

# From Stuck to Inspired: Mindsets That Move You Forward

*Discover how Design Thinking can transform your approach to personal and professional challenges in higher education*

Slides:

Worksheet:



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# Katie Hayes

## Advising Area Director

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As a former Leeds First Year Advisor, I taught many sections of "Designing Your Leeds," a first-year seminar grounded in principles from the book *Designing Your Life* by Bill Burnett and Dave Evans.

I have read the book *Designing Your Life* by Bill Burnett and Dave Evans multiple times and have completed & facilitated all the activities from the book & associated workbook.

I attended the week-long Life Design Lab at Stanford University, where I explored the framework in-depth and learned how to integrate it into our work with students.

# What is Design Thinking?

Design Thinking is a framework for approaching life's challenges with creativity, experimentation, and openness. Instead of getting stuck in problems, we **design solutions** through iteration and collaboration.



## Challenge Assumptions

Question what you believe is possible



## Explore Options

Generate multiple pathways forward



## Test & Learn

Try small experiments to discover what works

Today, we'll explore five powerful mindsets that help you move from feeling stuck to inspired action.

# The Design Thinking Cycle

Design Thinking isn't a rigid checklist, but a flexible, iterative cycle. Each stage builds upon the last, and you can loop back at any point to refine your understanding or solutions.

## Empathize

Understand the user's needs, challenges, and experiences.

## Test

Gather feedback on your prototypes and learn what works and what doesn't.



## Define

Clearly articulate the core problem you're trying to solve.

## Ideate

Brainstorm a wide range of creative solutions without judgment.

## Prototype

Build tangible representations of your ideas, even simple ones.

Embrace the iterative nature of this cycle. It's through repeated exploration and refinement that truly innovative solutions emerge.

# Five Mindsets for Moving Forward



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## Reframe

Replace limiting beliefs with generative possibilities



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## Be Curious

Explore new opportunities with openness and wonder



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## Try Stuff

Take action through low-risk prototypes and experiments



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## Know It's a Process

Embrace the messy, non-linear journey of growth



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## Ask for Help

Leverage radical collaboration and community support

# Mindset #1: Reframe

## Getting Unstuck Starts Here

Reframing gives you **permission to think differently**. When you replace dysfunctional beliefs with generative ones, you open up new possibilities and pathways forward.

**The shift:** From "I'm stuck" to "What new perspective could I explore?"



### Dysfunctional Belief

"I need to know my passion before I can start"

### Generative Belief

"I can start exploring different interests now, and passion will grow through experience."

 **Activity Time:** We'll practice reframing together to transform limiting beliefs into empowering mindsets.

# Mindset #2: Be Curious

Curiosity makes everything new and invites exploration. When you're curious, you see opportunities everywhere and approach life with openness and playfulness.

## Activity: Curiosity Radar

### List

3 things sparking your curiosity right now

### Choose

One to explore this week

### Brainstorm

One small action to investigate it.  
Keep it low-stakes and experimental!

# Mindset #3: Try Stuff

A bias towards action keeps you moving forward. Prototype, experiment, fail often. This is how you discover what works and embrace change.

## Activity: Prototype Your Day

01

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Identify one thing in your daily routine you'd like to experiment with or improve

02

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Design a 15-minute prototype to try

03

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Commit to testing it this week

04

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Reflect: What did you learn?

**Remember:** Gather data through action, not perfection.



# Mindset #4: Know It's a Process

Embracing the design thinking process means understanding that setbacks are not failures, but opportunities for learning. It's about recognizing that the path forward is rarely straight and often involves unexpected detours.

## Activity: Good Outcome vs. Useful Outcome

Think of a recent attempt that didn't go the way you hoped, either personally or professionally—your choice.

### GOOD outcome

What you wanted to happen; your initial goal or expectation.

### USEFUL outcome

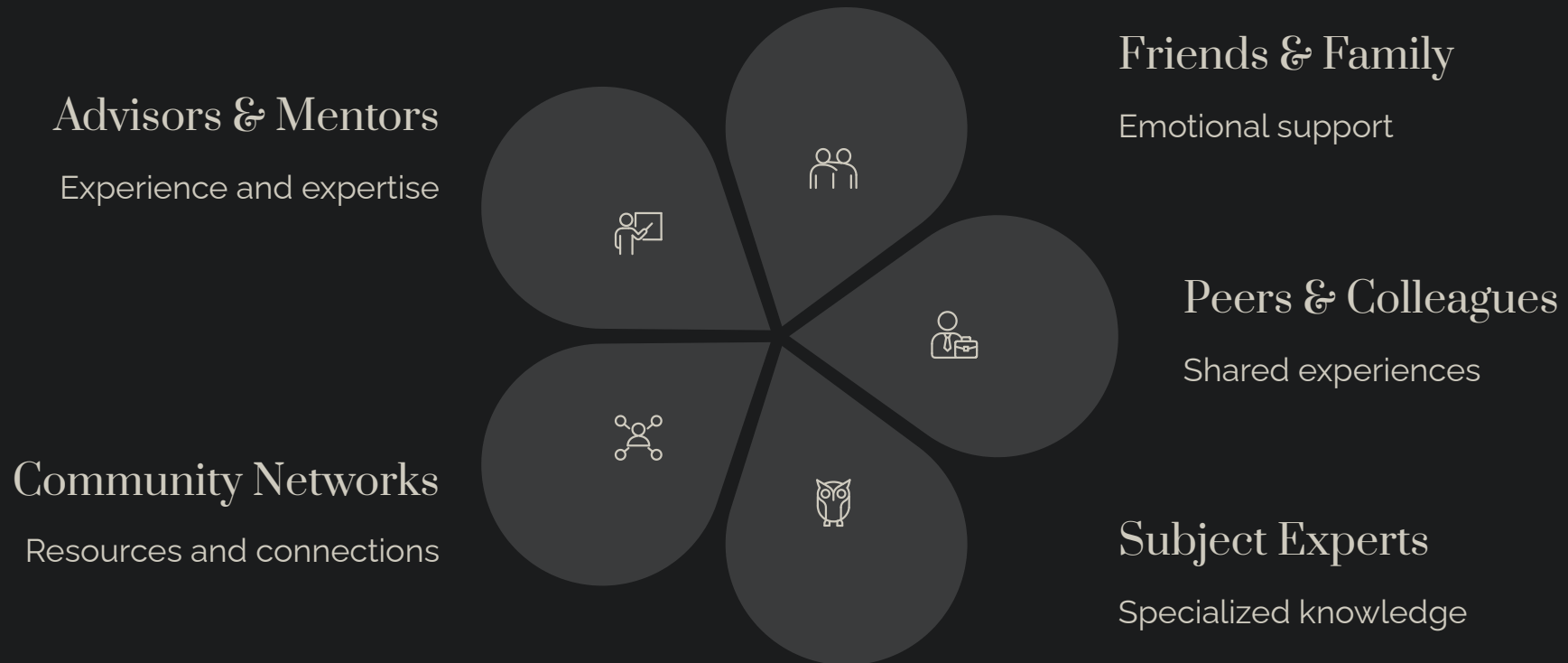
What it actually gave you: the unexpected learnings, insights, or new directions.

📌 **Key Takeaway:** In a process, you don't need every step to go well - you just need each step to teach you something.

# Mindset #5: Ask for Help

## Radical Collaboration Powers Life Design

Many of the best ideas come from other people. You're not alone in this journey - lean on mentors, peers, and your supportive community to get unstuck.



📌 **Activity:** Create your collaboration map. Identify 1-2 people to reach out to this week and what specific help you'll ask for.

# Moving Forward: Your Design Journey

## Start Small

Choose one mindset to practice this week. Remember: progress over perfection.

## Prototype Often

Test ideas through low-risk experiments. Learn by doing, not just thinking.

## Stay Curious

Approach challenges with openness. Every obstacle is an opportunity to explore.

## Collaborate

Reach out to your network. You don't have to design your life alone.

# Behind the Scenes

## AI Tools Used

- **Gamma** (Free account, <https://gamma.app/>): Generated the presentation slides and participant worksheet from my session outline and notes.
- **ChatGPT** (Pro account, <https://chatgpt.com/>): Brainstormed activity ideas.

## Interested in Learning More?

**AI Literacy Foundations:** This free, self-paced Canvas course for CU Boulder faculty and staff aims to raise baseline AI literacy across campus and empower educators and administrators to safely, and more confidently, engage with AI tools and concepts in their work.

[canvas.colorado.edu/enroll/L4Y6ND](https://canvas.colorado.edu/enroll/L4Y6ND)



Burnett, B., & Evans, D. J. (2016). *Designing your life: How to build a well-lived, joyful life*. Alfred A. Knopf.

# Questions & Discussion

What resonated most with you today?

If you're willing to share...what's one small action you'll take this week to move from stuck to inspired?

Thank you for engaging with these mindsets!