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# SENSORY & IMPERFECT

SLOW DESIGN IN AN AI ERA

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DESIGN MATTERS  
MC DEAN  
17TH JUNE 2025

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“As much as AI is about algorithms, it is also about the human condition — and we need to make sure that humanity is at the center of this powerful technology, especially as it changes so fast.”

— Dr Fei-Fei Li, Godmother of AI



# WHAT IS SLOW DESIGN

A PRACTICE ROOTED  
IN REFLECTION  
RESPONSIBILITY  
AND LONG-TERM  
VALUE





ALASTAIR FAUD-LUKE



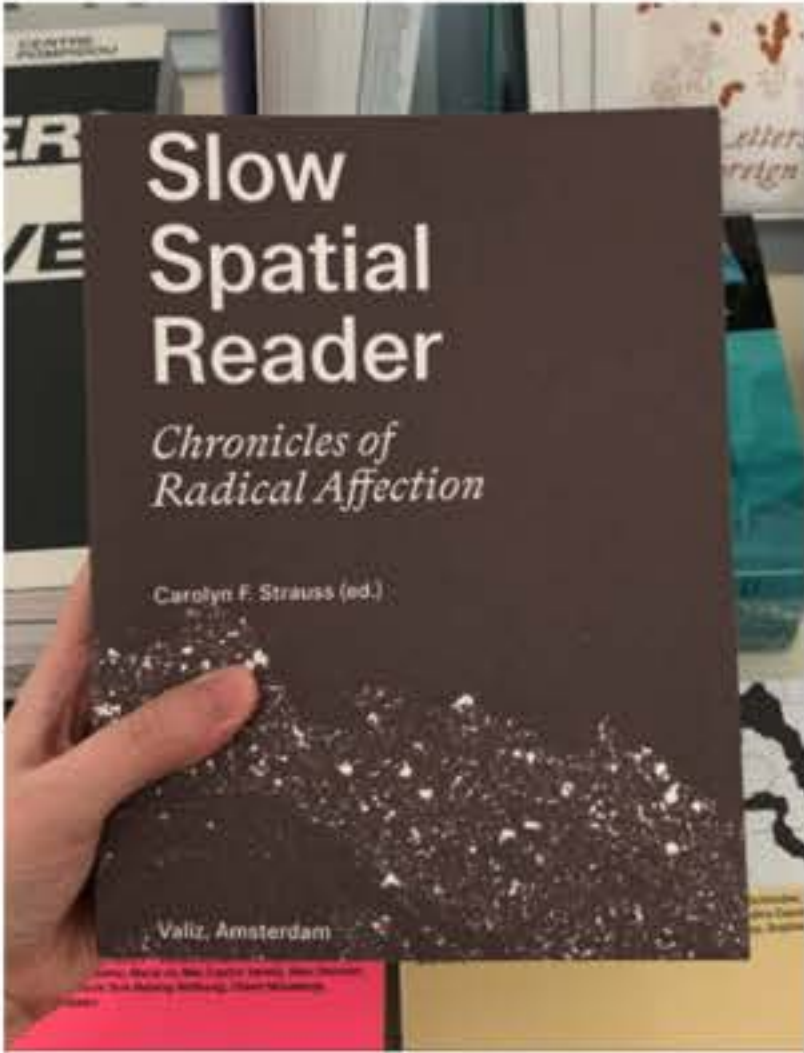
CAROLYN STRAUSS

SLOW  
RESEARCH  
LAB

ABOUT  
VISION  
WHO  
WHERE  
HOW

INQUIRY  
ENCOUNTER  
RESOURCES

Contact  
Follow  
Current



Slow Spatial Reader: Chronicles of Radical Affection | Valiz 2021

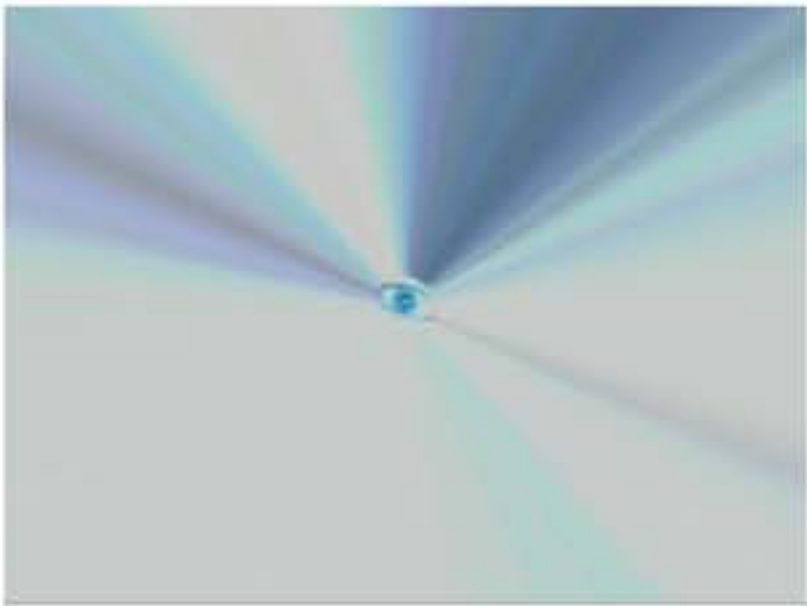


Encounter | IN-SITU DIALOGUES

site-specific, immersive, probing, participatory, intimate, discovery, deconstruction, attention, acknowledgment



Resources | CONVERSATIONS | Interviews



Inquiry | SCALE | Imagined

re-revealing, immersion, presence, absence, expansion, recalibration



Inquiry | SPACE | Activated

opening, challenging, amplified, deconstruction, reconstruction, awareness, accountability, performativity, presence, anchoring, kinetic, immersive

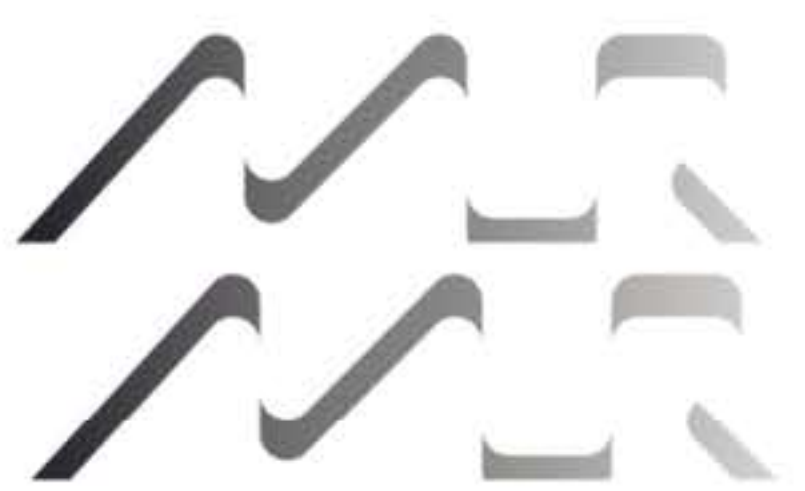


Encounter | RESEARCH RESIDENCIES

site-specific, new horizons, community engagement, expanding borders, doing slowing



Resources | PUBLICATIONS | Slow reading(s)



Resources | PODCAST | AI Murmurs



Inquiry | TIME | Reclaimed

deceleration, presence, personal rhythm, autonomy, resilience



Inquiry | SCALE | Familiar

open, transparent, symbiotic, non-anthropocentric, mutual respect, attention, trust, care



Inquiry | SPACE | Perceived

sensory, (im)material, immersive, unexpected, receptivity, curiosity



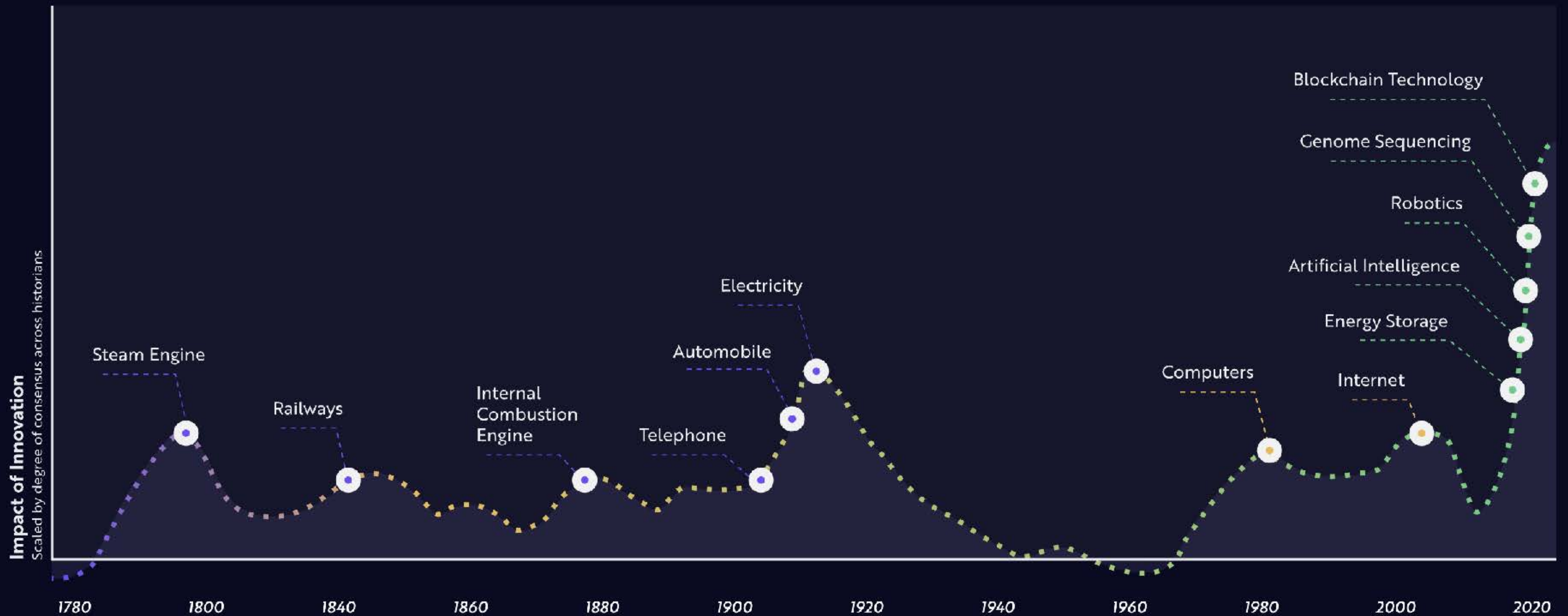
# FAST

# SLOW

OPTIMIZE  
ENGAGE FAST  
ADD FEATURES  
SHORT-TERM GAINS

REFLECT  
ENGAGE DEEPLY  
ADD MEANING  
LONG-TERM VALUE

# THE AGE OF ACCELERATION



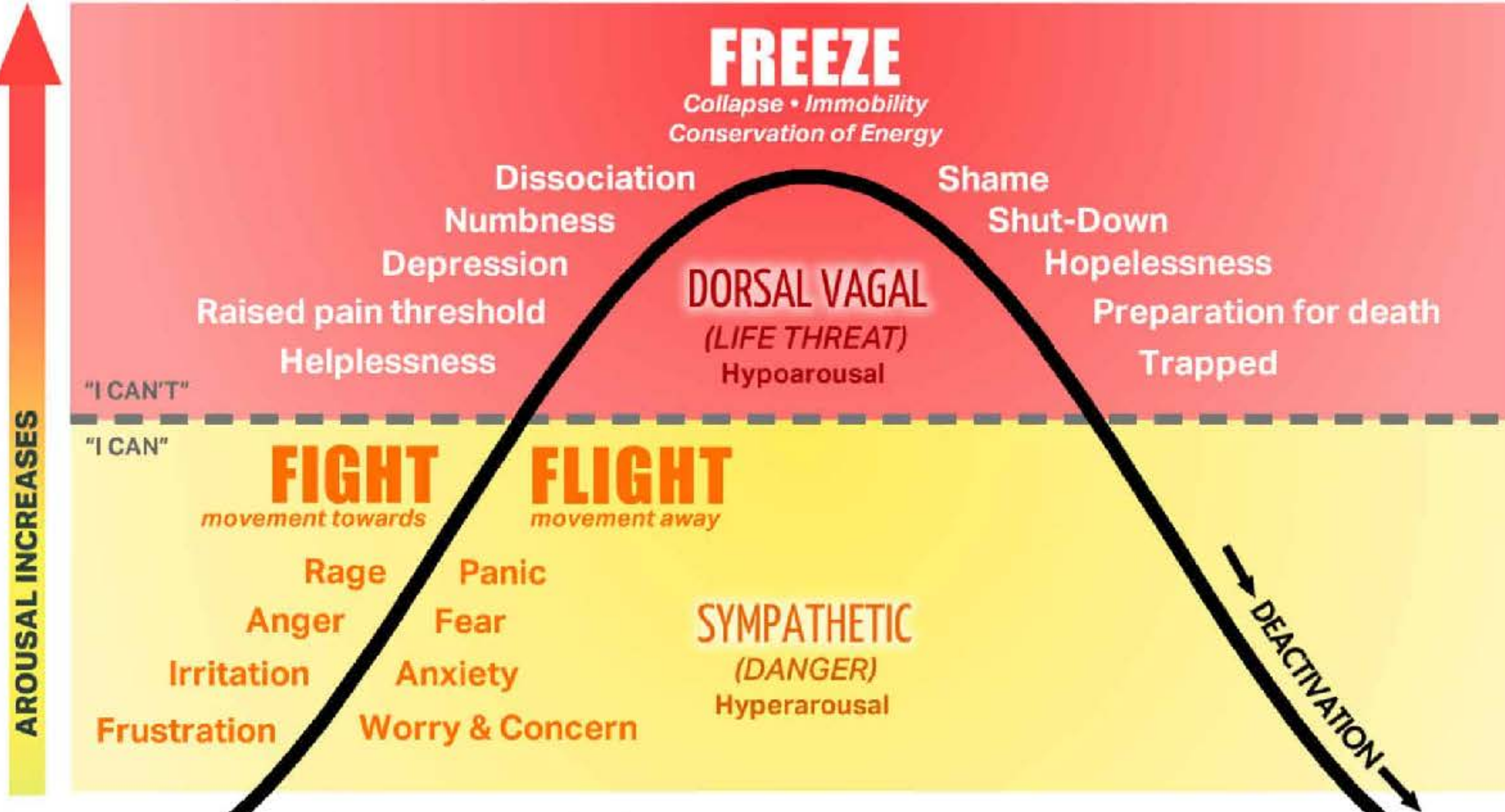
# FLOODED WITH DATA STARVED FOR MEANING

Photo by [Maxine guo on Pexels](#)



# POLYVAGAL CHART

The nervous system with a neuroception of threat:



The nervous system with a neuroception of safety:

## PARASYMPATHETIC NERVOUS SYSTEM

DORSAL VAGAL COMPLEX

### Increases

Fuel storage & insulin activity • Immobilization behavior (with fear)  
Endorphins that help numb and raise the pain threshold  
Conservation of metabolic resources

### Decreases

Heart Rate • Blood Pressure • Temperature • Muscle Tone  
Facial Expressions & Eye Contact • Depth of Breath • Social Behavior  
Attunement to Human Voice • Sexual Responses • Immune Response

## SYMPATHETIC NERVOUS SYSTEM

### Increases

Blood Pressure • Heart Rate • Fuel Availability • Adrenaline  
Oxygen Circulation to Vital Organs • Blood Clotting • Pupil Size  
Dilation of Bronchi • Defensive Responses

### Decreases

Fuel Storage • Insulin Activity • Digestion • Salivation  
Relational Ability • Immune Response

## PARASYMPATHETIC NERVOUS SYSTEM

VENTRAL VAGAL COMPLEX

### Increases

Digestion • Intestinal Motility • Resistance to Infection  
Immune Response • Rest and Recuperation • Health & Vitality  
Circulation to non-vital organs (skin, extremities)  
Oxytocin (neuromodulator involved in social bonds that allows immobility without fear) • Ability to Relate and Connect  
Movement in eyes and head turning • Prosody in voice • Breath

### Decreases

Defensive Responses

VVC is the beginning and end of stress response.

When VVC is dominant, SNS and DVC are in transient blends which promote healthy physiological functioning.

“I don’t feel good about my relationship with technology right now...It feels a lot like being jostled on a crowded street in New York, or being bombarded with notifications and flashing lights in Las Vegas.”

— Sam Altman, CEO of OpenAI

Photo by Snapwire on Pexels



# OUR BEST IDEAS EMERGE WHEN THE MIND WANDERS

Photo by [Juan Pablo Serrano on Pexels](#)



RELENTLESS  
EFFICIENCY IS NOT  
ALWAYS NECESSARY

IMPERFECTION  
MAKES US HUMAN

Photo credit: <https://risottostudio.com/>



# 6 PRINCIPLES

## REVEAL

HIDDEN OR  
OVERLOOKED ASPECTS  
OF EVERYDAY LIFE

## REFLECT

ENCOURAGE  
CONTEMPLATION  
AND INTROSPECTION

## PARTICIPATE

PARTICIPATION IN THE  
DESIGN PROCESS

## EXPAND

SENSE OF TIME,  
SPACE AND CONTEXT

## ENGAGE

EXPERIENCES,  
ENVIRONEMENTS, OBJECTS

## EVOLVE

DESIGN TO EVOLVE  
AND ADAPT OVER TIME

# WE NEED TO ENGAGE OUR EMOTIONS

EMOTIONAL RESONANCE BAR

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TECH EXAMPLES 

# REVEAL

This principle focuses on highlighting the spaces and experiences in everyday life that are often overlooked.



Photo credit Akiko Hirari

# AKIKO HIRARI



# Introducing the

Explore the  
latest updates

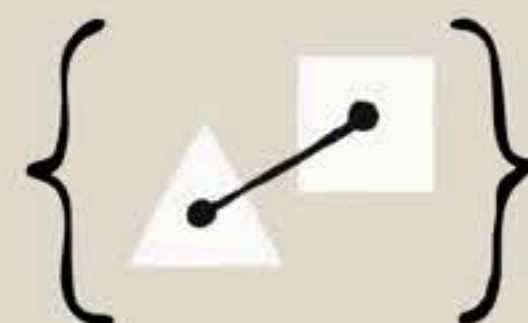


Claude 4



[Read the announcement](#)

API  
capabilities



[Read the announcement](#)

Claude  
Code



[Learn more](#)

Research



[Read the announcement](#)

# Claude 4 model family

Meet [Claude Opus 4](#) and [Claude Sonnet 4](#), our most powerful models for coding, researching, and writing

[Try Claude](#)

[Build with Claude](#)

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HOW CAN WE AMPLIFY REVEAL

EXPAND

REFLECT

ENGAGE

PARTICIPATE

EVOLVE

# EXPAND

This principle encourages designers to consider the potential "expressions" of objects and environments beyond their immediate functionality, lifespans, and physical attributes.

Photo credit Katie Patterson



# KATIE PATERSON - FUTURES LIBRARY



Photo credit Katie Patterson



Earth Species Project

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[WHAT WE DO](#)

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[SUPPORT](#)

*Katie Zacarian swimming with Hope, a Juvenile Sperm Whale (*Physeter macrocephalus*) near the island of Dominica in the waters of the Eastern Carribean Sea. Photo by Keri Wilk.*

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REVEAL

HOW CAN WE AMPLIFY **EXPAND**

REFLECT

ENGAGE

PARTICIPATE

EVOLVE

# REFLECT

Slow design promotes contemplation and reflective consumption, urging users to consider the impact of their choices.

Photo credit [www.heliograph.com](http://www.heliograph.com)

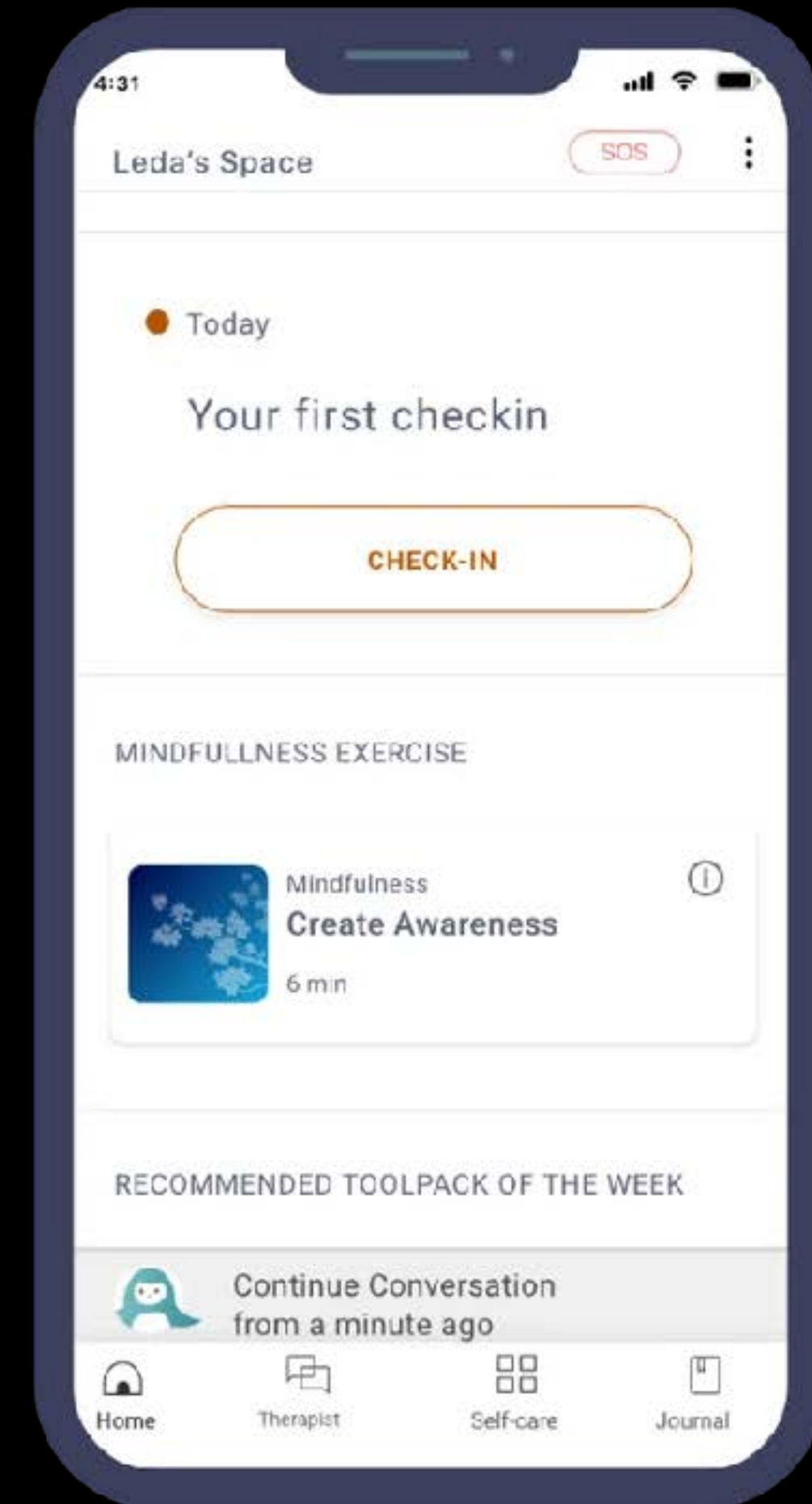
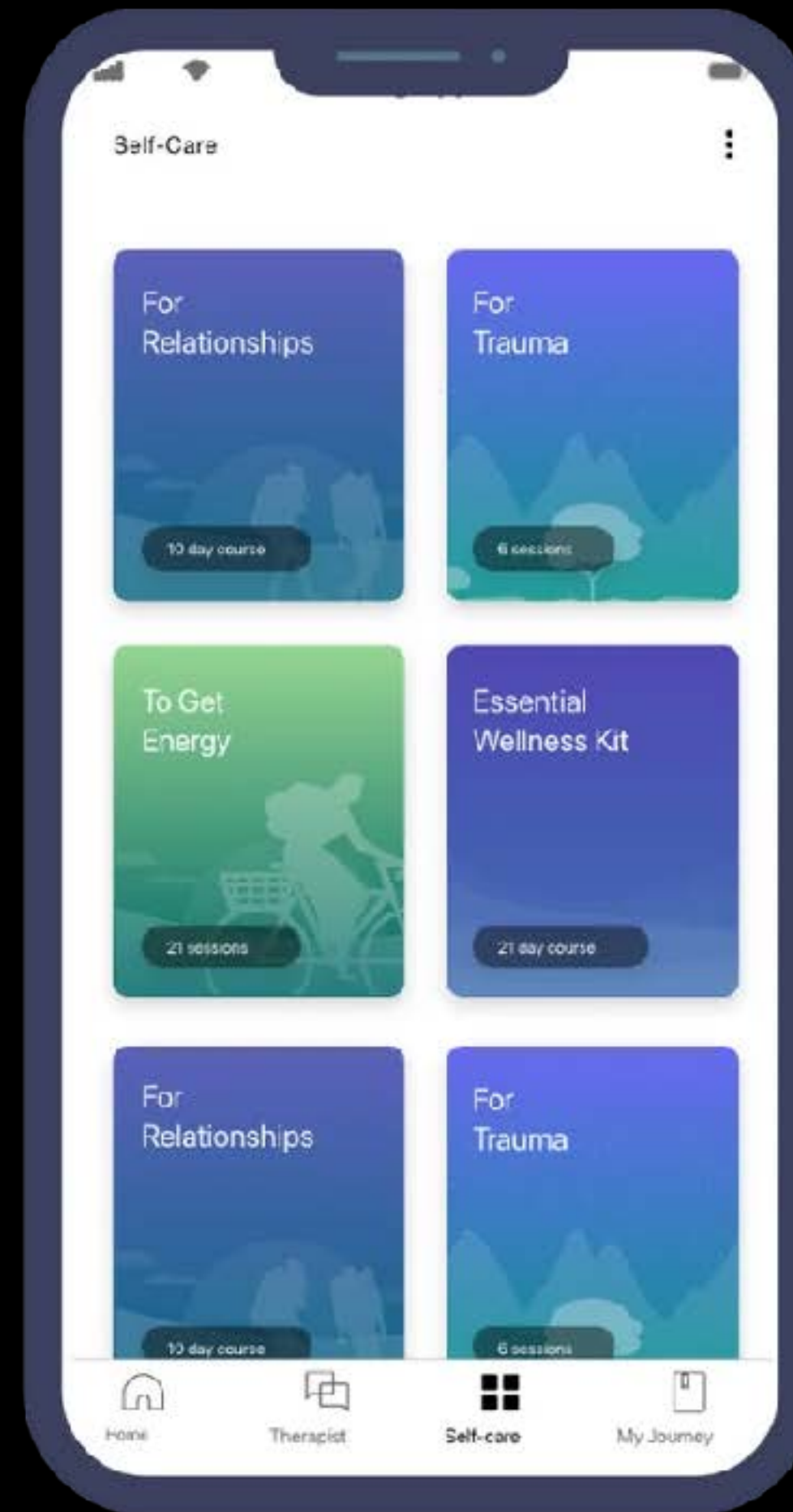


# ANGUS WARE & JEFFREY SIMPSON - HELIOGRAPH



Photo credit [www.heliograph.com](http://www.heliograph.com)

# FOSTER INTROSPECTION AND SELF DISCOVERY



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REVEAL

EXPAND

HOW CAN WE AMPLIFY REFLECT

ENGAGE

PARTICIPATE

EVOLVE

# ENGAGE

It emphasizes collaboration, transparency, and open-source processes, allowing for the evolution of designs over time.

Photo credit Lynbrek Croft

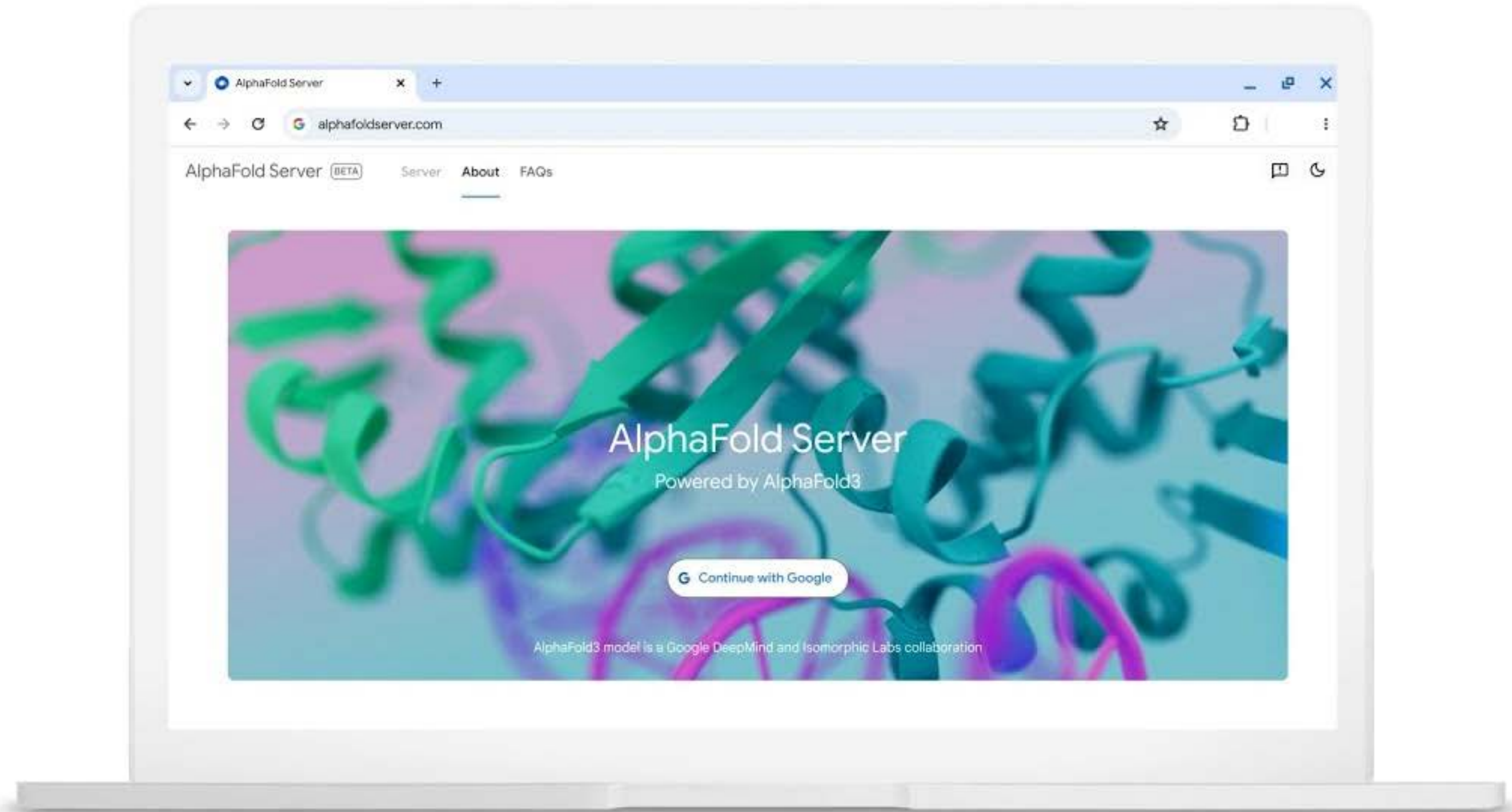


# LYNN CASSELLS & SANDRA BAER



Photo credit Lynbrek Croft

To get started, head to [alphafoldserver.com](https://alphafoldserver.com)  
and login with your Google account



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REVEAL

EXPAND

REFLECT

HOW CAN WE AMPLIFY **ENGAGE**

PARTICIPATE

EVOLVE

# PARTICIPATE

This principle encourages active participation from users in the design process.

Photo credit MONA

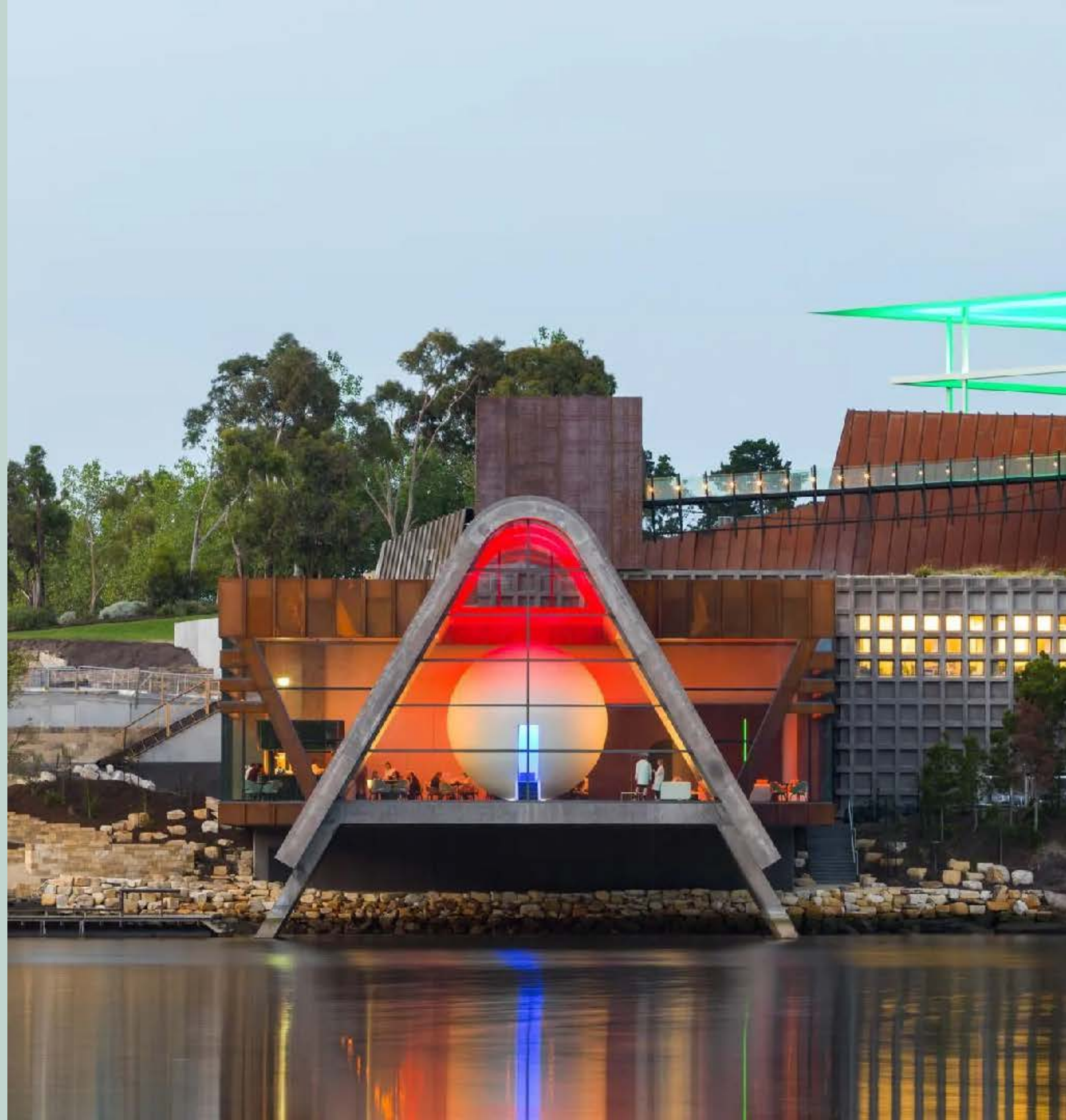
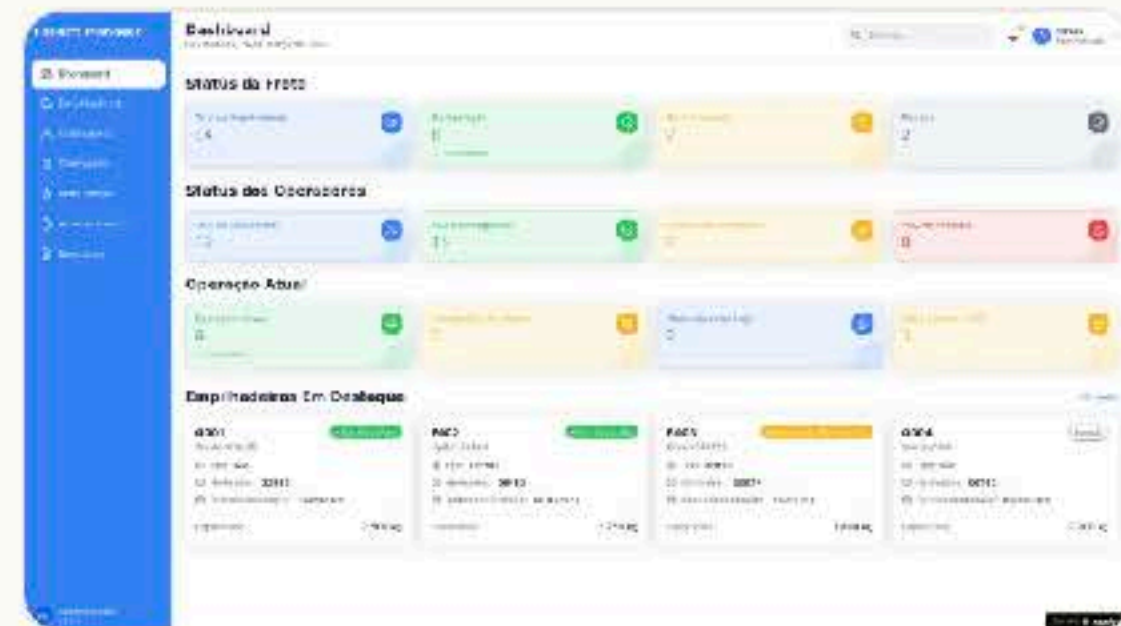


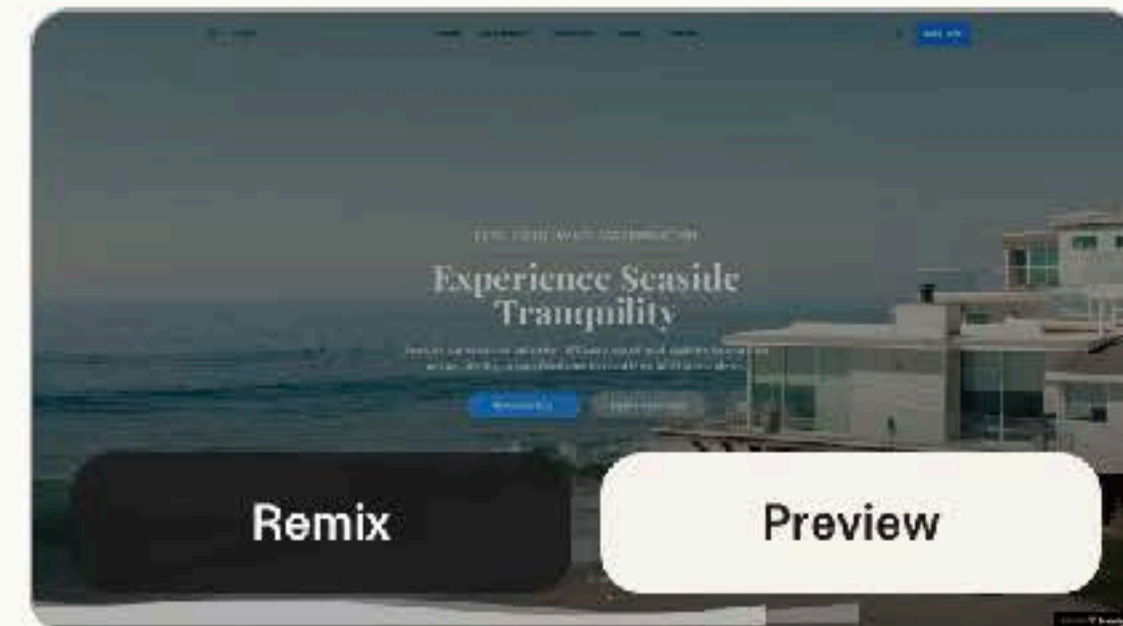


Photo credit MONA/Jesse Hunniford

characterforge-imagix Consumer App  
2482 Remixes



cortex-second-brain Consumer App  
2199 Remixes



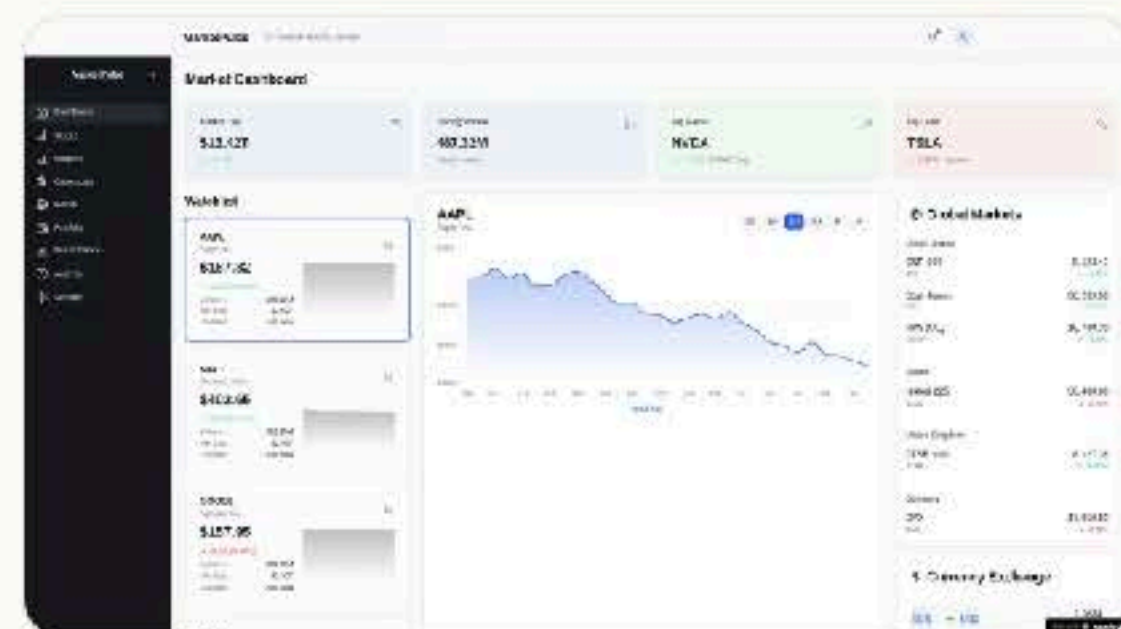
billify-generator Internal Tools  
2120 Remixes



crypto-trade-template Website  
2039 Remixes



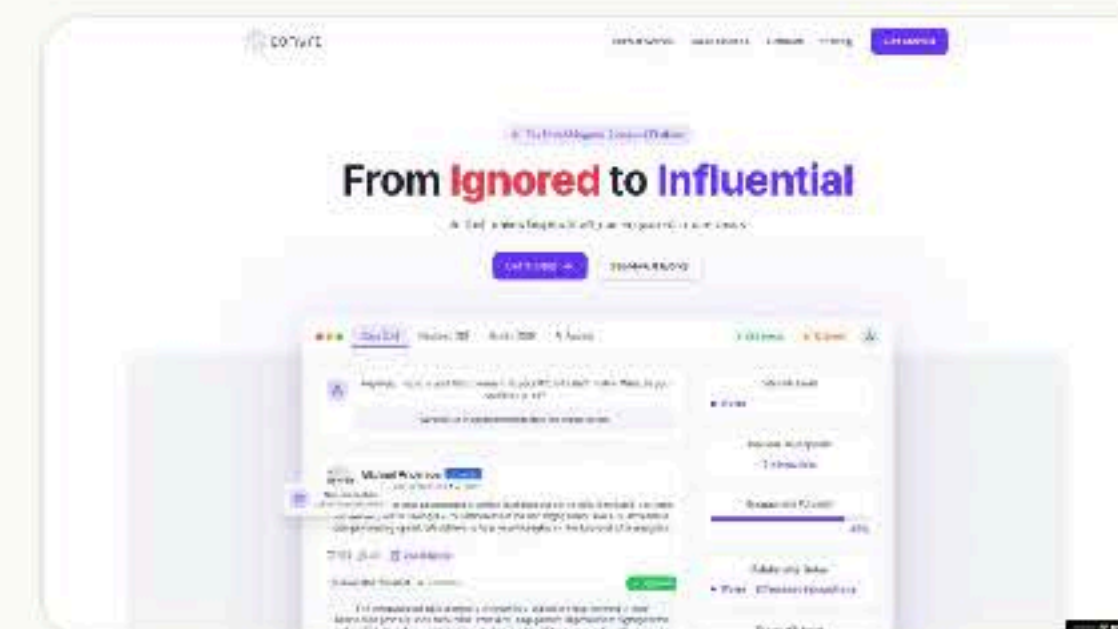
forklift-navigator Prototype  
2000 Remixes



modern-seaside-stay Website  
1972 Remixes



landing-simulator-sorcery Website  
1678 Remixes



orangery-ventures-harmo... Website  
1617 Remixes



market-mosaic-online Consumer App  
1577 Remixes



psk-services Website  
1387 Remixes



glow-convert-sell Website  
1164 Remixes



trailguidecoihues Consumer App  
892 Remixes



Show More

REVEAL  
EXPAND  
REFLECT  
ENGAGE

HOW CAN WE AMPLIFY PARTICIPATE

EVOLVE

# EVOLVE

Slow design recognizes that richer experiences can emerge from the dynamic maturation of objects and environments over time.

Photo credit [Art Interview](#)

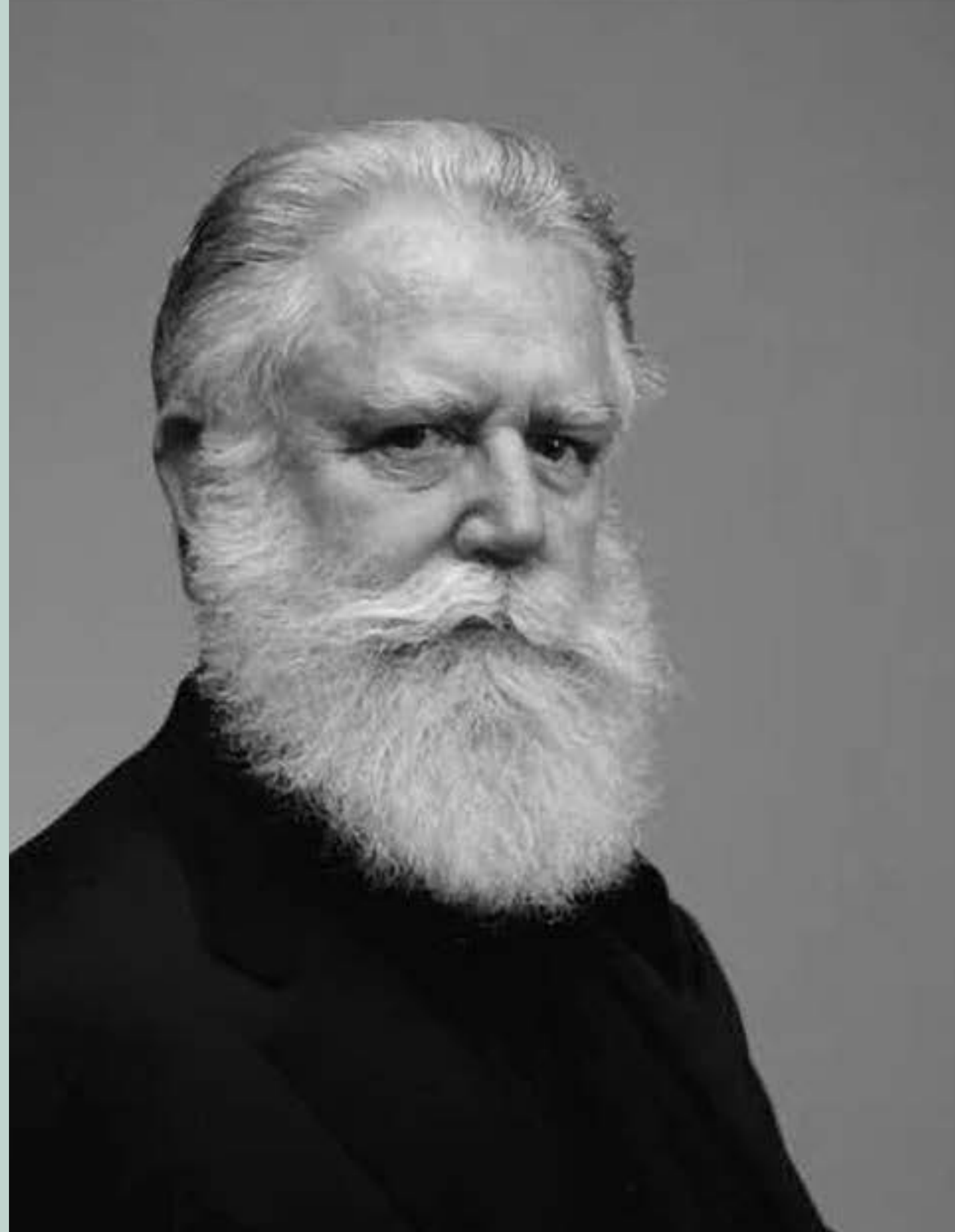




Photo credit [Copenhagen Contemporary](#)

# Meet the new Notion AI

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Get Notion free

Request a demo

Trusted by teams at



## Search

Find answers from Notion, Slack, Google Drive & more



## Generate

Create & edit docs in your own style



## Analyze

Get insights from PDFs & images



## Chat

Access knowledge from GPT-4 & Claude

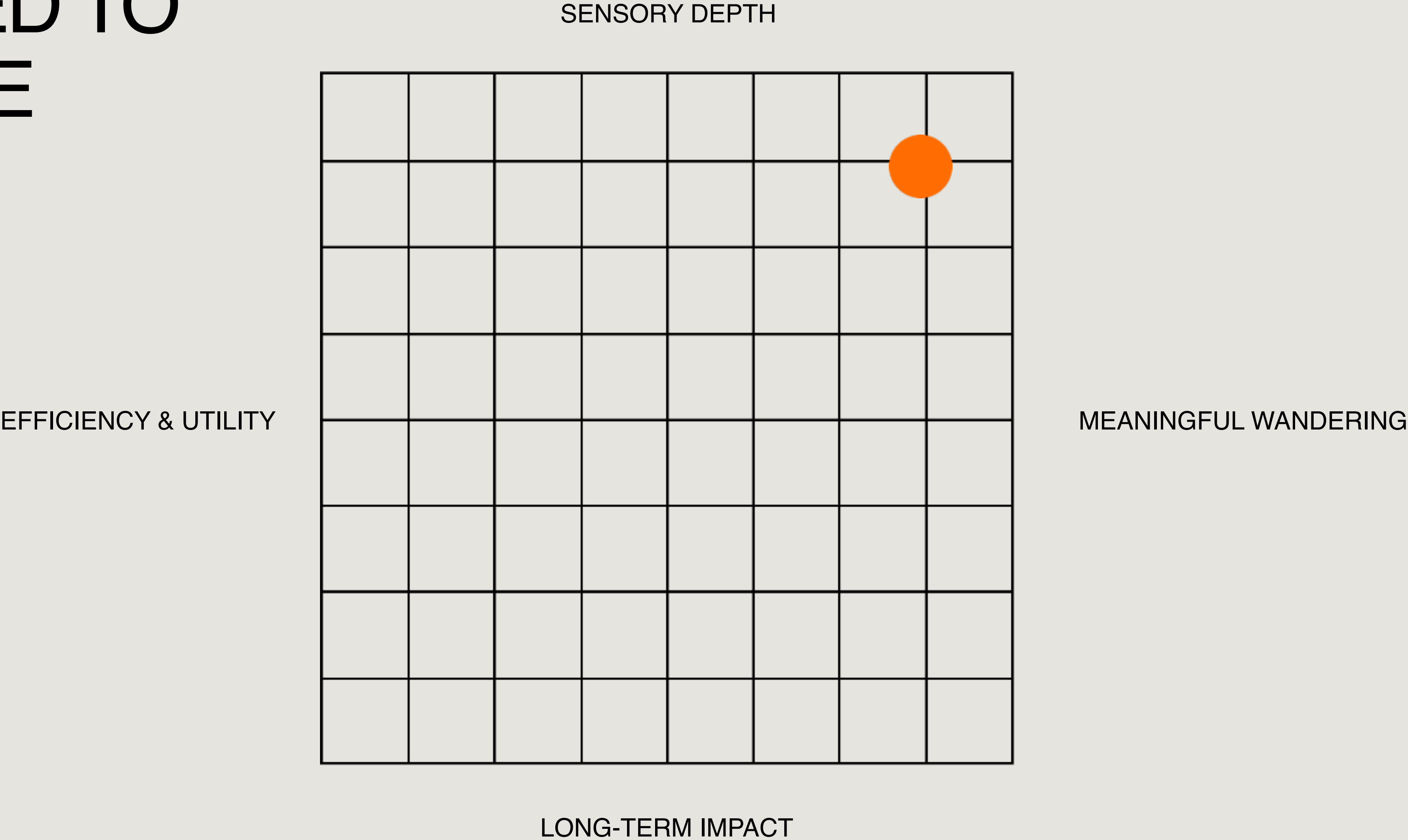


REVEAL  
EXPAND  
REFLECT  
ENGAGE  
PARTICIPATE

HOW CAN WE AMPLIFY **EVOLVE**

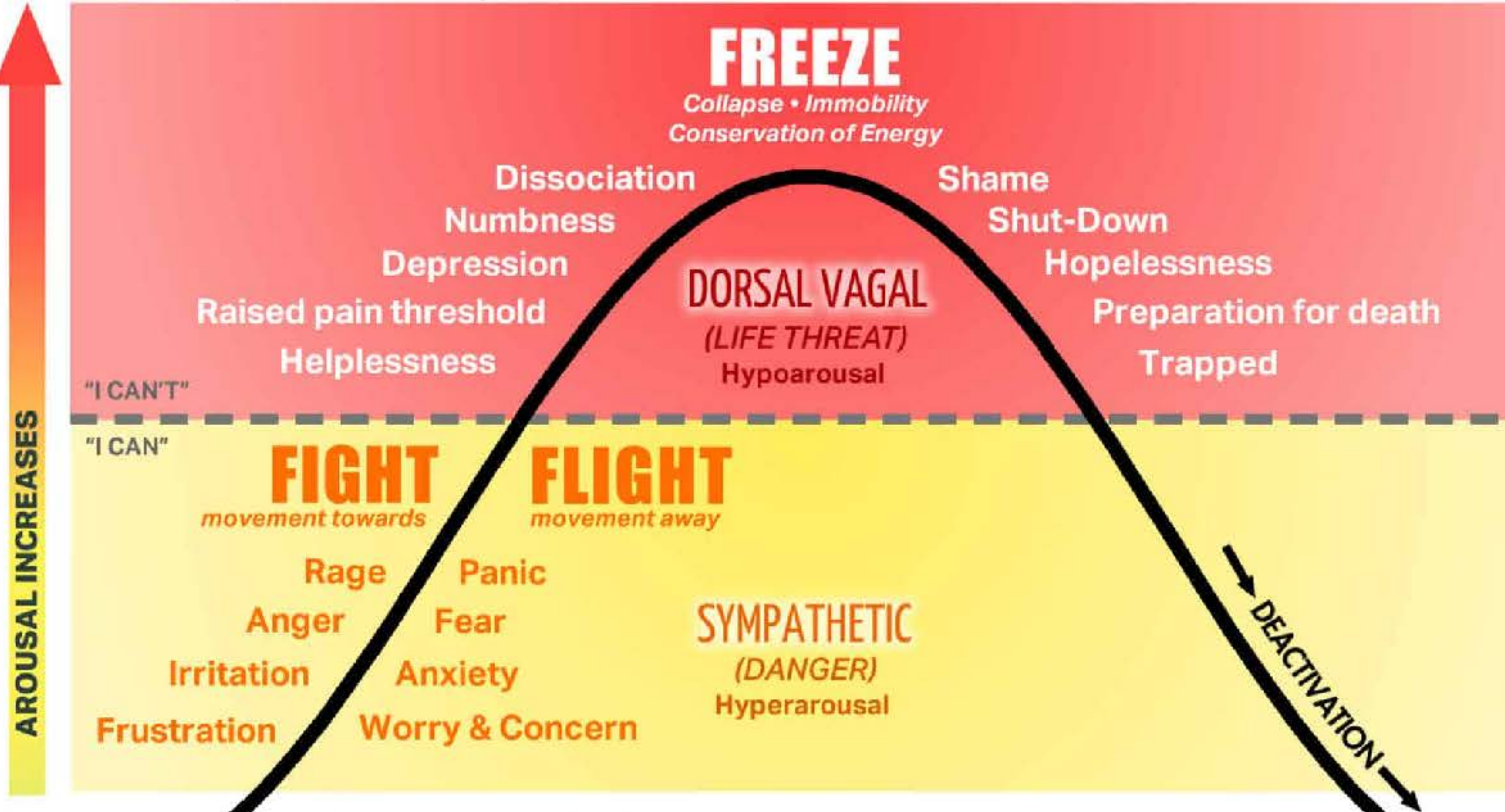
AMPLIFY

# WE NEED TO CHANGE GEARS



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Defensive Responses

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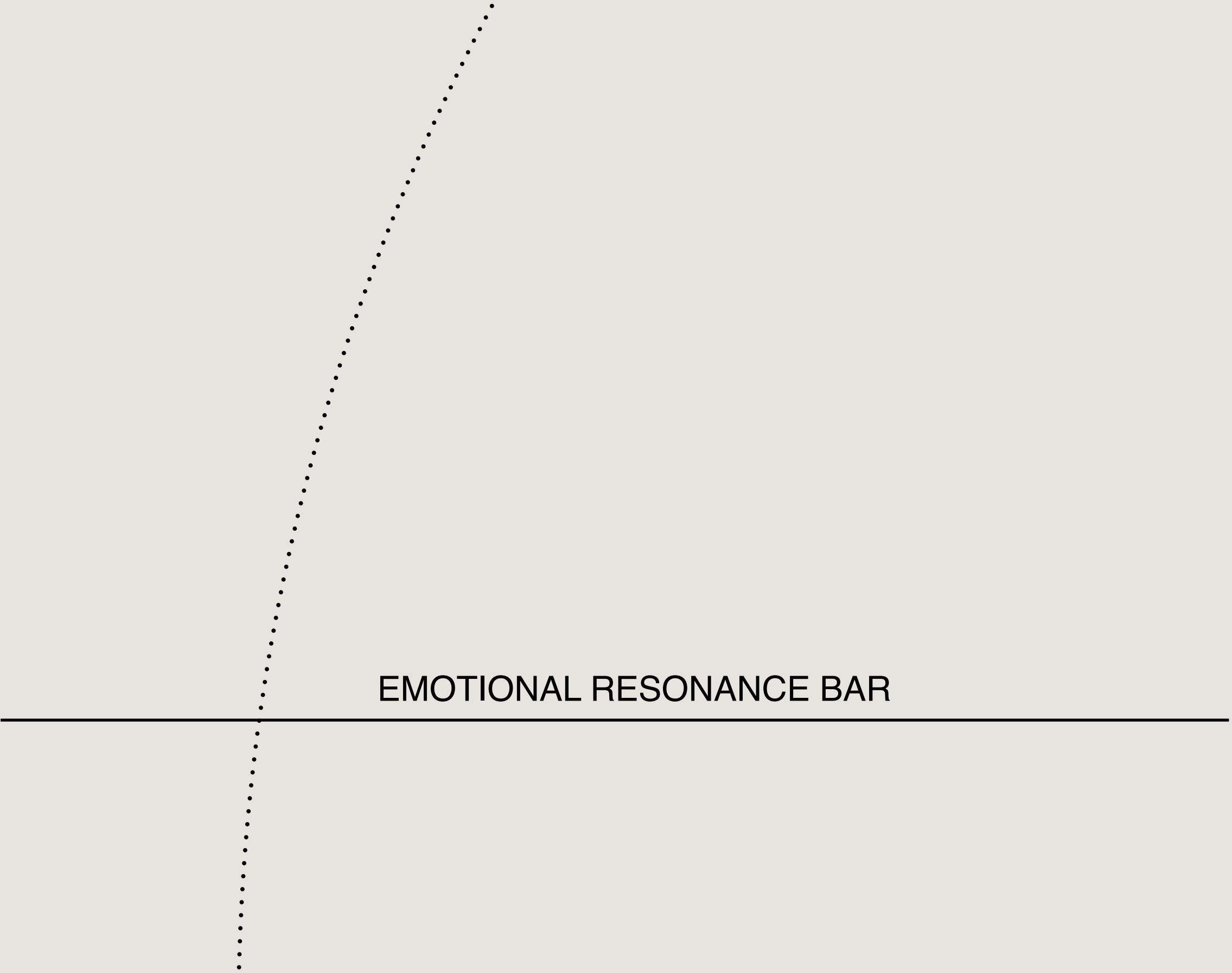
EMOTIONAL RESONANCE BAR

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TECH EXAMPLES 



# WE NEED TO ENGAGE OUR EMOTIONS



# DESIGN

Taste is power.  
Intuition is strategy.  
Weirdness is your edge.

Don't shrink to fit the metrics.  
Don't flatten your instinct to match the grid.

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# THANK YOU

GO SLOW

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MC DEAN  
MAKER & DESIGNER  
@OWL-LISTENER

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