

A person is shown from the chest up, wearing a green polo shirt. Their face is completely covered by a mask made of folded newspaper. The person is surrounded by a large amount of white, fluffy foam or packing peanuts. The background is a collage of various comic book pages, showing different characters and scenes in a colorful, stylized manner.

Keep it Stupid, Simple

*How to be a great strategist
and an excellent human*

So.

You want to be
a **Strategist**
A *real* one





Not just a **deck-monkey** with a
penchant for **venn** diagrams

Well **Congratulations**

You have made a
terrible life choice



None-the-less



***This guide is
here to help***

And *Good Lord* don't
we all need some **help**

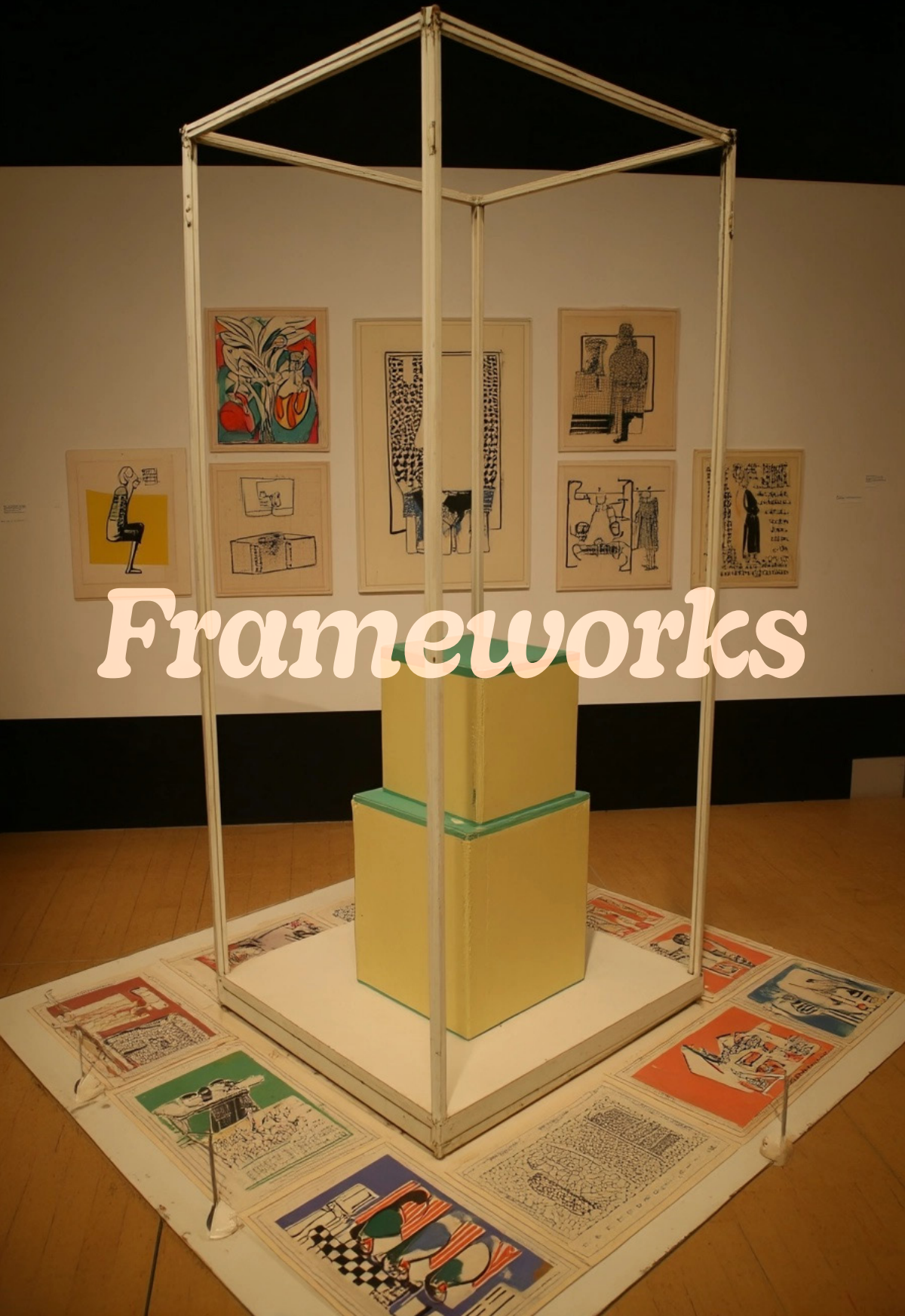


Playbooks





Frameworks



A large, detailed illustration of an onion with green stalks, positioned in the foreground on a green surface. The background is a colorful, abstract pattern featuring vertical stripes of red, blue, and yellow, interspersed with stylized, hand-drawn vases or pots. The word "Onions" is written in a large, white, serif font across the middle of the image.

Onions

**Brand ones*

A man with a beard and a blue sweater is holding a white onion. In the background, there is a cartoon illustration of a man in a suit. The text is overlaid on the image.

**Guys on
LinkedIn
posting
about
A.I. onions**

Debates about whether it's
comms strategy or **creative**
strategy or **cultural** strategy




Someone's 16 Takeaways about influencer tactics from **Cannes**



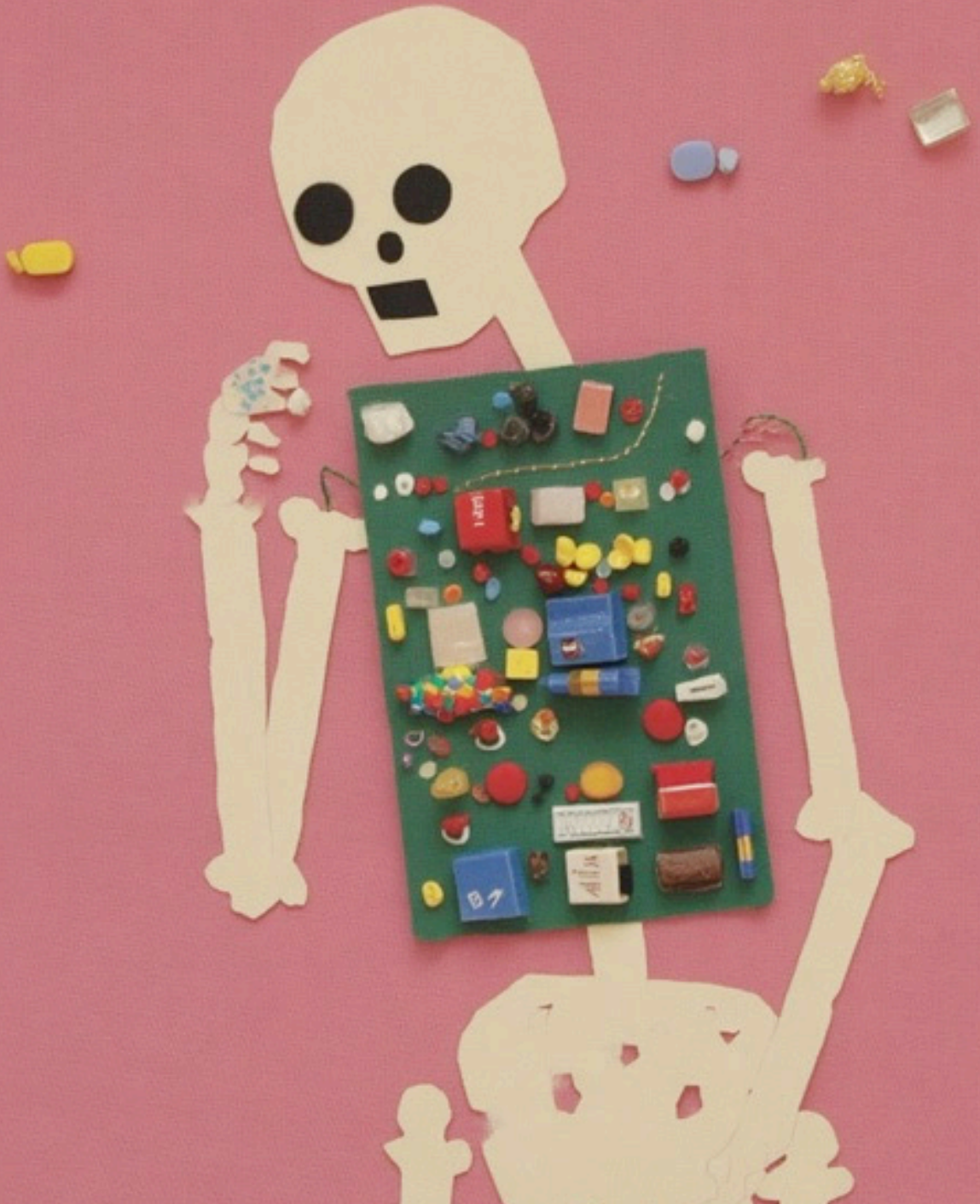
of training & RZ
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A vintage photograph of a garden with a large white cloud superimposed over the sky. The garden features a stone path, a low stone wall, and a dense hedge. The sky is a deep blue, and the cloud is a bright white. The text is overlaid on the cloud and sky.

*This flipbook
has none of
those things*

Because strategy has never
been more ***over-complicated***





When it ***doesn't***
need to be



There are actually ***only three*** things you need to be ***good*** at to be a ***great*** strategist



Not 7 different models
Not 15 weird tricks

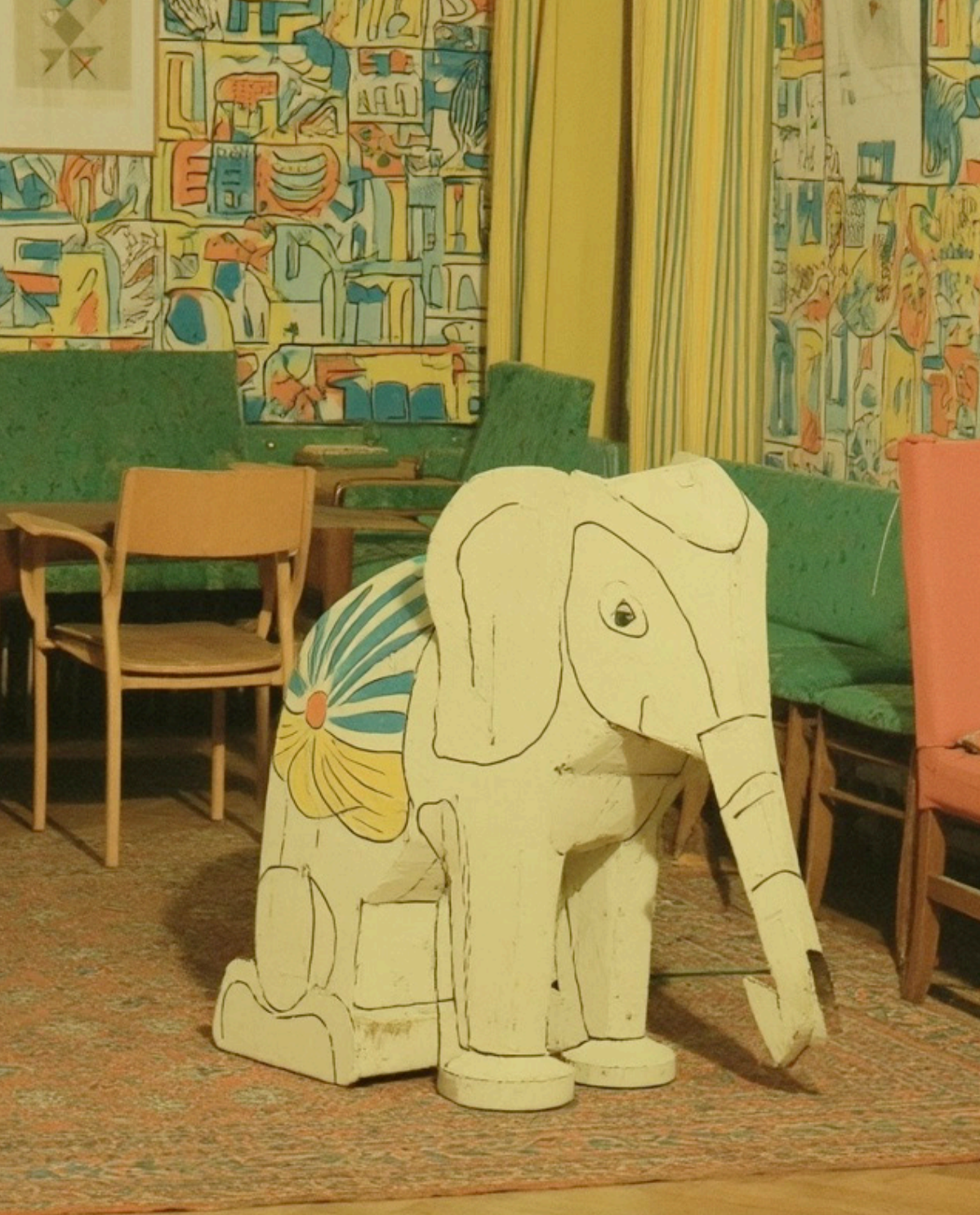


Just **three**
simple **things**



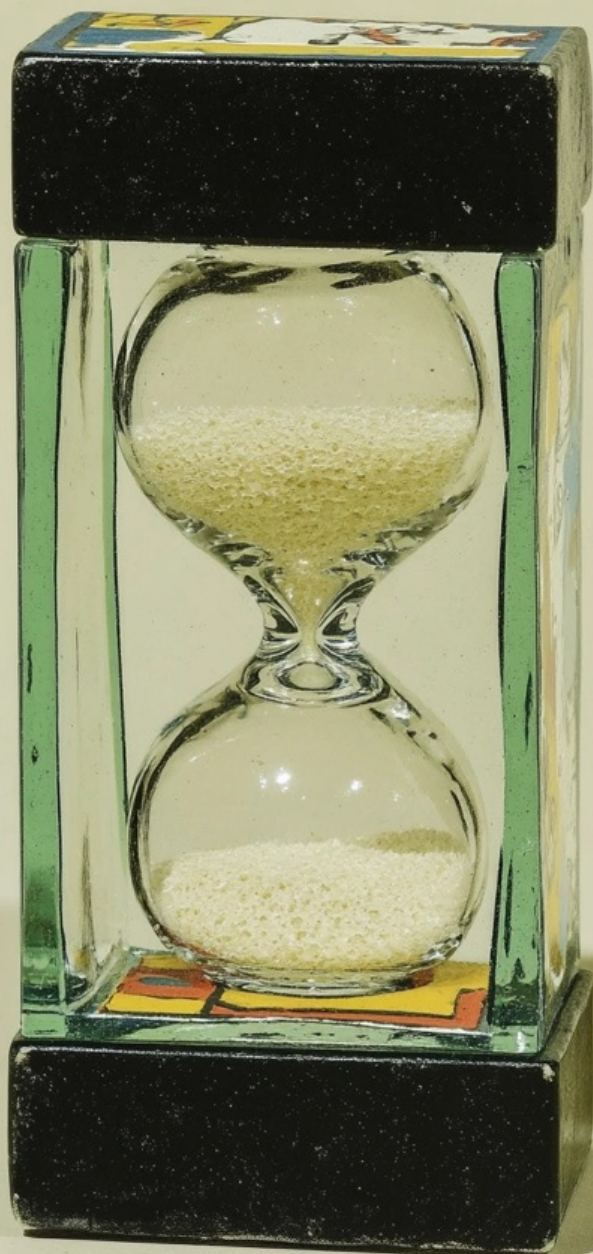
And ***this guide*** is going
to take you through
them ***one by one***





But **before** we get to that
We have to address **something**

Some say that '*brevity*' is
essential in strategy
But i'm ***not so sure***



Which explains why *here we are*
on page twenty-two already
...But ***don't panic***



The first thing ***really*** is
on the next slide

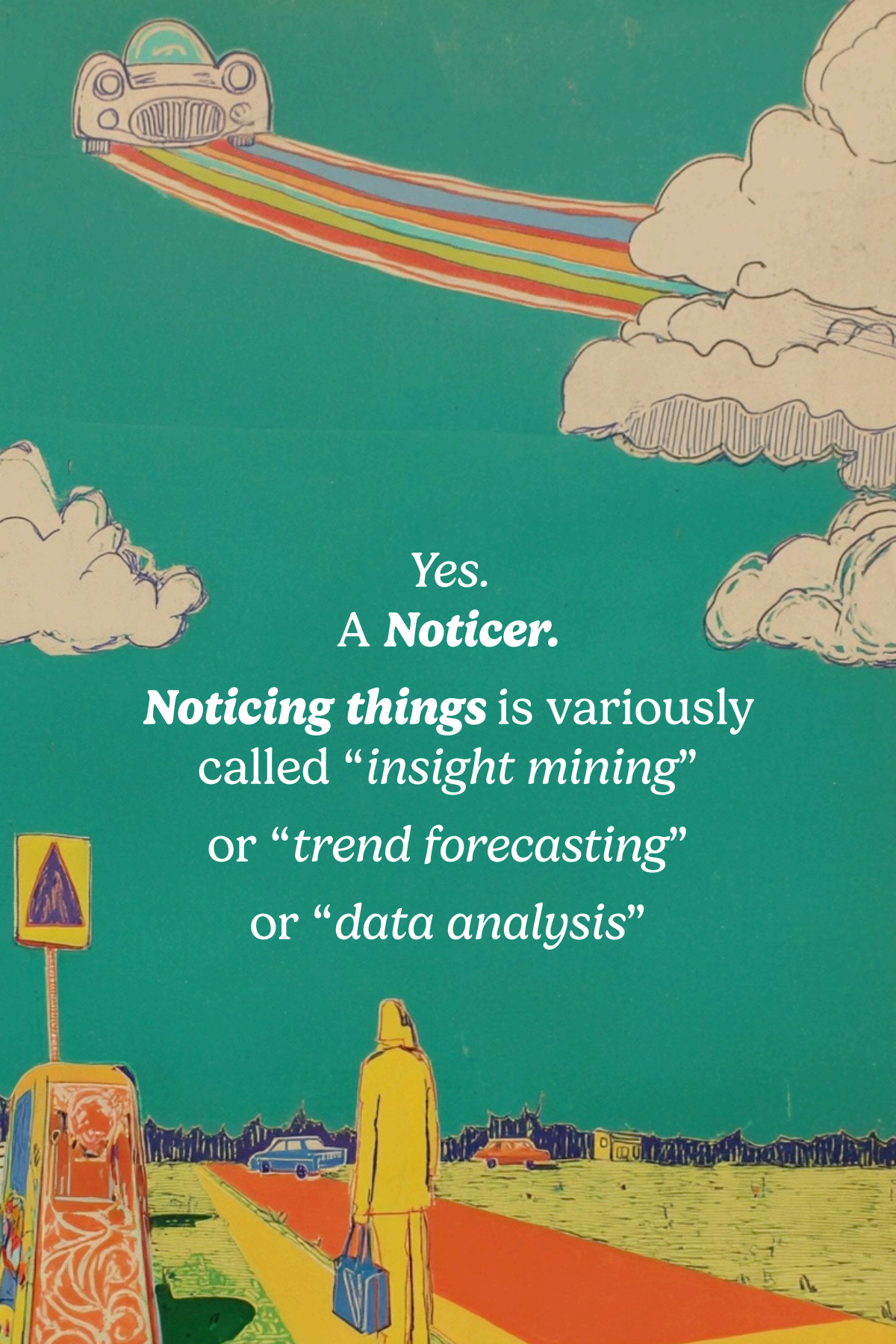
Promise



Be a

Noticer

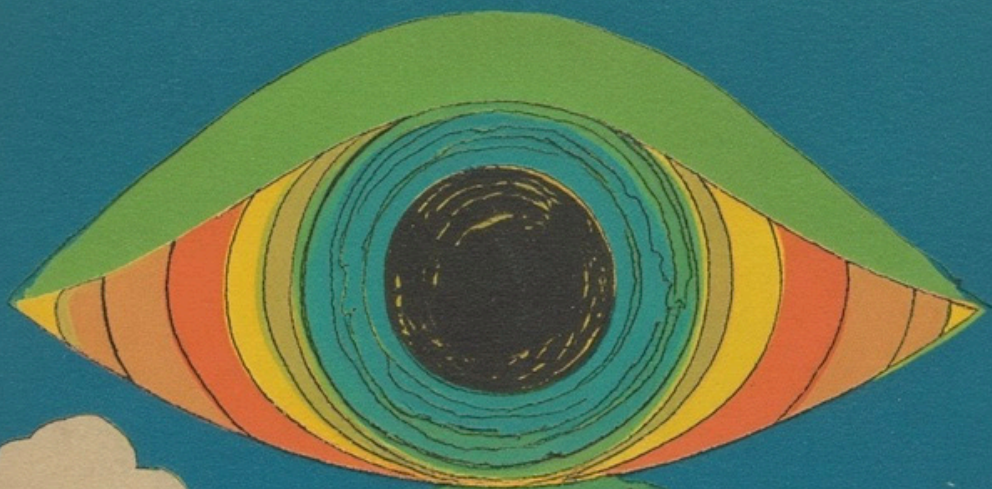
(That's thing number one)



Yes.
A Noticer.

Noticing things is variously
called “*insight mining*”
or “*trend forecasting*”
or “*data analysis*”

But really, **A Noticer** is
just someone who **looks**
at the **world** and **thinks**



Hang on...
that's weird



Anyone can read the same
reports, the same *articles*, the
same *Think with Google* PDFs
But **Noticers?** *They notice*



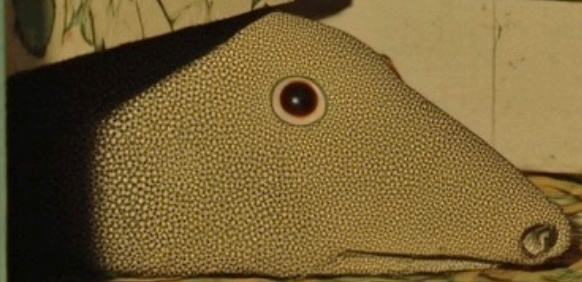
A Noticer sees the thing
everyone else *skimmed past*
The **oddity**, the **tension**





That **thing** in the corner
of the frame whispering...

**Psssst...
there's an
idea hiding
in here**

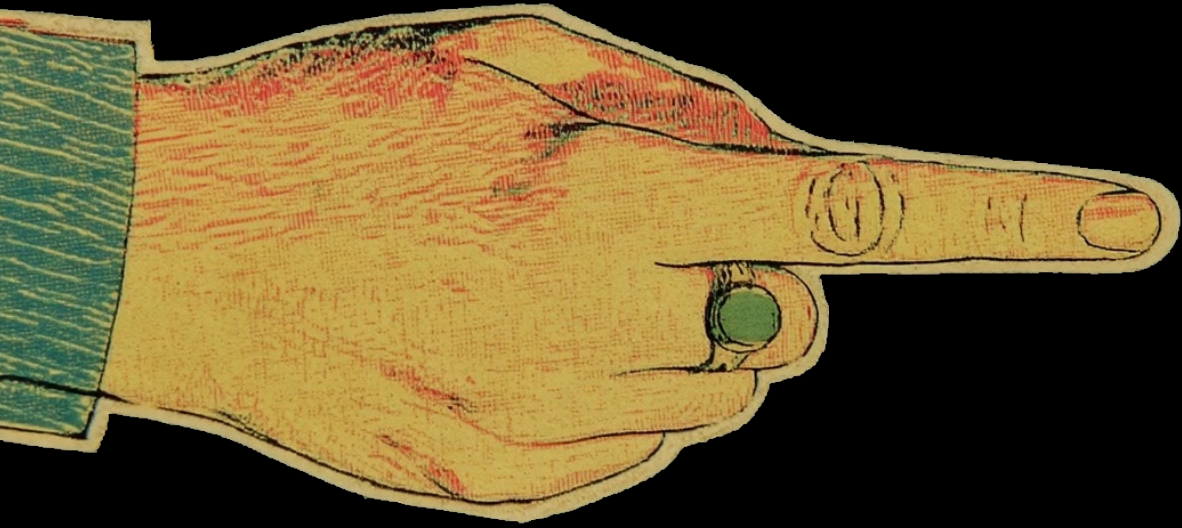


A genuine, bonafide **Noticer**
doesn't wait around for
oddities to show up



They curiously **poke** at the
ordinary until something
feels a little bit off

And the **very best** Noticers
know exactly where to **prod**

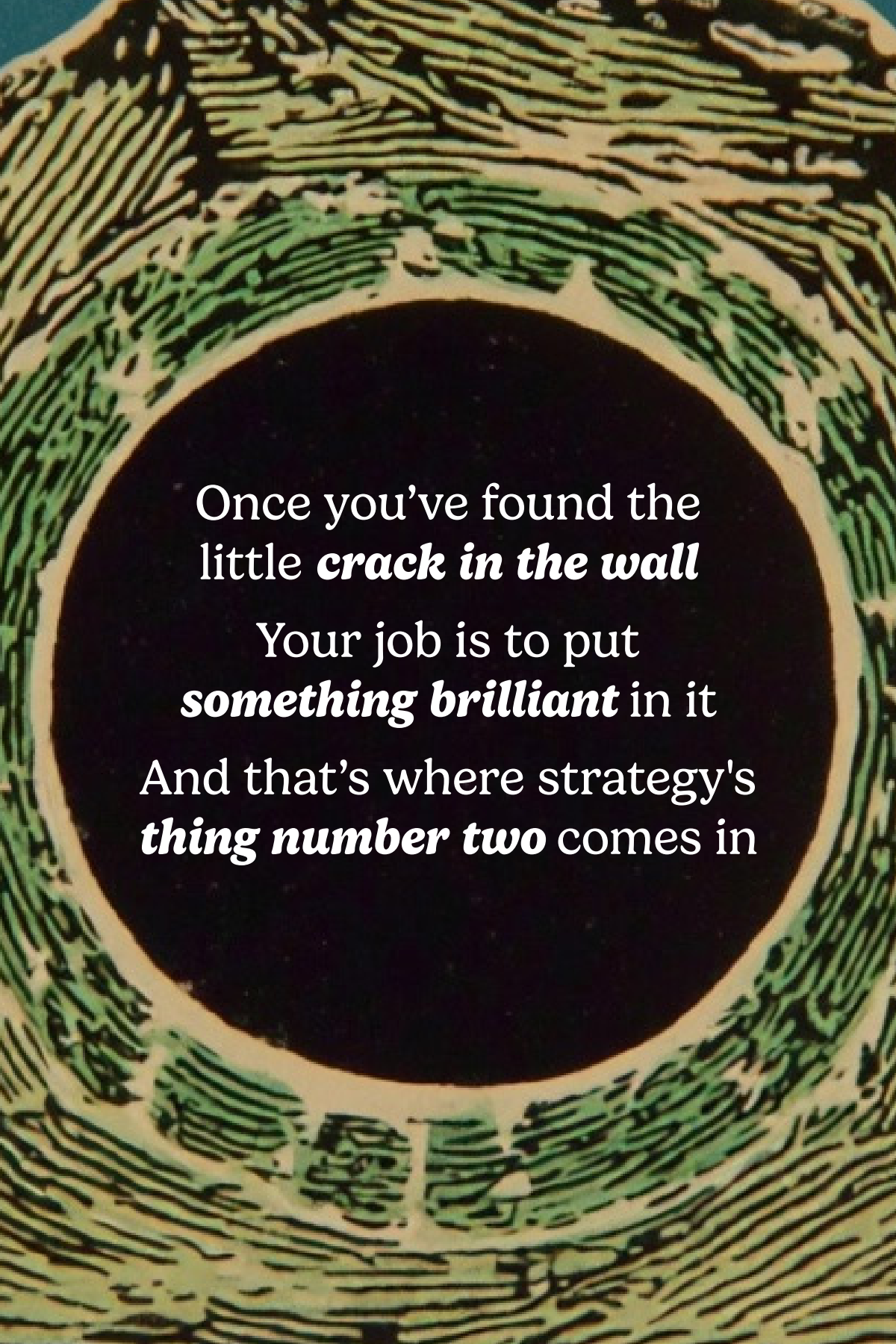


In **data**

In **conversations**

In obscure **journals**

In the **weird parts** of **TikTok** that
the other tentacles of capitalism
can't quite comprehend



Once you've found the
little ***crack in the wall***

Your job is to put
something brilliant in it

And that's where strategy's
thing number two comes in

Make Stuff Up



(This is the second thing)

Just to be **clear**
What we're **not** saying is
*“Just invent any old stuff
out of nowhere”*





That's the role of the
Creative Department

*And honestly,
they're great at it*

Your job is to use the
things you've ***noticed***



The ***patterns***, the ***weirdness***,
the off-kilter ***truths***

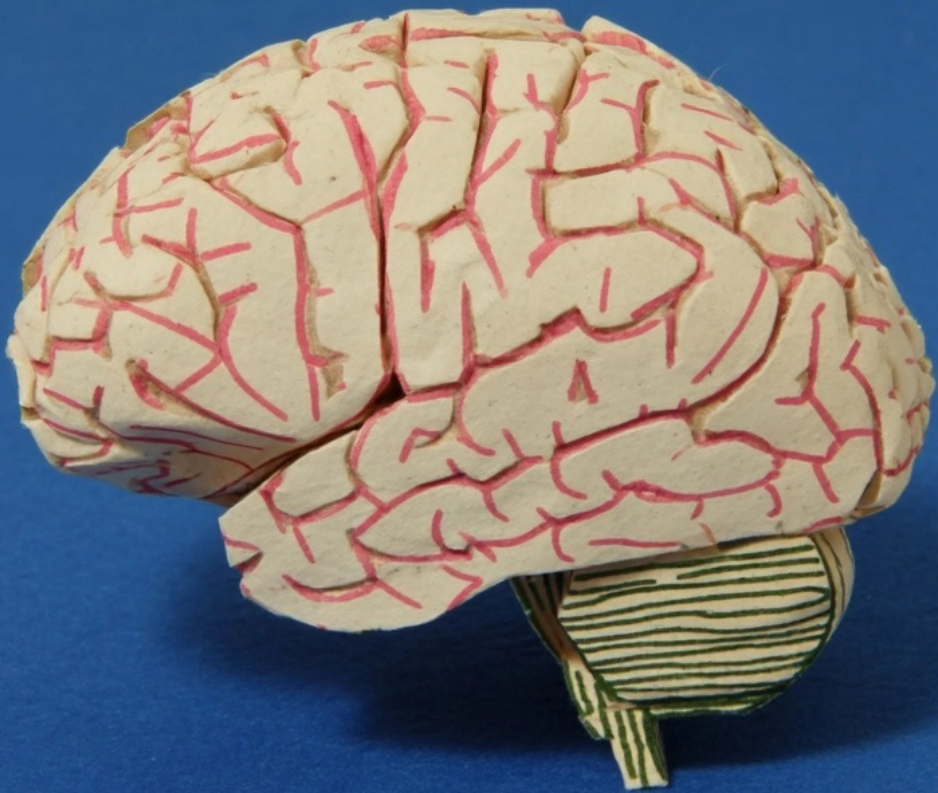


Then shape
that into
Something
new
Something
sharp

Something that
makes everybody go

"ooooohh"





That right there is **strategy's**
weird little genius **moment**

A person with short brown hair, wearing a black and white vertically striped shirt, is looking upwards with a focused expression. They are surrounded by a chaotic environment of papers and documents. Several papers are floating in the air around their head, while a large pile of papers and sketches is scattered on the floor in the foreground. The background is a solid green wall. The overall scene suggests a state of intense creative thinking or brainstorming.

**You're not
writing ads**

**You're creating
new ideas**

But not the type of
ideas that ***look like ads***



Strategy ideas work in
a very ***different way***

A stylized illustration of a person from the chest up, wearing a green sweater. Instead of a head, there is a large bouquet of flowers and various pieces of trash (like a broken box, crumpled paper, and a small green object) emerging from the neck area. The background is a solid yellow color. The text is overlaid on the person's chest in a white, serif font.

A **reframe** of
the problem

A **new way** to
see the audience

A surprisingly
sticky proposition

A surrealist illustration of a person from the chest up, wearing a green sweater. Instead of a head, a large bouquet of various flowers and greenery emerges from the neck. The bouquet is surrounded by several pieces of crumpled paper and trash, including a purple box, a blue box, a red box, and a white box with blue and red patterns. The background is a solid yellow color. The person's hands are visible at the bottom, resting on a yellow surface.

A **reframe** of
the problem

A **new way** to
see the audience

A surprisingly
sticky proposition

A surrealist illustration of a person from the chest up, wearing a green sweater. Instead of a head, a large bouquet of various flowers and greenery emerges from the neck. The bouquet is surrounded by several pieces of crumpled paper and trash, including a purple box, a blue box, a red box, and a white box with blue and red patterns. The background is a solid yellow color. The person's hands are visible at the bottom, resting on a yellow surface.


A **reframe** of
the problem

A **new way** to
see the audience

A surprisingly
sticky proposition

A **bigger, hairier**, more
inspiring style of imagining
the **opportunity**





The best way to describe
this type of **idea** is

Something that's
never been seen
before but that
people can't unthink

But that's a little bit
too abstract isn't it?

Which is where the final
thing a strategist needs to
be **good at** comes in





The Cleverly Mislabeled Box

(This is the third thing)

Ideas


If left loose

Can be a
problem

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A large, stylized sculpture of a creature with a black face, yellow eyes, and a red mouth with sharp teeth, set against a background of dense green foliage. The sculpture is partially obscured by green leaves and yellow flowers in the foreground.

**A loose
idea scares
people**

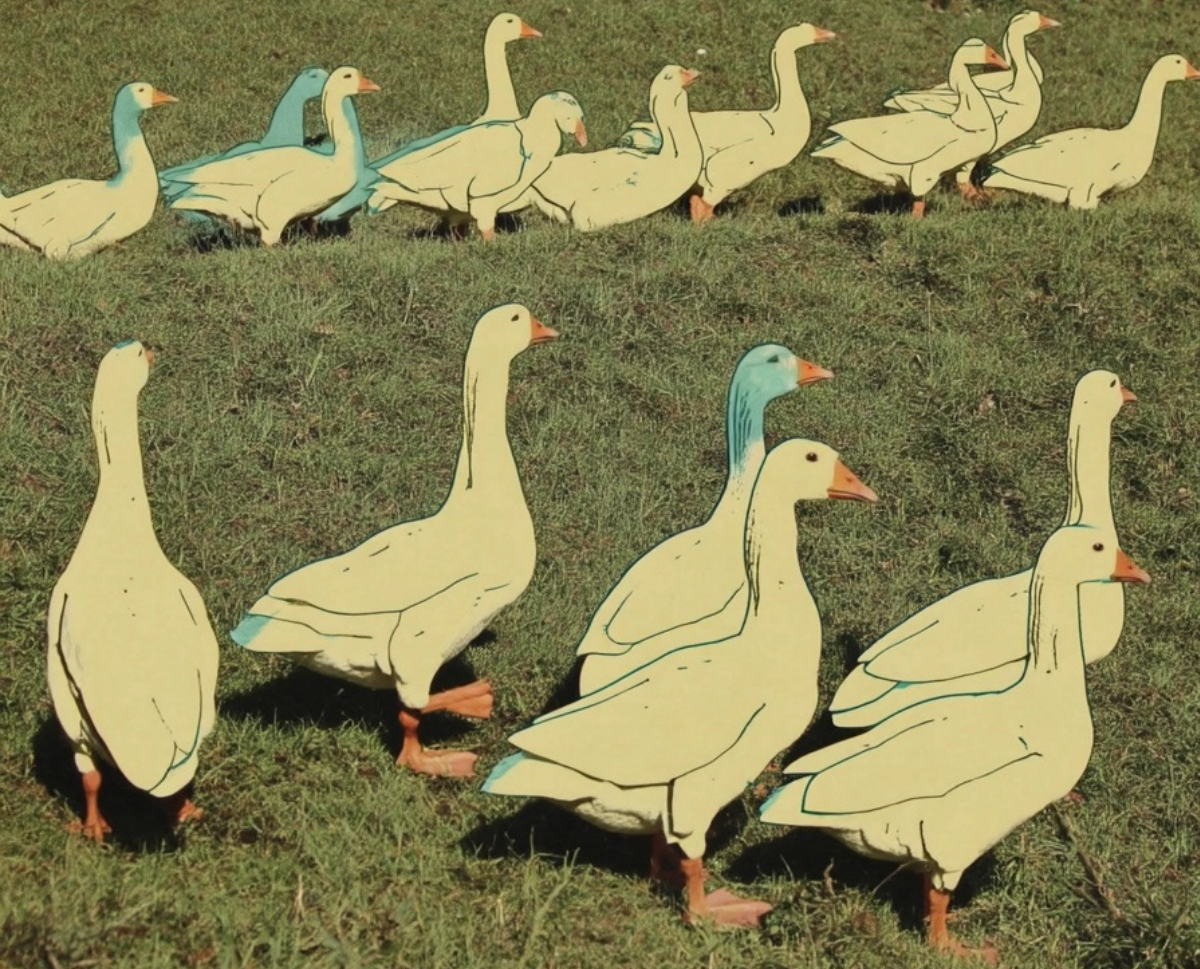
**A loose idea
makes people
nervous**



Loose ideas can ***slip*** off tables
They get ***stuck*** in people's teeth
They can end up ***lost*** and
forgotten in an old coat pocket



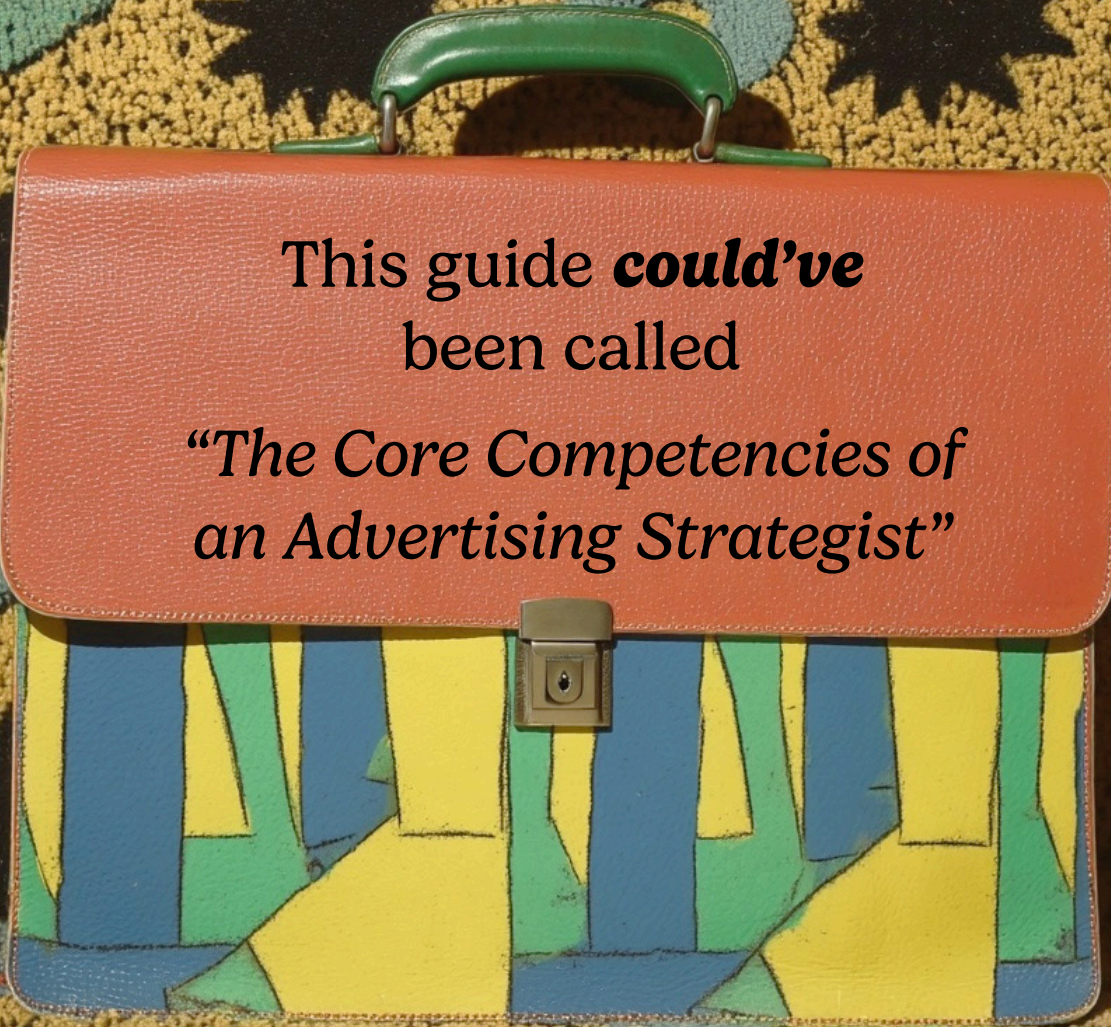
So instead of letting
ideas float around
all **loosey-goosey**



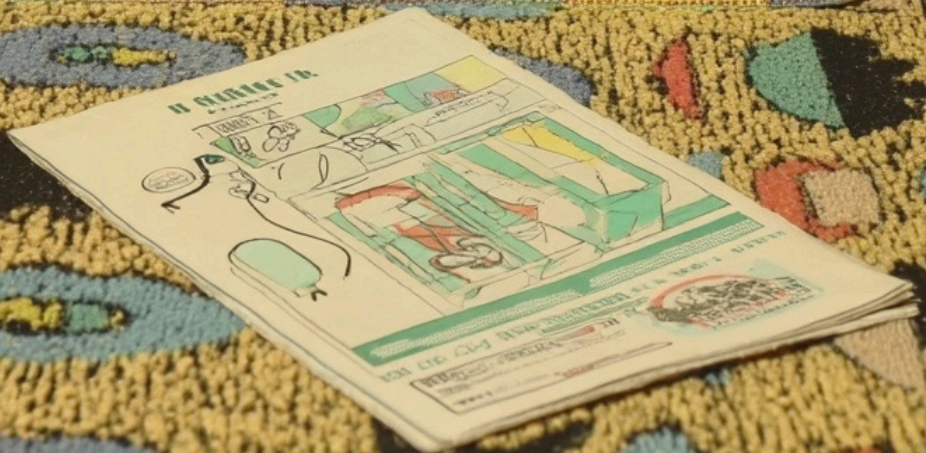
We package the
ideas up in **a box**

**And then we
label the box
slightly wrong**





This guide **could've**
been called
*“The Core Competencies of
an Advertising Strategist”*



But it's ***not***, it's called
"Keep It Stupid, Simples"



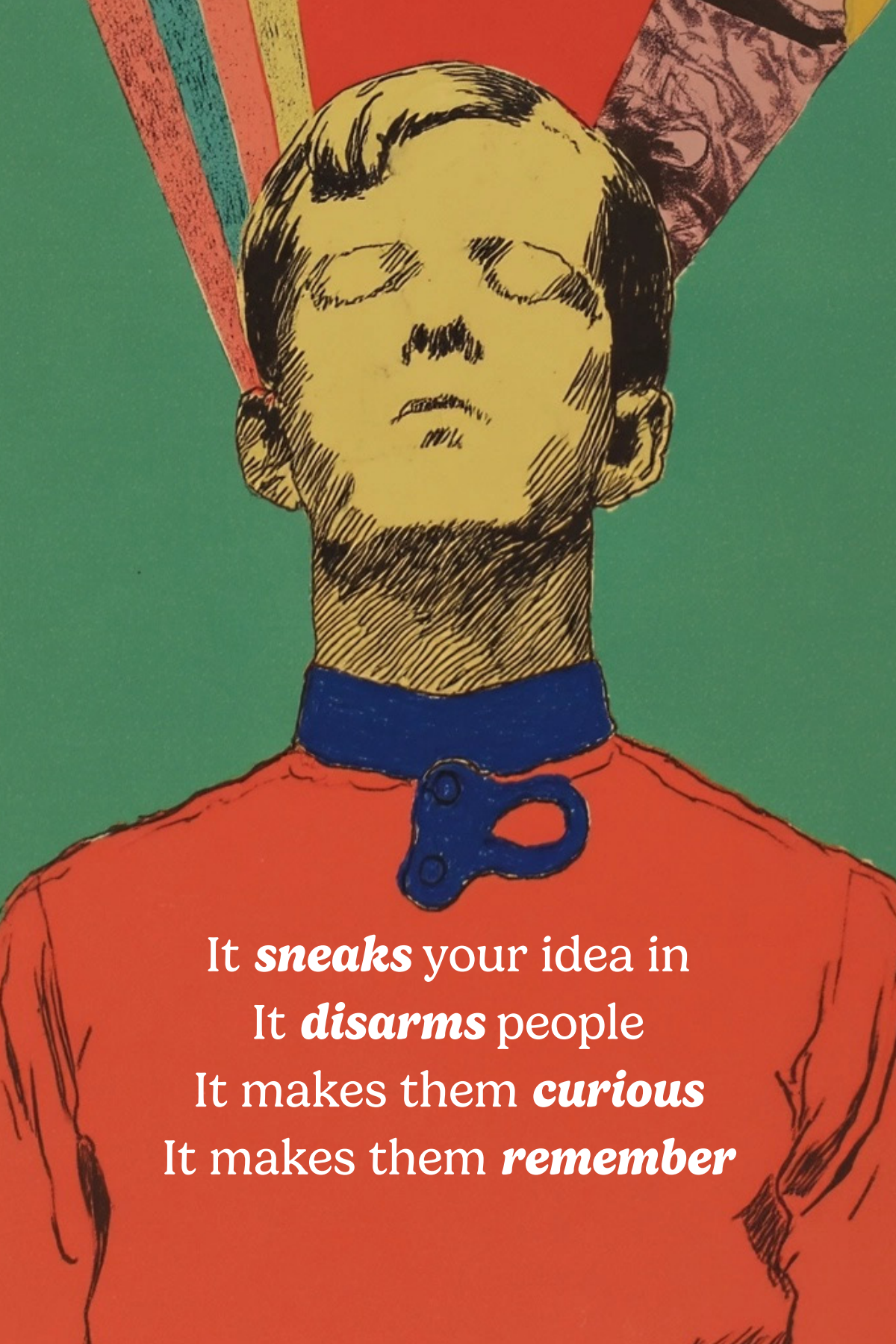
That's not just a title
That's a *wink*
A *detour*
A *distraction*



And that's the *point*

A cleverly mislabeled box
works like a ***Trojan Horse***



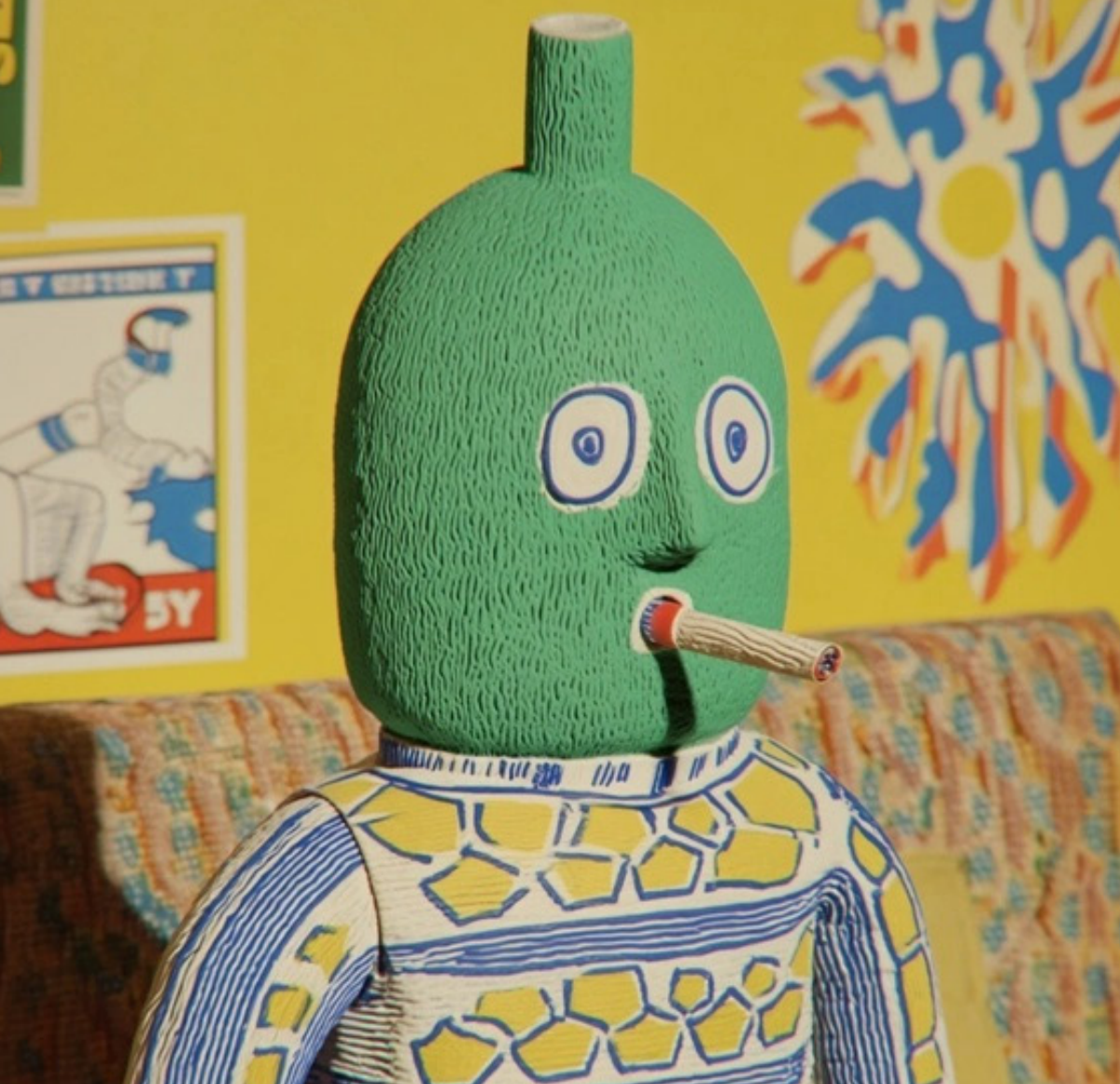


It **sneaks** your idea in
It **disarms** people
It makes them **curious**
It makes them **remember**



*and that
really matters*

Now *they* won't **admit** this
But genuinely **new ideas**
make most people feel
confused and a little bit **itchy**
So you have to **sneak** it in

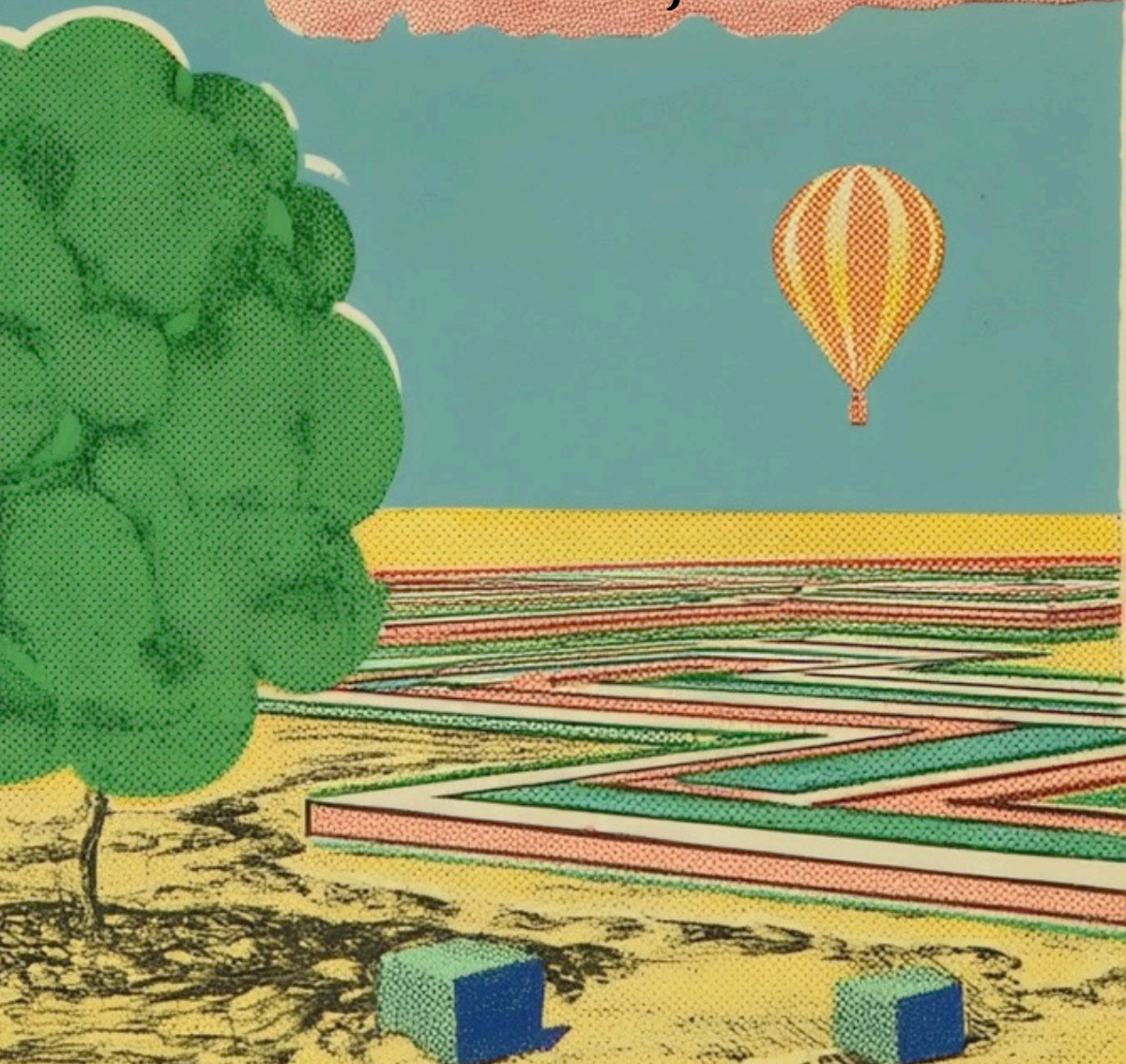


A collection of vintage playing cards and game components is scattered on a green felt surface. The items include a wooden box containing small wooden pieces, several playing cards with various designs (some featuring faces, some with abstract patterns), and a few wooden blocks. The text "And that's the game" is overlaid in a large, pink, stylized font.

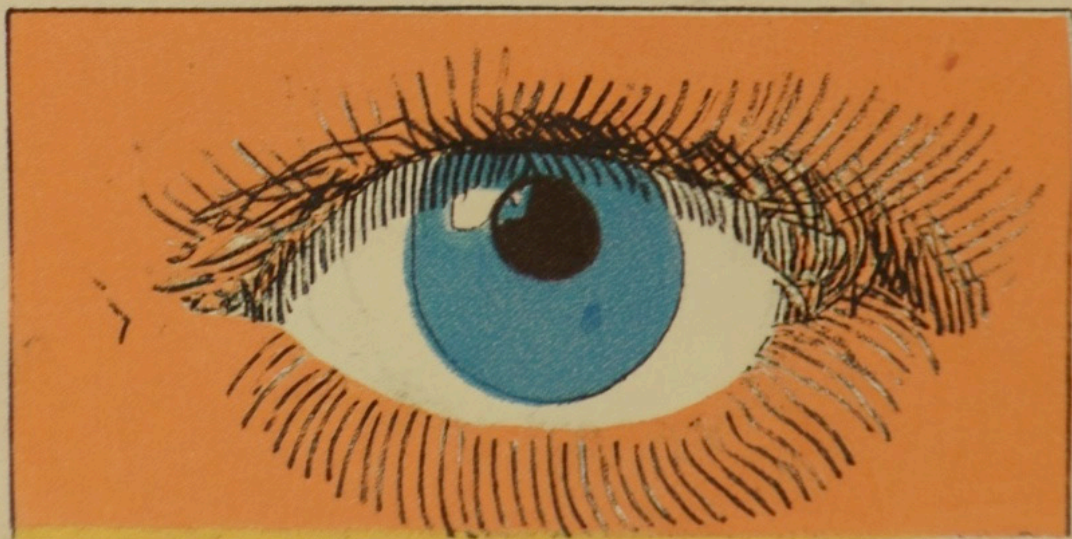
*And that's
the game*


*Be a Noticer
Make Stuff Up
Put it in a mislabeled box*

***That's it**
That's the job*



And maybe you've ***noticed***
what we've done here





We spotted the ***mess*** that
is modern strategy chat
Had an idea about what
actually ***matters***
And packaged it inside
a ***wonky***, colourful,
oddly-labelled box

A woman with blonde hair stands in a field of dry grass, looking off to the side. She is wearing a long green dress with a red belt and red and blue decorative patterns on the sleeves and hem. Behind her is a large, stylized rainbow arching over a yellow sky. The rainbow has thick, bold lines and is flanked by stylized, colorful clouds. The overall style is reminiscent of mid-20th-century graphic design or book cover art.

*And here
you are
reading it*

Will it change how ***you***
think about strategy?



Maybe

But at least now
you've seen it



Thank You for Reading

This was created by Joe Burns
A strategist at Quality Meats Creative
qualitymeatscreative.com

You can find more of his stupid
simple strategy thoughts at
welcomehome.work