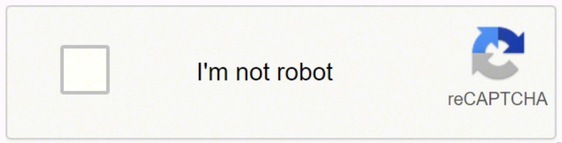

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Where good ideas come from chapter 1 summary

In Where Good Ideas Come From Summary by Steven Johnson explains great ideas lead to innovation and where do they come from. He also discusses how evolutionary ideas propagate through a liquid network and create euphoric moments or scientific breakthroughs that shake the world.Who should read Where Good Ideas Come From Summary, and why?This book is best suited for those people who are good at chemistry and neurology.But if you're someone who has studied a bit of chemistry in school and enjoyed those chemistry lectures that were taught in school, you may enjoy this book too.In general, if you want to know:Where do great ideas come from?How ideas shaped the society we live in today?How do scientists discover breakthrough inventions?How is the chemistry soup prepared inside the brain?Give this book or book summary a read.Where Good Ideas Come From Summary [PDF]Want to discover answers to all the above questions?Let's dive straight into the summary.Key idea #1: Innovation happens in the adjacent possibleBefore we talk about adjacent possible, we must discuss a bit about eureka or lightbulb moments.The author says that eureka moments don't just occur out of thin air.There is a process involved!That means before a scientific breakthrough happens or a billion-dollar idea emerges, a lot has already happened.No matter how fantastic the idea is, it has to develop somewhere. There has to be a point where the seed of that big idea is planted and nurtured over time.Okay, so now that it's clear that big ideas don't just strike out of nowhere, let's discuss the adjacent possible.The author says that innovation happens in the adjacent possible.You might be thinking, "what does the adjacent possible even mean?"Allow me to explain.Think of adjacent possible as a space with multiple doors.And when you open any other door, you get connected to thousands of other doors.Confusing, right?Put simply, one idea leads us to another set of ideas.Thousands of ideas get lost. But the ones we choose to stick with open up a whole realm of ideas.Not all ideas lead to innovation or a eureka moment.But some of those ideas connect and result in a discovery.Put another way, some ideas exist only because there were specific ideas that emerged before them.Let me explain it better with an example.Today, we have Amazon to shop for almost any product. But what if Tim hadn't invented the World Wide Web.If there were no internet today, you wouldn't be reading this summary. There wouldn't have been Netflix and YouTube.People would still be sending their mails through the post, right?Every invention you see today is the consequence of another invention. And what are inventions? They are all eureka moments, aren't they? All the inventions are discoveries, which were only possible due to the adjacent possible.Even those who had insights while dreaming have a lot to do with the adjacent possible.The author's study shows that the earth was a lifeless planet earlier.And only because some of its parts or chemical elements combined in their adjacent possible, the earth evolved.According to the author, both evolution and innovation happen in the adjacent possible.The more ideas connect to each other, the closer they get us to innovative ideas.And that's why ideas mustn't get stuck in one place. There has to be an environment that allows those ideas to cobble with each other.See how this idea that we just discussed connects to another key idea?Key idea #2: Evolutionary ideas emerge when connected to a liquid networkIt takes a liquid network to connect ideas and allow them to develop and grow into a big idea.But why must ideas be connected? And why only to the liquid network?Why not to the solid and gaseous network?There are a lot of questions to answer, right?Let's answer all of them.First, let's find out what evolution has to do with forming connections.The author's research suggests that the earth evolved into a vibrant and lively planet because it had Carbon and Water. These two chemical compounds had some properties which made evolution possible.Carbon has a connective property to form bonds with other chemical compounds. Why? I don't remember all the chemistry stuff, but its structure is such that it quickly forms bonds with other chemicals.When it comes to water, it is neither too solid nor too gaseous.Let me elaborate.Solid has high stability and low chaos. In contrast, gas has a high disorder and low stability.But on the other hand, water has enough stability to hold its molecules together. And enough chaos to allow random collisions of molecules.Now transfer this entire chemistry to ideas.Ideas need to collide with each other and form random connections.Now answer me, which medium would be the best? Of course, any medium that has the property of water.We need a network that has both stability and chaos like water in real life.The author says that you grow smart faster when connected to a network of wise people.A water-like medium allows an idea to explore the adjacent possible.Key idea #3: Hunches develop slowly with timeHunches develop over time.Think of hunches as a tree.For a tree to exist, someone must plant a seed in fertile soil. And water it. Or in other words, someone has to take care of it.But in real life, we think of hunches as mysterious or magical things that emerge in our minds.Do you think that Darwin just formed The Theory of Evolution in just one lightning moment?No, it developed slowly over time.The hunch developed when the old ideas opened doors to the adjacent possible.A lot of other ideas might have also crossed his mind.Did Darwin remember all of them? Probably not.He might have forgotten many of them.But some ideas connected and made the picture clear. Then, it was only a moment of realization, which we call Eureka moment.All the scientific breakthroughs happen like this.It's not magic. It's not the gift of God. It's the culmination of the fully-connected ideas.Again, the network through which the ideas propagate plays a crucial role in whether those ideas will lead the person to the discovery or not.If an idea is good but fails to find a quality network, it won't ever be realized.If there is a fantastic network, but the idea itself is of low quality, then there won't be any breakthrough either.To have a breakthrough or eureka moment, you need both the quality ideas and the quality network, which allows those ideas to form random connections.And finally, drive towards a lightbulb moment.Key idea #4: Accidental or random connection of ideas lead to lightbulb momentsAll our idea are the web of neurons. That's why to understand better where good ideas come from, we must know what the nature of neurons is.Once we understand the chemistry of our brain, we know what happens inside it. What happens when great ideas are born?How do those simple ideas lead to innovation and change the world?The author questions:Are the neurons chemical or electrical?The answer is: Both.The author says that neurons send electrical signals. And once they reach the end, they may release chemicals like serotonin, dopamantine, etc.So those signals require a good liquid, which we already discussed.The point is:There should be both organization and disorganization in the network to allow the ideas to propagate and form accidental connections.For example, during natural reproduction, genes get mixed. It's a random process. The connections formed at that time are purely accidental.But the result is evolutionary.What if we build a wall and don't allow those genes to have random encounters with each other.Would there still be evolution? I doubt so.The author shares his concern about how we are building digital walls around the ideas in the name of patents and copyrights.When we do this, we block the smooth flow of ideas, which later limits the growth of evolutionary ideas.But not having patents can be risky for businesses too.It's not like everything will be fine if the ideas are not protected. People misuse this and steal other people's ideas. And even worse —put their name on it for the sake of money.We need to find some way to regulate ideas and, at the same time, protect their theft for selfish or commercial reasons.Although the internet has opened up a whole new world of information and ideas, there are many issues to deal with.Overprotecting and isolating ideas is dangerous too.Remember, ideas require incubation. And not all ideas are helpful. But some of them, when connected, create lightbulb moments.Key idea #5: Errors in our thinking force us to rethink our biasesEvery scientific experiment contains some errors.But they aren't something that we like.We want everything to be error-free, don't we?The author says that errors aren't as bad as they sound.How? They force us to rethink our biases.Whenever an idea comes out to be wrong, it forces us to challenge our thinking.Once we identify an error, we try to mitigate it.What happens when we dismiss an error? We ignore the possibility of improving the quality of our ideas. One may even prevent himself from realizing the full potential of his thinking.Which is, I think, not a good situation to be in.Again, it doesn't mean that you should deliberately try to induce errors in your thinking or experiments.Allow your ideas to spread their roots.Then identify the errors.At last, correct them and analyze.Errors don't harm your thinking. They challenge it and force you to bring more ideas to the table.Key idea #6: Ideas can be repurposed and used in an unorthodox wayJust think about it.Had Tim Berners Lee imagined that someday people would build thousands of big businesses over his platform?I guess not. Not even in his wildest dreams.We often fail to imagine the scale of growth that an idea may lead the world to.The author gives us a technical term here: Exaptation.What does 'exaptation' mean?The technical definition is:"It's a phenomenon when a trait developed for a specific purpose is used in a completely different way."My definition is:When a trait is repurposed and used for something entirely different than expected, it's called exaptation.Both the definition are pretty similar.The point is:There are many ways to repurpose the same idea.It doesn't matter who produced that idea. The same concept can be used to bring innovation in different fields.First, there is a conventional way of thinking, which is the main reason why an idea exists.For example, social media exists for talking and socializing with friends.But the same social media platforms can be used for running campaigns and selling stuff to people. That's a different approach. Way different than chatting with friends.Two people can use the same idea in unique ways.Exaptation is a powerful driver for innovation.That's why I'd repeat it, ideas usually die in isolation and don't reach their full potential until they are connected to a liquid network of quality ideas.What can you learn from this?If you want to bring innovation to anything in life, try to be unorthodox sometimes.When you think unconventionally, you'll likely take a different road that nobody has ever walked before.Most people think conventionally.But the very few who are insane enough to be unconventional bring change to this world. Such a handful of people contribute to the evolution of the human race.Again, imagine if Steve Jobs hadn't thought of an iPod.What would the music industry be like today?Are you able to see how powerful can a single idea be?Key idea #7: Platforms provide a foundation for ideas to evolveGenerally speaking, platforms could be anything that gives a foundation.For example, to drive a car, you need roads.To build a building, you need a foundation.Similarly, great ideas develop over existing ideas. And those existing ideas serve as a foundation for newer ideas.Not all new ideas are fantastic.But a few of them turn out to be brilliant. And those are the ones that bring a change.After those new brilliant ideas grow a bit old, more unique ideas pop up inside people's heads.And again, the existing ideas provide a foundation for fresh ideas to develop.This cycle keeps repeating itself.That's one reason why new technology looks so cool, and the older one doesn't look cool anymore.'What has already been built' will always provide 'what can be built.'At the root of all evolution, there will always be a few ideas that will change the world we see today.The Key Takeaways From "Where Good Ideas Come From"Let's recap the key ideas we learned in this summary:Innovation happens in the adjacent possible.Evolutionary ideas emerge when connected to a liquid network.Hunches develop slowly with time.Accidental or random connection of ideas leads to lightbulb moments.Errors in our thinking force us to rethink our biases.Ideas can be repurposed and used in an unorthodox way.Platforms provide a foundation for ideas to evolve.Listen to audiobooks, summary, exclusive content, and lots more … on the Blinkist non-fiction summary App. Take a 7-day risk-free trial. You won't be charged if you cancel before the trial expires. I highly recommend this app.Click here to claim your Blinkist 7-Day Risk-Free TrialWhere Good Ideas Come From Summary Video by Steven JohnsonWho could better than explain than the author himself, right?Watch the TED video where Steven Johnson (The author of this book) beautifully explains where good ideas come from.An absolute must-watch!Where Good Ideas Come From ReviewWhew! This was one hell of a book, which forced me to re-evaluate my ideas and learn where they come from.Worst of all, it had so much scientific jargon.I was scratching my head during the chapter where the author started discussing how carbon and water have remarkable properties that contributed to evolution.So here it is:Only read this book if you are related to science in some way.I don't recommend this book to a beginner.Because there are many areas where this book gets dull and sophisticated.But if you want to challenge yourself, you can go for it.Don't get me wrong:This is a great book.The only problem is that the author assumes that you already know certain things.Or put in other words:The ideas are a bit complicated for an average person.Suggested ReadingPeople who liked this summary also like:Means Genes SummarySteal Like An Artist SummaryNow it's your turnI hope you got a lot of value from Where Good Ideas Come From Summary.And got an answer to the ultimate question:Where do good ideas come from?Now, it's your turn.Take action based on all the lessons or key ideas you learned today in this summary.And share this summary with other people too.Remember, the ideas need a liquid network to connect. Thanks in advance. I appreciate it.

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