TEL EPISODE #005:
Inside The Box **with Drew Boyd**
Show Notes: http://www.theelpodcast.com/tel-005-inside-box-drew-boyd/

Welcome to The Entrepreneurs Library, the only book-centric podcast that reviews all the top-selling business books and shares author's perspective, firsthand. This is your resource to finding the next great book that will enable you to grow personally and professionally. Welcome your host, Wade Danielson.

WADE: Thank you for joining us today on The EL. Today we have Drew Boyd, author of *Inside the Box*. Welcome, Drew, and thank you for joining us on The Entrepreneurs Library.

DREW: Thanks. Nice to be here.

WADE: Will you take just a moment to introduce yourself and tell us just a little bit about you personally?

DREW: Yeah, I'd be happy to. I'm a professor at the University of Cincinnati, but truth is, I'm what I call a "faux academic." I'm really a corporate guy. I've been in large organizations for over 30 years, and 17 of those years were at the global healthcare company Johnson & Johnson, which is where I learned this method that the book is about.

WADE: Oh, fantastic. Thank you for sharing that. Now let's jump right into your book, *Inside the Box*, which was just made available for purchase on June 10, 2014. Drew, we're going to move quickly, but here are some of the top questions our listeners would love to get answered.

What was the inspiration for you behind writing *Inside the Box*?

DREW: It's really inspired from two perspectives. One is what I alluded to before, my time at Johnson & Johnson. We were very desperate to find an innovation method to create new medical products, and we spent millions of dollars looking for a method. Just by chance, I happened to find out about this method called systematic inventive thinking, and we realized immediately that it was special,

that it worked very well. And I continued to practice it, really for the last 12 years. In fact, I'm probably the most experienced corporate practitioner of the method.

And then a few years later, I met my co-author, Dr. Jacob Goldenberg. It's his research that this method is based on, and he and I became good friends and just started teaching together and working together. And that's when he popped the question, "Do you want to write a book together?" And without even thinking about it, of course I said yes, not realizing I was signing my life away for the next 2 to 3 years.
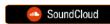
But that's the perspective of Jacob, who's more of what we call the scientific – he's more like the lab rat, and Drew, the corporate guy, I'm more the street rat. The two together I think work well in this book to give both of those perspectives.

WADE: Excellent. What would you say makes your book different from others regarding a similar topic?

DREW: Well, there are a lot of innovation books out there, believe me, and they come out all the time. It is true, though, that our book is the only book that details the method called systematic inventive thinking. It's really a book about the "how" of innovation. Most of the books you deal with today on this topic are more about the "why" or about how you execute innovation and things like that. Very few, if any, really deal with the "how." And that's what companies want to know. "Tell us how to do it."

So we wrote the book with this intent, to give people essentially a way to understand creativity, understand the method, the cognitive tools of how you use your brain in a different way to produce novel ideas you weren't likely to have produced without the method.

WADE: Okay, excellent. All right, now this is my favorite part of the interview, and that's where we take a deep dive into your book. I'm not going to interrupt you at all; I really want you to just take us, this future reader, through your book before we get a chance to get our hands on the actual book itself.
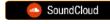
DREW: Yeah, great. The book starts with an introduction, like a lot of books, but this introduction is not just a brief intro. It's really an introduction to the method. So it's essential that readers read the introduction, because that's where we introduce the genesis of it, where it comes from, and its legitimacy, this idea of patterns, and how innovation can be thought of as a series of patterns that regulate the mind and channel the ideation process. It's in the introduction that we make this case, a very compelling case, of how patterns can boost your creative output.

We also introduce the story of how I met Jacob and why we decided to write the book, and what we think this book is for. We give some examples of how it's been used in the last 15 years or so. So it really does set the stage for the whole book.

Then in Chapter 1, we dive into one of the most important principles. The method, SIT, is essentially 4 techniques and a set of principles. Chapter 1 covers perhaps the most important one. It's called the closed world principle, and we titled the chapter "Creativity Hides Inside the Box." Because what the closed world is, the closed world is this imaginary boundary around where your product or service is being used.

And the closed world principle says this: that the farther away you have to go to import a solution to your problem, the less creative it's going to be. In other words, to be creative, the most creative solutions are right under your nose, so to speak. So what the 5 techniques do is they facilitate your brain to utilize resources immediately around you to generate the most creative solutions possible. Very important chapter.

Then the next five chapters detail each of the five techniques, with Chapter 2 starting off with what's called the Subtraction technique. Many innovative products have had a core essential element removed, initially in a way that seemed absurd or crazy, and we go through and detail many stories and many examples of how the method, the technique has been used, as well as the existence of the pattern in other products.

And then we finish the chapter with a specific list of steps that you follow to use the Subtraction technique, and then finally, common pitfalls. We want people to avoid the routine mistakes that sometimes happen when using the technique. We want them to use the technique perfectly. And that's how each of the chapters are structured.
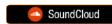
Chapter 3 is the Division technique. Many innovative products have taken the product, or a component of it, and divided it, and then rearranged it back into the product or the system, once again, in a way that was counterintuitive. Once again, this chapter tells some very nice stories about the prevalence of this particular pattern, and the many products and services that the Division technique can produce.

Chapter 4 is about the Multiplication technique. The chapter title is "Be Fruitful and Multiply." Many innovative products have taken a component, created a copy of it, but then changed the component in some counterintuitive, non-obvious way. This pattern is very unique, this technique is unique.

And we tell stories of things like the tsetse fly and how one eradicates tsetse flies. The way you do it? You make a copy of the male tsetse fly, but you lightly eradicate them to sterilize them, so that when they go back out into the population, they're getting with females that then aren't able to produce offspring, and eventually the whole population of tsetse flies dies out. It's stories like that I think our readers have really come to enjoy, these wide variety of stories across many industries and many parts of life.

The fifth chapter is called "New Tricks for Old Dogs." It's about the Task Unification technique. Many innovative products have taken a component of the product and then assigned it an additional job, something it wasn't intended to do. This technique, like the others, produces some amazing innovations.

We tell the story, somewhat of an urban legend story, but we still think it's appropriate, of Thomas Edison. In one of his beautiful homes, he had a large gate that you had to open and close, but it was very difficult to push open and very

difficult to close. It just seemed odd that a guy like Thomas Edison would have a gate that didn't seem to be working well.

It turns out that he had attached a pump to the gate, so that every time his guests opened or closed the gate, they were pumping fresh water into his plumbing system. It's a classic case of the closed world environment – using a resource, again, right under your nose for this highly innovative purpose. It's a great story, one of many in that chapter.

Chapter 6 is about the fifth and final technique. The title of the chapter is "Clever Correlations: The Attribute Dependency Technique." Many innovative products – in fact, the majority – have taken a variable or an attribute of the product and an attribute of its environment and created a dependency between them. As one thing changes, another thing changes.

Think of transition sunglasses. When you go outside with transition sunglasses, the brighter the light, the darker the lens gets. It's a classic example of the Attribute Dependency technique. And like all the other chapters, we teach explicitly how to use this particular technique, and end the chapter, again, with common pitfalls, so that people can perfect their use of the technique.

Chapter 7 takes a little bit of a deviation in that we talk about what are called contradictions. The title of the chapter is "Contradictions: A Path to Creativity." Most people think that contradictions are a barrier to creativity. A contradiction is when you have two opposing ideas that can't exist at the same time. So what we do in this chapter is show people how just the posit is true: that contradictions are a source of creative thinking. We do this by showing people how to use the 5 techniques to solve contradictions, to resolve them.

This is applicable in things like contract negotiations, where two sides are competing; they have the contradiction of competing for the same thing. How it might work in business situations, where you need more resources but you don't have the money to purchase it. A lot of our life is faced with these so-called contradictions, and if you know how to break them, guess what? You become a highly innovative person. This is a great chapter.

Our final chapter, simply enough, is titled "Final Thoughts," Chapter 8. Here, Wade, we're really trying to give people a sense that creativity is the way you make the world a better place. We want people to feel this sense of empowerment, that they can learn innovation. Creativity is a skill. It's not a gift; it's not something you're born with. You can use these 5 techniques to boost your creative output, no matter where you are in the creativity scale.

I have to finish with the Epilogue. The Epilogue tells a very nice story about my experience teaching children, as little as 3rd grade children, this method, and the surprising result of how these children were so capable at using this method to produce innovative ideas. The message simply is this: that if a 3rd grader can do it, then executives and people from all walks of life and business or other professions should be able to innovate with this method as well.
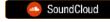
So that's a tour of the book, chapter by chapter. We end with acknowledgments, of course. We had many people help us along the way, and we give proper credit to those friends and colleagues that have inspired us throughout this writing of this book.

WADE: Great. You did an awesome job of taking us through the book and talking about a couple of the different techniques. But if there was only one concept or principle or action item that a reader could take out of your entire book, what would you want that to be?

DREW: The idea that I would take out of the book is this idea that innovation is a skill. It's not a gift; it's a skill that can be learned, and learned in a systematic way by harnessing the power of patterns and how those patterns can regulate your thinking, channel your ideation, and make you create concepts that you weren't likely to have created on your own.

WADE: From what it sounds like, you guys have spent a ton of time on putting this book together. So I want to give you an opportunity to brag on yourself. What is a quote that you guys came up with, or that you look back in your book, that you're really, really proud of? A quote that you guys have in there.

DREW: The quote in the book that – it's not ours, to be honest with you, but it's still my favorite quote in terms of innovation. It's by Harry McAlindon, and the quote goes like this: "The world leaders in innovation will also be the world leaders in everything else." And man, I can't think of a quote that says it better.

That really just gives people the impetus to understand the importance of innovation. Whether you're at a personal level, at a corporate level, at a state/national level, innovation is essentially how we compete in the world, how we overcome our challenges, overcome our adversaries, and make the world a better place. That quote sums that up very nicely.

WADE: Yeah, I agree. Drew, if there was only one book that you could recommend to our listeners based on the way that it has impacted your life – and it can be on the same topic, or it can be any book at all – what would that be?
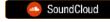
DREW: The one book I'd recommend is called *The Act of Creation*. It's an old book. It's by a guy named Arthur Koestler. That's spelled K-o-e-s-t-l-e-r, Arthur Koestler. I found it in a book that was printed in 1963. It's out of print now, but I'll tell you what, it's a book that I take with me on trips over and over. It's really inspired me to think about creativity throughout the ages and how it's occurred in different ways, and the various metaphors about innovation and creativity.

It really was an inspiration in a lot of ways for our book as well, because the research by Jacob formalized this idea of systematic creativity, but Koestler really laid down that foundation for thinking about creativity. I highly recommend it.

WADE: Excellent. Drew, thank you for your time today. Before we depart, can you recommend the best way for our listeners to get more information on you and *Inside the Box*?

DREW: To get more information about the book, I'd recommend readers check out a few resources. One is our website, called InsidetheBoxInnovation.com. But I also have a blog called Innovation in Practice, and I've been blogging for about 7 years now. I blog religiously, just about this method and its application in a wide

variety of scenarios. So if you look at the blog as a supplement to the book, that'd be a good way to consume it.

And it's also linked very closely to my other resources. For example, Twitter; I tweet frequently. And I have a Pinterest site, Pinterest.com/drewboyd. If you'll go to my Pinterest site, Wade, what you'll find is I have a board for each of the 5 techniques in this method, and those boards contain examples of products and services that epitomize that particular technique. So it's a great way for people to reinforce their understanding of the method and really get a sense of how it's so powerful to create highly innovative products.

WADE: Great. I'm glad you took the time to go through those different resources, because I believe that after people read this book – and like I said, I'm not all the way through just yet, but I already know that I'm going to be hitting up the blog and these websites, some of this stuff, to look for some more depth and some more information, some more examples. So I appreciate you sharing that.

And again, thanks again for being on the show. I can't wait to – I say this to almost everybody if I love their book, and that's that I'm hoping we get to talk again here in the future. Maybe there'll be an updated edition.
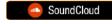
DREW: Yeah, stay in touch. I'm sincere about that, and I'm happy to take calls or take emails any time if you ever have questions or I can be of any help to you.

WADE: Excellent. Thank you so much, Drew. I appreciate your time.

DREW: Thanks. Bye bye.

WADE: Thanks again for listening in today. If you would like to get your hands on *Inside the Box* or any of the other resources mentioned by Drew Boyd, just look at the show notes at TheELPodcast.com.

Looking for your next book idea? Head over to TheELPodcast.com, where Wade shares his amazing resource, "The Top 10 Business Books Recommended by Over 500 Entrepreneurs," with you for free. That's TheELPodcast.com. Till the next time, keep it on the EL.

LINKS AND RESOURCES MENTIONED IN THIS EPISODE:

Buy *The Act of Creation* by Arthur Koestler on Amazon

Visit InsideTheBoxInnovation.com for more information about the book

Visit InnovationInPractice.com for supplement content of the book

Buy *Inside The Box* by Jacob Goldenberg and Drew Boyd on Amazon

Video: Wade's Two-Minute Takeaway on *Inside The Box*