

ComarathonMan



ZAK MOORE

Dedication

To Caitlin

Thank you for saving my life.

With love - Dad

Thanks to the people who helped me along the recovery road

Clare, Sarah, Ryan

The NHS care teams

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How to read this book

At quarter past eight on Thursday June 18th, 2015 I executed a yoga pose and began to die.

Physical recovery from meningitis coma to marathon took almost a year. That was what people saw. The intellectual, emotional and social aspects were not so apparent.

The year was like a back to front holiday from life. I start by checking out. Then send a postcard from each of the quarterly rehab iterations that reflect the step changes. I finish with a sense-making check-in. If you only read two pages make them this and the last one.

If you care for someone who has brain trauma be it from injury, age or other issues I hope that you will find my insights humorous and helpful.

If you enjoy my story please donate a fair cover price to [Meningitis Research](#).

Check out

Me, me, me and meningitis

Let's start small - Me. I am a peppery, far side of fifty, 1.7 metres in my socks, lithe as a whippet that has snaffled too many sausages, ginger-tinged Scot who lives in the South of England. < Talk about having bad luck to begin with... >

I have a wife, three children, small dog and a large mortgage. I used to be a geek then as my chops slowed I did my badges and became a coach: helping premier organisations get the best from their IT teams. I am not a scientist, philosopher, artist, musician, mystic or master of language.

The day I almost died had been rather normal. The only extra-ordinary event was that my wife Clare, a nurse at a local medical centre, had gone to Iceland with a group of friends to do a moonwalk in aid of Breast Cancer Research. I enjoyed the peace to focus on a book that that was taking time to gestate. Later I did the afternoon school run, fed the teens and went to my usual Thursday evening yoga class. Half way through the lesson I felt a dull ache in my sacrum. Awakening Kundalini < the primal energy of the dharmic religions > must feel like early-onset flu I languidly thought, as I stretched into another downward dog.

On the way home I bought a bottle of chilled white to drink while watching late night politics on the kitchen TV. < I find it better to drink white wine while watching politics as it is easier than red to clean off the screen following my spluttered expletives... > I had a headache that just got worse. The light in the kitchen was flick-knife painful. Normally in a man-flu situation or the first sign of a winter chill I would reach for a heavy bottomed tumbler and pour two fingers of Bunnahabhain, Popeye Doyle style. This time it was very different. At half past nine I went straight to bed. Lights out.

My 16-year-old daughter, Caitlin, found me comatose at 12:00 the next day.

Someone had called on the landline. Her grace under pressure and prompt actions stopped me flat lining. She hauled me into the recovery position and thumbed three nines. When the first responders arrived Caitlin gave them the low down

"He drinks a bit, smokes a bit...and is allergic to crab". < What an epitaph. > It must have been a slow day because eight paramedics turned up. The team set to work. They patched me up, put me in an ambulance, blazed the blues, blasted the twos and break-necked along the boulevard to hospital.

Two hours later the cleaners arrived to an empty house. They found the bedroom floor littered with foil wrappers and a bed that would give Tracey Emin's a run for its money. Knowing my wife was away they assumed the obvious. What a hoot they had... For the next month they did the cleaning free of charge. Bless.

At the hospital I was trolleyed straight into ICU. An emergency detective team started on my case. < it was two days short of a Mid-summer Murder. > They set a thief to catch the thief that was burgling my brain. They got their forensics, identified the culprit by antibody fingerprints and moved to arrest the brain bandit. Next morning I was transferred to the specialist neurology ward in Kings College Hospital, London.

Meningitis is a rare disease to get as an adult, but is on the increase. In the United Kingdom it is estimated that 3,400 people get pneumococcal meningitis each year. Approximately 10% of cases are fatal. Lasting effects can include: brain damage, loss of limbs, hearing or sight. Vaccination is available, but not always given to children who need it most.

There are two types of meningitis: viral and bacterial. I had the bacterial version. The bacteria live in the back of the nose and are usually benign. It is similar to

chickenpox and measles. In adults it manifests as an ear infection or sinusitis. Two days previously I had used a spray on my sore left ear. My left eardrum was prone to infections, has been perforated a few times and ruptured once. There was no need to bother a doctor for something that appeared run of the mill. I think that the infection of my weakened eardrum and doing headstands in yoga allowed the meningitis bacteria to cross my blood brain barrier: the sac that protects the brain and spinal cord from infection.

Meningitis makes the membrane surrounding the brain to swell increasing pressure inside the skull, and in my case caused intra-cranial bleeds. As the liver fights the disease its reserves of red blood cells run out and secondary symptoms such as septicaemia (blood poisoning) occur. I got a little of that too. My luck was now in recursive mode: repeatedly calling liver attack functions that, without intervention, would result in a quick death.

Clare was whale-watching off the Icelandic coast when she got a phone call out of the blue from a neighbour. The organisers flew Clare home as fast as they could. On arrival she went into nurse mode: ensured the children had prophylactic antibiotics, visited me in hospital, and after shift finished arranged a party with her girlfriends who enjoyed a very chilled Sauvignon Blanc. < Once a nurse, always a nurse... >

First Do Nothing

The Hippocratic Oath - First Do No Harm was essential to stabilise me at the start of my hospitalisation. Later, it can be changed for brain injuries: First Do Nothing, according to Dr Norman Doidge in his book "How the brain heals" That suited me. I was not aware of anything.

For the first two weeks I was in an induced coma. From what I understand I had an MRI scan each week. The scans showed a thrombosis beside my right ear and several small bleeds in the left frontal lobe as well as some between the two hemispheres. I have been told that my head was bulging out over my left eye due to the internal pressure. < I must have looked like a comic book detective peering through a magnifying glass. >

The second scan showed that the swelling in my brain was slowly decreasing. The doctors decided that there was no need to put a bolt through my skull to reduce pressure to prevent further bleeds. < Franklystienly, so long as the head bolt aesthetically matched the ones on the sides of my brass neck I would have been happy. >

I had batteries of tests to monitor my condition. Initially my liver function was all over the place. By the second week it was back to normal. < I had taken time and effort to train it well over the years. > I had some septicaemia, blood poisoning. That was a small concern. What was not clear to any of the observers, medical and familial, was just what was happening in my head. The encephalitis, brain eating, part of the disease was the scary one for my wife. Being a nurse she knows words like that and what their sub-textual meaning implies. Clare was rightly minded that if I bled again it would be better for me to die-at-ease than survive the disease to live a wrecked and wretched existence. < Tough call, but the right one. >

I have no recollection of conversations that were going on around me, about me. Had I been compos mentis I may have thought they were talking about dinner - it sounds so similar to DNR. Was there a sign lovingly put on my bed? I do not know. I did not care. There was nothing. No light, no dark, no noise, no quiet, no feel, no touch, no smell, no taste, no god, no ego, no otherworld and...oddly, not even zero. Nothing!

Was my grey matter being discarded like last night's curry? Or was there a deeper expunging of my memories? Would I awake to life in wheelchair with little control over brain and bodily functions? Were the things that made me, that had been built over many generations and one lifetime, being flushed away? Would I be able to be a husband, father and friend like the familiar curmudgeonly comfort blanket I had become? Or would I be a burden to all around me?

How would my family cope if I were an invalid? Would my wife have to stop working and become a full-time carer? How would she make enough money to pay the mortgage if I was a vegetable? Would it be better for her and the children if I checked out of the holiday resort we call life? Would my extended family be able to find closure at not having had a chance to say their goodbyes? Would my friends want my collection of CDs?

I like to think that my brain played 4' 33" by John Cage about 5000 times for the two weeks that I was comatose. The score for 4' 33" is a blank sheet. It lasts 4 minutes and 33 seconds. It has no notes! To find absolute silence as the player is difficult if not impossible. I was mindless: the stop before death, the terminus of mindfulness.

I was beyond life's visible spectrum. The machines that monitored me used

invisible elements of the spectrum: magnetic fields to picture my brain and electrical recording of my heart rate, which was shown on a screen above my head. Black is the closest colour I can use to suggest the sense of nothingness. I think of my memory like this when I was comatose.

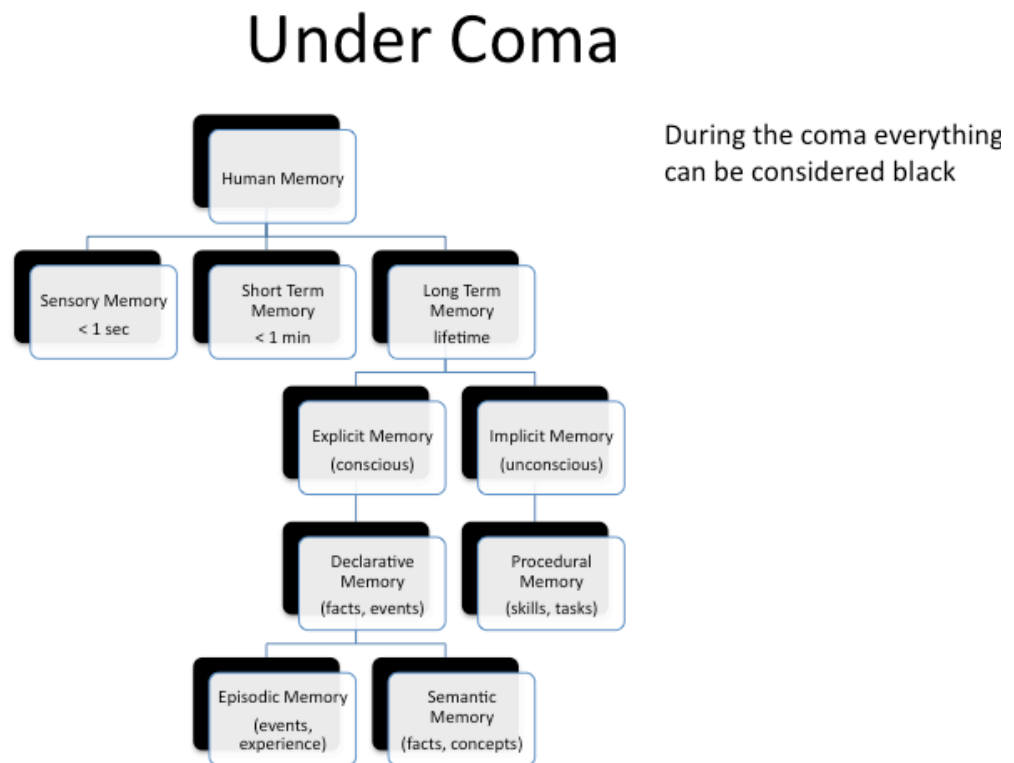


Figure 1.1 Atkinson-Shiffrin Memory Model

The Atkinson-Shiffrin model is very hierarchical. It is a useful image. I use it to show changes in my mental recovery in my non-scientific way. < Pictures are easier to share than words for those who find reading difficult, as I did in the early days. >

Forcing a broken brain to try and change ways of working is the cognitive equivalent of wiping your bottom with broken wrists. It gets very messy, regardless if you scrunch or fold. The scrunches and folds inside my brain were covered in blood

from head haemorrhoids. Letting my brain rest in a chemical enema was an essential part of starting the 'skiddy' recovery process. Slowly the distended grey matter did the hard job of slipping back into my cranial bowl with the attendant joys of a neural barium meal. < I left the paperwork to others. >

As I showed early signs of recovery Clare registered both of us to take part in an Encephalitis survey that was being run by John Moore's University, Liverpool.

Early Daze

As I came back from black the medical team would ease off the drugs that kept me sedated, bring me round and let me talk to visitors for very short periods. Here is a potted history of my time coming round and then being transferred from Intensive Care to an observation ward and finally a Nurse Ratched induced wretched time in rehab that was mercifully short lived.

Duchess

I recall waking up, as if in a dream, with my wife sitting in a chair beside me. She was smiling.

"Do you know who I am?"

"Yes" < What a stupid question. Imagine not knowing who you are? >

"What's my name?"

"Your name is Clare" < She's gone senile. I did not get too annoyed that she had forgotten her name. I was as mellow as a customer in a canal-side coffee shop on a slow Tuesday afternoon. I thought I might be in serious trouble. Since she could speak it could not be her tongue down my throat. Whose was it? I could not move my head to see who or what was tickling my tonsils. >

"That's correct she said" < Okay! I knew it was correct or I would not have said it. (Still not annoyed. It was just a dream after all) >

Her smile softened and shoulders dropped a little.

"Do you know where you are?"

My eyes looked around and did not recognise anything in the room, apart from Clare, that is. I also noted I was wearing paper mitts the size of boxing gloves. < Must have been some party! I was not as dead as a Kennedy but wondered: Did I drink 16

beers and start a fight? >

"No" I eventually replied, playing for time < whatever that was...it seemed the safest strategy. >

"Do you know what happened?" Clare asked with concern in her voice. < Not in trouble. Relax >

"Nope" I said vacantly, wondering where my motorbike might be and if it was a write off.

She smiled sweetly as a nurse appeared by my left side and adjusted a tap on a tube that fed a clear liquid into a black and blue, bruised and bandaged familiar looking forearm.

Hello Toulouse

Next, I woke up with my sister's serious face: knitted brows and questioning eyes (long time no see) staring at me from between my legs. It's a very odd sensation for most people, I assume.

I don't usually recall dreams: waking in a second one was a treat. How did I get to Toulouse? That is where my sister lives with her partner and children: my nephew and niece. What were their names? By the time my sister left I could recall her partner and children's names and asked after them, as if nothing was wrong. Nothing was wrong - in my mind, I thought.

I did not really register what Sis said...something about me having had a hard time. Everyone else may have had a bad time but all that bothered me was: 'why are the Strangers all Welsh? And why were they all called David Davies?' It seemed more important to answer that than listen to Sis. Where exactly was Wales? I

wondered.

5 Minutes

I came round and recognised a couple of faces at my bedside: Uncle Paul and cousin Kirsten. We usually meet at funerals and weddings. Who died? But Paul was not Paul. He was Dennis. Why would Dennis be here? I've never met the man. He is a distant relative.

We will only be here for 5 minutes then we have to go, said Paul-Dennis. My mind was doldrums slow, and sun-stroked deckhands that tended my neural cargo were languidly sliding horses over the side of HMS Cognition. Ethos, Pathos and Logos flailed then silently slipped away. Reality had me raddled at this Platonic tipping point. < Sedation now please! >

I could be wrong but I think prior to Paul and Kirsten arriving I realised I was wearing a nappy. I vaguely recall the words "Let's clean you up, before your visitors arrive." Then a quick hoist above the bed, the ripping sound of diaper fasteners, a paper-covered hand along my arse crack, a bit of a wet wipe and then a new nappy was fastened in place. This was an unexpected intrusion. I felt as frantic as a man in a bubble bath on stage in a Berlin nightclub on a Friday night, surrounded by nurses with the audience in the other beds evading eye contact so as not to be next up on-stage. < I used to get around >

The nappy changing must have happened frequently but this is the only occasion I remember from two weeks of sedation. Perhaps I got used to it.

Just what we talked about I have no clue. I may have mentioned Berlin, once. But I think I got away with it...

I was moved back to an observation ward in the first hospital once the head head doctor assessed I was as good as I was going to get in the specialist neuro-unit.

All of the Night (July 2015)

I arrived about 22:30 at the new/old place. I did not recall being there before. I was put in a light, airy room and kept under observation, with someone sitting beside me all of the night. < That was the closest I felt to death: a silent shadow sitting in a chair next to me in what felt like a waiting room. No scythe? That puzzled me as I nodded off >

To paraphrase Neil Young: Omemee! Helpless, helpless, helpless. No dream comfort memory to spare. All my changes start here. < Omemee is the town in North Ontario that he sings of in the song 'Helpless' >

All day

The days settled into a routine rather quickly. Up and shower before breakfast, three meals a day. Lots of sleep. Regular visits from the observation team, family and friends.

Nurses, Occupational Health Therapists and Doctors - of all grades are obsessed about knowing what the day of the week is. I thought I was the one with the deficits. I watched breakfast TV so I could find out what day of the week it was. < I was thankful that the medics were not keen sailors and wanted to know the Shipping Forecast, or twitchers who wanted to know the Radio 4 Tweet of the day. >

Doctors move in packs. It is a way of seniors transferring their Deep Smarts to juniors. This is a very good thing. It is missing from a lot of businesses. It could

explain why many fail, and others are screwing your pension investments through inefficiency that could be interpreted as negligence, but I digress...

At the start of their visit the most senior doctor would outline my situation:

"Peppery Scotsman: drank a bit, smoked a bit - but can't walk far enough to get to the outside smoking area and luckily for him our budget does not stretch to crab..."

He had obviously read my notes. The juniors listened and wrote his wisdom in their books. I assume they discuss things afterwards. A couple of days later a junior doctor would come back and ask questions. I think this is reinforcement of their learning: both cultural and cognitive. It is a very good thing.

I was going to be in for two weeks while I was assessed, injected, swabbed, injected again, popped pills and developed a rather serious yoghurt habit. I lost 6 kilos of my original 67 when I was in the neuro-ward. In two weeks I was back to pot-bellied pig status. < Oink! >

Get a grip

The septicaemia that was a side effect of the meningitis had left me with no feeling in the two bigger toes on my left foot. When I first tried to stand I fell over. Going to the bathroom, 4 steps away from my bed, was scary. Standing to shower was tiring.

One morning I did not have a towel, after showering. The towels had not yet been delivered and I had been up since early o'clock watching breakfast TV - to discover what day it was. After shaking off what water I could I waddled to the door of my room and asked a passing nurse for a towel. She did not break stride or laugh out loud. It had not occurred to me that I was stark naked. My only thought was "Get a towel."

Debra - took care of the physical side of things. Initially she took my Zimmer and put it in the shower-room to encourage me to walk. After a week she took me out of my room and helped me along the corridor of the ward. Gradually the walks got longer. I looked like a Thunderbird puppet under the control of an "easily distracted" puppeteer. Even Holding on to Debra's arm I would veer off line while walking. I used to search for corridors that had linoleum floors with joins that I could try to use as guides.

Sarah, the Occupational Therapist, came and gave me a test. I drew a clock and managed to fit all 12 digits into the first 7 hours. < Beat that Mr. Einstein: Relativity By Dummies >. Then we did some long division: 108 by 9. It is called long division because of the duration it took me that day. After that I named some pictures of animals she had in a book. So... it is true, I thought, I share my bed with a horse and an alligator. How prescient of the three layer brain theory... She came back regularly: one time she thought I had invented a new language as I had been practising my writing and had taken to listing yoga poses in my notebook. < Om >

My medication regime consisted of Warfarin (warfare) to thin the blood in case I had another cranial bleed, anti-convulsants to protect against epileptic fits as my brain started to move back to a more central location and antibiotics to fight the septicaemia. One day there was a bit of a fluster around me. Clare came for a visit and being a nurse she noticed that the bank nurse who was injecting me was using a different style of syringe to the one that was normally used. She looked at the notes and realised that I was being shot full of someone else's medication. DRUG ERROR. Had I been allergic to penicillin it would have been fatal. After that I was fitted with a pick-line in my left bicep to allow easier, error-free, administration of drugs.

One day I had a visit from the clinical psychologist. He had a domineering handshake: the sign of a cowardly, crimson-faced, conniving, runt whose consuming career concerns simply made him a parting of the C's. < I wondered if he had a Moses complex. >. He recommended that I go to the mental rehab unit in the neighbouring town in order to engineer his own kudos at my expense.

Suffering convictions on a two way stretch inside

I arrived at the rehab unit at lunchtime and was given a seat at the dining table. As soon as the nurse started talking I went on Dread alert! I sank in my seat and tried to disappear. After lunch I was offered a tour of the unit. I covertly watched fingertips as numbers were typed into the keypads that opened the doors, calculating the escape route of least resistance.

The contrast between where I had come from and where I was now was big. Very big. Within two hours the dread I felt had turned to fear. I had to get out. It came from my intuition - to escape the institution. I felt I had been tricked into coming here by the neuro-psych. I went to the doctors' booth and asked how I could leave. I was told I would have to speak to the staff and present a case. I went back to my room, not bothering to unpack.

Hanging around

The head shrink came in and told me he had seen my scans. He then went on to say that if I left I would have a shortened life expectancy and severe mental problems. < I was sizing up the doorframes and calculating the strength of my dressing gown chord versus ripped sheets >. The junior nodded in a boss-pleasing

manner. Why can't I have a large, mute Red Indian with a pillow? He would know what to do. It really was like that.

They called my wife. She came over and persuaded me to give it one night. Taking on an invalid is no easy matter. She was concerned that I might be a liability at home and revert to sofa surfing. Being on drugs overrides normal typical body responses. These medically trained staff were not picking up from my physiology what was going on in my head. I skipped dinner and went to bed. I waited for sleep to take me. I was alone. I was scared.

On waking the next day I knew what I had to do. I went on hunger strike and refused the medications! This was out of character - but I could live off the camel hump of yoghurt that bulged from my belly and hung over my belt. Things now started to happen, quickly.

A meeting with the care team was called in the morning where I presented my reasons for leaving in a rambling, ranting fashion. I should have called a solicitor to present my case. < Spud in Trainspotting would have interviewed better than me. > The thing about meningitis or most brain injuries is that logic and emotions vie for space and time in the processing centres of the brain. We cannot articulate fluently. < I did not realise that fact then. >

The rest of the team shared their thoughts. It was obvious, to them, I was not going to take instruction or follow their schedules. Mr Neuro-psych came and had an ass-covering chat after his lucrative private practise for the day had finished. < I was curious to know what trick Mr. Moses would do with his staff. > Another meeting was called for the afternoon to assess letting me go.

That meeting was held in one of the communal rooms. In attendance were the

Occupational Therapist, Mr Moses and my family. My wife being a nurse wanted me to stay inside the NHS system to secure follow up care. My argument for leaving was more structured than before. It must have been the interview type setting.

They asked me questions such as:

"What do you do if the toaster goes on fire?" < "Call Dave. He is a fireman that lives two doors down." Not the expected answer. >

"What do you do if you cut yourself with a knife?" < "Bleed." Another unexpected answer >

Once they explained they were looking for coping strategies I could give them the answers they wanted and they dutifully ticked the boxes on their assessment sheet. Eventually they agreed to let me go. I don't know who was more relieved. < Clare put me on "find-my-phone", not that I was going anywhere fast >

In the car home I plugged my phone into the music player and selected some Dad Rock: "Li'l Devil" by the Cult. This was the first music I had listened to at volume in six weeks. It was now I realised that I was completely deaf in my left ear: there were guitar parts that I knew were in the mix but I could not hear. I can rock out on Li'l Devil riffing a modified D shuffle with an added blue note, adding anticipation via the syncopated rhythm of the verse before soloing with pinched harmonics near the nut then moving to tenth position for some D minor Pentatonic playfulness. Musicians know that less is more. Now it seemed music was no more.

"Lizard in a bottle, Oh Yeah.

Dizzy in a haze for forty days" sang Ian Astbury.

I heard that loud and clear. < I had been off-grid for forty days. > Luckily I still had a spare ear. A few days later I discovered that my phone worked in mono mode. That was a great help. I could hear the full mix again.

Mesearch

When I was in hospital I felt I was map reading in the fog. Maps are helpful to ascertain where we are but not as useful when we need to understand where we are not! Sometimes navigation is easier without a map because, as Korzybski, the semanticist, said: "The map is not the territory". Even though I was home safe it was a strange landscape.

The fog was dense. But did not have the coma's heart-of-darkness. Mental survival mode kicked in with a night-patrol mindset: stay silent; use the ears < or the one working ear in my case > to hear in the dark rather than eyes to map the domain. Take small, silent steps: slowly bring the back foot forward and gently down then slide left and right to clear the ground underneath before gently bringing it back to centre and stepping silently on the cleared ground to avoid snapping twigs, rustling the grass or leaf litter. It was less scary than running home through a forest as night falls when the sounds of our trousers flapping round our ankles echo like a bad man chasing us, hearing him stopping when we stop and starting when we start moving again. Playing soldiers in my mind. < Welcome to mental gillie school. >

July

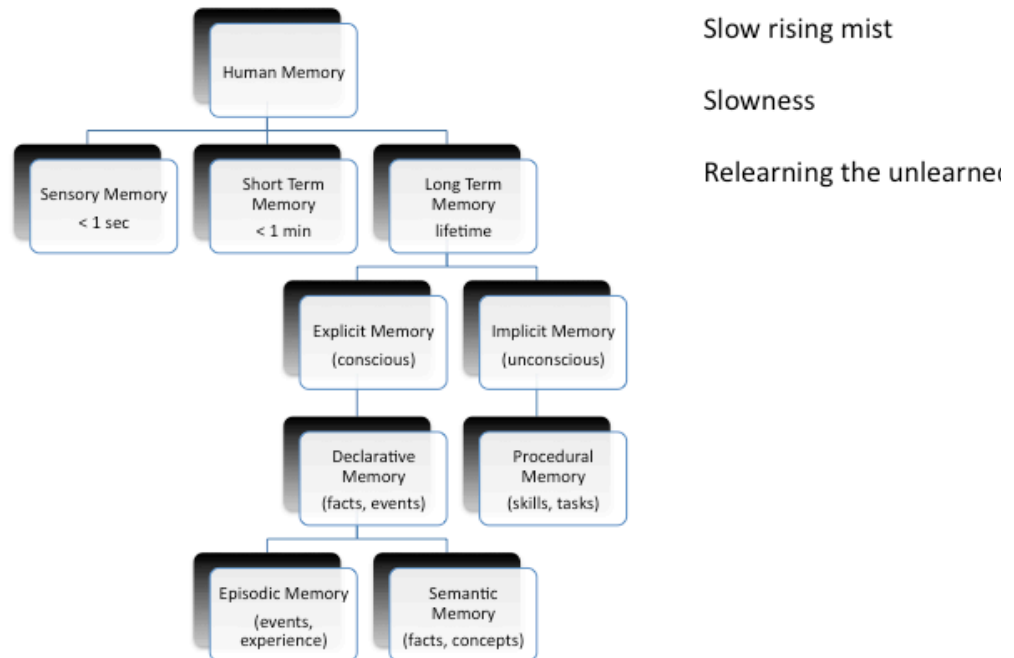


Figure 1.2 Atkinson-Shiffrin - Fog Rising

I have, until now, considered my minds-eye to look externally, like my physical ones. The doors of perception always opened outwards. Now the hinges had been reversed and the doors were opening inwards. I felt I was living inside a teardrop that had dropped onto a Jackson Pollock canvas, randomly rolling like a wet bagatelle ball amongst dirty, disjointed lines and splatters. A new map to master. Time for me-search.

Me-search is a term coined by Beatrice Beebe of the Tavistock clinic in London. She used it to describe British psychoanalysts who had been sent to boarding school, removing the primary care giver from their lives. Mum and Dad fulfilled their Larkin 'This Be The Verse' responsibilities by proxy, turning their children into "Fup ducks"

who then spend their lifetime figuring out what went wrong.

Boarding school can lead to low-level Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. What I was experiencing was Post Traumatic Euphoria Disorder. I knew I was not functioning properly but there was some inner knowing that gave me a feeling that everything would turn out well. Perhaps it was the anti-convulsants. They had the effect of making me feel that I was perpetually on the second glass before dinner, or just had a rum before going over the top. I am not as brave as the soldiers who do that for real, nor do I consider my injuries to be on a par with those suffered in wars. They are heroes - not me.

Rather than linger in the "Why me?" navel gazing of self-pity I was enthusiastic about the opportunity of me-search. I was aware that I would be self-reporting which can result in illogical leaps into cognitive cul-de-sacs or deductive dead-ends, so allowed myself time to experiment. Luckily Keith, my writing partner, is a trained social worker and kindly offered to mentor me through the early stages. This consisted of weekly Skype calls and occasional meetings in London. I am eternally indebted. < Our words were our bonds. > Having to put up with me banging on about whatever I had latched onto the preceding week would be a bit much for anyone.

I was unaware of how long the process would take. I received some very good advice from a colleague of Clare's who had lived through meningoencephalitis with her Dad. She told in no uncertain terms that it would take at least six months before I stopped feeling tired and needed daytime naps.

Getting back on terms with life was going to take time. I decided to take the remaining summer to get back to basics then follow up with more detailed

application. Initially I hoped I would get back to work by January. Experience soon tempered that eagerness - but I was eager. Attitude is important. Start small. Never to Defeat.

Estimating exploration can be a problem if you do not have a toolset to do so. Luckily I had one that allowed me to time bound small forays into the fascinating realm of reconnecting memory muscle in brain and body and between the two.

Small things I previously took for granted were difficult or impossible in the early daze. And it was mostly a daze. The physical change as my brain bled six weeks before had been big-bang fast. Now I felt I was peering at the output of a radio telescope that scanned and mapped the background radiation from the beginning of my Universe and sought out black holes, dark energy sources, information and other as-yet-unknowns. Synaesthesia was one such unknown.

My first synaesthesia experience occurred while watching a classical concert on TV. Sir András Schiff played Bach's Goldberg variations. I was sleepy and closed my eyes. My head suddenly filled with an image of a translucent Buddha sitting silently in space. Multicoloured elements like mathematically precise precious stones of reds, green, lapis and turquoise zipped around and through the silhouette at different speeds. They spun around their own axes as they followed spiralling trajectories that exhibited order within chaos in some choreographic pattern that must have been initiated by the music. I opened my eyes and was back in the moment. No comedown. < Nice! > I was astonished at the synchronicity, relieved at being instantly back in the room, intrigued and excited at what had happened. I wanted more. I closed my eyes and let things go. There was a calmness about the whole process. I felt safe, knowing I was not out of my mind but inside this unknown, yet

strangely knowing, new version of it. There was no revelation of epiphany then. Just an inner glow of possibility and abundance. Or was it my imagination?

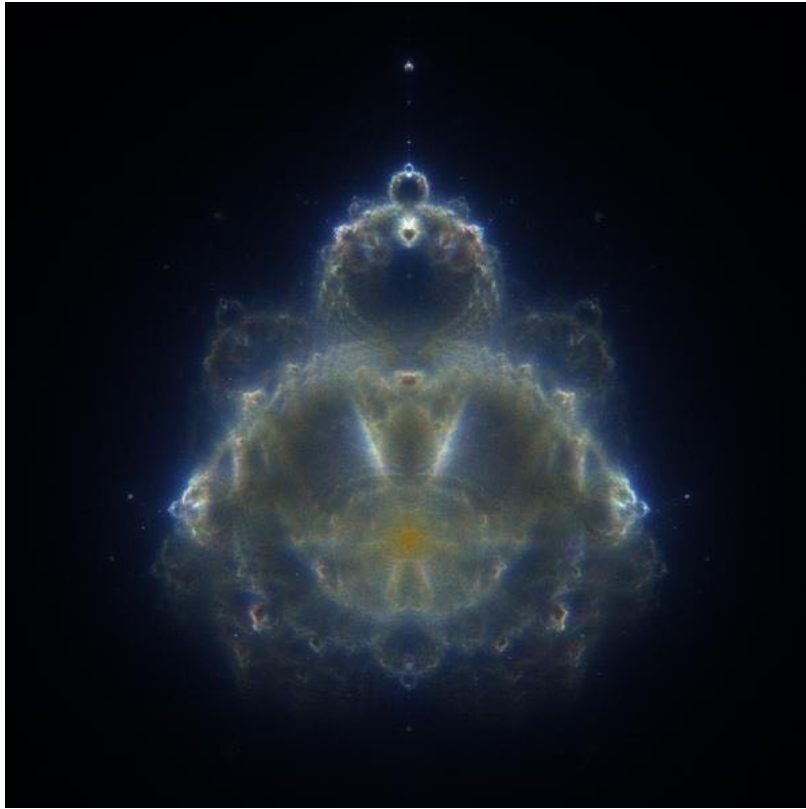


Figure 1.3 Buddhabrot

No Mind, No Matter. No Matter, No Mind.

To my addled surprise I now found koans to be playful, slightly selfish, gibberish time wasters. I had more pressing concerns that mattered: a broken body and brain to heal. Clear and present concerns that held my attention over and above Buddha-babble.

PIES Factory (Aug - Oct)

Recipe

I set about seeking similarity to my previous self. I needed a recovery programme. Creating it was all I had to do.

One sunny August afternoon I sat in the garden and devised my rehab plan. Being slightly ginger I monitor the amount of sun I take. There are a couple Scottish social media tricks that have made it possible for me to predict the weather more accurately these days. Firstly I look at Garbage's Shirley Manson's tweets - if she is happy I know it is raining. Same with Jim Kerr of The Jesus and Mary Chain. This is the Manson-Kerr corollary. I also have Fran Healey, of Travis, on find my phone. If I know where he is then I am fairly sure it is raining on him. Just what did he expect writing songs such as "Why does it always rain on me?" in Dunoon? <Dunoon is a small Scottish town where the warm wet weather from the Atlantic Gulf Stream meets land rises and encounters colder air. Result = rain. >

I selected four main ingredients for my rehab recipe: Physical, Intellectual, Emotional and Social. PIES.

Cooking was a skill that the rehab team had been keen to know if I could master. I was lucky Clare cooked when I came home. Living alone would have made life difficult. When I did venture near the oven I would point at the ring on the hob I needed to turn on then twist the appropriate hob-knob and watch that the correct filament turned orange. < I was not cooking with gas! >

My rehab PIES are not as mouth-watering as Wayne Thiebaud's PIES, PIES, PIES.



Figure 2.1 - PIES, PIES, PIES © Wayne Thiebaud

My olfactory system was not working; my snout was up the spout. Kebabs were king! A friend sent me a jar of Chilli Sauce. I put that on most food. I also craved strong coffee and dark chocolate. < The synaesthesia was working well, though: confusing cookery with modern art. What a mash up! Luckily I had not chosen a rehab recipe based on physical, objective, thinking and talking, obstinate, emotional, social (POTATOES) >

Bake

For each element I had challenges to overcome.

When I left hospital my walking was limited to 200 yards. My balance was very bad and my potbelly stuck out even more than before to keep me upright, and act as a fleshy airbag in case I fell forwards. I still have days when I am more flat footed than my usual loping walk < my gait is, I am sure, a side effect of wearing Dr Marten's air soled shoes as I went through adolescence. > The septicaemia had affected my left side and I had no feeling in the two bigger toes on my left foot. My left thigh muscles tingled when touched...that novelty soon wore thin.

B e c a u s e t h i n k i n g w a s v e r y s l o w I could sense connections reforming in my brain as the memory associations were slowly and randomly re-established. This was fascinating to look in at and somehow observe slow motion replays of thought to speech construction and analyse the action like a player-turned-pundit.

The process was: Someone would ask me a question in conversation. I would ask internally for the answer, wait for a train of thought to emerge from a subterranean synaptic tunnel, watch responses disembark at intersecting stations, dress them with emotion and bias, check that the thoughts were proper and not carrying anything suspicious, formulate answer in a shuffle process of converting internally visualised words to understanding by edge detection of letters, boundary detection of words, grammatical sentence construction, test using forward and backward scans of the answer and finally speak. All in all it could take thirty seconds to formulate replies to questions that I would have previously just rattled off the answer to.

It sparked a desire to better understand how memory worked. I picked out some books that I had not previously read but appealed to me now: Chomsky, Orwell and

Jane Lapotaire's book "Time Out Of Mind". It was a small start of a revelatory journey into neurology.

It was fascinating to witness emotions being added to sentence construction. It was also different to appreciate a new way of visualising the past. Beforehand I would not really register emotions in my consciousness. I may have a touch of Asperger's Syndrome, or just be a normal bloke. Do you know anyone who answers as many rhetorical questions as me? No! The result is that most people assume that I am being sarcastic. It is not the best way to win friends and influence people.

I knew that Jung had reverted to childhood activities to recover from the death of his wife. I returned to drawing. I was good at copying cartoons when I was young. When I was nine a family friend asked me to make a Disney collage for a children's hospital ward that she was the Sister of. As I looked for books on drawing on Amazon I kept seeing links to "The Artist's Way". It seemed to be based on a twelve-step recovery programme. I bought it. Good Move.

When I got my phone in hospital I ordered a guitar that I had wanted for ages: a blonde Epiphone dot. < It was a birthday present to myself, once I remembered that I had had a birthday when I was in the coma. >

I thought I would try to increase my digital dexterity by playing old riffs on my new guitar. I knew I would be bad - but not that bad. I was fluffing notes and choking bends. A quick quarter turn on the truss rod should have sorted it. Nope. I then discovered that the neck was broken just by the headstock. My wife had brought it to hospital to show it to me and dropped it on the way back to the car. That was the first time I lost my temper. It dissipated quickly, though. I could feel an empathy with the guitar. I got my wood glue and clamps out of the cupboard and did to my guitar what

had just been done to me. < Fixed it and left it alone for a fortnight. >

I had done a similar thing previously to another guitar many years ago and the tone it produced was unique: it sounded like two guitars. When guitars get dinks they get their voices. Sometimes it is the amp and effects that really make the sound - but there is something visceral in playing that is unique to each guitar. When I play it now I feel little rough patches near the nut. < It has a country music melancholy tone: high and lonesome as Hank Williams. >

I now had three elements to start creating a rehab plan: physical, intellectual and emotional. I admit at that time I had not considered the social aspect. That popped up about six weeks later when I started to get a bit stir crazy. My legs were working better by then and I was letting selected friends know by email what had happened.

I am happy in my own company, and others are also very happy that is the case. It did not initially cross my mind that socialisation is an important part of rehabilitation. To be frank it is not that important early on, but it is later. I wanted to work in offices with others.

PIES initial goals

Physical - Walk a mile, maybe run, do circuits in the gym, ride a bike.

Intellectual - Think and communicate in order to get back to work.

Emotional - Find and evaluate my sense of self in the new paradigm.

Social - Reconnect with people and not be isolated.

With goals set for the four PIES elements I could focus on scheduling the activities.

Music is such a good way of describing the interplay of time and emotion. It is natural. We all like music. We have our own favourite songs and tunes. Some styles and genres appeal more than others. Our brains do an amazing job scheduling sounds in small time intervals. Now, however, I was so far out of time and behind the beat I was in an unknown song.

I cut and pasted from the master chop-up lyricist of my generation, who had borrowed the technique from William Burroughs who had lifted it from the Dadaists. A bit of bastardised Bowie with Mike Garson as an avant-garde cabaret pianist playing TIME on Aladdin Sane. The 'not-at-home' piano played in A-flat reflected my Total = I + Me. Similar yet different: in the same place and time broken like arpeggiations with emotive rubato that danced in the confines of a real world four-four time signature.

T = I + Me.

Would I + Me find memories waiting in the wings

Or take centre stage where I + Me speaks of senseless things

The script is I + Me, Aye.

I + Me might be a temporal twat, flexing like a whore

Then I + Me falls like Onan to the floor

Laaah, la,la, la laaa, la la la-la

Laaah, la, la, la, latentalent?

Eat

I started to work toward the goals immediately. Here is a brief summary of how things turned out.

Physical:

After leaving the care of the NHS I looked for a personal trainer, left messages on answer phones, received no responses. Clare spoke to the staff at her gym and found Emma. Emma is great: Disciplined, gently demanding, loud on the ear, easy on the eye and appreciates the compliment.

I signed up for ten sessions and tried to get to the gym two or three times a week.

My first session was a blast. I was able to do a plank but when I tried a couple of press-ups a psychedelic spiral wheeled and eddied before disappearing into the region between my brain hemispheres. This would happen if I exerted myself and forgot to breathe. Emma would recognise when I was not breathing properly or getting frustrated at myself and order "Stop! Relax! Breathe! Start small. Never to defeat." I liked that mantra so much I still use it frequently.

Emma wrote a set of exercises. < The gym was a lot more technical than the last time I had been in one. There are running and cycling machines that can be programmed to allow one to do a route on another continent. I thought I would end up looking more like Charles Google-Maps than Charles Atlas. >

Name: Zak Moore
Date: 08/03/2016



Exercise	SET x REP	WEIGHT	NOTES
Plank Leg Lifts + Reptile Combo	2-3 x 20	X	
	2-3 x 20	X	
Bridges	2-3 x 20	X	
Leg Lifts	2-3 x 20	X	
Fitball Leg Lifts	2-3 x 20	X	
TRX Roll Outs	2-3 x 20	X	
Main CV session			

Figure 2.2 - Exercises to rebuild strength

The exercises were designed to get me back to strength. Each week Emma would evaluate my progress and change the exercises. I did body-weight training. < Not that anyone would associate my physique with bench-presses. > I could do it anywhere, within reason. Some places I have worked have gyms so the staff can exercise. It is a good thing.

I had sessions on the treadmill, holding on to the bars because my balance was bad. I would lurch across the running surface with the randomness of a punch drunk boxer trying to recapture his morning run routine. < Skipping was also on the agenda. Hop-stop-swear was a more apt description in the early sessions. >

Following one session in the gym I went for a swim. I was tense on the slippery floor in case I took a pre-poolside dive. In the water I tried breaststroke: I pulled on both arms and, due to my weak left side, performed a perfect a semi circle in the

shallow end. < The shallow end, incidentally, is twinned with my gene pool. >

I carried on and went slowly up and down the lanes a couple of times. I used to enjoy swimming but this was not fun. Being unable to keep a fast rhythm was frustrating. I used to bang-breathe as I front-crawled. < Now I was sieving water like an old whale, > From then on I had a sauna instead. There was a list of medical conditions that were not recommended on the wall outside it. Meningitis was not listed...< It rarely is, thankfully. >

As a child I had always wanted a home gym. I bought a cheap chin-up bar, put it on my home-office door frame, looped a couple of yoga belts over it to emulate the straps I used in the gym for balance exercises and reclined pull-ups. I could now practise my stretches and balance poses at home. I was the "Bolshy Ballet": swearing and cursing each time I over-stretched or lost concentration and hopped to regain my balance.

After eight weeks of increased stretching, core strength building and a little weight work Emma took me onto the running track. I can pose to look as if I know what I am doing but am slow. I put it down to the meds. < It is probably age. >

Going round the first bend felt like my brain was missing a couple of shock absorbers where the cranial nerves connect to the spine. I cut the pace and readied myself to fall gracefully in true Buzz Lightyear fashion. < Was he really modelled on Steve Jobs? > Apprehension made my breathing laboured. My vision changed from colour to grey-scale: a precursor to the onset of synaesthesia episodes. It was an effort to keep going through 200 - 400 metres. I stayed ramrod stiff rather than leaning into the bend as I had done in my school days. At the end of the lap I heard Emma say three little words: "One more time." What a little pig I thought as I

continued like an emphysemic big bad wolf on the brick-red asphalt for another 400 metres. I was not standing comfortably when I heard the stopwatch's story. It was no fairytale.

Two weeks later on a train to London I saw an advert for the Brighton Marathon being held six months hence. The challenge of coma to marathon in a year appealed. I tore the page from the free newspaper and put it in my day-sack. Next day I looked up the Brighton Marathon on Google and discovered that Meningitis Research were offering free places in return for a bit of fund raising.

Meningitis Research was glad of the offer. The wheels were in motion. Would I be ready in time?

Emma's face was a picture of dazzlingly white dental disbelief when we met the following week and I told her of my Phiedippedean fundraising. When she recovered her composure we got to work. Emma prepared another set of exercises geared for marathon training.

Unlearning to ride a bike

Clare had taken time off work when I came home. Near the end of August she had to go back to work and the children would return to school. To ensure I could get around I thought it best to check if I could cycle. To boldly go...to the local shop. That would be a decent test.

Riding a bike uses all the memory elements of the Atkinson-Shiffrin model: Short term handles balance and coordination, working deals with road sense and long term vaguely recalled that I may have a bike.

Clare suggested that Ryan, our son, come along to make sure I was safe. He quickly realised that I would be flush with success and could score a treat at the shop.
< An ice cream on a summer day. >

I went to the garage and checked that I did in fact have a bike. With an increasing pulse I put my helmet on. < So very Major Tom. > It took a little while to figure out which way round to wear it. < The skip at the front was a good but not immediately apparent indicator. > I wheeled the bike out, pointed it in the direction I wanted to go, placed my numb-toed foot on the left pedal and did a couple of push-skips with the right to get over the inertia. I swung my right leg over the saddle and sought the right pedal with my foot flailing in the air where I had expected the pedal to be, wobbled and fell over. It was not a bad fall, more of slip to the left and a collision with the cross bar that left a nasty bruise at the top of my thigh.

My circuits said there was something wrong. How could I have unlearned to ride a bike? Rational explanation was that my left side was so weak that I was putting uneven pressure on the different pedals and not reacting fast enough to compensate. Solution: take it slowly - but fast enough to get going so that the body/brain connections could remap the associations and apply compensatory corrections.

Try again. This time I was more alert to the possibility of falling and did a slower skip-push on the right foot as I coasted along the tarmac. Then it was a slow leg over, tense shoulders as I stared intently ahead, circuits scanning for aberrations in feedback and adjusting to keep upright. I went past a few houses and came to an area that was wide enough to try turning round. Was I going fast enough? I felt four years old again. The sensations were from far back in time when I first learned to ride, with my dad running behind, holding the saddle of my little blue bike with fat white tyres.

This time my son was riding on his Mum's bike behind watching what I was doing and staying respectfully silent. < My Dad and son share the same name. >

Keeping the left pedal high I started turning. It felt more like a series of ten or twelve small corrections to complete a 180-degree turn and head back where I had come from. All the time my brain was thinking about stalling in the turn and how to bail out if needed. The relief on the return was palpable. 50 metres.

Suitably tuned to my lower tempo we set out to the shop. The journey was down a lane that is just over half a mile long. As I pedalled I broke a massive sweat. By 200 yards I was blinking beads of perspiration out of my eyes. I did not dare take my hands off the handlebars for fear of losing balance. I simply shook my head. Bad move. I veered sharply right. My slow synaptic circuits were in overdrive. "It's the dilithium crystals, Captain! They cannae take it" said my inner engineer, in a dubious Scottish accent. I just had to klington. < Sorry. >

Once slowed and steady again I tested a lifesaver glance over my right shoulder. Same thing. I veered out into the middle of the lane and then back to the side in a snaky, shake. I had a big balance problem. Coupled with the missing shock absorbers from the base of my skull it was like being on cobbles. At least it wasn't wet.

Ryan led down the lane with me following. It was hard for my left leg to push with the same consistency as my right. It was fine when I remembered to concentrate but started weaving when I relaxed. It was hard work and the monochrome vision came again.

When we arrived at the shop I was sweating, out of breath and a tad rattled. I realised that I had left my padlock key in the garage door.

Ryan was keen to come into the shop to choose his ice cream but I brusquely

negotiated with him to watch the bikes.

"Look...I am your father!" I rasped. < Ryan was not too sure about my heavy breathing and dark demeanour. >

"I will go and get you a raspberry Ripley, but just remember: in space no-one eats ice-cream"

I left a bemused Ryan to watch the bikes and bought his reward. My confidence and equilibrium were returning. Suitably refreshed we made it back to base with the occasional wobble and weave.

One small recovery step for Zak, One giant leap. Forza! < Forza is an Italian, cycling phrase that means strength or force as Mul from the Johnstone Wheelers explained to me. Chap, buddy. >

Intellectual:

When I had been in hospital the occupational therapist asked me to draw a clock. It turned out like this.

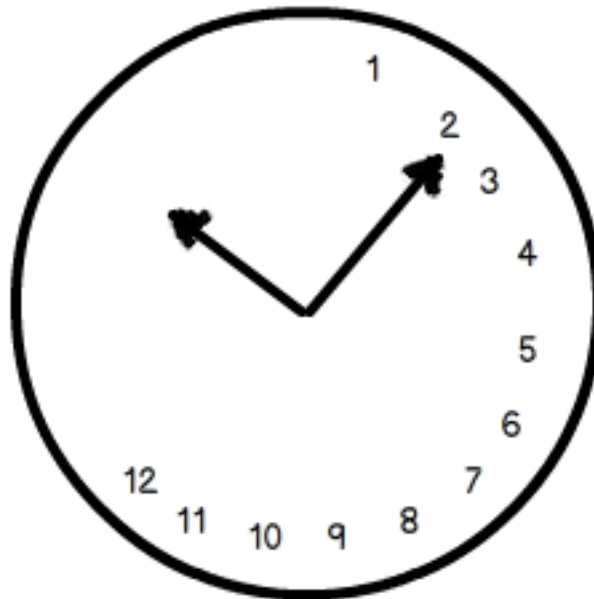


Figure 2.3 Clock as drawn in July 2015

The clock exercise was too soon, according to Dr Norman Doidge. I can appreciate the hospital staff were assessing what my memory was like. It left me with feelings of inadequacy and there was no indication if or when my temporal abilities would return. There was no follow up check.

Time is important to schedule activities. I was not so worried as I was in "I + Me" mode. Others were not dependent on me to execute tasks to co-ordinate with their activities. I had surrendered my driving licence on medical advice. Sleep was very important and I did a lot, which seemed at odds with the large number of espressos I drank during recovery, once I figured out how to put the capsules in the machine.

The memory fog was lifting, slowly. Time takes Time. And time is different with a broken brain.

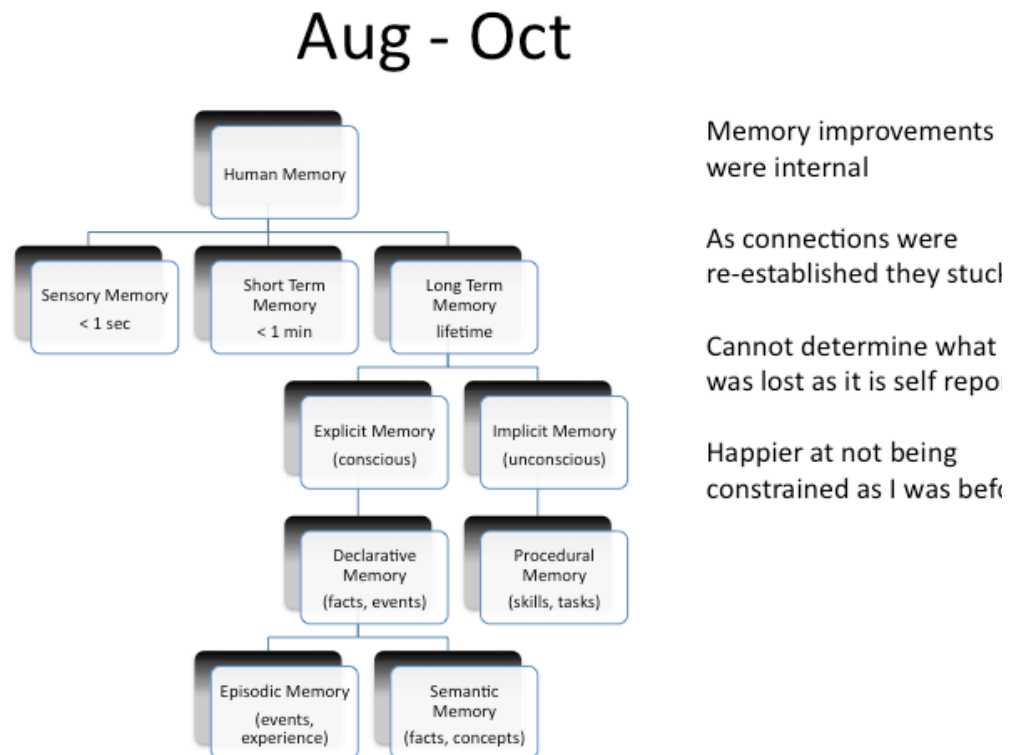


Figure 2.4 Atkinson-Shiffrin Memory Model - Rising Fog

My explicit memory was deficient in the episodic and semantic sections and tests in the hospital had shown problems with procedural memory such as time and cooking that concerned the care team assessing letting me go. Activating the Semantic memory was where I was headed by luck rather than design. I enjoyed reading. That had not changed but the swelling in my brain had squashed my left optic nerve. After a short period of focus my left eye would follow a trajectory akin to Kennedy's rogue bullet: back and to the left.

This was the right place and time to make a new I + Me resolution. Resolutions,

like so many well-intentioned self-improvement schemes, tend to fall by the wayside without applied dedication, common sense and attention to detail. < Start Small. Never to defeat. >

The Artist's Way provided a twelve-step process to creativity. I started at page one and worked through each of the twelve weekly exercises: Safety, Identity, Power, Integrity, Possibility, Abundance, Connection, Strength, Compassion, Self-Protection, Autonomy and Faith.

I would not turn into a first class artist. That was not the point. The outcome was to find a recovery path.

I could relate to stroke victims. They suffer similar brain trauma to what I was experiencing. Remembering distant events and people but forgetting what happened yesterday. Doing things from my past provided a starting point that I could ripple outwards from.

I got my pencils out and did a bit of cartoon drawing for the first time in about forty years. < It was fun to be a fool. >



Figure 2.5 - The Mad Jester

To reduce the pressure of my normal time-to-complete, deadline mentality I relaxed the constraints. I worked to the Creative Thinking Precepts. They were my time-to-complete lifeline.

Curiosity	Forgiveness	Love	Sense of direction
Adopt a set to break a set	Value play	It's there already - nurture it	Know what you really want

Explore the givens	Build up, don't knock down	Involve others	Cycle often, close late
Broad Picture, Local Detail	Live with looseness	Connect and be receptive	Manage the process

Table 2.6 Creative Thinking Precepts

The way of working was based on a diary. That sounds straightforward but I found writing difficult and time consuming. It took me twenty minutes to write a two-paragraph email, which was littered with mistakes, grammatical and logical. I started learning to touch typ and realised that I was more dyslexic than I remembered. Tim gave me very good advice: write, check and write again.

Aspiring artists need structure. Each morning I would recall and record what happened the previous day and make a loose plan for the day ahead. I developed a template that allowed me to capture what I wanted to track. The "Artists' Way" advice was to work for eight weeks before reading the daily reviews. This tied in with the advice from neuro-plasticity research to wait for about six weeks of not doing what had been habitual before. In other words - learn to forget. Mental dieting. The brain/body connection does not enjoy it. The diary is a way of mental flossing after breakfast: routine resolution. Success.

I am naturally biased so I can unwittingly skew facts to match my worldview. This was different. I had to change to meet the view that the rest of the world would expect of me. < I had nowhere to hide. >

After eight weeks I reviewed the logs that I had fastidiously kept. Events appeared different from how they had before. Previously I had compartmentalised memories

linearly as if they were previous versions of me in train carriages that stretched back in time. Sometime I was the guard that would walk through the train and check tickets of past versions of me to reinforce the memory. Other times I would stand on a platform and watch the train roll by recognising previous incarnations of myself. Sometimes the train stopped and other times not - but nobody got off. < 'So if you find yourself sitting on a train, while you're thinking of a different world, then you might see me standing on the platform staring through you in a different way.' to paraphrase the Ocean Colour Scene's "Traveller's Tune" >

Now memories were less linear. Big ones appeared as bright as the first fireworks from Sidney Harbour on a New Years Day. Less vibrant ones were like dull orange street lamps in a fog on Hogmanay in Edinburgh. It was a richer way of recall.

As the first three months went on I turned away from cartooning. I used to be a geek. I wondered if I still had my computing chops < programming abilities. >. As I was enjoying doing creative stuff I looked for something funky to code. I had done a Creative Problem Solving module as part of an MBA. There was a fantastic book "Creative Problem Solving Techniques" written by four of the course tutors. I decided to try and turn it into a colour-coded periodic table.

I did what any geek does - I looked on the web, found something that did just about what I needed, copied it and modified it. I made a little demo version that I shared then put it through a production mix. A lot of software is issued under creative commons licence and is free to use and modify. The book belonged to others. Before publishing I had to ensure that I could use their copyrighted work. That took some time.

Emotional:

The main emotion at the beginning of recovery was elation. Elation at being out of the rehab unit. Elation was tempered by a worry that my brain was permanently damaged. I decided not to panic. It would not help. Rather I would enjoy the journey. I had worked most my career as a contract computer systems consultant. I was used to uncertainty, continuous changing of work and adapting to new roles.

POTUS gets ninety days to get used to being called the most powerful person on the planet. < The only executive oval office function I was interested in securing was the just above my neck: At this time in recovery my head office address was as good as 1600 Pensive-veiny Avenue. > I had twelve weeks to be me again, I thought.

Near the end of September the Encephalitis survey asked for Clare and I + Me to fill in a survey. I recorded that I thought I was back to 80% of where I had been before. Clare put me down at 95%. We rarely see ourselves as others do.

Around that time there was a programme on TV in which Andrew Marr, a stroke survivor, gave this description of Winston Churchill using art to get through his Wilderness years.

"The capacity of art and its making to restore mental health is something that *I* am coming to understand and I am sure Churchill did too.

I am really interested in the idea of flow as the essence of happiness, if you like, and flow is, we are told: being engaged with full intensity with

something. Doing it as much as you possibly can, as hard as you can, but something you find difficult and not easy but you can do. So for me it is drawing.

When I am doing it everything just dissolves into mere colour and light and there is nothing else in the world except for colour and light. Ultimately this is what it does for me and I am sure it was the same for Churchill too.

I wouldn't say art has kept me sane but I think, certainly for me, it has been a very, very important release valve. When things have been going really badly; there has been too much pressure in personal life or in professional life. When I think I am about to go pop then frankly going back to paints and easels and colours and shapes helps me hugely and always has.

None of us are Churchill. We don't know what was going on in his mind. None of us ever will. But my best guess is that it kept him sane because it kept him connected to the vibrant, kind of flickering, iridescent reality of being alive.

It is about looking out and thinking 'I am alive'. You are thinking about the colours and you are full of awe and amazement. And his paintings are full of awe and amazement and joie de vivre and a sense of being really

engaged in this extraordinary world around you.

And, you know, in a pressured and difficult life where you are full of gloom, and full of worry, and full of angst - he had these terrible depressions I think that is the kind of thing that can stop you blowing your brains out frankly!

Painting helped Churchill find a path through his wilderness years, which is just as well because, of course, history had not quite finished with him just yet."

'I have nothing to offer but blood, toil, tears and sweat!' (Churchill)

An aphorism that appealed to me on several levels. I created this "homage" to Roy Lichtenstein

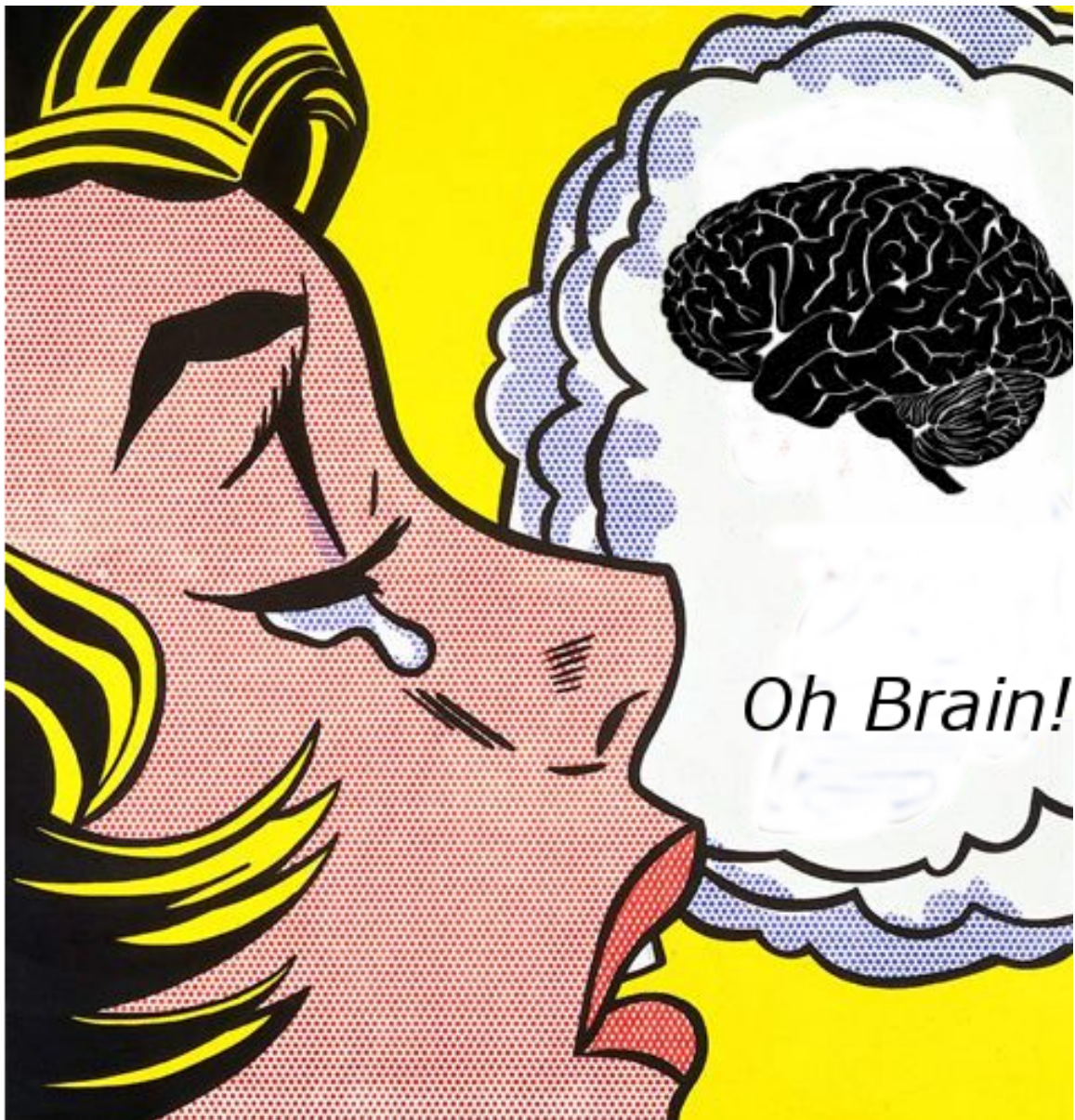


Figure 2.7 'Oh Brain', homage to Roy Lichtenstein. All rights respected.

I felt sadder than when I had my old black Labrador put down, three years before. I was well aware of Churchill's depressions that he called black dogs. I knew it was imperative to avoid those moods at all costs. The desire to have a functioning brain was the most important thing to me in the summer of 2015. This was not going to be an academic session. There were practical things that I could do and measure my progress against a baseline.

Andrew Marr's explanation of FLOW and its benefits to him and Churchill resonated with me. I am not a left-leaning intellectual or wannabe wartime leader, or even a half proficient painter. For the last two years I had tracked my FLOW using Mihály Csíkszentmihály's model while I was at work < Oooh! What a Dudley Do-gooder. >

The Flow model has the following 8 states.

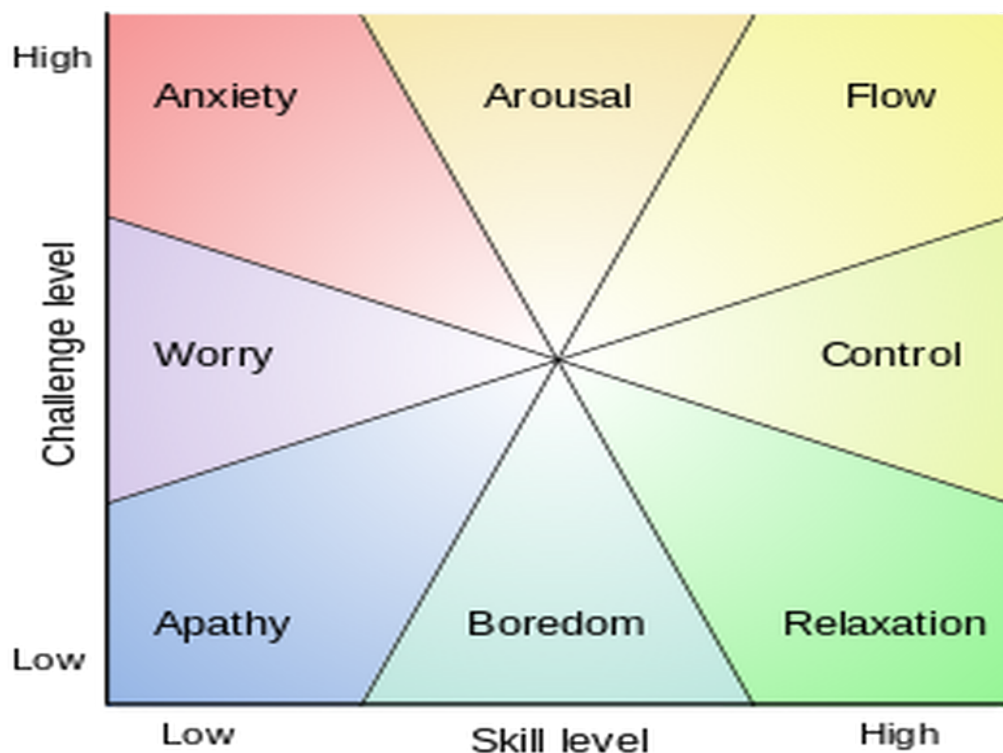


Figure 2.8 Mihály Csíkszentmihály's Flow Model (original)

Keeping a diary was good but not enough. I realised I could use flow tracking in early recovery. Previously I had used a spreadsheet to measure the things that put me into and knocked me out of flow. Usually it was other people. Sometimes it was unexpected news or events. The technique is, like music, to appreciate the intervals between the notes. It is the movement between states that needs to be recorded.

To recap on the Flow Model the states are: Apathy, Arousal, Anxiety, Boredom, Relaxation, Control, Worry and Flow. During my earlier self-reporting I changed 2 states in the standard model. I replaced Apathy with Annoyed and Worry with Puzzled. < Who in their right mind would record apathy or worry at work? > The changes were informed by some very early feedback I received from my MBA cohort. I logged each week's work and ran a programme over it to create chord diagrams.

At the end of twelve weeks I had comparable results to how I had worked before.

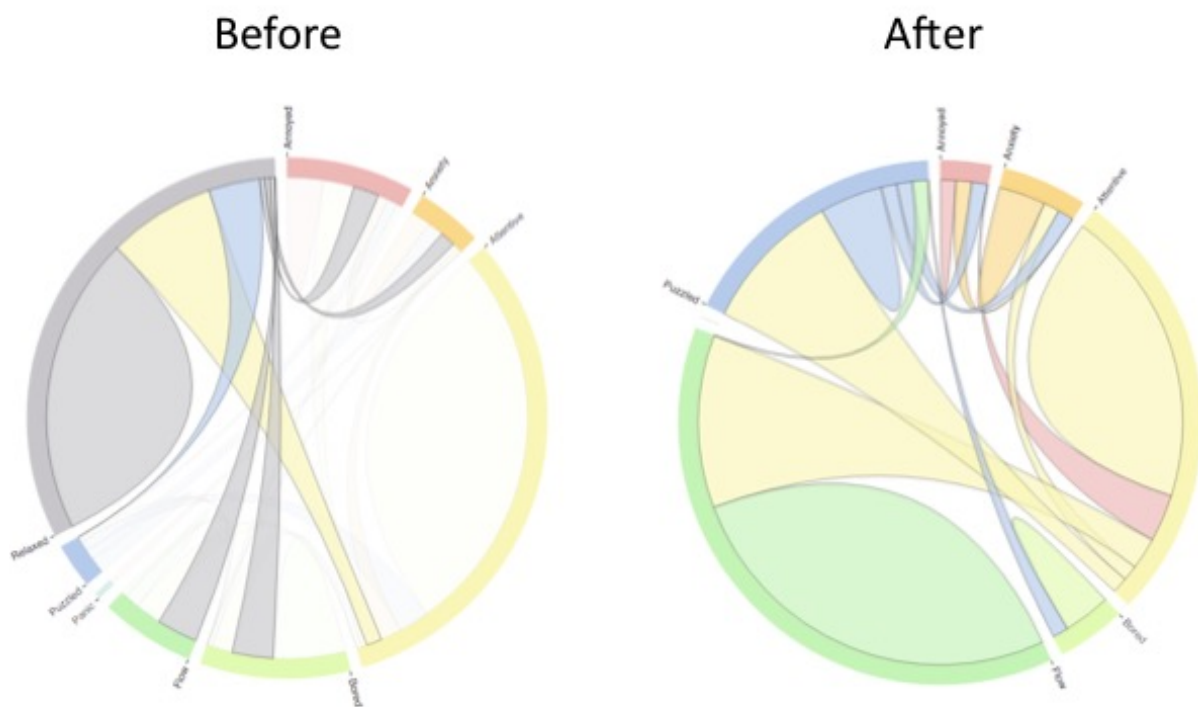


Figure 2.9 Comparison of Work vs. Recovery Flow tracking

The above diagram is called a chord diagram. If it is new to you I apologise. To read it look at the colours on the rim. They are proportional to the number of times I was in certain states, not the actual time. The inner links show the changes between the states. The most interesting differences between the two charts above are:

State	Before	After
Relaxed	High - suggests waiting on others	Disappeared - I was working by myself for me
Flow	Low - It was difficult to enter FLOW	High - I was enjoying what I was doing
Puzzled	Low - The work was straightforward	Higher - To be expected as I looked at new things

I was happy with the changes. How would you feel if you could spend 25% of your effort in the "zone"?

There may be other changes that could make the model more accurate for today's work places such as achievement, gratitude and exuberance. What states would you monitor to determine your optimum working conditions? Would you bother?

Parts of The Artist's Way were at odds with my new found empiricism: it was rather religious, distinctly American and did not offer any counter arguments.

There was encouragement to be disciplined and fill in a "Morning Page" or diary each day. As I worked I found that the template I was using changed to incorporate the PIES aspects. The daily log really helped. I augmented it to include firmer plans for the day ahead. That helped close the loop when I reviewed the next day.

I cannot be 100% certain < as I was operating at self-estimated 80% > but I think this was a crucial part in helping reconnect the associations in my semantic memory. If writing is difficult for you it is now possible to record diaries onto phones and new machines that are very good voice recognition systems. That may have long-term

benefits for mental health.

Social:

When you are in recovery you are the most important person. You may have other duties to attend to but you must care for yourself. If anyone tries knocking you off course pull back and box round him or her. Think of a barking farmyard dog whose ground you inadvertently walked into. The mental maps other people use are not your territory.

Family is the second most important group of people. My wife and children had the harder job. I was euphoric, living in my own foggy bubble. They had to live with me rolling around in my Pollockian landscape. The new house-rules such as not leaving things on the floor that I might trip over, cleaning the bath after showering so that I did not slip, allowing me to sleep, giving me time to respond to what were normally simple questions, being a driver down, wondering if I was going to recover or if I would be even more of an embarrassment in front of their friends. < Last point was a duty I performed to the best of my abilities. >

After a couple of days at home Clare took me on a trip to the local supermarket. Like a small child I was given the trolley to steer. My feet flip-flapped as I pushed it around. Control was good but not exact, as I calibrated for my weaker left side. < I had a few slow collisions with other trolleys. > At the checkout there was an old couple in front of us. They took their time packing their bag with groceries. Previously I would have been annoyed, tutting and simmering with resentment. Now I saw myself thirty years ahead. A future echo? I was relaxed and smiled as I told them to take their

time. There was no rush. < Empathy before speed. >

Initially I had kept myself to myself. I chatted online with people who understood my situation. There are a few people I chat with online. They had wondered where I had been. When I got my phone in hospital I had been able to let them know the score. Online typed chat was a very good way of slowly reconnecting. The delay between messages allowed me to hide my mental slowness in a way that is not possible in face-to-face communication.

A few friends came to visit:

Goldie came down from Scotland. We had been best men at each other's weddings. We had not met for a wee while. My daughter drove me to the station so I could spot him. It was easy: there are not that many Gold Marlboro smokers about, these days. I am a wholemeal tobacco man, myself < Gram Parsimonious – smoking country music joke >. I sat in the back of the car listening to Goldie and Sarah talking.

He turned his head toward Sarah in the driving seat said "I can remember seeing you when you were this big" - holding his hands to baby size.

"Did you come to the hospital?" I asked.

There was too much going on for me to process all at once. As his head turned I thought he was speaking to me, in the back. I thought he meant he had seen me in a coma when I was as helpless as a new-borne, in a nappy. About 30 seconds later I recalled he had come over to my flat in London the night Sarah had been born. I explained my retarded reasoning as we sat in the garden.

A few weeks after that Clare and I took Sarah back to university. We stopped off at a service station for a sandwich. A biker pulled in. He was riding an Indian. I knew that Anthony Hopkins had been on TV in "The World's Fastest Indian" earlier that

week. I went over to speak to the rider. My mind emptied < well more than normal > I could not get the words out. Luckily the biker was pumped with adrenaline after his ride and he did all the talking.

James who visited me in hospital came round every now and then. His Dad had had a few strokes. He recognised me recalling information and processing for thirty seconds before I spoke. It happened when I searched for answers. He rated me at 70% of my previous mental capacity. He knew his stuff, and mine, better than the rehab shrinks. He gave me a benchmark. I could improve on that baseline. < James 1, Psychologists 0 >

Near the end of September I felt that I was ready to go and meet people. The excited puppy in my brain was jumping up and down and whimpering at going for a walk. The puppeteer had left. He probably got my place in rehab. I could now walk normally and did not have the 'two before dinner' drunk feeling. I am sure a lot of that was down to the gym work.

I live fairly close to London. We moved to the country as the family grew. It is forty-five minutes by train to the City centre. That was 7.5 hours per week when I travelled to work: a working day. I previously used train time to study. I arranged to meet old business colleagues, some of who became new friends. I spread the meetings over a few weeks. Start small. Never to defeat.

I hooked up with people I worked with immediately before I got ill. Some were social and others business oriented to test my presenting skills. James came over and listened to me talk through a presentation that I had prepared for one consultancy firm. His words will stay with me a long time: "It is as if your brain has closed down and let the healing happen." < James 2, Psychologists 0. > Armed with that I sallied

forth and screwed the presentation when I got over excited at the end.

Most people were curious to know how I was. Chatting over coffee was a good way to time-box conversations. < I always had room for another if needed or wanted. > I did not know how long I would be able to pay attention. Just before meeting people I was nervous and excited. I woke up early on my days out, got a lift into the high street from Clare on her way to work, go to the local cafe, drink hot chocolate and write my computerised diary while I waited for cheap-day train tickets to start at 09:30. I checked the computer's clock every five minutes and always needed a nerve settling comfort break before leaving the cafe at 09:20 to catch a cheap train. I usually sat in the front carriage and was first off on arrival at Charing Cross.

I had the first morning uptown to myself. I took the tube and discovered I was people watching more than I used to. Instead of thinking of them as blobs I wondered what they had for breakfast? What they argued about over breakfast and whom they argued with? Where were they going? Was to an office? Were they late? What excuse were they making up? Was it to meet someone and maybe do a deal? Questions that I had not thought of before jostled and jumbled in my short-term memory as the tube rumbled and bumbled.

Then a thought pulled in to my pineal platform. Thank goodness Network Rail does not run my long-term memory! Sorry - can't recall that fact – wrong synapses on the line. The memory on Platform 4 has been cancelled due to signalling problems. Do not flush your brain while the train is stationary. I must try the Neurostar one day. < Is it good? >

After lunch I took a trip round the Tate Modern. I made a point of looking at a Jackson Pollock painting,



Figure 2.10 Jackson Pollock at Tate Modern

I was slightly poignant and reflective remembering how I felt in when I started me-search but did not shed a tear.

I met Tim for coffee at three o'clock on the North side of the Millennium bridge, near St Pauls. He has hearing aids and told me what I could expect. The news was good. In town I found that refrigerated lorries, espresso machines and hand dryers were painful on the ear.

I later met a couple of friends, after their work, at St Pancras station. I got there an hour early. My feet hurt, I was tired, and I was feeling a little miserable. As I stood in the shopping area a couple of people went past: one in a wheel chair and one with what looked like cerebral palsy. I felt small and pathetic complaining about my predicament.

As well as the helpful and curious colleagues there were a few intellectual leeches more interested in sucking my ideas for their own benefit. Good luck to you if you feast on my blood, brother. My life is too short to sweat the small stuff. I was ruthless and 'moved those people to trash'. I was polite yet firm - then ignored them like deleted files on my hard drive. I quickly learned, early in recovery, that it is the quality of friends that count - not the quantity of fiends.

The day after my trips to town I would be tired, very tired. Walking got easier as time went on. It was good to get out of the house and meet people.

I met Esbjörn in October. We first worked together twelve years previously when he mentored me into a role at an Insurance firm in London. We get together and have tasty scoffs for lunch when we are in the same town at the same time. We had up-market kebabs, which suited my palette.

I was in broadcast mode and relating the stuff I was working on. As we were friends I was at ease and open about my situation. I explained how I was hedging my options in case the recovery stalled and I had to work from home. I explained how I saw society changing and the need for people in many different jobs to be smart and creative in order to secure employment in a fast changing world. I also mentioned the Flow logs I had been keeping.

Outcomes

At the beginning of the recovery I was as crystal clear as I could be in my foggy thinking that I was interested in the outcomes rather than the outputs of the first iteration.

I can work linearly, iteratively or incrementally. Linear is when I need time to think, to mature ideas, to change. Iterative working requires looping through the same thing several times and incremental working means making small changes on each iteration to produce outputs. It is the essence of Lean: a business technique that has been around for a long time but, like sex, each generation thinks they invented it.

The 4 PIES elements: Physical, Intellectual, Emotional and Social do not obviously exist discretely. Trying to consider each individually misses the holistic view that is the essence of ones self. Good learning requires interleaving by studying several related subjects in parallel. It is a Time and Emotion exercise. It was easy for me to do that as I had been in isolation for a while and was slowly starting to oscillate back and forth into socialisation.

In summary my outcomes were:

Family

My wife and children had got used to the new old man: Dad Mark 2! The return of the curmudgeon. < I don't believe it! >

Physical

Regularly attending the gym.

Fitter than before but not yet running a mile.

I entered a marathon and had great support from Emma.

Intellectual

Twelve-week iteration through The Artist's Way and enjoyed it.

Started a journey into layman understanding of my neural condition.

Emotional

The main revelation had been the new way of retrieving memories with colour.

The FLOW tracking showed that I enjoyed what I was doing.

Social

Most people were glad to see me.

Some people considered me to be warmer than I had been.

Worryingly some old friends did not see a difference.

Work

I needed to hedge my options in case I could not return to work. How would I do that? Find a passion, build some components, configure for re-use and sell. Simple.

Society

A reinforced realisation was that Western workplaces are moving from Time and Motion to Time and Emotion.

The ways of measuring work specified by FW Taylor to inform production line efficiency in the early 20th century are being replaced by what is supposedly more

relaxed environments in offices that encourage creativity in the individual and innovation at the corporate level.

The problem is the lack of smart creatives to fill the roles that will appear. The initial realisation will come from commerce. Government will try to change the education sector. The problem is a messy one. There is no clear-cut answer.

Smarts need to be augmented with creativity. Some people will teach themselves and others will expect to be trained. Will the education system respond? Is it too late for tomorrow's pensioners - or can they learn themselves?

Next Steps

I had time to do another iteration through the PIES process and address the things that interested me during the initial recovery period.

Neuro-plasticity - the brain's ability to change over time.

The differences between teaching, training and learning.

Empirical measurement of value and progress from creative types of work to complement rational thinking.

Food tastes good (Nov - Jan)

Virya

On briefly invading Britain Julius Caesar famously said, "Veni, Vidi, Vici". < I came, I saw, I conquered. >

"Veni, Vidi, Virya" was more appropriate to me as I started into the second round of PIES. I was making progress but had not conquered the elements of recovery. Virya is a Sanskrit word, a Buddhist term that translates as energy, diligence, enthusiasm or effort. I applied Virya to understand my situation and try to plan ahead.

As I reviewed the first three months I found that there were topics that intrigued me that my misty mind could benefit from a bit more exploration. They were:

Neuro-plasticity - the brain's ability to change.

Measuring value and progress of creative work to complement rational thinking.

The differences between teaching, training and learning.

Finding a way of developing my insights and perhaps sharing them.

I had to hedge my options in case I could not return to office work. < Having survived one NDE I had no desire to experience Death by Meeting. > A straddle strategy was in order. I could work at home in limited ways taking siestas as needed. I was diligent at spending time at my desks. I have two: one is for digital work and the other for analogue activities when I want to let my imagination off the leash. Sometimes I dust down my keyboard, plug into Garage Band and play a tune or two.

The excursion into creativity reconnected me with fun things that I had long ignored. Childhood hobbies were probably the things that brought me back to an emotional even keel sooner than being subjected to abstract tests that I had been given in hospital. Tests are designed by teachers to measure teachers. They are not designed to measure student attitude. The IQ test is a prime example. It was devised to assess the efficacy of the French Education System, not to monitor childrens' intelligence. It is important for countries to know their position in world rankings of next generation capability. The measurement methods, and quite probably the teaching methods need re-assessment. Do I have an answer?

From my point of view the answer lies not in the Government or the Education sector. Education is a laggard with regard to businesses that need to compete. London's rise to a financial centre during the 1980's opened up the market to bright people from all around the world. It was a pleasure and an education to work with them. Most of those people found it natural to learn in order to acquire the skills that the market demanded, and then some.

The counter-intuitive part is that having forgotten I needed to learn to forget in order to learn. Learning to forget is easier said than done. The neuro-plasticity research that I had been reading during the first three months was quite straightforward in it's advice of doing no mental rehab for the first six weeks. That was about the amount of time that I was in hospital and then at home after getting out of the coma. But that was luck rather than application of knowledge. Fortuitously I started at just the right time. Doing things my way may have been at odds with the NHS way. At least I was in with a good chance of success. This was borne out by conversations I had with various medics when they assessed me. Every musician

knows if you want to play fast, practise slow and that less is more.

Around this time my major sound/vision synaesthesia stopped. I would sometimes still get dreams with more imagery than I had before. I had mixed feelings. On one level it meant I was getting better but there was a feeling of loss. Could I replace it with something more formal, learnable and useable? To what end?

I also noticed that I could taste food better than before. It happened in a cheese shop. I could differentiate between goat's cheese and cheddar, at last. When I ate ice cream, a real favourite, I got brain freeze on the front of my head rather than up and down the middle. I was very attuned to any headache. There was a lingering fear that meningitis would return, even though I was innoculated. < I stayed away from wine as I did not want to experience the wrath of grapes. >

More Pies than Greggs

I was enjoying myself in the PIES factory. I thought I had three months before I would be back to normal. My activities across the segments were as follows.

Physical:

At the gym I moved onto the exercises that Emma designed for marathon training. I was still unable to drive so cycled everywhere. It was another way of building much needed stamina. My cycling had improved. I was not veering across the road when I threw lifesaver glances over my shoulders in traffic. My left eye was still bad and there were some busy roads and roundabouts where I would dismount and push my bike across the road.

Name: Zak Moore
Date: 03/11/2015



Exercise	SET x REP	WEIGHT	NOTES
Chin-Ups	3 x 5	X	
Walking Lunges	3 x 12	X	
Single Leg Extensions	3 x 12	X	
Press-Up - T-position	3 x 12	X	
Plank Taps	3 x 12	X	
Touch the sky	3 x 12	X	
Step-Ups	3 x 12	X	
Windmill	3 x 12	3kg	
Main CV session			
Treadmill Intervals	x6		Workouts-2 speed intervals-1% incline 1 min @ 6.6kph 1 min @9.5kph

Figure 3.1 Exercises to start training for marathon 6 months ahead

Through November and December I followed the above routines. On a good day, and most were, I would put extra reps in the bank.

There is a small hill near where I live. It is about 300 metres from bottom to top. I would put a handful of pebbles at the bottom, jog up, turn round, wonder what I was doing, walk back down and repeat. My brain still felt the shock absorbers were missing when I ran. The easiest thing to do was slow the pace < which happened naturally > I worked up to 4 handfuls of pebbles over the next few weeks. I did not want to go too far from home in case I could not make it back. Start Small. Never to Defeat.

I started running further. Two miles to begin with, on the country lanes near my house. I took my dog, a red Labrador < Ginger like her master! >. She is very good at walking to heel. This time she was too good. As I ran she took her "at heel" position. She was carrying a stick in her mouth and the pointy end kept jabbing my left calf. I hitch kicked the half mile home to avoid the prodding pooch.

Early in January I got out on the roads < to avoid taking the dog. > I did a six-mile circuit in walk/run mode. I ran on my toes, trying a new way of running called the POSE method. Too much too soon: I got a bleed on my right calf and shin. I was on Warfarin to prevent blood clots and it took three weeks to heal. This was longer than what I normally would have expected. I spent January resting and watching more daytime TV than is healthy. I mainly watched archaeology programmes and then fell asleep. Digging into and piecing together the past from broken pottery, skeletons and other artefacts was something I identified with, especially after I learned that one of the presenters had died from a brain aneurysm.

I got slightly depressed during January. I knew it would happen at some point. I discovered that if I did not get out every other day or get to the gym I would get tetchy and twitchy. The three-week layoff was character building. It also added to the anxiety if I would finish the marathon training in time. Either way I was going. < Blisters rather than blistering pace. >

When people found out I was doing the marathon they asked what time I was aiming for. "Finishing" was my stock reply. I set myself a target of six hours. It is good to have goals.

By the end of January I was back to running. I used apps to monitor my run on my phone. I loaded some music from my youth (AC/DC) to listen to on my mono phone, hoping to find my inner runner. If the cartooning had helped my initial rehab perhaps this connection would help too. I killed off any desire for the POSE method. That is the second pose I have executed. This time I did not start to die. I used my new super-hero creative powers to invent a replacement: PLOD - Pull Leg, Over, Down. < Simply repeat the process. > It was more fun and less injurious.

My sleep cycle shifted markedly. I woke at six and worked for a couple of hours. I would wake the family in turn so that they could get out to school and work. I allowed myself a siesta after lunch. At night I would fall asleep any time between eight and half past nine, usually watching TV. < My head was full of unfinished police procedurals. I started to think crime might pay. >

Intellectual:

I had been practising my coding chops and successfully converted the Creative

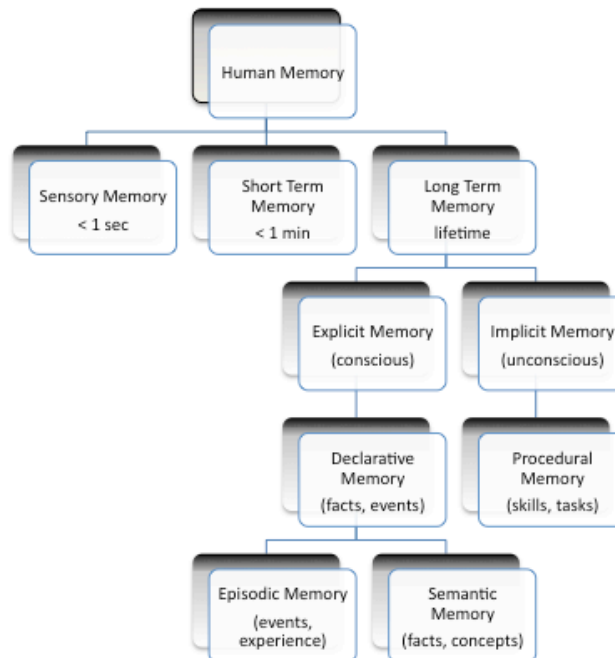
Techniques Handbook. The book was written by four of my old University tutors. They and the University owned the material. I had to negotiate using the intellectual property [IP].

During my reading of creativity material I kept coming across the quote that Picasso had filched from Voltaire "The good borrow. The great steal." I do not truck with that point of view. Other peoples' intellectual property must be respected. You could ask Aaron Swartz, had he not killed himself over that very issue. What a waste.

The IP negotiations took on a life of their own, and lasted through to the New Year. I had to speak to many people until eventually I reached a lawyer that could make an affirmative decision on behalf of the University. This was my major intellectual goal during the tail end of 2015. It made a change from the technical and administration roles I had done before. I enjoyed it.

I had read up on neuro-plasticity and realised that having an idea was easy. Trying to get other people to absorb new stuff took them six weeks. They had to forget their old, ingrained, habitual ways. Then there is time for the impact to filter through for the recipient. It was a good lesson. Transferring ideas needs an appreciation of other people and stellar communication to create value.

Nov - Jan



Almost back to before

Chasing percentiles

Added some new stuff:

Neuroplasticity for self
Neuroplasticity for business

Assess the way I worked in
comparison to treatment
-Relaxed constraints

Figure 3.2 Atkinson-Shiffrin - Chasing the upper percentiles.

As the fog turned to a mist that could be heavy some days and light on others I was able to observe my still slower-than-before brain. My memory map was growing but the processing seemed as asynchronous as a rail network without a timetable.

I visualised my brain spatchcocked and rolled out to micron thickness. It resembled a city. The process that shuttled information between the stations was like an underground system. This metro, however, was not one I was familiar with. I live near London and know that tube map. This was more like a city I have never been to. Moscow was a good candidate.



Figure 3.3 Brain-Moscow Metro mash up.

This tied in to what had been a major theme for my generation. Noam Chomsky nailed it eloquently and succinctly: "The Cold War was everything...and nothing."

About half Moscow Metro stations had been designed as nuclear shelters. The art is reportedly beautiful.

I was twenty-one in 1984. Orwell's dystopian masterpieces left me with a sense of nihilism. < I prefer his autobiographical works now. > I had no plans for anything after. Thankfully that threat has passed, I hope. Now there are new threats with home-grown terrorists using bombs and knives on the underground. Vigilance is needed at many levels.

My brain had been dirty bombed by bacteria. I did not know how my thought citizens had fared in their lock-down station-shelters. Nor did I know if there were subversives or terrorists lurking around my neural network.

Putting the metaphorical map aside and going inside my head: an executive function watched surveillance cameras in a control room, monitoring my thoughts travelling on the different coloured underground lines. In my unscientific way I was aware of being both the watcher and the subject at the same time. This was viscerally different from the MRI scans that were carried out. Mine showed reducing lesions and repairs to damage by comparison to previous scans but not thoughts. One day that will change. Art may lead us there. I do not believe in magic but enjoy magic realist stories of Borges, Bulgakov, Garcia-Marquez, Eco, et al. Smart-Creative people will be needed.

Mostly the monitoring was boring and benign. Virtual checks were run to ensure that there I had no unusual behaviours that would upset others. Thought citizens were counted on and off the trains. What items did they carry on to trains? Did they take them off? Did the subject drop anything? Were sleight of brain passes made on platforms? Did I need to alert internal thought police on the platforms and

labyrinthine corridors? "Proceed with caution".

I was also an investigative neuro-journalist. Each day I kept a log of what had happened the day before. I reported as best I could the things that I felt, remembered and thought was newsworthy. A reporter conscientiously filing copy day after day. I was a stringer in a strange land. Nobody on the news-desk was interested in Notes from the Underground. They wanted stories from above the subterranean stations. They would have to wait until I mastered my new map before I could venture above ground.

When my thought citizens eventually made it outside the underground they walked in the world, like busy people with scant regard for others. The surveillance switched to street level. My inner surveillance team looked for reactions in others when I spoke. Was there anything untoward? Had something subversive slipped through from the underground? Was that a Tourette utterance that startled friends or family? Was my behaviour within the limits of acceptability? < I am used to test driven development. This was the social equivalent. Slow and awkward. JDIRFT - Just do it right first time. practise produces perfection. >

Whatever was going on physically and psychologically with the schizo-surveillance unit was compounded by a bigger realisation: there is nothing beyond consciousness. The subconscious is part of consciousness and it can be observed. My subconscious was operating slowly enough to be recognised. It was an interesting side effect of the drugs as my brain reconfigured. Would both parts join up holistically to be me? Or was I going to become a great group of guys?

Perhaps it was the new soundscape from my partial deafness that was most prevalent. It took time to adjust my good ear to tune into the action and more time to

accommodate the filtering required. Perhaps it was my left eye. It was lazy after about fifteen seconds looking at things and unable to hold focus. Perhaps it was the readjustment of the cerebral spinal fluid that was trying to find equilibrium levels in my constantly changing brain physiology as the swelling slowly subsided.

Emotional:

My writing buddy, Keith, observed that I was warmer than before, a little less ready to bombast. I was however very tired and had to sleep throughout the day. Perhaps Spain would be ideal with their lunchtime siestas.

The Inner Game of Music has some good techniques to help doing practise when you don't feel like it or are under the weather. The changed perspective somehow assists by having to approach habitual practise differently. In effect we relax the constraints that we impose from previous practise sessions. We allow our brains freedom to explore. Etudes are easier. Learning is better. Progress is achieved.

In the first 3 months of recovery my progress was haphazard.

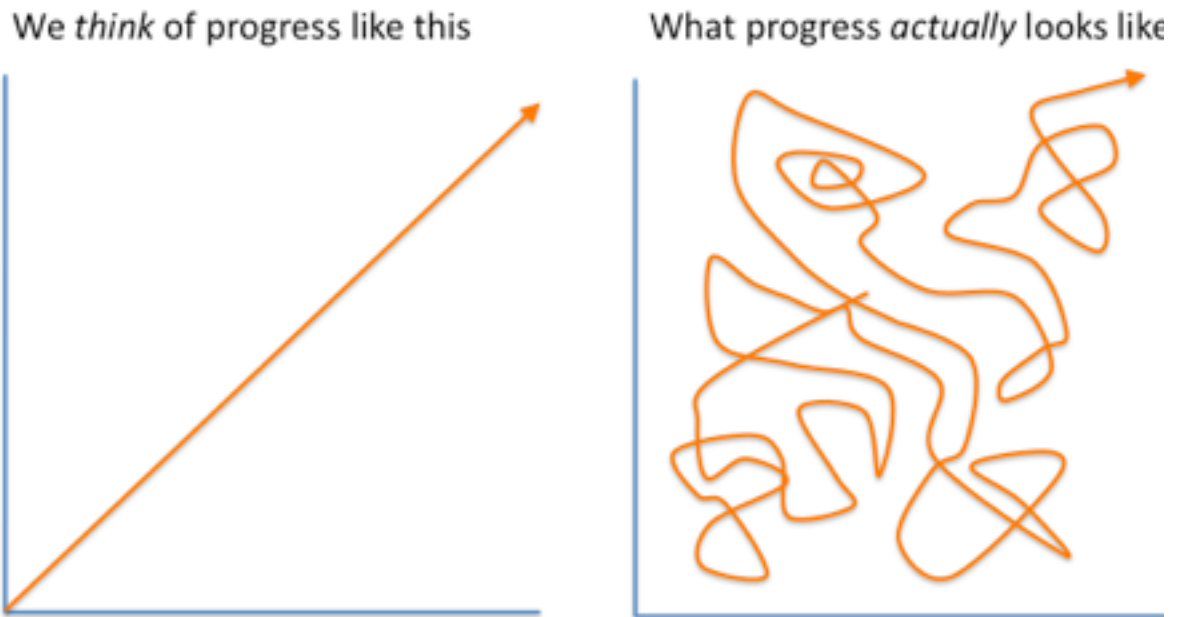


Figure 3.4 Our ideal view of progress versus what it was really like in the early days.

There are other factors at work: Scale and Time. There is a fractal dimension in recovery. Most of our quantitative measuring systems are based on decimals and a few on logarithmic or sometimes exponential scales. At least that is what I was taught at school and University. < Education is always open to change as new discoveries are made. >

Some measurement techniques are statistical. I think we will see significant changes as new ways of finding patterns emerge from Big Data. I suspect, but cannot prove that many of the patterns already exist but we do not have mature enough methods or techniques to measure and depict them meaningfully. > Fractals may hold some of the answers. Fractal has the same etymology as fractured, another word for broken. As my broken brain was healing fractal graphing provided a better way to show things.

Perhaps the easiest way to explain what I felt was happening as my memory

recovery progressed is to show by Koch curves.

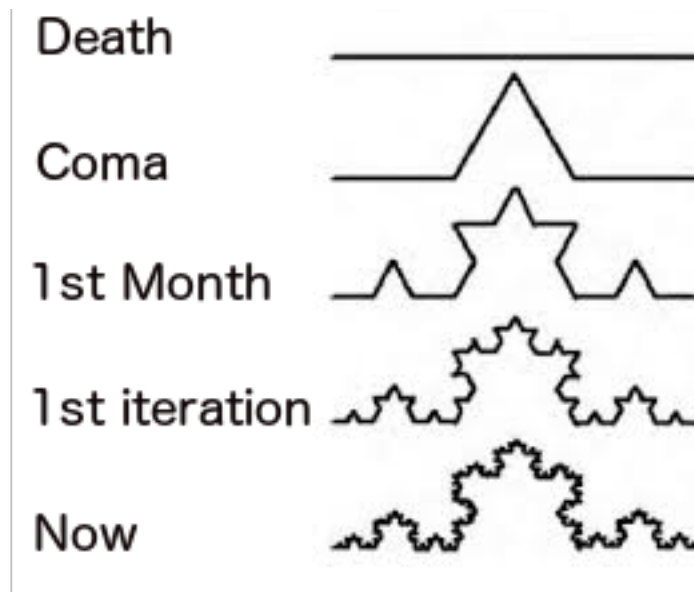


Figure 3.5 Koch fractal breakdown. Scale of neural reconnections over time.

The Koch curves represent growth through levels of brain recovery. More detail was added over time. My feelings and thoughts grew in natural fashion, unlike Cartesian 'progress' curves. < Infant brains generate neurones at a pace in excess of 250,000 cells per second at peak expansion time. Ask your mother how quickly your head grew when you were young. >

I can only assume what death is like but I had been close enough...for the time being. It did not appear to be too bad - if you can get the necessary drugs. I know that the body plays a part in self-administered medication for pain relief. That said I would not like to be run over or eaten by sharks or lions. < Having survived one NDE I did not want to experience Death by Math. Pictures are easier to share ideas with. >

I suspect that my muses < I have more than one. > exist somewhere in the levels of the Koch curves. Perhaps there is a muse for each level.

When I came round after my coma I was obsessed by The Stranglers, an underrated pop group, that may be a low level muse for me as their song titles informed the Early Daze section of my story. Some people come out of comas thinking that they have been kidnapped by reindeer. It sounds idyllic - but if you have ever been on a Lapland sleigh ride you will know it is very boring staring at the backend of a reindeer.

Stephen King, the writer, says he has a grunting, sniffing cigar-chomping muse. It reminds me of the cat in 'The Master and Margarita' by Mikhail Bulgakov, which in turn inspired the song 'Sympathy for the Devil' by the Rolling Stones. If I need to activate my version of King's muse I call up the image and sounds of Keef and Ronnie singing 'Woo, Woo. Woo, Woo.' < Access all dark areas. >

In short I think that there are muse activators that we do not understand well enough to call on at will. Some try meditation and others mindfulness to activate theirs. I suspect those practises are warm-up activities. I, and others, do not pay to watch warm ups. I pay to see performance.

For me it was not so much new emotional assets being acquired. Rather this was old ones being reactivated and sticking. It was more like walking in a large landscaped garden. When I turned a corner I would recognise plants that were already laid out and usually in bloom. It was not planting and growing but looking afresh and more deeply into emotional intelligence. There was a natural order that had been arranged. It was more ordered than the Jackson Pollock paintings of the previous iteration. There was height in the landscape. Instead of being in a teardrop I could see dewdrops glistening on petals and spider webs in early morning sunlight. Peace rather than chaos. < Environmental metaphors are good ways of describing

knowledge work. The shapes that are natural are fractal, too. There are no straight lines in the forest, as my training corporal used to say. >

I was lucky that once something was recalled it seemed to stick.

I have meditated off and on for forty years. < From my Western perspective: Buddhism is to the Abrahamic Religions what Brazil is to International football: everybody's second favourite team. > The experience of Being an accidental transcendent then coming slowly back from a coma showed different levels of consciousness that I had not been aware of. The increasing detail in each layer signified the joining of memories and motor functions as my brain and body healed and the brain swelling reduced. I do not think that it is possible for healthy people to transcend, at will, backwards through the layers as deep as I had gone for as long as I did. < You may be able to get black-out drunk, but to stay like that for six months... > I think that short of a physical or psychological brain trauma or deterioration through ageing our body's protection systems will prevent that. You can try. Let me know how you get on. < But if you are successful you will not remember this. >

It reminded me of when I was eight years old, skating on a frozen pond at an Aunt's farm. I could look through the ice and see the brightly coloured stones and pebbles on the bottom but I could not, and would, not try to break the ice. In the summer there were reeds in the pond and it was too dangerous to swim in.

Mindfulness is another area that piqued my curiosity concerning consciousness. I appreciate that people want to use it as a way of understanding and exploring unanswered questions. But my view is: I think that the clockwork nature of the inner scheduling systems of the brain *and* body do not allow that. I think mindfulness is like having a box of chocolates but you are only allowed to eat the foil wrappers. < It

plays merry havoc with your fillings. >

About the end of October I received my hearing aids. My left ear is completely deaf and will not work again. < It is now a very ostentatious pencil holder. > I thought about getting it pierced, for five seconds before rejecting the notion. I have a loop hearing aid that picks up sound on my left and transfers it to a bud in my right ear. The hearing aids are good to let me hear on my left side - but since I spent the majority of my time in my home office I had no need for them. I may change when I have to work with other people for longer periods of time. The unexpected benefit was that my gait improved. As soon as I put them in my pelvic girdle loosened as I walked down the hospital corridor. It was four months since I had walked down that corridor. In the summer it had taken me three weeks of practise to get that far, holding on to Debra's arm.

Social:

After my initial small successes I continued going out and meeting friends and colleagues in London.

People come back from NDEs with different experiences. Some say they have proof of heaven. I now believe that God is imaginary. I also now realise that i is an imaginary number. That raises some fundamental questions about my current understanding of mathematics and by inference the Scientific way. The debate between two divergent views both grounded on imaginary entities started me thinking more deeply than I had before. Where and what are the demarcations between free will and collective will?

I respect other people's points of view about imaginary entities. There were days when the anti-convulsants may have had similar effects to Lithium - " I am so happy because today I found my friends. They're in my head" as Kurt Cobain so eloquently put it in the eponymous song. I produced a series of blogs at that point based on the song.

I have reasons to be grateful for both viewpoints. Many people mentioned me in their prayer groups. My Mother found solace in those actions. I am grateful.

I am thankful for the application of science that enabled medicines and machines to provide ease of mind to my wife and children, after the initial shock.

I appreciate that both belief systems do good for society. Religious houses provide space for charities. Science provides research that is engineered to improve the quality of life. There are downsides such as zealots, weapons and war. Neither way is perfect but they are the best we have, at the moment. To quote Paul Dirac - "Some new thinking is here needed." I had a brain that was thinking differently. The answer would emerge from plain sight...it may have needed my broken brain to see it. But as I said I am no philosopher or scientist.

Christmas and New Year came and went. I was limited to buying small presents when I did my shopping as I could only carry what I could put in my day-sack. On Christmas day my wife's family came to our house for lunch. I wore my hearing aids. When the crockery was moved to the kitchen and loaded into the dishwasher I thought somebody was playing a loop tape of Pierre Boulez conducting of Ligeti's "Aventures" where a tray of dishes is thrown to the floor. I was asleep early on New Year's eve. < I will probably have what is left of my Scottishness revoked... >

When I was in London doing Christmas shopping I was very international: I met

Pier Lorenzo, an Italian I had worked with in Norway for coffee before I met my Swedish friend Esbjörn for lunch. Japanese this time. There are very few JDI-RFT < Just Do It - Right First Time > coders that I trust to release without testing: he is one. Not that he would, of course.

He was finishing his current role in the New Year and was going to take some time to work on a pet project. He also offered to help turn the FlowTracker spreadsheet into a phone app, claiming it was for his own pedagogic purposes. My external surveillance team was telling me differently. It would have been rude to turn down such a generous offer. I am very grateful for his considerate and considerable help. In return I stayed out of his way as he worked and gave advice and direction only when asked for.

This was more like jazz than the large scale orchestrated work we did 12 years before when we first met. We sorted out what had to be done but stayed loose on the by-when. We knew the head < main melody > and could improvise over the choruses. We did not need a napkin to plan. The system was easy to understand with our shared knowledge of the patterns to use, and there was a working prototype. We were like jazzers jamming on a standard from the Great Coders Songbook. < Bill Evans meets Kazoo Zak. >

There is a commercial correlation: Large companies think of their IT departments as opaque orchestras. The technical staff however consider themselves to be like Lisa Simpson at the start of every episode...being shown the door for playing jazz. This disconnect of perceptions explains why a lot of projects run late, don't deliver to expectations or are canned., but I digress...

Ambient Music will provide a metaphor for generative systems development, an

emerging trend. Managers will be pressured from above to commission computers to do in microseconds a lot of rational work that currently takes man-months. The premise is that it will free up staff to be creative. But as I explain next that is a fallacy.

< There may be trouble ahead...as Irving Berlin so lyrically put it. >

That learned me

Most people do not like being taught subjects that do not engage or enthuse. Some expect to be trained. Others learn and apply by themselves.

For me learning during recovery was hard work. I enjoyed it, but I was on strong medication.

One potential avenue back to work could be training, coaching or facilitated learning: three knowledge management perspectives. Knowledge is slippery according to Edith Penrose. It is notoriously difficult to measure.

In November I took trips to the educational spawning grounds: two school parent evenings. What better place could there be to test my understanding of the latest teaching methods of Bloom, Hattie, and Dweck? The difference was astounding. One school had teachers oblivious to the established trends and the other was bang up to speed. Perhaps too much up to speed - as there is a backlash against some of the findings from Dweck based on allegedly non-scientific data.

Caroline Dweck purveys the Grit school of learning. She terms Grit a Presbyterian trait. I had a Presbyterian upbringing in Scotland. Hume tried to "bundle" Buddhist or Eastern thinking into his philosophy. It did not really work. Scots have a Presbyterian version of the Daoist Yin-Yang symbol: it allows one choice more than Henry Ford offered. We can have black *or* white. Here are the two versions.

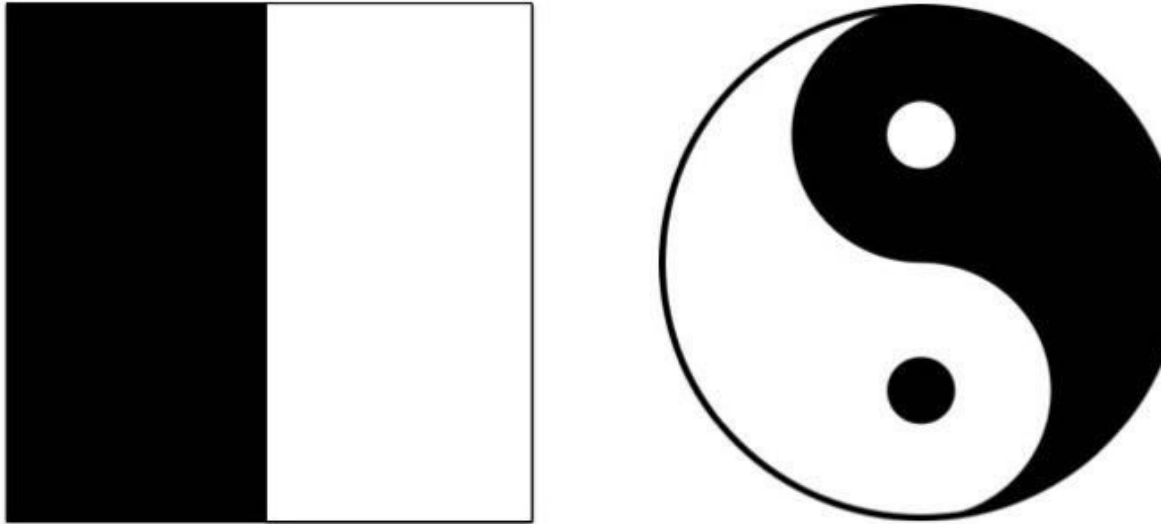


Figure 3.6 Two Daos: Presbyterian and Chinese

I like to think that Malevich would be half pleased with my homage to his suprematism classic.

I had a good education. < The teachers' abilities were high, even if my IQ was low. >
> Application of that learning provided a comfortable life.

Now I needed creative aspects that education had not supplied. I stick my hand up and admit that I have more audacity than talent. It was twenty years after leaving school that I picked up a guitar and bought a motorbike. < Recycled adolescent. >
Now fifteen years on I was in a similar place on my mental recovery.

I could not completely shake the shackles of the square but knew that the softer elements alluded to by the Yin-Yang would be good to incorporate into a way of complementing rational thought with creative thinking.

I had previously used the I-Ching. < Another technique I had picked up from Jung. >
> It is a very simple way of thinking differently. It is not pre-ordained divination. It helps remove mental blocks but uses archaic language, which makes it difficult to understand. I think that De Bono's lateral thinking is a good alternative: it provides

six different modes of thinking.

I started to triangulate between rational learning models and creativity research. The main material that I looked at are shown below.

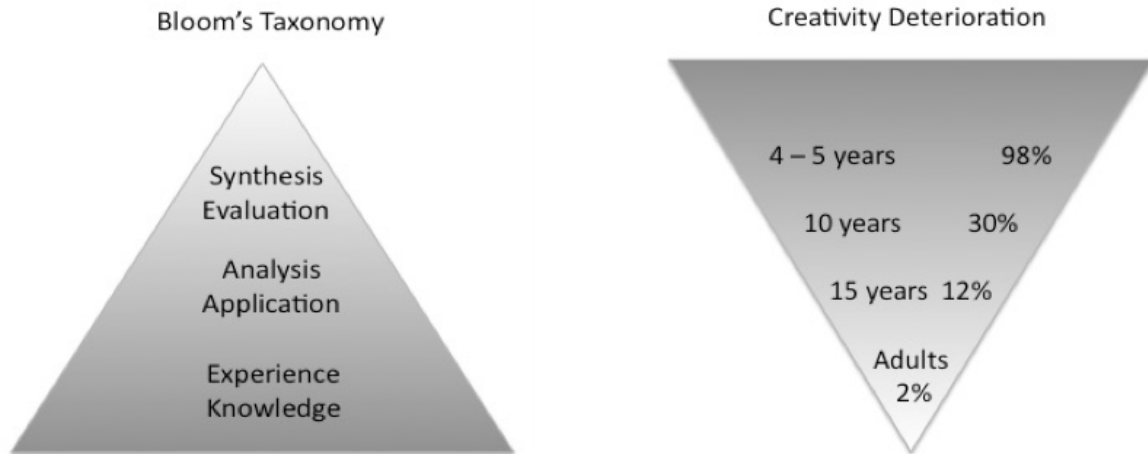


Figure 3.7 Bloom and Land Comparison.

Bloom - a learning taxonomy	Land - Creativity diminishing over time
Bloom is used to teach	George Land commissioned by NASA
Makes plans and checks	Harder to objectively measure
Used in schools for society	Needed by business to capitalise on automation
Works bottom Up	Depicted Top down deterioration
Used in classes and groups	Considered to be individual
Formal and structured	Freedom

Table 3.8 Bloom compared to Land

There was a liberating feeling at finally understanding what education had been about. With the bright-eyed youthful enthusiasm I pulled together other models from business (Plan, Do, Check, Act), education (Explain, Model, Scaffold, Practise as well as reinforcement, spacing and interleaving), creative thinking (Divergent/Convergent), neuro-science (Plasticity) and knowledge research (Boisot's Social Learning Cycle) to synthesize a process for myself. It allowed me to escape the bounds of business and incorporate creative thinking in a learning loop focussed on delivering value.

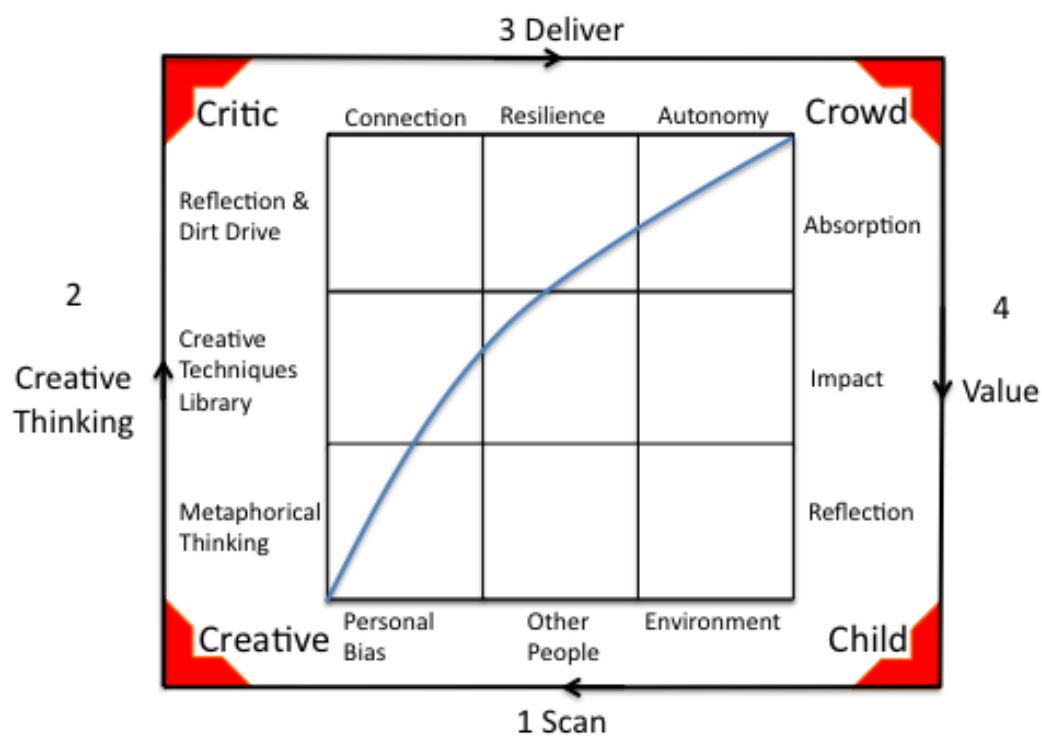


Figure 3.9 Initial Creative Thinking Framework

At last I had a way of incorporating Creative Analysis into what is a standard knowledge work cycle.

What goes in the creative thinking box? The Creative Technique Library.

Creative Problem Solving was an enjoyable semester during my studies. I selected its core component: The Creative Technique Library and had made a 'periodic table' from it. That would not be too far "out there" for rational minded people to understand and hopefully intuitive for first timers. I find that creative problem solving is best used before embarking on rational analysis and modelling. It improves the speed of design and development by defining bounds then relaxing them. It is good for finding and removing unknowns.

Creative thinking differs from Bloom's hierarchical model. It is an eight-step divergent-convergent process. I frequently use it to augment rational analysis. You may need to give yourself time to switch from rational to creative thinking. It will vary from person to person. Here is a simple overview.

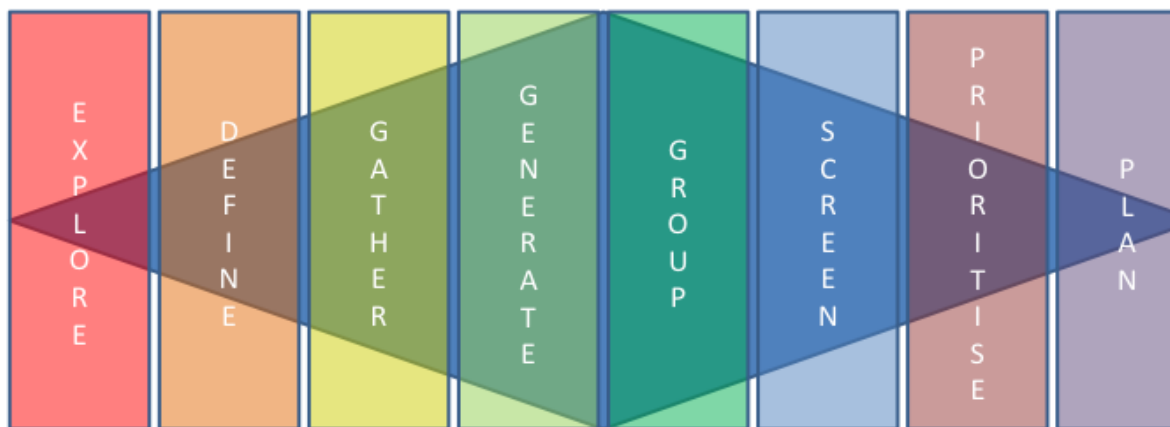


Figure 3.10 - Divergent convergent thinking model

The steps are listed below

Divergent steps	Convergent steps
Explore	Group
Define	Screen

Futures/Plans

It is available on the COMARATHONMAN website. The easiest way to learn is to explore some of the techniques. Take 10 minutes to have look and play. Come back in to it in 2 days to after doing fast and slow thinking. That will help reinforce it in your working memory. If you have a real world problem to use it on give it a test. I am interested to know how it helps.

Men In GIT Is

Men In Git Is... a play on meningitis. Allow me to explain.

Esbjörn finished his contract in early 2016 and began to build the FlowTracker phone app.

He set up a repository on GIT to manage the code. GIT is a tool that many developers use to store and share their software, usually under creative commons licenses to enable and encourage re-use through open source.

The differences and similarities between using GIT and meningitis I perceived are:

GIT	Meningitis
Differences	
Open Source	Open Sores
Version Control	Wipes Memories
Short Learning Curve	Long Relearning Curve
Similarities	
Collaborative	Selfless help from Esbjörn
Backup	Reconnection
Self Managed	Self Managed Rehabilitation

Table 3.12 GIT vs. Meningitis

According to the inventor of GIT, Linus Torvalds: "I'm an egotistical bastard, and I name all my projects after myself. First 'Linux', now 'Git'". ('git' is British slang for "pig headed, think they are always correct, argumentative"). It is a self-deprecating

remark that is not a true reflection of the use of the tool. GIT, and other similar platforms and online communities provide showcases of talent and application. < If you want rock 'n' roll coders send your A&R team to the online repos. >

GIT helps collaborative development through sharing. It provides version control. It also facilitates learning by reverse engineering, mimicry and being able to discuss details with the author. Repositories can be private or open.

Commercial companies still tend to work in Time and Motion ways when it comes to software development. Their IT departments and teams are working so far behind the business beat that they may as well be playing in a different concert hall. There is so much < over > reliance on the Toyota Production System [TPS] I think many IT departments are playing the Budokan in Tokyo. The heterogeneity in Western psyche is different to Japanese homogeneity. Simply transferring what works in one culture will not guarantee success in another, but I digress...

The FlowTracker specification was loose as a fake book. A fake book in Jazz terms supplies details for musicians such as key, tempo, time signature, melody line (head) and a list of the chords for the different sections. Normally it will be one side of A4 - or less. It is a lot more relaxed and allows for individual expression than a classical music score. Players can take turns to improvise over the backing "comp" chords to express themselves. Some people see improvisation as important to psychological contracts and others do not.

I was as excited and nervous as a kid that had been invited onto stage to play backup comps to a Jazz great: somewhat in awe and worried that I would not be able to keep pace with the maestro. Would I sound like fourth Kazoo in the school orchestra in comparison to the maestro? I need not have feared. Esbjörn led and left

little bits for me to fill in. He focussed on developing the chassis of the app and Android version. As I had a Mac I could convert bits of functionality specific to iPhones and iPads.

I had absolute trust in Esbjörn's dedication, common sense and attention to detail. We kept the retakes to a minimum and did very little 'remixing'. By then end of January the app was in beta mode and we could use it on our personal Android devices to iron out any small wrinkles. < Pass the software starch... >

Every time we made a change to the code we would update the GIT repository. It would inform the other to know to download the latest version and make sure it worked. Mistakes and misunderstandings, normally my fluffed fingering, could be spotted, fixed. If only shared knowledge was as easy to manage...

Outcomes and outputs

The outcomes and outputs from the second PIES iteration were:

Physical:

Running up and down the hill 20 times, twice a week.

Going to the gym until I got injured in January, which led to a light depression.

Intellectual:

Coded the "Creative Periodic Table" and negotiated use of IP.

Esbjörn was building FlowTracker, with a little help from me.

The learning material to support courses I intended to give was underway.

Emotional:

Not ready to return to full-time work.

I was concerned about a pending neuro-consultation.

Near the end of January I received an email from Esbjörn with a beta version of the app that I installed in on my Android device. That really lifted my mood.

Social

I got out and met people on a regular basis.

I survived Christmas. When the dishwasher was loaded with crockery I thought the dishes had been put in the clothes washing machine. < I was still getting used to using my hearing aids. >

Things that had piqued my curiosity

Neuro-plasticity - the brain's ability to change

The material on neuro-plasticity was very interesting.

I began wondering if I could use it at work to reduce, or appreciate cognitive lead times. People are interested in it. It is not very accessible.

There are benefits to come from applying it at Social, Commercial and Personal levels

Measuring value and progress of creative types of work to complement rational thinking.

Started to consider value in different ways to how it is used in business.

Strategy is changing to make money from Intellectual Property rather than hard goods. But we still use metrics from manufacturing to measure work and value.

Customer Value is supposed to be the driver of software development - but the differences between the conductors and jazzers obscures it.

Personal value - the long-term trend to automation suggests humans will need to learn to be creative. There is very little in the way of teaching it from commercial perspectives. There is a gap in the market.

The differences between teaching, training and learning.

I had read through a good few books on teaching and learning. I selected the better

bits, simplified where necessary and identified the components to make learning of creativity as simple as possible.

Next Steps

I was moving out of the "Artists' Way" of working and finding a path to back to income generation.

I could use the findings from my research to devise better ways of working. It is what I was paid to do previously so the change would not be too much too soon, I thought.

But first there was a marathon to prepare for and finish in better form than Phiedippedies.

A day at the seaside (Feb - Apr)

Hello World, again

At the start of February I had a check up with a neurologist. Clare was skiing with Ryan. My neighbour, Sue, drove me to the hospital with instructions from Clare to report back in case I could not understand what was going on. I was suitably nervous to get the adrenaline running. I wondered if I had progressed enough to stop the drugs? Would I be fit to drive again?

After the preliminary height, weight and blood pressure checks Sue and I were shown into the consultant's office. He was like a dressed down accountant in a toothpaste advert, exuding minty-mouth confidence. He ran through some initial questions that I assume were tests to rate my state of cognition. The last test was the most confusing: "Just go into that side room, remove your socks and shoes and lie on the bed." He said.

I shot him a sceptical look and he flashed back his Colgate smile like Lee Van Cleef in "For a few dollars more". < That was apt as the NHS had subcontracted neurology to the private hospital he worked at. >

He came in with a drawing pin and started pricking my feet. He tested my reflexes with his hammer, peered in my eyes with a torch and got me to walk along his carpet like a dressage donkey. He returned to his main room and updated his notes. I reshod and went back into the consultation room.

He was happy for me to come off the anti-convulsant tablets over a six-week < there it is again > weaning off period. I needed yet another brain scan and depending on the results I might be able to stop taking Warfarin.

I had emailed a list of questions to him in the week before the visit. One of my questions was about the benefits of polyvagal theory < It is not as profane as it sounds, I assure you. > He was man enough to tell me all he knew about it was that I

was interested in it. In short it suggests that there is a link between the vagal nerve and the subconscious. It is a "new and flexing" theory with research underway in a variety of neuro-related fields. It may also provide insights how spirit, yoga, gut feel and sixth-sense work.

With one last smile, he bade me farewell, expressing his admiration at my resilience at improving so well. I put that down to the PIES.

I was moving away from self-focus to a more holistic view of the world and my place in it. It is amazing what a little confidence boost can do. It set me up to focus on training for the day beside the sea when I was running the marathon.

Somewhere over the rainbow weigh up PIES

I had hoped to get back to fee-earning work in January. It did not happen. It was a small setback in my bigger plans. The leg injury and the depression it caused was more of a concern. I have one life and will have many jobs. One would come along in good time.

The PIES method began changing. < Start Small. Never to Defeat. > A framework was emerging.

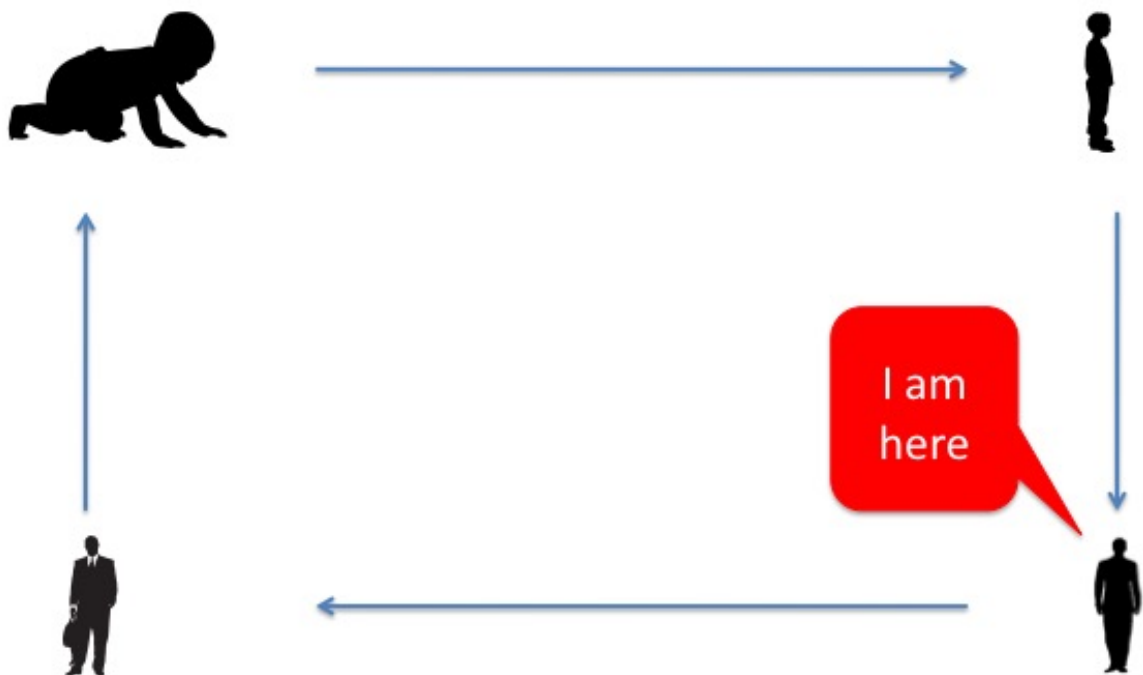


Figure 4.1 I am here

A time to look forwards and backwards: from being baby-helpless in hospital, through cartooning in childhood to adolescence and into young man without responsibilities and now a father. I realised that I was not as well recovered as I hoped to be at this stage and reset my expectations for getting back to work.

Revisiting the stations in life had benefits. Experience suggested that by ignoring creativity I had become a critic. As time had progressed I became a collection of

criticisms that Hitched me into a contrarian demeanour and finally a curmudgeon. < Gulp. >

Being able to turn back the clock and not be bounded by expectations from others and myself had been enjoyable and enlightening. I did not want to lose the second-time-round sojourn into creativity. I had enjoyed it. In thought and deed I wanted to share it's benefits. If it helped me in a way that the Neuro-consultant thought was good could it help others? Could I package the process in an understandable and useable way?

Physically - my main aim was to keep up the training after January's setback.

Intellectually and emotionally - Creative Thinking could augment rational analysis in a business context. A framework to make that happen was coming together. The activities could be applied at different levels for personal, commercial or social use. They could be delivered as learning or training depending on the recipient's attitude. Aptitude would follow. Both involved a degree of e-teaching. I assumed there would be a market. The drugs were good at removing fear of failure and ridicule. Success criteria also changed. I was more interested in getting a product together. I needed something to assess market sentiment.

Physical:

After January's enforced layoff from training for the marathon I was happy to get back on the roads. My mood lifted after forty minutes into the first six-mile run when

the endorphins kicked in.

I pinned the marathon training routine to my home-office wall and applied myself to it. I used a catch-up process. Not going as far or fast as suggested by the schedule in order for my calf to heal. I wore compression socks. They provided a sense of security.

I ditched the POSE method and ran as I used to when I was younger, so much younger than today. Back in the day I would sing to myself. I updated to the 21st Century. I downloaded some Dad Rock onto my phone, got an arm holster and went with tunes from yesteryear. I followed the same route, sometimes running it backwards. The music helped. It was around 120 - 130 beats per minute, rather than the POSE suggested 180 bpm. I started small to get back into the groove. < I say groove - it was AC/DC rather than full out funk. >

Emma had prepared an updated routine.

Name: Zak Moore
Date: 03/02/2016



Exercise	SET x REP	WEIGHT	NOTES
MOBILITY: Lunge Back with Twist	2 x 16	X	
Scorpion Stretch	2 x 16	X	
Forward, Back & Twist Lunges	2-3 x 20	X	
Hop Squats	2-3 x 20	X	
Kettlebell Swings	2-3 x 20	8KG	
Plank Leg Lifts	2-3 x 20	X	
TRX Press	2-3 x 20	X	
Single arm Pull	2-3 x 20	X	
Wall Sit	60 sec	X	
Standing Extension	2-3 x 20	X	
Main CV session			
Hill Running	6%	1 min @5KPH	
	10 mins	30s @ 8KPH	

Figure 4.2 February's Gym schedule.

As I was not working nor earning Emma gave me an hour of her time each month for free. It was really kind of her. In return I regaled her with my merry wit and repartee - which were really excuses to take a breather...

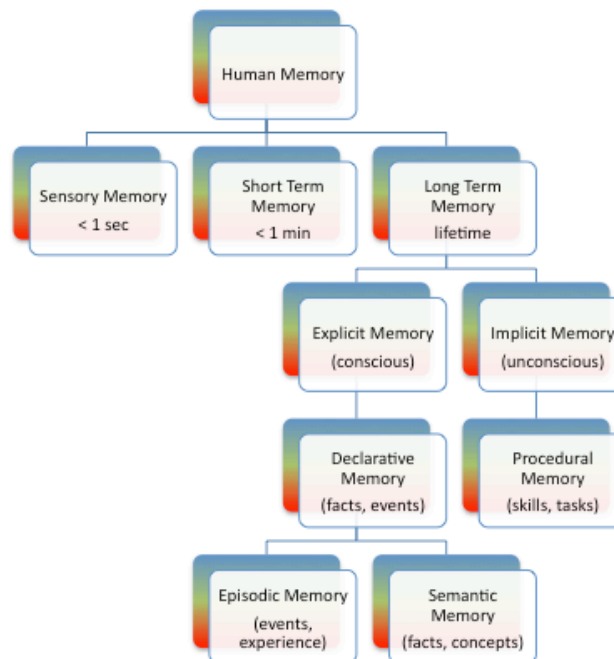
I timed my bike rides to the gym. The week on week improvements were encouraging. A degree of competing against the clock was returning. That was uplifting too.

I was conscious of time trickling down to the marathon as I trundled through the training schedule. I became slightly obsessive about it. At least I was weaning off the anti-convulsants but still on Warfarin, which meant I was always running with injury in mind. Injury came again but not as I expected.

Intellectual

My Atkinson-Shiffrin memory depiction turned from monochrome to multicolour as the mist lifted. I was warming to the challenges that lay ahead.

Feb - Apr



R, G, B works
inside out

Me first - broadcasting

Pushing my stuff with no
real concern for others

Publishing stuff. Looking
at feedback focussed on
marathon.

Euphoria at completion

Figure 4.3 Atkinson-Shiffrin Transmission Mode

I wrote some blog posts on social media. The readership for these posts was about 25% of what I received for the initial story about meningitis. It was good practise to hone my skills and pick up some useful feedback. I paraphrased Lithium lyrics by Nirvana for three posts. People liked the comparison between songs and business.

I had the task of preparing the websites for the FlowTracker app release. I know from experience that the first time I put a site live is the worst. Other people will invariably find flaws and errata. I took a relaxed but professional view. So long as I could showcase Esbjörn's efforts I would be happy.

I was still working through the material that had fallen out my initial iterations of the PIES process. It is hard to understand something when you are in the middle of it

< except trouble. > Strands of questioning thoughts were emerging like butterflies from chrysalises. Would the butterflies land on my lobes with sense and order or would one wayward wing beat lead to chaos?

Emotional:

February was the hardest part of recovery. It was healthy hard unlike January.

I was starting to push myself physically and playing catch up with the missed training. One time on the treadmill I took a middle distance view, letting myself transcend the monotony of running. It was a good sign that I was relaxed enough to do that. Pictures of the children whose stories appear on the meningitis book of experience floated in front of me. The bittersweet feeling that I was alive and they were not struck me and stuck. That was the moment my qualms about being ready-to-run evaporated. Instead of thinking about myself I thought about those less fortunate. Emma was watching and stayed silent until I finished. I explained what had happened. She told me that when she was ten years old her best friend had died from meningitis. Her help to get me ready was a way of giving something back, and perhaps finding some closure, too.

Not having achieved my aim of getting back to work by January was a bit debilitating. Caitlin - saviour turned tormentor - would remind me that she earned more from her Saturday job than I did. In return I explained the concept of saving to her as well as the difference between price and value. < Caitlin 1 - Curmudgeon 2 >

I was in another period of uncertainty waiting for the MRI scan that the consultant ordered. Eventually I received news that it was scheduled for 15th April. Two days

before the marathon.

Just before the marathon I published a post on my social media networks asking for last minute donations. I noticed that Sian looked at it on LinkedIn. Sian, prettier than Stevie Nicks circa '76, was the first girl I went to the cinema with. The usherette seated us in the front row of "The World's Greatest Athlete". After 30 minutes of plucking up the courage and rehearsing in my mind I did the big yawn and put an arm across her shoulders. Then what? I did not know how to do the next step and felt self-consciously caught in the projector beam which was now a spotlight focussed on the back of my head. I thought that if I moved in for the kiss everyone behind would see it on screen. Fifteen minutes later my left arm went to sleep and was stuck across Sian's shoulders for the last half of the film. I don't know what she must have thought. < If you are a Dad with a young daughter may I suggest you treat her by booking the tickets for her first cinema date. You know the row. >

We met up after school a few times after my cinema fail and eventually Sian was the first girl I kissed. How my ego soared when she asked, "Can we do it again?" One Saturday afternoon we went to the local park. It was there and then I realised Sian could run faster than me. My ego tumbled like an asteroid through the event horizon of the biggest black hole. I could not accept any girl running faster than me. You know how < fragile > men are. I did not know what I felt or how to say it so went into avoidance mode. < How funny it would be if dark energy is simply male emotions... Powering the Universes. > Eventually emotions come out the other side of black holes. Sorry Sian.

I learned from our brief chat on LinkedIn that Sian had meningitis in her early 20's. Thankfully she made a full recovery. I wonder if she sings Stevie Nicks songs on

Karaoke nights or in the car every now and then?

Social:

Waiting for the scheduled MRI scan left me in limbo, as that would determine my future paths. A crossroads somewhere way up ahead. The results would say whether I had recovered or not. This would, I thought open the doors to going back to work. Would I want to do what I did before? The scan took place 2 days before the marathon. It was part of a confluence of events in my life: an eddy in my river.

My main focus was on getting ready for the marathon. I had the time to go running. I noticed more people coming out and running as the weather improved. We did not speak. Sometimes there was a nodded acknowledgement, but not always. If you ride a motorbike you always nod to other riders as you pass them. Runners are not as social as bikers in that regard.

Coming off the anti-convulsants changed my sleep patterns. At last I was able to watch police procedurals to the end and see that the criminals do get caught. I also started waking up at four a.m. I would get up, feed the dog, go to my office and start working. I would work through to about eight then shower and have breakfast and write my diary. I found I could get a lot done in the early hours. I had been a night owl before I got ill. This was a big change. I needed less naps after lunch unless I had gone to town or run the day before.

Half way through this rehab-iteration I published the app that Esbjörn had made. I had been so focussed on the production and marketing side of thing that I did not consider Aunt Flo in the bigger picture. When it went live it was listed on the same

page as menstruation trackers. Sometimes words have more than one meaning. < I took two aspirin and got on with things...I had swapped out the Warfarin for Aspirin as soon as I was free of the anti-convulsants. >

FlowTracker is Go!

Time sheeting is a very boring task. I have worked in some companies where the staff were required to record start and finish times of each task using an automated tool < I did not last long in that organisation. > I am wary of the advances in measuring knowledge workers by Time and Motion metrics. I am also wary of organisations holding employee biofeedback data. It will come.

Esbjörn came to do some things on my Mac-book to make the app viable on the iPhone. I am not going to hide behind memory problems. I just did not have the technical skills or aptitude/attitude to do the more esoteric things that were required to make it work. < Having escaped one NDE I did not want to suffer Death by Code... >

I had set the kit up the night before so that we would be ready to roll. He rocked. The speed of his typing was akin to a teenage girl on a mobile phone. < Impossible to follow with the naked eye. > Barcelona FC is renowned for tika-taka football. Esbjörn was doing the coding equivalent. Structure emerged from playing precise professional passes. Goal after goal was scored and seen on screen. At "half-time" I cooked lunch of Caribbean pork and rice. That was another step on the recovery path. Up until then I had been a strictly pierce-film-lid-in-several-places kind of chef. I admired his bravery trying my first attempt at grown-up cooking in eight months. After suffering no ill effects from lunch he did some more magic to the app. By the end of the day he published it onto my iPhone. We took the dog for a celebratory walk.

The release was scheduled for mid March. My job was to get the stuff out. Deploying to Google Play was straightforward and the app went live on 4th March.

Apple promotion was more convoluted. The app had to be properly packaged, signed and submitted for testing by the Apple technical team. Everything was going well until the unexpected last step - Now please upload 30 screenshots! It had to be done as I had scheduled an initial marketing campaign to coordinate with newsletters going out from recruitment agents. < Agencies need their contract staff to submit time sheets with their invoices in order to bill the clients. >

The emulator I had on my computer could produce the necessary screen shots. I spent a good half-day running through virtual devices and dumping screen-shots That I uploaded to the placeholders on iTunesConnect. Finally the publishing app let me submit for approval. It was promoted to iTunes on 14th March. < If I had not been brain injured beforehand I felt like it afterwards. >

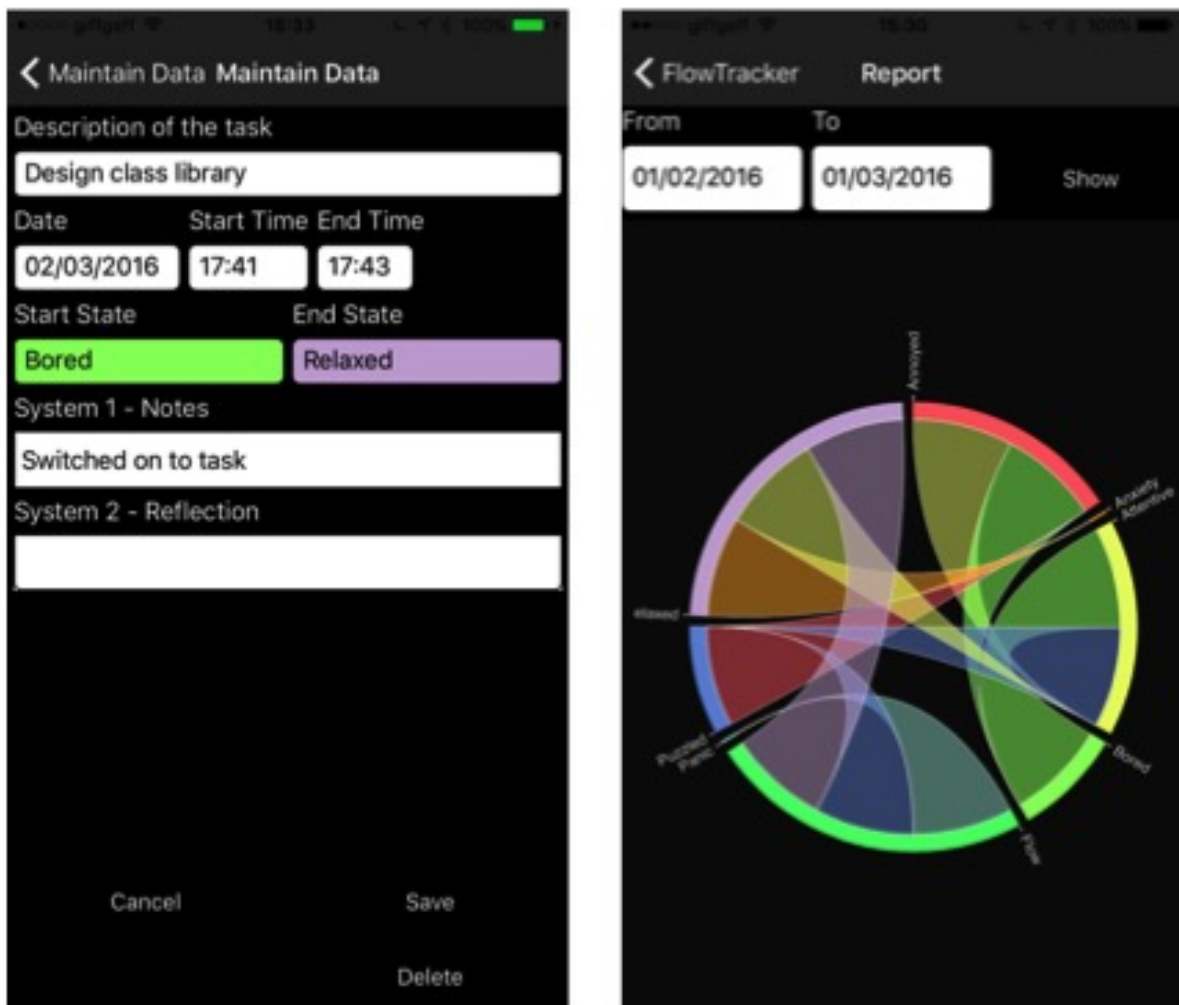


Figure 4.8 FlowTracker Entry and Report

The app needed a home a page so I registered Flowtracker.org. The app is free for life. You probably only need to use it when there are significant changes in your role, or you need to get a FLOW baseline to be able to monitor future changes.

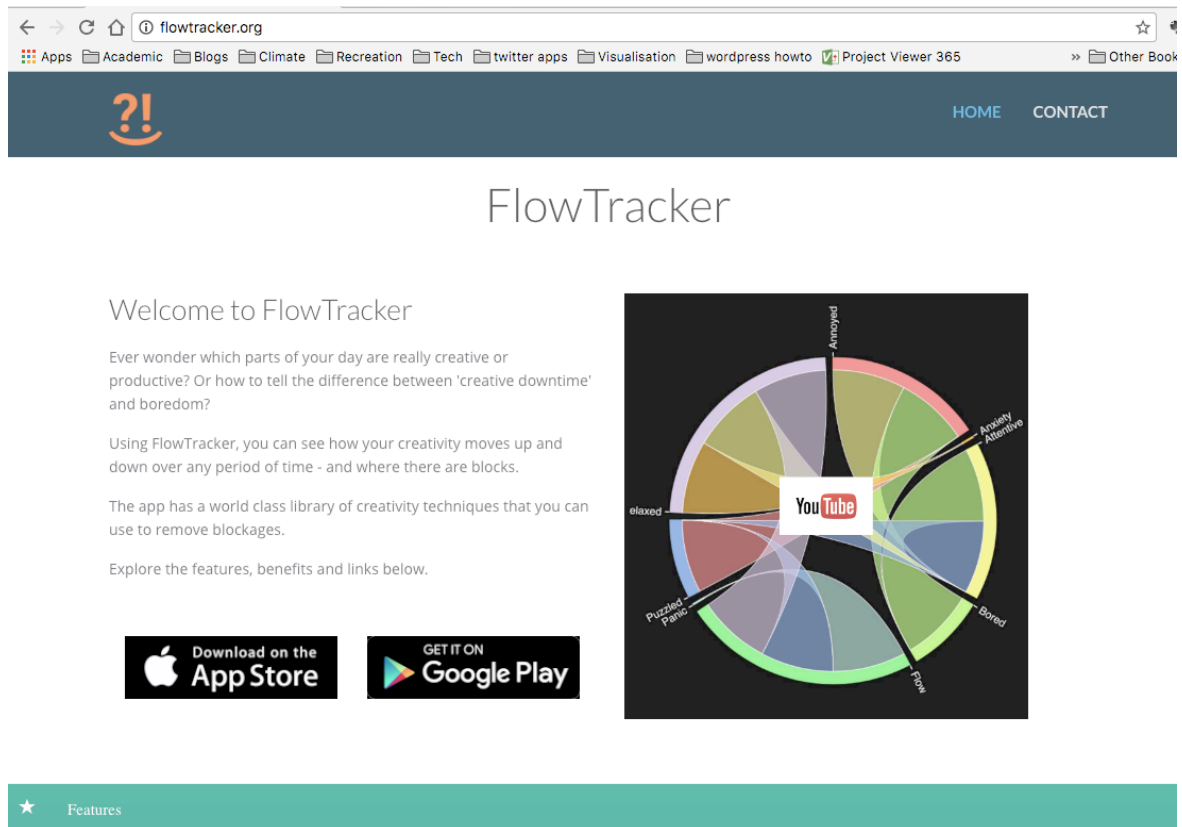


Figure 4.9 FlowTracker homepage

I made a video to show the app in action. This was a first, and no doubt the worst, attempt. I relaxed my constraints to do the marketing side of things.

Feel free to try FlowTracker if and when you need it. < Having escaped an NDE I do not wish Death by Timesheet on anyone. >

I have never been a fan of Frederick Winslow Taylor. He is the man who created time and motion studies. Most companies still use his outdated methods. < If you fill in a timesheet on your job you can thank FWT for that WTF Friday afternoon feeling. >

I had long realised that there is a lot more to people than the machine-age, production-line metrics prevalent in Time and Motion ways of work. The answer was really simple: change Motion to Emotion. This will improve workplace hygiene,

morale and motivation leading to a visceral connection to work and better results all round. Some organisations are more successful with this approach.

At the beginning of February I met a yoga classmate for coffee. Amanda, or Omanda as she is known in class, is a top flight HR consultant. As we spoke about the apparent furniture rearranging of business models to restructure organisations I dropped Time and Emotion into the conversation. She paused, cup halfway from saucer to mouth, thought for a moment, and said, "That's a good one". That was a tipping point to put together the first-cut material and website to explain Time and Emotion. I built and published TimeAndEmtion.com over the next two days.

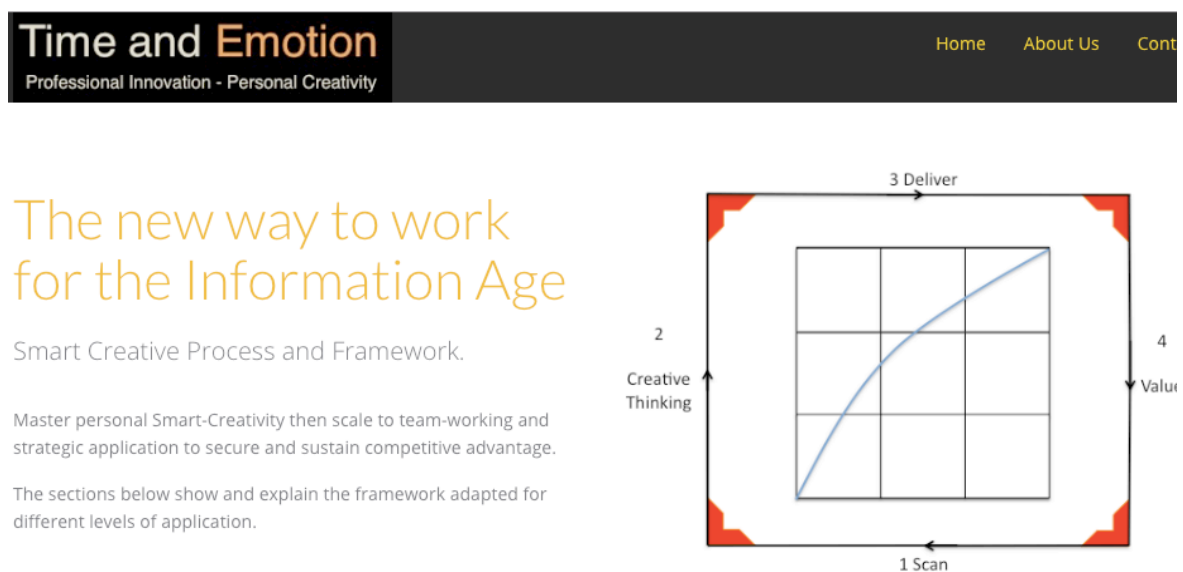


Figure 4.10 Time and Emotion home page

Here is an expanded overview of the model that I initially created.

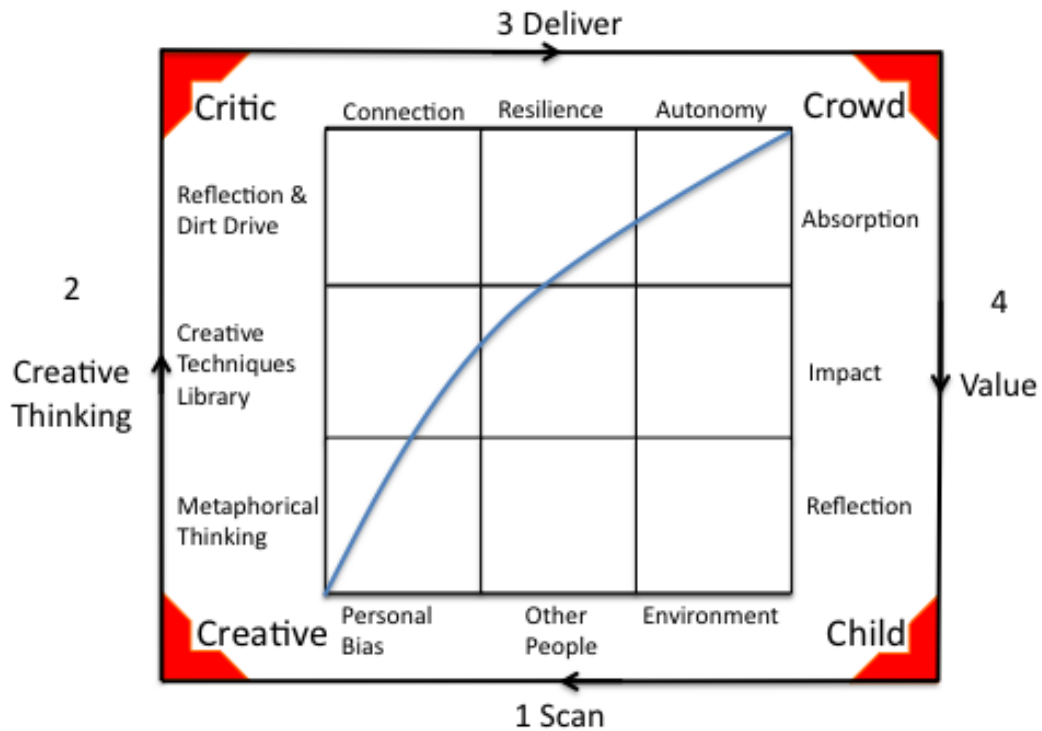


Figure 4.11 Initial Personal Creativity Framework

The elements are:

Four Personas: Child, Creative, Critic, Crowd to address internal characters. Red corners denote where blocks are most likely. - Need a way to unblock creativity.

Four stage process that can be iterative, incremental or linear based on the cut-down Social Learning Cycle

Each side of the square is split into three steps - each of which linked to background material and apps:

Scan: Environment, Other People, Self - Safety first and assessing personal

potential. (Need to learn new skill)

Creative Thinking: Metaphors, Techniques, Reflection (Focused on creativity - no rational analysis)

Deliver (to self): Connection, Resilience, Autonomy (Creating the inner reserves to get things done and delivered)

Value: Absorption, Impact, Reflection - Determining the uptake and value to self and others

Blue Line is the value curve.

Internal Grid is the Creative Canvas - A lift from iterative and/or incremental work

I packaged it up in PowerPoint presentation and made a website then asked friends and family for feedback. The response was not as encouraging as I had hoped. It took time to absorb the response. < No prizes for guessing how long! Start with six if you need a hint. > Then it was back to the design studio with some good feedback.

The process flow seemed back to front for most people. They considered the top left a more logical place to start than the bottom right.

The Disney method was not widely known or used.

Creative thinking was considered irrelevant by a lot of people; they wanted rational analysis included.

The layout would need to be responsive to work on mobile phones and tablets.

Would scale and translation help to provide information to people at different levels in business - and perhaps provide joined up understanding from different

perspectives?

In short I had promised screaming guitars and delivered scale lessons. It was not a winning ticket but I could iterate and refine the message. I would need time time to get unstuck then Take 5. First there was a marathon to run.

Comarathon Man

I was dedicated to the training. I slowly increased the reps I did of Emma's schedule. On the roads I built up to eighteen miles two weeks before the run.

A couple of days before the race the local TV news called. They had been contacted by Meningitis Research and wanted to include me in a feature about the event. We arranged to meet at the track. Emma and I were filmed doing a bunch of bouncy exercises. I did a piece to camera followed by some shots of me running, tying shoelaces and other visual fillers. Near the end of the shoot I was standing in the cold waiting for a shot to be lined up the rain started. < I had forgotten to check the Manson-Kerr corollary that morning. > As I did my last run past the camera I felt my right calf go. It felt like the muscle slid down the back of my shin. The dull pain of my leg was not reflected in my brain. I limped off to get changed, thankful that I had swapped out the Warfarin for aspirin a month before. Resilience robustly nestled into my brain and body, like a Rottweiler in front of a dying fire on a winter night. I knew better than to try to move it.

After filming I caught a train to the hospital where I had spent my coma the previous summer, missing Father's day and my birthday. < What a cheap date. > After the scan the radiographer said my brain was a "pretty picture". That lifted my spirits as I shuffled back to the station. "Your walking." growled the Rottweiler. "You left on a stretcher last time." Resilience - mans best friend.

I took two trains to Brighton to collect the race-pack. The organisation had been shambolic from the start. Initially I had been unable to register as a charity runner. I received two registration cards - another computer glitch. Most people I met shared my view that it wasted time and money having to collect the packs. There was an unexpected benefit. After picking up my pack I walked round the adjoining

exhibition and found a stall selling rock tape. I bought a roll and the assistant kindly applied some strapping to my right calf. Perhaps it was psychosomatic but my leg felt better and I limped a little less afterwards.

On the way back to the station I popped into a bookshop and bought: "Godel, Escher, Bach - an eternal Golden Braid" by Douglas Hofstadter. My early Bach inspired synaesthesia was the purchase inspiration. I started reading it on the arterial train back to London.

I met my elder daughter, Sarah, at Charing Cross Station and we caught a train home. I saw the news item on iPlayer and then discovered Clare had shared it on Facebook. It boosted my final fund raising. The next item in the package was about a family who had lost their daughter to this unnecessary disease. It made me sad.

On marathon day Clare gave me a lift to Brighton. We intended to park at an outlying station and catch a train. In Southern Rail tradition the trains were cancelled due to a tree on the line < it was too early in the year for leaves... > We picked up another couple of runners and gave them a lift to as close to the start as we could get. The runners and I walked over to the start. We parted ways when they joined the pre-race poo-queue and I went to apply heat balms to my legs, attach running gels to the safety pins in the waistband of my tracksuit bottoms and fix the timing chip to my shoe. The forecast was for cold weather so I was wearing a warm layer.

I meandered over to my corral - the slowest one - and did a little warm up. Zoë "It takes two" Ball started the race and we in the slow corral hung around for a good forty five minutes before we ambled past the start line - by which time I had completely cooled down. I walked the first mile, listening to AC/DC as I had done

during training. By starting at the very back I hoped to take inspiration later in the race by picking off the people who started too fast and "blow up" too soon. < A common complaint of men my age - allegedly. Running offests that onset. >

The first three miles were very slow as we looped out of the park then through the streets. < The back up car almost ran me over at one point. It was not the only time. > After three miles, I took some water and headed East along the sea front to the turn at mile 9 nine. It was sunnier than I expected. My good ear got so sweaty my earplug fell out. < Bye, bye Bon and the boys. > I had a nice little rhythm going and got back to the halfway point in three hours, taking water and gels as necessary. I was on target for six hours, I thought.

The second half started by going through residential roads behind the sea front then looped back to pass mile 18. Next it was way out West towards the Power Station at mile 21. < This was new territory for me. I had gone as far as 18 miles in my training. > The pain in my calf was back and I could not run it off. Time to change strategy to protect my right leg. I brought to mind the Godel, Escher, Bach book and allowed my brain to drift ruminating on Bach's famous Canon that is the same backwards and forwards as I crabbed my way to Mile 21. The turn there is known as Hell, and the local running club have a banner welcoming people to it. It was gone by the time I got there, or perhaps they did not do it that day.

Just after the power station at Mile 21 I was targeting people ahead who were in a similar state to me, physically, but going slower so I could pick them off on the long walk in. I caught up with a fellow who was also wearing a meningitis sponsor vest like mine. I tapped him on the shoulder. We introduced ourselves and started chatting. Ben asked why I was doing the run and I explained my Comarathon

moniker. I asked why he was doing it. His voice caught a little as he explained that his daughter had meningitis a couple of years before. I expected the worst. I wondered if I had done the right thing. He quickly recovered his composure and went on to say how she had made a complete recovery after a very stressful time for him and his family. < After the run he was going to have his chest and legs waxed to raise more money. >

Neither of us was going anywhere fast - apart from my regular breaks, which were a side effect of the caffeine gels and water that I had loaded up on throughout the day. We buddied along for the next 5 miles shooting the breeze, enjoying the sunset stroll along "Sin City" sea front. With about 400 yards to go Ben said he was going to pick his children up from the crowd and let them finish with him. He encouraged me to run in the last bit. I recognised he wanted family time so I doubled my pace to a hobble with my right leg moving half as far my left and struck out for the finish line. < I have seen the video of me crossing the line and refuse to pay money for it >

I crossed the line in 6:46 called Clare to meet her and texted Emma to let her know I had finished. Then my phone died. < That pissed me off but it was okay, as I had gone to the loo, again. >

As I was picking up my medal Ben and his children came over and said hello. I was delight to see his youngest daughter in his arms and his two older ones by his side. Seeing a fellow survivor, who wondered what the sweaty man was doing, closed a circle. During my training when times got hard my head would fill with the pictures that I first saw on the treadmill. Who decides who can live and who dies? Quis custodiet ipsos custodes? (Who watches the watchmen?)

The journey home was slow. I got in, had a salty plate of chips, a celebratory

Guinness that I could not finish, and went straight to sleep. I woke the next day feeling elated at the accomplishment, had a shower and spent the day lounging in the afterglow of my small achievement.

After the marathon I did not run for six weeks. Now I had the stamina I could focus on developing speed. I have been introduced to the POSE method and heard a few people talk well about it. Frankly it sucks my enjoyment out of running. Give me a headphone < I only need one > some 132 beats per minute dad rock and let me enjoy myself.

I have lined up other races, I say race it will be a run for me. Not as long as marathons but something to keep the body kicking over. < Just don't ever call me Pheidippides >

Self Similarity

Running the marathon covered new ground for me. I had gone further than my original intention at the start of the PIES process. My initial goal was to walk one mile. In the end I walked, ran and limped twenty-six and a bit.

It was easy for others to see what I had physically done. What was less obvious was what was happening with my intellect and emotions. How were they changing? I had kept busy and been a tad academic. < I dressed badly and had an unfashionable haircut. > Did I want to be a self-similar version of the person I was before? Was I prepared to stick or was there a twist to come? Would I go bust in the pontoon game that is life?

What do I mean by self-similarity? I think of it like a personal stock price. If you look at two stock prices for a company but do not show the value or the date/time information you do not know what you are looking at - but the price will exhibit self-similar characteristics. As you know my stock had gone through the floor. Now it was rising. Where was the ceiling?

Self-similarity surrounds us. It can be observed in many natural things like ferns, sea shells, snowflakes, finger prints, coastlines, mountain ranges and it is within us too - capillary systems, heart beats and tumour growth to name but a few. It can be described with abstract patterns like the Koch triangle, which showed my perception of transcendental, levels, the Serpienski gadget and perhaps most famously the Mandelbrot set.

I had a self-similar baseline of how other people thought of me beforehand - I had carried out a JoHari analysis in 2010.

<p>Arena</p> <p>independent intelligent knowledgeable logical observant</p>	<p>Blind Spot</p> <p>bold calm clever complex confident dependable energetic friendly helpful organised proud reflective relaxed responsive searching trustworthy warm witty</p>
<p>Façade</p> <p>ingenious</p>	<p>Unknown</p> <p>able accepting adaptable brave caring cheerful dignified extroverted giving happy idealistic introverted kind loving mature modest nervous patient powerful quiet religious self-assertive self-conscious sensible sentimental shy silly spontaneous sympathetic tense wise</p>

Figure 4.4. My JoHari Results from 2010.

Joseph Luft and Harrington Ingham created the JoHari method in 1955. It is reminiscent of Robert Burns ending of "To a Louse":

"O wad some power the giftie gie us

To see oursels as ithers see us".

< Translation: Oh Would some power give us the gift to see ourselves as others do.

>

I consider JoHari analysis superior to psychometric tests that ask for answers to a battery of inter-related questions and then try to assess by computer algorithm which personality pigeon-hole we perch in. The main reasons I prefer JoHari are:

- 1 It is not self-reporting. Other people carry it out, which is an objective way of self-measurement.
- 2 It is possible to ask the respondents for examples of behaviour after they have completed it.
- 3 Because the results are not set in stone one can work to change aspects. Perhaps coaching will be needed, like an actor preparing for a role
- 4 Your boss does not see it - unless you show it.
- 5 It allows us to break out of the academic/theoretical perspective of psychometric models that miss the holistic view.

There is a prescient anecdote from Gerald Weinberg in "The Psychology of the Computer Programmer". He conducted two sets of psychometric on a group of coders. One techie asked if he should use the same personality for each test.

Plucking up the courage to ask peoples' opinions was nerve wracking. I took three deep breaths before I sent emails asking friends and colleagues to fill in the JoHari. The results surprised me: half the respondents found me complex. < For the mathematicians: I know more imaginary numbers than zero and infinity. > It was simple to ask how I came across as being complex. Scot told me that I shared too much information in response to questions that required polar answers. Lesson Learned. Fast fix applied. Sorted. < I monitor my responses now. >

Nobody agreed with my own < Façade > observation that I was ingenious. Perhaps I am not: I do not always show my working or reasoning. Now I was doing my own research I had freedom to take a more detailed look at myself. I could be as ingenious as I wanted.

I felt that creative activities had reconnected me viscerally to the world in a way that was missing before. I wanted to be able to complement my rational analysis with creative techniques. I see threat to jobs from automation and creative thinking offers one way to differentiate humans from machines. How could I make creativity learnable without making people think?

My ideas regarding memory were changing at this point. The underground trains now seemed synchronously scheduled. I could hold conversations without appearing to pause. I was more appreciative that other people may have different viewpoints. I too had variable viewpoints that allowed me to access different internal thinking modes, at will.

The Buddha image from my initial synaesthesia in August had stayed with me but it did not feel as good as before. An old black dog.

As Zen Master Suzuki said: "If you meet Buddha by the roadside - kill him." < It is important to be yourself rather than emulate the Buddha. >

Killing the Buddha came easily. I put him down and laid him out. No guilt. I had resilience as my best friend now.



Figure 4.5 Dead Buddhabrot

The Buddha concept of mind controlling body or somehow being a gateway to a transcendental plane was not making meaning to me. The change in my beliefs from being close to death was more of a lurch towards post Kant philosophers. The debate between free will versus collective will was a common theme. The polyvagal theory also cast a new chiaroscuro over the emergent neuro-forest that grew in my brain following the fire that had cut it back the previous summer.

I saw similarity with the Atkinson-Shiffrin model. The Short, Medium and Long-term boxes appeared similar to the three circles along the centre-line of the laid out Buddha. Mashing the models generated a fractal representation: The 'Mandelbrain'.

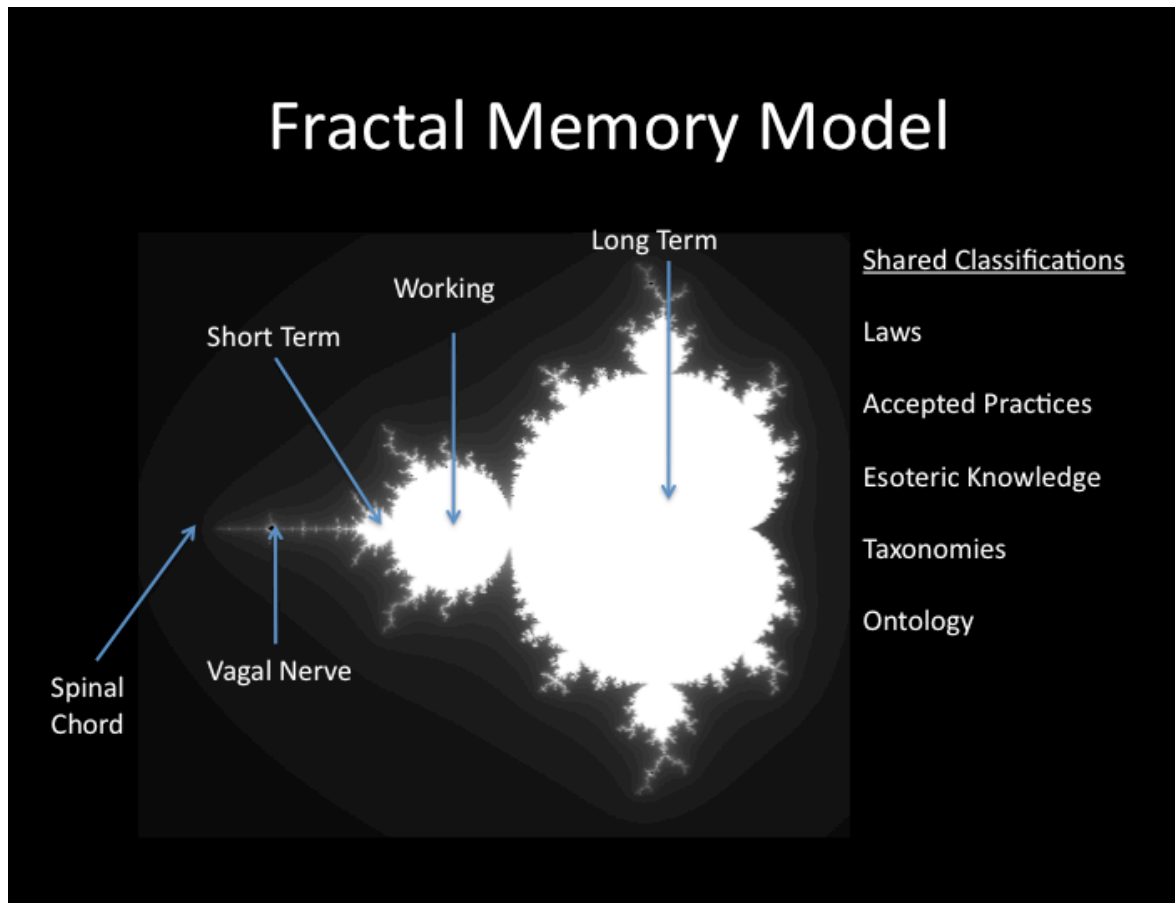


Figure 4.6 "Mandelbrain" - Mandelbrot set to complement Atkinson-Shiffrin.

The white region in the centre represents our personal internal knowledge as per Atkinson-Shiffrin. I posit that there are patterns of connections that exist inside the white region that may one day explain how memories are stored, associated and activated. The implication is that we may need to consider non-linear or non-Euclidean maths to appreciate and find a way of scaling the patterns. There may be some serendipity that falls out of Big Data market analysis where I suspect the patterns are similar. < I am no scientist and these are speculations. >

We can also see, on the right, external knowledge. The stuff that we share in categorised taxonomies. Some categories are accepted societal laws (Speed limits, etc) and other bits are relevant to the work we do. (Computer Codes, Business

Domain Knowledge and processes < note to self: get out more. >) Categorisation varies from person to person and between groups. It is not an exact science as taxonomy builders try to make out.

Over to the left is a new term for most. The Vagal Nerve. A simple introduction will be helpful. Polyvagal theory has been round for twenty years. It is a scientific explanation of how our organs influence what we interpret as spirit, sixth-sense, kundalini or gut-feel.

The vagal nerve is like the roots of our inner tree. It reaches down into our bodies. It collects information from the major organs and supplies information to the subconscious through the tenth cranial nerve connected to the brain stem. < I may have observed this process when my body/brain connections was most broken in the summer of 2015. >

The processing of the messages controls our nervous systems and reactions such as social, fight/flight and freeze. This replaces the old fashioned triune theory that contended that the brain evolved from reptilian to mammalian to human - and that the structures of those animal groups still persist in our brains. The stronger, holistic connection between body and brain made a lot of sense to me throughout recovery. < In my case yoga could have been fatal. It should have a health warning. Polyvagalism replaces Chakras in my new worldview. Each to their own. >

In social terms our ears, eyes and mouth are linked to the heart. < But you know that anyway. > This allows us to communicate better than most other animals through facial expressions and languages - spoken and body. The fight/flight and freeze reactions are normally kept in reserve and get called on in "fallback" situations. That said some people that experience extended periods of high alert can

develop psychological issues when the backup protection systems get stuck in a continuously ON state and override 'normal' processing. Soldiers rely on it when they have to "Switch on and tune in".

The Polyvagal theory is being tested in the treatment of: PTSD, brain trauma, autism and epilepsy to name but a few. In the words of its discoverer, Stephen Porges, "it is new and flexing so we can expect changes or breakthroughs over time." Of course this is at odds with people who think that pharmaceuticals, commercial or recreational, are the answer to their problems. Curiosity can be demanding and tricky.

Normally we do not notice polyvagalism in action - unless the car is going over a cliff or menace is nearby. As my body and brain had been through the wringer, as witnessed by the "ridges of trauma" slowly moving over my fingernails until they grew out in March, I was able to appreciate the possibilities and prospects of polyvagalism.

The above model is easy for me to hold in my head and makes sense in that:

1	The brain body connection is explained better than having memory discrete from body < Ask a musician about muscle memory and emotion. >
2	The polyvagal feed into the short-term memory makes sense to keep us alive when the body uses "gut feel" before conscious registering of danger.
3	The explanation of spirit and sixth-sense through polyvagalism provided a sense of peace and well being that I had not found in yoga, Buddhism or Daoism.

4	We differentiate between shared and internal knowledge (explicit and tacit) through individual categorisation.
5	The fractal nature of brains may reflect a means of storage that is yet to be considered. It could mean cheaper, faster techniques and tools to assess brain trauma in the early stages then provide cures.

Table 4.7 Mandelbrain attributes for me

I realised that I was not going to be the same as before. I have a more grounded understanding of the world from my own neuro-plastic perspectives. I can accommodate other peoples' points of view yet retain an independent decision making process.

There is a lot of work happening in neuro-plasticity that seems to be replacing the ground once held by philosophers.

The benefits to me were a realisation that I could change my ways of thinking and acting at my old age.

Stuck Figures

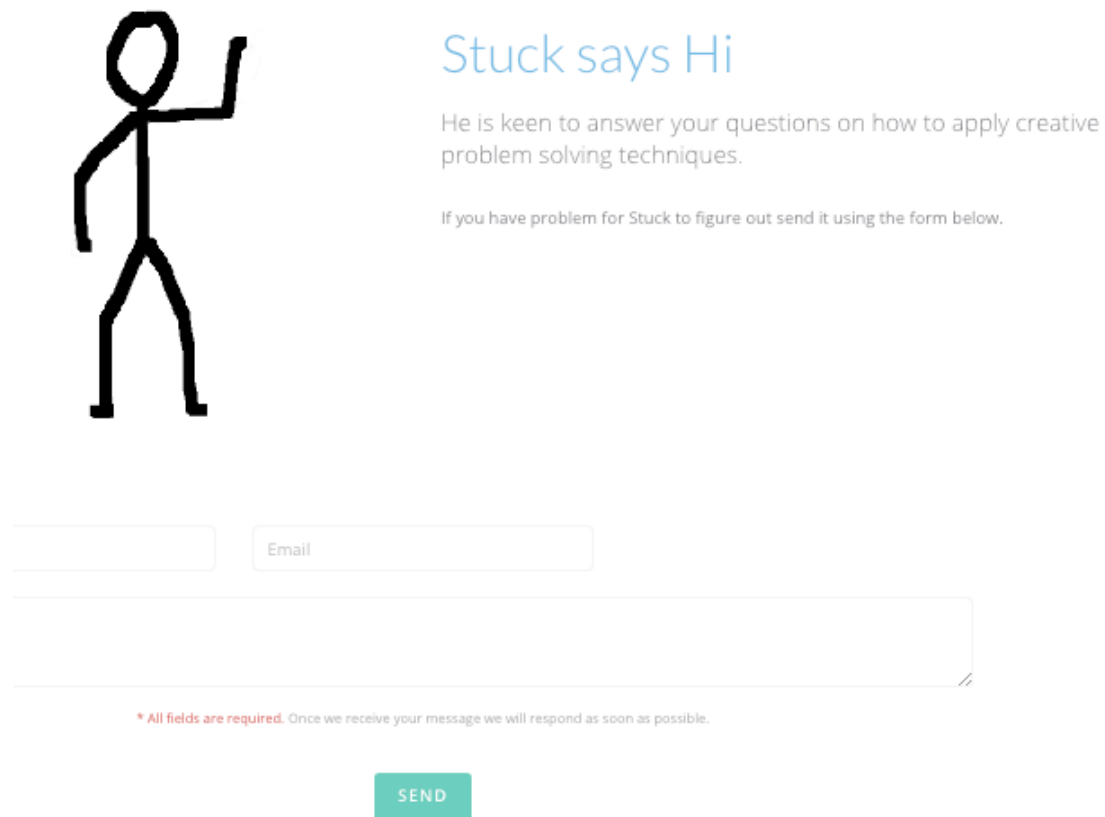
After the marathon afterglow the first update from the design studio < my desks > was swift. I use two desks - one for digital work and the other for analogue work. I like the change. It is a form of interleaved learning. If you learn two things at the same time your memory will make the knowledge stick faster and longer as it pulls and pushes information between long-term and working memory.

Some feedback I received about the creative learning framework was: "Show it to the least interested member of your family. If they do not understand it you know you need to simplify it." I showed Clare the Framework. Her head tilted back and her eyeballs rolled as she started counting ceiling tiles. Her insouciance at my innovation was informative. There had to be an easier way for people to get answers.

I had been reading Randal Munroe's xkcd, which Esbjörn had mentioned to me in October. I liked Randal's question and answer approach. He had made a living from it. Here was a potential path to follow back to work. And more importantly it started moving me out of transmit mode. I had been stuck and had to figure out a way through the blocks. Keep it simple. When I was cartooning I played with stick figures but pulled back from that, as I would be encroaching on the graffiti artist Stik, whose book I had picked up on a trip to London. Stik, the artist, is an inspirational character.

Mashing Randal and Stik and drawing from my earlier sojourn into cartooning I came up with the name Stuck-figures, < an accurate description of my predicament. > I registered the website, plugged my drawing tablet into my computer, and had some quality gimp time, < Gimp is a free drawing application. Gnu Image Manipulation Program. Honest! > I drew a welcoming stick figure called Stuck, wrapped him in html, added a feedback form for people to submit questions, added

analytic call-backs, configured the web and mail servers, deployed and tested. It took less than three hours from concept to publication.



Stuck says Hi

He is keen to answer your questions on how to apply creative problem solving techniques.

If you have problem for Stuck to figure out send it using the form below.

* All fields are required. Once we receive your message we will respond as soon as possible.

SEND

Figure 4.12 Stuck-figures.com

Next step was to get questions from people. I had a bunch of contacts that work in the same industry as I had done before. They ask me questions. A captive audience. I fired off a couple of emails asking for questions, got some responses and set about making my answers. Then what? Would I need to publish them on the site or would personal replies do. I opted for the latter. Start Small. Never to Defeat.

If the responses were encouraging well I could revisit creating blogs as an alternative to full time employment.

Take 5

Take 5 is a famous Jazz tune played by Dave Brubeck. Musicality is apt as I associate play with work in five ways.

- 1 Play with ideas to create something
- 2 Play to practise
- 3 Play to perform
- 4 Play to record and produce
- 5 Play the product

Step 1 is where original ideation and building on inspiration happens.

Steps 2 to 4 are the regions of practise perform, produce.

Step 5 is the end customer playing - which may be yourself.

Perhaps you can identify other ways.

I had used a development process that is similar to how a lot of work < I estimate upwards of 90% > is done these days. Have an idea; know where there are inspirational pieces of information. Copy, modify and paste to make a demo. If the demo generates enthusiasm make it into a product.

I do not think this is too different from how I have always worked - going back to recording songs off the radio when I was a kid listening to the Top 40 every Sunday evening. I would then mime along to the songs when I played them back. A lot later on I got into playing guitar - I was not allowed to play music at school. I have had the pleasure of seeing tunes I wrote being played on stage at Shepherds Bush Empire.

Some of my guitar pupils went on to study music at college.

Demos are used to solicit feedback. When there is enough positive feedback, empirical measurements or intuition < the order is variable > produce the product and deliver it to create value. Many development processes follow the same pattern. For the most part the product is like Satie's furniture music: an unobtrusive background setting supposed to add value to the environment.

Now, however I could honestly acknowledge the process that I use. There was no need to hide what I was copying and changing. It is the copy and paste with enough modification to provides sufficient novelty that creates intellectual property in an evolutionary way. When I deal with people who have protected content that I want to use I always check that they are happy. It is a time consuming business but ultimately worthwhile. In some situations it makes good sense to offer the original creator a share of the income, if the derivative is not too far from the original.



Figure 4.13 Fake it to make it

The path to success is in being honest enough to recognise which type of play I am doing and then execute the five steps quickly and efficiently. Check points and tests can be applied between each step, if necessary.

The type of play permitted in business defines, in part, the psychological contracts. Take 5 minutes to consider what types of play you do at work. Bear in mind that I am not advocating turning work into a play park or play pen. As I recovered I was lucky in that I had techniques that helped me time box play. I was also very tired at the

beginning of the process and had to work fast. I turned the initial play sessions into published products: Creative Technique Library and FlowTracker. Sometimes I was the player and other times the producer allowing space and freedom for talent to shine.

One way to accomplish time-boxed play is to use flow racking. This NOT FlowTracking. Flow racking is a lean logistics techniques used in many warehouses. It is a simple technique of putting returned goods onto a holding shelf and then adding them to new orders that need them, rather than having to send a request to the shelf pickers to pull the same item from the main warehouse. I try to use the cognitive equivalent to reduce learning or cognitive lead-time. To do it I set up tasks that will take ten minutes and schedule them when I have downtime in my day. I have a map-reduce-pack memory association method that works and I can play like a song in my head.

At work we have to create and produce things that are not music - but the principles are similar. We also have to be aware of what type of play we are doing. If we think we are being creative but are really just mimicking some other piece of work is there any real value? Yes! The value is split three ways: Customer, Strategic and Self. There is a balancing act to produce all types of value. Sometimes I focus on the wrong aspect. Working at home, by myself for myself resulted in a bias towards value for myself. Changing back to strategic and customer value was easy after I recovered. < I had to tone down my enthusiasm for life to fit in with large organisations. >

I can get caught up in the administration processes and lose focus on the end product and more importantly the people. < I am qualified to count paperclips in an office three ways: arithmetically, algebraically and the pinnacle of professional

administration - paper-clip-calculus. >

Everyone has an important role to play, but the roles are changing in ways that we have not been trained for.

Outcomes and Outputs

By the end of April I felt I had achieved a lot from the beginning of February.

In PIES terms

Physical

I had completed the marathon, raising money in the process. That was more important.

Intellectual

With Esbjörn's help we had released FlowTracker.

I had created and deployed TimeAndEmotion and received feedback.

I was itching to get back to working. While that took time I did my own stuff.

Emotional

I had come off the anti-convulsants and taken myself off the Warfarin which I replaced with 75 mg aspirin per day.

I wondered if I would lose some of the self-assuredness that the meds had given me.

Would the fears of ridicule and failure reappear?

Social

I had a 15 second spot on the TV and raised a bit of cash for Meningitis Research.
< 15 seconds these days is a lot less than Andy Warhol's 15 minutes... >

I had taken Caitlin to the TV shoot: she was interviewed but did not make the edit.

That is a shame because what she did was far braver than what I had done.

Even though I was not fully signed off medically I felt ready to go back to work. How would that pan out? Would I go back to fee-paying work or would I have to really apply Plan B and push the option that I had been hedging.

Wish you were here? (May - Jul)

Pies are squared

The fourth PIES iteration started slow. I was not doing any exercise after the marathon. Initially I thought I would take three weeks off. It turned into six. < There it is again. Maybe it has been ingrained now. > I was not perturbed.

In mid May I received a letter from the neurosurgeon. It was the All Clear. The scan from April showed that my brain had healed as well as it was going to. He could not say whether I was fit to drive. I booked an eye test with an optician who knew what he was doing. I was concerned that I would not have the "letter-box" or peripheral vision necessary to re-apply for my driving licence that I had voluntarily surrendered. I should not have worried. My left eye was working. I needed a new prescription to counteract the residual effect of the squashed left optic nerve and get back behind the wheel. I ordered a pair of glasses with confidence that I would be able to drive. I applied to DVLA, received some forms, filled them in, posted them back and waited.

In mid June I got a letter from DVLA saying I could start driving, under a provision of the Road Traffic Act, 1998. In the meantime they waited to receive confirmation from the neurosurgeon. < F Law 46: A bureaucrat is one who has the power to say No but none to say Yes. > Three months later I finally received my licence. I barely recognised the picture of myself on it. I realised that I been a journey, mostly on A and B roads and daily dirt-dives.

It was one week short of a year since I had last driven. It was easier than riding my pushbike. Driving made me feel part of the human race. I had not anticipated such a lift. There were other benefits such as: buying ice cream and get it home before it melted made eating it doubly enjoyable. Remembering the roads was a great relief. Then I had to fill the car, which was expensive. < I remembered it was Diesel. > I also

shifted the balance on the speakers to suit my good ear when I was driving. Being half deaf beat the backseat drivers. Result!

Hitting the anniversary of my illness (18th of June) and getting through it was good. Living through the days that followed was difficult. I took some downtime from pushing at the ideas that had been emerging and searched for a way of formalising them in order to explain them to others. I kept my diary updated every morning.

The ideas I was looking at were:

A replacement method for the synaesthetic experiences that I had enjoyed as my brain reconfigured and settled.

U n d e r s t a n d m y n e w w o r l d v i e w a n d e n v i r o n m e n t .

Make sense of the year and share my thoughts.

My fluid persona was changing from creative to marketing as I hoped to get back to office-based work. < I was concerned: having survived one NDE I did not want to risk Death by Dickhead where I was "Richie Cranium". Oh Happy Days! >

Physical:

I returned to the gym in mid June with a new target - a local 10k in October.

Emma was ecstatic to see me. She had just got engaged. Yay! She gave me a new training regime to tackle the 10k.

Warm Up / Pre Stretches:			
5mins Warm Up Treadmill 1% incline			
Cardio-Vascular (CV)			
Equipment	Time/Distance	Speed	Level/Incline
Dreadmill			
Intervals			
Notes:			
Equipment	Time/Distance	Speed	Level/Incline
Notes:			
Equipment	Time/Distance	Speed	Level/Incline
Notes:			
Equipment	Time/Distance	Speed	Level/Incline
Notes:			

Free Weight/Resistance Machine/Body-Weight				
Exercise	Sets	Reps	Weight	Notes
Squats (pause)			10kg	
Mountain Climbers	2-3	20	X	
Lunges		10 each side	X	
Side Lunges		10 each side	8kg	
Wood chops	2-3	20	8kg	
Box Jumps			X	
Step Ups			X	
Burpies	5	2-3	X	
Back Lunge		each leg 10	X	
Knee Drive madness				

Figure 5.1 Gym regime post marathon lay off

I adopted a completely different mindset from the marathon to prepare. I got in two or three times a week and worked slowly towards the new goal on the treadmill. I took the speed up to 10kph and can hold it there.

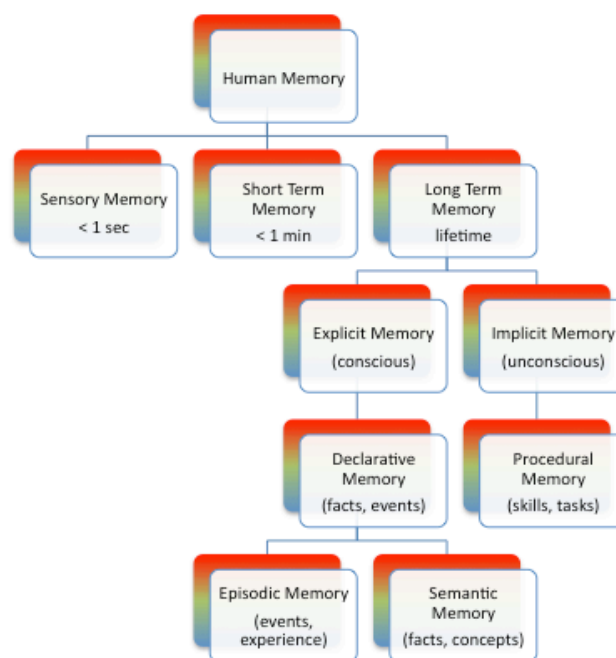
Now that I could drive I went back to yoga. It was one year and one week since my last lesson. Alas it was not the same. The room was noisy as a swimming pool on a summer Sunday afternoon. Not at all relaxing. It was easy watching someone doing poses and then mimicking them. My knowledge of polyvagalism gave me fresh

insights as to what was really happening between body and brain. I filled with cynicism about the whole subject. I am not anti-yoga. I recognise the benefits and enjoyment many people get from it. Now though I prefer running and have recently taken up swimming again. Those activities give my internal organs as much, or more, of a workout as yoga did.

Intellectual:

After the marathon I enjoyed a thirty-six hour afterglow. I took a short break from my desks where I had been working on the websites for Stuck-figures and Time And Emotion.

May - Jul



R, G, B works outside in

Needed to step into other peoples' shoes to see their POV and blend to meet their expectations.

Still missing part of the process – collectivism, acceleration.

Getting trouble at home to go and get a job.

At odds with my self.

Figure 5.2 Atkinson-Shiffrin - Adjusting to other peoples' perceptions.

Getting back into work proved to be trickier than I initially thought it would be. I had a yearlong gap in my CV. Even though I had not been earning I had been working from October onwards. I ate some of my dog-food and went creative on my CV. It is customary to blend it to meet different job descriptions.

What I did not consider was that recruitment agents were reading my CV then looking at my profile on LinkedIn. The two were different. That was easily fixed with a cut and paste from updated CV to LinkedIn.

Strategy A had not panned out so I reverted to Plan B. It is usually the one that works. If it failed I would move to plan C, after I devised it.

How was I going to make money before mine ran out? Find a job doing what I did before.

Emotional:

I was under pressure at home to start earning. Not being able to find work quickly was dispiriting. I am old and gnarly and had been through enough to fix the situation. It just took a little bit of time to build my confidence. Fear of ridicule and failure were concerns. I polished my brass neck and set about finding work.

I had a good reservoir of resilience. I also had the neuro-plasticity insights about dropping old habits and implementing new ones. The first couple of weeks I sent my updated CV to agents. They quickly came back asking what I had been doing for the last year. When I told them they fell into two camps: those that appreciated what I

done and those that saw their commission disappear.

Socially I was reserved. The neighbours gathered for the Queen's birthday celebration. I went out for a bit. The weather was bad. I went home and slept. This was a change to how I previously would have been. Normally I would stay until the beer was finished, fetch more and carry on.

Father's Day and my birthday at the beginning of July were good. I thought I might be able to get away with two this year as I had been in a coma when they occurred the year before. No such luck...Sue from next door kindly arranged a barbecue and invited some friends. It was a surprise, for me.

I really needed to get back to work as the school holidays approached. Being stuck at home with teens... < How would they cope? >

Social:

A consultancy that I had previously worked with invited me for an interview. I was still buzzing from recovery and could not settle down into a way that would let me do what they did for their clients. I was asked to write a "Zak in the box" description of what I could bring to the table. It was outlandish and self-centred. I found it difficult not to be enthusiastic about life.

An old colleague and new friend, Paul Eastabrook, invited me to join a Slack network with other people who are at the top of the agile space. It took me a little time to settle in and find my feet. < Still popping and fizzing. > One of the group members, Dhaval Shah, gave a speech about "Psychological safety at work" at a Meet-up in London one evening. I went along not expecting to say anything. I was

straight in with insights and comments regarding the state of play of psychological aspects software development. < I refrained from mentioning neuro-plasticity and polyvagalism. >

On the back of my comments I was recommended to another consultancy. I interviewed with them and they offered me a job, dependent on me passing an interview with their end client. The end client did not impress me, or I him. I left the meeting with a feeling of Career Unpleasant Danger.

I had several other interviews and found that explaining the outcomes and outputs of the year to strangers overcame the fears of ridicule and failure that had worried me. There were many interesting conversations.

Eventually I found a berth doing part-time work with a consultancy that I had previously worked for.

It's the Environment, Stupid

As I made more contacts and connections while looking for employment I had some realisations that would never have occurred. What is the primary function of our brains?

The element that is missing from Kant and the schools of philosophy that followed him is environment. Environment loosely couples us to the Universe, or at least the ground beneath our feet and society. It is a means of sharing space and time.

What we consider to be free will is most likely a by-product of an unhealthy or different brain/body/environment relationship. Neuro-science is moving into this area of research. Many CEOs stand out from the groupthink of their staff and shareholders and are labelled as psychopaths by Jon Ronson. < I hear Keef and Ron singing Woo Woo. Woo Woo. I have sympathy for the CEO. >

As I stated at the beginning I am no philosopher or scientist. I do not profess to have studied scientifically, morally, ethically or in any great depth the topics that would allow me to enter the intellectual and abstract world of the brain-boxes and madmen who struggle with the big questions. Instead my observation comes from a small thing - yes me again: my Moscow Metro metaphor morphed into an octopus. The brain with metro lines legs flowing outwards made a connection in my head. When I remembered that an octopus is a master of camouflage I had an epiphany.

I don't think that octopodes < it is Greek to me, too. > consciously change their appearance. I surmise it is subconscious and that humans do something similar in social contexts. I have the memory of what it was like when my unhealthy brain ran slow. Reflecting on that period and the journey back from teardrops on a Jackson Pollock, spatch-cocked Moscow Metro, free versus collective will and fractal memory models led me to the view that the primary purpose of a healthy brain is camouflage.

I revisited the Mandelbrain image from Self Similarity and considered a conversation between two people with healthy brains, similar categories of knowledge and shared mental models.

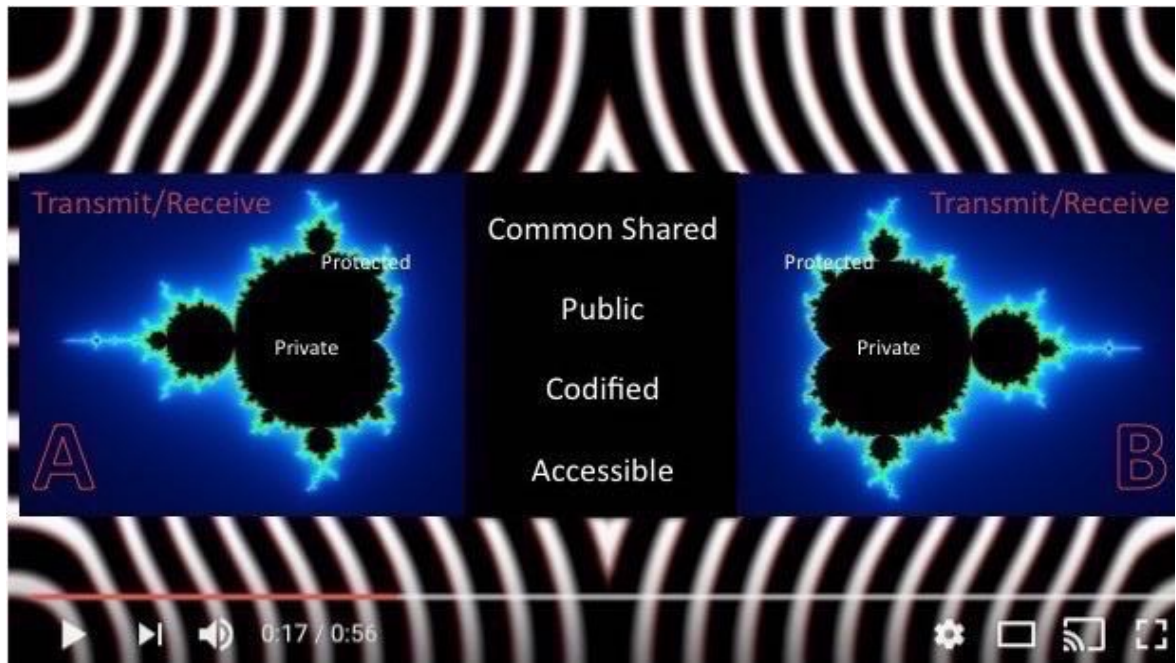


Figure 5.3 Two people with healthy brains at start of a conversation

As time moves forward both parties stay tuned to the physical and social environments, and each other.

The background environment, however is continuously changing, perhaps not big changes to consciously notice but I think that our subconscious is monitoring through polyvagalism. We receive subconscious inputs from the vagal nerve. We like to think we are in control and making rational decisions. The received wisdom from neuro-science is that we are not. Philosophers and neuro-scientists posit that we are all making decisions in response to collective will.

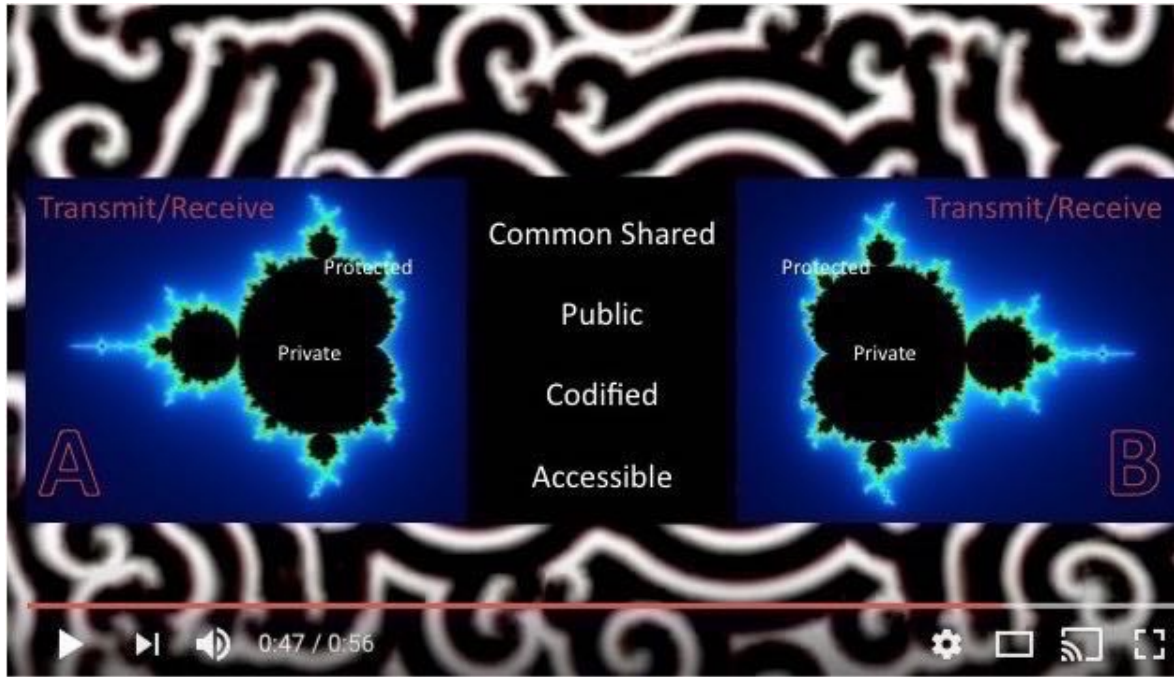


Figure 5.4 Conversation moves 30 seconds forward - both still in sync with each other yet environment that has subtly changed. So far so good.

If however the person on the left has a brain impairment, as I did, the above diagram will look like the one below

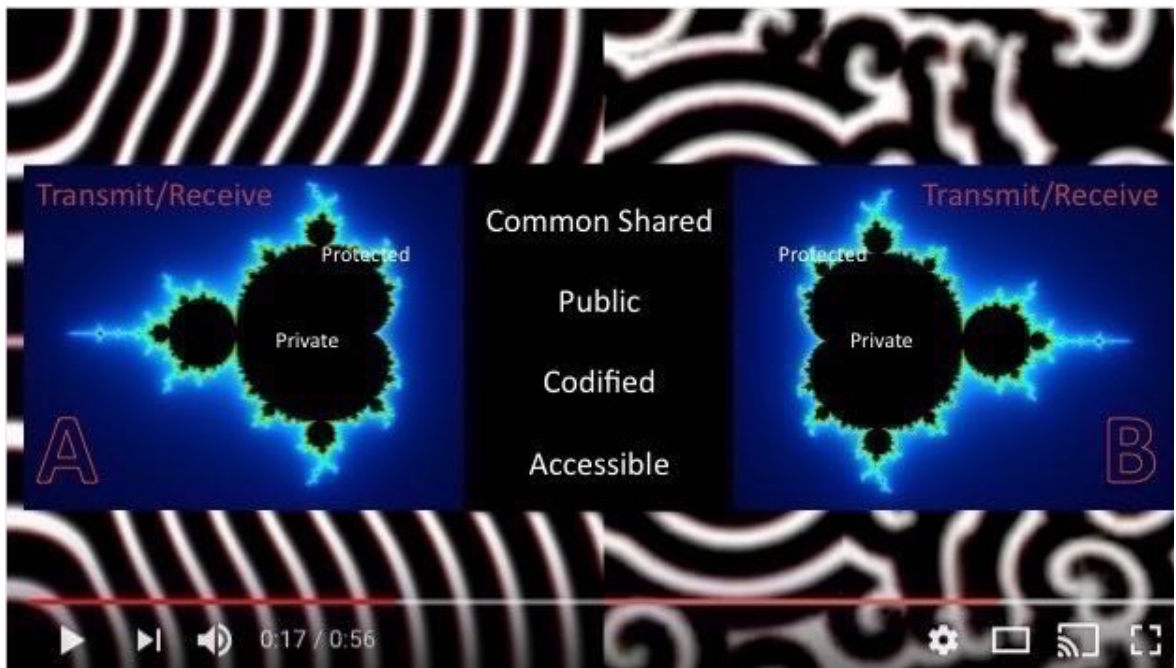


Figure 5.5 Person on the left has switched off from environment to process

internally.

STOP! Look again at the two preceding pictures: notice the subtle background change.

The person on the right kept in synch with the environment while person on the left has time out from camouflaging and is now self-centred. I had to go into self-centred mode to recall, prepare, check and speak. It took an average of thirty seconds.

If the same situation continues it can look like the one below. We may see this more frequently than we care to admit. Think of those that care for Alzheimer's sufferers or work with people who think differently, have teenage children or are in a relationship going through a trough.

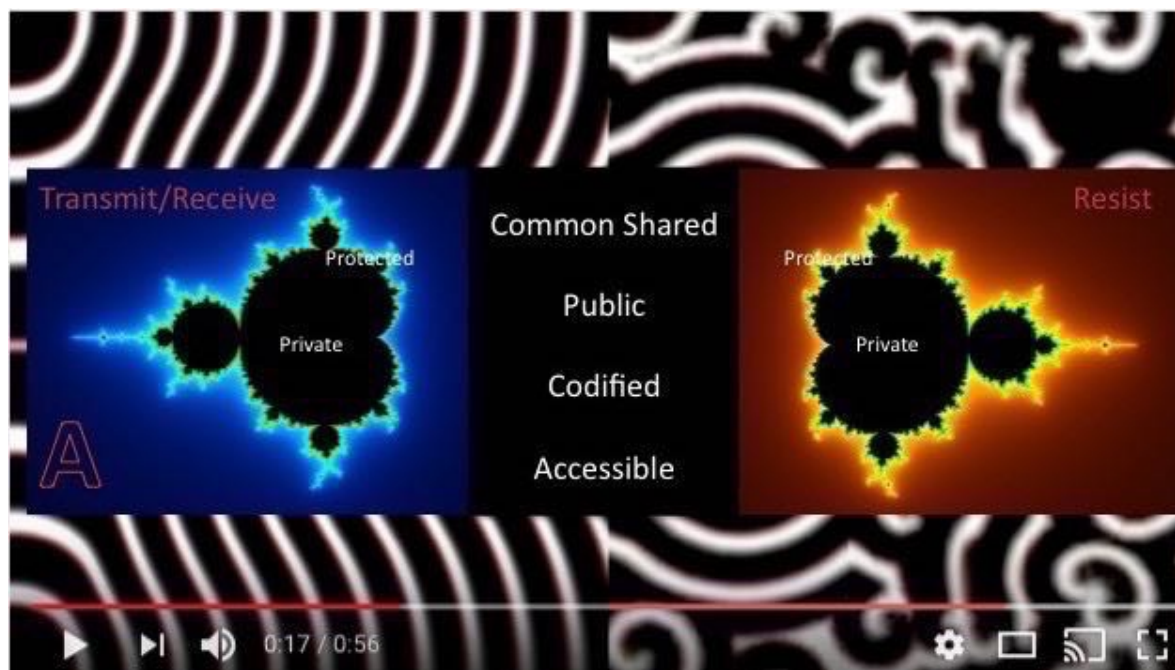


Figure 5.6 - Person on the right becomes exasperated at the one on the left apparently not staying switched on and tuned in.

The four proceeding slides are like my mental, emotional and social journey played back to front. If you take a minute to relook starting at the last slide and working backwards you will see my journey from start to finish.

A word about environments: The background in the pictures was taken from a video of a Belousov-Zhabotinsky emulation. It is similar in concept to the work Alan Turing did on the chemical basis of morphogenesis that he published in 1952. Environments can be digitally modelled using Cellular Automata and/or Lindenmayer systems. I suspect that there sets are of patterns in environments that will provide insights into the human condition and perhaps also market analysis when applied to the data we think of as big. < Big is a relative term. > More people research market conditions than neuro-science, as it is more lucrative.

The point is that people who do not fit in are considered to have free will by the majority that synchronise with the environment. I think that in healthy brains and polyvagal systems the subconscious continuously applies camouflage as a form of social cohesion. People that are unable to stay tuned-in suffer social exclusion.

So what?

People slow down when working in groups. Fear of standing out prevents meaningful contributions to group work. The lessons learned in group situations of family, school, work and socially can have counter intuitive impacts.

Using the environments as a way creating safety to be expressive is rather simple. It is what I used to do and wrote about, with Keith, in a previous Kindle chart topper called Creative Climate Change.

Syn-aesthetics

My last major sound/vision synaesthesia episode was in November 2015. At the dentist when the hygienist polished my teeth with the high pitched buffer I had visualisations of glowing soft hued red/green/gold pyramids tumbling out of my mouth and following parabolic curves into the corners of the room.

I missed my synaesthetic moments. I have however found a replacement: aesthetics. Schopenhauer offers this hierarchy of aesthetics.

Music

Painting and sculpture

Poetry and prose

Landscape gardening

Architecture

Aesthetics allow me to change perspectives at will and connect viscerally with my work. I was intrigued that music and architecture top-and-tailed Schopenhauer's list: my alpha and omega. When I came out of the coma I had a fixation about The Strangers and the episode around Bach's Goldberg variations produced some vivid images. My omega is architecture - not of buildings but of business processes and computer systems that enable organisations to make products, services, money or social improvements.

In my new way of thinking I can stretch time. I can make a 4 second music riff extend over longer durations and use it as an associative trigger to visualise work packs.

The elements of music I find useful in a work context are:

Duration: Each piece of music has duration. This is essential for planning and co-ordination. < Live music can be extended to keep people dancing. This is common in house, jazz, rap and other forms that I probably do not know too much about. It is also very useful in customer conversations. >

Tempo: Every song has a tempo to coordinate performance. I know of some great solo jazz players whose music is hard to notate because their timing is their own. Within the tempo of the bars there is enough room for rubato - quickening and slacking without affecting the overall pace.

Time Signatures: provide a rhythmic pulse used to bring pieces of work together at predefined intervals. ~~All~~ Most music has time signatures - even Stockhausen's String Quartet for Helicopters... With the rise of ambient and generative music it is possible that the work rhythms we are accustomed to may change.

Key: The key in music is interesting. In general terms it specifies the tonic or 'home'. Usually if there are sharps the music is more extroverted and flats denote a more introspective type of tune. I think people "play" in different keys at different times. Most workplaces are flat and a few are sharp. What is yours?

Score: allows me to show actions over time. I can work with classical, pop, jazz or ambient notations.

Annotations: Qualitative instructions can be added into the score by composer or players.

Commitment: Players need to be committed to delivering. There can be different styles and genres that require different aptitudes, experiences and skills.

There are other considerations to extend the metaphor:

Audience expectations: can vary. Some want concert performance that sounds exactly like the recording. Others expect and are happy with variations in live performance. Some are moved and other not. Fashions and fads come and go. Some bands have longevity and tour the world playing to stadia of screaming fans and others are consigned to the holiday camp circuit. Sometimes your boss wants a "cover" of another strategy and wants you to play it like the record.

Scaling: can be achieved by pitch class arithmetic in my abstract world.

All musicians play. The composer plays with ideas to create, the individuals play to practise - alone or in groups. Play moves to performance and recording. And the customer plays the final product.

The process of creation to production can be described and documented in myriad ways. I try to keep it simple and play from the head and heart. I enjoy being connected to the vibrant, kind of flickering, iridescent reality of being alive. Mostly I

get it from delivering value from design thinking.

Einstein on the beach

The Time and Emotion material was good three months previously but it focused on me. I had to fix potential users' pain points. Feedback came from peers at strategic, operations and work levels in organisations as well as friends and family.

I am aware of trends that suggest creative thinking will be needed by many people in order to differentiate from automation that is predicted to replace many jobs. According to George Land creativity diminishes over time. Creative people will not suddenly appear, but as I had discovered creativity can be learned. People that blend creative and rational analysis then deliver value are Design Thinkers.

Design Thinkers can change their modes of thinking at will. They appear to ghost through creative blocks where some people get stuck. How often have you heard the term creative block? If we accept the received wisdom about psychometric profiling we stay stuck in a rut. I prefer to use different modes of thinking at different stages of the process. My first step was to simplify the core of the Process for fast work.

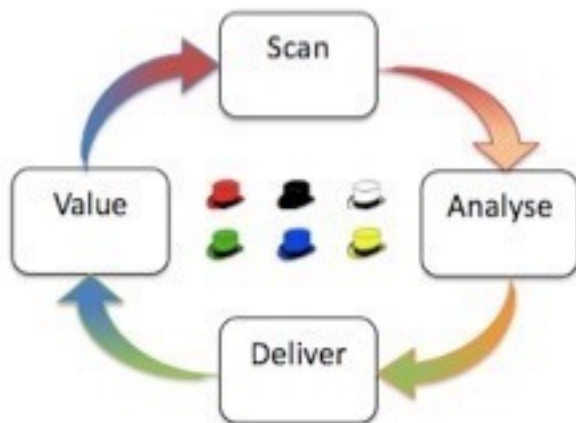






Figure 5.7 Scan, Analyse, Design, Value

The four phases reflect an upgrade to the Plan, Do, Check, Act cycle. That process is very rational and logical and rooted in manufacturing and may not be best suited

for successful work in the information era. We work in a knowledge-based economy. But knowledge alone is not enough. We need to work through Bloom's taxonomy to earn by analysis and application and profit from evaluation and synthesis. We can augment and complement Bloom's rational approach by re-activating our inherent creativity. When both work in harmony we realise value through delivery.

The hats in the centre of the process represent different modes of thinking. They can be dragged into the Scan, Analyse, Deliver and Value boxes. I find that It is a very fast way to set my head for design thinking.

The hats in the diagram are De Bono's thinking hats and are described below:

H a t Colour	Associated thinking mode
	Intuition, hunches, gut instincts, My feeling right now. Feelings can change - no reason is given
	Ideas, alternatives, possibilities. Solutions to black hat problems
	Positives, plus points. Why an idea is useful. Logical reasons are given
	Difficulties, dangers, weaknesses. Spotting the risks. Logical reasons are given



	<p>Information and data. Neutral and objective. What do I know? What do I need to find out? How will I get the information I need?</p>
	<p>Thinking about thinking. What thinking is needed? Organising the thinking. Planning for action</p>

Table 5.8 De Bono's thinking hats

The hats also tie in with my view that my brain is a camouflage kit: blending into environments. I think that most people do it subconsciously. My injured brain had allowed me to see that process in action.

Here is a lucky break. Malcolm Gladwell wrote, but in my opinion never proved, that it takes 10,000 hours to master anything. I assume that you, like me, spent most of your pre-school years, sleeping, eating, filling diapers and exploring the world. It is most likely that you already have 10,000 hours of creative thinking in the bag. This realisation made me change the design of the larger process interface to something more reminiscent of childhood.

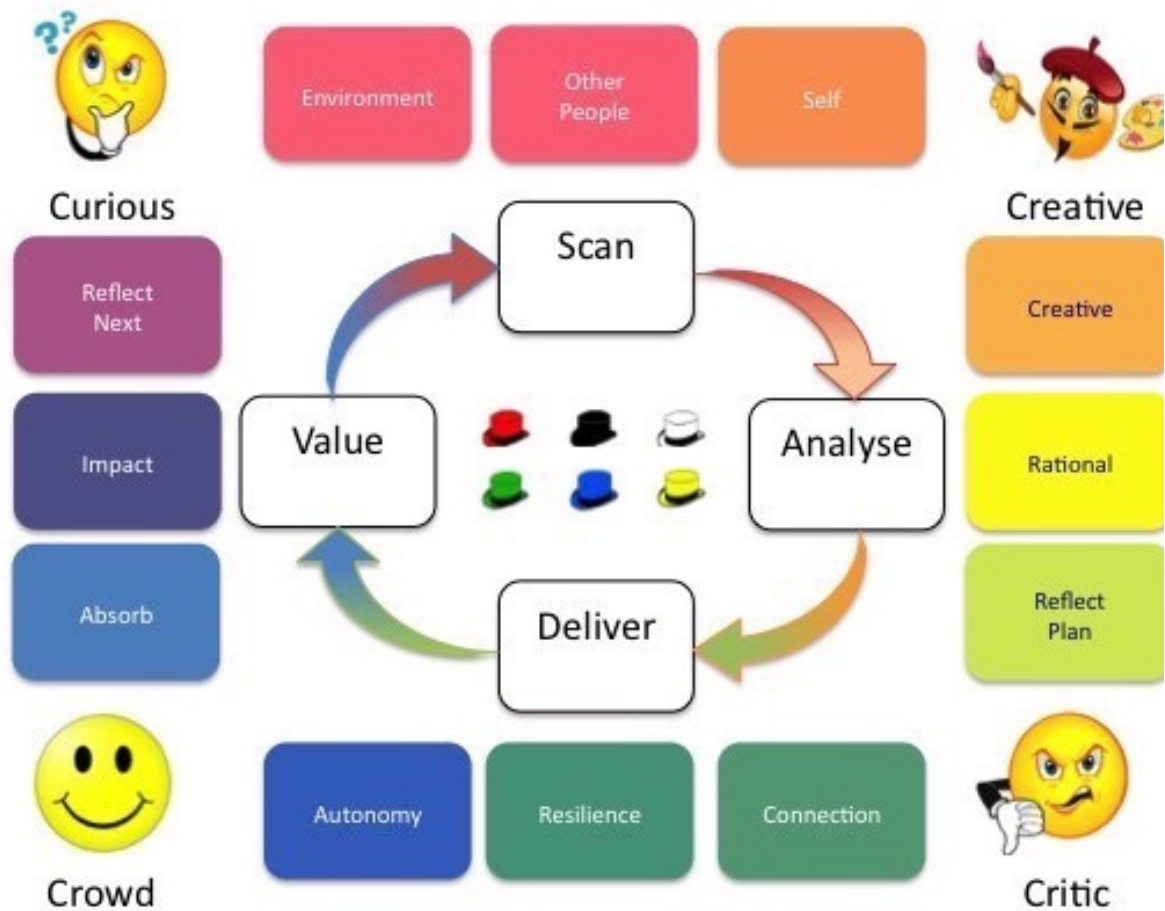


Figure 5.9 Design Thinkers Toolkit

The sides of the square link the different actors in the framework. The actors are Curious, Creative, Critic and Crowd. Depending on the context actors may be internal or external. I refer to Ackoff's second F Law: "Knowledge is of two types, explicit and implicit, and knowing that is implicit"

The actors represent the different stages I had been through in recovery, and life in general. I was glad that I had swapped out the curmudgeon for crowd. The technique is similar to the Disney Method for script writing to appeal to different audience segments.

Three steps for each phase link the actors and remove creative blocks

Phase	Steps	Actions
Scan	Environment, Other People, Self	Set the context to foster creativity
Analyse	Creative, Rational, Reflect & Plan	Do two types of analysis & plan
Deliver	Connection, Resilience, Autonomy	Do the work that was planned
Value	Absorb, Impact, Reflect & Next	Allow time for value to impact & review

Table 5.10 DTT Phases and Steps

There is no need to perform every step in a circular manner. That would be akin to playing every note in an octave like Schoenberg's serialisation. That said there is a musicality that I use to navigate the framework. This is my interpretation of using Schopenhauer's list of aesthetics to replace syneasthesia. Or it could be an over-compensation for being partially deaf. It is not immediately apparent to everyone so I ask that you allow me one last right-brain turn before I head to the coda. If you want to understand how I use aesthetics to replace synaesthesia feel free to play along. < Start Small. Never to defeat. >

In a famous thought experiment Einstein imagined himself chasing a light-beam to consider relativity. When I think of a piece of music my brain does something similar in the slower audio domain: I surf the sound waves converting from analogue to digital and search for themes and patterns. This happens at a low level of consciousness that I previously overlooked. My associative memory creates attachments.

I picture myself on a hot summer day standing on a beach in a Mediterranean bay, about to parakite behind a powerboat. Albert Einstein is at the wheel, wearing a fluorescent green mankini. Marilyn Monroe is sitting in the back of the boat smiling straight back at me. Oh! Pretty Woman. < It is a thought experiment. > As the boat slowly moves away from the beach I run with pumping adrenaline over the sand into gentle waves with a pulse that makes my racing brain latch onto the last thing I saw and I start to hum the opening riff of Pretty Woman by Roy Orbison.

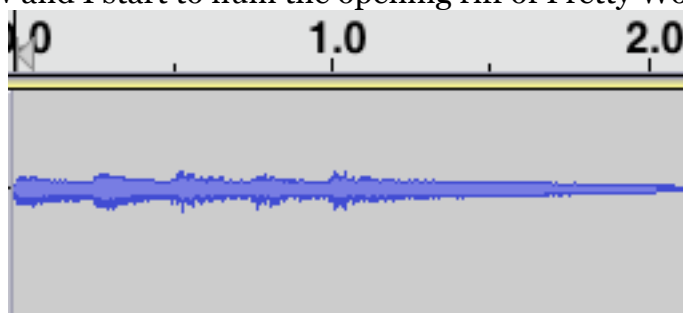


Figure 5.11 Pretty Woman - volume against time.

As I stretch the last note I rise above the water as the parachute lifts me into the air.

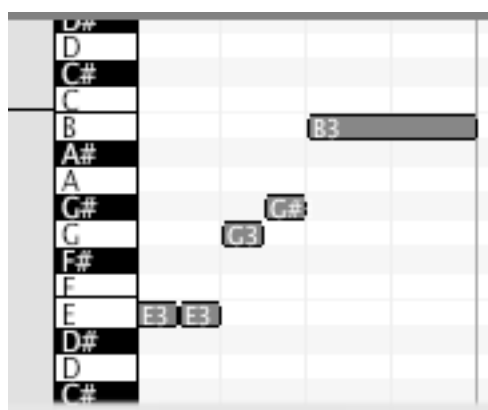


Figure 5.12 Pretty Woman - frequency against time.

I ascend into the air like the notes in the above picture.

I am now flying above the shoulders of giants in the boat below. As Albert slows and speeds the boat I rise and fall like the melody of Pretty Woman that I hear in my imagination. Warm rain gently starts to fall and I find that I am flying inside a cylindrical rainbow. As I move up and down in the air with the changing boat speed the colours in the rainbow reflect the notes in the tune. I rise through reds, oranges, green and light blues. I relax and enjoy it. At the end of the ride I return safely to the beach. That is as close to guided synaesthesia that I can describe.

This thinking led me to replace the piano keys on the left of the above picture with the corresponding coloured steps from the Design Thinkers Toolkit. By applying the frequencies of the notes over time I could produce a very simple work-plan.



Figure 5.13 Pretty woman mapped to framework

The above picture maps to a set of concrete work pack tasks as follows:

1	Set the environment: ensure sure my desk is ready with paper, pens and that I have ten minutes free from interruptions.
2	Use the Creative Technique Library and do a quick exercise. (Most big ideas happen in the first ninety seconds)
3	Determine the rational analysis required. Again I use the DTT and bring up the sample models that I can re-use.
4	Finally I assess my readiness and resilience using the DTT sheet to convert the design into a provisional plan.

Table 5.14 Concrete mapping of Idea Test – Pretty Woman

I use the above work-pack when I devise a loose specification to write computer code and need to create a fast demo. The time-scales of the riff and the duration it takes me to do the work are different: the riff lasts a few seconds and the work takes minutes or hours.

This is akin to the synaesthesia I randomly experienced in early recovery. Now I generate such events at will to realise benefits. The benefits are that I can change perspective and dimension to look ahead and around. I find it useful to bound problems and relax constraints. I sometimes find insights that were not apparent. I also have the subsequent stages of the framework to assess the usefulness of my new knowledge and, if viable, turn it to valuable outcomes and outputs for me and others. I use longer riffs such as Day Tripper or She Sells Sanctuary. The former has an

ascending riff and the latter a descending riff. The direction of the tune means that I can work round the design thinking framework from a me-first or customer-first perspective. The riffs are memorable and easy to associate to the appropriate work packs.

Modern music technology has some other metaphorical devices, such as synthesizers, samplers and fast delivery channels, that I find useful when preparing, communicating, co-ordinating, reusing existing material, delivering work and creating new value. With these techniques and tools I can make it like Mozart, Miles Davis, Muse or Eminem.

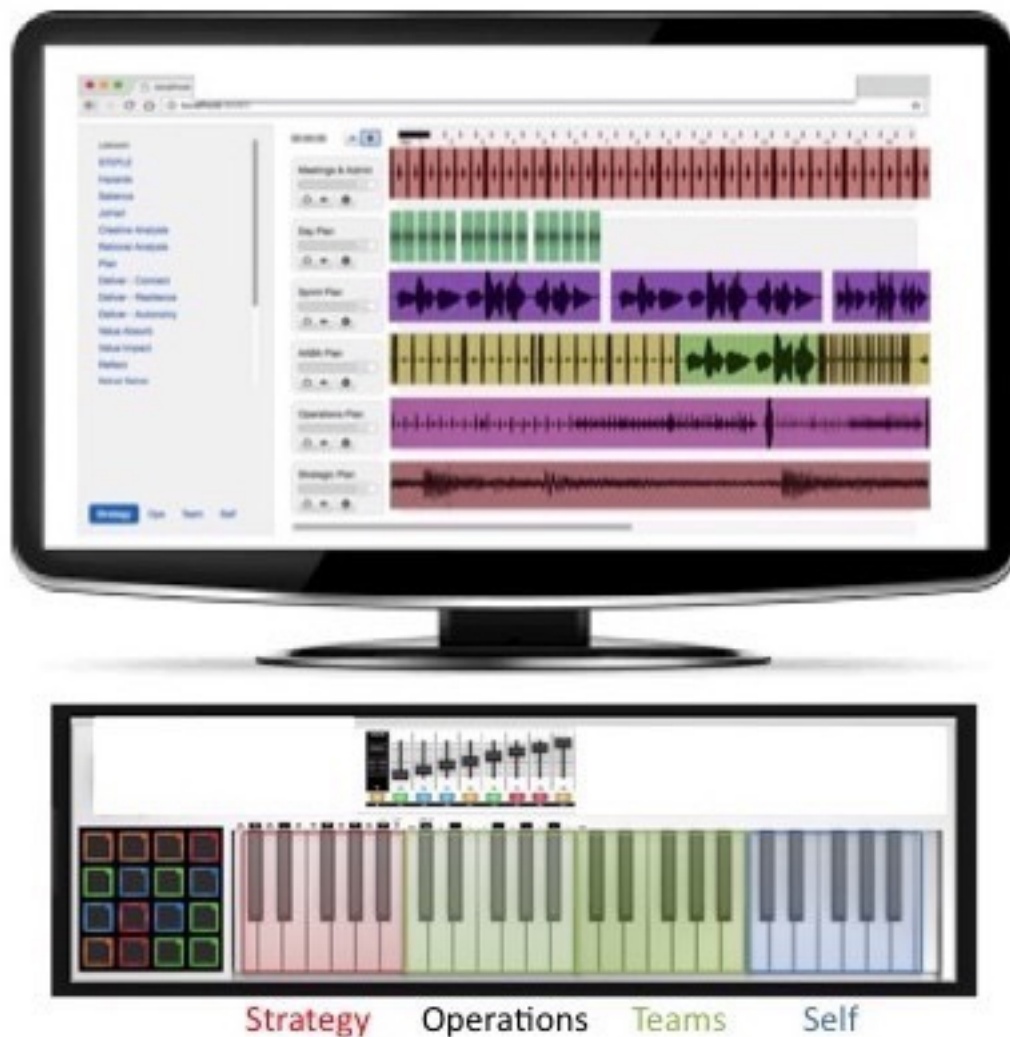


Figure 5.15 WorkSynth components

The screen represents the type of plans I make, connect and execute at different levels.

Using abstract components of the keyboard allows me to use samples of models and workflows then apply De Bono style thinking like audio filters. The zoned keyboard means that I can literally scale from strategy to individual work or vice-versa.

Writing this book is an example of the process. I used a classical template: The 2001 - A Space Odyssey theme tune - "Thus Spake Zarathustra" by Strauss. The draft writing, editing, revision-by-others, subsequent restructuring, formatting, proofing and publishing fitted rather well. I used the plans like an orchestral score. It helped me get things done by play, practise, performance and recording to produce. The overall plan was easy to carry in my head and dip into at will by humming the tune to activate my associative memory.

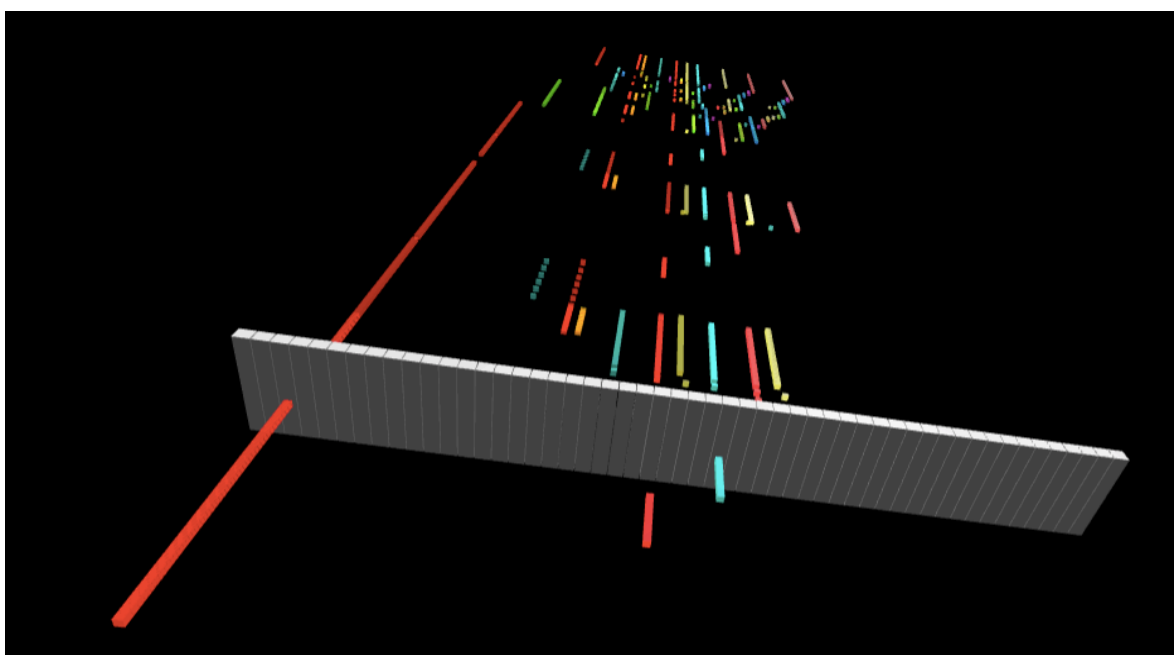


Figure 5.16 - Midi project plan of "Thus wrote Zakathustra" 3D view for longer timescale

The long red note on the left represents strategy. The project work of drafting and reviewing can be seen stretching back in the middle octaves until finally the material is proofed and published to achieve self-actualisation. At times I composed and at others conducted, rehearsed, rewrote and produced. How valuable is it? To me it is very valuable because it proved, after a year in recovery, I could hold a story in my head. It is your consideration if there is value to you and others.

I find musical metaphors are more conducive to design thinking than production line metrics. Sampling is one way to do more with less. This approach does not mean throwing away the good process stuff that already exists but building on strong foundations to foster individual creativity and corporate innovation.

The outcomes and outputs of this iteration are the on the ComarathonMan website. If there is interest I can develop them over time. And how Time has changed.

TIME (Reprise)

The door to dreams was closed.

My coma was real dreamless

Perhaps you're smiling now,

smiling through this darkness

But all I had to give was the realisation of creation.

Laaah, la, la, la laaa, la la la-la

Laaah, la, la, la, realisation

Check In

Ch, ch, ch, changes

Having survived an NDE that last thing I want is to be hoist by my own petard.

The changes I experienced in the year required some sense making.

John Cage whose 4" 33' may have played 5000 times during my coma was convinced that music more is than a system of strict rules. He freed himself from pesky constraints like melody, instruments and this instance sound itself.

Under the influence of Eastern philosophies Cage increasingly removed human control from classical music, resisting the nineteenth century romantic view of the artist as a vessel of divine inspiration. As he said: "I came to the intention of making my work non-intentional because I had no desire to express my ideas or my feelings. I wanted rather to open my mind to what was outside of my mind...and so I had to become free of my likes and dislikes."

Before I was ill I thought Cage was a doyen of creativity. I still do but consider his method to be wrong. I do not think healthy brains can achieve freedom. My life is not about monkish devotion or mindful meditation. There is no divine entity, except in some peoples' imaginations. The I-Ching in Daoism is a convoluted version of the die in The Dice Man. Having another shot at life before I die is too precious to gamble or leave to chance.

My interpretation of the Upanishads makes me nauseous < Sutras vs. Sartre. > The proclamation to transcend to selflessness is manifest selfishness. If you transcend as far as is alluded to you will be as good as dead. It is good to align body and brain with exercise and calming meditation but there is a level below which I think is foolhardy to seek. Dedication, common sense and attention to detail were helpful in my recovery.

The Beatles used techniques from Cage, and others, on their Sergeant Pepper

album. My peppery nature slipped a few degrees down the Scoville scale during my "Year in a life."

My recovery was like having a New Year resolution imposed rather than chosen. That said I am more content at the end of the process.

My primary changes in understanding are:

Time - it was disconcerting not knowing the day of the week. Keeping a diary and reviewing it was good. It changed the way I recall facts and emotions. I now also have the ability to stretch time and riffs from songs into longer periods. This is something that will keep me busy as I find ways to explain and share. On reflection I realise that I followed a Celtic Calendar. Maybe I was lucky that I was in synch with nature's timing and rhythms as I recovered.

Synaesthesia - The episodes were profound and will last in my reconstituted memory. I enjoyed the sensory confusion and use aesthetics as a substitute.

Creativity - Was very helpful to make a visceral connection to life and work. I have restructured my learning and work cycles to include creativity. I use it to augment rational analysis. I think creativity will be needed to differentiate humans from automated work.

FLOW - there was a step change from what work was like before to after.

PIES method worked for me to recover and rehabilitate. Is it useful for others of similar afflictions? Use any bits that help.

Physical - get active. Start Small. Never to defeat.

Intellectual/Emotional - Daily logs may offset the effects of mental deterioration with age but not completely. Creativity and working with childhood hobbies was good in helping me recover. Brains are camouflage kits and blend us into different environments.

Social - it is easy to become isolated. The Internet helps but taking part in discussions was sometime difficult.

The objective models that I had previously used for sense making in the large were no longer suitable. I used quadrant models such as Competency, Lifecycle, Knowledge types, Boisot and the Cynefin. The Cynefin has categories of: obvious, complicated, complexity and chaos. It looks like this

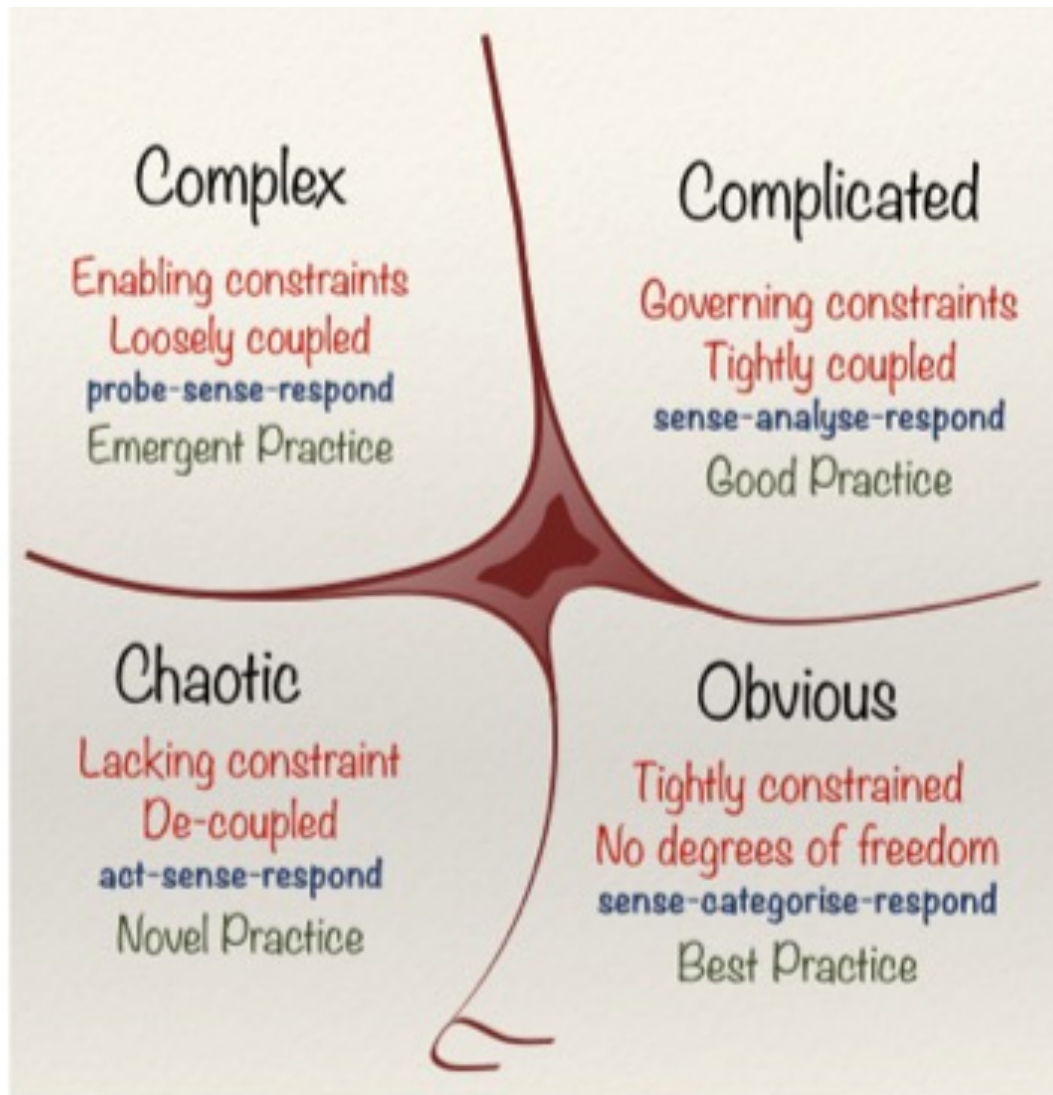


Figure 6.1 Cynefin sense maker framework

The movement in my life over the last year felt more like a counter-clockwise rotation from chaos to simplicity. There are hints of fractals in the depiction but the model did not reflect my subjective experience. It was missing certainty as a category as well as a way of showing personal change. I use the model below.

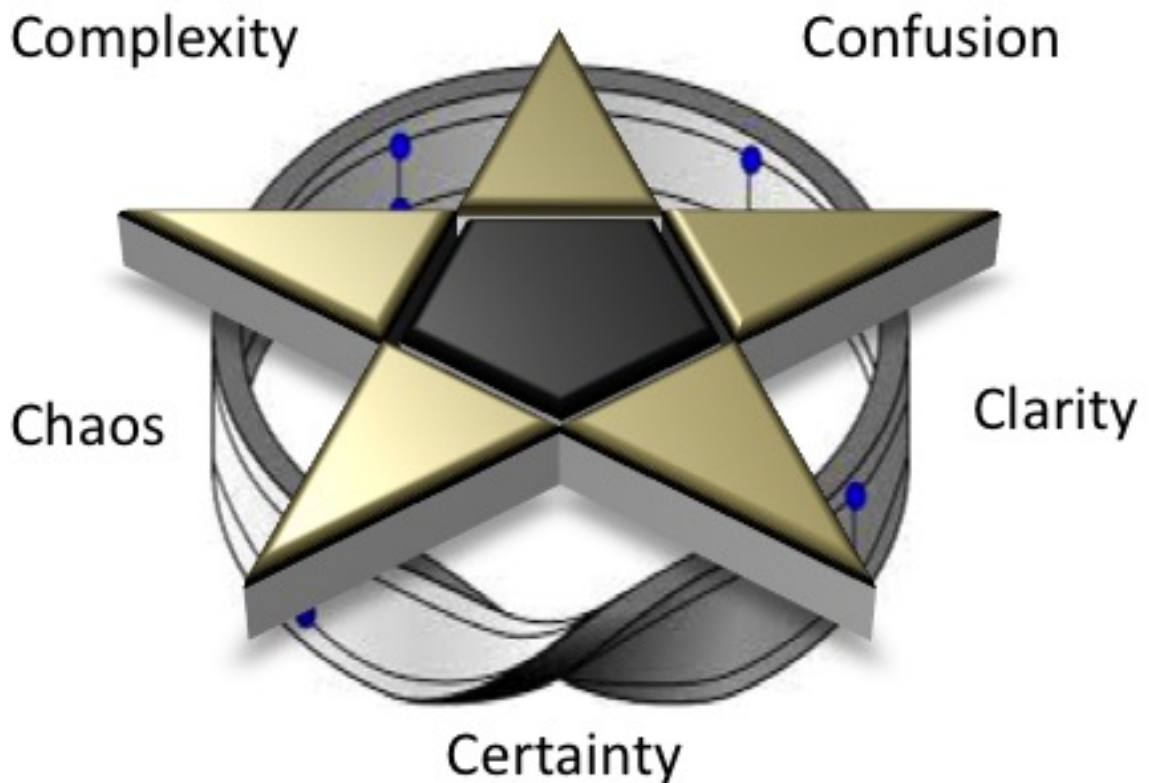


Figure 6.2 Subjective sense maker framework

The star depicts five categories including certainty. This was important because my understanding of 'as was' and 'as is' is different. It is my nature to update my understanding and keep my camouflage kit ready for action. I can work clockwise or counter clockwise or go from leg to leg of the star at will.

The Möbius loop under the star represents the twists in my beliefs and understanding. Even when I was in my most chaotic state I had a sense of certainty. Some uncertainties have hardened and some fixed beliefs have softened. That is simply neuro-plasticity in action.

Applying the model produced the following succinct summary of how I consider my underlying beliefs have changed.

Before	After
God may exist	God is an abstraction.
Math and rationality rule	The rules are not exact. Zero, too, is imaginary
Time is in-built and fixed.	Time is malleable. I stretch riffs from seconds to days
Creativity is nice to have	Creativity secures future employment
Empathy was a distraction	I feel others pain more than before.
Self will bias	More aligned to collective will
Driven by curiosity	Driven by better work/life balance.
Fear of death, ridicule and failure	I have lost my worry bucket.

Table 6.3 Summary of changes

Although I no longer believe in God I base my social values on the Terms and Conditions outlined in the ten commandments <small t, small c. > This helps me work at a collective level.

I consider Buddhism, meditation, and mindfulness to be aligned with self will. This is a Möbius twist in my understanding. I use the techniques for my own < selfish > creative needs. If the outcomes and outputs are good I can share.

Being aware that my brain subconsciously applies polyvagal camouflage allows me to blend in better than before and to stand out when I want to.

The changes above reflect my current way of thinking. They may be different to yours. We have different paths and experiences. I am not advocating you follow my

path or take my viewpoints as your own.

My fate is insignificant in comparison to that of people, especially children, who needlessly die from meningitis because they are prevented protection.

My beliefs may change again as I shuffle along my mortal coil. Schopenhauer posits that shuffle is a typesetter's error and may have originally intended to be shuttle. That insight shifts Hamlet's metaphor to weaving and clothes making which leads to the coda: Invisible Sewing.

Invisible Sewing

When we fell over as children and tore holes in the knees of our trousers the stinging pain was intense. The subsequent washing to get the wound clean was necessary and sore but done with tenderness.

Our trousers could be mended with some invisible sewing. Nobody seemed to notice any difference to us, or the trousers when we next wore them. We, however, felt different. Every time the scar on our knee rubbed against the rough patch of new cloth it made us remember the initial pain.

With time the painfulness goes away and the scar smoothly heals. Sometimes unexpectedly seeing the back of someone's head, hearing a familiar phrase or smelling a perfume will trigger memories of brushing scarred knees on trouser legs. But as the mender used their skills to fix our trousers it is our responsibility to take up the invisible threads that we use to weave our lives into the communities and families that need our input.

Over time we grow out of one set of clothes and get other sets - but we always have a special set we remember with love.

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If you have laughed at my experiences, consider developing your creativity or cogitated on camouflage I humbly ask you to donate the price you would have willingly paid for this wee story, or more, to [Meningitis Research](#).

Your invisible sewing will help make a difference.