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Building a Second Brain

Chuck Frey | @chuckfrey

Creative Problem Solving with Evernote

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BLOGS

- Mind Mapping Software Blog
- ChuckFrey.com
- InnovationTools.com (2002-12)

BOOKS

- **Eureka!** How to Use Evernote to Generate, Incubate, Evaluate & Activate Your Best Ideas
- **Creativity Hacks:** Shortcuts to Help You Crush Your Challenges & Live a Kick-Ass Life
- **Up Your Impact:** 52 Powerful Ideas to Get Noticed, Get Promoted & Become Indispensable at Work
- **Power Tips** & Strategies for Mind Mapping Software 4th Edition

SKILLS

- 20+ years writing on creativity
- Focused on tools - work smarter!

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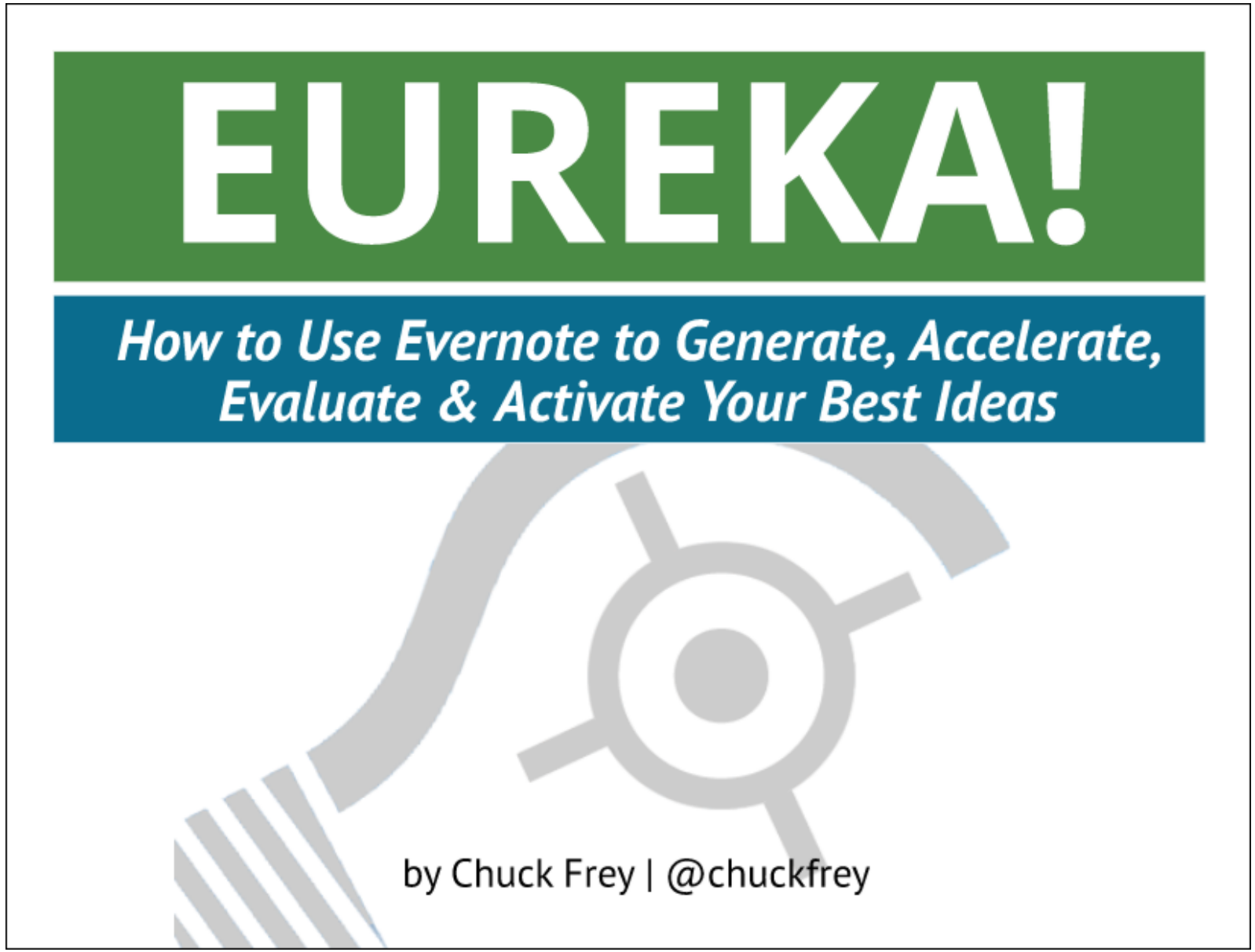

chuckfrey.com/eureka

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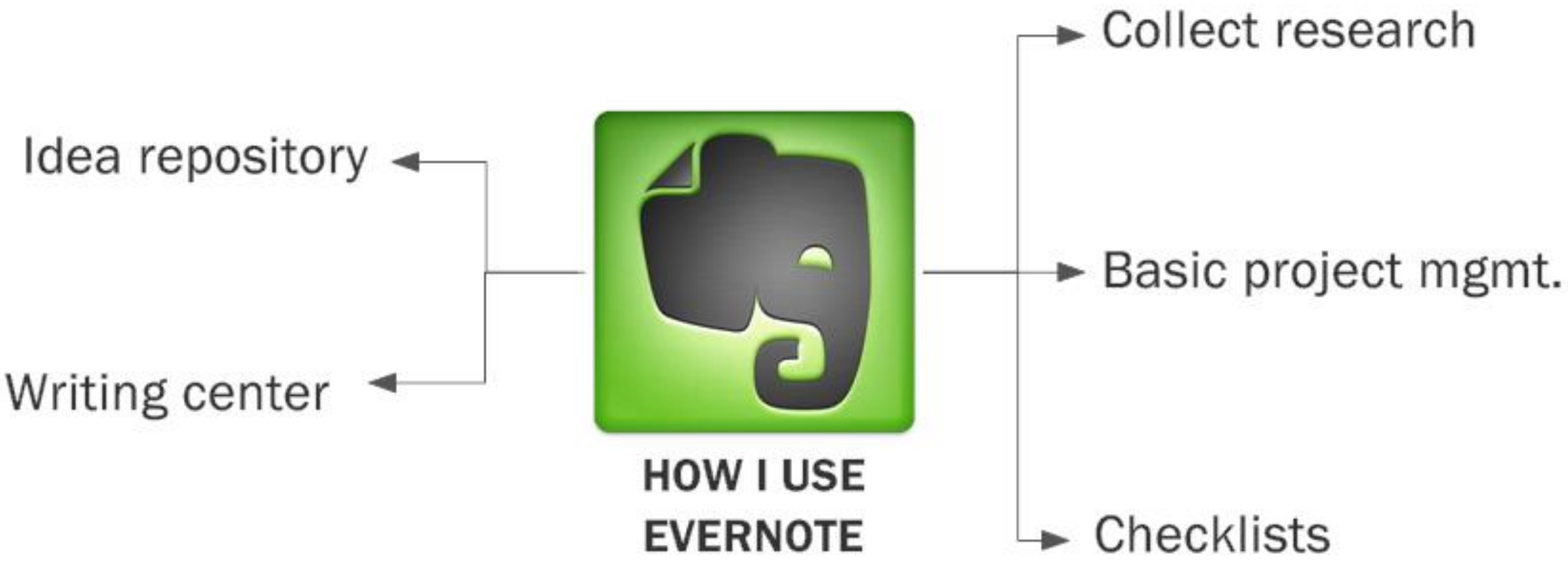

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WHY BE CREATIVE?

HOW YOUR CREATIVE BRAIN WORKS

EVERNOTE TOOLS & TECHNIQUES FOR EACH PHASE OF THE CREATIVE PROCESS

TOOLS - AN EXTENDER OF HUMAN CAPABILITY

CREATIVITY AS A PROCESS

MY SEARCH FOR THE PERFECT IDEA CAPTURE TOOL

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IS **NOT** AN INNATE CAPABILITY

IS A SKILL

CAN BE LEARNED

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“Tools extend man’s abilities. Thinking tools extend man’s ability to brainstorm innovative solutions.”

- Chuck Frey

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Our habitual tendency:
RUTTED THINKING

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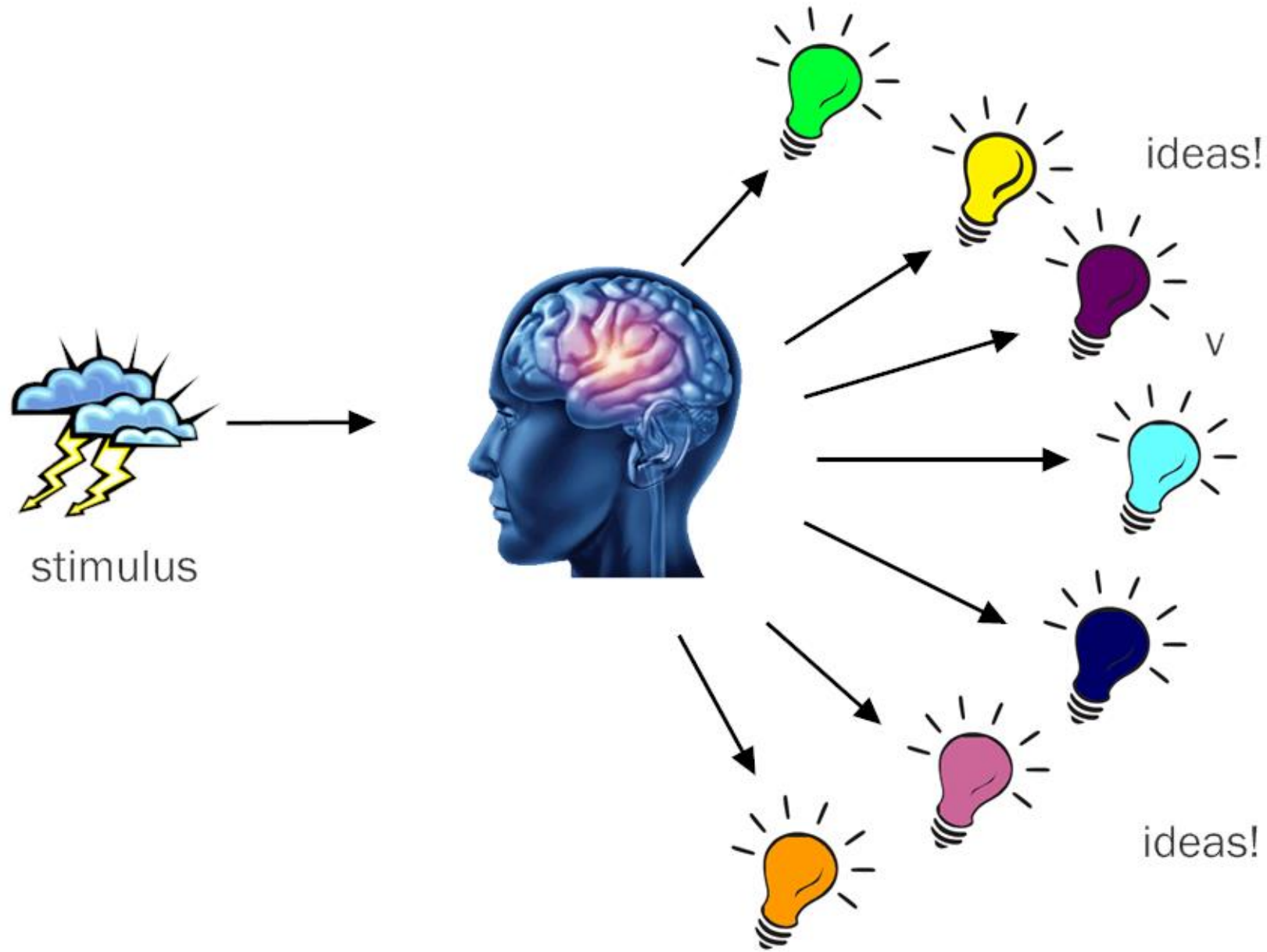
CREATIVITY: How your brain works



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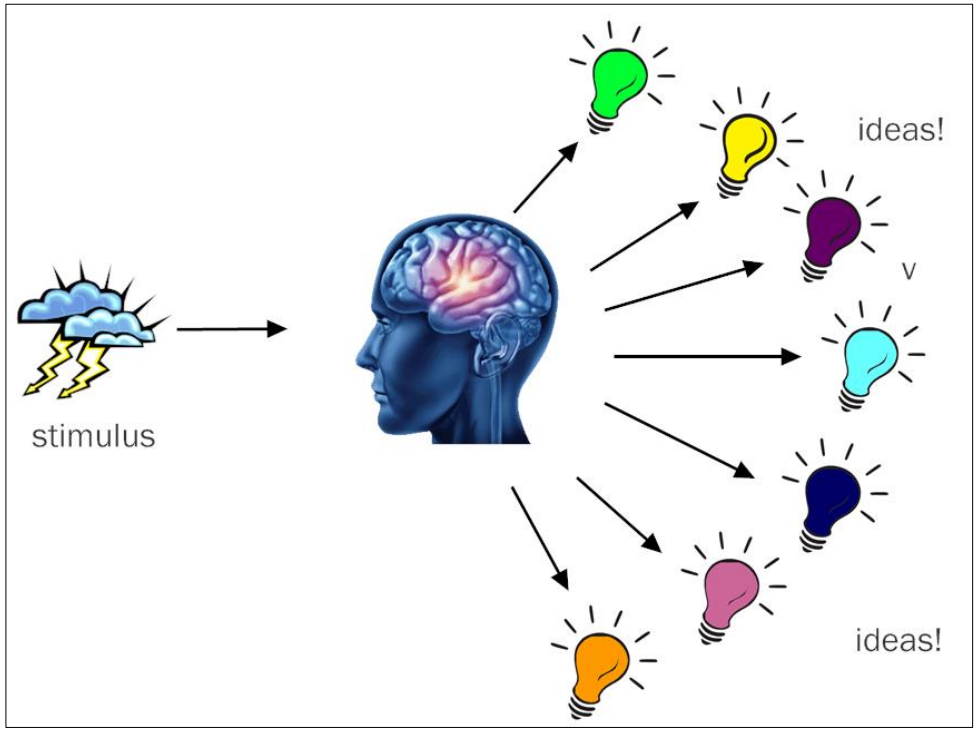
Types of creative stimuli

Words/reading

Images

Sights



Sounds/music

Experiences

People

<u>ANY</u> environmental stimuli

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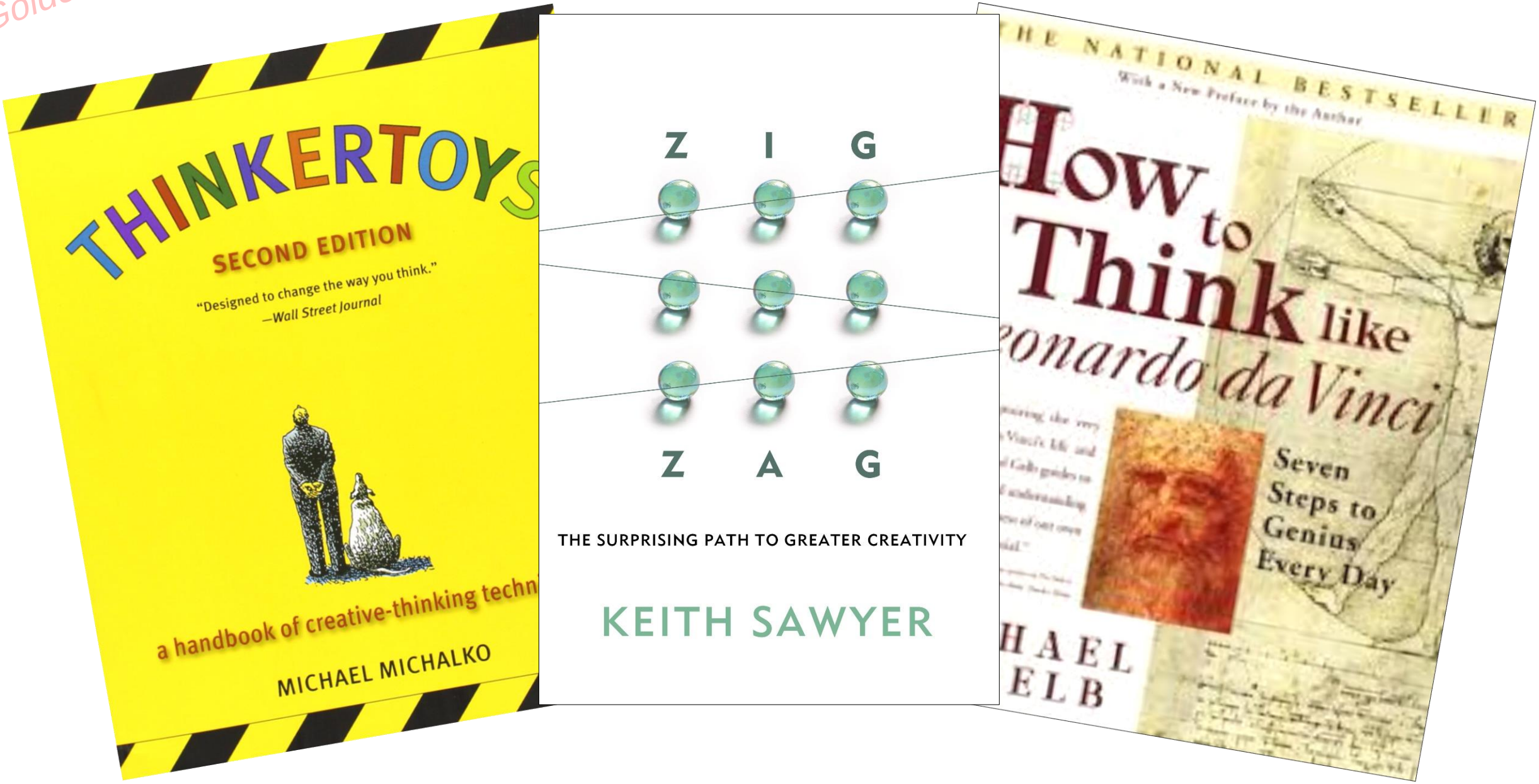

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BRAINSTORMING TOOLS

Thought-provoking exercises

Divergent stimuli

Help “de-rut” your brain!

Yes, there are “apps for that!”

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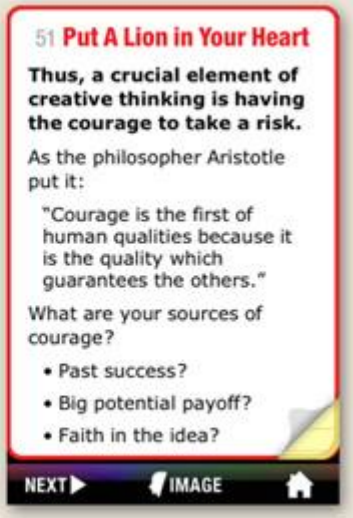

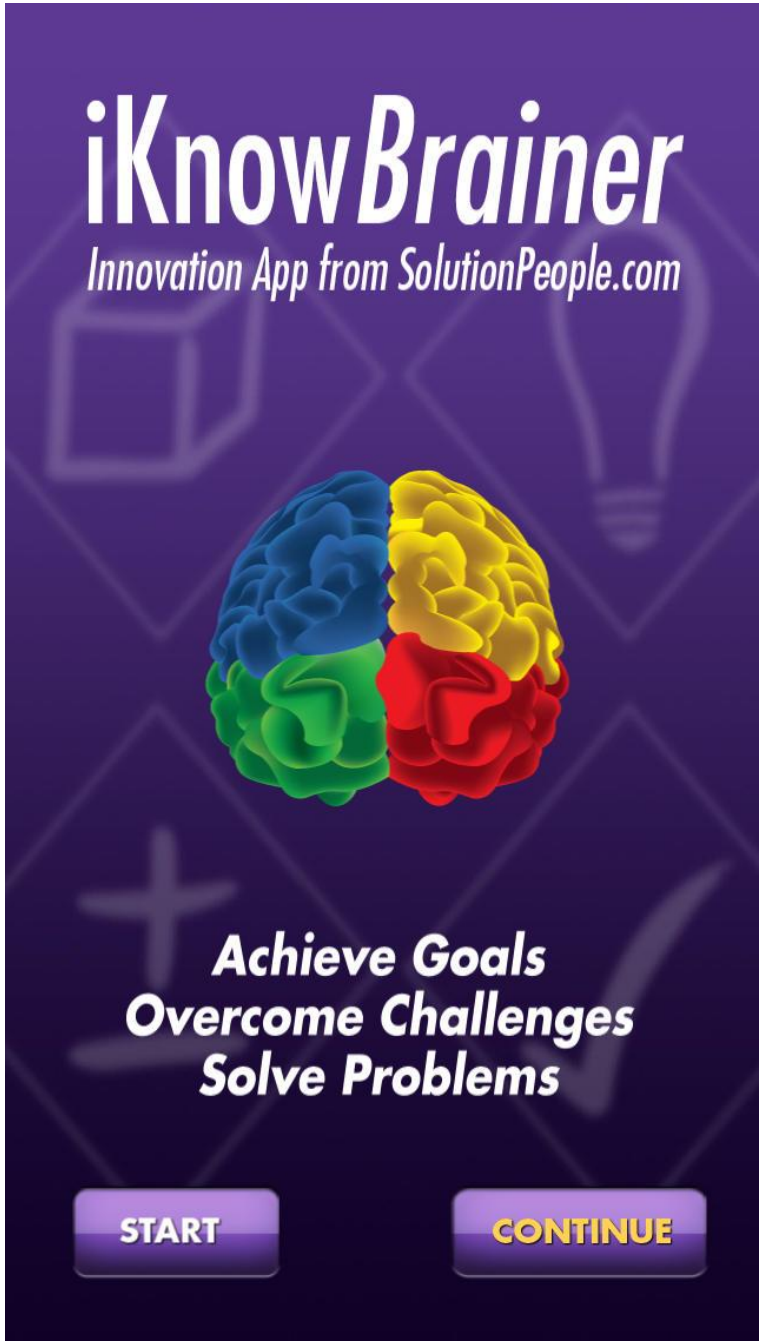

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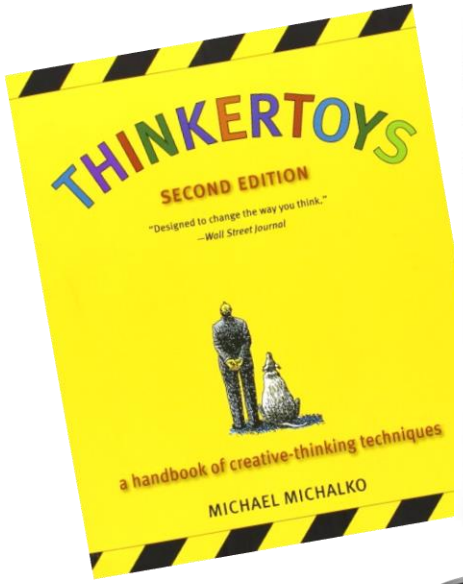

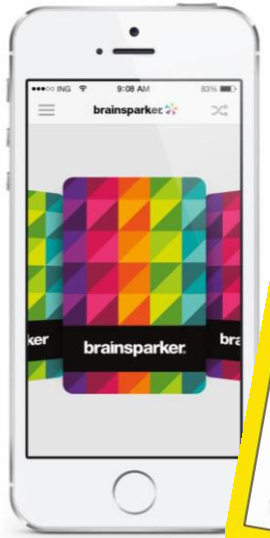

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My search for the ideal idea capture system

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THE IDEAL IDEA CAPTURE TOOL

It's agnostic - any type of content

It's available on all platforms

Instant syncing - capture, access your ideas any time, anywhere

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Everybody knows...

Evernote is an AWESOME idea repository

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What if...

Evernote was used to manage an ENTIRE creative workflow – including storing a collection of creative problem solving techniques?

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The creative **PROCESS**

INVESTIGATE

Problem definition
Root causes
Contributing factors
Solve the right problem!

GENERATE

Ideation
Brainstorming
Adapt existing ideas
Lateral thinking

INCUBATE

Walk away
"Sleep on it"
Hunches
A-ha! moments

EVALUATE

Identify best solutions
Measure vs. criteria
Do we have resources?
Is it practical?

ACTIVATE

Take action on
the best ideas!

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PROBLEM

THE PHOENIX CHECKLIST

Phoenix checklist

The Phoenix Checklist is a set of questions developed by the CIA to encourage agents to look at a challenge from multiple perspectives. Select questions from this list that are relevant to your needs and brainstorm answers to them. Note your thoughts in the space provided. Also, feel free to add any intriguing and thought-provoking questions you come across to this list. Remember: better creative solutions come from asking better questions!

The Problem

Why is it necessary to solve the problem?

What benefits will you gain by solving the problem?

What is the unknown?

What is it you don't yet understand?

What is the inform

What isn't the prob

Is the information

Or is it insufficient?

Or redundant?

Or contradictory?

The Plan

Can you solve the whole problem? Part of the problem?

What would you like the resolution to be?

Can you picture it?

How much of the unknown can you determine?

Can you derive something useful from the information you have?

Have you used all the information?

Have you taken into account all essential notions in the problem?

Can you separate the steps in the problem-solving process?

Can you determine the correctness of each step?

What creative-thinking techniques can you use to generate ideas?

How many different techniques?

Can you see the result?

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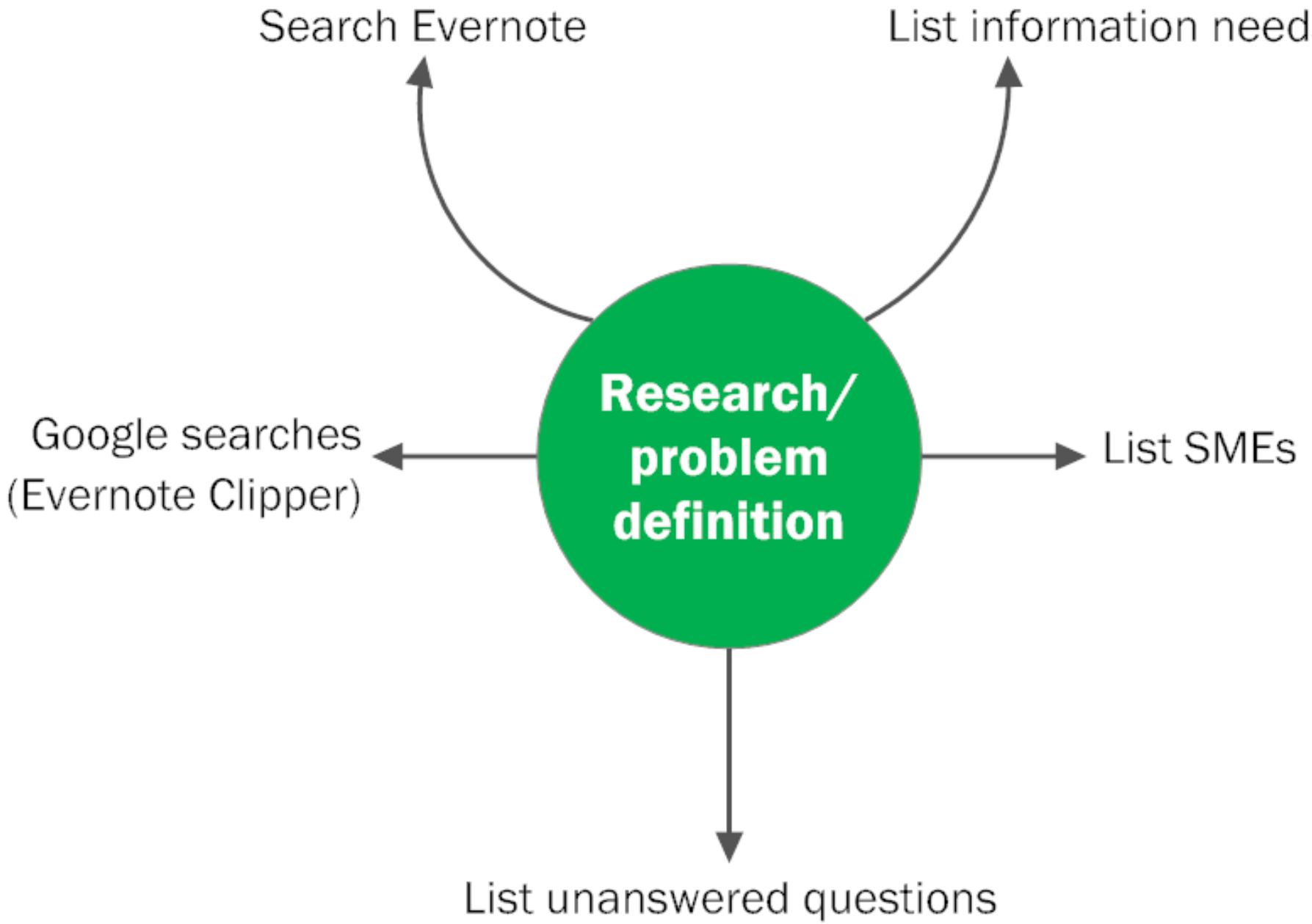
PROBLEM



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IDEATION

Morphological analysis

Industry: Construction

Product: Wheel loader

Customer need/problem	Content type	Purpose	Channel
Poor reliability	How-to article	Inform	Company blog
Safety tips	List-based article	Persuade	Customer magazine
Reduce cost/ton	Tips roundup	Early funnel	News media
Preventive maintenance	E-book	Mid funnel	Twitter
Poor visibility	Video	Conversion	LinkedIn
Rebuild vs. replace	Quiz	Influence the influencers	SlideShare
Hot weather operations	Case history	Loyalty	Facebook
Cold weather operations	Customer profile	Add-on sales	Pinterest
Winter shutdown prep	Trends article		Direct mail
Spring startup prep	Slide show		Email
Selecting (machine type)	Media relations		Product resource page
Finance vs. buy	News release		
Loading trucks efficiently	Infographic		
Moving material efficiently	Visual tip series		
	Post series		

INSTRUCTIONS

1. List ALL possible attributes in a column under each characteristic
2. Select one item from each column to create random combinations
3. Write down and brainstorm further about those that look most promising

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Morphological Analysis

1. Take a spreadsheet and list the attributes or characteristics of the product or item that you want to brainstorm about, one per column at the top of the spreadsheet.

2. Next, list in the appropriate column the different variations that are possible for that characteristic, one per cell. Repeat this process for the remaining characteristics. Try to list as many variations of each attribute as possible.

3. To use this chart for brainstorming, randomly select one item from each column, and be sure to record any combinations that appear to be promising product ideas. Repeat this random selection process multiple times for best results.

Attribute 1	Attribute 2	Attribute 3	Attribute 4	Attribute 5	Attribute 6

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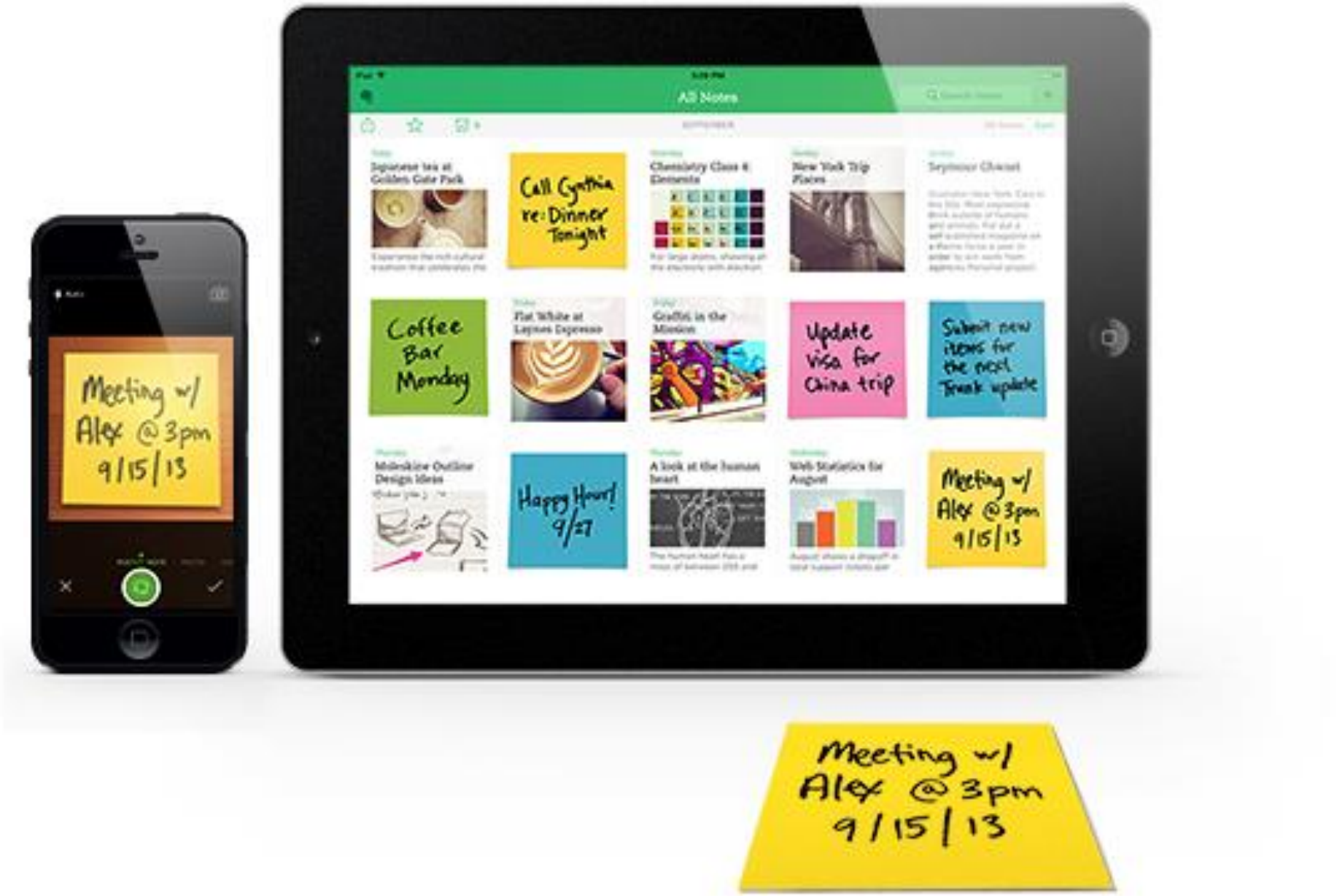

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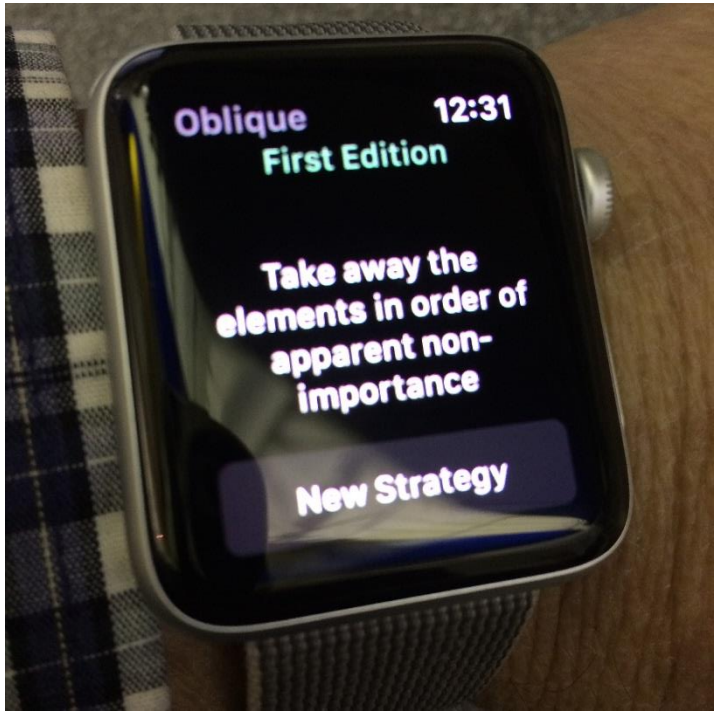

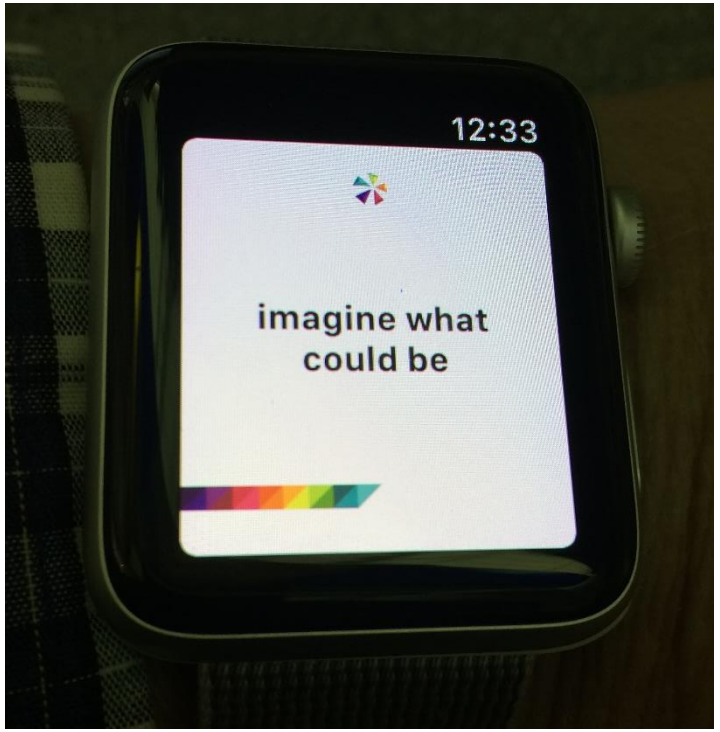

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INCUBATION

12. Evernote Creati
Project Planning

September 27,
Initial project r
and tasks As y
would expect,
Evernote is no
an idea captur
management t
It's also very
for converting

11. Evernote Creativity - Annotate with Skitch

September 27, 2016
Annotate your ideas with Skitch Skitch is an app owned by Evernote that integrates tightly with it. Its purpose is to annotate images, by adding

2 Notes Selected

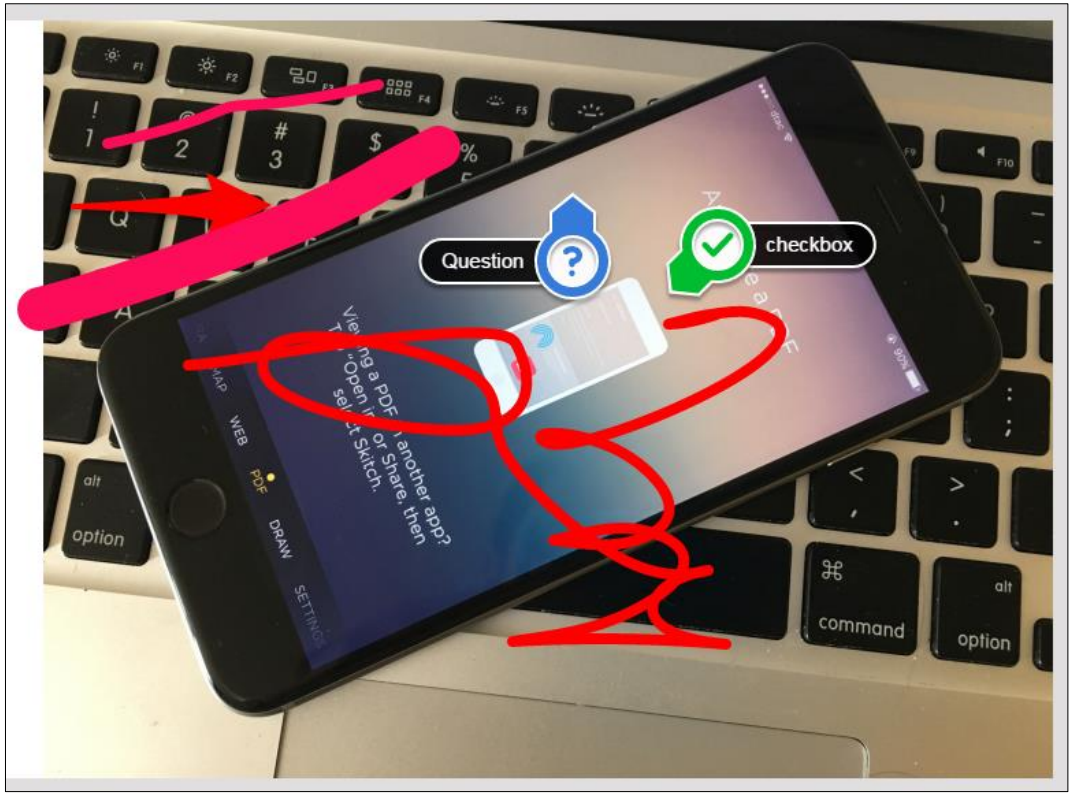
Share | Merge | Save Attachments

Move to notebook

Start Presentation

Create Table of Contents Note

Click to add tag...



Use this note as a template to capture and process your new ideas

Title:

Description:

Reminder Added

Set a date to be notified?

Notify Me

Done

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INCUBATION

What was my most amazing insight today?

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EVALUATION

Implementation cost

Ease of implementation

Resource requirements

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ACTIVATION

All Notes — To Watch/Read/Do

Created	Title	Updated
1/24/14, 5:07 PM	Jan. Bi-Weekly Checklist 2	Today, 11:07 AM
1/24/14, 5:07 PM	Bi-Weekly Checklist – Template	Today, 10:55 AM

To Watch/Read/Do — click to add tags

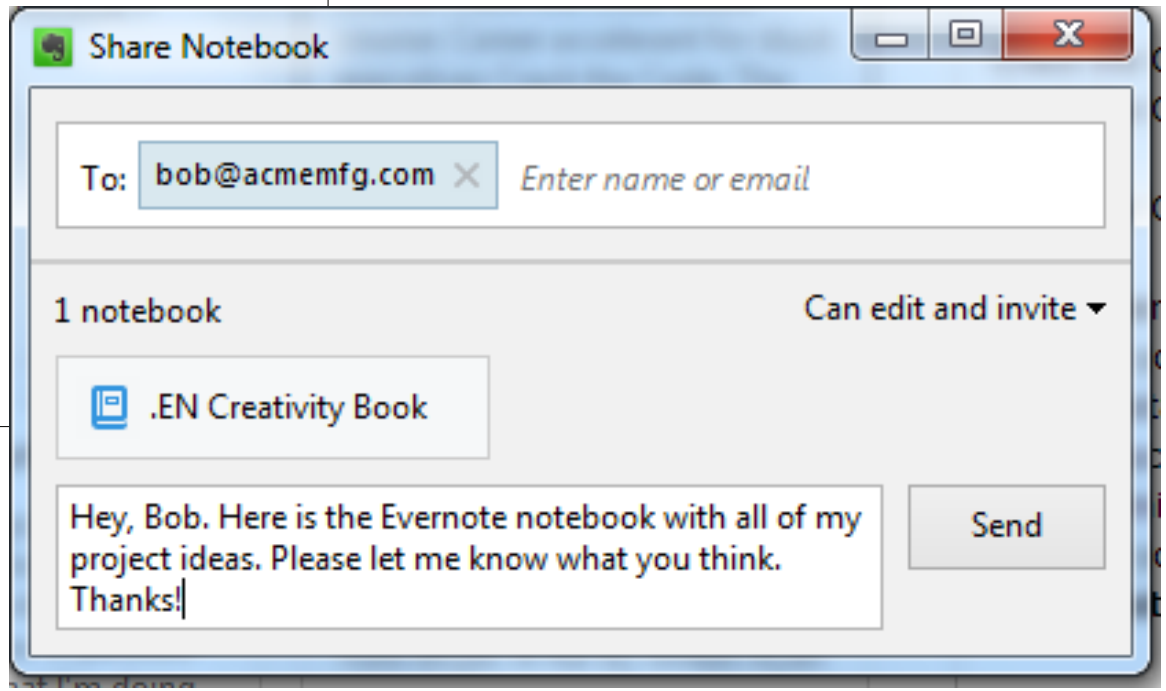
Arial 13

Jan. Bi-Weekly Checklist 2

JennyBlake.me
- [x] Post 1
- [x] Stacy assign WCT 1
- [x] Weekend Coffee Talk 1
- [ ] Post 2 - Evernote system + time tracker (week of 1/26)
- [ ] Stacy assign WCT 2 (Weds 1/28)
- [ ] Weekend Coffee Talk 2
- [ ] Newsletter (Feb 4)
- [ ]

Life After College
- [x] Revise & schedule next newsletter
- [ ] Blog post - intro them - draft
- [ ] Call with Marisol and Davis
- [ ] Review newsletter

Operations
- [x] Revise one page of website - create BB!!
- [ ] Update time tracker
- [ ] Update finance apps (Mint, Outright)



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Your job – create your own templates!

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10 Reasons Why EVERNOTE should be your primary creative tool

chuckfrey.com/eureka

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Why be creative? Why now?

+

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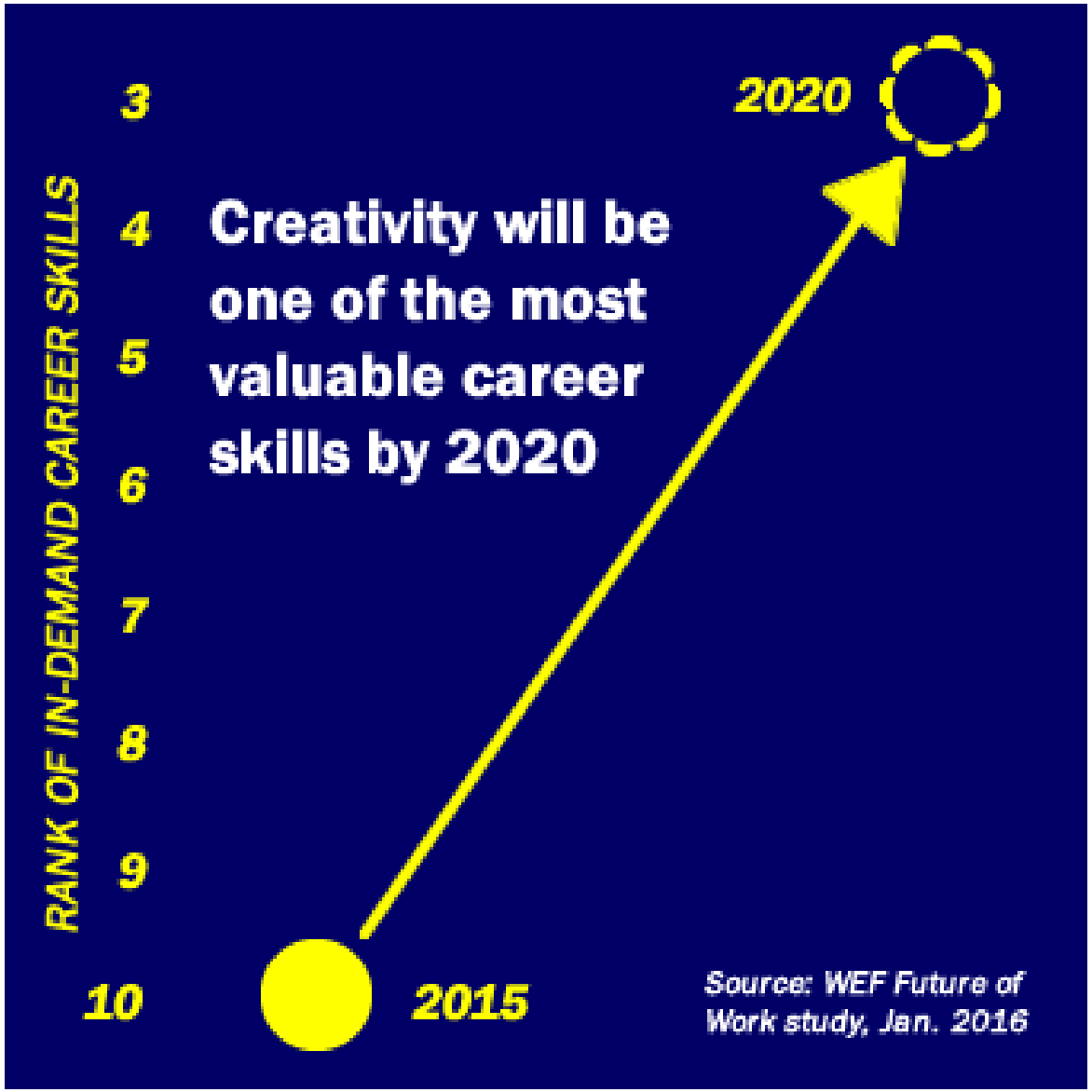

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GET AHEAD OF THE PACK

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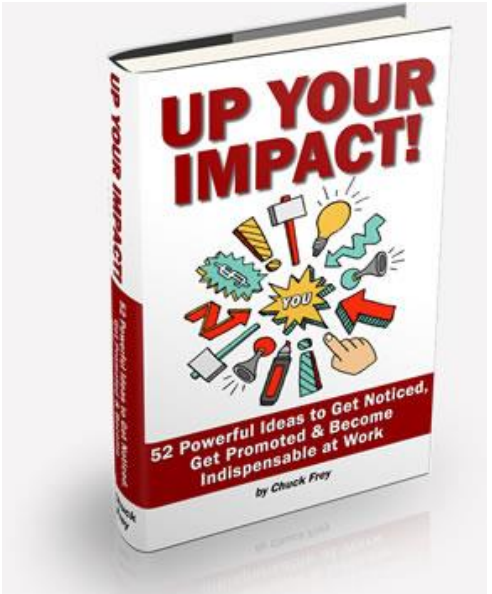
How I wrote a book entirely in Evernote

BOOK CONTENT

- **Ideas** — Raw idea, recently dictated. No editing done yet
- **In Process** — Ideas more fully formed; still needs to be edited
- **Edited** — Idea is complete and has been edited; ready for inclusion in manuscript
- **Actions Written** — Action items have been dictated and appended to strategy; not yet edited
- **Actions Complete** — Action items have been edited and are ready to be added to manuscript

OTHER RESOURCES

- **Other** — Book introduction, resources list and other non-strategy items
- **Promo** — Book promotion ideas file
- **More Topics** — Additional strategies, possible blog topics



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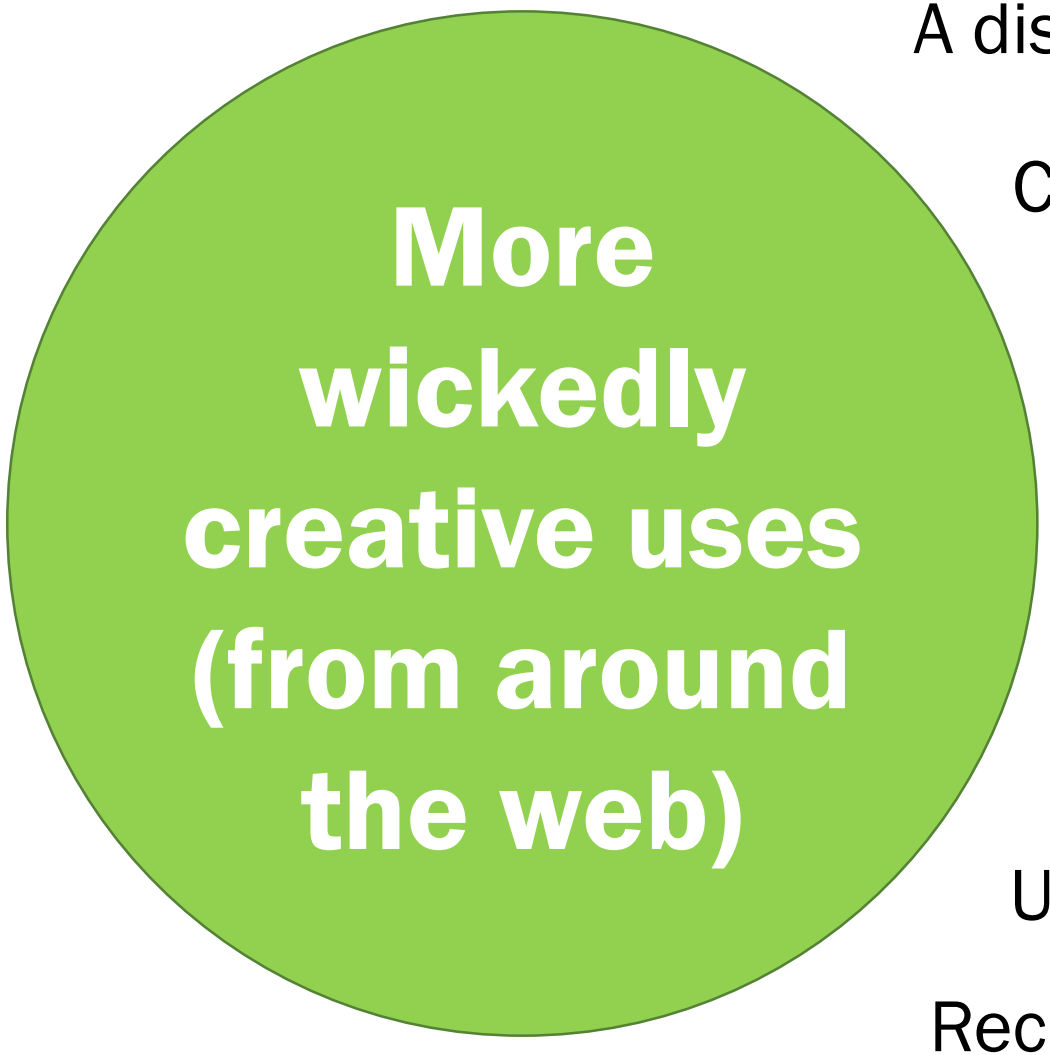

A creative to-read list

A distraction to-do list

Commonplace notebook

Capture bits of inspiration

Capture research on the go

Shoot book page – notes in Evernote

Subscribe to enewsletters w/ EN address

Use IFTTT or Zapier for automation

Record ideas fast using audio

Create a monthly tickler file

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Creative challenge

- Pick a challenge or problem you now face.
- Type it in a single sentence into a new Evernote note.
- Add several sentences that capture the essence of it.
- Use the techniques we've talked about to brainstorm ideas to solve it. Capture them in Evernote.

HAPPY IDEA HUNTING!

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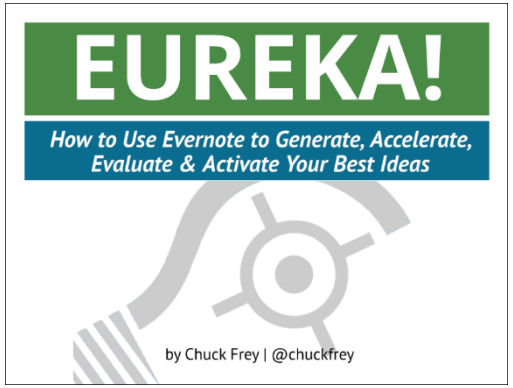
Thank you!

Chuck Frey

chuckfrey.com

mindmappingsoftwareblog.com

@chuckfrey



chuckfrey.com/eureka