



## **THE FUTURE OF INSPIRATION CIC**

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The text for The Dr. Suess Universe and accompanying examples were developed by Anja-Karina Pahl to explain column 2 & 3 of her 'Innovation Map' and is taught to Million Dollar GameDay Workshop attendees and Licenced Facilitators of her method. The text is edited, republished and distributed with the written permission of the original author.

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**THE  
DR. SUESS  
UNIVERSE**

## THE DR. SUESS UNIVERSE

The problems we face in day-to-day life are almost always complex and messy and tied up together with more problems, ad infinitum.

Worse than that, most problems can be said to result from the way we think about things, rather than being problems in themselves. Buddhist Masters call this 'not seeing how things really are', while Albert Einstein, Richard Feynmann and Roger Penrose, world-renowned physicists, all commented that we cannot think our way out of a problem by using the same kind of thinking that created it.

Our best bet at solving problems, is not, however, about just 'thinking out of the box'. The world's best problem-solvers do not randomly brainstorm ideas. They first very precisely define how problems relate to each other - and that makes it far easier to find the best solutions.

Today we, too, will learn to define every problem both precisely and simply, in just 3 parts. My last 10 years of research and coaching experience show that when we ask questions this way, our problems can even sometimes simply disappear.

Indeed Professor Mihaly Csikzentimihalyi's research on creative flow shows that inventors who change the World aren't just the ones with the best answers. Rather, they're the one who ask questions no one else asks, and see problems everyone else ignores, and solve them first.

To begin with, let's agree there are 3 fundamental divisions in the universe:

[1] stuff we can touch or see - e.g cats and stars

[2] actions done by the stuff we can touch or see - e.g sit and exist

[3] a spacetime in which stuff exists and actions happen - e.g mat and sky.

This division is true to the smallest scale, so technically speaking, we can never find the smallest, isolated particle in the universe. The Higgs Boson exists in spacetime. And it is true for the largest scale: The Vacuum [a non-thing] permeates [or does not permeate, if you prefer] all of outer space [another non-thing].

After all, there is No Thing that exists anywhere but in space and time, right? Similarly, there is no space and time that does not have stuff existing in it!

This division is also true for our thoughts and concepts of things we cannot see or touch. It is absolutely not possible to just say the word 'exists', without asking, 'what exists'? And it is absolutely not possible to just say 'I exist' or 'I Am' or 'The Higgs Boson is' without implying that existing happens somewhere, sometime and thus also in relation to a whole field of other things.



STARS.  
EXIST.  
IN THE SKY.

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This simple, 3-fold nature is one of the most fundamental patterns of all creation.

So it's also not surprising, that every language on the planet identifies these three classes of reality. After all, our brains evolve to allow us to exactly describe the universe around us.

In an English sentence, these 3 classes of reality are called 'subject', 'verb' and 'object'. And in Australia, we learn this grammar in grade 2 at school. Often our first written sentence is something like 'The Cat sat on the Mat'.

Basically, we can make a total description of all 3 interrelated, interdependent parts of the universe in a child's rhyme. So I always say we live in a Dr. Seuss Universe.

Now, this is a hugely important trick modern innovators should care about, because we already know that people who make historical, world-changing breakthroughs see a problem no one else saw and solve it first. They can do this only because they are precise about what is really going on around them. They can describe a situation completely because they care about the existence of all of these classes and about the unbreakable interrelationship between them.

There is a bonus that comes to meet an innovator, who looks at the interrelationship of things in this way - when we ask better questions, we can find better answers.

## HOW TO ASK BETTER QUESTIONS

You can use this insight to help formulate better, deeper, broader questions about any issue, before you start looking for answers. You can approach the Dr. Seuss Universe for one category, a clowder, or a cloud.

1. **CAT.** Here you focus on just one part of your issue. So there's only one decision to make upfront. Do you want to improve [a] a material, [b] an action or [c] an environment ? After choosing your category, first write down all the kinds of questions that are related to that category. Be as detailed as possible. Finally, brainstorm ideas for your best questions.
2. **CLOWDER.** Here you consider 3 parts of your issue randomly. First, write down all the questions you have. Capture each thought on a different post-it note. Be as detailed as possible but don't worry about the order. Next, write 3 headings on a piece of paper: [a] materials [b] actions [c] environment and move and cluster your questions so they fit in the most appropriate category. Finally, choose the 1 most important question in each category and brainstorm ideas to improve it.

3. **CLOUD.** Here you focus on how all parts of your issue relate with each other. How do you want to improve it all ? Write 3 headings on a piece of paper: [a] material or subject [b] action or verb [c] environment or objective. Make a sentence that describes your challenge in these three parts. Use a separate post-it note for each of the three parts of your sentence and write as much detail as you can fit on the note. Create as many sentences as possible in a time limit of eg. 10 minutes. Finally, choose your best set of three post-its from all options and brainstorm ideas to make each part better.

- By material, we mean any actor, structure or thing you can touch or point at.
- By action, we mean behaviour, function and a million other ways of moving about.
- By environment, we mean the space, time, context, culture and purpose that is acted upon.

## EXAMPLES

1. **CAT.** Let's say I want my cat to star in a reality show. I decide the most important thing is to improve first is how she looks on camera ie. her physical appearance [material]. Then I consider how often to wash her, whether to colour/dye her hair etc. When I've written all my questions down, I brainstorm answers for these questions.

**MY CAT.  
SITS.  
ON THE MAT.**



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2. **CLOWDER.** Let's say I want to improve everything about my cat for the show. So I make notes and questions in all 3 universal categories. For materials, I want a clean, brushed, well-fed pink-dyed cat. For actions, she needs to sit still, not chase birds, not pee, not scratch, not meow. For environment, I want her on a mat, on the judges table, in front of the camera or around other cats. Later, I choose one favourite point in each categories [eg. pink cat - sitting still - on the mat] and brainstorm solutions for these.
  
3. **CLOUD.** If I want to cover all bases to get my cat on that show, I need to be very clear how everything relates to everything else. For instance, if I know she likes chasing birds when she is hungry, then to improve this, I define a sentence like: My kitty is fed her favourite snack at 3pm, 1 hour before the show, so she won't be hungry and chase birds. I also write a sentence stating my goal to have a clean, brushed pink-coloured kitty trained for months before the show to look at the judges adoringly, as soon as she sits on a mat in front of cameras. Finally, I choose a favourite sentence and brainstorm ideas to improve each part of it, simultaneously.