

SERIOUS PLAY

VOLUME II

FIELD GUIDE TO FIGHTING AND SURVIVING BANALITY
NOW IN SHORTER EXERCISES

OFFICE OF ENROLLMENT &
STUDENT ADVANCEMENT



THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

CREATED AND COMPILED BY D.GOEBEL
FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF OUTREACH

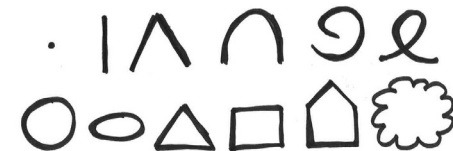
Everyday Creative

What follows is a series of creative exercises you can do in few minutes. These are designed for those moments when you have 5, 10, 15 minutes between meetings, a free moment after lunch, or when you just need a little mental break.

These are not logic puzzles. Those are also great "workouts", but typically designed to produce one "right" answer. There are no right answers to be found in this book. It's simply about the exercise and the workout you give your creative "muscles".

Don't worry: no one need ever see this book! It's yours and yours alone. You can keep the pages you're proud of and share them with the world, if you wish. You can toss the ones you dislike. Or, heck, just shred the whole darned thing. These pages are about the journey not the result. Happy creating!

Think you can't draw? Bosh! Flimshaw!
Everyone can draw. If you can make these 12
symbols, you can draw anything. Really!



Daily Doodle

Draw something. Anything. The first thing that pops into your mind. Reserve judgement and don't erase. This is just an exercise. Just spend 5 to 10 minutes. Relax and have fun. Do this each day until you fill all the spaces on the page.

Object Scavenger

Grab the things around you. Are you at your desk? In a hotel? Airport? Use the pen, stationary, mini shampoo bottle. Whatever you can grab. Now create your sculpture.

What is it? What does it do?

Extra Credit: name your creation and turn this into an Instagram story!

Name Game

Think of someone you met today. Using the first letter of their first name and the first letter of their last think of 2 objects. For example: Douglas Gustafson = Donut Gaslamp. Draw the world's first Donut Gaslamp (or whatever you came up with).

Compound Interest

Think of 2 compound words and split them up. Then, recombine them to make up new words. For example: seahorse airport. These might give you airhorse and horseport. Explain what your new compound words are and/or what they do.

You Can Call Me Al. Weird Al!

Weird Al Yankovic has made a career out writing song parodies. Sometimes they're political, sometimes they're cultural commentary. Your mission is to take a popular song and rewrite the words below:

Objects Incorporated, LLC

Christoph Niemann, designer of many covers for The New Yorker Magazine, has a fun side project in which he takes everyday objects and incorporates them into doodles (check out @abstractsunday on Instagram.) A plastic fork becomes a giraffe (the tines are the legs; head at the top). A penny becomes the scoop of an ice cream cone held by a child. Paperclips become beach chairs.

Throw something down and try your own:

Memories . . . Light the Corner of My Mind

Want to remember something? I mean, REALLY remember something? Draw it. It doesn't have to be good. Just look at it and draw.

Cloudy But Clear

We all did this as kids--and probably as adults, too. Spend 5 minutes clearing your mind and just look at the clouds. What are they? Did one morph into something else?

Write about the cloud "thing" you see. Do you see many different things? If it changes, what is the next thing you see?

Haiku

The perennial favorite: Haiku. Using the rigid construct of 3 lines and 5, 7, and 5 syllable respectively, explain the story of your favorite movie, book, or play.

Happy Baggage

Travelling can be stressful and having bad luggage can make it worse. Where is that boarding pass? What happened to the phone charger? Where's that water you just bought? Why are these effing chords always tangled?

Design your perfect, custom luggage below. It has all the things you need, when you need them. Design it below and show from different perspectives if necessary.

The Gift of No Lift

First draw something you see without lifting your pen:

Finally, draw something you see without looking at your paper OR lifting your pen:

Next, draw something you see without looking at your paper:

Fake It Til You Make It

Turn an accidental scribble, a pen mistake, a blurred mark by an errant finger (anything really) into a drawing.

Better yet, play with a friend. You each scratch something down and have other person turn it into whatever your imagination sees.

Theory of Relativity

What if Einstein never pursued science? Would we still know him as the genius he is? Imagine, instead, Albert as a poet, a choreographer, or a camp counsellor, who still achieved levels of brilliance. What is his area and what did he do?

Kids Be, Like, Creative

There are many, many reasons why kids are so creative. One is that the world is still so full of wonder and mystery. The magic that gets squashed out through years of rational thinking is still alive and kicking in kids. There's a reason why the protagonists in Harry Potter and Stranger Things are kids: the world is full of possibilities and we get to see it through their eyes.

Think back to a childhood vision or invention you had. What did it do? Who was it for? What did it change?

Emoji Karaoke

Draw the lyrics to your favorite song using only emojis.

Shoshin or "beginners mind" in Japanese.

Take a familiar object and look at it from the eyes of someone who's never seen it. Like a space alien or a figure from history. How would you explain a smartphone to Mozart?

Subconscious Alphabet

Next to the vertical alphabet below, write a vertical sentence. Anything, really. Doesn't have to make sense.

Now look at the 2 letters next to each other and come up with a famous persons name--real or fictional--and put it on the line next to it. If you get stuck, move on. The subconscious mind will keep working on the other problems. This is the importance of leaving a problem and coming back to it.

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Creative Traffic Lights

One area where we have less interest in "disruptive" development is when it relates to safety. Think of the stoplight. It's been much the same for the last 100 years.

How could you redesign it to make it even more effective? Write about and/or draw your traffic light improvements.

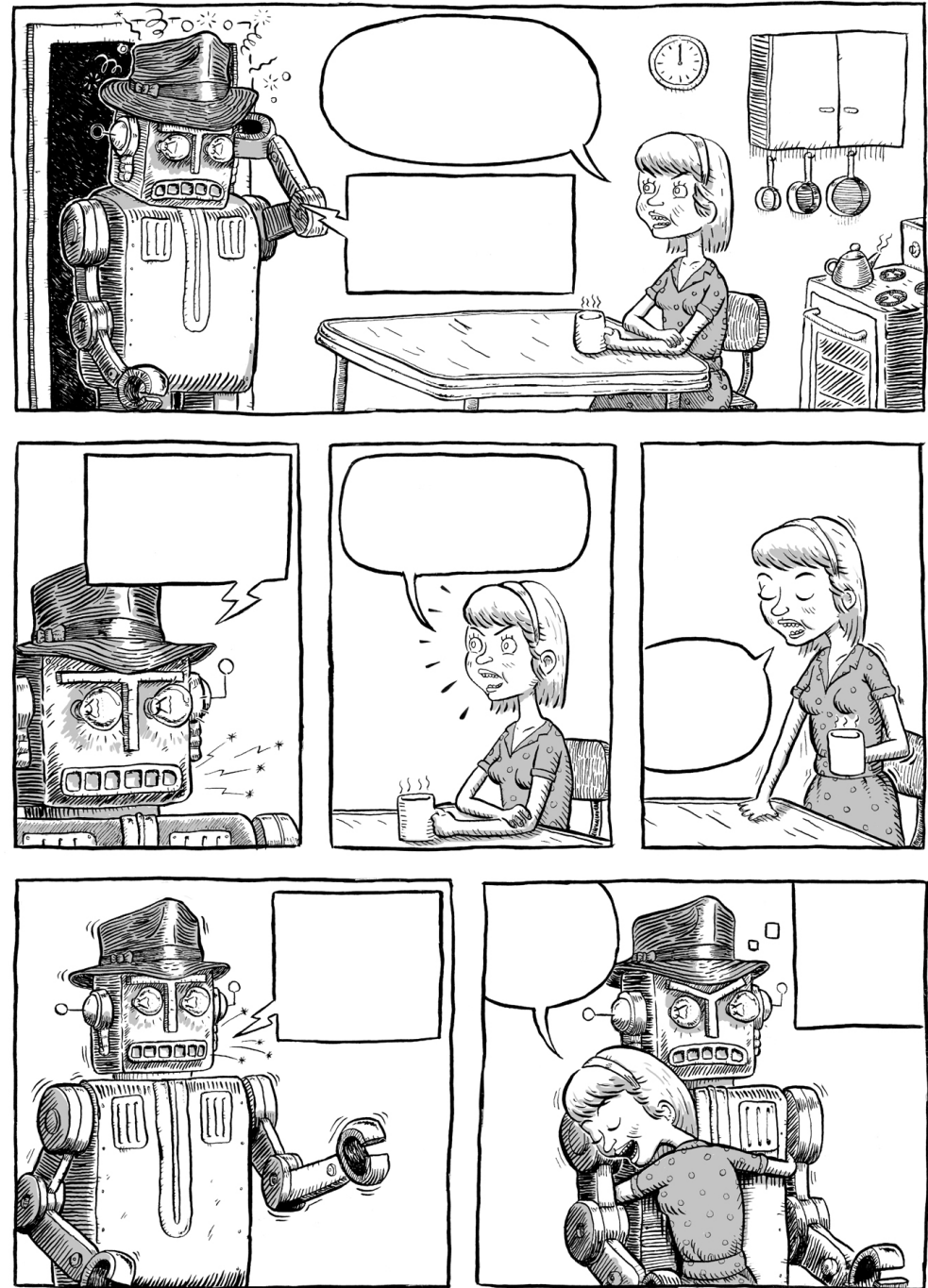
Trivial Superhero

Imagine yourself as a superhero. Like most superheroes, your powers are both a blessing and a curse. That said, the powers you possess are relatively trivial. For example: you can make an elevator arrive instantly by squeezing your left kneecap; you can make anyone sneeze by blinking at them; you can produce a raucous fart on command. What is your trivial superpower that is both a blessing and a curse?

Extra credit: draw your super hero costume above!

Comic Strippers

Write what the characters below are saying. Start with this constraint: the characters are not where you first assumed they were.



Sad is the New Happy

Have you seen that trailer for The Shining that turns one of the most frightening movies of all time into a feel-good RomCom? Your task is to do the same. Take a funny, happy movie and turn it around. Or the opposite. Make Step Brothers into a Shakespearean tragedy. Turn The Ring into a zany slapstick full of pratfalls and high jinks. Think of the funniest and/or scariest movies you know and flip them over. Write the voiceover to the trailer here:

Seasonal Pop Up

Pop up stores have become very popular. Especially around major holidays: Halloween, Christmas, 4th of July. Your job is to create a pop up store for minor holidays. Think: Labor Day, Flag Day, April Fool's Day. Pick your favorite minor holiday and create a store. How many days is the store open? What are the hours? What products are you selling? Who works and/or shops there?

"You can't use up creativity. The more you make, the more you have." --

Maya Angelou



"You are not a drop in the ocean,
you are the ocean in a drop."

-- Rumi



"It's through mistakes that you actually grow. You have to get bad in order to get good."

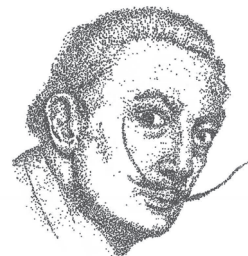
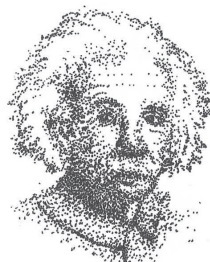
-- Paula Scher

"Great things are done by a series of small things brought together."

-- Vincent van Gogh



"Imagination is more important than knowledge. For knowledge is limited, whereas imagination embraces the entire world, stimulating progress, giving birth to evolution." -- Albert Einstein



"Have no fear of perfection,
you'll never reach it."

-- Salvador Dali



"Curiosity about life in all of its aspects, I think, is still the secret of great creative people." --Leo Burnett

"When inspiration does not come to me, I go halfway to meet it."

-- Sigmund Freud





"Creativity is seeing what everyone else has seen, and thinking what no one else has thought."
-- Albert Einstein

"Creativity is just connecting things. When you ask creative people how they did something, they feel a little guilty because they didn't really do it, they just saw something. It seemed obvious to them after a while. That's because they were able to connect experiences they've had and synthesize new things." -- Steve Jobs



"Imagination is not only the uniquely human capacity to envision that which is not, and therefore the fount of all invention and innovation. In its arguably most transformative and revelatory capacity, it is the power to that enables us to empathize with humans whose experiences we have never shared." -- J.K. Rowling



Beethoven, whose bust has become a meme for "genius", was known to have written melodies 70 times or more before getting the "right" one.

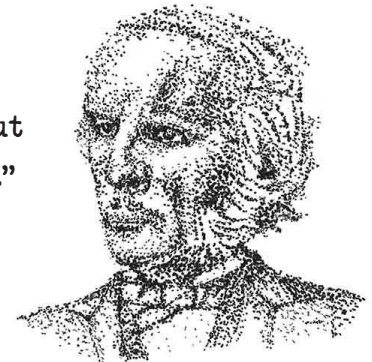


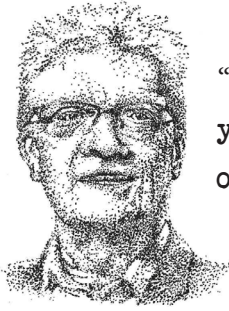
"Every child is an artist, the problem is staying an artist when you grow up."
-- Pablo Picasso

"Creativity is a wild mind and a disciplined eye."
-- Dorothy Parker

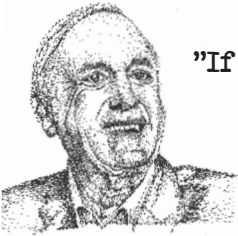


"A ship is safe in a harbor. But that's not what ships are for."
-- William Shedd



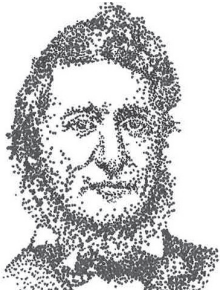


"If you're not prepared to be wrong,
you'll never come up with anything
original." --Ken Robinson



"If you want creative workers, give them
enough time to play."

— John Cleese



"It's not what you look at that
matters, it's what you see."

-- Henry David Thoreau