

KINESTHETIC MODELING (KM)

Getting out of the BOX is the NEW BOX

ON JUNE 23, 2010 BY ADMIN

Thoughts on the deterioration of a powerful metaphor.



The first time I heard someone say “out of the box thinking”, I was riveted by the image. So was everyone else it turns out. And now, some fifteen years later, people pepper conversations with it. It has become a cliché. I get the same feeling when I hear that we should “brainstorm” about a pesky problem that has come up for the upteenth time in a meeting. Did you know that a true brainstorm is defined as a temporary fit of insanity. It takes courage and discipline to conduct one effectively. But, usually the casual meeting request is followed by the same old predictable stream of consciousness chatter. And, having appeased our minds with an homage to creativity, we return to the predictable.

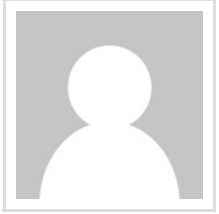
The cartoon above came from my sketchbook. It’s a product of my wandering mind and pen. People seem to like it, especially the orange box on the right. They single it out as the one that works for them. This has surprised me because I see it as part of a sequence. Singling it out is understandable; it carries some of the power of the original utterance*. But preferring it after all these years is like singling out a word at the end of a sentence for praise. As I drew the five box series I was mulling over how metaphors lose their power as we use them unconsciously. Need some innovation? Push the “think out of the box” button.

One way to retrieve that power is with a picture. My doodle had that unintended consequence: a pleasing recovery. Now, I wonder what we have to do to spark our next inclination to brainstorm?

A side note: the colorizing of the drawing came later on my iPod touch, of all things. I had been showing people the sketch. And in yet another peripatetic moment, I re’-worked it in Sketchbook-mobile, a \$3 app from Autodesk! Makes me want an iPad. The colors re-invigorated the metaphor. They put a visual exponent on it!

* I wonder if anyone knows who said, “out of the box thinking” first?

1 comment



Wisdomofhands.blogspot.com
April 24, 2011 at 3:33 pm - Reply

John, as a box maker, the idea of thinking outside the box has always amused me because you can do so many meaningful things in your approach to a wooden box. The form offers amazing opportunities, and it would be just as useful for people to think inside the box as outside of it. When I teach, I have my students go at the box, breaking it down into its facets and features, and we can spend nearly an hour exploring the various options it presents. Thank you for your illustration and observation of this cliché.

Sadly, most woodworkers think of boxes they’ve seen. My challenge is to get them to understand how their own box can draw from the many facets of their own real lives. The most important thing is not to be different, but that what they make be meaningful and expressive of their own intellectual and emotional landscape. Creativity is overrated.

Leave a Reply

Logged in as John Ward. Log out?

Comment

Comment

Archives

- June 2010
- April 2010
- January 2010
- August 2009
- July 2009
- June 2009
- April 2009
- March 2009
- February 2009
- January 2009

Calendar

SEPTEMBER 2023

M	T	W	T	F	S	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	
« Jun						

Categories

- Kinesthetic Modeling (KM)
- Uncategorized