





# Creative rule breaking for direct mail nerds

John Lepp (he/him/his) • DMAW Multi Channel Mini Con • October 24, 2024



- direct **marketing**, direct **response** and direct **mail expert** for 25 years
  - **author** of “Creative Deviations”
  - **partner** at Agents of Good





“More and more we’re just using an envelope with a signee’s name in the corner. We’re finding it doesn’t even have to be a name anybody’s heard of. We find it looks very plain compared to the flashy pieces, and attracts people for a completely different reason...”

— Steve Thomas, 1985

*Jacqueline Bloom CFRE  
Chief Executive Officer  
STEGH Foundation  
189 Elm St.  
St Thomas, ON N5R5C4*

Agents of Good  
Box 82003  
RPO Towne Plaza  
Waterdown, ON  
LoR 2Mo

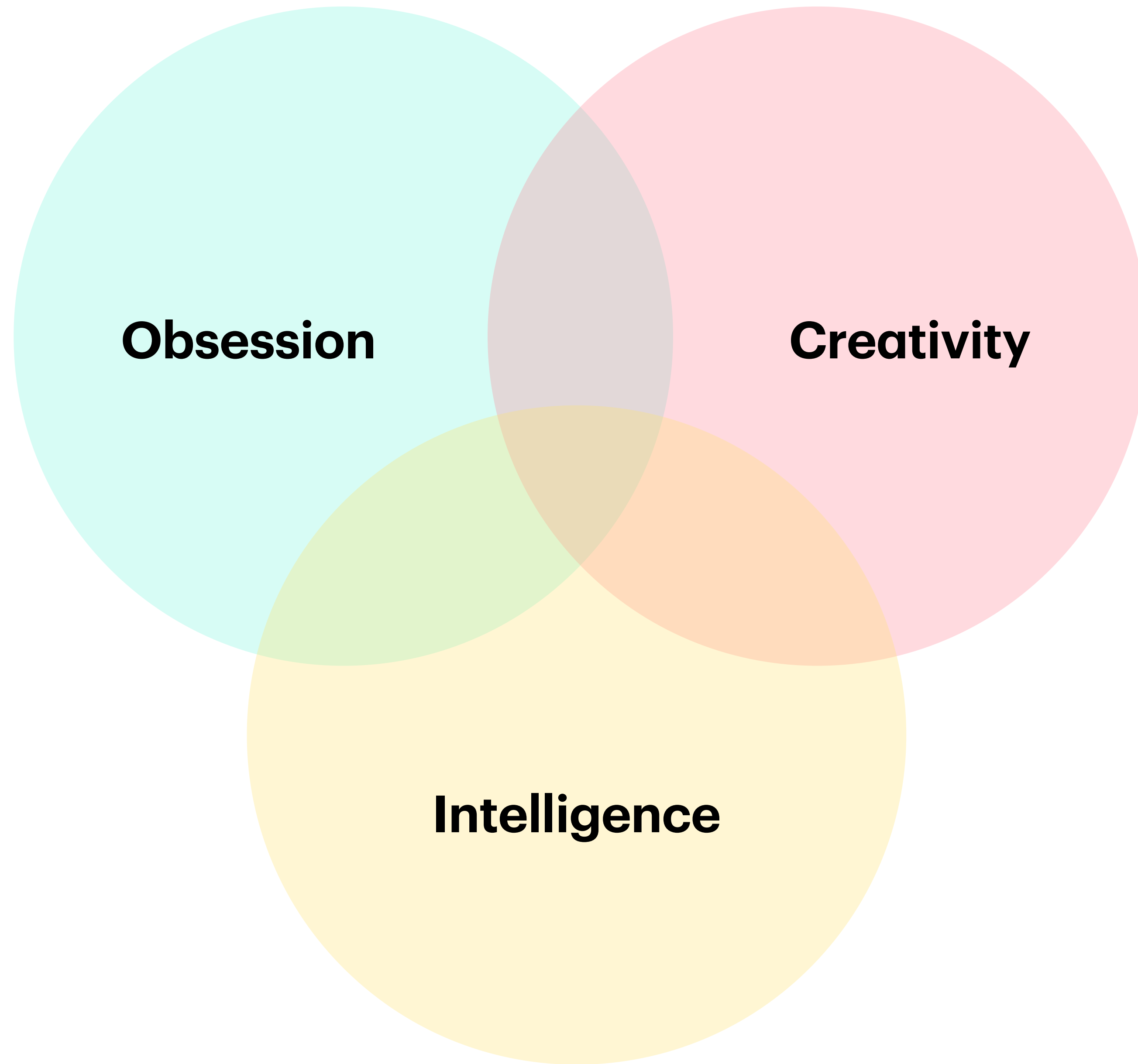




**Obsession**

**Intelligence**

**Creativity**



**Obsession**

**Creativity**

**Intelligence**





**Obsession**

**Obsession**





## St. Paul hustling for monthly donors

1 Corinthians 16:1-4

Now **about the collection** for the Lord's people: Do what I told the Galatian churches to do. **On the first day of every week, each one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with your income, saving it up, so that when I come no collections will have to be made.** <sup>3</sup> Then, when I arrive, I will give letters of introduction to the men you approve and send them with your gift to Jerusalem. <sup>4</sup> If it seems advisable for me to go also, they will accompany me. —AD 56



## Eihei Dogen, making an ask for a capital campaign

We respectfully make this announcement to all buddhas in the ten directions, sages and monks in the heavenly and human worlds, the eight types of beings in the dragon realm, generous men and women. We wish to construct a training hall with small donations from people's pure heart.



## Eihei Dogen, making an ask for a capital campaign

For some years ever since I returned to Japan from China, I have vowed to establish a monastery. But there has not been a place suitable to support monks' formal practice using bowls and robes. **Now we have acquired an excellent place...** Although it is still covered with weeds and not yet functioning, we plan to build a training monastery there... **We urgently need a Monks' Hall right now. We plan to build one seven ken square (70-feet-square), with no interior walls.** We will set up long platforms to reside on, where we will practice day and night without fail...

**Look in this box!**

It contains a little of the rubble that was once part of The Hospital for Sick Children, Great Ormond Street, before it was bombed. Please, PLEASE help!



THE HOLE IN THE ROOF OF THE HOSPITAL FOR SICK CHILDREN, GREAT ORMOND STREET, LONDON, W.C.1. CAUSED BY A NAZI H.E. BOMB



LITTLE PATIENTS BEING EVACUATED FROM THE HOSPITAL FOR SICK CHILDREN, LONDON, W.C.1. AFTER IT HAD RECEIVED A DIRECT HIT - EVERYONE WAS SAVED AND THE HOSPITAL CARRIES ON

## Great Ormand Street Hospital: Christmas appeal



Please  
Open  
Carefully

The President  
The Chatham Infy Co.  
~~Portland~~  
Conn.

Box 405. USA.  
New Haven,  
Conn.



Passed Free  
U.S. Customs  
Boston, Mass.



FROM  
LORD SOUTHWOOD  
CHAIRMAN OF  
THE HOSPITAL FOR SICK CHILDREN  
GT. ORMOND STREET, LONDON  
W.C.1

The President,  
The Chatham Mfg. Co.,  
Portland.

15th October, 1941.

CHRISTMAS, 1941.

Dear Sir,

I am writing this letter to you from THE HOSPITAL FOR SICK CHILDREN in the centre of London - in fact within a mile-radius of St. Paul's Cathedral.

This is one of the largest and most up to date hospitals for children in the world. The greater part of the magnificent building, costing \$2,205,772, had just been completed before war broke out.

With so many air-raids on London, it was too much to hope that a conspicuous building like this would escape. We have been bombed - cruelly. I am enclosing with this letter a small box of rubble that was once part of the hospital that Hitler has bombed.

We have also during some of the most savage raids on London stood, a citadel of healing, ringed round by a living furnace of fire. But - come what may - the doors that have never closed for nearly 100 years, and through which over 2,000,000 suffering little ones have passed, will remain open and not a single sick child will be turned away. In these dark days we are proud to

-2-

think of our record as our call to duty for the present and as our inspiration for the future.

This letter comes to you, not because I want you to pity us or feel sorry for us. We are glad to carry on and, indeed, we feel it a privilege to do so. Many of our friends in America who love children have offered spontaneously to help us and I am sending this letter to you just in case your kindness of heart, your goodwill towards the little ones of this country, prompts you to send us a Christmas donation to help wipe out the debt that is hanging over us - a debt of nearly \$604,500.

Of all the things for which we are fighting just now there is nothing more precious than that of the coming generation - and Christmas is their very own festival.

Children are in a place apart and if, I might, in my mind, follow this letter across the Atlantic, I know that wherever it goes I should find it fall into friendly hands - simply because all hearts go out alike to sick children.

I do not beg, I do not plead - I just leave it to you. If you feel that to help our Hospital is something you would like to do, I cannot tell you how tremendously grateful I shall be.

Yours sincerely,

*Southwood*

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ONE OF THE WARDS OF THE HOSPITAL FOR SICK CHILDREN, GREAT ORMOND STREET, LONDON, W.C.1, DAMAGED BY A H.E. BOMB. OVER £50,000 WORTH OF DEVASTATION WAS CAUSED.



LITTLE PATIENTS BEING EVACUATED FROM THE HOSPITAL FOR SICK CHILDREN, LONDON W.C.1 AFTER IT HAD RECEIVED A DIRECT HIT - EVERYONE

## Look in this box!

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**sofi**  showcase of fundraising  
innovation and inspiration



**Conferences**

**Blogs**

**Podcasts**

**Linkedin**

**Agencies**

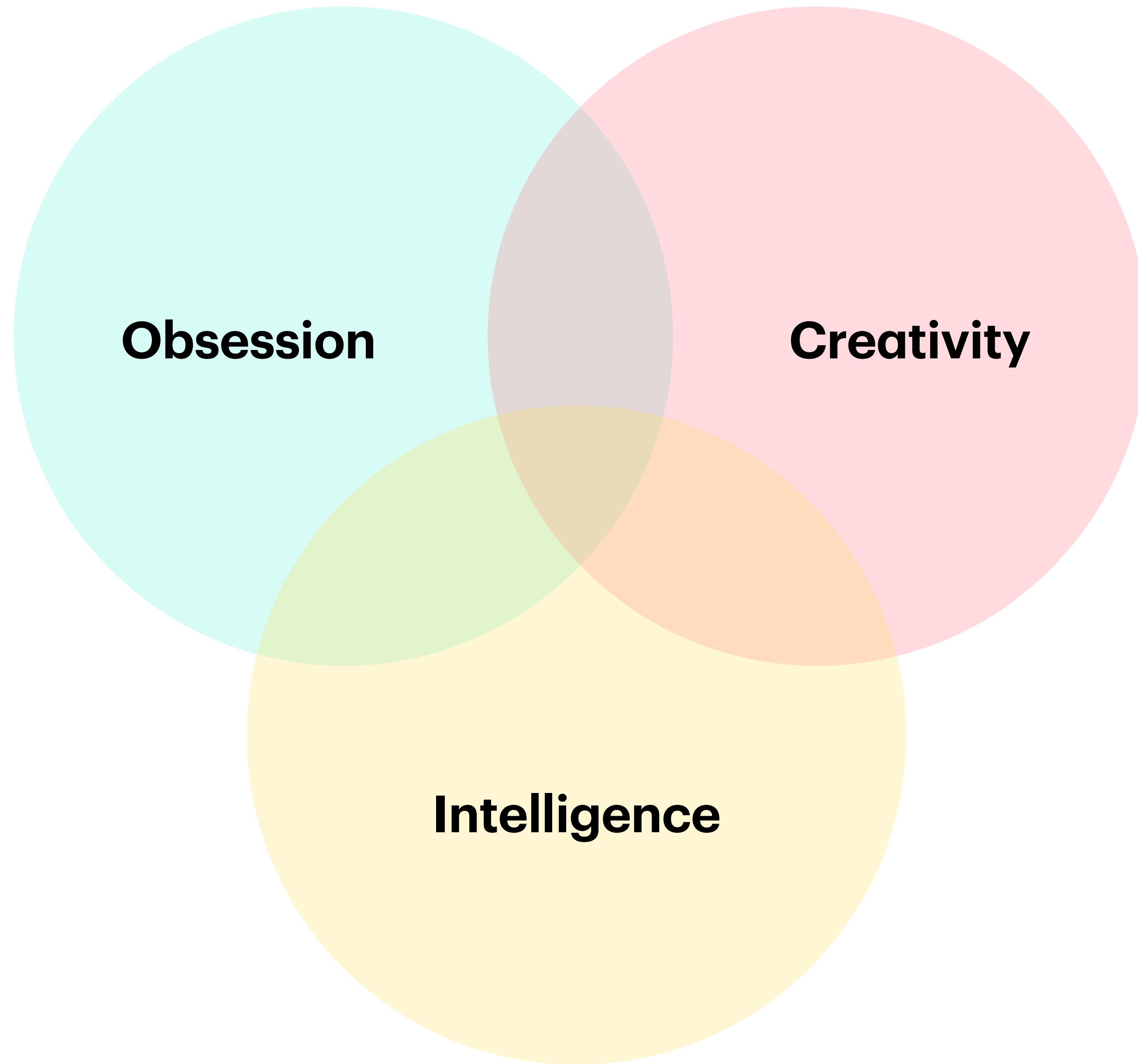
**Charities**







1. Seek out and learn from the past
2. There are no original ideas
3. The more tactics and techniques you know and when to use them, the more effective the output



**Obsession**

**Creativity**

**Intelligence**



**Intelligence**

**Intelligence**



Photocredit to Mark Philips, BlueFrog and AI



**1.54 million**



64






**67%** (ish)



80%



**10 - 20%**

4 key things for direct response

**List. Offer. Timing. Creative.**

List.  
50%



List.  
50%



**Offer.**

**30%**



Give us \$7 NOW or the dog gets it!





Give us \$7 NOW or the dog gets it!



Give us **\$7 NOW** or the dog gets it!



Give us **\$7** NOW or the dog gets it!



Give us \$7 **NOW** or the dog gets it!





Timing,

10%

## Regina Humane Society Animal Community Centre

Here it is! A purpose built home perfect for all of our animal friends and you. There will be room for cats and dogs to roam around outside as much as inside. A place for comfort and healing. A place that's Almost Home.

And all we need is **YOU!**



The new space will be open, inviting and safe for all of our animal friends. Hurt and vulnerable animals will receive the best possible medical care in surroundings that feel (almost) like home. Also! There will be room for our human friends to learn about pets and what they will need from us when they find their forever home.



**Animal Habitats** - Cages replaced with clean, warm, home-like habitats for dogs and cats



**Veterinary** - Equipped veterinary services for animals at need



**Animal Services Centre** - Dedicated space to accept lost or surrendered animals and provide them with comfort and care



**Centre for Education & Wellness** - Classroom and program space for after-school activities



**Green Spaces** - Fenced and landscaped large and pint-sized dog parks



**Cat Adoption** - To provide safe and healthy homes for cats



## Ways your gift will help!

**\$50 Water Fun:** You can help a family make waves by purchasing water toys and equipment for relaxing by the lake

**\$75 PPE Kits & Hand Washing Stations:** Safety first—but fun right after! Your gift provides each Camper with their own PPE kits and supports hand washing stations all across our camp sites

**\$100 Wilderness Kits:** You will provide a Camper with seeds to plant, rubber boots and a net to explore the great outdoors


**\$250 Family Cabin Welcome Basket:** You can outfit a family's cabin with a welcome basket for COVID times with board games, art supplies, a coffee maker, s'mores kits and more

**\$500 One Day of In Person Camp:** Your gift funds 24 hours of fun, friendship and community at overnight camp

**\$1,500 Weekend at Camp:** Your gift makes a magical weekend at camp possible for a Camper and create memories that last a lifetime

# Creative: 10%



A lush, green prehistoric landscape with a dense forest of tall, thin trees. In the foreground, a river flows through the scene. A large, long-necked dinosaur (sauropod) is visible on the left, and another one is on the right. A Triceratops is in the water in the foreground. A pterosaur is flying in the sky on the left. The title "Decision Science" is overlaid in a white banner across the center.

# Decision Science



A lush, green prehistoric landscape with dense foliage and a river. In the foreground, a Triceratops is partially visible. In the middle ground, a long-necked sauropod stands near the water. In the background, another long-necked sauropod is visible, and a pterosaur is flying in the sky. The scene is set against a backdrop of a steep, forested hillside.

# 1. The past

A lush, green prehistoric landscape with dense foliage and a river. In the foreground, a Triceratops is partially visible. In the middle ground, a long-necked sauropod stands near the water. In the background, another long-necked sauropod is visible, and a pterosaur flies in the sky. The scene is set against a backdrop of a steep, forested hillside.

# 1. The past

# Scarcity

**24** HOURS  
TO GO

MONDAY 12 OCTOBER



**Big Give  
4 Arthritis**

*Giving  
day*

A lush, green prehistoric landscape with dense foliage and a river. In the foreground, a Triceratops is partially visible. In the middle ground, a long-necked sauropod stands near the water. In the background, another long-necked sauropod is visible, and a pterosaur flies in the sky. The scene is set against a backdrop of a steep, forested hillside.

# 1. The past

## 2. Our brain

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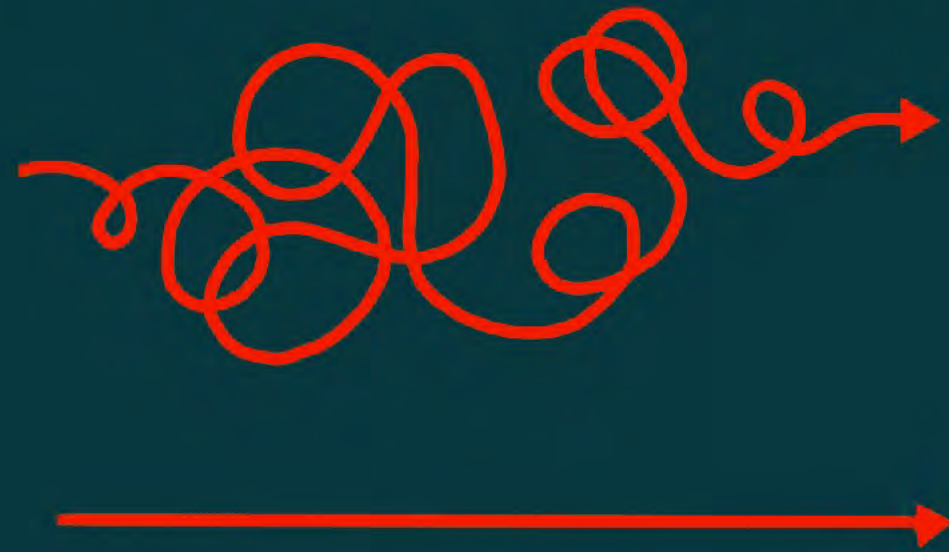
# Common Causes of Cognitive Bias



Limits on the mind's attention



Individual motivations



Mental shortcuts called "heuristics"



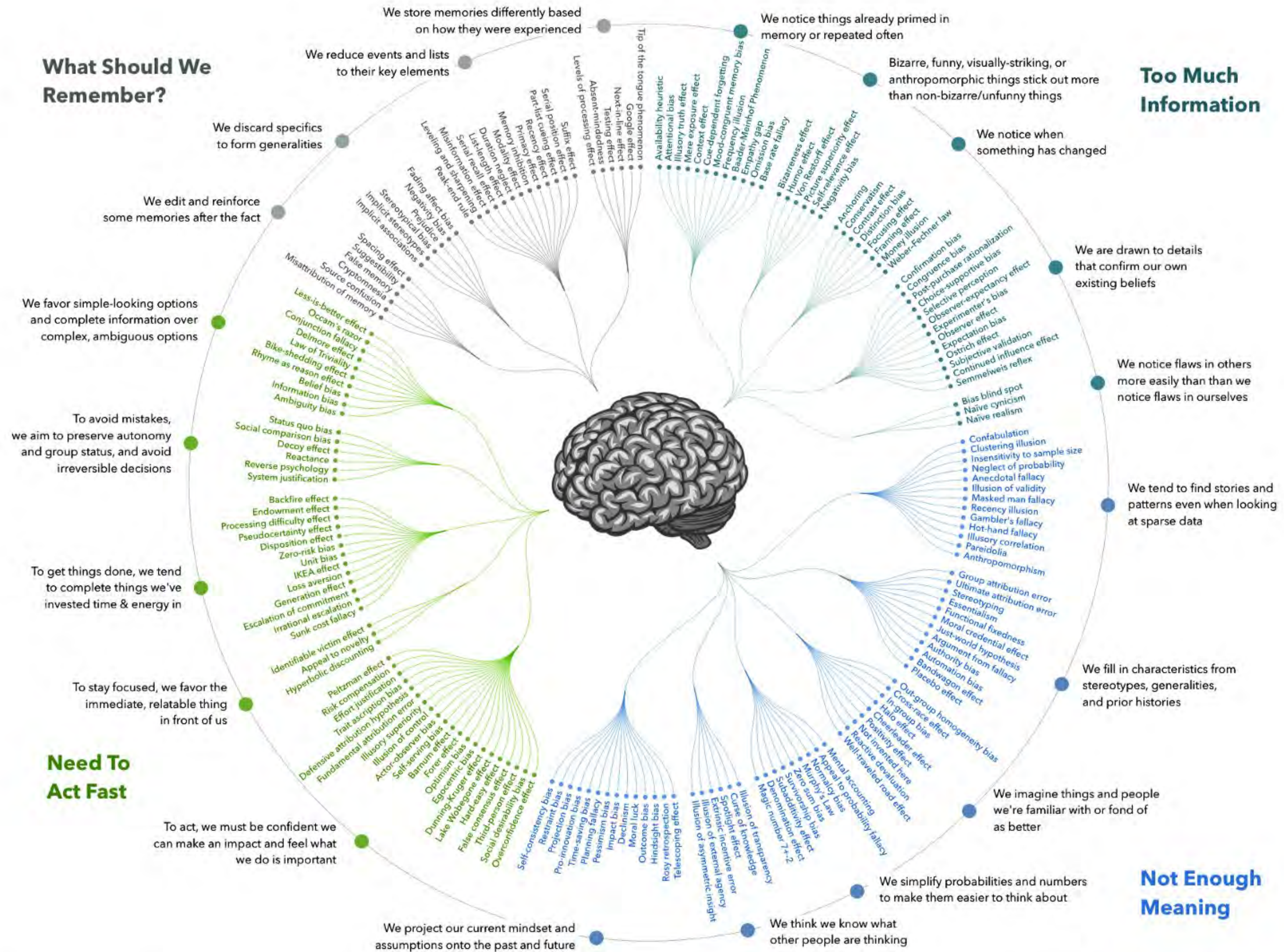
Social pressure



Emotions



# COGNITIVE BIAS CODEX





irreversible decisions

To get things done, we tend to complete things we've invested time & energy in

To stay focused, we favor the

Reactance ●  
Reverse psychology ●  
System justification ●

Backfire effect ●  
Endowment effect ●  
Processing difficulty effect ●  
Pseudocertainty effect ●  
Disposition effect ●  
Zero-risk bias ●  
Unit bias ●

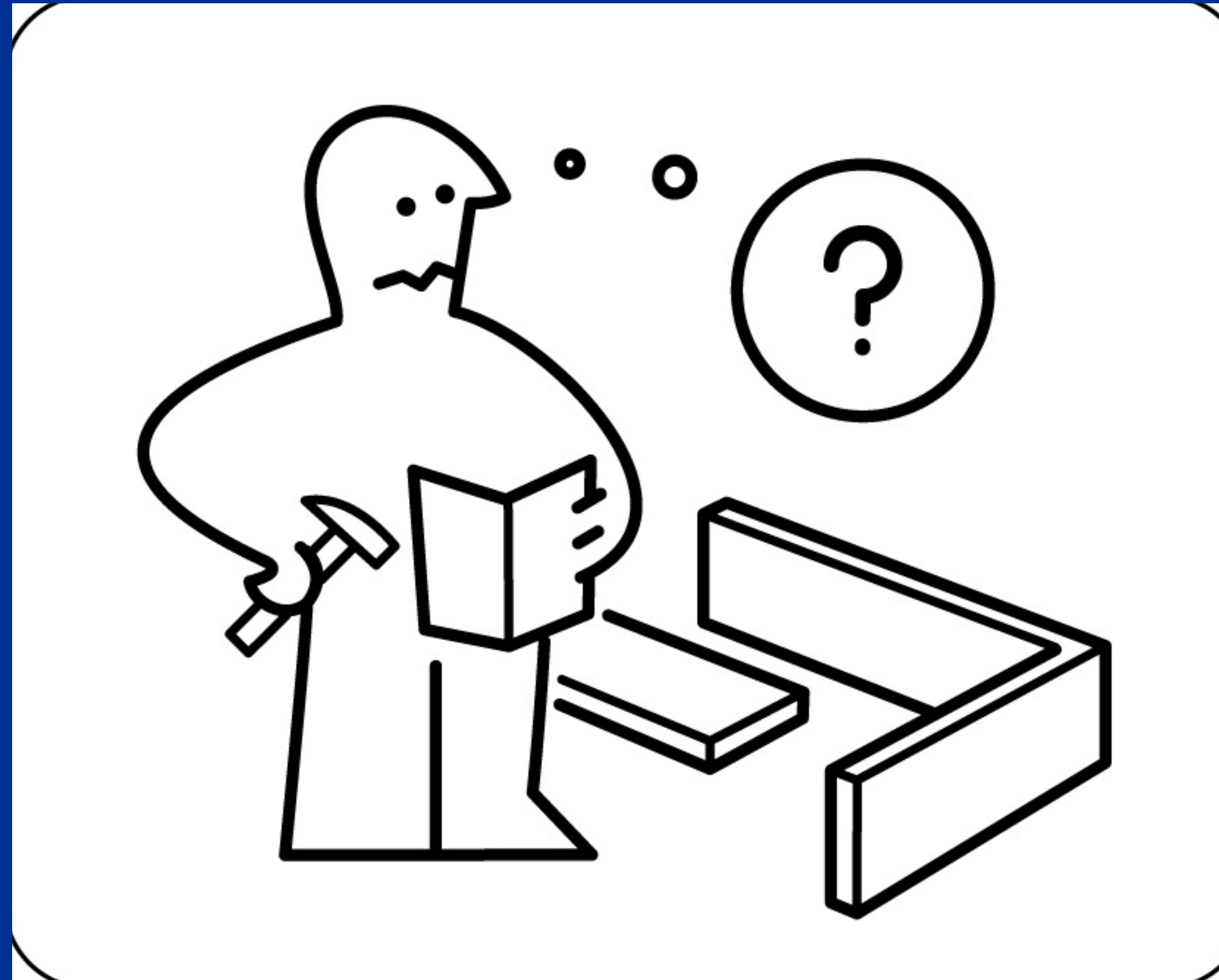
**IKEA effect** ●

Loss aversion ●  
Generation effect ●  
Escalation of commitment ●  
Irrational escalation ●  
Sunk cost fallacy ●

Identifiable victim effect ●  
Appeal to novelty ●  
Hyperbolic discounting ●

Itzman effect ●  
Sensation ●  
Information ●  
Bias ●

# **IKEA** effect



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To avoid mistakes,  
we aim to preserve autonomy  
and group status, and avoid  
irreversible decisions

To get things done, we tend



THE  
SAME  
OLD  
THINKING

THE  
SAME  
OLD  
RESULTS



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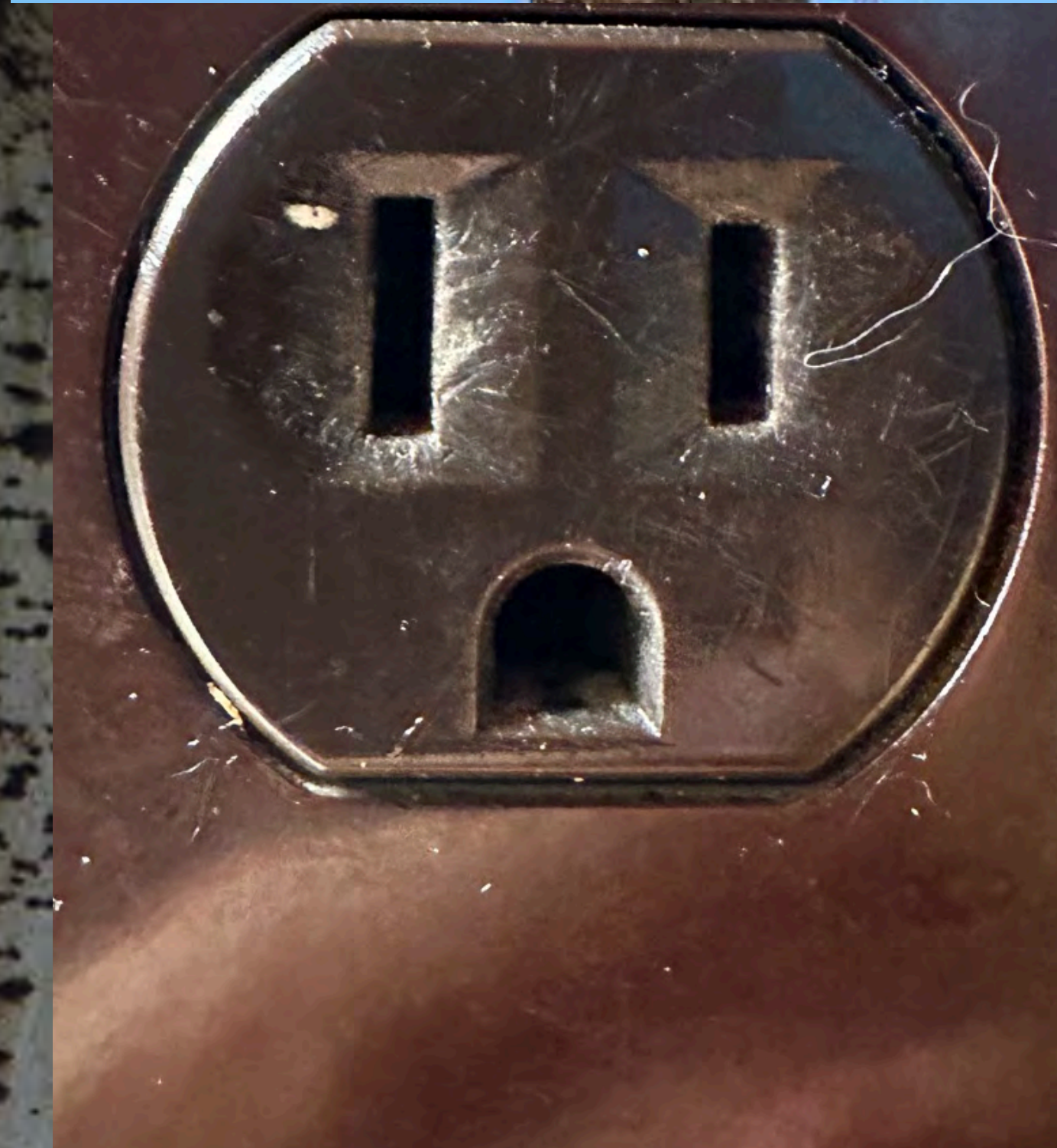


- Confirmation bias
- Clustering illusion
- Insensitivity to sample size
- Neglect of probability
- Anecdotal fallacy
- Illusion of validity
- Masked man fallacy
- Recency illusion
- Gambler's fallacy
- Hot-hand fallacy
- Illusory correlation
- Pareidolia
- Anthropomorphism

We tend to find stories and patterns even when looking at sparse data

- Group attribution error
- Ultimate attribution error
- Stereotyping
- Essentialism
- Functional fixedness
- Moral credential effect
- Just-world hypothesis
- Argument from fallacy
- Authority bias
- Automation bias
- Bandwagon
- Peer pressure

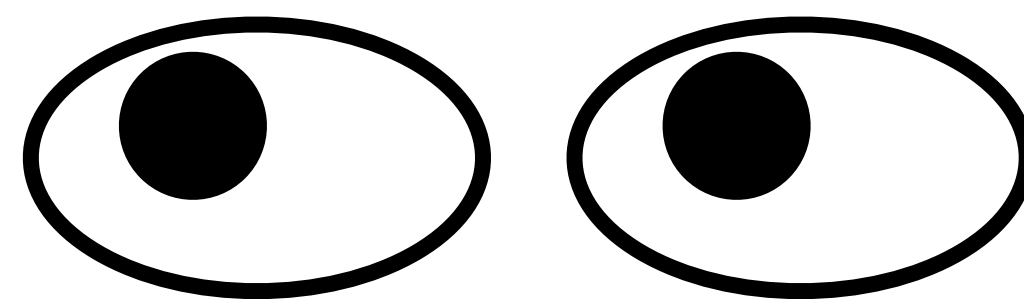
We fill in characteristics from





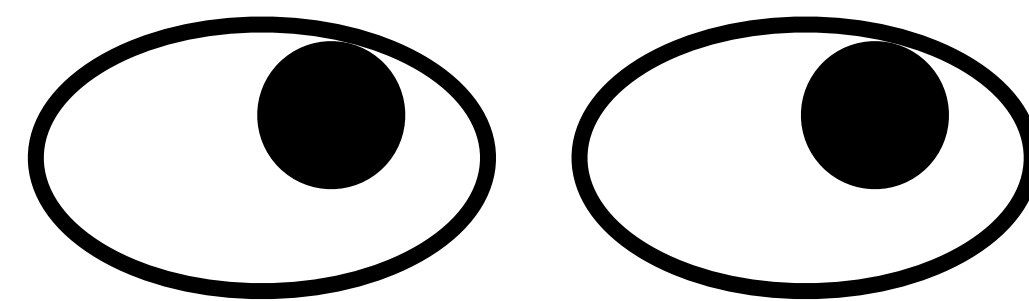


Pareidolia





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We fill in characteristics from

We notice things already printed in memory or repeated often

Bizarre, funny, visually-striking, or anthropomorphic things stick out more than non-bizarre/unfunny things

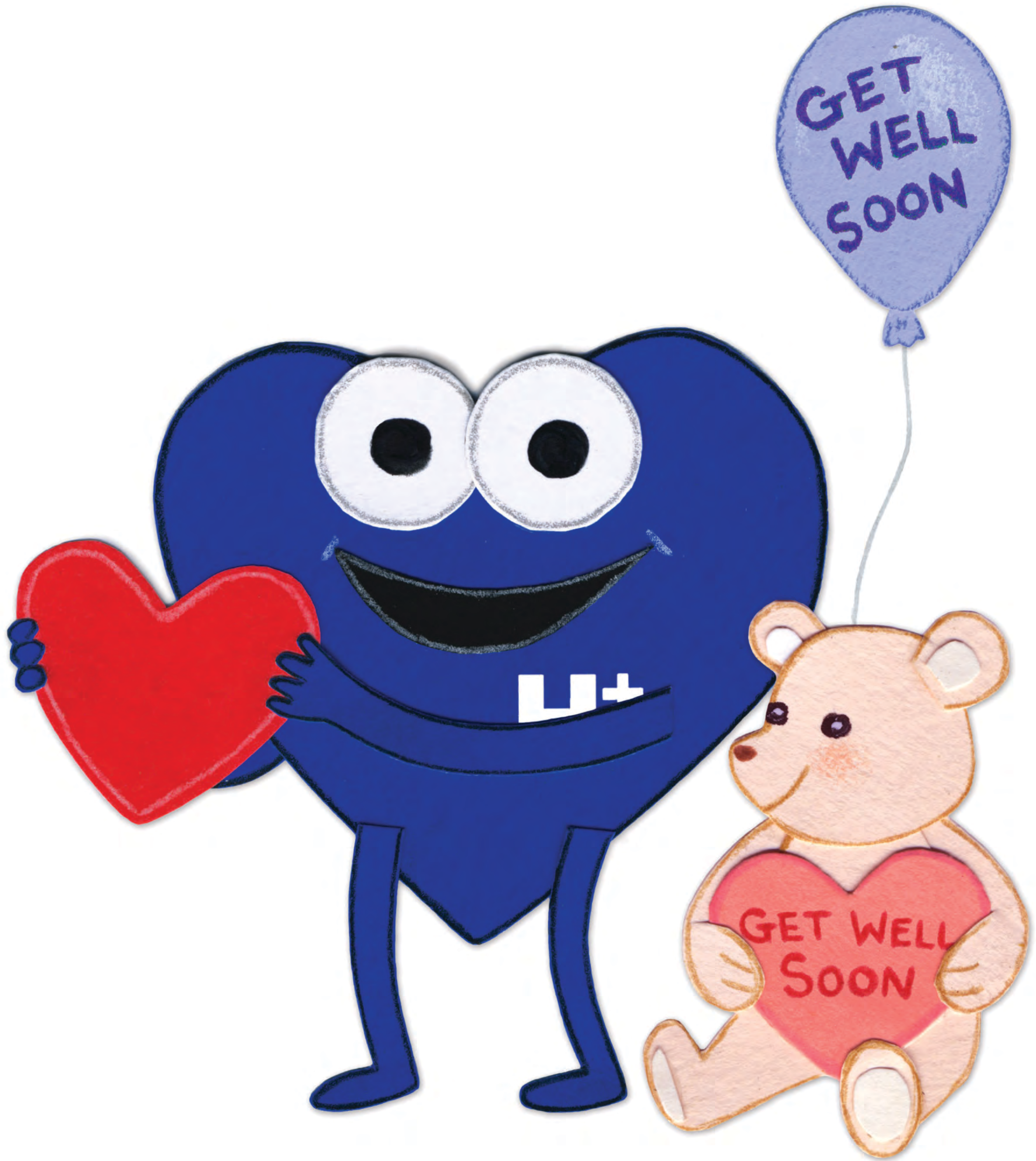
We notice when something has changed

- Mood-congruent memory bias
- Baader-Meinhof Phenomenon
- Empathy gap
- Omission bias
- Base rate fallacy

- Bizarreness effect
- Humor effect
- Von Restorff effect
- Picture superiority effect
- Self-relevance effect
- Negativity bias

- Anchoring
- Conservatism
- Contrast effect
- Distinction bias
- Focusing effect
- Framing effect
- Money illusion
- Weber-Fechner law

We are dra



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We are dra

- We
- Confirmation
- Congruence
- Post-purchase r
- Choice-supportive b
- Selective perception
- Observer-expectancy effect
- Experimenter's bias
- Observer effect
- Expectation bias
- Ostrich effect
- Subjective validation
- Continued influence effect
- Semmelweis reflex

- Bias blind spot
- Naïve cynicism
- Naïve realism

- Confabulation
- Clustering illusion
- Insensitivity to sample size
- Neglect of probability
- Anecdotal fallacy
- Illusion of validity

that confirm our own existing beliefs

We notice flaws in others more easily than we notice flaws in ourselves

We tend to find stories and





# SYSTEM 1

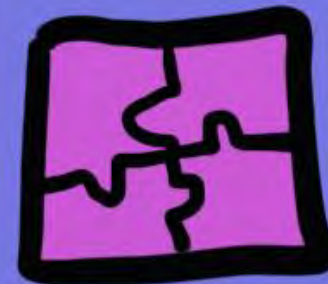
FAST



SUBCONSCIOUS



AUTOMATIC



EVERYDAY  
DECISIONS



ERROR PRONE



# SYSTEM 2

SLOW



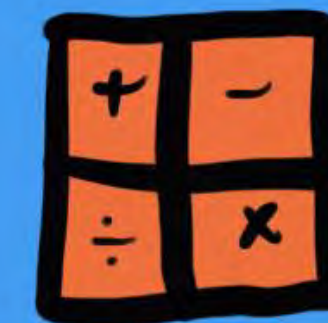
CONSCIOUS



EFFORTFUL



COMPLEX  
DECISIONS



RELIABLE







Canadian  
Cancer  
Society



HEART &  
STROKE  
FOUNDATION



Plan

Princess Margaret  
Cancer Centre  UHN

SickKids<sup>®</sup>  
FOUNDATION




UHN

Toronto  
General & Western  
Hospital Foundation

unicef   
canada



United Way  
Toronto & York Region

World Vision 



RETURN POSTAGE GUARANTEED  
PORT DE RETOUR GARANTI





5. The real world





**A last example**





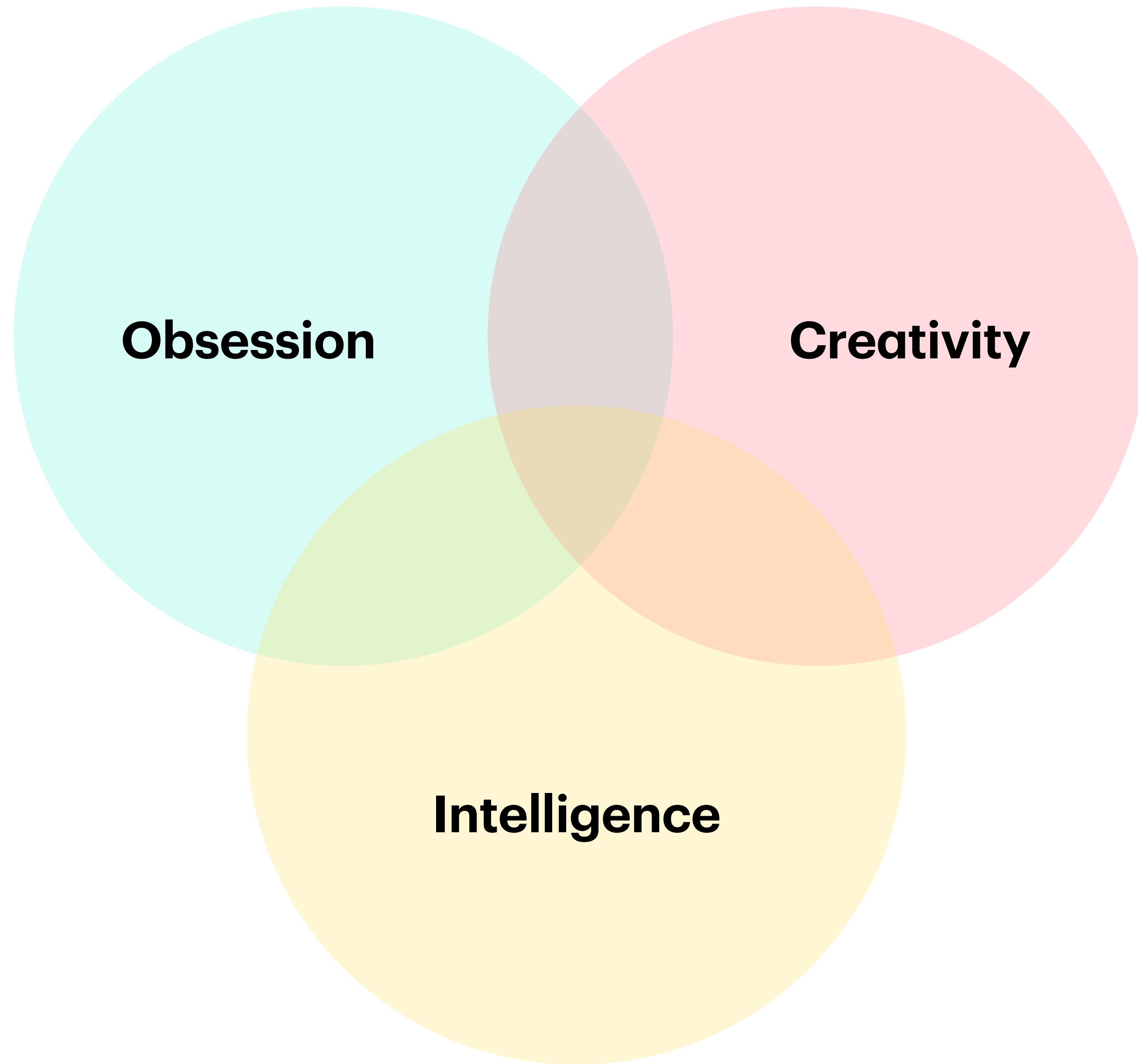
CANADA		POSTES
POST		CANADA
	Postage paid	Port payé
	Personalized Mail	Courrier personnalisé
1060090		

RETURN POSTAGE GUARANTEED  
PORT DE RETOUR GARANTI





1. This craft is a science and an art form
2. Steer clear of people who use subjectivity in their decision making
3. The way humans make decisions & choices can not be changed



**Obsession**

**Creativity**

**Intelligence**



**Creativity**

**Creativity**

The British Columbia  
Society for the Prevention of  
Cruelty to Animals

(BCSPCA)



- **oversize**
- **no logo**
- **no tagline**
- **no photo**

Zoey Daniell c/o BC SPCA  
1245 East 7th Avenue  
Vancouver BC V5T 1R1





**Zoey**  
From the Desk of ~~Craig~~ Daniell



<SALUT\_RAW>,

RUFF! It's me, Zoey!

Shhh... my dad, Craig, doesn't know I'm writing you... he's busy helping animals right now. But I really wanted you to know how important you are!



If I could, I'd give you a big sloppy kiss! You help save animals... just like me! I found my fur-ever family at the BC SPCA just like the other fur-buddies you read about in letters my dad writes to you.

Your kindness made my life so much better! That's why I think it's important you know...

**You've still got time to give!**

You can still send an amazing, wonderful, loving, life-saving gift to help an animal **this year**. And I can tell you that it will really, really, really help so so much!

So please, if you haven't yet this year, please give an innocent animal the chance for a loving happy home! **It's something we all deserve, don't you think?**



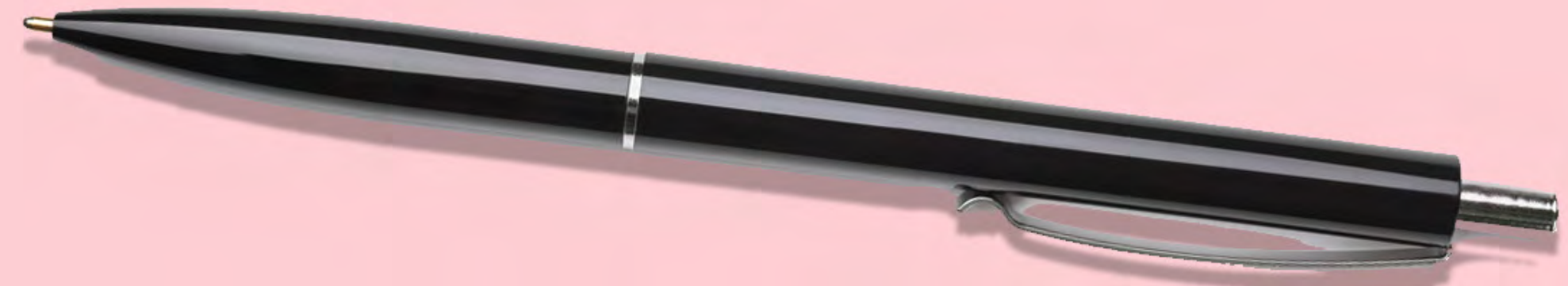
Puppy dog kisses  
coming your way,  
Zoey, faithful dog  
of Craig Daniell, CEO

**PS: I ruff you!** You're awesome for giving animals like me the chance to find kind, loving homes. **Remember you can give until December 31<sup>st</sup> and still get one of those tax-receipt thingys for this year.**

**PPS:** Ruh-roh... if you've already sent your gift... I may have gotten a bit excited and sent this note too soon. **Thanks so much!**



- no branding
- from a dog



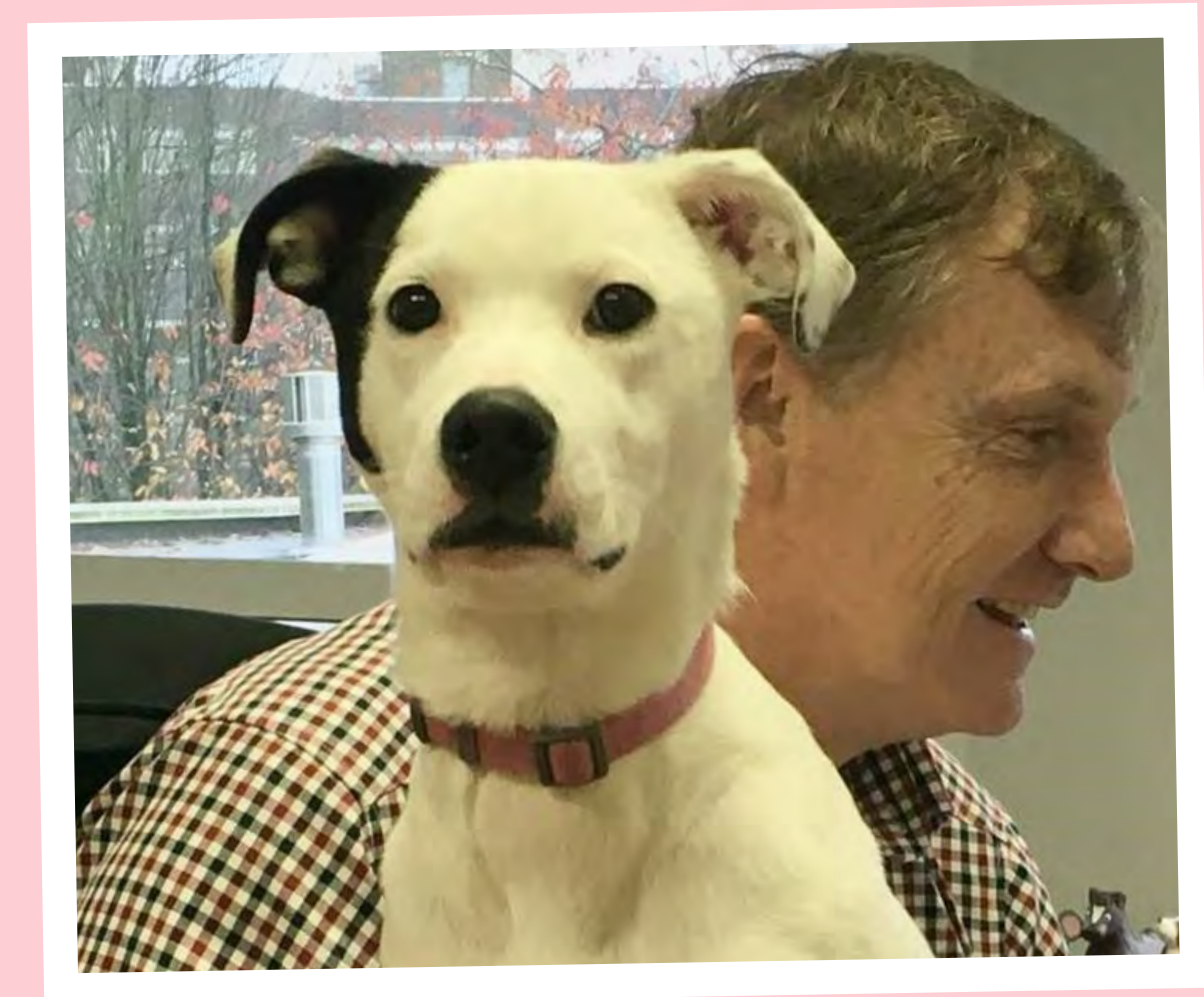
Zoey

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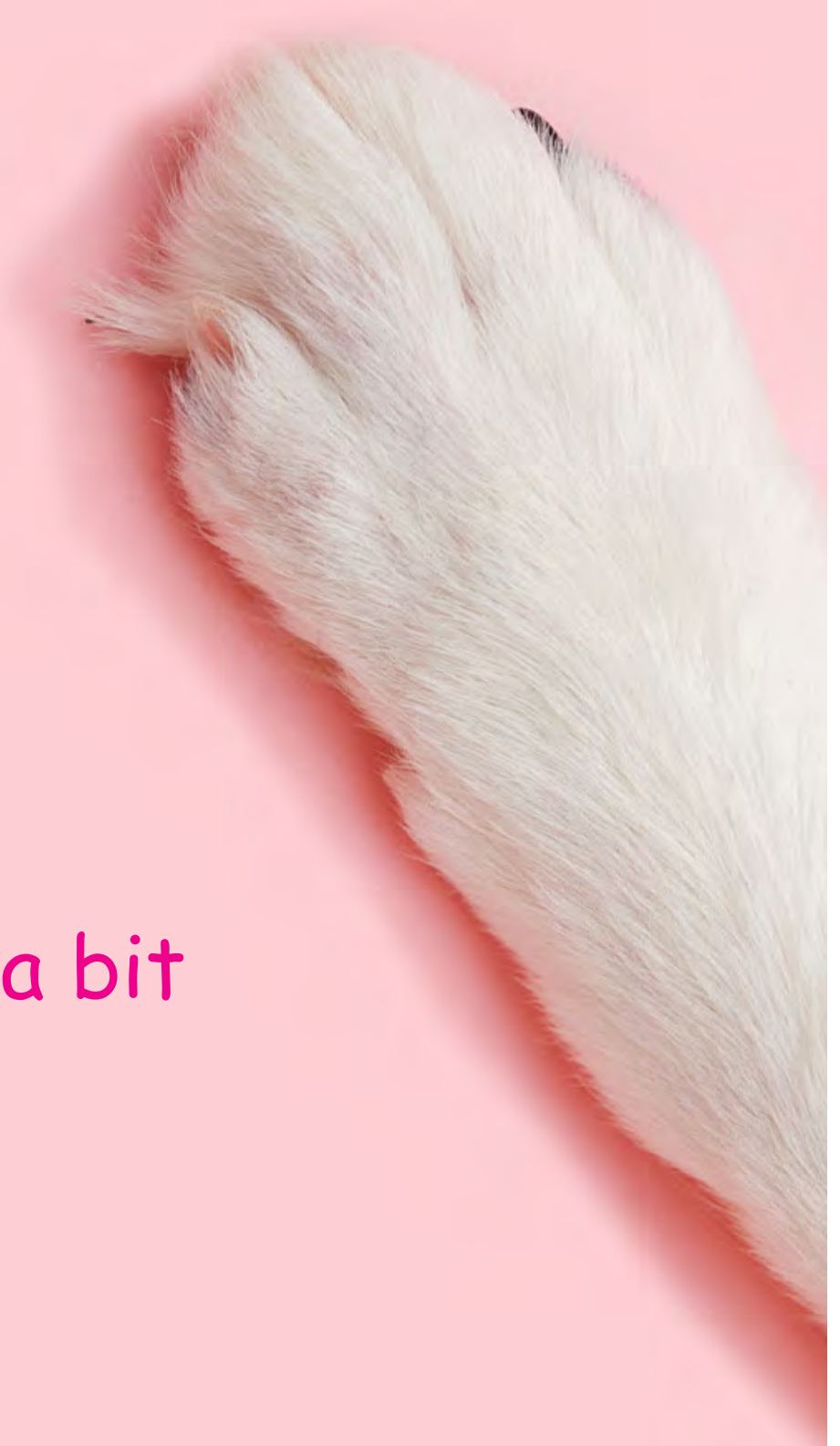
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coming your way,  
Zoey, faithful dog  
of Craig Daniell, CEO

**PS: I ruff you!** You're awesome for giving animals like me the chance to find kind, loving homes. **Remember you can give until December 31<sup>st</sup> and still get one of those tax-receipt thingys for this year.**

**PPS: Ruh-roh...** if you've already sent your gift... I may have gotten a bit excited and sent this note too soon. **Thanks so much!**





**Zoey**  
From the Desk of ~~Craig~~ Daniell



<SALUT\_RAW>,

RUFF! It's me, Zoey!

Shhh... my dad, Craig, doesn't know I'm writing you... he's busy helping animals right now. But I really wanted you to know how important you are!

If I could, I'd give you a big sloppy kiss! You help save animals... just like me! I found my fur-ever family at the BC SPCA just like the other fur-buddies you read about in letters my dad writes to you.

Your kindness made my life so much better! That's why I think it's important you know...

**You've still got time to give!**

You can still send an amazing, wonderful, loving, life-saving gift to help an animal **this year**. And I can tell you that it will really, really, really help so so much!

So please, if you haven't yet this year, please give an innocent animal the chance for a loving happy home! **It's something we all deserve, don't you think?**



Puppy dog kisses  
coming your way,  
Zoey, faithful dog  
of Craig Daniell, CEO

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• Spotted it yet?

Zoey

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# St. Thomas Elgin Hospital Foundation

Jacqueline Bloom CFRE  
Chief Executive Officer  
STEGH Foundation  
189 Elm St.  
St Thomas, ON N5R5C4

Agents of Good  
Box 82003  
RPO Towne Plaza  
Waterdown, ON  
LoR 2M0



Jacqueline Bloom CFRE  
Chief Executive Officer  
STEGH Foundation  
189 Elm St.  
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LoR 2M0





**Saliency:** *the quality of being particularly noticeable or important; prominence.*

Mail date

<Addressee>  
1234 Generous Street  
Anytown, ON. XoX oXo

Dear <Rachel>,

**You know the first thing I noticed?**

**It was eerily silent.**

Normally, you hear all kinds of hums, clicks and beeps in an operating room. The tell-tale *ker-chunk* of the X-ray machine scanning a patient.

But not today.

<Rachel>, I just got back from an urgent visit to the OR. A vital piece of equipment broke down and we need to replace it ASAP.

It's called a C-Arm. It's a mobile X-Ray unit used for several types of urgent surgical procedures, including stabilizing bone fractures and performing joint replacements. I'll explain more in a minute, but first I have to ask:

**Will you help us purchase a new C-Arm?** It has a hefty price tag of \$198,000, but I know we can raise the funds if everyone pitches in to help.

In fact, if you and every person reading this letter gave \$35 right now, that would cover the cost. Now, if you could give \$<ASK2> or even stretch it to \$<ASK3> then we'd be that much closer that much faster!

It won't be quiet in the OR for long. We'll get a loaner machine to help

*Please turn over...*

treat patients until we can purchase the new one.

You may not realize this, because I didn't either, but when someone falls and breaks their hip – they need surgery within 24 hours!

And, you guessed it, the C-Arm is an essential part of a hip joint replacement surgery.

In fact, I had no idea just how vital this piece of equipment really is. It's used just about **every single day** in our Emergency Department!

When someone falls and badly fractures their wrist or ankle – the C-Arm is used by the orthopaedic surgeon to help insert the pins and screws that keep it together.

When someone has a kidney stone, gallstone or cancer related blockage the C-Arm is used during an urgent surgical procedure to remove it.

I've included a little more information for you – as well as a photo of the C-Arm we're looking to purchase. And, we're also getting the one that broke down fixed. That means we'll have two of these machines in use – which is best practice in case one breaks down again in the future.

**Can I count on you today?**

**Please send your gift as soon as you can to help purchase a new C-Arm for your community hospital.**

With gratitude,



*Jacqueline Bloom*

Jacqueline Bloom, CFRE  
Chief Executive Officer  
STEGH Foundation

**PS: Please don't delay – fill out your reply form ASAP and send it back in the postage paid envelope.**



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**Anchoring:** *an individual's judgements or decisions are influenced by a reference point or "anchor".*

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189 Elm Street, St. Thomas, Ontario N5R 5C4  
519.631.2030 x 2246 • [foundation@stegh.on.ca](mailto:foundation@stegh.on.ca) • [ItsOURHospital.ca](http://ItsOURHospital.ca)

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### Readability Statistics

#### Counts

Words	1,585
Characters	7,057
Paragraphs	64
Sentences	106

#### Averages

Sentences per Paragraph	2.3
Words per Sentence	14.3
Characters per Word	4.2

#### Readability

Flesch Reading Ease	76.5
Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level	6.1
Passive Sentences	0.9%

OK

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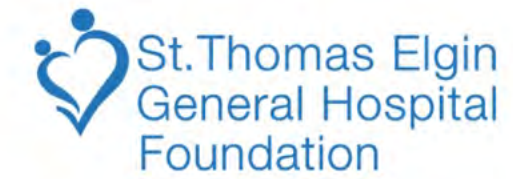
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**Special Reply for:**

<Ms. Addressee>

1234 Generous Street  
Anytown, ON. XoX oXo



ConstID/Appeal-Seg Code

**Yes, Jacqueline!** I'll help you purchase a new C-Arm machine ASAP. Here's my gift of:

\$XX  \$XX  \$XXX *or*  \$198,000

I have enclosed my cheque, payable to St. Thomas Elgin General Hospital Foundation.

**OR**

I prefer to make my gift using my

Card Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Expiry Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name on Card: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone #: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

New regulations from VISA may require us to contact you by phone to confirm your CVV. If you choose to give using your VISA, please include your telephone number. Thank you!

ConstID/Appeal-Seg Code

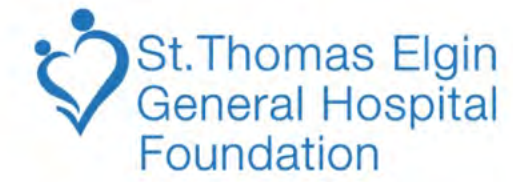
Due to COVID-19, we are asking our donors and supporters to please consider **giving online** at **ItsOURHospital.ca** or by **calling Amanda Campbell** (Amanda loves to hear from donors like you!) at **519-631-2030 ext. 2282.**

- Full size
- Only asked for single gift

**Special Reply for:**

<Ms. Addressee>

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Anytown, ON. XoX oXo



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Card Number: ..... Expiry Date: .....

\$100

\$200

*This amount will really make a difference!*

\$300

Surprise us! \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**AND**  I'd like to help animals in need right now with

**Goldilocks effect:** *humans have a tendency to seek out options that are neither too much nor too little, but rather fall within an ideal range.*



Yes, Janet, **I want to help build better gardens** for the people who live at Rest Haven Lodge!



*This amount will really make a difference!*

**Here is my gift of:**

\$100  \$150  \$200 OR \$ \_\_\_\_\_

*I would like to make a monthly gift amount of \$ \_\_\_\_\_*

*Process my donation on the:  1st or  15th of each month*

**I prefer to donate by:**

Visa  MasterCard  Cheque payable to Broadmead Care

\_\_\_\_\_  
Credit card number

\_\_\_\_\_  
Expiry (MM/YY)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

I would like to receive my receipt by email.  Yes  No

Please confirm your email address \_\_\_\_\_

**gardens** for the people who live at  
Rest Haven Lodge!

*this amount  
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Visa    MasterCard    Cheque payable to Broad





You can see why it's called a C-Arm, right?

The C-Shaped arm goes around the sedated patient. Images can be taken at anytime during the procedure so the surgeon can easily see what is happening in 'real time'.

It is really a critical piece of equipment!

I hope you can pitch in to help purchase a new one for your community.

 St. Thomas Elgin  
General Hospital  
Foundation

Thank you!  
Jacqueline

One last direct response...  
**SUPERHACK!**





BREATH E  
the lung association

THE  
hearing foundation  
OF CANADA



CANADA	POSTES
POST	CANADA
Postage paid	Port payé
Addressed Admail	Médiaposte avec adresse
1009201	





1. What sort of fundraiser do you want to be?
2. Which rules can you break and  
which ones to leave alone
3. Are you willing to try the storytelling SUPERHACK?

Not *all* rules  
need to be broken.



*Deviate.*

*Never stop  
learning.*

Ask for *help*.

Be *playful*.

Believe in *yourself*.

You're doing

*amazing.*

Only *love* is real.



# Thank you DMAW!

@johnlepp • john@agentsofgood.org

