

“This is the place of creative incubation. At first, you may find nothing happens there. But, if you have a sacred place and use it, take advantage of it, something will happen.”

Joseph Campbell

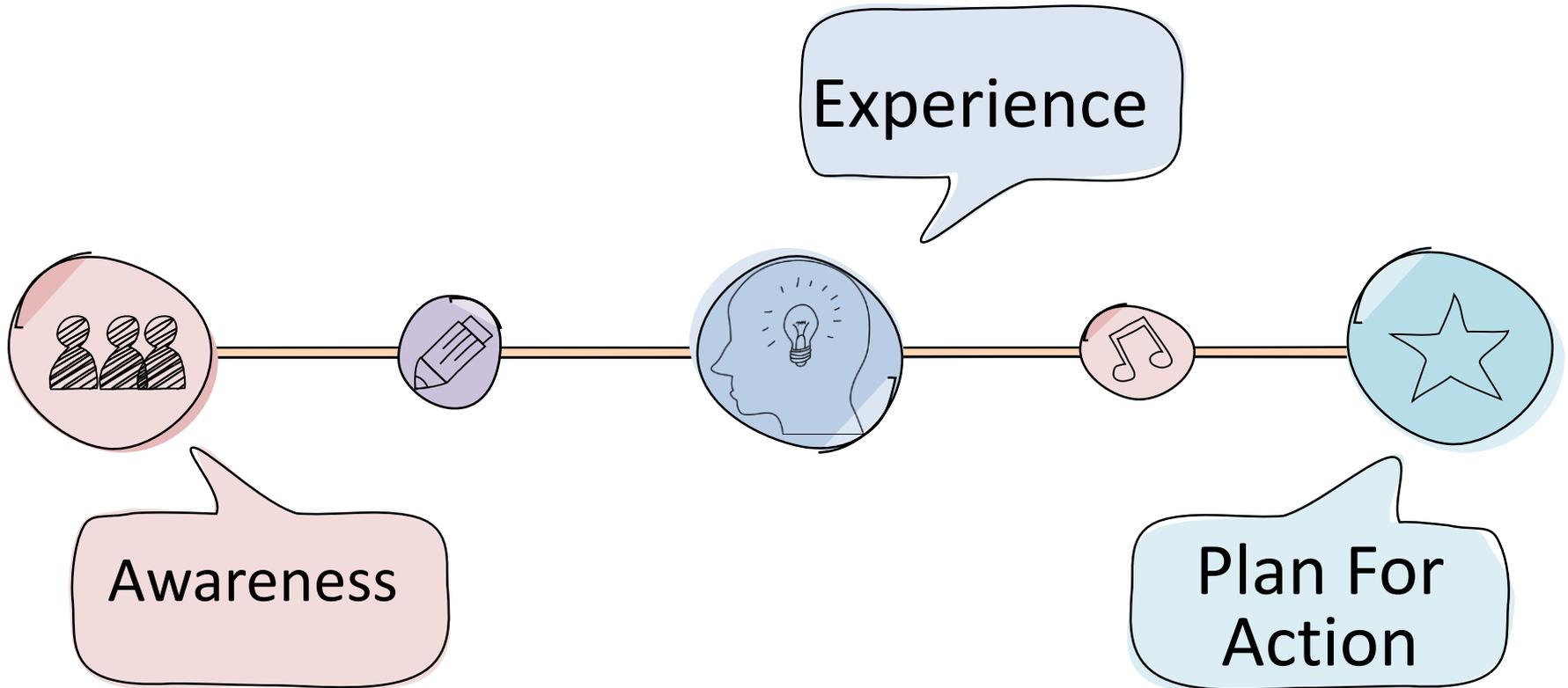


# Shower Thinking

Kristen Peterson  
Clare Dus



# Objectives



# What Are Your Definitions?



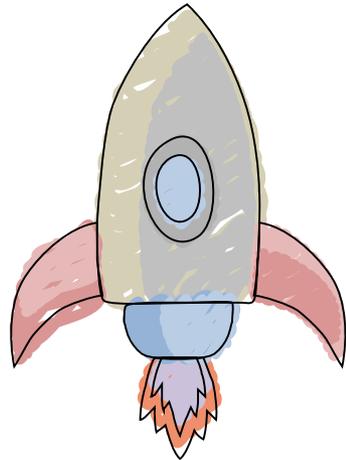
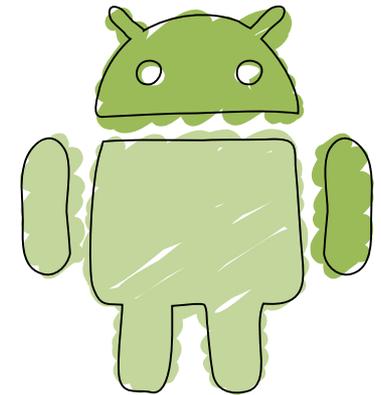
# Your Aspirations

***How might I.....***



Yada..  
yada

Yada..yada

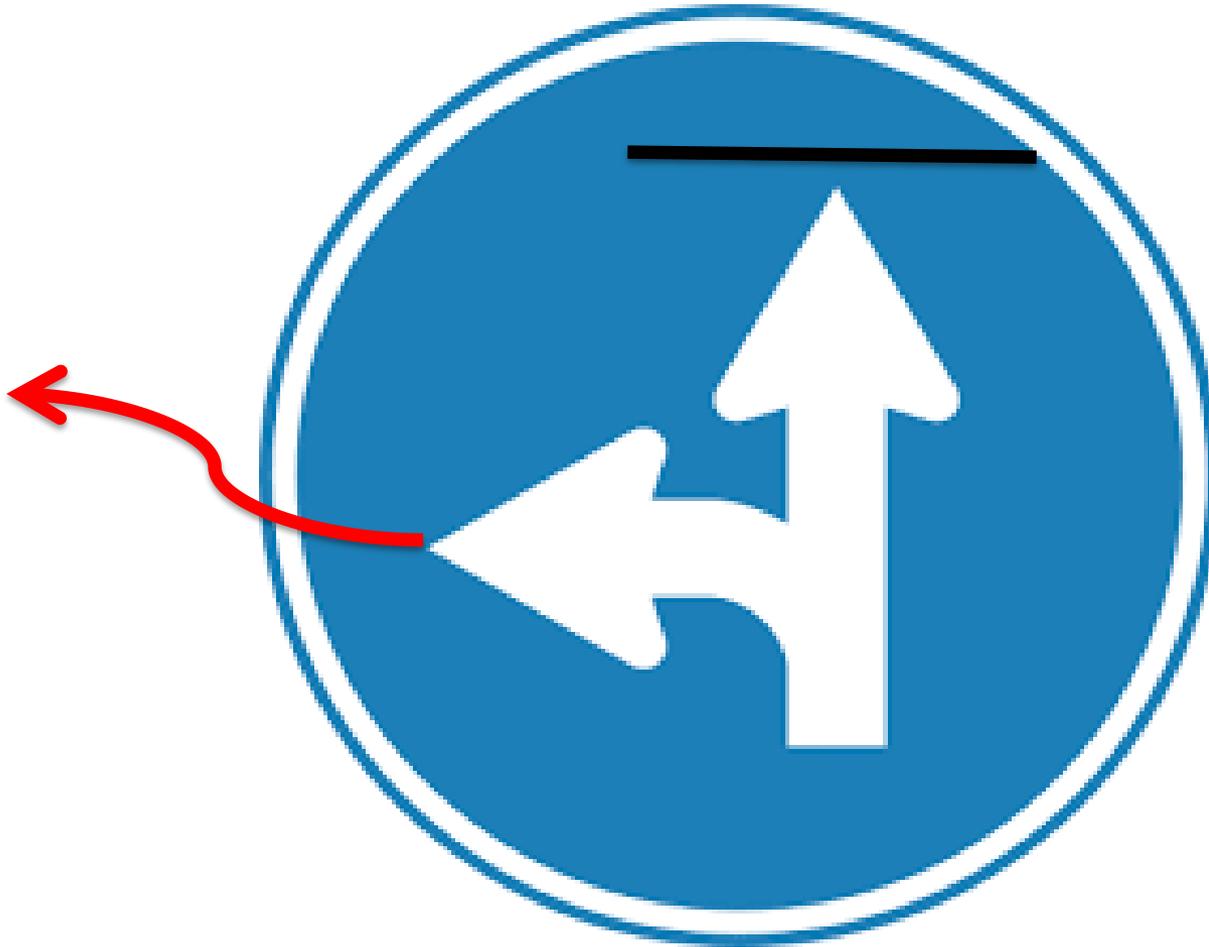


Yada..  
yada

Yada...yada

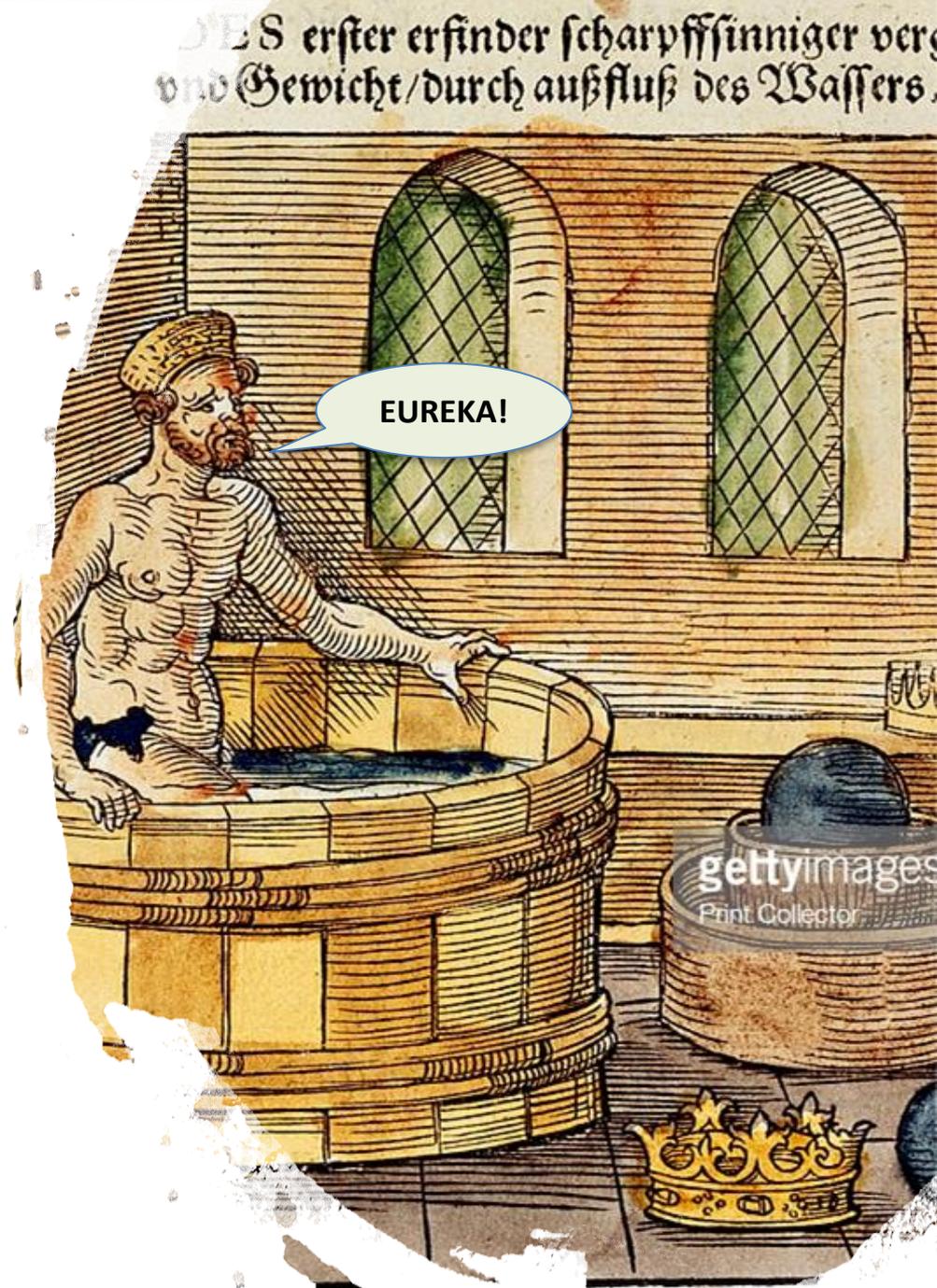


# What is Incubation?



# Does It Work?

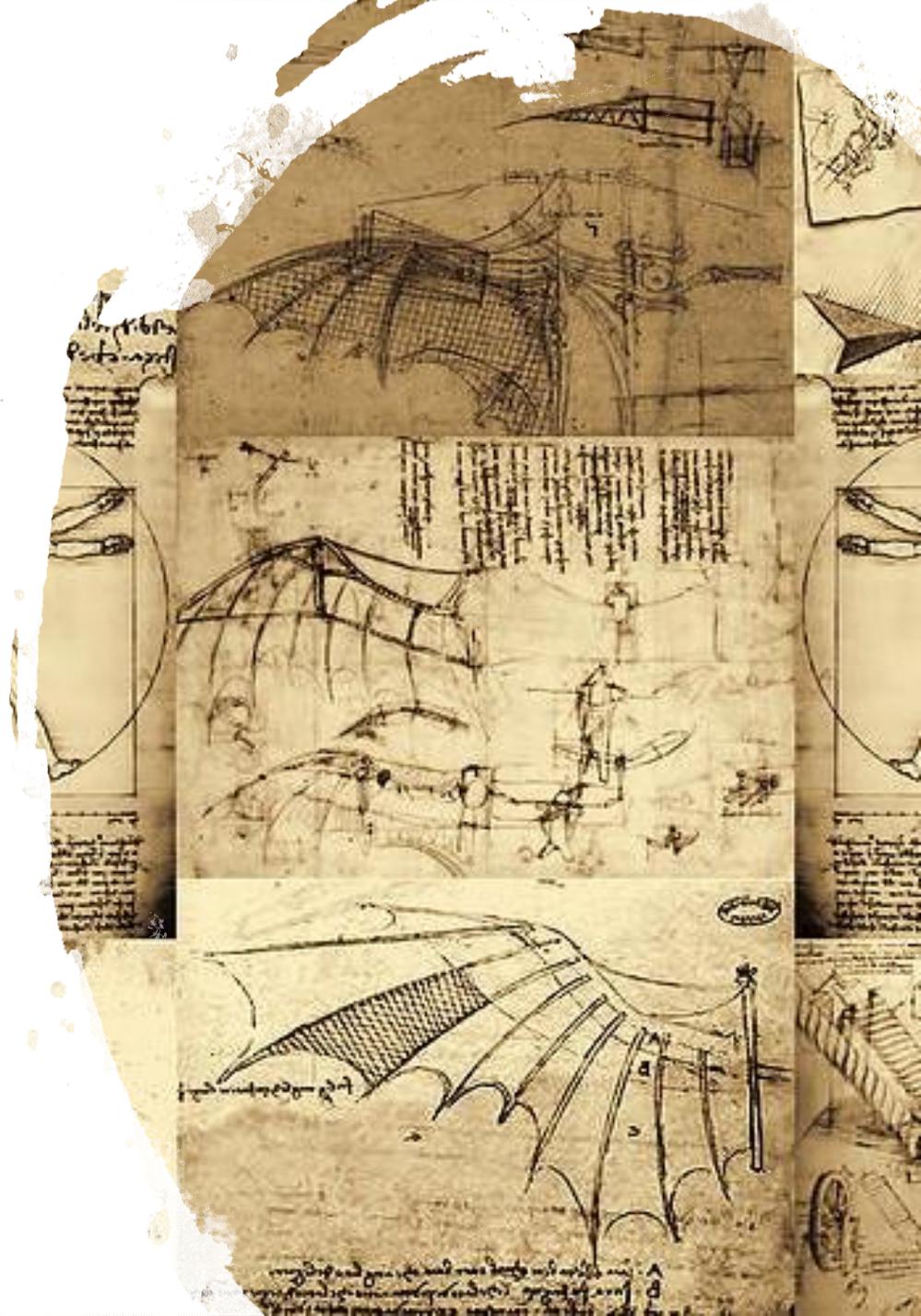
We have lots of evidence—anecdotal, qualitative and quantitative—that incubation enhances creative performance.



# Does It Work?

*Every now and then go away, have a little relaxation. For when you come back to your work, your judgment will be surer.*

*-Leonardo da Vinci*



# How Does It Work?

## Different Theories

- **One path:** Relax, reduce mental fatigue; or change consciously controlled problem solving activities during incubation (The “Conscious Work” theory)
  - Someone can have better creative performance if well-rested
  - Cues from the environment may facilitate the retrieval of previously un-retrieved information
  - Time away may allow one to forget “fixating elements” and allow mental re-setting or restructuring of the problem



# How Does It Work?

## Different Theories

- **Seemingly *stronger* path:** Shift attention to other unrelated mental activities, have a level of involvement in other tasks during incubation (The “Unconscious Work” theory)
  - Unconscious processes will contribute to creative thinking, will continue to actively work on the problem and contribute to solutions
  - This process may go on for some time before solutions are available to the conscious mind



# Principles for Incubation

- Take time away after conscious problem solving has reached an impasse
- A task of *low performance demand* during incubation seems to have the greatest effect
  - Can be set up on purpose AND can be serendipity
    - Important: set up ways to capture insights, especially the unexpected ones if relying on serendipity

# Expectations Matter

- As you begin an incubation period, having an expectation that you will be returning to the original task after incubation can increase the divergent thinking afterwards
  - Quantitative evidence, Ritter and Dijksterhuis, 2014
- Hopefulness and optimism are foundational, too



## High Performance Demand

.... such as learning something new unrelated to the challenge

# Experience & Debriefing



# Low Performance Demand

....that which  
occupies your  
conscious mind  
such as reading



# Experience & Debriefing





# Mind Wandering

Spontaneous state of mind when not engaged in a cognitively demanding task

# Experience & Debriefing



# Experience & Debriefing





## A Special Shout-Out for Walking

*“All truly great thoughts are conceived while walking.”*

—Friedrich Nietzsche

# Prepared Mind

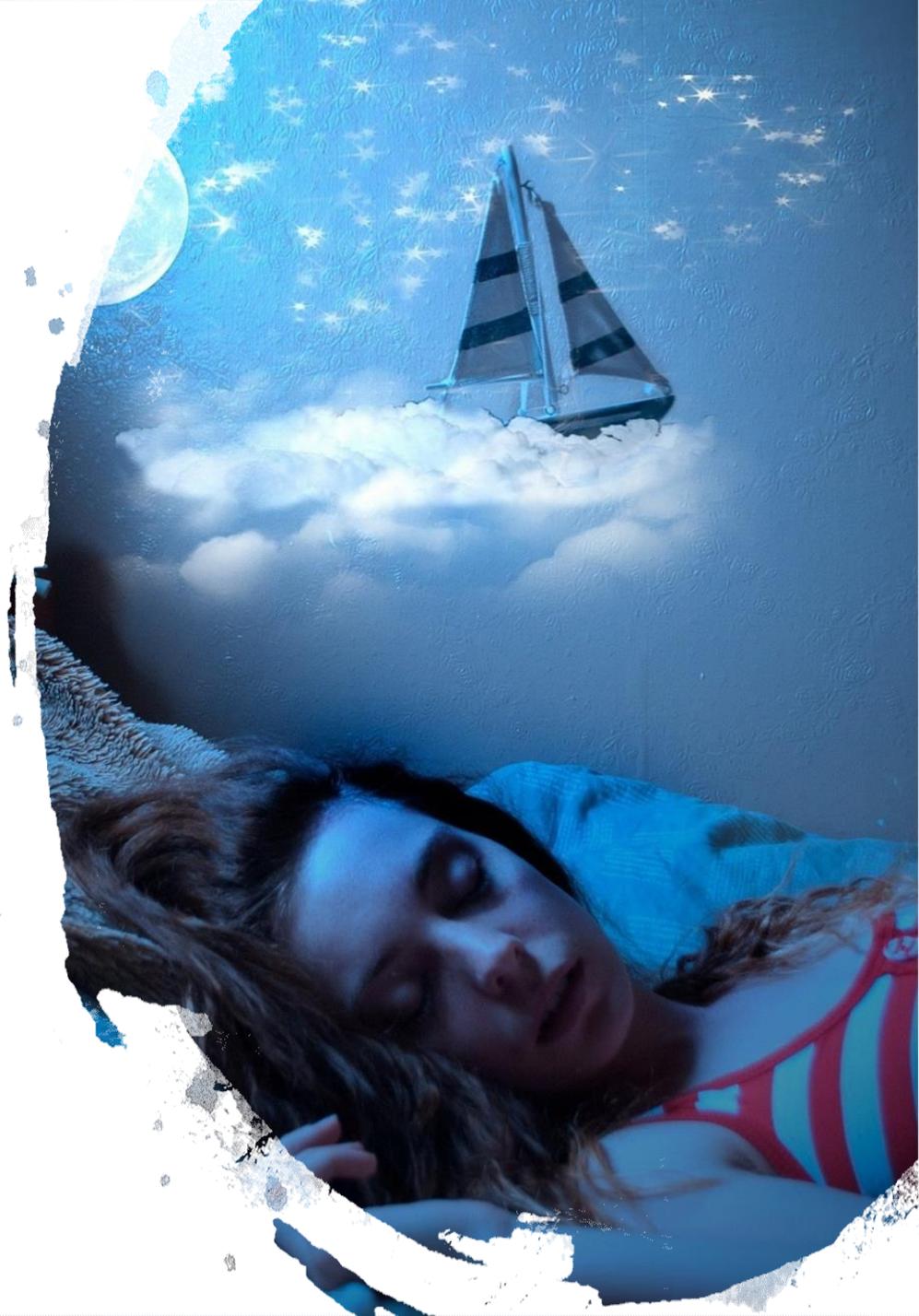
Using what you already know

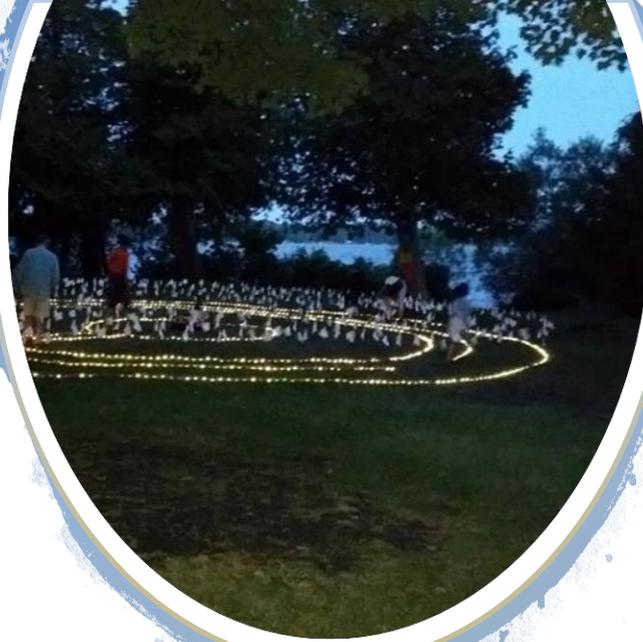
- We return to the classic definition of creativity: “Novelty that is useful.” According to this dog, her owner has incubated on something without REALLY understanding dog behavior, especially how dogs view costumes at the dog park.



# The Role of Dreaming

- Well known impact, stories
  - For example, Paul McCartney's "Yesterday"
- Outside of conscious control
- Longer incubation period
- Looser connections during REM sleep
- More serendipitous?
  - Possible to be intentional, according to some





# Mindcamp – The Incubator

*How will you use the next  
few days?*



A close-up photograph of a person's hands holding two large balls of yarn. The ball on the left is a vibrant pink, and the ball on the right is a bright green. The person is wearing a light-colored, possibly grey, long-sleeved shirt. The background is dark and out of focus, showing what appears to be a wooden cabinet or desk. The overall lighting is soft, highlighting the texture of the yarn and the person's skin.

**I finally learned how to knit socks.  
I also am accepting orders.**