



TRANSCRIPT: “Thriving in a complex digital world”, by Jamie Anderson

Jamie Anderson: Good afternoon. In Brian's talk, he said something very interesting. What he said was that it's not about technology. We're all talking about disruption and we're talking about digital, but he said, "It's not about technology." The other thing that Brian said during his talk, which really struck me, was he said, "It's not about capital, it's not about money, we have enough money."

Do you remember what he said it was about? Do you remember what he said? He said it's about creative minds. What he meant by that is that it's about you. Can you please raise your hand in this room if you think-- Not just in this room by the way because we're in several rooms across the Nordics. Can you please raise your hand if you think you've got a creative mind? Okay, maybe half. Okay, so what you're going to experience in the next 30 minutes is probably going to be the best 30 minutes of your life-

[laughter]

Jamie: -because if you think you've already got a creative mind, after the next 30 minutes, you're going to have a even more creative mind. If you think you don't have a creative, what we're about to do is actually reactivate your creative potential. How does that sound?

[audience murmurs]

Jamie: Are you shivering now with anticipation across the Nordics? I'm like an Australian Moses coming down from the mountain and I've got this tablet and I'm going to show it to you. Now, what the next half an hour is going to be about is interaction. Can you please take that piece of paper across the Nordics, the piece of paper and pencil.

Here's what I'm going to ask you to do now. I would like everyone across all the four locations to start filling out those circles for me. I want you to fill up every single circle on that piece of paper. Your time starts now, go. Please start writing. Please start drawing. Please start doing whatever you need to do. Fill up the circles. Come on, let's start please. Good. Let's go. There we go.

TV2in the front row. Have you finished? Please raise your hand if you've already finished. Wow, third of the people already finished. The rest of you, please continue. Who's finished on this side of the room? Good, okay, good. Please keep going. Who's finished over here? Good show of hands. For the rest of you, please keep drawing. Now, if you've finished your circles you can follow me on Twitter if you like. Send a couple of Facebook [chuckles] messages, whatever you want to do. Keep drawing.

Now, for those of you who have finished drawing, please take a look of what the people who are still drawing are doing. Now, please do this across the locations. Have a look around you. Please raise your hand if you're finished now. Okay, around half



the people. Now, for those people who are still drawing but not shading, please raise your hand if you're drawing but not-- Shading is just filling out the circles like this. Raise your hand if you're drawing but not shading. A few-- Now, have a look at these people because they're special.

They're special because what I've actually just given you is a psychological exercise. What this psychological exercise is about is cognition and your cognitive preferences when faced with a complex and ambiguous task. What did I not tell you about this exercise? I didn't tell you how long. What else did I not tell you? I didn't tell you how to do it. How many possibilities could you use? How many different things could you use to fill up those circles? An exponential number.

Actually, what this exercise tests, is your ability for joining the dots in your brain. If you think of cognition as a scale, at one end of the cognitive scale is what is called divergent or linear thinking. This is not creative thinking at all. This is not imagination. This is where you go very narrowly towards one solution. If you took one line and went zip, zip, zip, zip, zip - Not creative.

[laughter]

If you went one, two, three, four, five, six, A, B, C, D, E, F, shading all the circles the same, smiley face after smiley face after- Not creative. Have a look around you folks.

Divergent or linear thinking, non-creative thinking. At the other end of the spectrum, of course, is this idea of imagination, of non-linear thinking, of being open. This exercise that I've given you, and in fact, most of the exercises I'm going to give you today, I've also given to my children. This was the exercise done by my daughter Hannah, who's now 13, when I first discovered it about three and a half years ago. She was about nine years old.

What you see with Hannah's circles is imagination. You see divergence, not converging to one idea. You see breadth of imagination. What is fascinating about this is if we look at the world of developmental psychology. What do we discover? From the age of zero to six, 98% of children are, by default, divergent, creative thinkers. They are born creative. Is anyone here from the USA? Okay, you're from the USA.

Picasso was this Spanish artist guy.

[laughter]

Jamie: Picasso, he was very creative and he once said that the problem is not to become creative, the problem is not to become an artist. "The problem is to remain an artist as we grow." This is exactly what we discover in the world of developmental psychology, because while 98% of six-year old's are divergent thinkers, what do you think happens by the age of 12? We have 98%, what do you think it declines to? Less than 40%.



Then, between the ages of 12 and 18, something even more frightening happens. That figure declines to around 10%. What about in a room like this? Remember, I asked you to raise your hand for those people who were still drawing. It was a handful of people, because by the time we're 35 years old, what does the research shows us? Only 2% of people still have this default ability for divergent or imaginative thinking. The problem is not technology, the problem is not capital. The problem is the way we think.

What's my first lesson or my first piece of wisdom to you, actually? It is very simple. It's what is called metacognition. If we want to innovate, we have to be able to think about the way we are thinking. What the psychologists call this is metacognition, this ability to step back from ourselves and think about the way we're thinking. That will enable us, then, to step into new domains. It's not easy in fact it's very very difficult. Now, I'm going to explain how difficult it is - This is with a question. Across our four locations, please raise your hand if you shaved this morning. Please put your hand up if you shaved this morning. Ladies?

[laughter]

Jamie: No one. I can't see Sweden but I bet not many of the guys in Sweden shaved because they all think they're George Clooney. These Swedish guys, they like to be sexy so they always have the three-day growth going. Here, in Denmark, raise your hands, who shaved this morning. Very good. What brand did you use, sir?

Participant 1: Gillette.

Jamie: Gillette. The best a man can get.

[laughter]

Jamie: This is amazing, actually, because if you go back in history, this company has been around for more than a century. The original patent for that Gillette razor was 904. In fact, this original product, this original design was quite revolutionary, because for 4,000 years before this, how did people shave? They shaved with a knife. They found cut-throat razors in the pyramids.

Then, this guy, King Gillette, came along with this innovation, but that innovation pretty much didn't change for about 70 years. It became a standard until this French company called Bic came along in the 1970s and disrupted the industry. Now, Schick and Wilkinson Sword, the competitors of Gillette, they almost went into bankruptcy. Gillette innovated. What they innovated with was this, it was a product. I've got one. You see that?

That's an original Gillette Atra from 1976. They innovated and what they innovate with? A little clickhead and two blades. This was an incredible innovation, an incredible global success for the company. What do they do next? They kept innovating. In fact, what they then did over the next 15 years, was they developed the pinnacle of this



two-blade technology which was the Gillette Sensor. This was a two-blade aluminum-handled mold, a beautiful razor. You had one?

Participant 2: I have one. I still have one

Jamie: I can see you don't use it very often.

[laughter] It's George Clooney. Think about this, this company's been innovating for 15 years, but now they want to get radical, so they launch this project called Project 2,000. The goal is to launch the next generation breakthrough. What do you think they could possibly do to better a two-blade razor? What could they do folks?

Audience: Three.

Jamie: Three. You people are - You're brilliant. You're absolutely right. In fact, they came to the market with this phenomenon, it was called the Mach3. You see this? I've got the platinum Mach3, this was the limited edition version. There were only six million of these made.

[laughter]

Jamie: - and I've got one. Can you hold that for me for a second? Okay, good. You imagine you're Wilkinson Sword. The guys at Wilkinson Sword are going bananas because they're always the follower. They get together an innovation Tiger team. They go on Benchmark, they go to Silicon Valley, they go to Apple. They knock themselves out with innovation. What do you think they could possibly do to beat a three-blade razor?

Audience: Four.

Jamie: You're brilliant, you people. Not only four, because now it's all about experience, it's all about not just functionality, it's about emotion. So, they call it the Quattro.

[laughter]

Jamie: I'm Australian, we're linguistically handicapped, but I think this means four in some Latin language. Wow. Okay folks, now turn to the person next to you and tell them, "What could they possibly do to beat four blades?" Can we do that across the Nordic? Please turn to the person next to you and say, "What could they do to beat four blades?" Let's go, I'll give you 10 seconds. Let's go.

[audience murmurs]

[laughter]



Jamie: Okay, folks. What do you think they could do? What do you think? Some of you in Denmark said five. You said five? No, not five, they came with six. That's right. The Gillette Fusion. Now, the question is why, why the six blades? Can you please raise your hand? Now, again, this is across the Nordics, can you please raise your hand if you are using the Mach3 or the Quattro? Please raise your hand. Excellent, very good. I see some people here. You're using the Mach3's then? Can you come over here for a minute please?

Participant 3: Me?

Jamie: Yes, can you come here for a second? I'm not sure we can get a close-up with the camera. Now, again, across the Nordics, you want to take note of this. You're using the Mach3 right now, sir?

Participant 3: No, the four.

Jamie: You're using the Quattro?

Participant 3: Quattro, yes.

Jamie: You see, now I have a Quattro. Now, the problem with the Quattro is that it's got a very wide edge to hold the four blades in place. If we look very closely, you have three-- Excuse me ma'am, can you come over here for a second? It's okay. During the coffee break, if you take your finger and just go like this, you will find there's the layers, correct? Right?

Participant 3: Yes.

Jamie: Round of applause, please, for our volunteer.

[applause]

Jamie: You hang onto that for me? You see this is all about experience. In fact, what is the blade on the back for? The blade on the back is for those hard to reach places and the side burns. Did you know that? You didn't know that, did you? Did you want to know that?

Participant 4: No.

[laughter]

Jamie: No. [laughs] Okay. Look at that. What I've just demonstrated to you is one century of innovation. That's one hundred years of innovation. My question to you, and again going back to Brian's talk earlier, is this innovation? Because a couple of the words that Brian used were, "incremental." The words he used was, "permission-based." We don't take risks, we don't do things dangerous, because what are we



aiming for? We're aiming for that cost reduction, we're aiming for that 2% or 3% of growth every year.

This folks, in fact, is the biggest problem. It's not that technology has evolved, the problem is that we are stuck with Industrial Age mindset, because the mindset that most of us have and have acquired in business over the last 10 or 20, in some cases, 30 years has been built around an Industrial Age business model. What we actually need to do to really disrupt, to really innovate is to break out of that.

Now, not at the organisational level. Too many people stand on these stages and they talk about organisational transformation, they talk about strategy, evolution. No, it's about individual change. It's about you, actually. It's about you. Would you like the answer of how--? I thought Danish people were extrovert.

[laughter]

Jamie: I spoke to this Finnish guy and he said, "You'll have no problem in Denmark, they will laugh at your jokes."

[laughter]

Jamie: There are folks in Finland-- Don't get me wrong, I love going to Finland, but I was on stage in Finland and nobody laughed at my jokes. Then, I was very upset and during the coffee break, I spoke to this Finnish guy, Antti, and I said, "Antti, did you not like the joke?" You know what he said? "Jamie, I was laughing on the inside."

[laughter]

[applause]

Jamie: [laughs] I think I get it. Okay. For the people here in Copenhagen [laughs], in Oslo, in Stockholm and of course, in Helsinki, would you like the answer to how to unleash your creativity?

Audience: Yes.

Jamie: Thank you, but before we do that, let me show you the current generation of Gillette razor. Have you seen this one? This is like Frankenstein razor.

[laughter]

Jamie: This is not the way-- My wife took one look at that and she was like, "Oh my goodness, what does that do?" Can you hang onto that for me for a second? Thank you. Good.

Okay, so here's the answer. You ready? Now, you need your piece of paper and you need your pencil, please. Please take your piece of paper and your pencil and here's



the answer. Are you ready? The answer is cake and not the kind you buy in Amsterdam.

[laughter]

Jamie: [laughs] Here's what I would like you to do. Now, in this case, the exercise has a time limit and a time limit will be strictly enforced. It is 30 seconds. In a moment, I'm going to ask you to draw a cake and then, I want you to cut the cake four times. You draw the cakes, you cut it four times, and your objective is to come up with the maximum number of pieces of cake. Are you ready? Your time starts now. Go. Draw your cakes. Cut them. 30 seconds. Now, we're doing this across the region.

15 seconds to go. Who's finished? Raise your hand if you're finished. A lot of people done already. 10 seconds. Please raise your hand if you're finished now. Good. Okay. Please stop. Please put your pencils down. Now, please raise your hand if you did a cake that looks like that. Please raise your hand. Pathetic.

[laughter]

Jamie: What have we been talking about? We've been talking for 15 minutes about creative thinking. That's the least creative cake you can imagine. What about this one? Did anyone do one like this? Equally bad.

[laughter]

Jamie: What about this one? Anyone do this one? Come on, offset cuts. Don't be too proud. This is the one that I did. When I got this exercise in psychology, I did that and I felt really good. Then, I showed it to her and this lady psychologist, she looked at me and you know what she said? "Loser."

[laughter]

Jamie: [laughs] How about this one, three-dimensional? No. Here's the amazing thing. I gave this exercise to my three children when I discovered it a couple years ago. Who do you think did it the best? Reese, who was 13, Hannah, who was 10 or Charlie, who was 8? Who did it the best? Was Charlie, it was the youngest one, because he did something different to you.

Here's what I'd like everyone to do. Across the region, this is what I would like you to do. I would like you all to stand up now and turn to the people behind you, except for the people in the back row. Just stand up, talk to the people around you. Here's the question, what assumptions did you make about this exercise? Let's go, everyone stand up. Let's talk. What assumptions did you make?

[audience chatter]



Jamie: Chocolate for you. Some chocolate, there you go. Okay, folks, now, please do not sit down. All right. What were some of the assumptions that we made? What I heard, I went over to this corner, people said, "Well, we assumed the cake was round." What other assumptions did we make? The lines are straight, that everyone gets the same size piece, for most of us, actually.

Actually, where do these circles come from? I spoke at the World Creativity Forum a couple of years ago and I did this exercise with an audience of 3,000 people and I collected the results. Those four outcomes represent 85% of the results that I collected from a very small group of people, so don't be depressed.

[laughter]

Jamie: All right? What do you see? Look at the top three. Two-dimensional cakes, when we all know that cakes are three-dimensional. You made all these assumptions about the cake. Not only did you make assumptions about the cake, you made assumptions about the knife. What was the assumption about the knife?

[audience responds]

Jamie: It was a straight blade, single blade. What about a multi-bladed knife or a laser? You see? You were stuck. Now, not only did you make assumptions about the cake and the knife, you also made assumptions about the process, because when I said, "Go," what did we see? You all acted as individuals. Maybe this is unique to a Danish audience, but I looked at some guys over here and one of the other guys looked at what he was doing and he went like this.

[laughter]

Jamie: [laughs] You see, because we know that if you want creativity, if you want innovation, that's about collaboration. It's about bringing minds together. You didn't collaborate. From a creative perspective, you did almost everything wrong, although you're smart people. Here's the next question I'd like you now to talk about for about three minutes. What has life done to you to mess you up?

[laughter]

Jamie: [laughs] Can you please do that? No, now the question is why did you make those assumptions? Please talk about that. Let's go.

[audience chatter]

Jamie: What happened?

Participant 8: I think we learned to learn in a certain way. What you do in university and school.



Jamie: Individualistic, one right answer? Absolutely. That's from education, right?

Participant 8: Yes.

Jamie: Remember, I mentioned from 6 to 18, the biggest collapse? What did we do between 6 and 18?

Jamie: Okay, now, the interesting thing is that when I gave this exercise to my little boy, Charlie, he was with a group of friends. 7 or 8-year-olds. They collaborated and then they came to me. What they essentially told me was that the answer was infinite. I'll explain this in a second, but you can actually, if you think about it, create thousands. That's what these little kids did. They came to me and they showed me that they created thousands of pieces of cake in less than a minute.

Now, why was that? Because they weren't stuck in the same assumptions as you. Why did we make these assumptions? Let me tell me you what the research, the theory tells us and also some of the conversations that we had in these rooms. The first thing is education, because the Industrial Age industrial model came with an Industrial Age education system, where subjects are prioritised.

What is the least important subject in most education systems? Anything to do with creativity. Art, dance, music. It's no surprise, actually, if you look at that decline of creativity between six and 18, that it absolutely correlates with formal education. One right answer thinking, do it alone, formulaic approaches. Now, this is so anathema to the idea of creative thinking, of brainstorming, of divergence, of making mistakes. So, education is there. Have a look at this one, top-left. I bet the people in Sweden did that one. Every time I go to Sweden, they draw cakes like that. Now, why is that? They're Socialist.

[laughter]

Jamie: Because in Sweden everybody should get the same-size piece. What about the top-right one? That's the Norwegian cake because they deserve a bigger piece.

[laughter]

Jamie: Where does this also come from? It's not just education, it's experience. It's our life experience. It can be our professional experience, our narrow functional orientation. Now, what does this then translate into? Also, the environment. Why else did most of us only draw one cake? Because of time pressure, because you were under this intense time pressure and with that pressure you didn't think. When you're under intense time pressure, you default.

Interestingly enough, most of you felt the pressure but you didn't use the time, because, actually, I gave you 45 seconds. You went for efficiency instead of creativity. That's the environment that you find in most big companies because that's the Industrial Age model, efficiency before creativity, before experimentation. We see this.



Now, of course, what was the other reason? Somebody over here said, "Jamie, you made me do it." Of course, because I went like this, and that's also about the environment because what that is about is leadership. Do you have leaders who come to you and say, "Bring me your ideas."?

[laughter]

Jamie: [laughs] It's about leadership. Okay, last exercise for everyone across the region. I would like you to do this exercise, it's a new exercise. I tried it recently. Actually, it was at another Accenture event, but it was in Brussels and it was for a room full of financial services executives. They hated it.

[laughter]

Jamie: But you're going to love it. Okay, now, this next exercise, you really must use paper and pen. Don't take a photograph, don't draw an abstract, because what I'm going to give you now is just two minutes to do this. I would like you, now, to draw a picture of the person sitting next to you in life like detail, let's go. Across the region, please draw the picture of the person sitting next to you.

[audience chatter]

Jamie: Let's go guys. If you push back, they can draw you from either side. That's great.

Jamie: Keep drawing, come on folks. Keep going, you've got one minute to go. Please keep drawing. Very good. It's very small but good. Keep drawing, folks. Please keep drawing, you've got not so long to go. Please keep drawing because I would really, really like you to finish this picture. [laughs] Okay, so you really should be starting to finish up your picture now. The eyebrows, the nose, the mouth.

[audience chatter]

Jamie: [chuckles] Okay, now what I'd like you to do is, can you please show the person your picture? Let's go. Please show the people your pictures.

[audience chatter]

Jamie: Can I have a look at this? Can I borrow it, is that okay? I'm going to get a close-up of this one with you, okay? Okay folks, now, can I please have you back in the room? Sorry. Before I explain this in a second, I forgot to give you the answer to the cake exercise. I'm sorry. What's the answer to the cake, what did the little kids do? Actually, the little kids did a round cake but they said, "What about if you do a zigzag cut?" You see?

Because if you do a zigzag cut, that's one cut. Then, what one of the other little kids has done was a spiral. Do you understand? If you overlay these zigzags and spirals,



you get an exponential increase in performance. In fact, that's what Brian was talking about. With these companies like Uber and Facebook and Google, they're not interested in going from six pieces of cake to nine pieces of cake, they're looking for exponential. That's rethinking the tools.

All right, now, let's go to our pictures. Can you just zoom in on this for a second? Because I would like to show you this. Can we please just have this one on the screen? Can we get it on up here? Have a look at that. Now, if I went out here into the streets of Copenhagen and said, "How old was the person who drew that picture?"-

[laughter]

Jamie: -what do you think they'd say? What do you think? About nine. Of course. We know why, because I mentioned developmental psychology. Most adults have the drawing ability of an eight to nine-year-old because that's when you're told, "It's never going to get you a good job."

[laughter]

Jamie: Now, what has this got to do with digital, for example? This has a lot to do with digital, because if drawing becomes essential to your job, what do you need to do? What would you need to do? You would need to get better, you would need to practice. It's the same with artificial intelligence, big data, mobility, social. We need to get better. How do we do that? We do that by engaging in life-long learning. We have to embrace that.

There's something else at play here. I don't want to embarrass anyone. It's a beautiful picture. It's really beautiful, but there's something else at play, because when I gave this exercise to this group of financial services people in Brussels, this big event venue, some of them got angry. There was this guy, I'm not going to say which country he was from, but it was a very big country, south of Belgium.

[laughter]

Jamie: This guy, he was really angry, and I went to him and I said, "Philippe, come on man, draw the picture." He looked at me and he said, "No." I said, "Come on, draw the picture." I went away. I went to this other guy, he was from another very big country kind of to the east of Belgium, I want to say. I looked at this guy, said, "Come on Jurg, draw the picture." The guy looked at me and he said, "I came to learn, not to have fun."

[laughter]

Jamie: I was like, "What the heck?" Then I went back to Philippe and I said, "Philippe, please draw the picture." Do you know what he did? He looked at me and said. He said, "Get lost." Why? Now, the issue here, actually, is very important because the issue is ego. If you're in an organisation with people with big egos, they will never



embrace this transformational change because they're afraid. What are they afraid of? They're afraid to say, "I don't know."

In a world of disruption, as a leader, you have to be willing to issue a statement of ignorance. You have to be willing to say, "I don't know." What's the other thing here? The other thing, actually, is having fun, because what does the research show us? There's a whole field of research called gelotology. Gelotology is the study of laughter and humor upon the brain. What do we know? Humor reduces physical and cognitive tension. That puts us in a better place, actually, when it comes to ideation and brainstorming, a critical component of innovation.

If you go around a company and there's a bunch of stiffs walking around, there's no humor, you're not going to get a lot of creativity. Here's the last thing...

Jamie: This is Dr. Nakamats. Dr. Nakamats is a Japanese guy and he's one of the world's most productive inventors. He has more than 2,000 patents in his name, double the number of Edison. He's working on a microchip design. Isn't this amazing? Now, the question for you is, what are you doing and where are you when you get your best ideas? Guess what the research suggests? It's not at work.

When I ask this question around the world, what do people actually tell me? What people tell me is they tell me about this stuff. That's me. I'm a cyclist. I returned to competitive cycling six years ago. I've had the best ideas of my life in that six-year period. I thought, at first, that was because I'm taking time. This is important, by the way. You need to take time for creativity. When I gave you the cake exercise, when you were under intense pressure, you can't be creative. You need to take time.

I thought, "I'm riding my bike, I'm giving myself time," but no. There's something else at play because, when I'm out riding my bike or when you're in the gym or you're taking a run or you're doing exercise, your body is releasing Dopamine. Dopamine is a neurotransmitter, it fires those neurons. It's the creativity chemical in your body. The best people in your companies are not those who work through their lunch breaks, they're those who go for a run, take a swim, who exercise.

It is okay, however, because if you don't like exercise, what's the other great way to release Dopamine? Good Belgian chocolate. I shared some of that with you in this room, I wish I could have done that across the region. Chocolate has a chemical called tyrosine. Tyrosine is nature's Dopamine booster, it helps your body to release-- You're not going to become a genius by eating a little bit of chocolate, but it will give you that boost of Dopamine that you need. Now, of course, we all know what's the other great way to boost Dopamine? The old bum-bum.

[laughter]

Jamie: Sex. Actually, this Norwegian guy, he asked me, "Should it be with somebody else?"



[laughter]

[applause]

Jamie: I don't know. I'd said, "Whatever makes you happy." That's important because you do the old bum-bum, you get the big rush of Dopamine and it's fabulous. Now, what's the only problem? Probably in the Nordics as well, most people do this at night. It's a complete waste of good Dopamine. I've been talking to my friends at Accenture, and I said, "You guys need to do much more of this during the daytime."

[laughter]

Jamie: "You need to create places..."

[laughter]

Jamie: Anyway, that's a whole other issue. We talk about this disruption. We talk about organisations. We talk about strategies. No, disruption is actually about disrupting ourselves. What it's really about is having this ability to embrace our creative potential and it's not complex. It's about thinking about the way you're thinking, it's about questioning your education, your experience in your environment. Of course, what else is it about? It's about having a lot of sex. Thank you very much, thank you.

[applause]

[00:39:09] [END OF AUDIO]