

# Going for a BIG Insight?

## *Understanding the Stages of Creativity*



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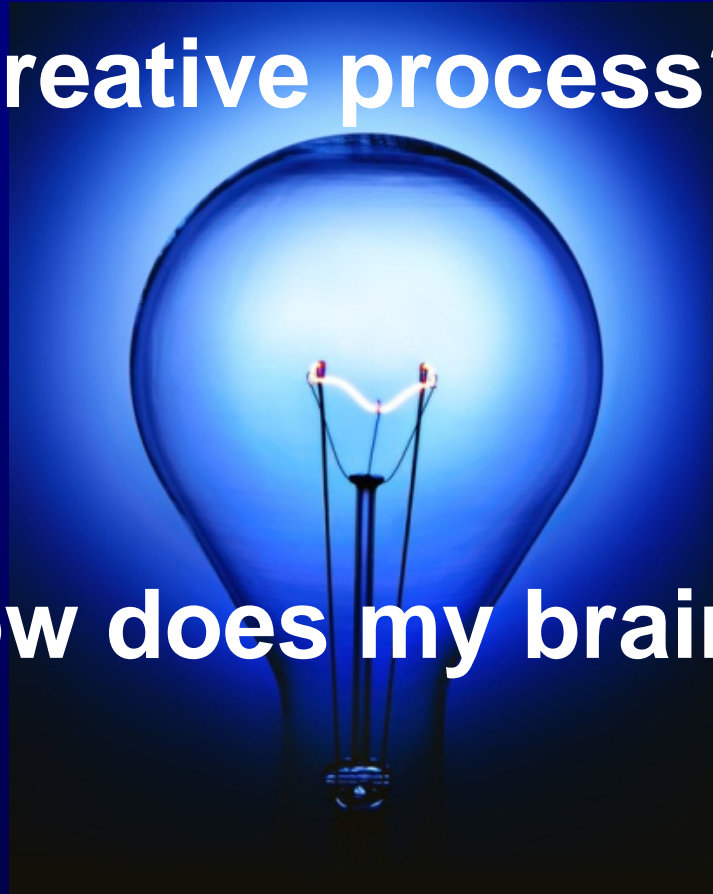
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QRCA Southern California- 2012 Conference

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**What is the creative process?**



**How does my brain change?**

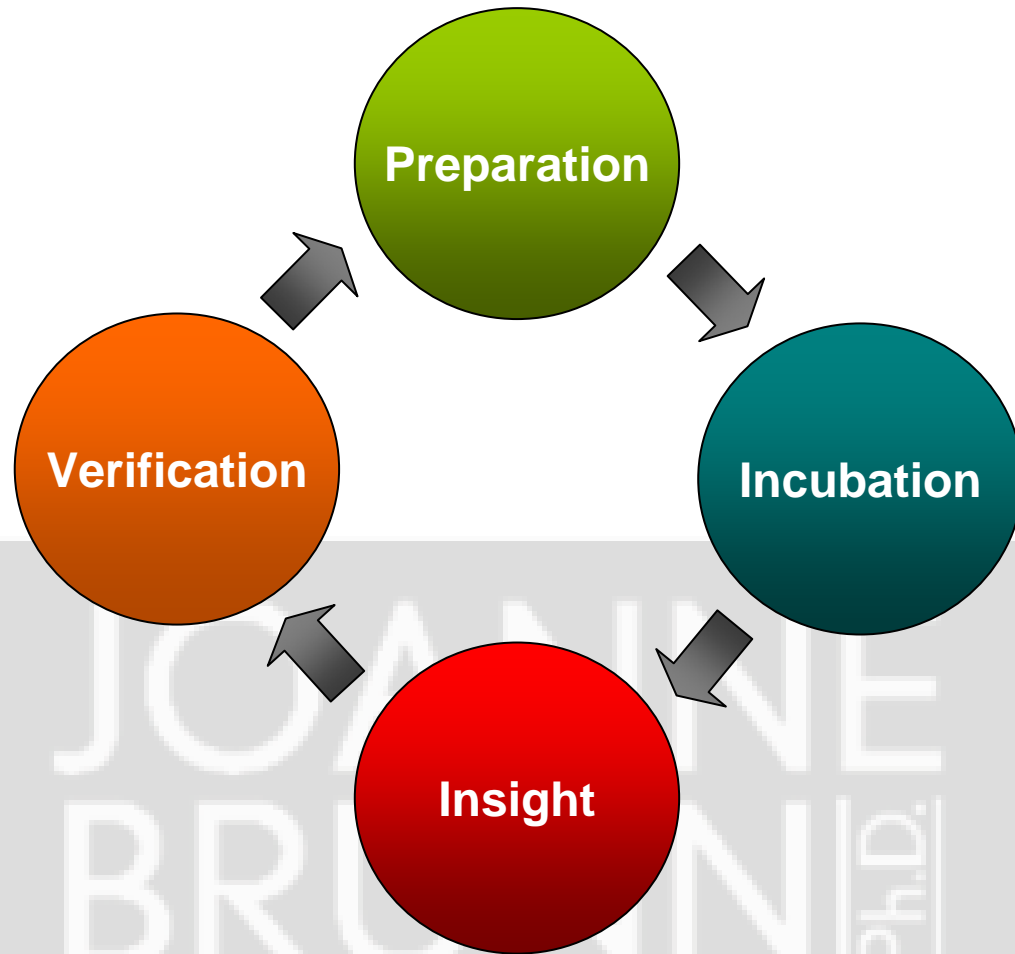
**Why does creativity seem so elusive?**

## Our Agenda

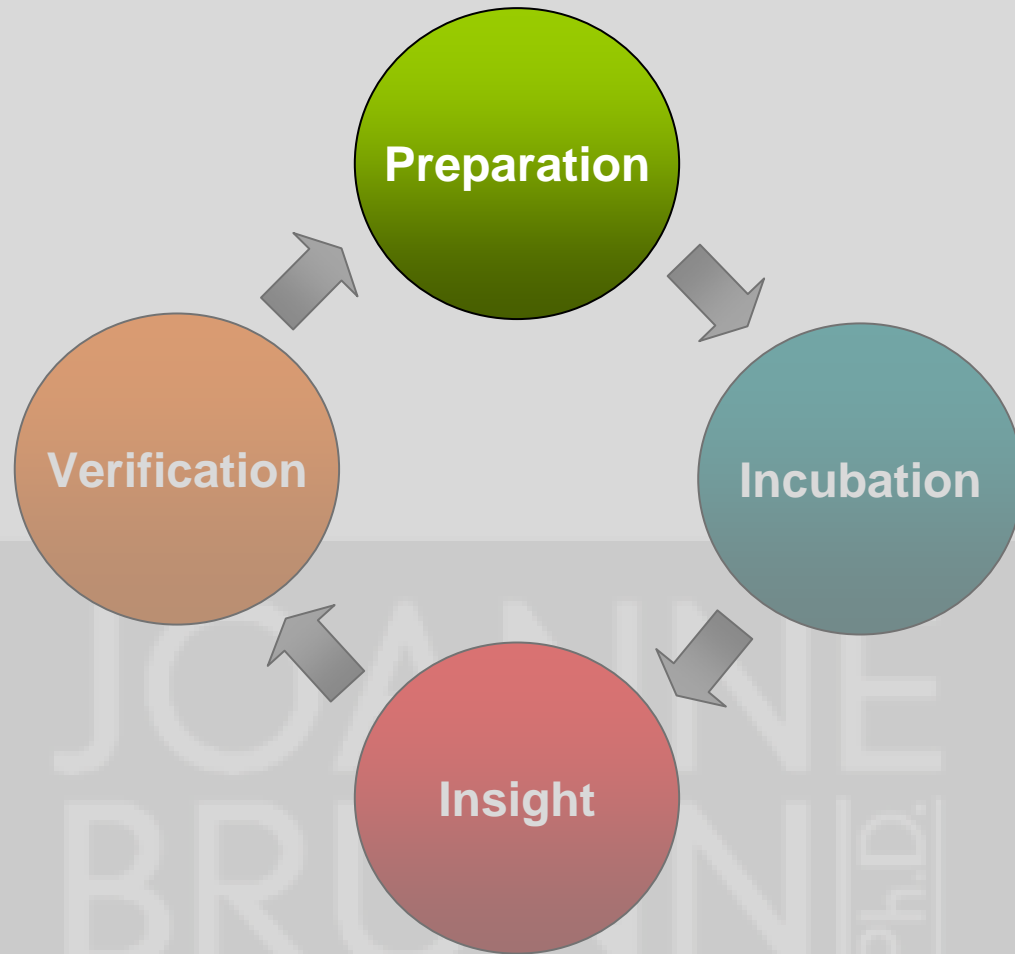
- What is the creative process?
- How does it work?
- Why does it work?
- How do I apply it?



# Four Stages of the Creative Process

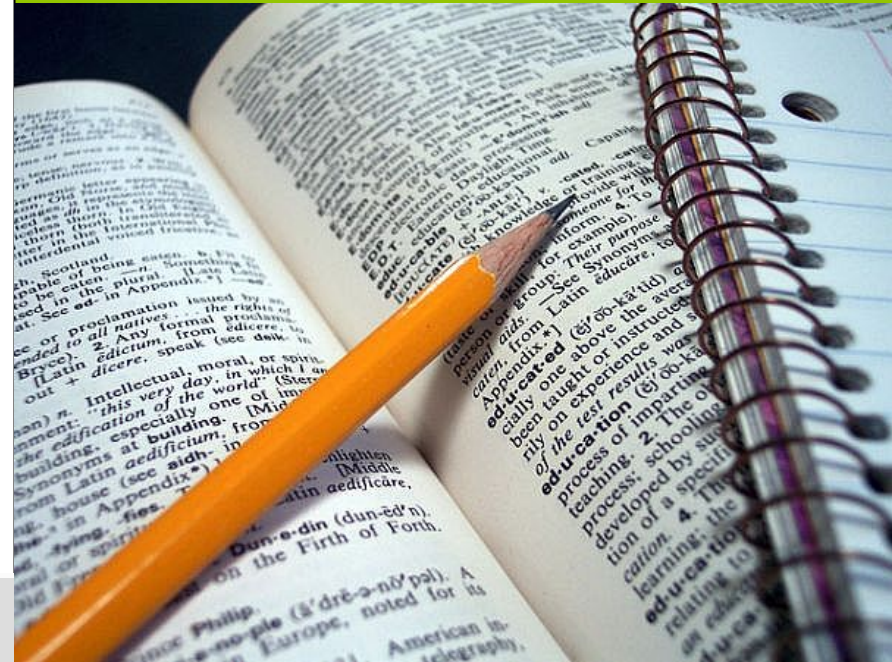


# Four Stages of the Creative Process



# Preparation

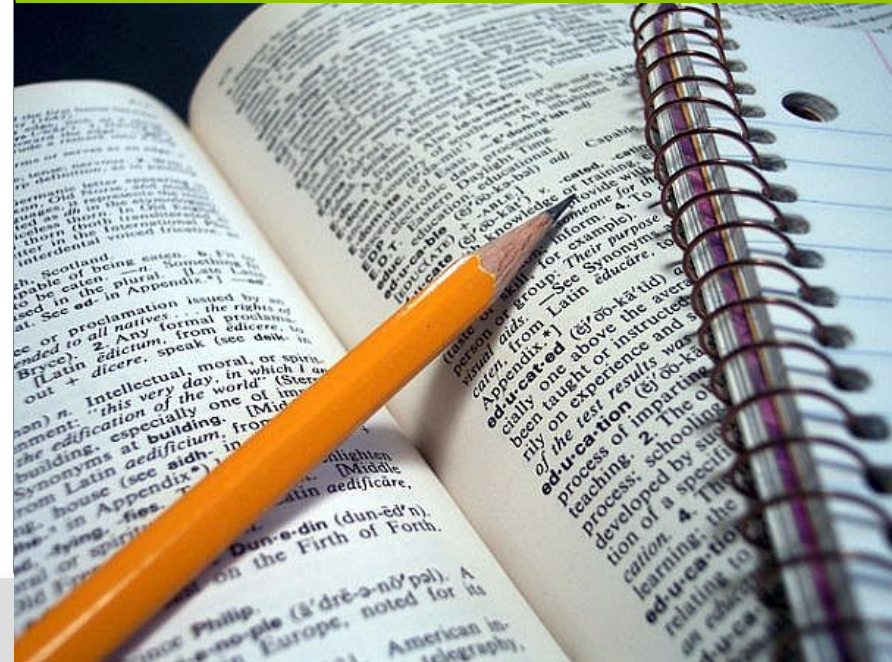
- What is the current level of knowledge?
- What about serendipity?
- Can one have too much knowledge?



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# Preparation

- Have knowledge & skills already
- Need to gather more information
- Need diversity
- Need to be taught
- Need insights grounded in reality



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# How does it work?

Preparation

## ***Assignment:***

You have been tasked with coming up with a drink to help adults relax during their first flight.

# How does it work?

Preparation

***Assignment:***

You have been tasked with coming up with a drink to help adults relax during their first flight.

- This is a flight to the moon
- Conditions are zero- gravity
- Must account for different taste preferences

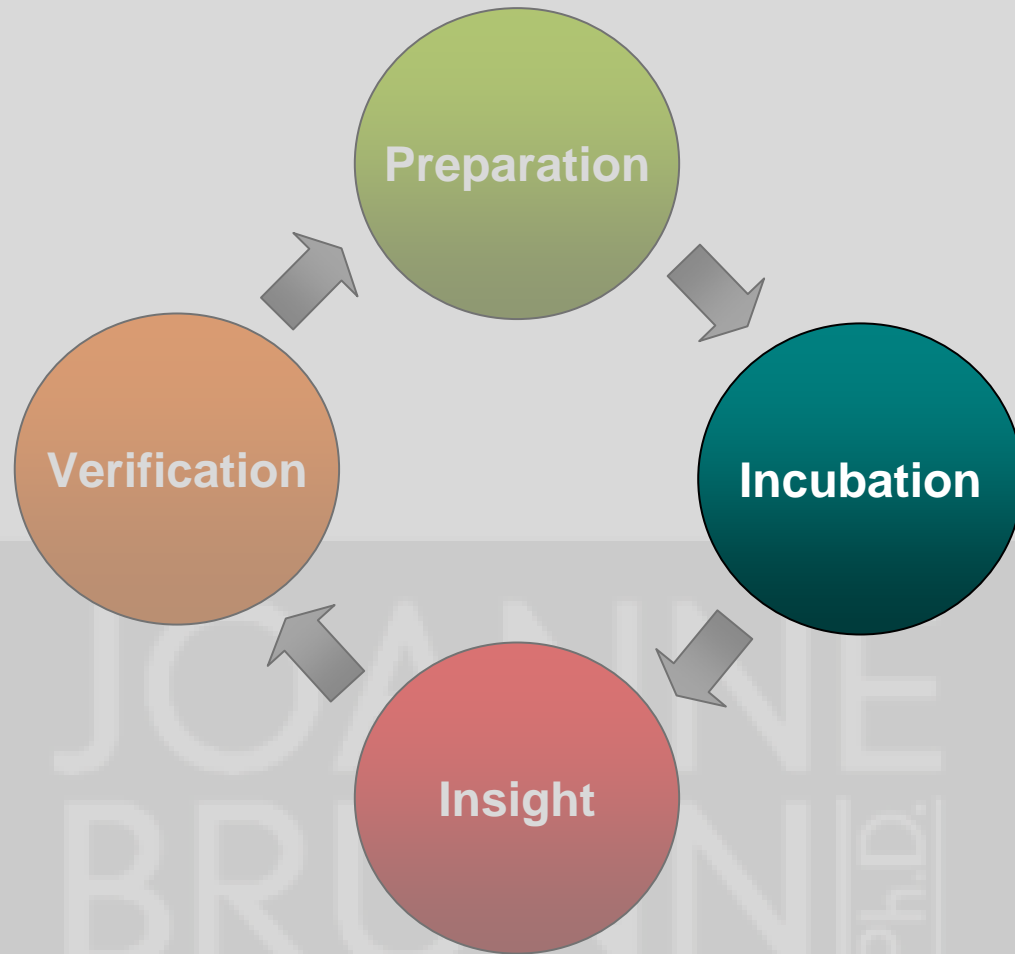
# How does it work?

Preparation

We will prepare for the task by enhancing our imagination skill set...

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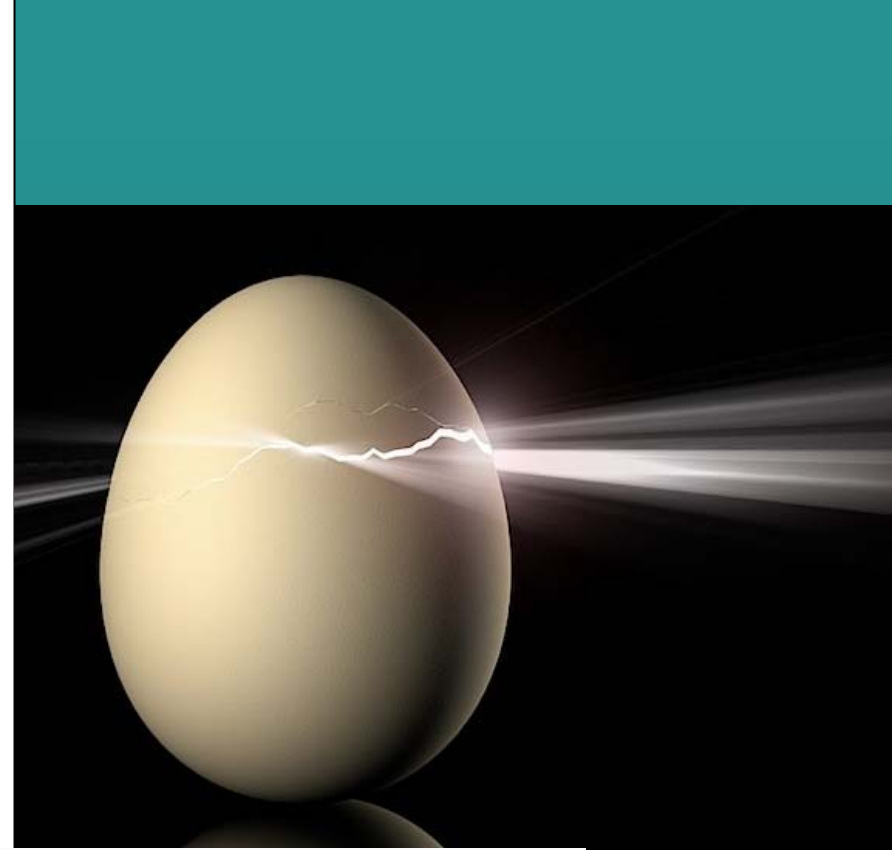
# Four Stages of the Creative Process



# Incubation

The time and conditions needed to allow insight to occur

Insight and incubation are inseparable



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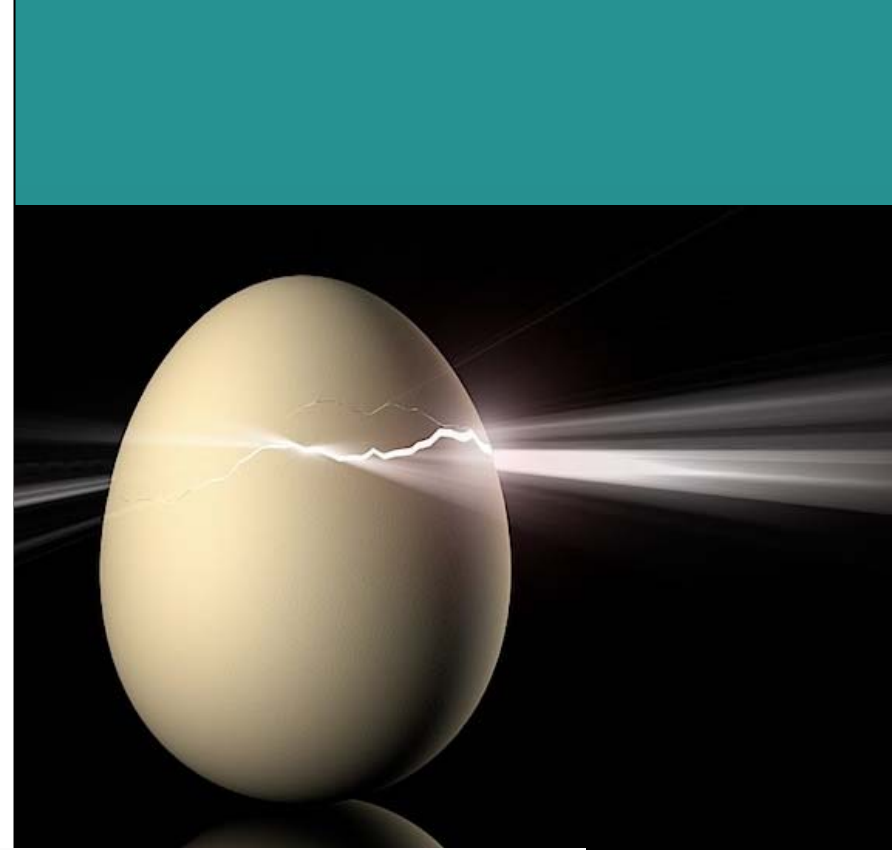
# Incubation

## Time:

Variable – could be 1 minute to several days or more

## Conditions:

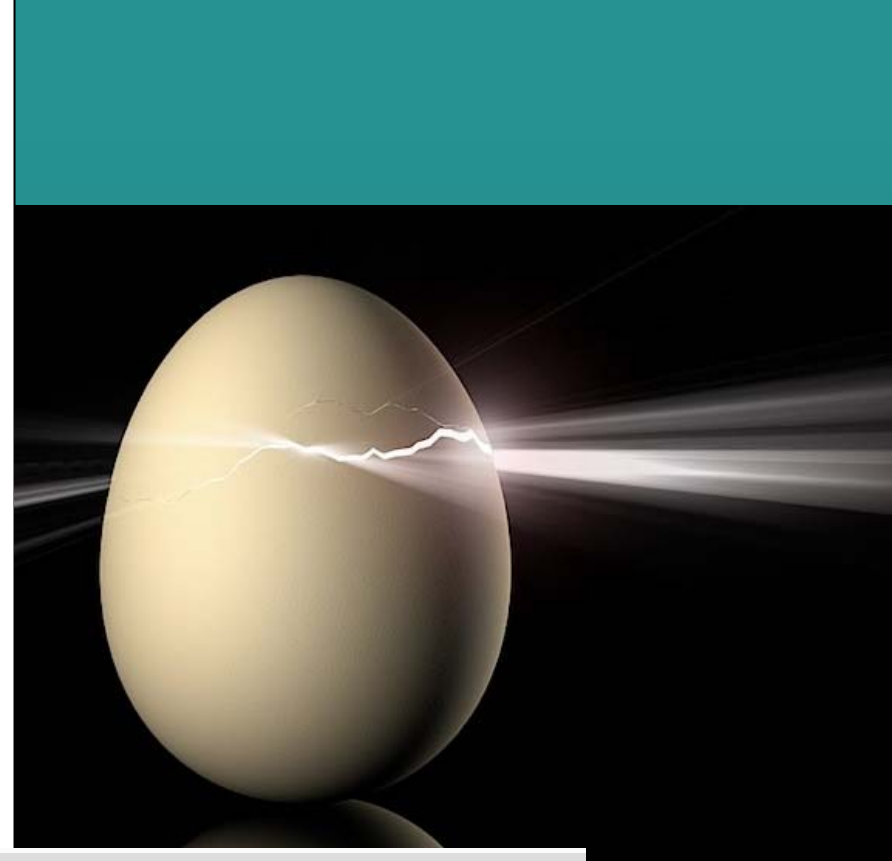
- Have a personal, emotionally charged need to solve the problem
- Absorb yourself in the problem
- Stop the brain chatter



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# What does this mean?

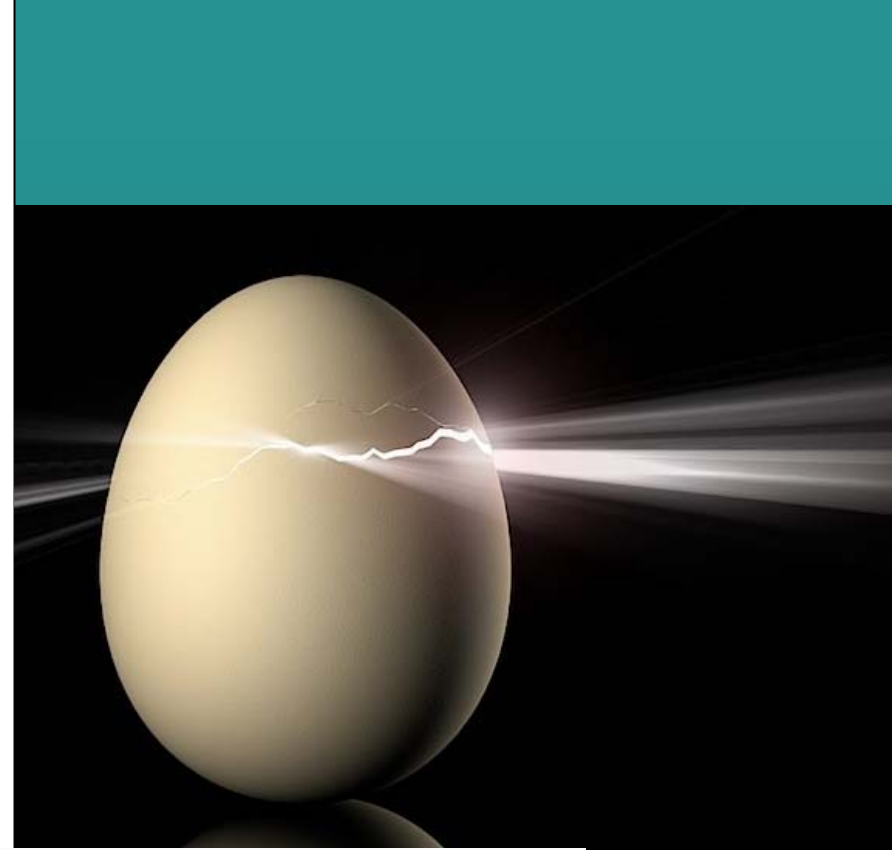
- Rest your conscious mind
- Focus on other things
- Percolate ideas on the 'back burner'
- Allow transition between work and relaxation



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# When can Incubation happen?

- Moments just before sleep
- Moments just before waking up
- Dreaming
- Relaxing
- Meditating
- Physical activity
- Habitual activity
- Simple, repetitive activity
- Positive mood



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# How does it work?

Incubation

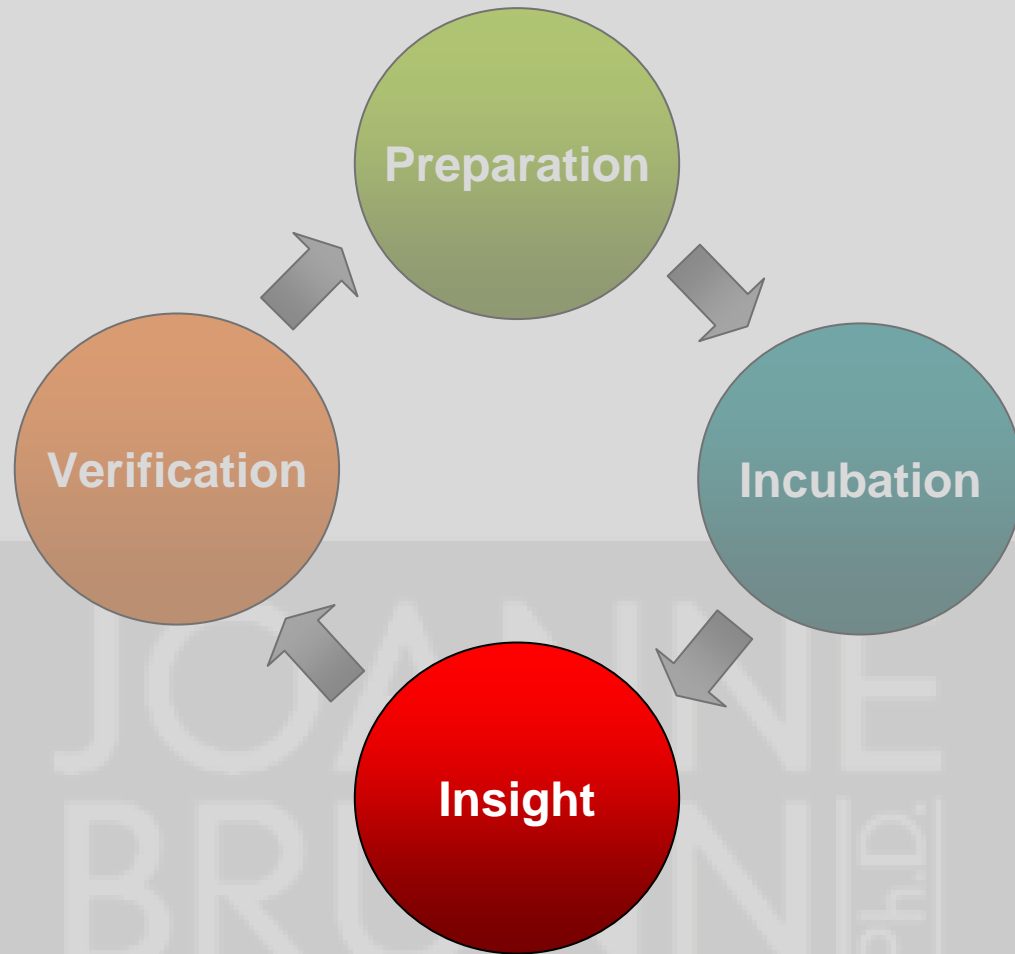
## ***Assignment:***

You have been tasked with coming up with a drink to help adults relax during their first flight.

## **Exercise 1: Get Physical**

- No talking / No cell phones
- Get up – walk across the room and then sit down and untie and retie your shoes *or*
- Get up – walk across the room and pour yourself a glass of water
- Write down any insights

# Four Stages of the Creative Process



# Insight

- No one solves complex problems at will
- The 'aha!' moment
- Moment of the shift between focused work and relaxation
- Insights increase when we are open to the experience



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# What does this mean?

- Not random
- Completes an incomplete pattern in the brain
- Result of preparation and emotional need
- Direct response to your problem



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# How does it work?

Incubation

## ***Assignment:***

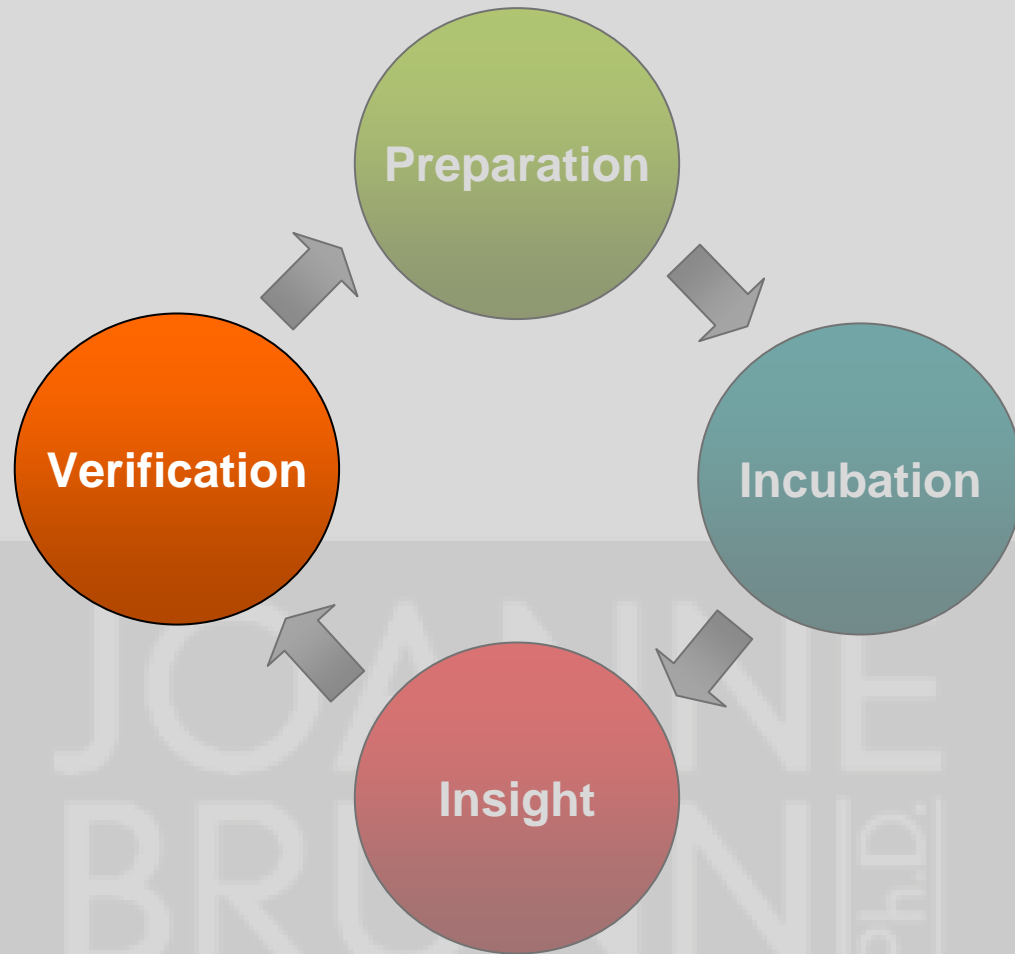
You have been tasked with coming up with a drink to help adults relax during their first flight.

## **Exercise 2: Get Re-focused**

- No talking / No cell phones
- Listen to instrumental music
- Write down any insights



# Four Stages of the Creative Process



# Verification

- Is it unique?
- What is its potential?
- Does it have value?
- How do you know?
- What criteria can you test against?
- What proof steps need to occur?



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# Verification

“Every act of creation  
is first of all an act of  
destruction.”

- Picasso



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# Verification

- Lasts a few months or a lifetime
- Never stops
- Entire process cycles again and again



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# How does it work?

Incubation

## ***Assignment:***

You have been tasked with coming up with a drink to help adults relax during their first flight.

## **Exercise 3: Have Fun!**

- No talking / No cell phones
- Listen to a comedy routine
- Write down any insights

# How does it work?

Incubation

***Assignment:***

You have been tasked with coming up with a drink to help adults relax during their first flight.

## **Exercise 4: Simple Activity**

- No talking / No cell phones
- Draw some simple doodles – lines, circles, curves
- Write down any insights

# How does it work?



Verification

## ***Assignment:***

You have been tasked with coming up with a drink to help adults relax during their first flight.

## **Discuss our insights from each exercise**

Verify:

- Did you have enough preparation?
- Which incubation to insight process worked for you?
- Could you identify the moment of insight?

## Our Agenda

- ✓ What is the creative process?
- ✓ How does it work?
  - Why does it work?
  - How do I apply it?



# Non-conscious Resources Are Huge



## Conscious

- Working out a solution logically

## Non-conscious

- No pre-existing, logical or easy answer
- Solving the tough problems

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Incubation



# The Insight Burst

- Brain changes just *before* moment of insight
- ‘Burst’ creates a complex set of new connections
- ‘Burst’ feels good

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# A Changed Brain

- Our new set of connections helps to overcome resistance to change
- Our insight brain 'burst' allows us to embrace and accept a totally new way of looking at things



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# Verify the 'Burst'

- Were you able to think more creatively after your insight 'bursts'?
- Did you feel the difference between conscious processing and non-conscious insights?

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## Our Agenda

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# How do I apply it?



- Identify the current stage
- Utilize the corresponding techniques

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# How do I apply it?

## Identify the stage

Preparation

- Do they know what problem they want to solve?
- Is the company still gathering information?
- Do all the participants have experience in the field and good knowledge of the problem?

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# How do I apply it?

Utilize the techniques

Preparation

- Gather company data
- Assess participant knowledge level
- Assign participant homework
- Provide training sessions
- Provide introductory material
- What else?

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# How do I apply it?

## Identify the stage

Incubation

- Has the company spent time to focus on the problem?
- Has enough time been allocated between preparation and expecting a solution?
- Does everyone involved have a personal, emotionally charged need to solve the problem?

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# How do I apply it?

Utilize the techniques

Incubation

Do things like:

- Provide enough time
- Have quiet times
- Get up and move
- Simple tasks
- Have fun
- What else?

To Evoke a sense of:

- Inward focus
- Safety
- Curiosity
- Fun
- Relaxation
- Letting go

# How do I apply it?

Identify the stage

Insight

- How receptive are the participants to new ideas?
- Have some ideas already been identified?
  - How many?
  - What kinds?
- Are the ideas inspired or obvious?

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# How do I apply it?

Utilize the techniques

Insight

- Provide opportunities for people to come up with their own insights
- Recognize all insights
- Incorporate ‘insight gathering times’ into your schedule
- Balance divergent and convergent exercises
- What else?

# How does it work?

Identify the stage

Verification

- What criteria have been established for judging ideas?
- Have plans been created for any previous ideas?
- Have some solutions already been attempted?
- What were the results of previous solutions?
- How confident are the participants that the solutions have merit?

# How does it work?

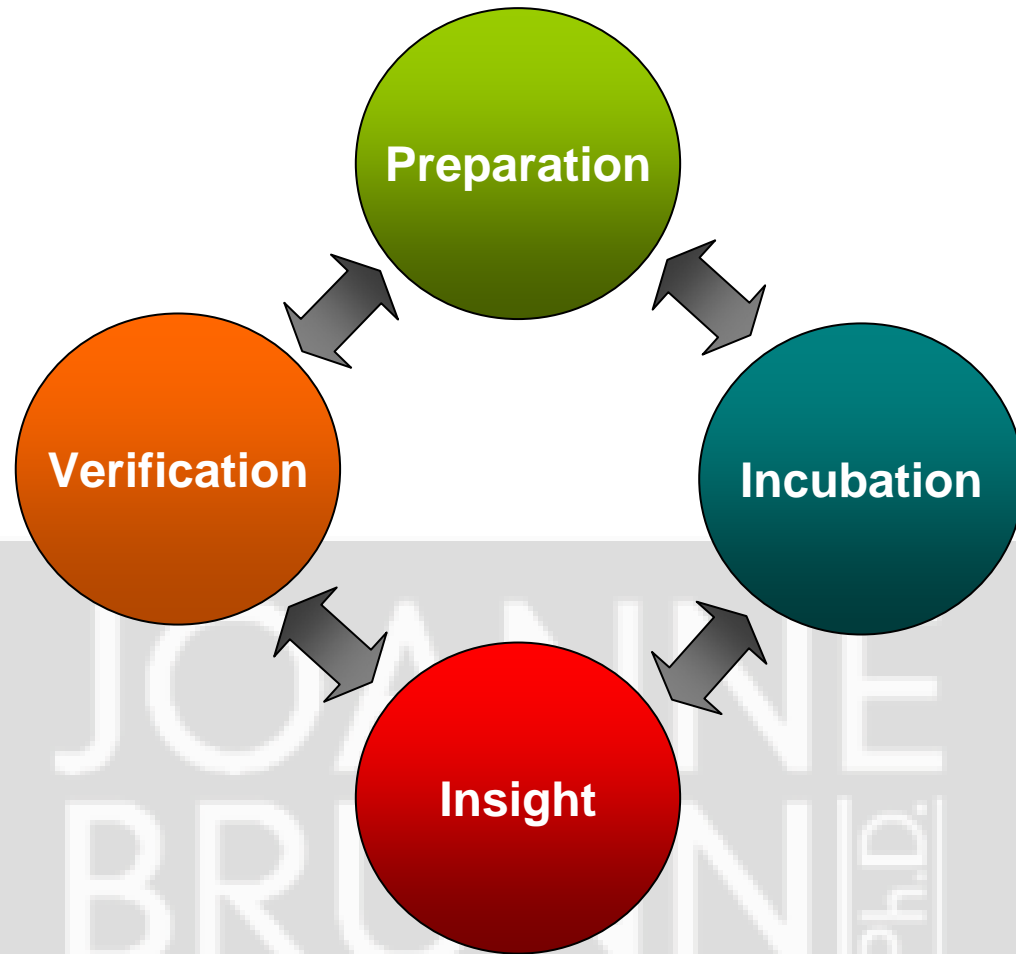
Utilize the techniques

Verification

- Internal group discussions
- Ranking/Sorting techniques
- External Focus groups
- Test live in market
- What else?

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# How do I apply it?



# Getting to the Big Insights



- Respect preparation stage
- Respect time and conditions for incubation
- Utilize non-conscious resources and speed
- Insight burst:
  - Feels good
  - Creates connections
  - Causes us to be open to change and possibilities

## Our Agenda

- ✓ What is the creative process?
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**Thank you!!!**

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a BIG Insight?**

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