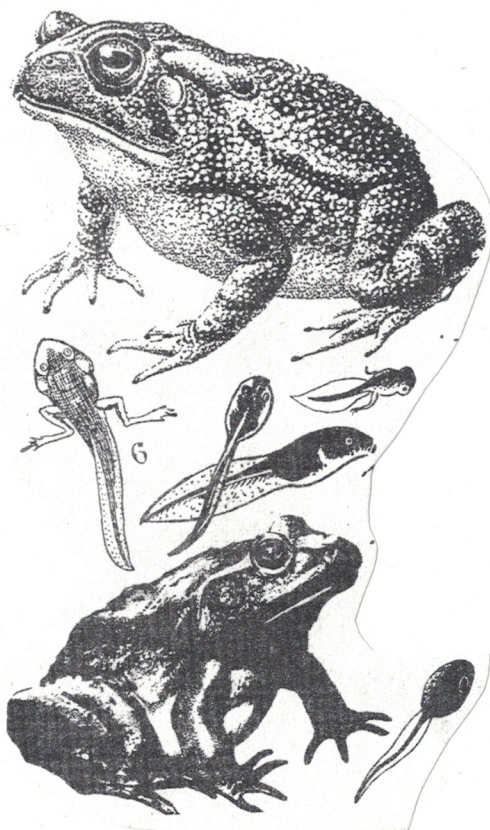


# flexible me and

Creative organization for writing & life



for

Sundae  
School

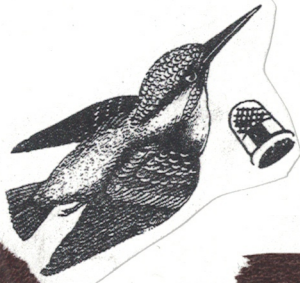
July 2023

By

Silch  
Radovsky

When I think about my goals and how to accomplish them, there's a storm pattern in that neighborhood of ideas: the expectation that there's a right way to do things meeting the nonlinear pattern of my actual movement. Here are a few frameworks I've found that help me work with the blessing and challenge of this divergent movement, and build functional(-ish) structure for myself.

flexible means  
& a work-in-progress



### **Divergent/Convergent thinking**

*Oxford English Dictionary*

#### **convergent, adj. & n.**

Inclining toward each other, or toward a common point of meeting; tending to meet in a point or focus; = converging, adj. 1.

#### **divergent, adj.**

Proceeding in different directions from each other or from a common point; departing more widely from each other; diverging.



# 1. Shape

“In 1926 an Irish designer named Eileen Gray, who’d created lots of gorgeous, strange furniture but scarcely a house, began designing a shiplike villa on the south coast of France that would drive the famed architect Le Corbusier wild. Corbu had just announced that a house was ‘a machine to live in,’ but Gray thought, No: a house is a person’s shell, a skin, and should respond to how she lives. To start designing, Gray studied how she and her housekeeper moved through the day; she made diagrams of their motions and those of the sun to reveal natural patterns—loops in the kitchen, deep lines by the windows, meanders through the living room—an organic choreography. The house she then built on rocks by the sea expressed this choreography: a mouthlike entry pulled you in; screens and mirrors unfolded from walls like wings; windows and shutters opened in all directions for the right air, light, or view at any time of the day. On her plans she drew lines showing ways you could move, look, and *live* in this house: her pathways transformed to design.”

*Meander, Spiral, Explode* by Jane Alison

*narrative patterns*

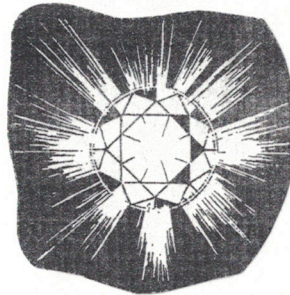
- Waves (arc)
- Wavelets
- Meanders
- Spirals
- Radials or explosions
- Networks and cells
- Fractals
- Tsunami?



# Shapes, cont'd

## Practical applications

- Kanban board — puddle-jumping through stages, compared to the linearity of a list
- Design narrative forms and organizational tools that fit with or reflect the way things want to move (or most helpfully contain them)
- “Constellation System” by Rachael Stephen (YouTube) — example of creative organizational system (very circular and web-like)
  - Introduced in early autumn in my bullet journal — September 24, 2021 described @ 22 min mark
  - Taught me to identify different life domains, approach each of them as something to care for (including inputs/outputs) vs. “task lists,” and to separate their cyclical routines/rituals from one-time tasks and projects.



## Consider

*Multiple shapes & patterns can exist simultaneously.*

*Where is there repetition in your life or in a project? What intervals and shapes do different parts of this ongoing work take?*

# 2. Momentum

“What is quickest is not always what’s functional.”

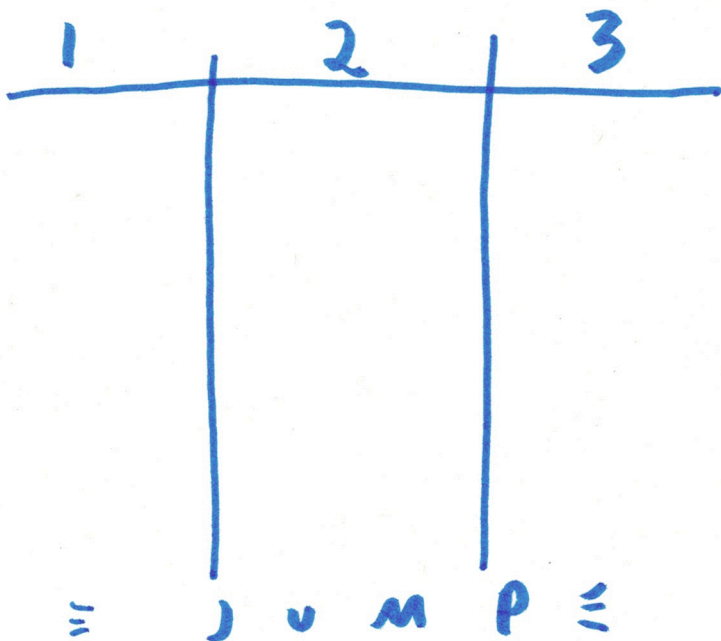
“For a lot of people, finding a method that bypasses the most executive functioning barriers or that makes a task a little less intolerable is better than what’s ‘quickest.’ In the end, the approach that you are motivated to do and enjoy doing is the most ‘efficient,’ because you are actually doing it and not avoiding it.”

*How to Keep House While Drowning* by KC Davis

## Practical applications

- Warm-up activity —> task initiation/activation energy
- “1, 2, 3 jump”
  - Harness momentum from ordinary tasks to plunge into creative activity (i.e., reading or writing doesn’t have to be special and rarified)
  - Also....this is a shape! (Zig-zag)
- First domino
- Start very small and simple (*Atomic Habits*)
- Give yourself a low bar for what participation and engagement looks like
- Write the next thing you know how to write (it’s a hallway in whatever structure you’re creating)

# Momentum, cont'd



## Consider

*What if the point isn't to get things done, but to find a way to keep moving?*

*The fastest way to do something is the way that works for you.*

*Sometimes I avoid doing something because it's difficult, frustrating, emotionally charged, or I don't actually know how to do it or where to begin. Sometimes I avoid doing something because part of me knows it actually doesn't matter. Working in fragments is rarely an avoidance strategy for me, but a strategy for engaging.*



# 3. Constraint

"If you are a 'hunter,' always seeking the perfect answer, choice, or solution, your expedition can take you always anywhere—to the Internet, the library, into many discussions with many people, on a search through magazines, newspapers, and into your own world of needs, wants, preferences, and ideas. This search for the perfect choice is very time consuming. But, if you 'fence in' your hunting ground, it will set an objective limit to your hunt, reducing choice and increasing the prospects of succeeding in your hunt for a good decision."

*ADD-Friendly Strategies for Organizing Your Life* by Judith Kolberg & Kathleen Nadeau, Ph.D.

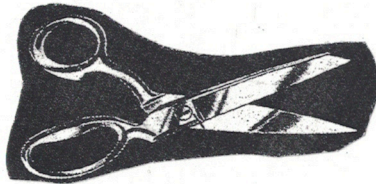
## Practical applications

- Rule that governs what to keep and what to let go of (at home, in writing, what projects to keep working on)
  - Marie Kondo's method is a great example—visceral feeling that signals yes/no.
- Random constraint (Oulipo)
- Spatial constraint
  - Everything that can be written about a topic in 500 or 5,000 words; only as many paint swatches to choose from that will fit in a particular envelope

# constraint, con'd

- Temporal constraint
  - Only 1 hour or 1 month to work on/do something; external deadlines
- Values-based or meaning-based constraint
  - A particular approach or method that governs a creative project; making a choice based on a pre-established criteria (like what option will be the simplest, least resource-intensive, most self-loving, or most colorful, etc)
- Solution for the gray-areas, so the ambiguous stuff doesn't clog up what's within the container (and time can help take care of decision-making)
  - Ripening drawer (papers)
  - Purgatory folder
- Rule about where you put something
  - A note or an idea in process; only 1 task list at a time
- 24 hour rule
  - Example of a guideline for when you bring something into your home, like a book you want to read, materials for a craft project, or an item to help you organize something: have to be ready to start using it within 24 hours.

oh,  
the  
irony...  
another  
long  
list, caps





(yep. still on  
constraint)

## Consider

*If I'm trying to hold or do too much, no shape or structure can facilitate fluid motion.*

*Affirmation: My desire to follow each inkling of curiosity is a testament to my energy and passion, not a sign that there is something wrong with me. I am learning how to let go of some of these desires and to give myself constraint, in order to create the life and work I dream of embodying in the present.*

*"Kill your darlings, but save them." (Was that Eirik?)*

Constraint is generative.

Even just having a concrete thing that I'm trying to do or make is a constraint: it makes a vision tangible and can help force compromise. It gets me out of the abstract and into my body. Example: this zine, this workshop... Deadlines or other limitations also help me jump the hurdle of my own excess. How long does something need to be, really?

*"Maybe it is a good thing for us to keep a few dreams of a house that we shall live in later, always later, so much later, in fact, that we shall not have time to achieve it."*

*The Poetics of Space* by Gaston Bachelard

# 4. purpose circuit



Once my friend Andrés told me about a kind of motor or contraption that's designed to be load-bearing. When it isn't loaded with the proper weight, the motor will run itself out. I think it can be that way with life or a project, too, where injecting more things that are exciting can help stabilize and energize the system, and keeps it moving smoothly. It's possibly an inverse of constraint and simplifying—bringing more things on board.

And/or, sometimes what I need is to jolt my mind/spirit with a refresher about what's possible and what I care about. This jolt re-calibrates my focus and informs how I engage with any other tool or framework (like constraint, and what to keep/let go of).

## **Practical applications**

- Go be with people you love
- Read, watch, listen to things that get you re-excited about the things you're excited about (or help you discover what that is)
- Events and activities that get you outside your house/world

# Additional elements

- visibility
- Accountability
- Compelling story
- centralization?

more t b d ...

These ideas are a work-in-progress, and I'd love to continue the conversation: [si.radovsky@gmail.com](mailto:si.radovsky@gmail.com)

More resources (and more coming) on [silohradovsky.net](http://silohradovsky.net).