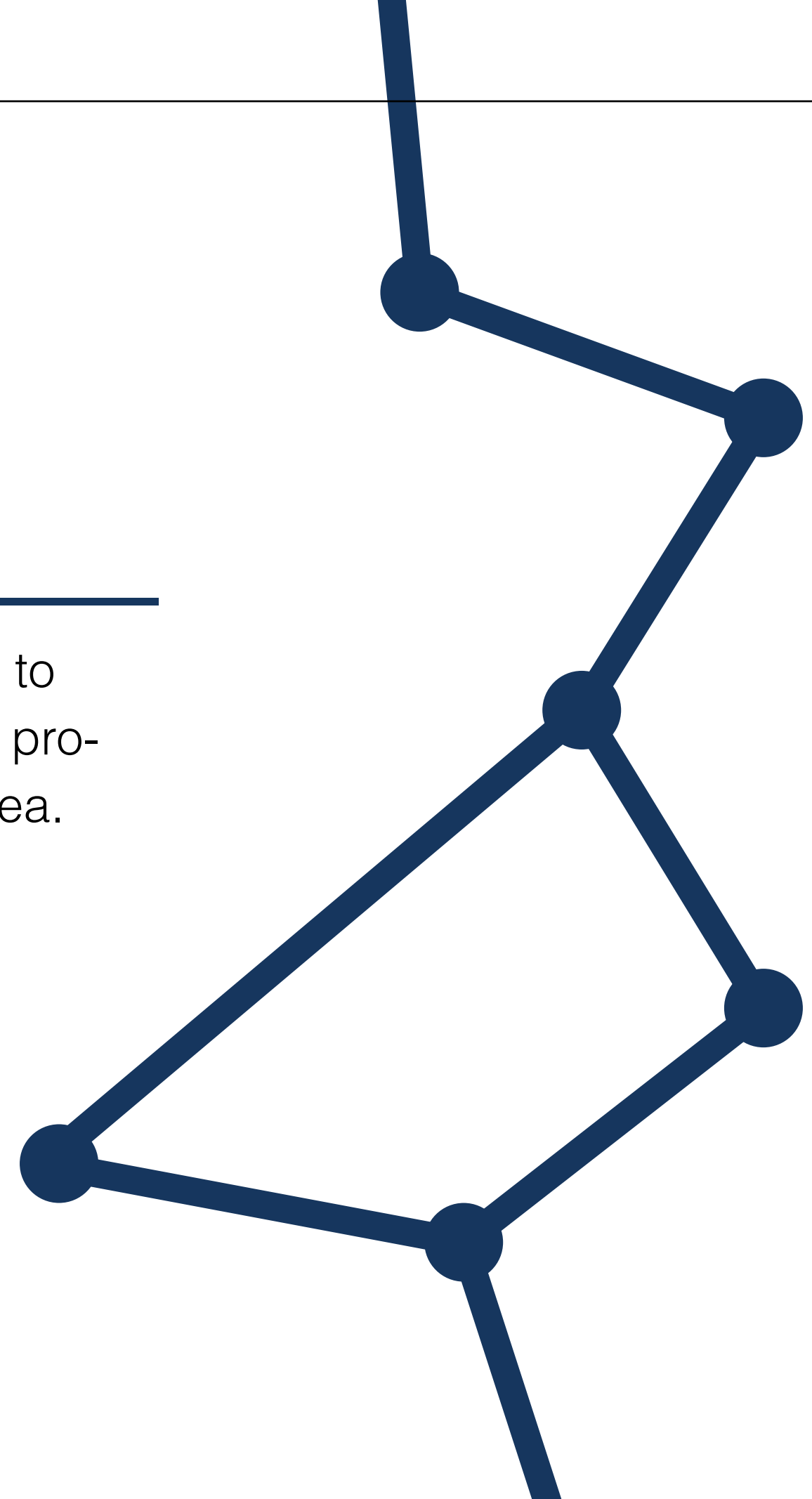
Collective creativity remains untapped in the pursuit of greatness no longer.



Consider all human invention as a great web. An enormous, interconnected, living network. A canvas upon which you are free to expand.



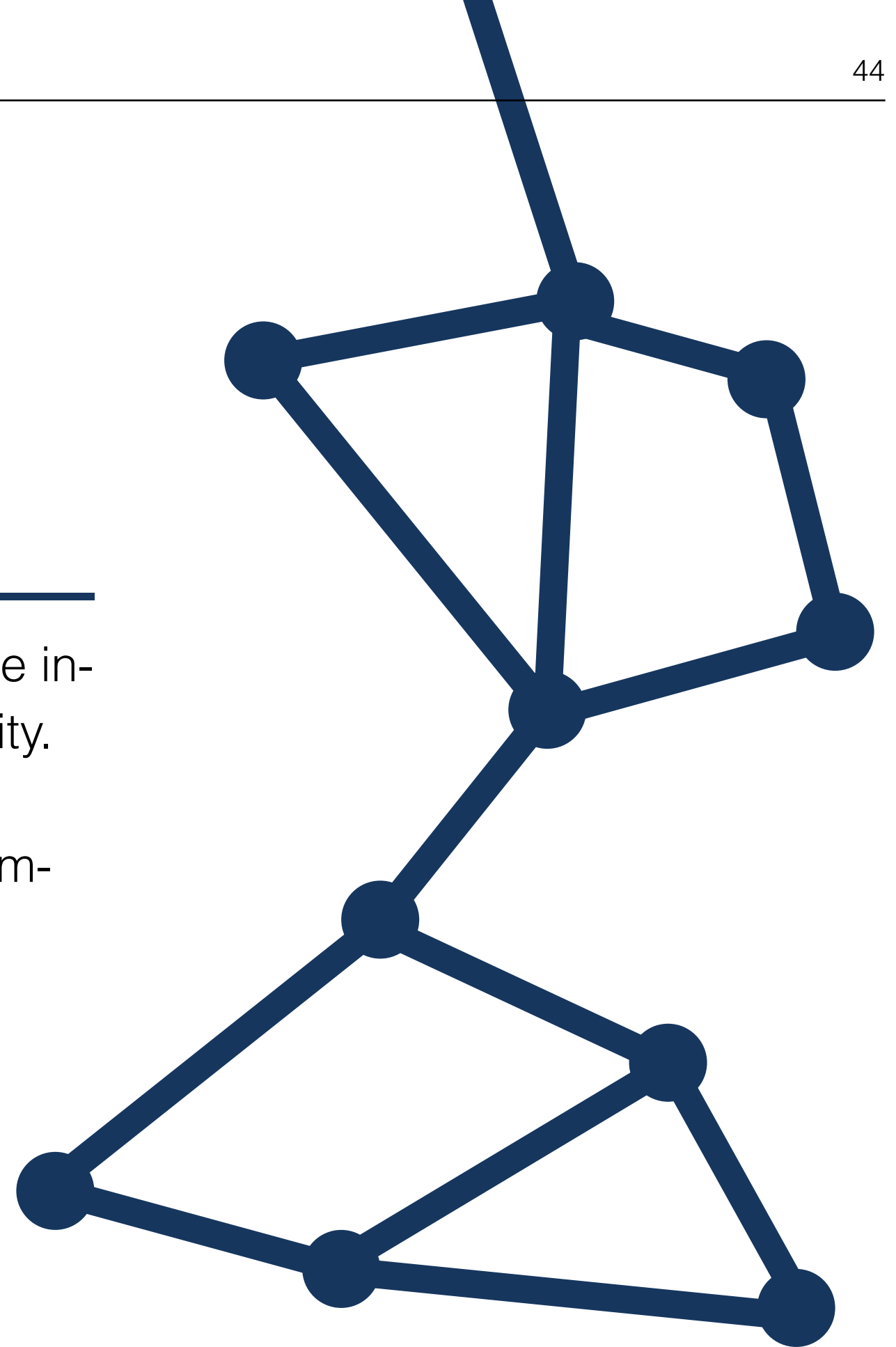
Indeed, there has never been a time where it was easier to contribute to the collective creative canvas. The internet provides unprecedented distribution speed for any good idea.



At thefuture.academy we believe it is your duty as a creative individual to expand the collective creative canvas of humanity.

This is your legacy. This is our legacy. The pinnacle, the combined prowess of all human creation.

And you can be a part of it. You are a part of it.



TASK 7

DREAM BIGGER. CHALLENGE YOURSELF TO SEE YOUR PART IN THE COLLECTIVE CREATIVE CANVAS. MAP OUT YOUR PROFESSION OR INDUSTRY, AND HOW IT INTERRELATES WITH OTHER PROFESSIONS AND INDUSTRIES.

AN EXAMPLE IS AVAILABLE AT [THEFUTURE.ACADEMY](#). WHAT YOU PRODUCE IS UNIMPORTANT. THE PROCESS IS THE GOAL; THE JOURNEY IS THE DESTINATION.

APPENDIX: SOME NEXT STEPS

This final section is a little different. This was a miniature guide to expanding creativity. If you enjoyed the tasks after each chapter, here is a list of extra steps that you might choose to take.



REVISIT EACH TASK IN THE BOOK OVER TIME. THEIR MEANING WILL CHANGE FOR YOU, AND YOU WILL KEEP GROWING. PERSONAL AND CREATIVE GROWTH IS NOT SOMETHING YOU CAN AUTOPILOT, SO KEEP AT IT – THE RETURN ON INVESTMENT IS MASSIVE!

PURSUE MOVEMENT AS A GENERAL EXPRESSION OF CREATIVITY. DO YOU LIFT, SWIM, RUN, CLIMB, ROW, PLAY FOOTBALL? NO MATTER YOUR CHOICE OF MOVEMENT PRACTICE, THERE IS ROOM FOR CREATIVE EXPRESSION. AESTHETICALLY OR FUNCTIONALLY, YOUR MOVEMENT MAY SERVE A DUAL PURPOSE AS A CREATIVE PRACTICE.

IN THE PURSUIT OF EXCELLENCE AND CROSS-FUNCTIONAL SYNERGIES, GO AND LISTEN TO **TIM FERRIS' PODCAST.**
JUST START FROM ONE END AND WORK YOUR WAY THROUGH.

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