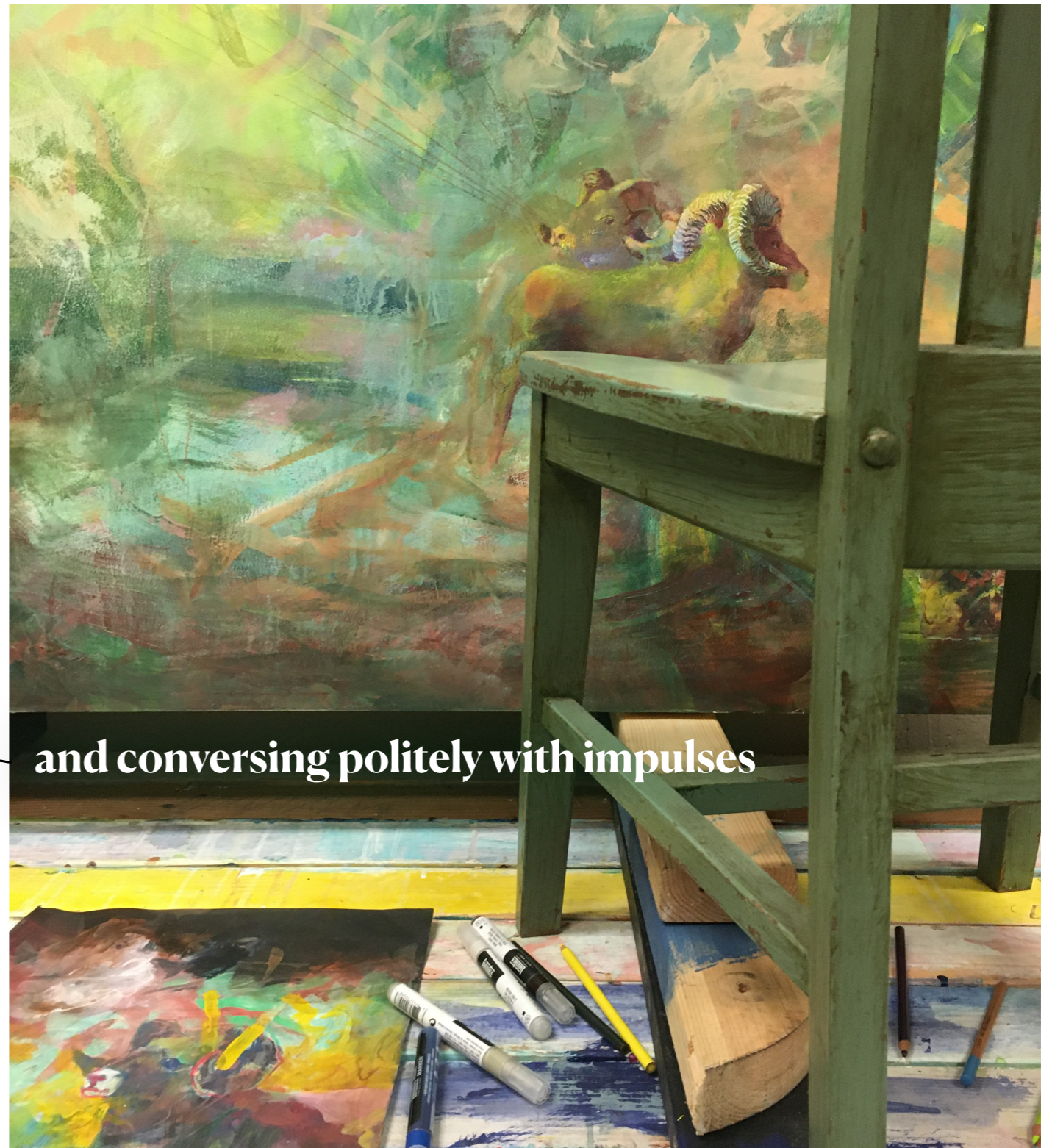


# Curiosity



and conversing politely with impulses



# CURIOSITY, AWE AND WONDER

## Psalm 148

- 1 Praise the Lord!  
Praise the Lord from the heavens!  
Praise him from the skies!
- 2 Praise him, all his angels!  
Praise him, all the armies of heaven!
- 3 Praise him, sun and moon!  
Praise him, all you twinkling stars!
- 4 Praise him, skies above!  
Praise him, vapors high above the clouds!
- 5 Let every created thing give praise to the Lord,  
for he issued his command, and they came into being.
- 6 He set them in place forever and ever.  
His decree will never be revoked.
- 7 Praise the Lord from the earth,  
you creatures of the ocean depths,
- 8 fire and hail, snow and clouds,<sup>[a]</sup>  
wind and weather that obey him,
- 9 mountains and all hills,  
fruit trees and all cedars,
- 10 wild animals and all livestock,  
small scurrying animals and birds,
- 11 kings of the earth and all people,  
rulers and judges of the earth,
- 12 young men and young women,  
old men and children.
- 13 Let them all praise the name of the Lord.  
For his name is very great;  
his glory towers over the earth and heaven!
- 14 He has made his people strong,  
honoring his faithful ones—  
the people of Israel who are close to him.

Praise the Lord!

Curiosity is in many ways inferior to AWE and to WONDER. All three are responses to mystery. Curiosity is different in that it is within our power to cultivate it. You can *choose* to pursue a curious disposition towards beauty, intricacy, vice, etc... while WONDER and AWE are things that most often *happen to* us; they have more to do with the thing we encounter than with our own decisions, virtue, sin, or attitudes.

It is possible, though, that choosing to cultivate curiosity primes us for the “bigger” experiences of AWE and WONDER by making us more aware of things we might otherwise overlook or move too fast to see.

### Redeemed Curiosity

When we praise the Lord in AWE and WONDER, everything in the created world “under” Him becomes more amazing. If worship is a choice to joyfully place ourselves under His feet, then in some inverted way it seems to give us an AWE-inspiring bird’s eye view of creation. This is one of the cascades painted by Psalm 148, and it catches the tone of what I would otherwise describe as a sense of *wow!-what if?...* in the worshipful creative process. Redeemed curiosity like this requires mystery; something unknown needs to pull our right foot forward, while at the same moment our left foot is stabilized by the knowledge of an unchanging God. C.S. Lewis describes this simultaneous longing and knowing in his biographical book Surprised by Joy:

Much the most important thing that happened to me at Campbell was that I there read Sohrab and Rustum in form under an excellent master whom we called Octie. I loved the poem at first sight and have loved it ever since. . . . Arnold gave me at once (and the best of Arnold gives me still) a sense, not indeed of passionless vision, but of a passionate, silent gazing at things a long way off.

-C.S. Lewis, Surprised by Joy, pg 53

The magnetic disposition he is describing is its own work ethic in the studio, and it is one of the things that I most desire to grow in myself and in my students. If curiosity is a primer for AWE and WONDER then it is exceedingly important for creative people. If it can be cultivated and redeemed as a component of the renewed mind that Paul writes about in Romans 12:2, then one of the questions I want to answer for my first-year Foundations students especially is “*how do you get there?*” Put differently, “*What is the best first step to catalyzing spirit-filled curiosity?*”

While this essay begins and ends with the subject of redeemed curiosity, the next (and longest) section deals with the dynamic tension between *creating* and *analyzing*. My goal is to articulate a biblical answer to the question of which of these two modalities is the best way to begin a creative process that eventually pulls us forward with (and towards) magnetic curiosity.

Consider the contrast in personality below between Matthew (the writer in the first passage) and Simon Peter (whose actions are described in the second passage from John's Gospel).

## Matthew 1:1-17

The Genealogy of Jesus the Messiah.

**1** This is the genealogy of Jesus the Messiah the son of David, the son of Abraham:

**2** Abraham was the father of Isaac, Isaac the father of Jacob, Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers, **3** Judah the father of Perez and Zerah, whose mother was Tamar, Perez the father of Hezron, Hezron the father of Ram, **4** Ram the father of Amminadab, Amminadab the father of Nahshon, Nahshon the father of Salmon, **5** Salmon the father of Boaz, whose mother was Rahab, Boaz the father of Obed, whose mother was Ruth, Obed the father of Jesse, **6** and Jesse the father of King David. David was the father of Solomon, whose mother had been Uriah's wife, **7** Solomon the father of Rehoboam, Rehoboam the father of Abijah, Abijah the father of Asa,

**8** Asa the father of Jehoshaphat, Jehoshaphat the father of Jehoram, Jehoram the father of Uzziah, **9** Uzziah the father of Jotham, Jotham the father of Ahaz, Ahaz the father of Hezekiah, **10** Hezekiah the father of Manasseh, Manasseh the father of Amon, Amon the father of Josiah, **11** and Josiah the father of Jeconiah[c] and his brothers at the time of the exile to Babylon. **12** After the exile to Babylon: Jeconiah was the father of Shealtiel, Shealtiel the father of Zerubbabel, **13** Zerubbabel the father of Abihud, Abihud the father of Eliakim, Eliakim the father of Azor, **14** Azor the father of Zadok, Zadok the father of Akim, Akim the father of Elihud, **15** Elihud the father of Eleazar, Eleazar the father of Matthan, Matthan the father of Jacob, **16** and Jacob the father of Joseph, the husband of Mary, and Mary was the mother of Jesus who is called the Messiah. **17** Thus there were fourteen generations in all from Abraham to David, fourteen from David to the exile to Babylon, and fourteen from the exile to the Messiah.

*Did you skim? Matthew probably wouldn't.*

## John 18:4-11

**4** Jesus, knowing all that was going to happen to him, went out and asked [the soldiers and officials from the chief priests and the Pharisees.], "Who is it you want?" **5** "Jesus of Nazareth," they replied.

"I am he," Jesus said. (And Judas the traitor was standing there with them.) **6** When Jesus said, "I am he," they drew back and fell to the ground. **7** Again he asked them, "Who is it you want?" "Jesus of Nazareth," they said.

**8** Jesus answered, "I told you that I am he. If you are looking for me, then let these men go." **9** This happened so that the words he had spoken would be fulfilled: "I have not lost one of those you gave me."

**10** Then Simon Peter, who had a sword, drew it and struck the high priest's servant, cutting off his right ear. (The servant's name was Malchus.) **11** Jesus commanded Peter, "Put your sword away! Shall I not drink the cup the Father has given me?"

We will circle back to this contrast shortly, after taking a look at a list of rules created by John Cage... or Merce Cunningham, or Sister Corita Kent. The record of their authorship isn't nearly as meticulous as Matthew's genealogy.

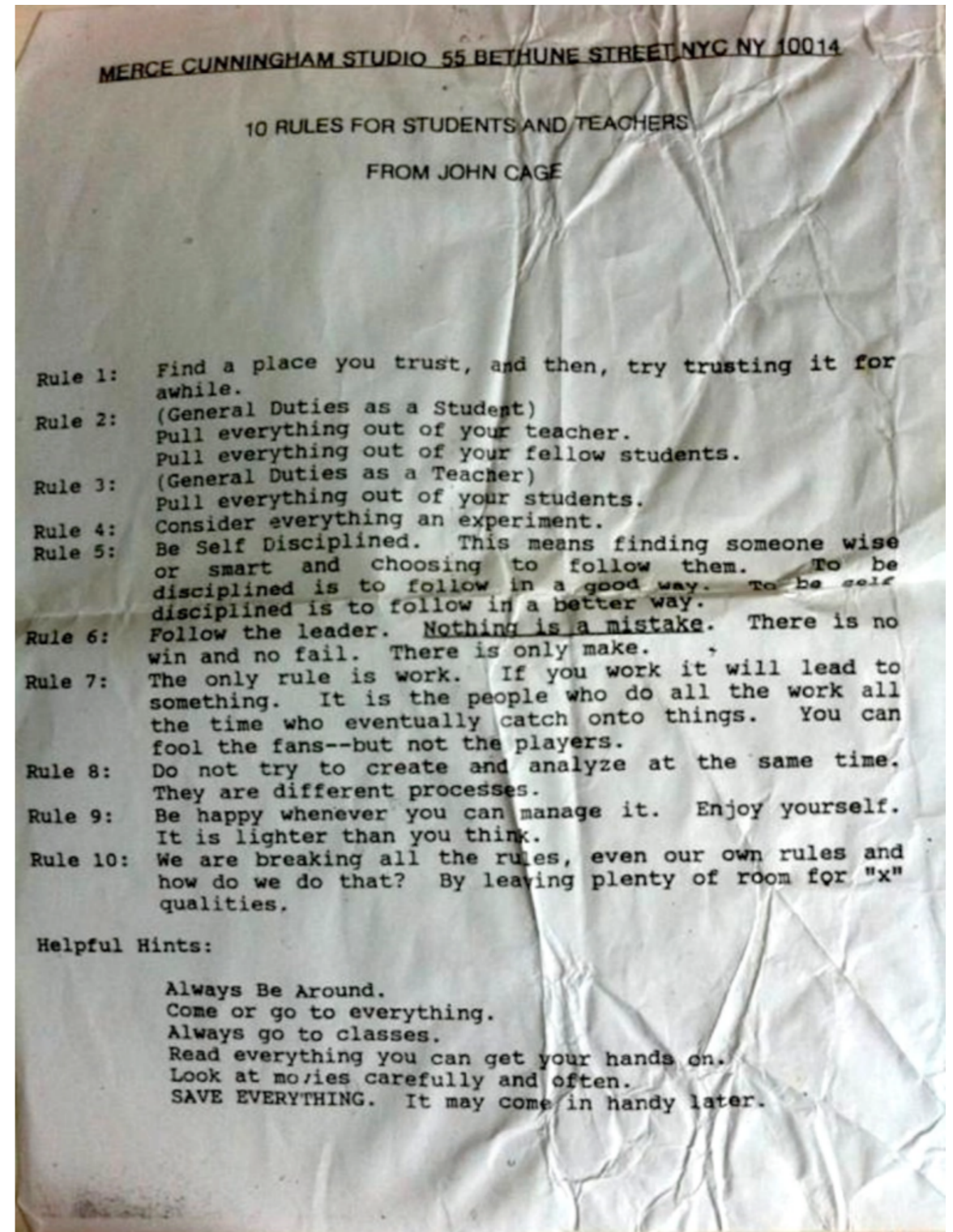
# Who gave you your copy?

## Rule 6 | Rule 7 | Rule 8


Sculptor Elizabeth Kronfield handed me my first photocopy of *10 Rules for Students and Teachers*. I had seen copies around before, but no one in authority had officially given me one. Photocopies of someone else's crumpled photocopy of this apparently typewritten document are ubiquitous in Bauhaus art schools; somehow they are passed around with the reverence of heirloom seeds and the nonchalance of a receipt at Circle K. My copy - the one from Elizabeth - is taped in my sketchbook from 2010, and I photocopy it for my students at IWU every year. Each copy has a second-hand image of the creases Elizabeth put there and a first-hand image of the creases I put there. More historically embedded textures might be visible on close inspection, and although the document itself would seem to imply the original authorship of the composer John Cage or the choreographer Merce Cunningham, the artist and nun Sister Corita Kent most likely deserves credit. In various ways Cage, Cunningham, and Kent were friends and collaborators with competing penchants for enigmatic humor, so perhaps they intended some artful confusion.

In case you can't read it, Rule 7 says: *The only rule is work. If you work it will lead to something. It is the people who do all the work all the time who eventually catch onto things. You can fool the fans — but not the players.*

Rule 8 says: *Do not try to create and analyze at the same time. They are different processes.*







Rule 6:  
Follow the  
Leader.

# Nothing is a mistake.

There is no win and no fail.  
There is only make.

But also, you should step back from your drawing sometimes to figure out what's working and what needs editing.

**T**he dialogue between *work* and *analyze* is famously fraught; They are like Simon-Peter cutting off the guard's ear and Matthew working hard to get the genealogy straight. If you are Nietzsche, one is Dionysian and the other is Apollonian.

## Simon Peter's Sword

When you take to heart the impossibly beautiful adage from Rule 6 that "Nothing is a mistake," *work* feels like play, impulse, and catching drips from the edge of a melting ice cream cone. Your decisions are responsive, improvisatory, and free of that tattle-tale named Hesitation.

## Matthew's Genealogy

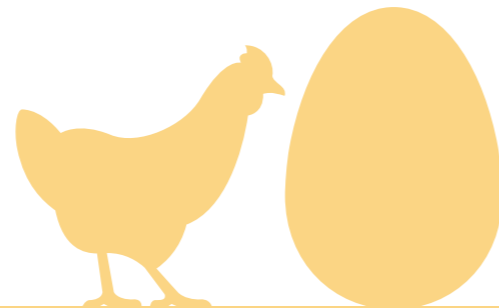
Analysis is like the leader in Rule 6. It's you and it's also not you; It says *already* while signing *not yet* with its hands, like patting your head and rubbing your belly at the same time. If you forgot to wind your watch while you were drawing, analysis reminds you that time is money. It doesn't want you to hesitate, but it does want you to think.

Making a genealogy is reverent and systematic, but it also involves gathering stories and figuring out who put the creases in your copy of the 10 Rules. Analysis might have a researcher's clear tone of voice, but it is still creative.



**Simon Peter's sword and Matthew's Genealogy are both part of any creative process that has momentum and unity.**

These two processes are like dual front doors to the studio; both have an address spelled out on the mailbox in nice brass numbers. Both involve risk and comfort with the unknown, and both have a genesis in the way that God designed human beings in His own image.

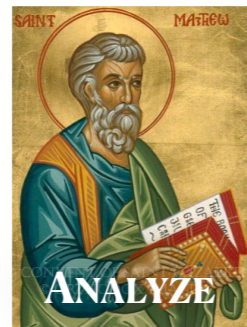


- Rule 3: Pull everything out of your fellow students. (General Duties as a Teacher)
- Rule 4: Pull everything out of your students. Consider everything an experiment.
- Rule 5: Be Self Disciplined. This means finding someone wise or smart and choosing to follow them. To be disciplined is to follow in a good way. To be self disciplined is to follow in a better way.
- Rule 6: Follow the leader. Nothing is a mistake. There is no win and no fail. There is only make.
- Rule 7: The only rule is work. If you work it will lead to something. It is the people who do all the work all the time who eventually catch onto things. You can fool the fans--but not the players.
- Rule 8: Do not try to create and analyze at the same time. They are different processes.**



*Merce Cunningham, Sister Corita Kent, and John Cage*

## CHICKEN OR EGG?



Clockwise from upper left: stained glass window depicting Simon-Peter in the garden of Gethemane; Unattributed icon of Saint Matthew; Paras Patel as Matthew and Shahar Isaac as Simon Peter from Dallas Jenkins' gospel-based series *The Chosen*.

If (as per rule 8) creating and analyzing are best in sequence and bad in unison, which makes the best opening act? Jazz musicians do the analytical work of running scales and arpeggios for hours on end before the wild improvisatory stuff happens onstage, but action painters like Robert Irwin will tell you that you've got to get some semi-reckless marks on the canvas *first*, so that you have something to respond to analytically. Lawrence Weschler quotes Irwin in his biography describing this dynamic of one brush stroke interacting with another. The productive tension between flashing swords and precise genealogies is apparent.

Shapes in a painting are just shapes on a canvas unless they start acting on each other and really, in a sense, multiplying. A good painting has a gathering, interactive build-up in it. And the good artists all knew it, too. That's what a good Vermeer has, or a Raku cup, or a Stonehenge. And when they've got it, they just jump off the [colorful language] wall at you. They just, *bam!*

-Robert Irwin, from Lawrence Weschler's biography [Seeing is Forgetting the Name of the Thing One Sees](#)

Irwin describes the tension between creation and analysis working in brilliant artifacts, but for artists working in the studio the question of whether to begin meticulously or recklessly can be paralyzing; it may be one of the toughest puzzles in creative work, especially visual art, design, and anything that ends with static products rather than performances.



Imagine yourself standing in front of a big sheet of beautiful blank rag paper holding a stick of charcoal. Following your gut from the get-go is likely to weigh you down, but so is trying to plan everything ahead of time. The reason is simple: both versions of *step one* narrow the field of possible solutions. Your gut can chain you to your own assumptions, but a well-researched plan can chain you to other people's assumptions.



This same chicken and egg conundrum emerges in the design process. Say you've been given the task of designing a park. You might begin by asking questions like *Where is this park-to-be? Who will likely be using it? Do they have kids? Does the city have a vibrant music scene? Will visitors want to stay long enough to need bathrooms and water fountains?* It would be a good idea to talk with the people you'll be designing for—both the people funding the park and the people who live nearby, if they are different people.

Most maps of what we call THE DESIGN PROCESS have a *step one* called something like *research*, *ethnography*, or *survey*. The benefit of beginning this way is that you narrow the solution space and avoid wasting time sketching ideas that don't make sense for your context. The potential downside is that you imbibe the assumptions being made by the people you are designing for and cut off the path to vibrant ideas you haven't thought of yet. For example maybe the real need is for a concert venue with good parking rather than the grassy park with bike racks that the nearby city built, which your mayor is really attached to because it got great newspaper coverage. If your research mostly turns up glowing descriptions of that park in a nearby city, it can weigh your ideation process down.

There is a rumor that Henry Ford said, *"If I had asked people what they wanted, they would have said faster horses."* Accurately attributed or not, the quote sums up the problem with stepping too deeply into a cloud of precedent research and target-audience interviews.

### Here is the question again in a different light:

Sometimes it is best to start the creative process by meticulously gathering lots of information, but other times it is better to jump right into sketching like Simon-Peter jumping out of the boat after Jesus without researching the statistical likelihood that he would float. How can artists and designers learn to discern the difference?

# Jump First Patterns versus Gather First Patterns

Stories of people encountering God's infinite *what if* in scripture provide an abundance of wisdom on this subject. You can fit many of the most relevant stories into two categories, which I think of as *jump first* and *gather first*.

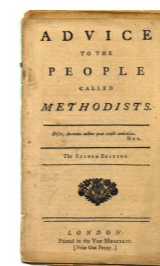
## Proverbs 14:4

Where there are no oxen, the manger is clean,  
but abundant crops come by the strength of the ox.

## Jump First Patterns

Simon-Peter stepping out of the boat in faith, and Moses raising his staff *before* he saw the Red Sea begin to part or the tide of the battle turn, are both emblematic of *jump first* patterns. The pastor Bill Johnson describes

Proverbs 14:4 as his favorite passage on revivals, which have the potential to be generative and transformative in ways that are controlled by Holy Spirit rather than human traditions; he points out that they can be messy. Alongside the Azusa Street and Charles Finney revivals, Johnson applies this Proverb to John Wesley, whose ministry caused significant offense. In his [Advice to the People Called Methodists](#), Wesley wrote:



You will give offence to the bigots for opinions, modes of worship, and ordinances, by laying no more stress upon them; to the bigots against them, by laying so much; to men of form, by insisting so frequently and strongly on the inward power of religion; to moral men (so called) by declaring the absolute necessity of faith in order to acceptance with God. To men of reason you will give offence by talking of inspiration and receiving the Holy Ghost; to drunkards, sabbath-breakers, common swearers, and other open sinners, by refraining from their company, as well as by that disapprobation of their

behaviour which you will often be obliged to express. And indeed your life must give them continual offence; your sobriety is grievously offensive to a drunkard; your serious



conversation is equally intolerable to a gay impertinent; and, in general, that ‘you are grown so precise and singular, so monstrously strict, beyond all sense and reason, that you scruple so many harmless things, and fancy you are obliged to do so many others which you need not, cannot but be an offence to abundance of people, your friends and relations in particular.

Offense and conflict are inherently messy, but Proverbs 14:4 encourages us that foregoing the control of a clean manger or a perfectly planned church service allows abundant crops to be generated. What an encouragement to delight in the prolific potential of messes!

Wild revivals and messy studio processes have something in common when it comes to the wisdom of Proverbs 14:4. Even when Simon Peter’s impulsive behavior was violently reckless in Gethsemane, it opened the door for Jesus to show radical Love to His enemy by healing the guard’s severed ear. Painters like Albert Oehlen talk about “opening the surface of a canvas” with messy impulsive brushstrokes. Even if these initial marks are later buried, they operate like a centrifugal force to pull the process forward. Chaos at the beginning is helpful; it gives the painter something specific to reply to.

This chaotic dynamic also operates on a community level in the arts, and has animated many jumps forward in Western artistry, or at least our collective memory of them. Allan Kaprow describes one such moment while remembering the painter Jackson Pollock:

The tragic news of Pollock’s death two summers ago was profoundly depressing to many of us. We felt not only a sadness over the death of a great figure, but in some deeper way that something of ourselves had died too. We were a piece of him; he was, perhaps, the embodiment of our ambition for absolute liberation and a secretly cherished wish to overturn old tables of crockery and flat champagne. We saw in his example the possibility of an astounding freshness, a sort of ecstatic blindness.

Allan Kaprow  
“The Legacy of Jackson Pollock”  
October 1958

It is difficult to imagine more fervent praise for a *jump first, analyze later* approach to creative practice. I won’t make the claim what Kaprow describes as *ecstatic blindness* is in all ways unbiblical, but it is worth noting that despite some similarities, it contrasts with the willful fasting from explainability that Christians call faith. The difference is discernible in Exodus 14 and Exodus 17, which tell symmetrical stories of Moses holding up his staff as a catalyst for the miraculous.

## Exodus 14:19-22

**19** Then the angel of God, who had been traveling in front of Israel’s army, withdrew and went behind them. The pillar of cloud also moved from in front and stood behind them, **20** coming between the armies of Egypt and Israel. Throughout the night the cloud

brought darkness to the one side and light to the other side; so neither went near the other all night long.

**21** Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and all that night the Lord drove the sea back with a strong east wind and turned it into dry land. The waters were divided, **22** and the Israelites went through the sea on dry ground, with a wall of water on their right and on their left.

## Exodus 17:8-15

**8** The Amalekites came and attacked the Israelites at Rephidim. **9** Moses said to Joshua, “Choose some of our men and go out to fight the Amalekites. Tomorrow I will stand on top of the hill with the staff of God in my hands.”

**10** So Joshua fought the Amalekites as Moses had ordered, and Moses, Aaron and Hur went to the top of the hill. **11** As long as Moses held up his hands, the Israelites were winning, but whenever he lowered his hands, the Amalekites were winning. **12** When Moses’ hands grew tired, they took a stone and put it under him and he sat on it. Aaron and Hur held his hands up—one on one side, one on the other—so that his hands remained steady till sunset. **13** So Joshua overcame the Amalekite army with the sword.

**14** Then the Lord said to Moses, “Write this on a scroll as something to be remembered and make sure that Joshua hears it, because I will completely blot out the name of Amalek from under heaven.”

**15** Moses built an altar and called it The Lord is my Banner.

Like the trumpets and shouting at Jericho, we are not explicitly told that Moses’ act of faith *causes* the miracle, but clearly it is important enough to merit mention and scripture implies that it is done in obedience to God. For Moses in these stories, I imagine that holding a staff in the air must have felt ridiculous, but the picture of faith is that he stepped out in advance of breakthrough with an action that bore no rational resemblance to the outcome he hoped to see.

There must be many lessons about faith and trust in the face of the unknown here, but one in particular stands out for creative people: For a painter envisioning a complex finished work, for example, the question of how to begin can be paralyzing, and making a first few marks boldly can feel ridiculous in the face of what needs to be accomplished. Giving in to this fearful feeling leads either to paralysis or to an uptight, awkward painting made of fake certainty. In many ways certainty is the opposite of artistry, and the life-giving alternative is to try to paint more like Moses raising his walking stick in the air when he needs the sea to part.



This is similar to the wisdom in Cage/Cunningham/Kent's Rule 7: *The only rule is work. If you work it will lead to something. It is the people who do all the work all the time who eventually catch onto things. You can fool the fans — but not the players.*

Begin anywhere, even with something that seems ridiculous or insignificant. This is both a disposition and a method, and like many glowing things in a *post-Christian culture* it probably works because its genealogy points back to the pattern of Faith. God's ways are so good that even their fumes can carry us a long way.

Faith tends to offend our will to have a logical plan, and offense is usually messy, but abundant crops come by the strength of the messy ð studio process.

## Gather First Patterns

The disciples waiting in the upper room for the spirit to fill them with power before they begin the work of the kingdom, and Gideon setting out a fleece to collect assurance are both emblematic of what I call Gather First patterns. Whether they are motivated by fear or wisdom, these types of stories embody a kind of meticulous care that often imbues action with greater significance, boldness, or power. They are more like Matthew's genealogy than Simon Peter's sword in Gethsemane, and while they may lack the brazenness of Moses holding his staff in the air or Jackson Pollock turning over old tables of crockery and flat champagne, they are still an excellent way to begin the creative process.

### Acts 1:3-4

**3** During the forty days after [Jesus] suffered and died, he appeared to the apostles from time to time, and he proved to them in many ways that he was actually alive. And he talked to them about the Kingdom of God. **4** Once when he was eating with them, he commanded them, "Do not leave Jerusalem until the Father sends you the gift he promised, as I told you before.

### Luke 24:49

And behold, I am sending the promise of My Father upon you. But remain in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high.

In Acts 1:4 Jesus tells His disciples "not [to] leave Jerusalem until the Father sends you the gift he promised." This might come across as an anomalous command for a specific scenario, except that Jesus references something that He "told them before" and the whole command happens in the context of the previous verse, which says that Jesus "talked to them about the Kingdom of God." On a different level than Anne Lamott's observation that certainty is the opposite of faith<sup>1</sup>, Jesus seems to imply that there is something important about patiently waiting in the Kingdom of God. I first met Jesus in a charismatic church, where people frequently used the phrase "tarry in the Lord." I'm still a bit unsure what that encompasses, but I'm pretty certain

that it is related to the way that the disciples were obediently waiting in the upper room (Acts 1:3-4) when Holy Spirit suddenly lit tongues of fire over their heads.

This kind of waiting (or tarrying, if I can use the word with partial understanding) is very different from hesitating, which is the death of any creative pursuit because of its fearful posture. I am generally skeptical of absolute statements about artistry, but I am persuaded that it is impossible for a hesitant painting to be a good painting, or for a hesitantly designed park to be a vibrantly designed park. The trouble is that at the beginning of the creative process it can be difficult to tell if we are hesitating or patiently waiting until we have enough research. The Amplified Bible has an interesting translation of Psalm 2:11 that is helpful here:

## Psalm 2:11

Worship the Lord *and* serve Him with reverence [with awe-inspired fear and submissive wonder];

Rejoice [yet do so] with trembling.

Rejoicing feels wild, like King David dancing in the street with no tunic or Jackson Pollock flinging paint through the air. Imagine what it looks like to rejoice with trembling, or to worship with submissive wonder and awe-inspired fear. Someone in this state might be jubilant, but they would be dancing underneath something bigger and grander than themselves. Freedom comes from making ourselves smaller, which is a great approach to both the Lord and (on a less cosmic scale) to the research that typically begins THE DESIGN PROCESS proper. This attitude towards even the most meticulous observation is liberating because it is driven by curiosity rather than a will to explain and catalogue. Although he may not have been intending to write about the abundance and joy of God's real Kingdom, Michel Foucault tapped in to a common grace truth when he wrote about "a new age of curiosity":

Curiosity is a new vice that has been stigmatized in turn by Christianity, by philosophy, and even by a certain conception of science. Curiosity, futility. The word, however, pleases me. To me it suggests something altogether different: it evokes "concern"; it evokes the care one takes for what exists and could exist; a readiness to find strange and singular what surrounds us; a certain relentlessness to break up our familiarities and to regard otherwise the same things; a fervor to grasp what is happening and what passes; a casualness in regard to the traditional hierarchies of the important and the essential.

I dream of a new age of curiosity. We have the technical means for it; the desire is there; the things to be known are infinite; the people who can employ themselves at this task exist. Why do we suffer? From too little: from channels that are too narrow, skimpy, quasi-monopolistic, insufficient. There is no point in adopting a protectionist attitude,

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1. Crediting Father Tom, Lamott writes: "The opposite of faith is not doubt, but certainty. Certainty is missing the point entirely. Faith includes noticing the mess, the emptiness and discomfort, and letting it be there until some light returns. Faith also means reaching deeply within, for the sense one was born with, the sense, for example, to go for a walk." -Anne Lamott, [Plan B: Further Thoughts on Faith](#)

to prevent "bad" information from invading and suffocating the "good." Rather, we must multiply the paths and the possibilities of coming and goings.

—Michel Foucault, 'The Masked Philosopher', in Michael Foucault: Politics, Philosophy, Culture, Interviews and Other Writings 1977–1984, LD Krizman (ed.), Routledge, London, 1988, pp. 198–99.

When curiosity is at its best, it mirrors something important about AWE and WONDER; in its most redeemed state it is not motivated by a will to grasp information or explain, but rather by a joyful unctio to explore something that might be too big to explain completely. Redeemed curiosity motivates research that is liberated from the need for tidy answers or cheap completion. It drives even the most impulsive first marks without a need to prove anything. It is willing to *slay its darlings*, as wise people like Dr. Mary Brown and my teacher Elinore Hollinshead say. When it is free to lead, redeemed curiosity bestows both leap-first impulses and meticulous analysis or research with humility, which is foundational to Awe, Wonder, and even Joy.

Curiosity and Joy (if in fact they always different things) both have the power to pull us onward and upward from a chicken or an egg to a deep creative process and vibrant finished products. Portland Oregon pastor and film maker Jon Betz says that *fits of inspiration and other bits of Heaven on earth are wonderful gifts but terrible pursuits*.<sup>2</sup> How different this kind of concrete pursuit is from the faith-saturated longing that C.S. Lewis describes in Surprised by Joy:

Joy is distinct not only from pleasure in general but even from aesthetic pleasure. It must have the stab, the pang, the inconsolable longing.

—C.S. Lewis  
Surprised by Joy, pg 72

Creative processes require an unknown that can be faced with optimism. This joyful curiosity is one of my longings, both for myself and for my students.



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2. Jon Betz, sermon titled *Heaven for Now*, Citizens Church podcast December 27th 2020