

AI-01893 BookNotes Stretch Power of Less

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Tags	Summary
Created time	@July 28, 2025 11:33 AM

This detailed briefing document reviews the main themes and most important ideas presented in the provided excerpts from "Stretch: The Power of Less" by Scott Sonenshein.

Briefing: The Power of "Stretching" vs. The Perils of "Chasing"

Core Concept: The central theme of the book "Stretch" is the fundamental difference between two approaches to resources: "**Chasing**" and "**Stretching**." Chasing is characterized by the belief that "Having More Resources = Getting Better Results," leading to a relentless pursuit of external additions. Stretching, conversely, operates on the principle that "Better Use of Resources = Getting Better Results," emphasizing the resourceful utilization and expansion of what is already available. The author argues that stretching leads to greater professional success, personal satisfaction, and organizational performance, while chasing often results in disappointment, burnout, and failure, regardless of the abundance of resources.

I. The "Chasing" Mind-Set: Causes and Consequences

The book begins by illustrating the pitfalls of a "chasing" mind-set, where individuals and organizations are constantly seeking more, often overlooking the value of what they already possess.

A. Root Causes of Chasing:

1. Upward Social Comparisons:

- **Idea:** Humans have a fundamental tendency to compare themselves to others to gauge their standing, particularly in areas like wealth, intelligence, and status. Visible markers (e.g., car price, office size, greenness of a lawn) facilitate these comparisons.
- **Impact:** "By always comparing to others who have more, social comparisons make us less likely to appreciate and recognize the many things we can accomplish by being resourceful." (p. 25)
- **Analogy:** The "treadmill" metaphor – "when we get more resources, our minds increase the pace of the treadmill. To stay on the treadmill, we have to run faster even though we get no farther." (p. 26)
- **Examples:** Woodside, California residents' obsession with green lawns despite drought, driven by a desire to "keep up with the neighbors." (p. 23)
- Olympic silver medalists' dissatisfaction, focusing on the gold they *almost* won rather than the bronze they *did* win. (p. 24-25)
- Silicon Valley entrepreneur Gary Kremen's sentiment: "'You're nobody here at \$10 million.'" (p. 26)
- Social media's role in exacerbating upward comparisons, leading to decreased happiness by showcasing only positive achievements. (p. 27-28)

1. **Functional Fixedness:**

- **Idea:** A psychological rigidity that prevents individuals from seeing resources beyond their traditional, intended uses. This leads to a constant need to acquire specific tools for specific problems.
- **Impact:** "Caught up in the belief that more resources will deliver better results, they think about resources as having limited uses and are compelled to acquire as much as possible." (p. 29) When new resources aren't available, progress stalls.
- **Analogy:** The physics teacher who can only conceive of a barometer being used to measure air pressure, not as a ruler or a bargaining chip. (p. 29-30)
- **Examples:** Children demonstrate less functional fixedness than adults, as seen in the "Bobo the Bear" experiment where younger children were more likely to use a wooden box as a platform rather than just a container. (p. 30-31)

- Borders bookstore's failure to adapt to online book sales, rigidly viewing bookselling only through the lens of physical stores. (p. 31-33)
- MacGyver, as an archetype of stretching, who "always found a way to use whatever was around to craft clever solutions to the seemingly unsolvable dilemmas he faced." (p. 28)

1. **Mindless Accumulation:**

- **Idea:** The tendency to gather as many resources as possible without a clear purpose or assessment of actual need, often at the expense of happiness.
- **Impact:** "Chasing might sometimes lead us to get more stuff, but it's stuff we don't often need to pursue our goals, and it frequently burns us out." (p. 34)
- **Example:** The "Overearning" study where participants accrued significantly more chocolate than they could eat, leading to lower satisfaction. (p. 33-34)
- **Case Study:** Joshua Millburn, a young executive who achieved material success but felt "stewed in anxiety and unhappiness" due to constant chasing and upward comparisons. His life only gained satisfaction after personal tragedies forced him to re-evaluate. (p. 35-36)

1. **Resource Squandering:**

- **Idea:** The inefficient or wasteful use of abundant resources, often stemming from complacency or an escalation of commitment.
- **Impact:** "When resources—such as people and money—are abundant, they need to be used even if there is no good reason. A careless pursuit of projects and the continuation of poorly performing projects follow—whether hiring people not needed or taking on more expensive and expansive office space." (p. 42)
- **Examples:** The dotcom boom, epitomized by Pets.com, which "blew through tens of millions of dollars... to build something unsustainable—until the money train screeched to a halt." (p. x) Companies like Fab.com "burned through \$14 million in cash per month" by prioritizing growth over discipline. (p. 40-41)
- Research on consumer electronics subsidiaries: departments with *too many* spare resources were less likely to improve, performing as poorly as those with none. (p. 42)

- "Escalation of commitment" – individuals or organizations doubling down on failing projects due to prior investment, especially when resources are plentiful. (p. 42-43)

II. The "Stretching" Mind-Set: Basics and Benefits

In contrast to chasing, stretching involves embracing existing resources and creatively expanding their value.

A. Core Elements of Stretching:

1. Psychological Ownership:

- **Idea:** A feeling of possessiveness towards a resource, even if not literally owned, which provides the license to transform and innovate.
- **Impact:** "When people feel a sense of ownership, they are far more satisfied with their jobs." (p. 50) It leads to greater control, individuality, and ultimately, "improved financial performance." (p. 51)
- **Example:** Ethan Peters, a retail store manager, transformed poorly crafted dresses into "beach cover-ups" because he felt a strong sense of ownership over his store, leading to a sales success. (p. 48-49) BoutiqueCo fostered this by avoiding centralized control and launching a "Year of Ownership" program. (p. 50)

1. Embracing Constraints:

- **Idea:** Viewing limitations not as barriers to be overcome by acquiring more, but as catalysts for creativity and resourceful problem-solving.
- **Impact:** "Constraints can motivate us to be resourceful, act in more creative ways, and solve problems better." (p. 10) This shifts focus from "what we couldn't" to "what we could." (p. 52)
- **Examples:** Artist Phil Hansen, diagnosed with permanent nerve damage in his right hand, "embraced the shake" to create new art forms using unconventional methods. (p. 51-53)
- Claude Monet, who constantly imposed artistic constraints on himself to foster creativity. (p. 53)

- Studies show that when facing scarcity, people are more likely to use resources in "less conventional ways," while abundance leads to traditional uses. (p. 55)

1. **Frugality (as a Virtue):**

- **Idea:** A mindful approach to resource use, taking pleasure in wise spending and maximizing value, rather than stinginess or a display of low status.
- **Impact:** Frugality leads to "better results" (p. 56), enables investment, and fosters a culture of avoiding waste.
- **Example:** Bob Kierlin, founder of Fastenal, built a multi-billion dollar company by promoting extreme frugality, "spending money like it's your own, so you'll have more to take home." (p. 59) This included driving modest cars, avoiding lavish meals, and using secondhand furniture. His culture of avoiding waste allowed for investments in training and bonuses, leading to low employee turnover. (p. 59-60)
- **Distinction:** Frugal people take "pleasure from saving money," while cheapskates feel "psychologically pained from spending money." (p. 177)

1. **Turning Trash into Treasure:**

- **Idea:** Recognizing and acting on the untapped potential in resources that others overlook or dismiss as worthless.
- **Impact:** This approach challenges the notion of inherent, fixed value in resources, emphasizing that "almost anything—tangible and intangible—has potential as a resource, but that to become anything valuable requires action." (p. 66)
- **Example:** Jenny Dawson, a hedge fund manager, started Rubies in the Rubble by transforming "perfectly edible" discarded produce from a market into gourmet jams and chutneys. She also hired homeless women and a man with brain damage, "turning these vagrants into diligent and dedicated employees." (p. 64)

III. **Developing "Stretching" Skills and Mind-Sets**

The book outlines specific skills and attitudes necessary for consistently applying the stretching philosophy.

A. Get Outside: The Value of Knowing a Little about a Lot (Multi-Context Rule)

- **Idea:** Breadth of experience and diverse knowledge ("multi-c rule") helps individuals stretch their thinking, seeing solutions invisible to narrow experts.
- **Impact:** "Diversity in our team's resources turns out to be the most important shaper of performance, making it more likely we'll openly debate and reach a better solution that incorporates multiple perspectives." (p. 82)
- **Challenges of Expertise:** "While compellingly reasoned, is ten thousand hours always the key to success?" (p. 75) Extensive practice is less relevant in rapidly changing or unpredictable fields. (p. 76-77) Experts can become "cognitively entrenched." (p. 79)
- **Examples:** Gavin Potter, "Just a Guy in a Garage," who, despite lacking mathematical expertise, improved Netflix's recommendation algorithm by applying psychological principles. His outsider perspective ultimately helped the winning team. (p. 73-74)
- Biologists solving chemistry problems more effectively than chemists on the InnoCentive platform, demonstrating that "the further the problem was from a person's expertise, the more likely he or she was to solve it." (p. 79)
- NASA's Story Musgrave, a high-school dropout with multiple diverse degrees and careers (mechanic, aviation electrician, surgeon, pilot), was the lead mechanic for the Hubble telescope repair mission, leveraging his varied skills for a complex challenge. (p. 83-85)
- John Davis, a chemist with no oil spill expertise, solved the problem of semi-frozen oil recovery by applying his knowledge of concrete vibrators. (p. 89-90)
- Executives with diverse experiences (multi-c executives) earned significantly higher pay, especially for complex tasks. (p. 87-88)

B. Time to Act: Why We Sometimes Perform Better without a Script

- **Idea:** Over-reliance on planning can hinder action, prevent learning, and cause rigidity. Embracing an "acting regulatory mode" allows for spontaneous adaptation and improvisation.

- **Impact:** "Too much planning prevents us from acting." (p. 104) "We learn from doing." (p. 107) Acting fosters intrinsic motivation and responsiveness to real-time information.
- **Analogy:** European navigators (meticulous planning) vs. Trukese sailors (goal-oriented, responsive action). (p. 112-13)
- **Examples:** General McClellan's indecision during the Civil War, despite having Lee's battle plans, due to over-planning and an inability to act quickly. (p. 103-104)
- Robert Rodriguez's filmmaking approach: "Even if I didn't know what to do, [I] just had to begin," leading to improvised solutions and a unique, successful style for *El Mariachi*. (p. 99)
- Nike's "Just Do It" slogan, tapping into the "acting regulatory mode" which prioritizes moving towards a goal over exhaustive planning. (p. 109-11)
- Dr. Angus Wallace improvising life-saving surgery on a plane using unconventional tools (e.g., brandy as sterilizer, coat hanger for tubing). (p. 119-20)
- Jazz vs. Symphony: Jazz, with its improvisation, better reflects adaptability and creativity in unpredictable environments. (p. 120-22)

C. We Are What We Expect: How Beliefs Make Us and the People We Care About Better (or Worse)

- **Idea:** Expectations, whether set by ourselves or others, profoundly influence performance and outcomes, even when based on false premises.
- **Impact:** Self-fulfilling prophecies can turn "fiction into fact." (p. 126) "The expectations we set, and that others set for us, are critical for our prospects." (p. 125) High, credible expectations lead to positive prophecies and enhanced performance.
- **Examples:** The "Clever Hans" horse, who appeared to solve math problems but was actually responding to subtle, unconscious cues of expectation from his questioners. (p. 123-25)
- The Bank of the United States' collapse due to a false rumor of insolvency becoming a self-fulfilling prophecy, as depositors withdrew funds based on

this belief. (p. 126-27)

- The "Pygmalion in the Classroom" study: randomly labeling students as "gifted" led to significant IQ gains because teachers, expecting more, provided more attention and support. (p. 128-29)
- Blind date experiments where positive expectations about a person's attractiveness led them to behave in more likeable ways. (p. 131-32)
- Madame C. J. Walker, who, despite facing severe societal constraints, elevated her own expectations and created a thriving hair-care business and opportunities for other black women. (p. 134-36)
- Negative expectations ("dunce cap mentality") lead to "threat rigidity," limiting creativity and problem-solving, and causing others to live down to those expectations. (p. 140-44)

D. Mix It Up: The Power of Unlikely Combinations

- **Idea:** Expanding resource value often comes from combining seemingly unrelated or incompatible elements in novel ways.
- **Impact:** This approach challenges the tendency to "bucket" resources and ideas into separate, fixed categories, revealing hidden synergies. "The whole is greater than the sum of its parts." (p. 150)
- **Examples:** Roy Choi revolutionized the food industry by combining high-quality Korean BBQ with the mobility and affordability of a food truck (KOGI KOREAN BBQ). (p. 147-49)
- Houston food truckers who mixed "competition and friendship," voluntarily helping rivals with supplies, repairs, and even advertising, leading to mutual benefit and increased industry sales. (p. 151-56)
- Bette Nesmith Graham, a secretary and artist, combined her identities to invent Liquid Paper, painting over typing errors. (p. 160-61)
- Neville Williams of the Solar Electric Light Fund, who bridged economic development and environmental sustainability by providing solar power to impoverished South African villages, convincing residents to pay for it to foster ownership and care. (p. 164-67)

- Charles Goodyear's accidental discovery of vulcanized rubber after years of "attempting new combinations" of chemicals with rubber. (p. 168-71)
- Successful mixtures require both **novelty** and **usefulness**, and a simultaneous focus on "learning" and "performance" goals. (p. 196-98)

IV. Avoiding Injuries from Overstretching

While stretching is beneficial, the author warns against "overstretching," where good principles are taken to an unhealthy extreme.

1. Turning into a Cheapskate:

- **Idea:** Excessive frugality that causes pain from spending, leading to underinvestment in crucial areas or neglecting necessary upkeep.
- **Distinction:** Frugal people find "pleasure from saving," while cheapskates feel "pained by spending." (p. 177)
- **Example:** Edward Wedbush, a multimillionaire financier, whose extreme cost controls led to fines from regulators for "reckless" underinvestment in compliance and neglected his own mold-infested home. (p. 174-75)

1. Wandering on the Road to Nowhere:

- **Idea:** Diversifying experiences too broadly or too quickly without first establishing a coherent "core identity."
- **Impact:** Sends "confusing signals to others: What type of skill does this person have? Is she committed to anything? What does this company do?" (p. 180) Can undermine existing relationships and well-being.
- **Examples:** Ronald Wayne, co-founder of Apple, who left the company after 12 days to pursue myriad interests, ultimately missing out on billions. His diverse interests prevented him from committing to one path. (p. 184)
- Actors who are "typecast" vs. those who incrementally diversify their roles (e.g., Matthew McConaughey). (p. 179-80)
- Frequent residential moves negatively impacting introverts' well-being due to difficulty forming new social relationships. (p. 182-83)

1. Leaping without Learning:

- **Idea:** Acting quickly based on gut instincts without incorporating a learning focus, especially when the stakes are high.
- **Impact:** Can lead to catastrophic outcomes if actions are not evaluated and adjusted based on feedback.
- **Example:** Ron Johnson's disastrous tenure as CEO of JC Penney. He aggressively implemented a new "fair-and-square" pricing strategy based on instinct, refusing to test or learn from declining sales, ultimately leading to significant losses and his ouster. (p. 185-87) Robert Rodriguez, in contrast, viewed his initial film *El Mariachi* as "inexpensive film school," constantly learning and adjusting. (p. 187)

1. **Being Cursed by High Expectations:**

- **Idea:** High expectations can backfire if they are not credible to the individual, leading to overwhelming "performance pressure" rather than internal motivation.
- **Impact:** Can cause individuals to "crumple under pressure" and hinder performance. (p. 192-93)
- **Example:** Ryan Leaf, a top NFL draft pick, whose immense potential was "cursed by high expectations." His early struggles led to a "downward spiral" and drug addiction, as he focused on "not letting others down" rather than his own growth. (p. 189-91) Peyton Manning, with equally high expectations, thrived by focusing on "hard work and self-improvement." (p. 190)

1. **Making Toxic Mixtures:**

- **Idea:** Combining resources in novel ways that lack usefulness or create unintended negative consequences.
- **Impact:** The result is often less valuable than the individual parts, leading to product failures or ineffective strategies.
- **Example:** Gerber Singles, a baby food product repurposed for adults, failed because its novelty (adult food in a baby jar) lacked usefulness and carried a social stigma. (p. 195-96)

V. Exercises to Strengthen a Stretch (The "Map to the Clinic")

The book concludes with actionable "workouts" to cultivate a stretching mind-set:

- **Just Say No:** Intentionally limit resources to spark creativity and resourceful thinking (e.g., writing a book with only 50 words like Dr. Seuss). (p. 203-5)
- **Find a Sleeping Beauty:** Identify dormant or overlooked personal and organizational resources and actively seek ways to revive and repurpose them. (p. 205-7)
- **Go Explore:** Broaden experiences by engaging with different fields, hobbies, or people, either directly or by leveraging outsiders. (p. 207-9)
- **Take a Break (and Pay Less Attention):** Engage in "mindless work" or activities that allow the mind to wander, fostering subconscious connections and creativity. (p. 209-12)
- **Pick New Neighbors:** Consciously choose to surround yourself with individuals who embody stretching principles to influence behavior positively and avoid social comparisons. (p. 212-13)
- **Appreciate:** Practice gratitude to expand thinking about existing resources, prioritize long-term goals, and increase patience. (p. 213-15)
- **Shop Your Closet:** Regularly assess existing resources (skills, talents, objects) and find new uses for them before acquiring more. (p. 215-17)
- **Plan Backward:** Act first, then reflect and "plan backward" by documenting actions. This fosters learning and adaptability over rigid adherence to a pre-defined plan. (p. 217-18)
- **Scramble the Back Row:** Disrupt routines and introduce variability (e.g., changing meeting locations, working hours) to prevent complacency and encourage adaptability. (p. 218-20)
- **Make Midyear Resolutions:** Set self-improvement goals throughout the year, not just at New Year's, and leverage existing traditions or rituals for motivation. (p. 220-21)
- **Break It Down:** Deconstruct resources into their smallest components to uncover hidden functions and potential new uses (e.g., a candle's wick can be a string). (p. 221-22)

- **Turn Trash into Treasure (Benefits Diary):** Actively identify unexpected benefits even in seemingly negative or mundane experiences to find hidden value. (p. 222-24)

Conclusion: The central message is one of empowerment: "It won't always be easy, but the changes stretching brings will make it worth it." (p. 227) By shifting from a "more is better" mentality to one of resourceful utilization, individuals and organizations can achieve greater success and deeper satisfaction in an increasingly unpredictable world.

Stretching: A Detailed Study Guide

I. Core Concepts of Stretching

A. Chasing vs. Stretching Mindset

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Chasing: An approach focused on acquiring more resources, often driven by social comparison and leading to dissatisfaction and resource squandering. It operates under the belief that "Having More Resources = Getting Better Results."

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Stretching: A mindset and skill set that emphasizes working with the resources already at hand, embracing constraints, and finding new possibilities. It operates under the belief that "Better Use of Resources = Getting Better Results."

B. The Problem with "More is Better"

- The conventional wisdom that having more resources leads to better results often fails.
- It can lead to seeking unnecessary resources and overlooking the potential of existing ones.

C. The Benefits of Stretching

- Achieving greater success and satisfaction in business and life.
- Unlocking exciting possibilities and achieving more than imagined.
- Adapting to change and uncertainty.
- Increased resourcefulness and creativity.

D. Four Critical Elements of a Stretching Mindset (Chapter 3)

1.

Psychological Ownership: Experiencing something, material or immaterial, as a part of oneself, leading to expansive and inventive use of resources.

2.

Embracing Constraints: Viewing limitations not as barriers, but as catalysts for creativity and new uses for existing resources.

3.

Frugality: A virtue of using money and resources wisely, taking pleasure in saving, and making the most out of what you have, rather than being stingy.

4.

Trash to Treasure: Recognizing potential in overlooked or dismissed resources, turning waste into valuable assets.

E. The Multi-C (Multi-Context) Rule (Chapter 4)

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Definition: Breadth of experiences helps people stretch, allowing them to apply resources to new problems and opportunities in ways invisible to specialized experts.

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Why outsiders outshine experts: Experts can become "cognitively entrenched," blinded to non-conventional uses of resources, while outsiders bring diverse perspectives.

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Gaining outsider experience: Even experts can cultivate an outsider's approach by seeking varied experiences, fostering curiosity, and connecting diverse knowledge.

F. Acting vs. Planning (Chapter 5)

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Perils of Planning: Excessive planning can lead to delays, reliance on questionable assumptions, and inability to adapt to changing circumstances, especially in unpredictable environments.

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"Just Do It" Mentality: Embracing an "acting regulatory mode" where one focuses on moving closer to goals without needing a perfect plan, learning from doing,

and being responsive to real-time information.

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Improvisation: A key skill for stretchers, allowing for spontaneous action, building on existing circumstances, and transforming uncertainty into opportunities.

G. The Power of Expectations (Chapter 6)

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Self-Fulfilling Prophecy: The idea that if people believe situations are real, they act on them, leading to real consequences.

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Positive Prophecies (Pygmalion Effect): High expectations, even if initially unfounded, can enhance performance by raising self-expectations and encouraging more supportive behaviors from others.

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Dangers of Negative Expectations (Dunce Cap Effect): Low expectations, especially when attributed to internal factors, can lead to self-fulfilling prophecies that hinder performance and well-being.

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Our Own Expectations: The importance of cultivating positive self-expectations and viewing challenges as opportunities rather than threats.

H. The Power of Unlikely Combinations (Chapter 7)

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Mixing Resources: Expanding the value of resources by combining seemingly unrelated or incompatible elements (e.g., competition and friendship, routine work and creativity, professional and personal identities).

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Bridging Trade-offs: Overcoming the tendency to see different resources or goals as opposing forces by accepting competing demands, recognizing distinct value, and finding synergies.

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Novelty and Usefulness: Successful combinations need both. Intrinsic motivation fosters novelty, while a performance goal focuses on usefulness. Achieving both often requires simultaneous pursuit of learning and performance.

I. Avoiding Injuries from Overstretching (Chapter 8)

1.

Turning into a Cheapskate: Frugality is good, but stinginess (pain from spending) is harmful. Stretchers take pleasure in spending wisely, not avoiding spending altogether.

2.

Wandering on the Road to Nowhere: Too much diversity of experience without a core identity can lead to aimlessness. Incremental diversification after establishing a core focus is more effective.

3.

Leaping Without Learning: Acting quickly is beneficial, but without a focus on learning from actions and making adjustments, it can lead to catastrophic failures. Avoid high-stakes, untested leaps.

4.

Being Cursed by High Expectations: High expectations are positive when credible and internalized, but they become a burden when they create performance pressure without genuine belief or lead to focusing on others' approval. Small wins help internalize positive expectations.

5.

Making Toxic Mixtures: Not all combinations are beneficial. Mixtures need both novelty and usefulness. Overly clever but impractical combinations lead to failure.

II. Study Guide Questions (Short Answer)

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Explain the core difference between a "chasing" and a "stretching" mindset, as defined in the source. How do their underlying beliefs about resources differ?

The chasing mindset believes "Having More Resources = Getting Better Results," constantly seeking to acquire more. The stretching mindset, conversely, believes "Better Use of Resources = Getting Better Results," focusing on maximizing the potential of existing resources.

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Describe the concept of "functional fixedness." How does it relate to the chasing mindset, and how do stretchers overcome it? Functional fixedness is the inability to use a resource beyond its traditional or intended purpose. Chasers are prone to it, seeing resources as having limited uses, while stretchers overcome it by envisioning unconventional applications for what they have.

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What is "psychological ownership," and why is it crucial for a stretching mindset? Provide an example from the text illustrating its benefit. Psychological ownership is the feeling of possessiveness over a resource, even without legal ownership. It's crucial because it grants individuals the license to transform resources inventively. Ethan Peters, the BoutiqueCo manager, exemplifies this by cutting up poorly made dresses to sell them as "beach cover-ups," transforming a struggling product into a key performer.

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How do "constraints" paradoxically spark creativity for stretchers? Illustrate with an example from the source. Constraints force stretchers to dedicate mental energy to resourceful action, pushing them beyond conventional solutions. Artist Phil Hansen, facing permanent nerve damage that caused his hand to shake, embraced this limitation to develop new artistic techniques, like pointillism with squiggly lines, leading to commissioned work.

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Explain the "Multi-C Rule" and its importance in challenging complex problems. Why might experts struggle where outsiders excel in this context? The Multi-C Rule states that breadth of experiences, or "multi-context" knowledge, helps people stretch. Experts can struggle due to "cognitive entrenchment," being blinded by their specialized knowledge, whereas outsiders bring diverse, less conventional perspectives that can unlock novel solutions.

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Discuss the perils of over-planning, as exemplified by General McClellan. How does the "acting regulatory mode" offer an alternative? Over-planning, as seen with General McClellan, can lead to delays and an inability to adapt when circumstances change, as it fixates on assumptions about the future. The "acting regulatory mode" offers an alternative by focusing on immediate action and learning through doing, rather than waiting for perfect information.

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What is a "self-fulfilling prophecy" in the context of expectations? How does the "Pygmalion Effect" demonstrate a positive application of this concept? A self-fulfilling prophecy occurs when a belief, even if false, drives behavior that makes the belief come true. The Pygmalion Effect is a positive self-fulfilling prophecy where high expectations set for others enhance their performance, as they internalize these beliefs and receive more supportive treatment.

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How can the combination of "competition and friendship" lead to better outcomes for stretchers, despite appearing contradictory? Use the example of the food truckers. While competition can hinder resourcefulness, combining it with friendship, as seen with the food truckers, fosters collaboration and knowledge sharing. Food truckers like William Ortiz, despite being rivals, supported each other by, for example, not selling similar items, leading to mutual growth and stronger community ties.

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What are the two key elements that make a "mixture" of resources successful? What happens if one of these elements is missing, as illustrated by Gerber Singles? A successful mixture requires both novelty and usefulness. If usefulness is missing, even a novel idea fails, as seen with Gerber Singles. The product, though novel in its packaging of adult meals in baby jars, was not useful or appealing to its target audience, leading to its quick withdrawal.

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Describe the injury of "wandering on the road to nowhere" when overstretching. What strategy is suggested to avoid this pitfall? This injury occurs when individuals or organizations diversify too broadly or erratically without first establishing a strong core identity. To avoid it, one should establish a coherent core identity first, then diversify incrementally, taking on new experiences that are only somewhat different from the existing focus.

III. Essay Format Questions (No Answers)

1. Analyze the role of "constraints" in fostering a stretching mindset. How do different types of constraints (e.g., financial, physical, social) impact the ability to stretch, and what are the psychological mechanisms through which they can be leveraged for positive outcomes?
2. Compare and contrast the leadership styles of Dick Yuengling and Peter Stroh, focusing on how their differing approaches to resource utilization ("stretching" vs. "chasing") ultimately determined the longevity and success of their respective breweries.
3. Discuss the interplay between individual and organizational behavior in the context of stretching. How can organizations cultivate a culture that encourages stretching among its employees, and what challenges might they face in moving away from a traditional "chasing" model?
4. Explore the concept of "improvisation" as a critical skill for stretching. How

does it challenge conventional notions of planning and preparation, and in what specific situations (professional and personal) can adopting an improvisational approach lead to superior results?

5. Evaluate the ethical implications of the "self-fulfilling prophecy" and the "Pygmalion Effect" in various settings (e.g., education, workplace, personal relationships). How can individuals and organizations responsibly harness the power of expectations while avoiding the pitfalls of negative prophecies or undue performance pressure?

IV. Glossary of Key Terms

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Acting Regulatory Mode: A psychological state where individuals are driven to initiate action and move towards goals, prioritizing "doing" over extensive planning.

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Anchoring: A cognitive bias where an individual's predictions or decisions are influenced by an initial piece of information, even if it's irrelevant.

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Bricolage Approach: A resourceful method of problem-solving that makes creative use of the tools and resources immediately available, experimenting with non-conventional applications.

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Chasing: A mindset and approach characterized by the constant acquisition of more resources, often driven by social comparison, leading to dissatisfaction and squandering of existing resources. It assumes "Having More Resources = Getting Better Results."

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Cheapskate: A person who experiences psychological pain from spending money and focuses solely on doing things cheaply, often at the expense of long-term value or quality.

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Cognitive Entrenchment: A state where individuals, especially experts, become rigid in their thinking and are blinded to using resources in ways that depart from established conventions.

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Contact Hypothesis: The theory that social contact between groups, even if initially distrustful, can reduce prejudice and increase liking, especially under certain conditions (though mere exposure can also suffice).

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Core Identity: A concentrated career in a specific area or a distinct product/service offering for organizations, which serves as a foundation before diversifying experiences or offerings.

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Dunce Cap Effect: A negative self-fulfilling prophecy where low expectations set for others, often based on external attributions for their failures, lead to decreased performance and negative outcomes.

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Engineering Approach: A method of problem-solving that involves searching for a specific, ideal tool for a task, taking a narrow view of what resources can do.

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Escalation of Commitment: The tendency to irrationally stick with, and even invest more resources into, a chosen course of action or project, even when evidence suggests it is failing, often due to personal responsibility for the initial decision.

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Extrinsic Motivation: Motivation driven by external rewards, such as money, titles, or recognition.

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Frugality: A virtue in stretching where individuals or organizations take pleasure in saving money and using resources wisely, getting the most out of what they have without being stingy.

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Functional Fixedness: A cognitive bias that limits a person to using an object only in the way it is traditionally used, hindering creative problem-solving.

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Growth Mindset: A belief that abilities and intelligence can be developed through dedication and hard work, rather than being fixed traits.

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Improvisation: A spontaneous approach to action and problem-solving, characterized by responding creatively to immediate circumstances without a detailed script or pre-planned steps.

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Intrinsic Motivation: Motivation driven by internal satisfaction derived from the activity itself, such as enjoyment, learning, or personal growth.

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"Just Do It" Mentality: An action-oriented approach that encourages immediate action towards a goal, even without a perfect plan or all perceived necessary resources, emphasizing learning through doing.

-

"Little c" Creativity: A form of everyday creativity focused on solving practical problems through new uses and applications of existing resources, rather than producing groundbreaking creative works.

-

Mindless Accumulation: The tendency to acquire resources without a specific goal in mind, simply to collect more, often leading to overearning and lower satisfaction.

-

Multi-C (Multi-Context) Rule: The principle that breadth and diversity of experiences, knowledge, and skills from different contexts contribute significantly to one's ability to stretch and solve complex problems.

-

Openness to Experience: One of the Big Five personality traits, capturing a person's interest in varied experiences for their own sake, often leading to a diversity of knowledge and skills.

-

Overstretching: The negative consequences that can arise from taking stretching principles to an extreme, leading to injuries like cheapness, aimlessness, or flawed execution.

-

Perky Effect: A psychological phenomenon where having a prior mental image of something alters how new, real information is perceived, often blurring the lines between imagination and reality.

-

Planning Regulatory Mode: A psychological state where individuals feel a strong drive to evaluate potential uses for resources comprehensively, seeking optimal choices and sometimes delaying action.

-

Positional Goods: Purchases or assets that signal wealth or success, often sought in comparison to others, particularly in environments with high-income inequality.

•

Positive Organizations: A scholarly field emphasizing bringing out the highest potential in people and organizations by engaging a person's whole self and the organization's larger purpose.

•

Positive Prophecy: A self-fulfilling prophecy that enhances the value or performance of something, often stemming from positive expectations.

•

Psychological Ownership: An individual's feeling of possessiveness towards a material or immaterial object, leading them to experience it as a part of their self and empowering them to transform it.

•

Pygmalion Effect: A specific type of positive prophecy where a manager's or teacher's high expectations for others (employees, students) enhance the performance of those individuals.

•

Resource Squandering: The misstep in chasing where abundant resources lead to careless pursuit of projects, continuation of poorly performing initiatives, and complacency due to a lack of urgency.

•

Routines: Standardized sequences of actions that, while providing stability, can also be dynamic and individualized, offering opportunities for creativity and adaptation.

•

Self-Fulfilling Prophecy: A concept where a belief or expectation, whether true or false, influences behavior in such a way that the belief or expectation ultimately comes true.

•

Social Comparison: The basic human tendency to evaluate oneself by looking to others, particularly concerning wealth, intelligence, and status. It can be upward (comparing to those better off) or downward (comparing to those worse off).

•

Spendthrifts: Individuals who spend money without fully recognizing the future consequences of their spending.

-

Stretching: A powerful mindset and skill set that allows individuals and organizations to work with existing resources to become more successful and satisfied by embracing and expanding on untapped value. It assumes "Better Use of Resources = Getting Better Results."

-

Structuration Theory: A sociological theory proposing that individual actions and larger social structures (norms, traditions) mutually create and shape each other.

-

Threat Rigidity: The tendency for individuals, teams, or organizations to restrict resources to traditional uses, limit creativity, and obstruct problem-solving when a challenge is perceived as a threat.

-

Trash to Treasure: The act of recognizing and transforming overlooked or discarded resources into valuable assets, often by finding new uses or combining them in innovative ways.

-

Trukese Navigational Approach: An action-oriented method of navigating (and problem-solving) that involves setting a goal and then continuously adjusting based on real-time observations, rather than following a fixed, detailed plan.

-

Upward Social Comparisons: Comparing one's resources or status to those who have more, often leading to dissatisfaction and a desire to acquire more.

- • **Chasing:** An approach focused on acquiring more resources, often driven by social comparison and leading to dissatisfaction and resource squandering. It operates under the belief that "Having More Resources = Getting Better Results."
- • **Stretching:** A mindset and skill set that emphasizes working with the resources already at hand, embracing constraints, and finding new possibilities. It operates under the belief that "Better Use of Resources = Getting Better Results."
- • The conventional wisdom that having more resources leads to better results often fails.

- • It can lead to seeking unnecessary resources and overlooking the potential of existing ones.
 - • Achieving greater success and satisfaction in business and life.
 - • Unlocking exciting possibilities and achieving more than imagined.
 - • Adapting to change and uncertainty.
 - • Increased resourcefulness and creativity.
1. 1. **Psychological Ownership:** Experiencing something, material or immaterial, as a part of oneself, leading to expansive and inventive use of resources.
 2. 2. **Embracing Constraints:** Viewing limitations not as barriers, but as catalysts for creativity and new uses for existing resources.
 3. 3. **Frugality:** A virtue of using money and resources wisely, taking pleasure in saving, and making the most out of what you have, rather than being stingy.
 4. 4. **Trash to Treasure:** Recognizing potential in overlooked or dismissed resources, turning waste into valuable assets.
- • **Definition:** Breadth of experiences helps people stretch, allowing them to apply resources to new problems and opportunities in ways invisible to specialized experts.
 - • **Why outsiders outshine experts:** Experts can become "cognitively entrenched," blinded to non-conventional uses of resources, while outsiders bring diverse perspectives.
 - • **Gaining outsider experience:** Even experts can cultivate an outsider's approach by seeking varied experiences, fostering curiosity, and connecting diverse knowledge.
 - • **Perils of Planning:** Excessive planning can lead to delays, reliance on questionable assumptions, and inability to adapt to changing circumstances, especially in unpredictable environments.
 - • **"Just Do It" Mentality:** Embracing an "acting regulatory mode" where one focuses on moving closer to goals without needing a perfect plan, learning from doing, and being responsive to real-time information.

- • **Improvisation:** A key skill for stretchers, allowing for spontaneous action, building on existing circumstances, and transforming uncertainty into opportunities.
 - • **Self-Fulfilling Prophecy:** The idea that if people believe situations are real, they act on them, leading to real consequences.
 - • **Positive Prophecies (Pygmalion Effect):** High expectations, even if initially unfounded, can enhance performance by raising self-expectations and encouraging more supportive behaviors from others.
 - • **Dangers of Negative Expectations (Dunce Cap Effect):** Low expectations, especially when attributed to internal factors, can lead to self-fulfilling prophecies that hinder performance and well-being.
 - • **Our Own Expectations:** The importance of cultivating positive self-expectations and viewing challenges as opportunities rather than threats.
 - • **Mixing Resources:** Expanding the value of resources by combining seemingly unrelated or incompatible elements (e.g., competition and friendship, routine work and creativity, professional and personal identities).
 - • **Bridging Trade-offs:** Overcoming the tendency to see different resources or goals as opposing forces by accepting competing demands, recognizing distinct value, and finding synergies.
 - • **Novelty and Usefulness:** Successful combinations need both. Intrinsic motivation fosters novelty, while a performance goal focuses on usefulness. Achieving both often requires simultaneous pursuit of learning and performance.
1. 1. **Turning into a Cheapskate:** Frugality is good, but stinginess (pain from spending) is harmful. Stretchers take pleasure in spending wisely, not avoiding spending altogether.
 2. 2. **Wandering on the Road to Nowhere:** Too much diversity of experience without a core identity can lead to aimlessness. Incremental diversification after establishing a core focus is more effective.
 3. 3. **Leaping Without Learning:** Acting quickly is beneficial, but without a focus on learning from actions and making adjustments, it can lead to catastrophic failures. Avoid high-stakes, untested leaps.

4. **4. Being Cursed by High Expectations:** High expectations are positive when credible and internalized, but they become a burden when they create performance pressure without genuine belief or lead to focusing on others' approval. Small wins help internalize positive expectations.
5. **5. Making Toxic Mixtures:** Not all combinations are beneficial. Mixtures need both novelty and usefulness. Overly clever but impractical combinations lead to failure.
 - **• Explain the core difference between a "chasing" and a "stretching" mindset, as defined in the source. How do their underlying beliefs about resources differ?**The chasing mindset believes "Having More Resources = Getting Better Results," constantly seeking to acquire more. The stretching mindset, conversely, believes "Better Use of Resources = Getting Better Results," focusing on maximizing the potential of existing resources.
 - **• Describe the concept of "functional fixedness." How does it relate to the chasing mindset, and how do stretchers overcome it?**Functional fixedness is the inability to use a resource beyond its traditional or intended purpose. Chasers are prone to it, seeing resources as having limited uses, while stretchers overcome it by envisioning unconventional applications for what they have.
 - **• What is "psychological ownership," and why is it crucial for a stretching mindset? Provide an example from the text illustrating its benefit.**Psychological ownership is the feeling of possessiveness over a resource, even without legal ownership. It's crucial because it grants individuals the license to transform resources inventively. Ethan Peters, the BoutiqueCo manager, exemplifies this by cutting up poorly made dresses to sell them as "beach cover-ups," transforming a struggling product into a key performer.
 - **• How do "constraints" paradoxically spark creativity for stretchers? Illustrate with an example from the source.**Constraints force stretchers to dedicate mental energy to resourceful action, pushing them beyond conventional solutions. Artist Phil Hansen, facing permanent nerve damage that caused his hand to shake, embraced this limitation to develop new artistic techniques, like pointillism with squiggly lines, leading to commissioned work.

- • **Explain the "Multi-C Rule" and its importance in challenging complex problems. Why might experts struggle where outsiders excel in this context?** The Multi-C Rule states that breadth of experiences, or "multi-context" knowledge, helps people stretch. Experts can struggle due to "cognitive entrenchment," being blinded by their specialized knowledge, whereas outsiders bring diverse, less conventional perspectives that can unlock novel solutions.
- • **Discuss the perils of over-planning, as exemplified by General McClellan. How does the "acting regulatory mode" offer an alternative?** Over-planning, as seen with General McClellan, can lead to delays and an inability to adapt when circumstances change, as it fixates on assumptions about the future. The "acting regulatory mode" offers an alternative by focusing on immediate action and learning through doing, rather than waiting for perfect information.
- • **What is a "self-fulfilling prophecy" in the context of expectations? How does the "Pygmalion Effect" demonstrate a positive application of this concept?** A self-fulfilling prophecy occurs when a belief, even if false, drives behavior that makes the belief come true. The Pygmalion Effect is a positive self-fulfilling prophecy where high expectations set for others enhance their performance, as they internalize these beliefs and receive more supportive treatment.
- • **How can the combination of "competition and friendship" lead to better outcomes for stretchers, despite appearing contradictory? Use the example of the food truckers.** While competition can hinder resourcefulness, combining it with friendship, as seen with the food truckers, fosters collaboration and knowledge sharing. Food truckers like William Ortiz, despite being rivals, supported each other by, for example, not selling similar items, leading to mutual growth and stronger community ties.
- • **What are the two key elements that make a "mixture" of resources successful? What happens if one of these elements is missing, as illustrated by Gerber Singles?** A successful mixture requires both novelty and usefulness. If usefulness is missing, even a novel idea fails, as seen with Gerber Singles. The product, though novel in its packaging of adult meals in baby jars, was not useful or appealing to its target audience, leading to its quick withdrawal.

- • **Describe the injury of "wandering on the road to nowhere" when overstretching. What strategy is suggested to avoid this pitfall?** This injury occurs when individuals or organizations diversify too broadly or erratically without first establishing a strong core identity. To avoid it, one should establish a coherent core identity first, then diversify incrementally, taking on new experiences that are only somewhat different from the existing focus.
1. 1. Analyze the role of "constraints" in fostering a stretching mindset. How do different types of constraints (e.g., financial, physical, social) impact the ability to stretch, and what are the psychological mechanisms through which they can be leveraged for positive outcomes?
 2. 2. Compare and contrast the leadership styles of Dick Yuengling and Peter Stroh, focusing on how their differing approaches to resource utilization ("stretching" vs. "chasing") ultimately determined the longevity and success of their respective breweries.
 3. 3. Discuss the interplay between individual and organizational behavior in the context of stretching. How can organizations cultivate a culture that encourages stretching among its employees, and what challenges might they face in moving away from a traditional "chasing" model?
 4. 4. Explore the concept of "improvisation" as a critical skill for stretching. How does it challenge conventional notions of planning and preparation, and in what specific situations (professional and personal) can adopting an improvisational approach lead to superior results?
 5. 5. Evaluate the ethical implications of the "self-fulfilling prophecy" and the "Pygmalion Effect" in various settings (e.g., education, workplace, personal relationships). How can individuals and organizations responsibly harness the power of expectations while avoiding the pitfalls of negative prophecies or undue performance pressure?
- • **Acting Regulatory Mode:** A psychological state where individuals are driven to initiate action and move towards goals, prioritizing "doing" over extensive planning.
 - • **Anchoring:** A cognitive bias where an individual's predictions or decisions are influenced by an initial piece of information, even if it's irrelevant.

- • **Bricolage Approach:** A resourceful method of problem-solving that makes creative use of the tools and resources immediately available, experimenting with non-conventional applications.
- • **Chasing:** A mindset and approach characterized by the constant acquisition of more resources, often driven by social comparison, leading to dissatisfaction and squandering of existing resources. It assumes "Having More Resources = Getting Better Results."
- • **Cheapskate:** A person who experiences psychological pain from spending money and focuses solely on doing things cheaply, often at the expense of long-term value or quality.
- • **Cognitive Entrenchment:** A state where individuals, especially experts, become rigid in their thinking and are blinded to using resources in ways that depart from established conventions.
- • **Contact Hypothesis:** The theory that social contact between groups, even if initially distrustful, can reduce prejudice and increase liking, especially under certain conditions (though mere exposure can also suffice).
- • **Core Identity:** A concentrated career in a specific area or a distinct product/service offering for organizations, which serves as a foundation before diversifying experiences or offerings.
- • **Dunce Cap Effect:** A negative self-fulfilling prophecy where low expectations set for others, often based on external attributions for their failures, lead to decreased performance and negative outcomes.
- • **Engineering Approach:** A method of problem-solving that involves searching for a specific, ideal tool for a task, taking a narrow view of what resources can do.
- • **Escalation of Commitment:** The tendency to irrationally stick with, and even invest more resources into, a chosen course of action or project, even when evidence suggests it is failing, often due to personal responsibility for the initial decision.
- • **Extrinsic Motivation:** Motivation driven by external rewards, such as money, titles, or recognition.

- • **Frugality:** A virtue in stretching where individuals or organizations take pleasure in saving money and using resources wisely, getting the most out of what they have without being stingy.
- • **Functional Fixedness:** A cognitive bias that limits a person to using an object only in the way it is traditionally used, hindering creative problem-solving.
- • **Growth Mindset:** A belief that abilities and intelligence can be developed through dedication and hard work, rather than being fixed traits.
- • **Improvisation:** A spontaneous approach to action and problem-solving, characterized by responding creatively to immediate circumstances without a detailed script or pre-planned steps.
- • **Intrinsic Motivation:** Motivation driven by internal satisfaction derived from the activity itself, such as enjoyment, learning, or personal growth.
- • **"Just Do It" Mentality:** An action-oriented approach that encourages immediate action towards a goal, even without a perfect plan or all perceived necessary resources, emphasizing learning through doing.
- • **"Little c" Creativity:** A form of everyday creativity focused on solving practical problems through new uses and applications of existing resources, rather than producing groundbreaking creative works.
- • **Mindless Accumulation:** The tendency to acquire resources without a specific goal in mind, simply to collect more, often leading to overearning and lower satisfaction.
- • **Multi-C (Multi-Context) Rule:** The principle that breadth and diversity of experiences, knowledge, and skills from different contexts contribute significantly to one's ability to stretch and solve complex problems.
- • **Openness to Experience:** One of the Big Five personality traits, capturing a person's interest in varied experiences for their own sake, often leading to a diversity of knowledge and skills.
- • **Overstretching:** The negative consequences that can arise from taking stretching principles to an extreme, leading to injuries like cheapness, aimlessness, or flawed execution.

- • **Perky Effect:** A psychological phenomenon where having a prior mental image of something alters how new, real information is perceived, often blurring the lines between imagination and reality.
- • **Planning Regulatory Mode:** A psychological state where individuals feel a strong drive to evaluate potential uses for resources comprehensively, seeking optimal choices and sometimes delaying action.
- • **Positional Goods:** Purchases or assets that signal wealth or success, often sought in comparison to others, particularly in environments with high-income inequality.
- • **Positive Organizations:** A scholarly field emphasizing bringing out the highest potential in people and organizations by engaging a person's whole self and the organization's larger purpose.
- • **Positive Prophecy:** A self-fulfilling prophecy that enhances the value or performance of something, often stemming from positive expectations.
- • **Psychological Ownership:** An individual's feeling of possessiveness towards a material or immaterial object, leading them to experience it as a part of their self and empowering them to transform it.
- • **Pygmalion Effect:** A specific type of positive prophecy where a manager's or teacher's high expectations for others (employees, students) enhance the performance of those individuals.
- • **Resource Squandering:** The misstep in chasing where abundant resources lead to careless pursuit of projects, continuation of poorly performing initiatives, and complacency due to a lack of urgency.
- • **Routines:** Standardized sequences of actions that, while providing stability, can also be dynamic and individualized, offering opportunities for creativity and adaptation.
- • **Self-Fulfilling Prophecy:** A concept where a belief or expectation, whether true or false, influences behavior in such a way that the belief or expectation ultimately comes true.
- • **Social Comparison:** The basic human tendency to evaluate oneself by looking to others, particularly concerning wealth, intelligence, and status. It

can be upward (comparing to those better off) or downward (comparing to those worse off).

- • **Spendthrifts:** Individuals who spend money without fully recognizing the future consequences of their spending.
- • **Stretching:** A powerful mindset and skill set that allows individuals and organizations to work with existing resources to become more successful and satisfied by embracing and expanding on untapped value. It assumes "Better Use of Resources = Getting Better Results."
- • **Structuration Theory:** A sociological theory proposing that individual actions and larger social structures (norms, traditions) mutually create and shape each other.
- • **Threat Rigidity:** The tendency for individuals, teams, or organizations to restrict resources to traditional uses, limit creativity, and obstruct problem-solving when a challenge is perceived as a threat.
- • **Trash to Treasure:** The act of recognizing and transforming overlooked or discarded resources into valuable assets, often by finding new uses or combining them in innovative ways.
- • **Trukese Navigational Approach:** An action-oriented method of navigating (and problem-solving) that involves setting a goal and then continuously adjusting based on real-time observations, rather than following a fixed, detailed plan.
- • **Upward Social Comparisons:** Comparing one's resources or status to those who have more, often leading to dissatisfaction and a desire to acquire more.

What is the core difference between "chasing" and "stretching" in the context of personal and organizational success?

"Chasing" is a mindset focused on the acquisition of more resources, driven by the belief that "having more resources = getting better results." This often leads to overspending, a constant desire for what others possess (upward social comparisons), a narrow view of resource utility (functional fixedness), and ultimately, mindless accumulation and squandering of resources. This approach can lead to dissatisfaction and a perpetual feeling of inadequacy, as one is always running on a "treadmill" to keep up.

In contrast, "stretching" is a resourceful mindset that prioritizes "better use of resources = getting better results." It involves embracing and acting on the possibilities of resources already at hand, rather than constantly seeking more. Stretchers ask what more they can do with what they already have, seeing untapped value in overlooked or discarded items. This approach leads to greater satisfaction, resilience, and sustainable success by fostering psychological ownership, embracing constraints, practicing frugality, and transforming perceived "trash into treasure."

How do social comparisons and functional fixedness hinder resourcefulness?

Social comparisons are a significant psychological foundation of "chasing." Individuals tend to evaluate their standing (e.g., wealth, intelligence, status) by comparing themselves to others, particularly those who have more (upward social comparisons). This often leads to feelings of inadequacy, dissatisfaction, and a relentless drive to acquire more, even if unnecessary. For example, the unhappiness experienced by silver medalists compared to bronze medalists, or the constant striving of Silicon Valley residents to match wealthier neighbors, illustrates how comparisons to those with more can diminish appreciation for what one already has. This constant "treadmill" effect distracts from being resourceful with existing assets.

Functional fixedness, on the other hand, is a cognitive rigidity that prevents individuals from seeing resources beyond their traditional, intended uses. It leads to a narrow view of what's possible with existing tools or assets. For instance, the physics teacher who could only conceive of a barometer being used to measure air pressure, rather than as a ruler or a bartering tool, exemplifies this limitation. This mindset encourages the belief that one must acquire specific, "correct" tools for every job, overlooking creative alternative applications of available resources. Both social comparisons and functional fixedness contribute to the "chasing" mentality by making individuals believe they lack what they need, thus compelling them to seek external acquisitions rather than innovate with what's at hand.

What is psychological ownership, and how does it contribute to a "stretching" mindset?

Psychological ownership is an attitudinal form of ownership where an individual feels a deep sense of possessiveness over something, whether material or immaterial, even if they don't legally own it. It's experiencing something as "part of our self." This feeling provides a "license to transform resources" because individuals with psychological ownership are more inclined to experiment with and expand the utility of what they perceive as "theirs."

This concept is crucial to a "stretching" mindset because it fosters initiative, creativity, and a proactive approach to problem-solving. For example, Ethan Peters, a retail manager, transformed poorly crafted dresses into bestselling "beach cover-ups" because he felt a strong sense of ownership over his store and its merchandise. Similarly, companies that foster psychological ownership among employees often see increased job satisfaction and better financial performance. By believing they control and are responsible for their resources, individuals are empowered to use them in expansive and inventive ways, unlocking hidden value and making more out of what they already possess.

How do constraints, contrary to common belief, fuel creativity and resourcefulness in the "stretching" approach?

Common intuition suggests that constraints hinder creativity by limiting options. However, the "stretching" mindset posits that embracing constraints can be counter-intuitively liberating and a powerful catalyst for resourcefulness and creativity. When faced with limitations (e.g., scarce money, limited tools, or even physical challenges), people are forced to think outside conventional boundaries and find new uses for what is available.

For instance, artist Phil Hansen, with permanent nerve damage causing a shaky hand, embraced this constraint to develop entirely new artistic techniques, leading to commissioned works and national recognition. Similarly, studies have shown that subjects given "scarcity" instructions generated more creative uses for bubble wrap than those given "abundance" instructions. Constraints direct mental energy toward resourceful action, compelling individuals and organizations to break free from traditional thinking and explore unconventional applications of resources. This "little c" creativity, focused on practical problem-solving through novel uses, is an important part of getting everyday tasks done and driving performance.

In what ways can an "outsider" perspective be more valuable than specialized expertise when solving complex problems?

While extensive practice and specialized expertise are often lauded as keys to success (e.g., the "ten-thousand-hour rule"), the "stretching" approach highlights that in unpredictable or complex challenges, an "outsider" perspective can be more valuable. Experts, by virtue of their deep knowledge in a specific area, can become "cognitively entrenched," or functionally fixed, to conventional ways of using resources and solving problems. This limits their ability to see new solutions, much like the "Perky effect" where prior mental images prevent the recognition of new information.

Outsiders, lacking this entrenched perspective, bring a "multi-context rule" approach, drawing on a breadth of diverse experiences from different fields, jobs, or cultural backgrounds. This allows them to apply resources and solutions from one context to an entirely different problem, in ways invisible to specialists. Examples include Gavin Potter, a non-mathematician, who used psychological insights to improve Netflix's algorithm, and John Davis, a chemist, who applied concrete-flow solutions to an oil spill. Even if they seemingly have "less" specialized knowledge in a particular domain, their diverse experiences enable them to connect disparate ideas and generate novel, more effective solutions.

How does "acting" over "planning" contribute to success and satisfaction, particularly in uncertain environments?

While planning provides comfort and a roadmap, over-reliance on it can lead to "the perils of planning," causing delay, excessive analysis, and a commitment to potentially outdated assumptions. In rapidly changing or uncertain environments, meticulous planning becomes less effective because "the rules constantly shift." The "stretching" approach advocates for an "acting regulatory mode," akin to the Trukese sailors who navigate by constantly responding to present conditions rather than a rigid, pre-charted course.

Acting first, even without a perfect script, allows for learning through doing and rapid adaptation. Robert Rodriguez's filmmaking process, where he embraced on-the-spot adjustments and mistakes, exemplifies this. By "just doing it," individuals and organizations remain responsive to real-time information, avoid "escalation of commitment" to failing plans, and foster a more intrinsically motivated and less

anxious approach to work. This spontaneous, improvisational mindset, which is less concerned with finding the "absolute best" option and more with continuous progress, often leads to greater creativity, effectiveness, and enjoyment in the process.

How do expectations shape performance, and what are the dangers of negative or excessively high expectations?

Expectations, whether self-imposed or set by others, can significantly influence outcomes, often leading to "self-fulfilling prophecies." The "Pygmalion effect" demonstrates that high expectations from authority figures (teachers, managers, recruiters) can enhance performance, as individuals internalize these beliefs, work harder, and receive more attention. Conversely, negative expectations, akin to putting a "dunce cap" on someone, can trigger "threat rigidity" and lead to worse performance. When we expect the worst from others (e.g., attributing failures to internal flaws, or anticipating resistance to change), we create the very conditions for those negative outcomes to manifest, often silencing legitimate concerns and eroding morale.

Excessively high expectations, even if positive, can also be detrimental. While they can spark a "positive prophecy," they also introduce "performance pressure." If the individual does not internalize and believe in these high expectations, or if they are perceived as unrealistic, the pressure can be paralyzing. Ryan Leaf, the NFL quarterback, crumbled under the weight of immense expectations that weren't matched by early "small wins" or a growth mindset, leading to a downward spiral. To harness the power of positive prophecies, expectations must be credible, supportive, and calibrated to allow for learning and adaptation, rather than setting people up for failure or pushing them into self-defeating behaviors.

What is the "power of unlikely combinations," and how can individuals and organizations foster this type of creativity?

The "power of unlikely combinations" refers to the idea that expanding the value of resources often comes from blending seemingly unrelated or incompatible elements, resulting in something greater than the sum of its parts. This involves bridging apparent trade-offs and finding synergies between concepts often kept in separate "buckets."

Examples include Roy Choi's fusion of high-quality Korean BBQ with Mexican tacos from a food truck, Bette Nesmith Graham combining her secretary and artist identities to invent Liquid Paper, or Neville Williams integrating economic development with environmental sustainability through solar power. To foster this creativity, individuals and organizations should:

1. **Accept competing demands:** Recognize that conflicts or tensions exist but don't necessarily need to be resolved by choosing one side over the other.
2. **Recognize distinct value:** Appreciate the independent worth of each seemingly opposing element.
3. **Find synergies:** Actively seek ways one element can enhance or advance the goals of another, transforming perceived trade-offs into collaborative advantages. This mindset encourages constant experimentation, like Charles Goodyear's years of blending chemicals to stabilize rubber, and a willingness to "mix things up" in relationships (e.g., competition and friendship among food truckers) and routines (e.g., incorporating individuality and creativity into mundane tasks).

Here is a detailed timeline and cast of characters based on the provided sources:

Detailed Timeline

Pre-1800s:

- **1723:** Adam Smith is born, later becoming one of the world's greatest thinkers and the founder of economics.
- **1776:** Adam Smith publishes "The Wealth of Nations," laying out principles of economic thought, including the division of labor.

1800s:

- **1829:** The Eagle Brewery, which would later become D. G. Yuengling & Son, is started by German ancestors in rural Pennsylvania.
- **1830s:** America experiences a craze for rubber, sourced from Brazil.
- **1834:** Charles Goodyear is jailed for debt but begins his lifelong fascination and experimentation with rubber.

- **1837:** A severe financial panic undermines the banking system, causing businesses, including Goodyear's rubber operation, to fail.
- **1839 (Winter):** Charles Goodyear accidentally drops a piece of rubber on a hot stove, leading to the discovery of vulcanization, which makes rubber stable and commercially viable.
- **1849:** The Stroh brewery is started in Detroit by German immigrant Bernhard Stroh.
- **1862 (September 17):** The Battle of Antietam, the bloodiest single-day fight in American history, takes place due in part to General George McClellan's over-planning.
- **1866:** Charles Goodnight converts an army wagon into a "chuck wagon" to sell food to cattle herders, an early form of the food truck.
- **1867:** Sarah Breedlove Walker (later Madame C. J. Walker) is born on a Louisiana plantation to formerly enslaved parents.
- **1869:** Emperor Louis Napoleon III of France offers a prize for a cheaper alternative to butter, leading to the invention of margarine and innovation contests.
- **1891:** Clever Hans, a horse, begins performing extraordinary math and reading feats, captivating crowds in Europe.

1900s:

- **Early 1900s:** Psychologist Cheves Perky conducts experiments on visualization, identifying the "Perky effect."
- **1904:** A commission investigates Clever Hans, finding no evidence of trickery.
- **1906:** Viola Spolin, considered the contemporary mother of improvisational theater, is born.
- **1913:** The Bank of the United States is founded in New York City.
- **1920s (Early):** Bette Nesmith Graham is born in Dallas, Texas.
- **1929 (Late October):** The stock market loses a quarter of its value in two days, signaling the start of the Great Depression.

- **1930:** The Bank of the United States has almost \$3 billion in deposits across sixty-two branches.
- **1930 (December 11):** A false rumor of insolvency leads to a bank run, causing the Bank of the United States to close, becoming the biggest bank failure in U.S. history at the time.
- **1930s:** The Oscar Mayer Wienermobile begins visiting cities.
- **1935:** Albert Einstein publishes an influential paper that remains largely uncited for almost sixty years, becoming a "sleeping beauty."
- **1935:** Story Musgrave is born in Stockbridge, Massachusetts.
- **1939:** Viola Spolin starts working with inner-city children in Chicago, developing "Theater Games" to teach resourcefulness.
- **1946:** Bob Kierlin, at seven years old, starts sweeping floors at his father's auto-parts store.
- **1950s:** Play-Doh, originally a wallpaper cleaner, becomes obsolete with vinyl wallpaper, leading to its repurposing as a toy.
- **1954:** Psychologist Gordon Allport proposes the contact hypothesis to reduce prejudice between groups.
- **1955:** Edward Wedbush starts his security and investment firm with a partner.
- **1957:** Theodor Geisel (Dr. Seuss) accepts a bet to write a book using only fifty unique words, resulting in "Green Eggs and Ham."
- **1959:** Disney releases the animated film "Sleeping Beauty."
- **1960s:** Harvard psychologist Robert Rosenthal begins research on expectations, finding that researchers' beliefs can influence experimental outcomes.
- **1961 (Fall):** Dick Yuengling Jr. leaves military high school to return to his family's brewery business.
- **1963:** Robert Rosenthal publishes his early work on expectation effects in "The American Scientist."
- **1967:** Bob Kierlin opens the first Fastenal outlet in Winona, Minnesota, after his vending machine idea flopped.

- **1967:** Peter Stroh becomes president of the Stroh brewery.
- **1968 (December):** Oskar Pfungst's investigation reveals that Clever Hans was responding to subtle body language cues, not actual intelligence.
- **1970s:** Bette Nesmith Graham invents Liquid Paper by combining her secretarial and artistic skills.
- **Early 1970s:** Ronald Wayne works as chief draftsman at Atari and meets Steve Jobs and Steve Wozniak.
- **1974:** Gerber Singles, a baby food product marketed to adults, is launched and withdrawn after only three months due to lack of usefulness and stigma.
- **1976 (April 1):** Ronald Wayne, Steve Jobs, and Steve Wozniak sign a contract to create Apple Computer. Ronald Wayne leaves the company twelve days later, selling his 10% ownership for \$2,300.
- **1977:** Gary Gilmore is executed, his last words "Let's do it" later inspiring Nike's slogan.
- **1978:** Geologists in Siberia discover the Lykov family, who had been isolated for forty-two years.
- **1980s:** The TV show "MacGyver" depicts Angus MacGyver solving problems with everyday objects, inspiring resourceful thinking.
- **1982:** Steve Jobs gives a speech at the Academy of Achievement, emphasizing the value of diverse experiences.
- **1985:** Dick Yuengling Jr. takes over D. G. Yuengling & Son from his ailing father.
- **1987:** Fastenal goes public with an IPO.
- **1988:** Dan Wieden creates the iconic "Just Do It" slogan for Nike, drawing inspiration from Gary Gilmore's last words.
- **1989 (March 24):** The Exxon Valdez oil tanker runs aground, causing a major environmental disaster.
- **1989:** Stroh attempts a sale to Coors, but the deal falls through.
- **1990:** Congress creates the Oil Spill Recovery Institute (OSRI) in response to the Exxon Valdez spill.

- **1990 (April 24):** The Hubble Space Telescope is launched but returns blurry images due to a mirror imperfection.
- **1990:** California experiences a major drought, with some wealthy residents resisting water conservation.
- **1991 (Spring):** Robert Rodriguez participates in a pharmaceutical study to fund his filmmaking.
- **1992 (Summer):** Northwestern University researchers study Olympic medalists' reactions at the Barcelona games, observing that bronze medalists are often happier than silver medalists.
- **1995:** Paula Dickson experiences a medical emergency on a flight, leading Dr. Angus Wallace to perform an improvised surgery using airplane resources.
- **1996:** D. G. Yuengling & Son reaches maximum capacity at its factory, prompting Dick Yuengling Jr. to consult his daughters about expansion.
- **1996 (Summer):** Chess master Bobby Fischer proposes Chess960 (Fischer Random Chess) to introduce more skill and adaptability into the game.
- **1998:** The Hubble Space Telescope is repaired by Story Musgrave and his team during an eleven-day mission.
- **1998:** Two top college quarterbacks, Peyton Manning and Ryan Leaf, enter the NFL draft with high expectations.
- **1998:** Mauricio Martinez, general manager of a luxury resort in Los Cabos, Mexico, converts his hospitality staff into construction workers after Hurricane Odile.
- **1999:** The Choi family starts BoutiqueCo, a chain of women's clothing stores, using excess merchandise from their manufacturing business.

2000s:

- **2000 (Spring):** Scott Sonenshein receives a cold call from a recruiter for Vividence, a Silicon Valley start-up, and joins the company.
- **2001 (September 11):** Terrorists attack the United States, including United Flight 93, on which Jeremy Glick, a colleague of Scott Sonenshein's at Vividence, bravely resists attackers.

- **2001:** InnoCentive is formed with backing from Eli Lilly to solve complex problems through crowdsourcing.
- **2002:** Scott Sonenshein leaves Vividence to start a PhD in organizational behavior at the University of Michigan, focusing on Positive Organizations.
- **2002:** William Oberton succeeds Bob Kierlin as CEO of Fastenal.
- **2004:** The film "Napoleon Dynamite" is released, known for its polarizing humor.
- **2006:** Netflix's Cinematch recommendation engine facilitates 60% of its movie rentals.
- **2007:** BoutiqueCo grows to sixty-five stores.
- **2008:** Roy Choi, Mark Manguera, and Alice Shin launch KOGI KOREAN BBQ, selling Korean beef tacos from a food truck.
- **2008:** The Great Recession begins, caused by excessive borrowing and leading to significant economic damage.
- **2010:** Jenny Dawson begins investigating food waste at New Covent Garden Market, leading her to found Rubies in the Rubble.
- **2010:** Jason Goldberg founds Fab.com, raising over \$335 million in funding.
- **2011:** Daniel Norris is drafted by the Toronto Blue Jays, receiving a \$2 million signing bonus.
- **2011:** JC Penney hires Ron Johnson as CEO, with high expectations for a turnaround.
- **2011:** Alex Turnbull founds Groove, a customer service software company.
- **2011:** Marie Kondo introduces the Japanese art of decluttering in her book "The Life-Changing Magic of Tidying Up."
- **2012:** Ron Johnson's initiatives at JC Penney lead to significant losses and a decline in sales.
- **2012:** FINRA suspends Edward Wedbush from managing his company for thirty-one days due to lax oversight.

- **2012 (August):** Researchers publish a study on how mentally unchallenging tasks can enhance creativity by allowing the mind to wander.
- **2013:** Scott Sonenshein begins a multiyear study on gourmet food trucks in Houston.
- **2014:** Bob Kierlin retires from Fastenal's board.
- **2014:** Ronald Wayne auctions off his remaining Apple documents for \$25,000.
- **2014 (Late):** Golin launches its "internship" program to encourage diverse experiences.
- **2015:** Daniel Norris is traded to the Detroit Tigers and hits a home run in his first MLB at-bat.
- **2015:** Sir Tim Hunt, a British biochemist, resigns from his university post after controversial remarks about women in science.
- **2015:** Researchers find that "sleeping beauties" in science (forgotten papers) are often rediscovered by outsiders.
- **2015:** BoutiqueCo expands to more than six hundred stores throughout the United States.
- **2016:** Madame C. J. Walker Beauty Culture, a new line based on original products, is placed on Sephora's shelves.
- **2016:** Randi (Scott Sonenshein's wife) turns down two significant job offers, prioritizing learning and life goals.
- **2017:** Scott Sonenshein publishes "Stretch: Unlock the Power of Less—and Achieve More Than You Ever Imagined," based on his research and experiences.

Cast of Characters

Main Figures & Examples:

- **Scott Sonenshein:** The author and a Henry Gardiner Symonds Professor of Management at Rice University. He shares his personal journey, research, and insights into "chasing" versus "stretching" resources. He experienced the dotcom boom and bust at Vividence, started a PhD at the University of

Michigan focusing on Positive Organizations, and wrote this book to share his findings on resourcefulness.

- **Randi Sonenshein:** Scott Sonenshein's wife, a significant inspiration for his work on "stretching." She is an accomplished professional who provided extensive editing for the book and made a conscious choice to prioritize learning and personal life over high-paying job offers that would require relocation. She also worked at Borders and was involved in exploring nonphysical book formats.
- **Dick Yuengling Jr.:** Owner and president of D. G. Yuengling & Son, America's oldest brewery. He is presented as a prime example of a "stretcher," who built a multi-billion-dollar beer empire by working resourcefully with what he had, focusing on longevity rather than rapid expansion or acquisitions, and instilling a culture of economy.
- **Daniel "Van Man" Norris:** A major league baseball player and multimillionaire who chooses to live in a beat-up 1978 Volkswagen Westfalia microbus. He exemplifies "stretching" by living frugally, avoiding the chasing mentality often seen in sports stars, and prioritizing his love for baseball and the outdoors over material possessions.
- **Jeremy Glick:** A colleague of Scott Sonenshein's at Vividence, who was a passenger on United Flight 93 on September 11, 2001. He is highlighted for his courageous and resourceful actions in resisting the terrorists, forcing the plane down and saving lives.
- **Phil Hansen:** An artist who developed permanent nerve damage in his right hand, causing a persistent shake. He became an example of "embracing constraints" by finding new, creative ways to make art with his "wobbly hand," eventually earning a commission for the Grammy Awards.
- **Bob Kierlin:** Founder and former CEO of Fastenal, an industrial supplies company. He is portrayed as "the cheapest CEO in America" and a model of "frugality." His commitment to avoiding waste and spending wisely, stemming from a modest upbringing, allowed him to build a multibillion-dollar business with astonishing returns.
- **Jenny Dawson:** Founder of Rubies in the Rubble, a company that transforms discarded produce into artisanal chutneys. She embodies the "trash to

treasure" concept by addressing food waste and providing meaningful employment to women struggling with homelessness and addiction, demonstrating that value can be found in overlooked resources and people.

- **Roy Choi:** A chef and co-founder of KOGI KOREAN BBQ, a gourmet food truck business. He is an example of "mixing it up" by combining high-quality, upscale food with the low-cost, mobile format of a food truck, revolutionizing the dining scene and launching the gourmet food truck trend.
- **Robert Rodriguez:** A filmmaker known for his resourceful approach to moviemaking, exemplified by his debut film "El Mariachi." He demonstrates "acting without a script" by using available resources (like a friend's ranch and desk lamps) and adapting to challenges on the fly, creating critically acclaimed and profitable films without Hollywood's typical large budgets.
- **Madame C. J. Walker (Sarah Breedlove Walker):** America's first black woman millionaire, who built a successful hair-care business for African American women. She is a powerful example of how "expectations elevate us," overcoming significant social and economic disadvantages to create opportunities for herself and a network of black female sales agents.
- **Alex Turnbull:** Founder and CEO of Groove, a customer service software company. He turned down a \$12 million acquisition offer, prioritizing his life goals, building a sustainable business, and balancing work with family and personal passions (like surfing). He exemplifies living up to "the right expectations" and appreciating what he has.
- **Ron Johnson:** Former executive at Apple (where he created the Genius Bar) and Target, hired as CEO of JC Penney. He is presented as an example of "leaping without learning," as his aggressive, instinct-driven "fair-and-square" pricing strategy, rolled out without adequate testing or adaptation to customer preferences, led to massive losses for JC Penney.
- **Ryan Leaf:** A highly touted NFL quarterback prospect who failed to live up to the enormous expectations placed upon him. He serves as an example of "being cursed by high expectations," struggling with pressure, a fixed mindset in the face of failure, and ultimately descending into drug addiction.

Supporting Characters & Concepts:

- **Amos Tversky & Daniel Kahneman:** Cognitive psychologists who launched the field of behavioral economics, demonstrating human irrationality and the "anchoring" effect (e.g., in the Netflix Prize context).
- **Angus MacGyver:** The fictional secret agent from the 1980s TV show "MacGyver," known for his ingenuity and ability to solve complex problems with limited, everyday resources.
- **Anthony McCaffrey:** A psychologist who developed a two-part technique for breaking down resources into their smallest components to discover hidden uses, crucial for invention.
- **Bernhard Stroh:** German immigrant who founded the Stroh brewery in 1849, later led by his great-grandson Peter Stroh.
- **Bobby Fischer:** A renowned chess player who proposed Chess960 (Fischer Random Chess) to reintroduce skill and adaptability to the game by randomizing the back row.
- **Brie Larson:** Oscar-winning actress who consciously maintains distance from Hollywood's chasing mentality, prioritizing her work over industry pressures.
- **Brooke Macnamara, David Hambrick, & Fred Oswald:** Researchers who meta-analyzed studies on practice and performance, finding that extensive practice is less relevant in unpredictable fields.
- **Carol Dweck:** Psychologist known for her work on "growth mind-set," which Peyton Manning exemplifies.
- **Charles Goodnight:** Texas cattle rancher who invented the "chuck wagon" in 1866, an early example of mobile food service.
- **Christopher Hsee:** University of Chicago professor who conducted studies on "mindless accumulation," showing how people acquire more resources than they need at the expense of happiness.
- **Claude Debussy:** Composer whose musical compositions, like Frank Lloyd Wright's architecture, demonstrate creativity from constraints.
- **Claude Lévi-Strauss:** French anthropologist who described two approaches to getting things done: "engineering" (seeking specific tools) and "bricolage" (using available tools creatively).

- **Colonel Pickering:** Character in Shaw's "Pygmalion" who treats Eliza Doolittle as a lady, illustrating the power of positive expectations.
- **Courtney Carver:** Diagnosed with multiple sclerosis, she founded Project 333, challenging people to minimize their wardrobe to thirty-three items for three months, promoting resourcefulness and focus on experiences.
- **Dan Wieden:** Advertising executive who created Nike's iconic "Just Do It" slogan, tapping into the "acting regulatory mode."
- **Del Close:** Largely unknown teacher of improv comedy and disciple of Viola Spolin, who mentored many famous comedians (Bill Murray, John Belushi, Gilda Radner, Mike Myers, Tina Fey) and taught them the "Yes, and" rule.
- **Dov Eden:** Management professor known for his research on the "Pygmalion effect" in organizations, particularly in the Israeli army, demonstrating how high expectations enhance performance.
- **Duncan J. Watts:** Sociologist who coined the term "small worlds," highlighting how little it takes to connect across seemingly self-contained pockets of knowledge and relationships.
- **Edward Wedbush:** Multimillionaire financier who runs a multi-billion-dollar security and investment firm. While frugal, he is also an example of "turning into a cheapskate" by under-investing in critical areas like compliance and neglecting his own home, leading to problems.
- **Eliot Van Buskirk:** Wired journalist who wrote about how the Netflix Prize was won.
- **Emperor Louis Napoleon III:** French emperor who initiated an innovation contest to find a cheaper butter alternative, leading to margarine's invention and inspiring modern innovation challenges like the Netflix Prize.
- **Ethan Peters:** A manager at BoutiqueCo who exemplifies "psychological ownership" by treating his store as his own, leading him to creatively transform inferior products into bestsellers and contribute to the company's success.
- **Ezra Zuckerman:** MIT researcher who studied how to balance diversity of experience in careers, using actors as an example, to avoid "wandering on the road to nowhere."

- **Frances Stroh:** Author of "Beer Money: A Memoir of Privilege and Loss," detailing the Stroh family's squandering of their fortune.
- **Frank Lloyd Wright:** Architect whose work, like Claude Monet's, demonstrates creativity from constraints.
- **Fred Cook:** CEO of Golin, a public relations firm, who launched an "internship" program to expose participants to diverse experiences outside their field, embodying the multi-c rule.
- **Gary Gilmore:** A convicted murderer whose last words, "Let's do it," inspired Nike's "Just Do It" slogan.
- **Gary Kremen:** Founder of Match.com, who felt "nobody here at \$10 million" in Silicon Valley, illustrating the treadmill metaphor of social comparison.
- **George Carlin:** Comedian who humorously critiqued the "American dream," suggesting it requires one to be "asleep to believe it."
- **George Jones:** CEO of Borders who remained steadfast in focusing on the company's traditional business of physical books, even as opportunities in digital formats emerged, contributing to the company's eventual liquidation.
- **Gordon Allport:** Prominent psychologist who proposed the "contact hypothesis" in 1954, suggesting that social contact can reduce prejudice between groups.
- **Greg Josefowicz:** CEO of Borders who signed an agreement to outsource the company's website to Amazon.com, contributing to Borders' demise.
- **James Córdova:** Psychologist who studied the "Marital Checkup," a performance review for married couples, showing its positive effects on relational satisfaction.
- **Jason Goldberg:** Founder of Fab.com, who spent over \$335 million in funding, demonstrating the dangers of "chasing" and "resource squandering" by prioritizing rapid growth over sustainable practices, leading to the company's collapse.
- **Jeff Bezos:** CEO of Amazon.com, who benefited greatly from the outsourcing deal with Borders, gaining valuable customer data.

- **Jeffrey Moeller:** Commercial real estate advisor in Silicon Valley who observed the excess spending of startups, echoing dotcom era mistakes.
- **J. Richard Hackman & Greg R. Oldham:** Organizational psychologists who advocated for designing challenging jobs to create more meaningful work.
- **John Bradburn:** Leads General Motors' landfill-free initiative, tasked with turning trash into treasure by repurposing waste materials.
- **John Duns Scotus:** Thirteenth-century thinker who believed cone-shaped hats facilitated learning, leading to the unfortunate invention of the "dunce cap."
- **John Norcross:** Psychologist who studies New Year's resolutions, finding that they significantly increase the success rate for positive changes.
- **Jon Sanders:** Netflix's director of recommendation systems, responsible for Cinematch, who launched the Netflix Prize innovation contest.
- **Joshua Millburn:** Co-founder of The Minimalists, who, after personal tragedies, abandoned a life of "chasing" material success at Cincinnati Bell for a simpler, more meaningful life.
- **Justin Kan:** Entrepreneur who noted that raising a lot of money can lead to solving problems by spending money.
- **Karl E. Weick:** Management scholar who discussed the "any old map will do" principle for navigating uncertainty and emphasized that we often learn what we think through action and reflection.
- **Kathy Eisenhardt:** Stanford University professor who researched how businesses navigate speed-versus-accuracy trade-offs, finding that quicker decisions often rely on more information from the present.
- **Katy DeCelles:** Researcher who studied environmentalists' self-defeat, noting they often undermine themselves by focusing on others' perceived superior efforts.
- **Kelly Leonard & Tom Yorton:** Former Second City leaders who wrote "Yes, And," advocating for improvisation skills.
- **Kim Elsbach & Andrew Hargadon:** Management professors who advocate for incorporating "mindless work" into schedules to enhance creativity and

recharge.

- **Lars Bo Jeppesen & Karim Lakhani:** Researchers who studied InnoCentive, finding that people further from their expertise were more likely to solve complex problems.
- **Lauri Ward:** Interior designer who founded a company based on the "use what you have" philosophy, advocating for resourcefulness in home design.
- **Leon Festinger:** Psychologist who proposed the "social comparison process," explaining why people compare themselves to others to evaluate their standing.
- **Linda Andrews:** Health journalist who advocates for "midyear resolutions" (e.g., July Fourth) as a less stressful time for self-improvement pledges.
- **Malcolm Brenner:** Former National Transportation Safety Board investigator who conducted an experiment on the "next-in-line effect," showing how planning to speak hinders listening.
- **Marc Epstein:** Colleague of Scott Sonenshein's at Rice, who provided counsel and support for the book project.
- **Marie Kondo:** Author who popularized the "Japanese art of decluttering and organizing," emphasizing that satisfaction comes from organizing essential belongings.
- **Mark Manguera:** Co-founder of KOGI KOREAN BBQ, who, inspired by a late-night taco, challenged Roy Choi to create the Korean beef taco.
- **Martha Feldman:** Organizational theorist who conceptualized resources as having potential that becomes valuable through action, rather than having innate, fixed value.
- **Matthew McConaughey:** Actor who successfully diversified his career from romantic comedies to critically acclaimed dramas, illustrating the strategy of establishing a core identity before diversifying.
- **Michael Nesmith:** Bette Nesmith Graham's son, a band member and costar of "The Monkees" TV series.
- **Michael Phelps:** Olympic swimmer.

- **Mike Myers:** Comedian and alum of Second City.
- **Miroslav Holub:** Czech poet and immunologist who documented the "any old map will do" parable about lost Hungarian soldiers.
- **Monica Worline:** Co-author of "Enabling Courageous Collective Action," discussing Jeremy Glick's actions on Flight 93.
- **Nancy Reagan:** First Lady who coined the "just say no" slogan for drug prevention.
- **Nathan Adrian:** Olympic swimmer.
- **Neville Williams:** Leader of the Solar Electric Light Fund, who brought electricity to the developing world using solar energy and a business model that harmonized economic development with environmental sustainability.
- **Nitin Nohria:** Harvard Business School dean who, with Ranjay Gulati, studied "resource squandering" in companies with too much slack.
- **Oscar Mayer Wienermobile:** Iconic hot-dog-shaped vehicle used for marketing.
- **Paul Sills:** Son of Viola Spolin and co-founder of the Second City comedy troupe.
- **Peyton Manning:** Highly successful NFL quarterback, contrasted with Ryan Leaf as an example of effectively managing high expectations.
- **Peter Roberts:** Emory University professor who, with Paul Ingram, studied friendships among managers at competing hotels in Sydney, Australia.
- **Philippe Verduyn, Emre Demiralp, Jiyoung Park, David Seungjae Lee, Natalie Lin, Holly Shablack, John Jonides, & Oscar Ybarra (from Ethan Kross's team):** Researchers who studied the negative impact of Facebook use on well-being due to upward social comparisons.
- **Phil Knight:** Co-founder of Nike, who initially resisted Dan Wieden's "Just Do It" slogan.
- **Qing Ke, Emilio Ferrara, Filippo Radicchi, & Alessandro Flammini:** Researchers who identified "sleeping beauties" in scientific literature.

- **Rebecca Rogers:** An employee at EntertainCo who viewed the company's organizational change as depleting resources, leading to a decline in her own psychological resources.
- **Richard Pine:** Scott Sonenshein's literary agent, who encouraged him to write the book.
- **Robert De Niro:** Actor known for starring in several genres.
- **Robert McMath:** Founder of the New Products Showcase and Learning Center, known as the "Library of Losers," cataloging failed product combinations like Gerber Singles.
- **Robert Merton:** Sociologist who coined the term "self-fulfilling prophecy."
- **Robert Zajonc:** Psychologist who studied the "mere exposure effect," explaining why simple contact with something (or someone) can increase liking.
- **Ronald Wayne:** One of the co-founders of Apple Computer, who left the company early, selling his stake for a small sum. He is presented as an example of "wandering on the road to nowhere" due to his tendency to pursue many interests without a consistent core focus, missing out on significant success.
- **Ryan Lochte:** Olympic swimmer.
- **Savin & Dmitry Lykov:** Sons of Karp and Akulina Lykov, born during the family's isolation in Siberia, never meeting anyone outside their immediate family until discovered by geologists.
- **Scott Pegau:** Research program manager at OSRI, who turned to InnoCentive to find solutions for dealing with semi-frozen oil after the Exxon Valdez spill, recognizing the value of outside expertise.
- **Scott Rick:** University of Michigan professor who led research distinguishing between "frugal" people (who take pleasure in saving) and "cheapskates" (who feel pained by spending).
- **Shigehiro Oishi:** Psychologist at the University of Virginia who found that frequent residential moves negatively impact introverts' well-being and social relationships.

- **Sir Tim Hunt:** British biochemist who made controversial remarks about women in science, highlighting their status as "outsiders."
- **Steve Jobs:** Co-founder of Apple, who along with Steve Wozniak, sought Ronald Wayne's help in arbitrating disputes for their venture.
- **Steve Wozniak:** Co-founder of Apple.
- **Theodor Geisel (Dr. Seuss):** Author who wrote "Green Eggs and Ham" on a bet to use only fifty unique words, illustrating the liberating power of constraints.
- **Tom Szaky:** Founder of TerraCycle, a company that repurposes waste materials into new products.
- **Tony McCaffrey:** Psychologist who developed a two-part technique for breaking down resources to discover hidden uses.
- **Utpal Dholakia:** Scott Sonenshein's research collaborator, who studied employee engagement with strategic change implementation.
- **Victoria Medvec:** Northwestern University researcher who studied Olympic medalists' emotions, finding that bronze medalists often appear happier than silver medalists due to counterfactual thinking.
- **Violina Rindova:** Professor who studied with Scott Turner the routines of trash collectors in North Carolina municipalities, highlighting their resourcefulness.
- **William von Osten:** German mathematics teacher and master of Clever Hans.
- **William Ortiz:** A Mexican gourmet taco truck operator in Houston who exemplifies the unusual "mixture of competition and friendship" among food truckers, even refusing to sell his Korean BBQ taco when another Korean truck was nearby.
- **William Oberton:** Bob Kierlin's successor as CEO of Fastenal, who embodied the company's frugal values.
- **Will Ferrell:** Actor, known for slapstick humor.
- **Yehuda Koren:** Computer scientist who, along with Robert Bell and Chris Volinsky, incorporated Gavin Potter's behavioral approach to win the Netflix Prize, emphasizing the value of diverse teams.