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Framestorming®

#07

Daily Skills - Small but powerful

Dariusz Grudzień - What and Why

Framestorming® for Engineers

Presented with a simple puzzle, engineers in the conference room struggle to solve it. Initial excitement and usual “*we can do it, we are ... !*” transitions into doubt “*is it really possible to solve?*” And eventually a denial: “*no it is impossible. I give up!*”. It happens with engineers, doctor, police detectives, etc.¹

It turns out that the difficulty lies not in the issue we are facing, but the way we think about it. More explicitly, the entrenched cognitive patterns we deploy to deal with encountered issues. Framestorming helps us to gently loosen entrenched patterns and allow for new framing of a problem to generate new possible solutions. During the class we will exercise the entire flow of **dilemma -> framestorming® -> new framing -> possible solutions**”.



When corporate leaders talk about change, they usually have a desired result in mind: gains in performance, a better approach to customers, the solution to a formidable challenge. They know that if they are to achieve this result, people throughout the company need to change their behavior and practices, and that can't happen by simple decree. How, then, does it happen? In the last few years, insights from neuroscience have begun to answer that question. New behaviors can be put in place, but only by reframing attitudes that are so entrenched that they are almost literally embedded in the physical pathways of employees' neurons. These beliefs have been reinforced over the years through everyday routines and hundreds of workplace conversations. They all have the same underlying theme: “That's the way we do things around here.”

That's the Way We (Used to) Do Things Around Here. From [Feb 2011 Strategy+Buisness](#) Picture Credit: *Guy Billout*

It's not difficult, you just need to know how 😊



Picture from 1896 book - [Cassell's complete book of sports and pastimes](#)

¹ Matthew E. May (2016) - *Winning the Brain Game: Fixing the 7 Fatal Flaws of Thinking*

² VUCA is a term coined to describe environmental Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity and Ambiguity.

Framestorming® - the registered trademark by Anette Prehn whose book in English [Play Your Brain](#) introduced the term ([see the intro video here](#))

There is little in complex situations which can be controlled at will. Addressing complex issues requires a thoughtful and skillful approach. Often what we perceive as clear and certain turns out to be a faulty perception, limited perspectives out of context, or forced behavioral changes. Complex issues, sometimes also called wicked problems, seem to resist, and derail algorithmic or forceful solutions.

Are we doomed to fail in the VUCA² environment which seems to only accelerate with advent of pandemic war times?

Neuroscientists and psychologists tell us about new tools which may be used to remedy increased demand for our cognitive performance. Many times, what we thought really was hard turns into easy after a different perspective or frame of mind is chosen.

What **framestorming®** proposes is an approach to open up our perception to more possibilities via an semi-algorithmic method of loosening of entrenched patterns in our thinking. We often assume that our job is to resolve all issues in a binary manner. This binary approach permeates the engineering mindset and eliminates any in-between states. In this approach, ambiguity is devalued, when in fact, it can be beautiful, beneficial to your career, and even entertaining.

Gentle, certainly not forceful stimulation, of our thinking can result in amazing outcomes.

Come to learn why, what, and how of **framestorming®** done in a skillful and playful conversation. It will help you to befriend ambiguity and will teach you how to function and thrive in a world full of VUCA.

Reason #1

Useful heuristics turn into biases without warning

Befriend it!

Art, at its best, mines the paradoxes that make humans human. It celebrates our ability to embrace ambiguity, and to experience this sustained, unresolved state as pleasurable, or at least significant.

Douglas Rushkoff - *Team Human*

Reason #2

Playful attitudes are saving grace

Paradoxical concept!

Pragmatic imagination includes a wide range of mental image making activities that can be used for action, agency, and impact. The era of industrialization created new ways of making things. The 21-st century will be the era of new creative ways of how to adapt better thru imagining.

Reason #3

Loosening of prevailing conceptions

Must have of leadership

How do we master the art of unlearning and relearning? By asking questions which will loosen entrenched patterns and allow for emergence of novelty. In complexity, anticipatory awareness and emergence of patterns are key to beneficial coherence at minimal cost. New skills for 21-st century anyone?