

Rolling the DICE on Innovation

By Mohamed Bahefwan

Nearly every organization I know has been frolicking with the term '*innovation*'. Some changed their entire HR culture, some changed processes, and some changed their entire leadership for the sake of it. However, that is not my premise for writing this. I am more focused on innovation on a personal skill level. So, I came up with these structured steps that helped my team and seems to be working well so far. My way of giving back to the world is by sharing it.

Simple. No meditation. No divine aspiration. No hidden technology. Personal innovation requires a roll of the DICE(Divination, Ideation, Cogitation, Etiolation). A 4-step journey of shifting mindsets through different stages of the innovation life cycle. So here it is:

Divination

Start by extrapolating the future. Not only imagining it! But shift your entire mindset to actually, wholesomely, and truly live it. Of course, you will be using today's realities as a spring board to envision this future. However do not think in abstract terms. Try to think of the granular day to day tasks of a typical person living X years from now. Indulge in that person's shoes and take note of everything you see, hear, touch, and even smell.

Ideation

After this deep dive into the future, brainstorm to yourself how can I make life more appealing, stimulating, simpler, etc. What problems will you face in that future? What is the list of 'I wish I could...' that the future you will be saying. Do not solve problems or create stimuli based on today's technology. That comes next. For this mindset stage, just think of value added propositions. Doesn't matter how ridiculous, foolish, or weird your thoughts are. All these ideas ultimately complement, consolidate, and synergize into a golden vortex.

Cogitation

Now comes the time where you shift your mindset to deep thinking in solution creation. Come back to today's reality, and utilize logical reasoning, factual judgment, technological trending, etc. Create product designs, development milestones, cost analysis, etc. Setup a realistic step by step strategy for purposeful winning, yet not forgetting the original desires of your future you.

Etiolation

With any new idea, expect to initially grow in the dark. Etiolation is just that. When plants grow in complete absence of light, they have stems that are initially weak. Yet, throughout this time of self-doubt, plants amalgamate a unique skill: The artistry to search and discover the smallest source of light. The plant will naturally then elongate its stems toward that small glimmer. Have that persistent stubborn mindset! Expect not be understood initially, and even for a while. Twist and turn, adapt your strategy, but keep on growing towards that very precise dim light. Surely that barely seen bullseye will grow shinier with time.

There you have it, a simple suggested process. It works with practice! Think of any inventor or global corporate founder, and think of what successful products and solutions they made possible. I could almost guarantee you that their mindsets traversed through DICE at some varied degree of velocity. Lastly, as the acronym puts it. Innovation requires risk. So be patient, be committed, and go ahead roll your DICE.