

WINA  
SMEENK

# CHANGE

# PLAY

# DESIGN

AGNES  
WILLENBORG

A PLAYFUL INTRODUCTION  
TO DESIGN THINKING

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Preface</b>	7
<b><u>1 DESIGN THINKING: AN INTRODUCTION</u></b>	11
<b>Wicked problems</b>	20
<b>Characteristics of design</b>	22
Uncertainty, complexity and serendipity	22
People, context and interactions	25
An iterative process	29
Convergence, divergence, synthesis and reflection	32
Experimentation, visualisation and rapid prototyping	34
<b><u>2 DESIGN, PLAY, CHANGE – GAME DESIGN</u></b>	39
<b>Design principles in action</b>	40
The game design	41
Advantages of playing	44
<b>The three phases of design</b>	45
Phase 1: Exploration	46
Synthesis phase 1: Reframing	48
Phase 2: Creation	50
Synthesis phase 2: Envisioning	52
Phase 3: Evaluation	54
Synthesis phase 3: Conclusions	56
<b>Method cards</b>	58
From abstract and reflective to active and concrete	60

<b>Roles</b>	61
The Empathiser	62
The Thinker	64
The Creator	66
The Maker	68
<b><u>3 DESIGN, PLAY, CHANGE – PLAY THE GAME</u></b>	71
<b>Preparation</b>	72
The initiator, the facilitator and/or the moderator	72
The challenge and the players	74
Duration and setting	78
Setting up the board	80
Method cards	82
Materials	83
<b>Warm up</b>	85
<b>Play the game</b>	86
<b><u>4 TIME TO PLAY &amp; CHANGE!</u></b>	91
<b>Quick fixes</b>	93
A player is not getting involved	93
An over-enthusiastic player	93
A habitual talker	93
A task isn't getting off the ground	94
Players don't understand the task	94
The session has ended, but you're still in the middle of a task and phase	94
Players throw too many sixes and speed through the game	95
Players throw too many ones and progress too slowly	95
You can't or don't want to be the moderator	95
<b>About the authors</b>	97
<b>References and inspiration</b>	101
<b>Other card sets</b>	102

# PREFACE

**When we are young, we learn by watching others, copying what they do, and trying things out for ourselves.** For children, this is all just play, although without knowing it, they're also discovering and learning. Playing allows you to almost subconsciously explore how things work, how you can deal with certain situations, and how others respond to you. In short, playing provides a safe environment in which one can learn how best to (re)act to new situations and adopt change.

**With this in mind, we decided to crystallise the core principles and characteristics of design into a game, providing structure and tools to help familiarise you with design.** In this book, *Design, Play, Change* and its corresponding game, we also harness the driving force behind all design: human creativity and inventiveness. When people play games, this creativity and inventiveness bubbles up all by itself, suddenly changing a seemingly complex challenge into a fascinating journey.

**Design and play are a match made in heaven.** When you play our game, you immediately notice how inspiring it is to investigate challenges with others and experiment with joint ideas. While traditional problem solving is all about analysis, solutionism, and endless meetings, our game transforms challenges into new opportunities, helping you to maintain an optimistic and experimental outlook.

**We firmly believe that design can radically change how people think, feel, and act.** Over our professional experience in both the public and private sector, we constantly see how valuable an open-minded mentality and an experimental attitude are when tackling all kinds of issues and challenges. People collaborate more effectively and are more passionate about their work when they are given the chance to work together on a creative process that will benefit themselves, the organisation as a whole, or multiple organisations at once. We see that creative processes substantially boost cooperation, commitment, engagement, and ingenuity, which greatly facilitates the development of new, original, and out-of-the-box ideas.

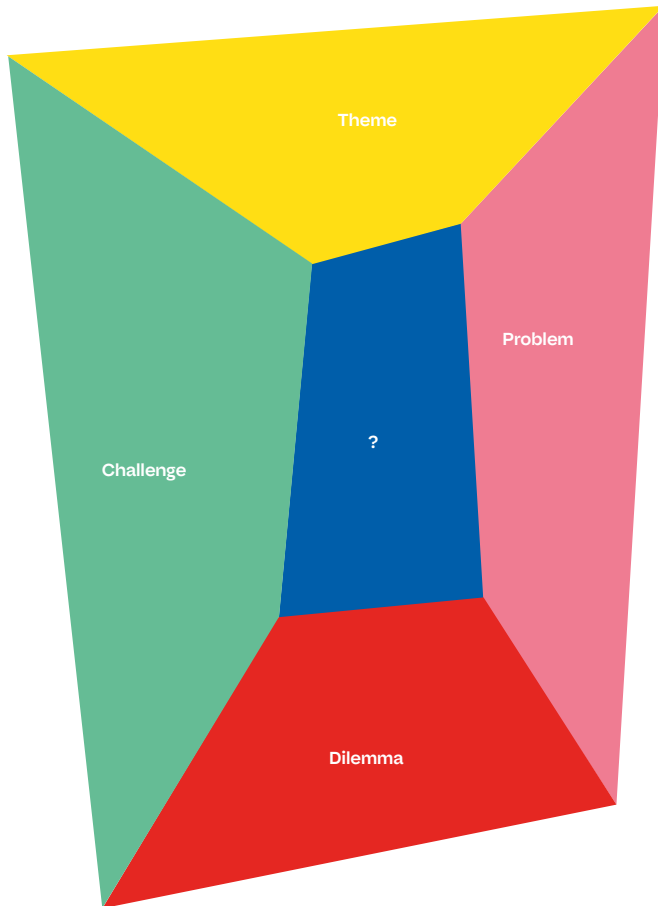


Figure 1:  
Types of  
issues

Of course, the process of Design Thinking does not mean there is any less need for designers, architects, or website designers. Even if residents develop ideas for a meaningful neighbourhood during a session, the architect still has to design it. Equally, if the municipality with citizens discover that the navigation of their website is confusing, an experience designer still has to optimize the design of the website. The actual design practices will therefore continue to be the responsibility of specialised designers. After all, they possess the specific industry knowledge and skills required to produce high-quality designs.

## DIFFERENCE BETWEEN STARTING WITH A PREDEFINED QUESTION OR AN OPEN CHALLENGE

### PREDEFINED QUESTION:

THE **PROBLEM** IS CONCRETE, CLOSED, AND UNAMBIGUOUS: TO IMPROVE PATIENTS' EXPERIENCES, THE OLD-FASHIONED WAITING ROOM AT THE HOSPITAL MUST BE REDESIGNED.

THE **NEED** IS KNOWN: A SPECIALISED DESIGNER WILL DESIGN A NEW, MODERN INTERIOR THAT COMPLIES WITH ALL APPLICABLE HYGIENE REQUIREMENTS.

THE **SOLUTION** IS CLEAR: AN ATTRACTIVE AND HYGIENIC WAITING ROOM.

### OPEN CHALLENGE:

THE **CHALLENGE** IS ABSTRACT, COMPLEX, OPEN-ENDED, AND AMBIGUOUS: ALTHOUGH THE QUALITY OF MEDICAL CARE AT THE HOSPITAL IS EXCELLENT, PATIENTS SAY THAT THEIR TIME AT THE HOSPITAL IS STRESSFUL AND UNPLEASANT. THIS COULD BE RELATED TO THE OLD-FASHIONED WAITING ROOM, ALTHOUGH THEY DIDN'T DIRECTLY SAY THIS. DUE TO THIS, IT'S DIFFICULT TO PIN DOWN THE EXACT NATURE AND CAUSE OF THE CHALLENGE.

THE **VALUE** IS UNKNOWN: IT IS NOT CLEAR IN ADVANCE WHAT PATIENTS' VALUE AND HOW THEIR EXPERIENCES CAN BE IMPROVED. A NEW WAITING ROOM COULD HELP, ALTHOUGH SO COULD IMPROVING THE WAY APPOINTMENTS ARE MADE, THE WAY PATIENTS ARE TREATED, THE RULES FOR VISITORS, THE WAITING TIMES, ETC. BY INVESTIGATING THIS MATTER WITH THE STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVED, EXAMINING THEIR EXPERIENCES AND NEEDS AND WORKING WITH THEM TO DETERMINE EXACTLY WHAT THE PROBLEM IS, IT IS ALSO POSSIBLE TO DESIGN A DESIRABLE FUTURE SITUATION TOGETHER WITH THEM.

THE **SOLUTION DIRECTION** IS NOT SET IN STONE IN ADVANCE: A DESIGN PROCESS CAN DETERMINE WHETHER A NEW WAITING ROOM SHOULD BE DESIGNED OR WHETHER THERE IS GREATER DEMAND FOR A HOST THAT WELCOMES EVERY PATIENT WHO ARRIVES AND MAKES THEM FEEL COMFORTABLE. IT IS NOT NECESSARILY OBVIOUS FROM THE OUTSET WHERE OPPORTUNITIES TO BOOST PATIENT EXPERIENCE CAN BE FOUND.

the outcome is specified in advance, we refer to a ‘problem space’ and an ‘opportunity space’. Both are open and undefined, with the design process providing as much freedom as possible to repeatedly re-evaluate, redefine, and design the desired future.

As a result, both the problem space and the opportunity space are subject to change based on new insights. These spaces can expand, contract, or move in different directions based on new insights. By switching back and forth between the problem space and the opportunity space, you get an increasingly clear picture of the desired future situation and you gradually gain insight into the reasons why the current situation is not working. Switching between the problem space and the opportunity space also provides opportunities for new and original points of view to develop.

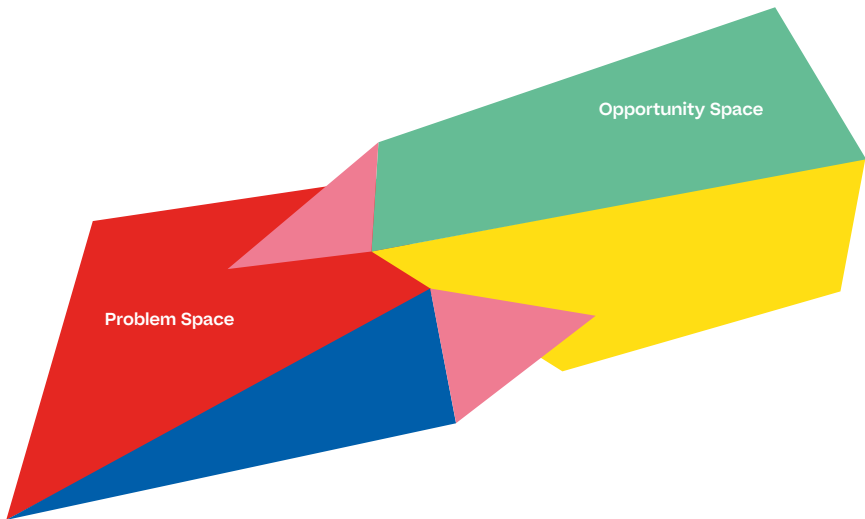


Figure 2:  
The problem  
space and the  
opportunity  
space

Naturally, the problem space contains everything we think we know about the challenge, although as mentioned before, it is open and leaves room for what we don’t yet know about the challenge, and hence also what we can learn and discover about the challenge. During the design process, we will seek new information by searching for data, observing people in action, conducting interviews, and co-creating together with people in the search for insights. Based on this information, we will be able to make a number of assumptions.

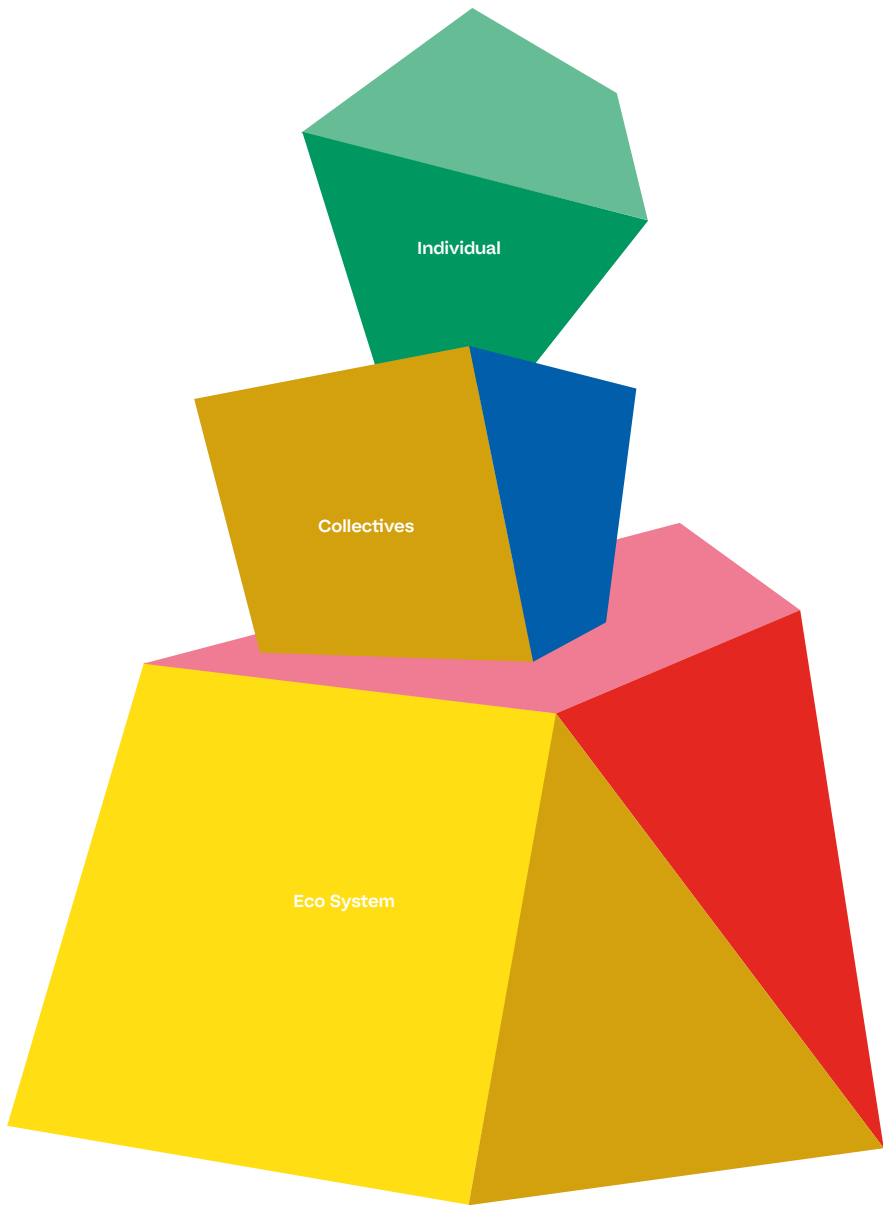


Figure 3:  
The context of  
a challenge at  
three levels





When described like this, the process may seem relatively chronological and linear. However, this is far from the truth. After all, the critical reassessment of the original challenge, ideas, and draft concepts mean it is highly likely that the focus will switch back to the challenge again. For example, whoever is responsible for testing and evaluation will examine whether the promising idea direction actually changes (all) issues concerning the challenge. The outcome will shed new light on the challenge, which may result in new ideas being devised, which in turn may serve

Figure 4:  
The iterative  
design  
process

## Convergence, divergence, synthesis and reflection

During all phases of the design process, continual divergence and convergence are highly important. Divergence means broadening your thinking and creative imagination: everyone is encouraged to spontaneously and intuitively explore as many scenarios and perspectives as possible and to propose and try out alternatives, opportunities and ideas. During the divergence process, it is recommended that nobody criticises each other's ideas. Reservation and the postponing of judgement is vital, as dismissing people's initial ideas right off the bat nips their creativity in the bud and stifles the development of new ideas. This is because our brains are programmed to consider existing and recognisable ideas as more logical and, therefore, 'better' than

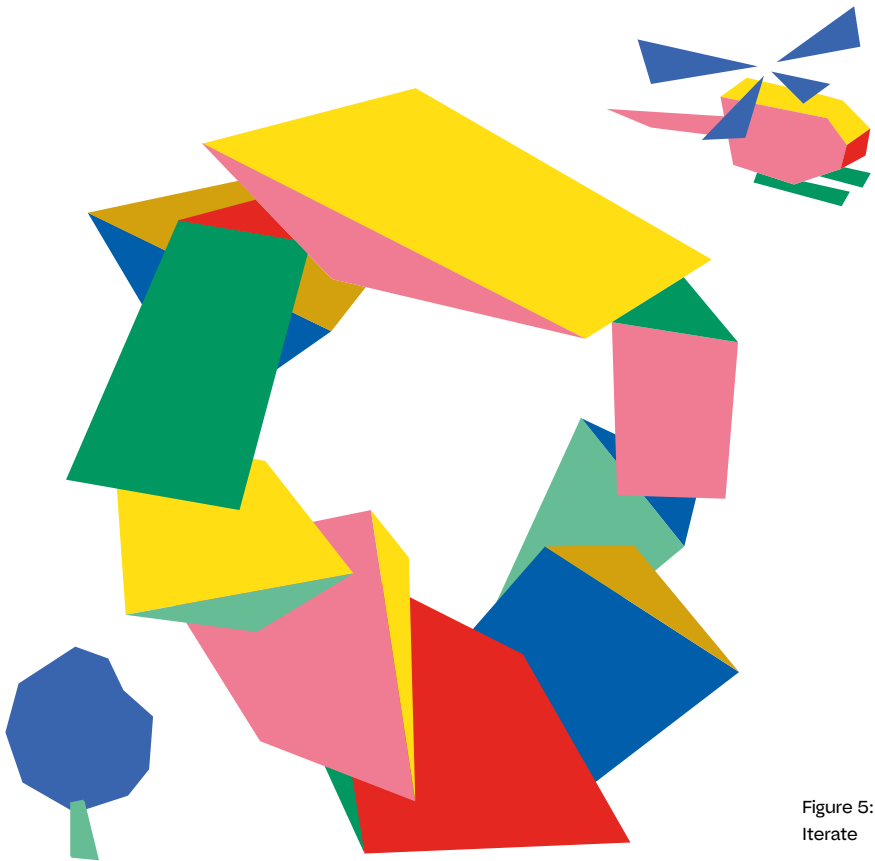


Figure 5:  
Iterate

# DESIGN GAME PLAY DESIGN CHANGE

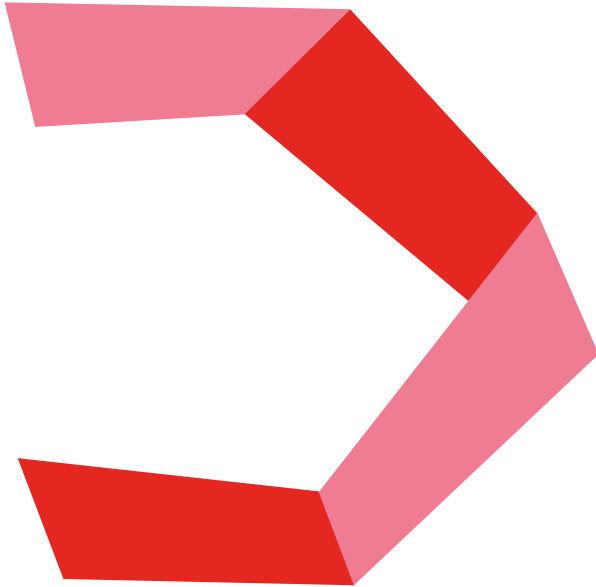
The theory behind design is one thing, but putting it into practice is quite another. How can you get participants in a design process to exchange their analytic mindset for a creative and opportunity-oriented mindset? How do you encourage them to imagine and visualise ideas rather than describe them? And how do you generate so much enthusiasm in the process that upon finishing their first iteration, they eagerly dive into a second?

The best way to facilitate this is to play a game based on the characteristics and principles of design. The game design encourages players to diverge and converge their way through three key phases of a design process.

*Design, Play, Change* is developed for anyone who wants to collectively (with a team, a group of people or organisations) and quickly develop innovative ideas for change. Playing the game allows everyone to experience what it's like to think, create, act and feel like a designer and how you can apply the basic principles of design to solve complex challenges. The game is an accessible and playful introduction to design that encourages players to examine complex strategic, organisational, ecological, cultural, economic, political or social issues. Regardless of

## Phase 1

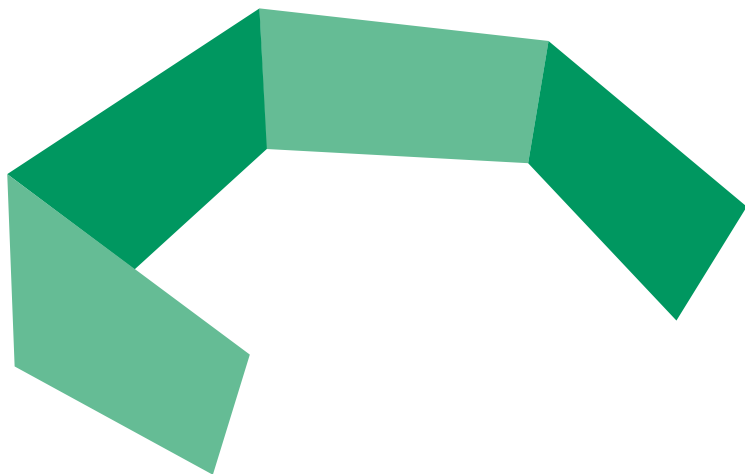
# EXPLORATION



The exploration phase in *Design, Play, Change* is a time for action, exploration, investigation, and discovery, giving you the chance to quickly explore and document all of the ins and outs of a challenge. During this phase, all needs, convictions, perceptions, wishes, mutual relationships, dilemmas, and opportunities involved in the challenge can be brought to the surface, which makes the problem space clear and enables the players to slowly but surely move towards the opportunity space. Eventually, the players will narrow down, reinterpret, and redefine the challenge based on the insights and ideas gained during this phase.

## Phase 2

# CREATION

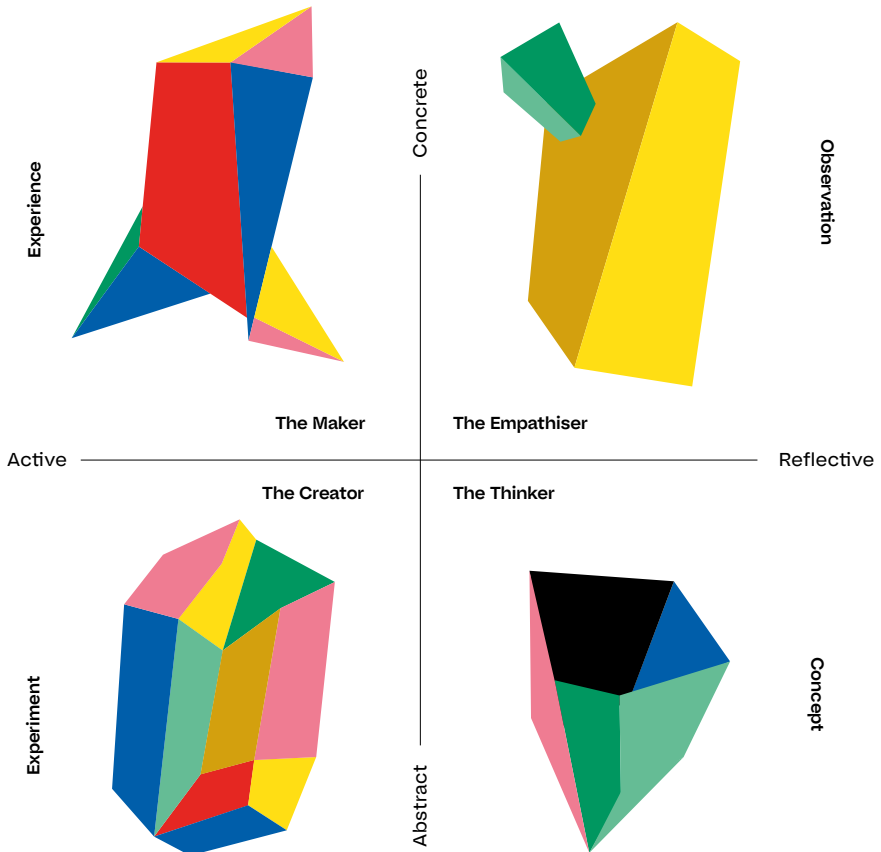


**Everyone has a creative spark. It may seem that some people come up with more ideas than others, but appearances can be deceptive. People who seem creative to us are simply good at opening up to and voicing their imagination, inventiveness, and intuition that is in everybody's nature. This means it is possible to improve our creative thinking skills. By trusting ourselves, becoming more aware of our mind's impulses, and trying to consciously notice them, we can naturally boost our creativity and imagination.**

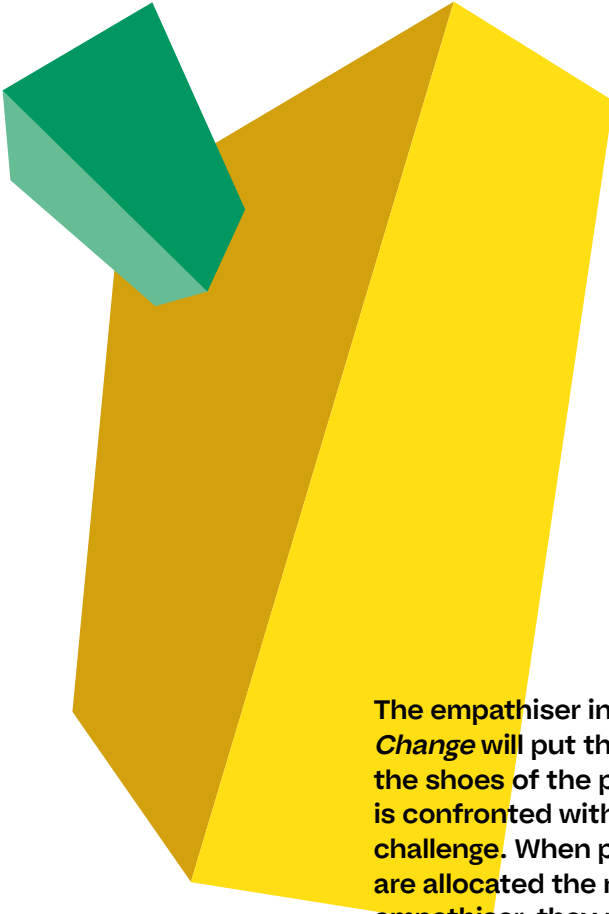
Ideas are potent thoughts that seem to unexpectedly rise to the surface all on their own, although they are always based on your own experiences. By opening up to these ideas rather than hastily judging and dismissing them, you can encourage your creativity. As a result, the word 'but' is banned, and the word 'and' is sacred, because 'and, and, and' feeds your creative capacity.

By switching roles, the players gain a greater understanding of both the challenge and each other, which hugely facilitates cooperation, the likelihood of success, and the impact of the outcome. Furthermore, as each role features its own specific perspective, attitude, rules and habits, switching roles will therefore mean the players discover new sources of information and learn new skills.

# ROLES

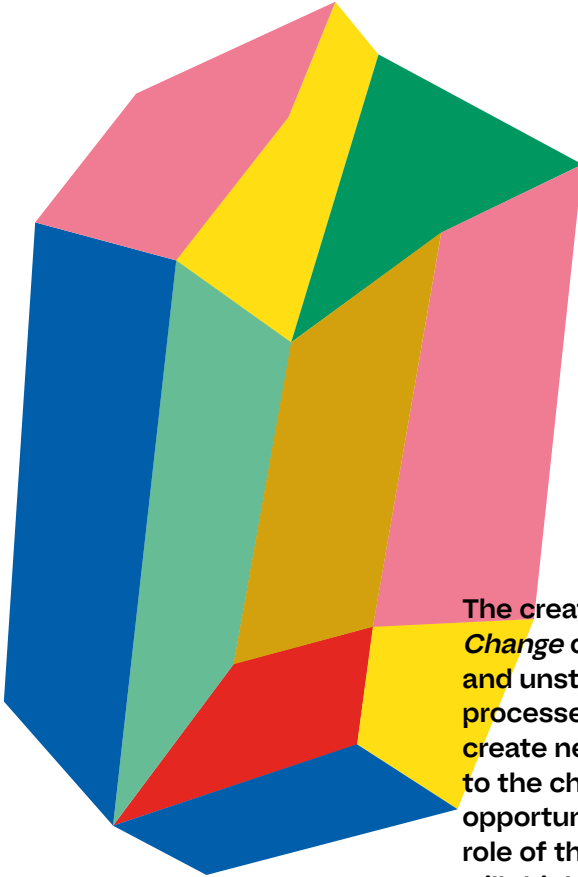


# The Empathiser



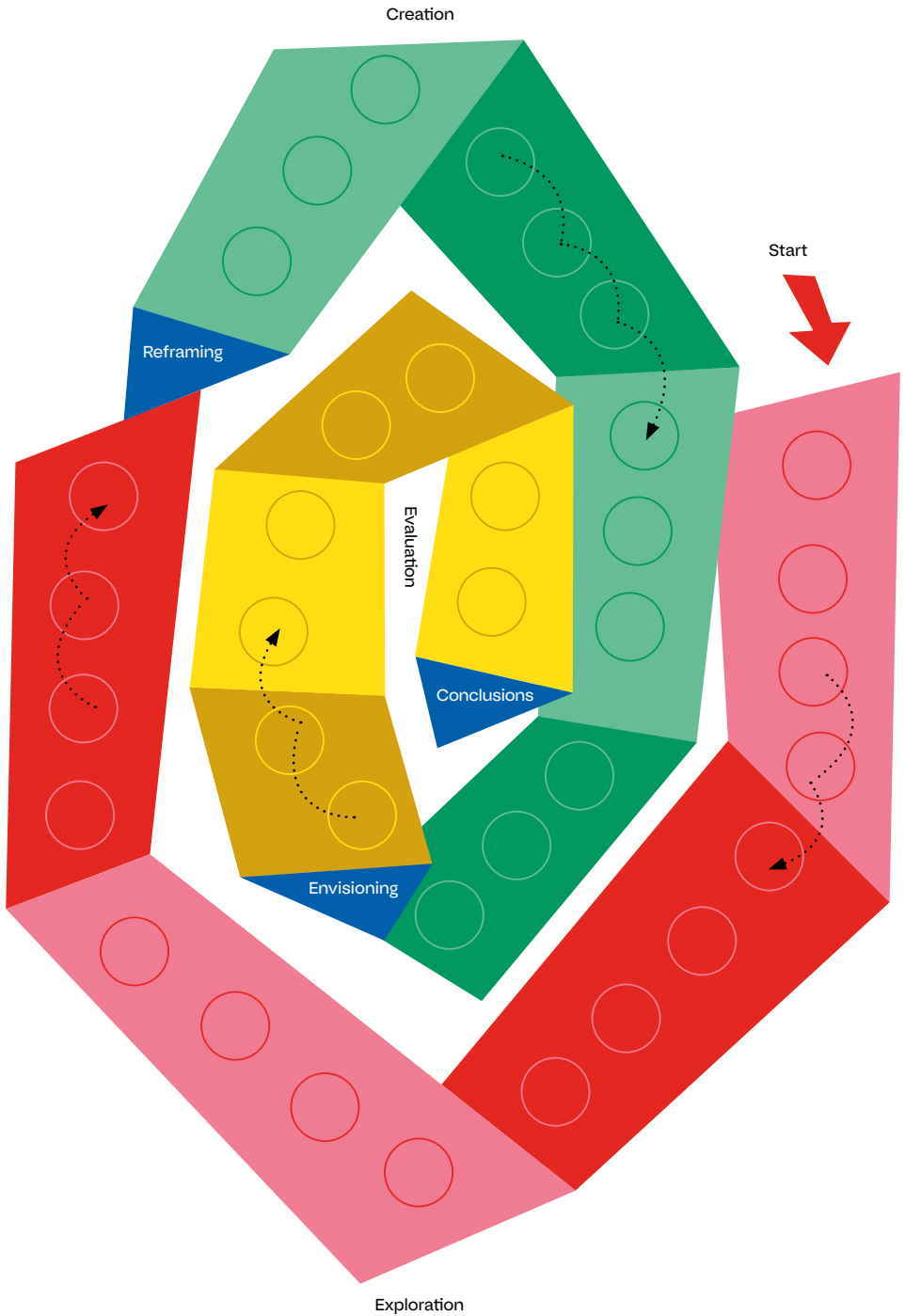
The empathiser in *Design, Play, Change* will put themselves in the shoes of the person who is confronted with a certain challenge. When players are allocated the role of the empathiser, they respond intuitively, they feel emotionally involved, they listen, they share personal stories and experiences, they respond spontaneously and off the cuff, and they are not afraid of drama.

# The Creator



The creator in *Design, Play, Change* combines structured and unstructured thinking processes to consciously create new images relating to the challenge or the opportunity for change. In the role of the creator, the players will think creatively and share spontaneous insights. They make associations, are playful and inventive, seek shortcuts, turn things upside down, and use their imagination.

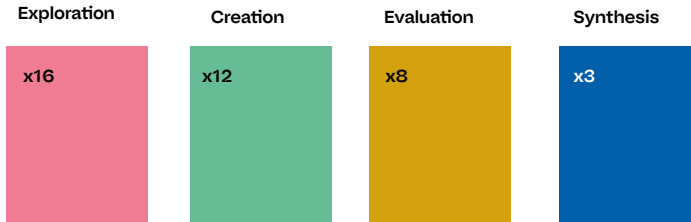




## Method cards

Now that the board is prepared, you can start sorting the method and synthesis cards. There are:

- 36 method cards  
(16 exploration cards, 12 creation cards and 8 evaluation cards)
- 3 synthesis cards



### TAKE THE CARDS AND SEPARATE THEM BASED ON THE PHASES AND ROLES DISPLAYED

- THE 16 EXPLORATION CARDS INCLUDE 4 FOR THE THINKER ROLE, 4 FOR THE MAKER ROLE, 4 FOR THE CREATOR ROLE, AND 4 FOR THE EMPATHISER ROLE.
- THE 12 CREATION CARDS INCLUDE 3 FOR THE THINKER ROLE, 3 FOR THE MAKER ROLE, 3 FOR THE CREATOR ROLE, AND 3 FOR THE EMPATHISER ROLE.
- THE 8 EVALUATION CARDS INCLUDE 2 FOR THE THINKER ROLE, 2 FOR THE MAKER ROLE, 2 FOR THE CREATOR ROLE, AND 2 FOR THE EMPATHISER ROLE.
- THE 3 SYNTHESIS CARDS ARE PLACED SEPARATELY FROM THE METHOD CARDS.

The colour of the cards will tell you which phase they belong to, and the illustration on the rear of the card will show you what role they correspond to. Now take the exploration cards and sort them into roles; this will give you four piles of cards, each of which is in random order. Place the cards with the instruction text downwards so the players cannot see the text. Do the same with the creation cards and the evaluation cards. You may also choose to only put out the exploration cards first and wait until you reach the creation or evaluation phases before taking out the corresponding cards.

# DESIGN

In our modern world, we are constantly confronted by challenges of a societal, ecological, organizational, strategic or cultural nature. These so-called wicked problems are difficult to define and even harder to solve, often requiring feats of collaboration.

*Design, Play, Change* is a Design Thinking book and game created for managers, entrepreneurs, trainers, coaches, educators, and students who want to develop innovative ideas for future change within and between their teams or organizations. In short, this book is the active agent that can be used to theorize, restructure, and overcome challenges we face on a daily basis.

# PLAY

Crafted both for experts in Design Thinking and for those just getting started, *Design, Play, Change* will explain the theory behind designing as well as demonstrate how to think, act, create, and feel like a designer. With 40 method cards, spanning across different critical roles like the Creator, Empathiser, Thinker, and Maker, the book presents an extremely accessible and fun way of examining complex contemporary challenges with a light-hearted outlook. Regardless of what challenge needs to be overcome, this collaborative game creates a shared vision of the challenge at hand while also generating inspiring insights, fresh ideas, and productive activities. Above all, *Design, Play, Change* is inspirational, energising, and fun for you and the whole team playing along with you.

At its core, *Design, Play, Change* teaches readers and players a practical way of reframing, envisioning and evaluating their challenges and ideas, addressing them like a designer would in a collaborative game format.

# CHANGE

[WWW.BISPUBLISHERS.COM](http://WWW.BISPUBLISHERS.COM)



9 789063 696498 >