



JOOL Deep Dive *into Creativity*

SESSION 3

Humans are big on exploring. We revel in new discoveries, particularly if they prove immediately helpful. Imagine what it was like before everyone just learned growing up what a wheel was? Think of the revelatory aha! that must have taken place in the minds of early humans as they individually stumbled onto the concept and practical use of the wheel. Eventually, knowledge of the wheel was shared far and wide – it must have caught on like a virus – still, it’s exciting to try and conjure the emotional response of someone realizing for the first time what the full impact of the wheel would be on their lives. “OMG! Everything’s going to be different from here on out.”

Inventions like the wheel are mighty few and far between across history but don’t try telling that to Elon Musk. Part of what makes living in our time so exciting is that there’s so much more for us to work with: new knowledge, materials, tools, processes, references, perspectives, opinions, exposure to people from diverse backgrounds – all coming together daily with the prospect of making something new, something truly great. I hope you’re excited. It’s hard not to be. So, how can you bring that excitement into your work. Your life. And the lives of those around you?

Let’s talk about firing up Discovery – that all important first phase in the creative process. Here’s an important early step: make sure you tightly define the problem you’re trying to solve. Without this, it’ll be difficult to know if, or when, you’ve succeeded. Boil your challenge down to a simple statement. Here’s one: “I race my bike long distances in extreme heat but I don’t want to stop to drink water. For the upcoming race, I want to find a way to carry and drink significant amounts of water without stopping or even using my hands.” That’s pretty clear. A lot of creativity gurus recommend using the familiar five Ws to zero in on your problem definition. Let’s see if it fits. **Who:** Michael Eidson – an emergency medical tech and competitive bicyclist; **What:** ample, hands-free hydration; **Where:** at the upcoming Hotter Than Hell 100 bike race; **When:** race day; **Why:** it’ll improve my race time.

You’ve probably guessed by now that this is a true story. So, how’d Michael solve this creative challenge in a way that no one had thought of before? As a medical tech, he looked around him and decided to fill an IV bag with water, put it into a tube sock, sling it over his shoulder, attach a tube to the bag, and hook the other end of the tube to the front of his racing jersey with a clothespin where he could reach it with his mouth. Done. Michael’s now booming company, Camelbak, was born of a desire to compete, creative use of unrelated knowledge and materials, inspiration from nature -- the camel -- along with a ton of continuous refinement, persistence, and marketing smarts.

If you think about it, Michael Eidson’s initially funky, but super elegant invention made good use of S.C.A.M.P.E.R. He **substituted** an IV packed in a tube sock for a backpack; **combined** the IV bag, tube, and clothespin; **put** the IV bag and sock to a different use; **eliminated** the standard plastic water bottle; **adjusted** the clothespin so it would position the drinking tube right next to his mouth -- we could go on but you get the point. Check out the Resources list for this Deep Dive. It lists two excellent books and a card deck from Michael Michalko that detail the many uses of S.C.A.M.P.E.R. along with hundreds of related techniques for keeping your creative juices flowing.

That’s it for today. Be sure to complete the challenge and be on the watch out for our email invite to Session 4. So long for now.