

HOW WE ARRIVED AT THE FUTURE

A SPLAT STORY

COSLA CE FORUM 2025

[HTTPS://LIBRARIES.IDAHO.GOV/SPLAT/LIBRARY-FUTURES](https://libraries.idaho.gov/splat/library-futures)





SPLAT CO-LEADS



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CURRENT SPLAT MEMBERS

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Maggie Dumont, Boise Public Library

Mariah Farmer, Meridian Library District

Jessica Fleener, University of Idaho

Monique Gaddy, Boise Public Library

Darin Garr, Lewiston City Library

Michael Ireland, Caldwell Public Library

Chris Thielen, Community Library Network

Ann Veloso, St. Luke's Health System

Rachel Welker, Boise State University

LET'S PLAY THING FROM THE FUTURE!

- Participatory design game
- Create future scenarios
- Serious play...no, really!



THING FROM THE FUTURE



In a society
characterized by...

Collapse

Society as we
know it has come
apart

Arc

There exists a...

Festival

Object

Having to
do with...

Fashion

Terrain

That produces...

Curiosity

Mood

THING FROM THE FUTURE



Your turn!

In a society
characterized by...



Arc

There exists a...



Object

Having to
do with...



Terrain

That produces...



Mood

WHAT DO YOU THINK SPLAT STANDS FOR?

Wrong answers only...



CREATING SPLAT

The Special Projects Library Action Team was an outcome of ICfL's 2020 visioning session held in 2005. SPLAT was developed to:

- Be the eyes and ears on the ground for ICfL, “crow’s nest”
- Be a flexible group meeting regularly
- Discuss the 25,000 ft perspective
- Be change agents
- Prototype and push ideas
- Members apply to serve a 3-year term
- Monthly meetings
- Biweekly Curiosity Report

SPLAT EARLY DAYS

- **SPLAT 101 (2008-12)** - Self-paced six week online course covering 6 internet technologies



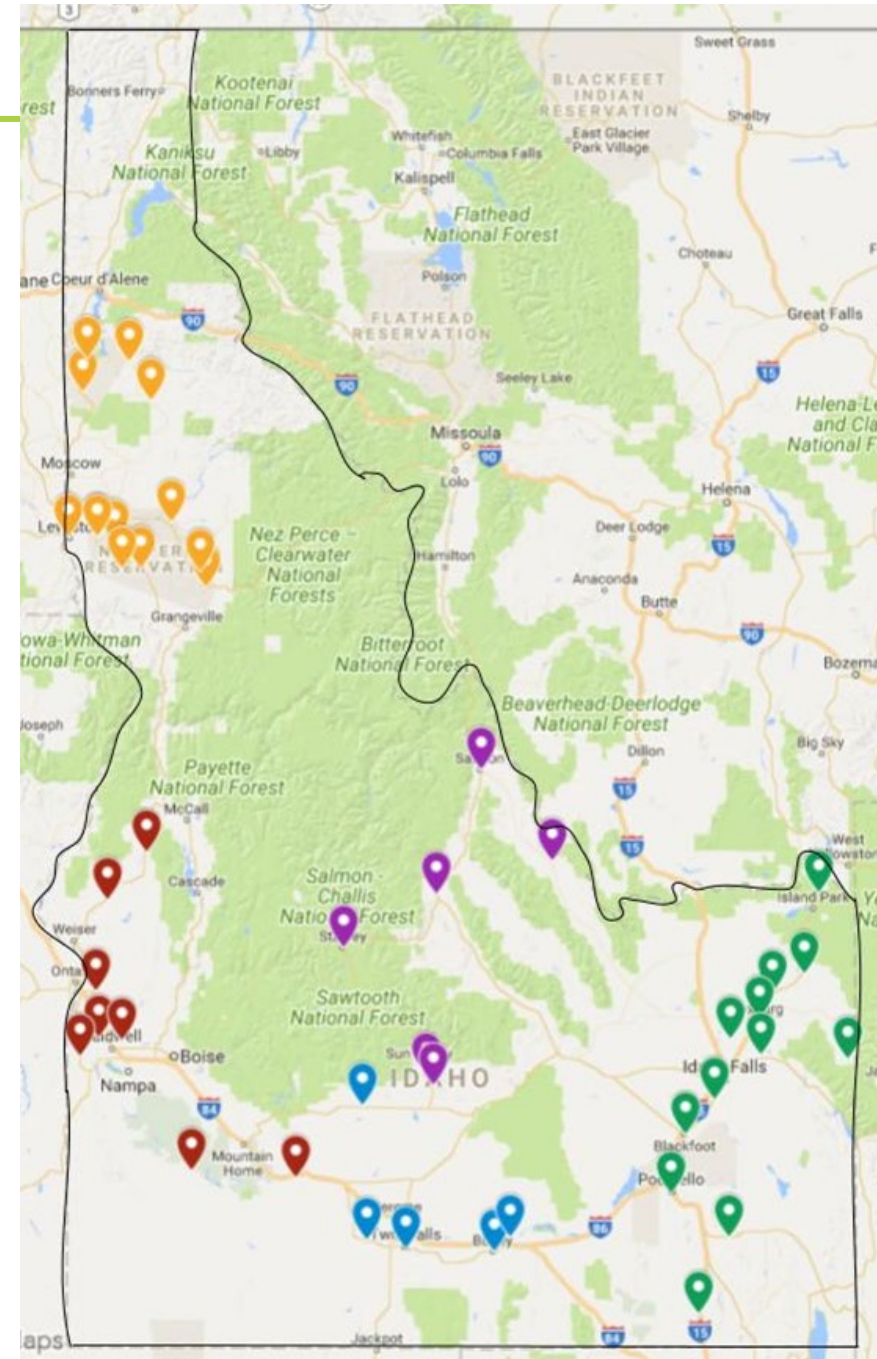
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- **Emerging Trends (2017-19)** - Shifting focus from specific technologies to durable skills that can be applied to any library issue



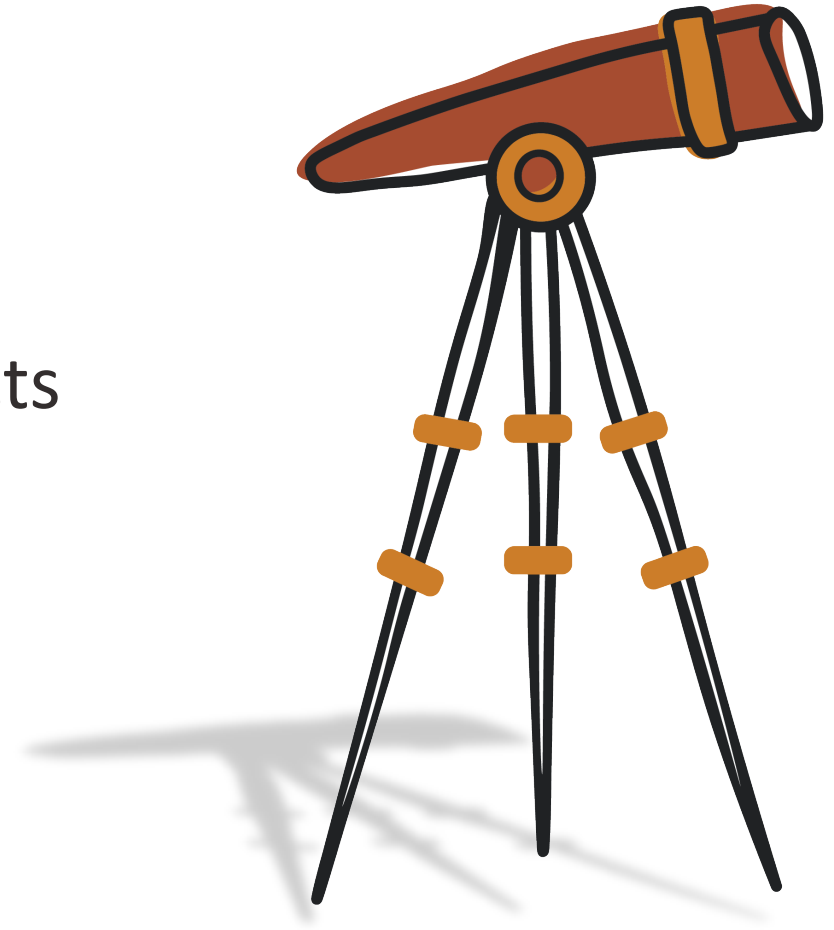
**THIS IS WHEN
WE ARRIVED AT
THE FUTURE**



WHAT IS FUTURES THINKING?

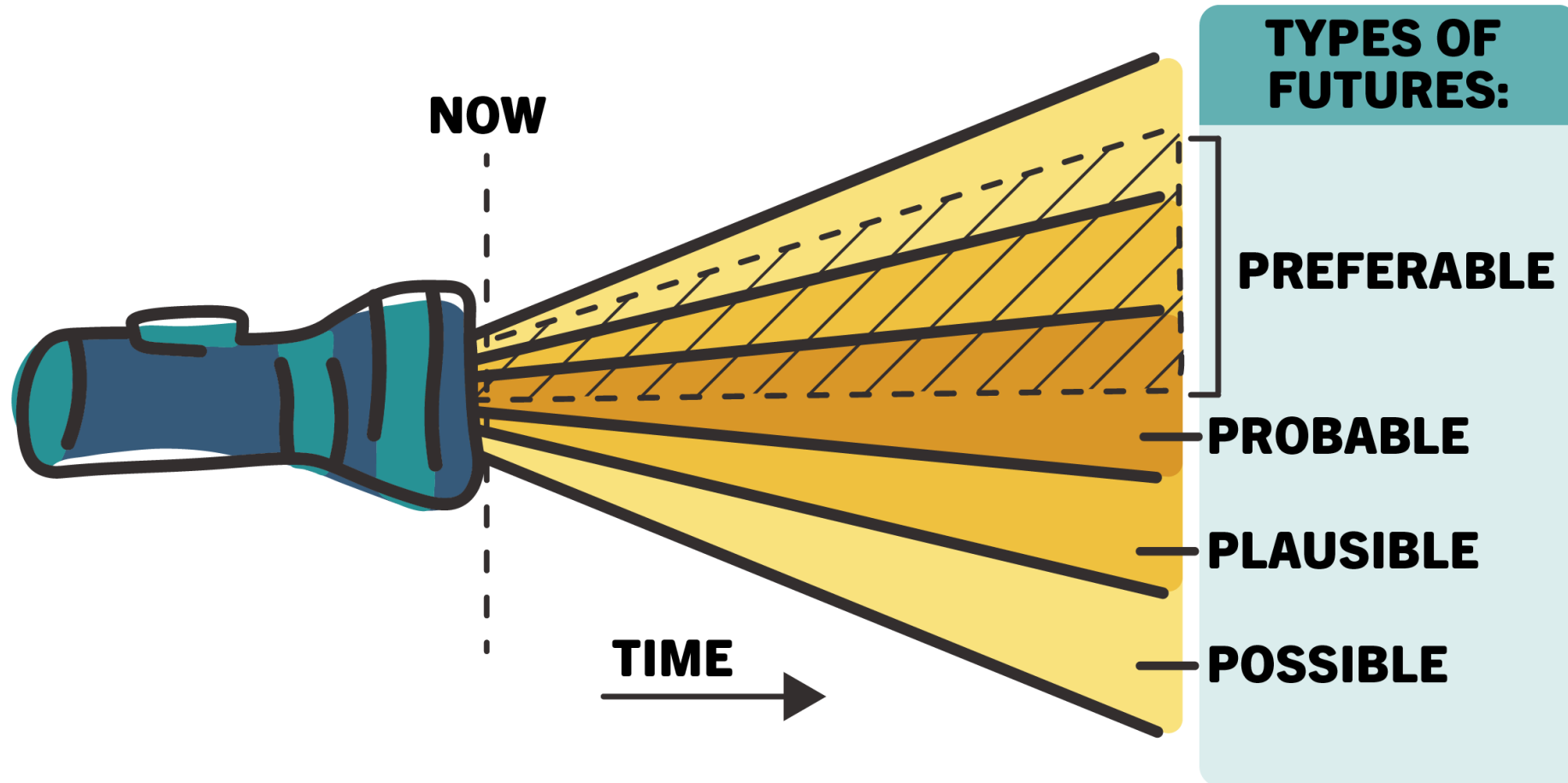


- Theory + Mindset + Processes
- Futures thinking \neq Prediction
- Multiple futures \Rightarrow Uncertainty
- Stories of the future \leftrightarrow rooted in facts
- 7 key strengths it develops
 - Creativity
 - Foresight
 - Mental flexibility
 - Empathy
 - Practical Skepticism
 - Strategy
 - Hope



7 strengths are from Institute For The Future's free "Ready, Set, Future!" Course
<https://www.coursera.org/learn/introduction-to-futures-thinking>

CONE OF PLAUSIBILITY



Based on the work of Joseph Voros

SPLAT'S FUTURES JOURNEY

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**How does a library
without people in it
continue to serve
the community?**

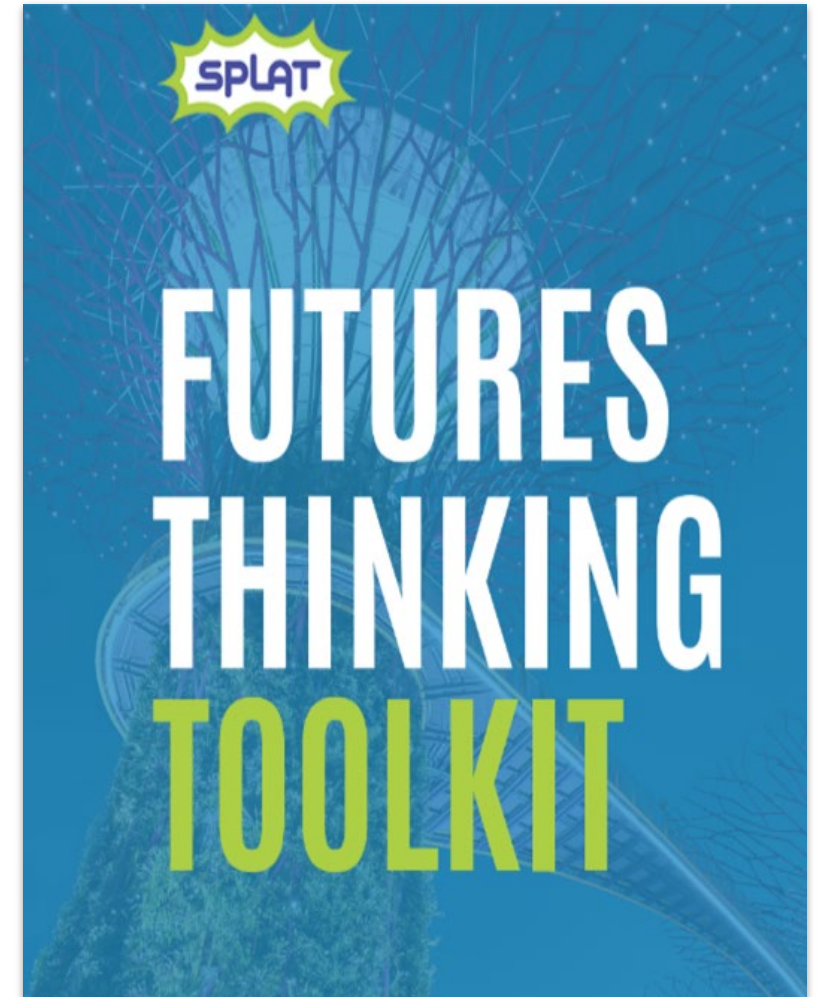
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- **Futures Thinking Toolkit (April 2023)** Provide a library lense for futures work with teens, displays, and professional development



DEVELOPING THE THINGS FROM FUTURE LIBRARIES TOOLKIT

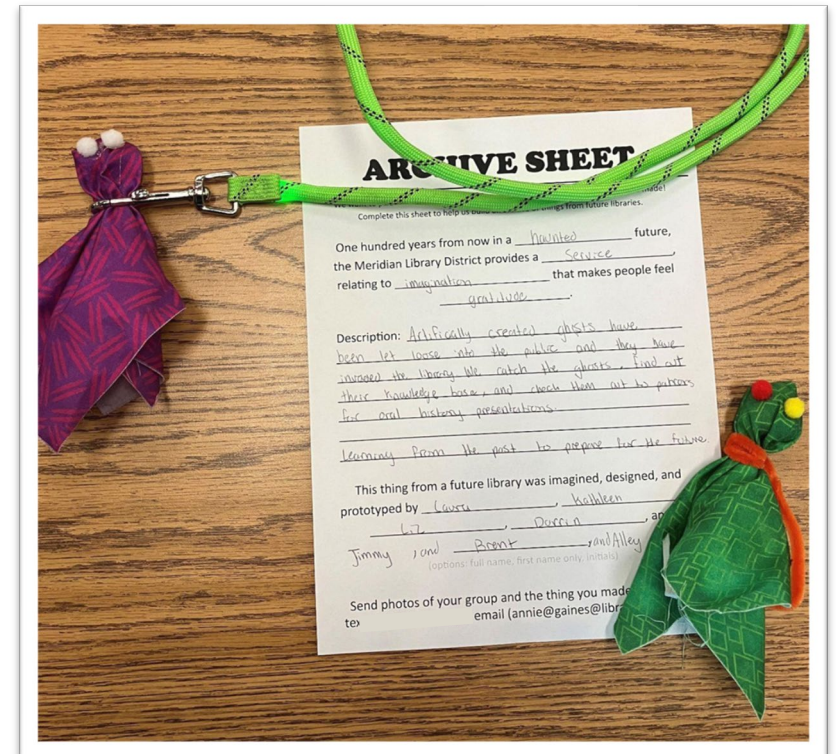


Inspired by the Futures
Bazaar from Situation
Lab published in 2022



2023 Idaho Library Association
Pre-Conference with SPLAT,
pilot run "Things from future
libraries"

2024 staff training day
with 100 staff from
Meridian Library District



PUBLISHING THE --- THINGS FROM FUTURE LIBRARIES TOOLKIT



- Manual
 - Event planning information
 - Facilitation guide
 - Speakers notes
- Slide deck
- Handouts ready to print
 - Prompt Sheet
 - Warm Up Sheet
 - Archive Sheet



Published in 2025 in time for
World Futures Day on March 1st!

HOW LIBRARIES ARE USING THE TOOLKITS



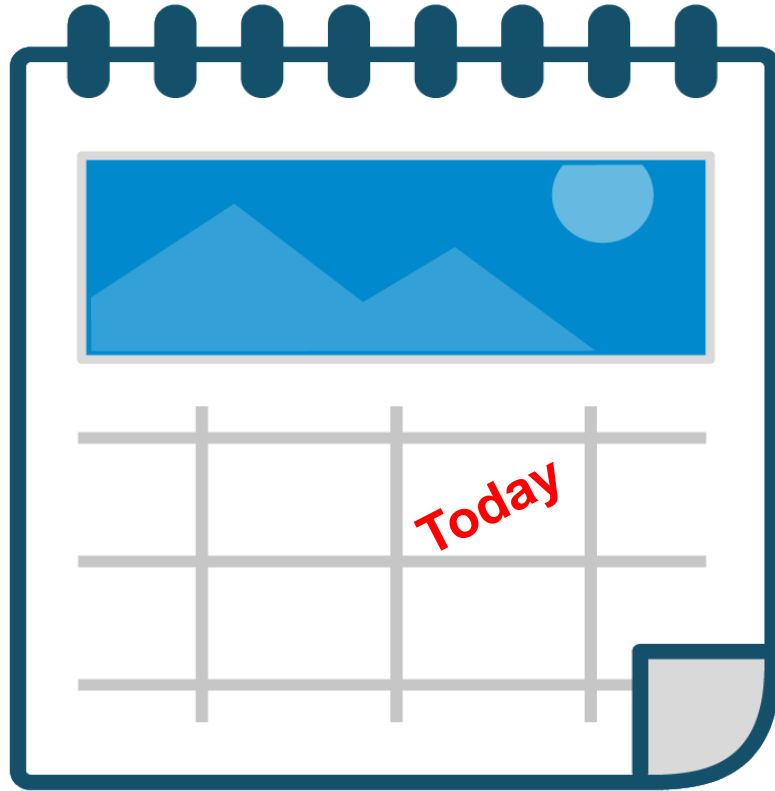
- **Rhode Island** - held a futuring session at a state library conference
- **Iowa** – used pieces from “Futures Thinking Toolkit for Libraries” to guide discussions about staffing levels after upcoming retirements
- **Idaho** – 2 of the state’s largest library systems have used it during staff days
- **Maryland** – held a futuring day for the public at a public library



**HOW CAN WE
HELP
LIBRARIES
IMAGINE
FUTURES?**



NOW, THEN NEXT: BACK/ FORECASTING



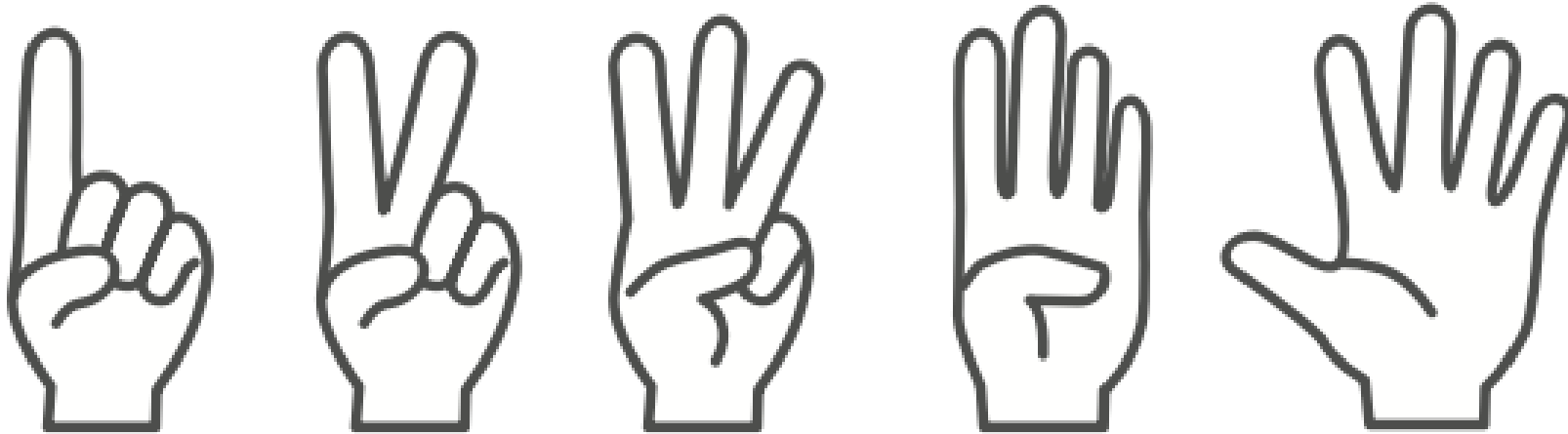
Steps:

1) Where are you now?

STRUGGLE VIBE CHECK

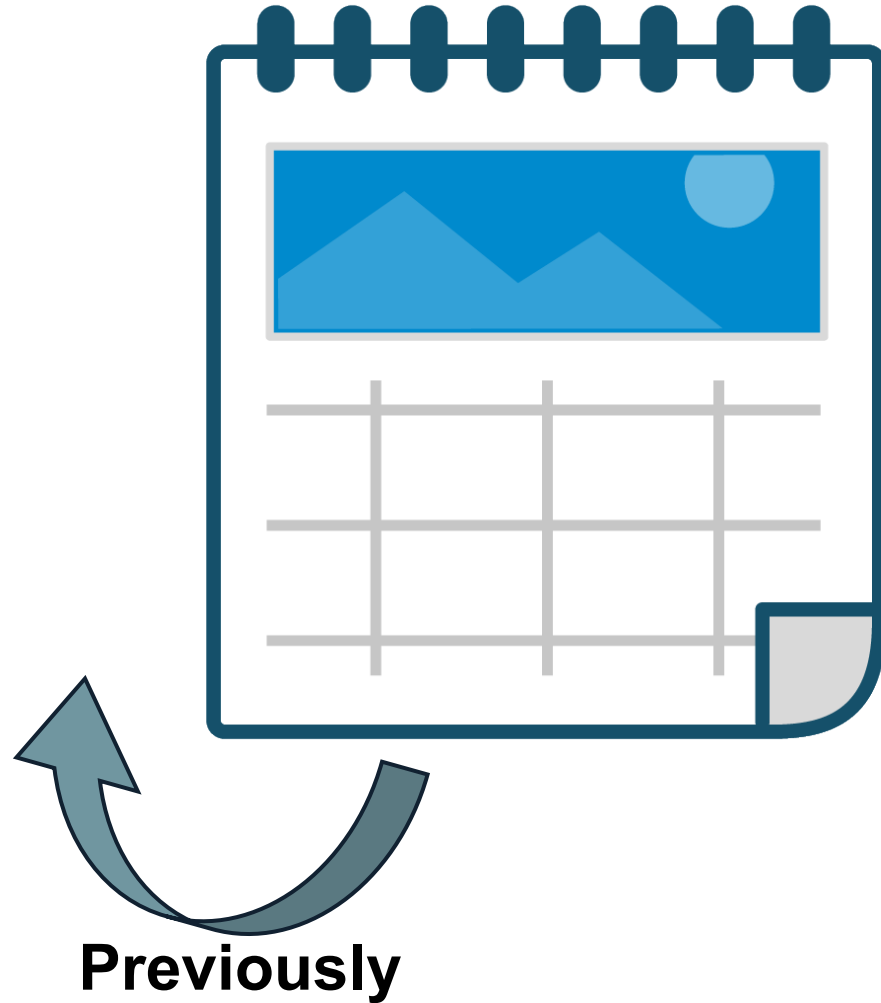


**How would you rate your
feelings towards that struggle?**



This is fine (1) >>> >>> >>> >>> Everything is on fire (5)

NOW, THEN NEXT: BACK/ FORECASTING



Steps:

- 1) Where are you now?
- 2) Where were you then?

NOW, THEN NEXT: BACK/ FORECASTING



Steps:

- 1) Where are you now?
- 2) Where were you then?
- 3) **Worst Future**

NOW, THEN NEXT: BACK/ FORECASTING



Steps:

- 1) Where are you now?
- 2) Where were you then?
- 3) Worst Future
- 4) **Best Future**

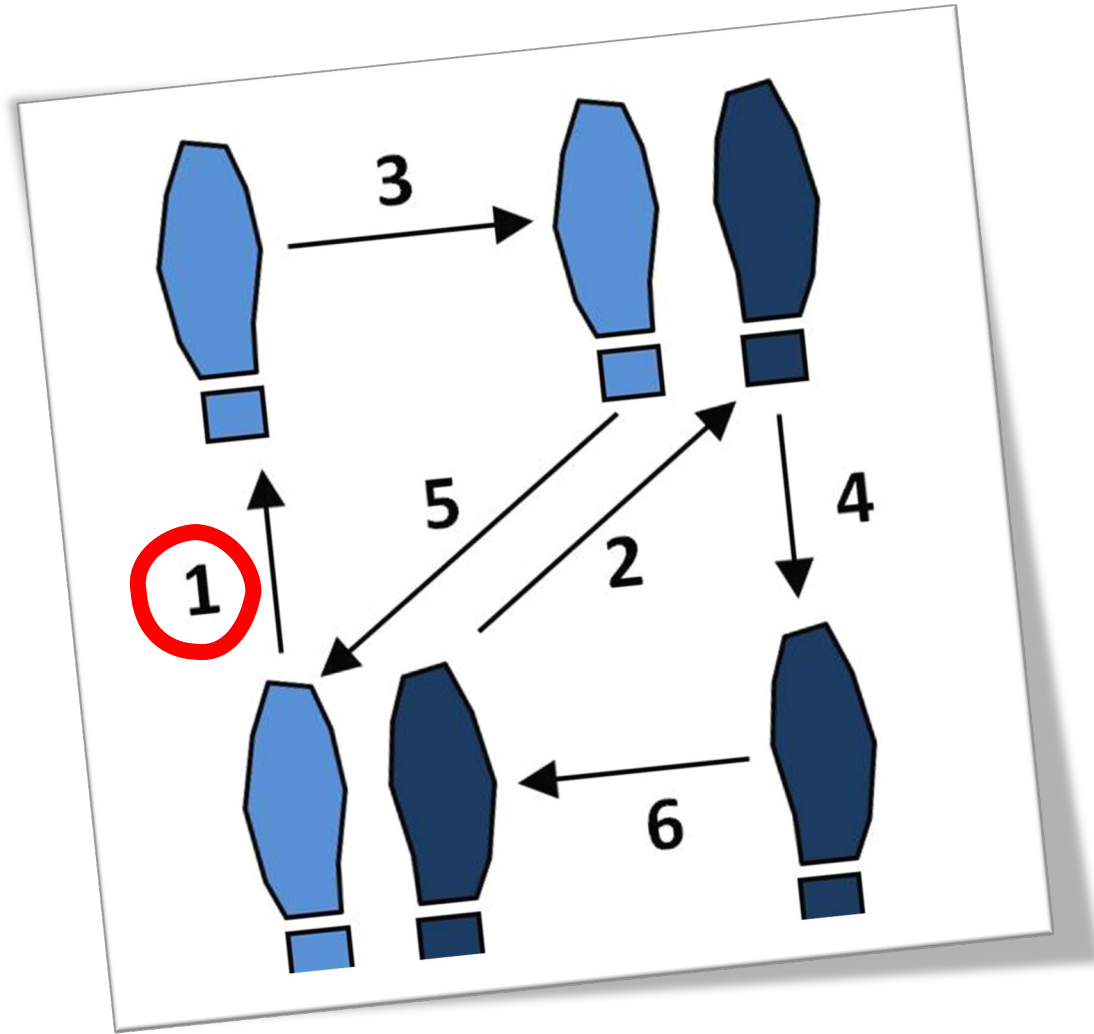
NOW, THEN NEXT: BACK/ FORECASTING



Steps:

- 1) Where are you now?
- 2) Where were you then?
- 3) Worst Future
- 4) Best Future
- 5) **Last Piece**

NOW, THEN NEXT: BACK/ FORECASTING



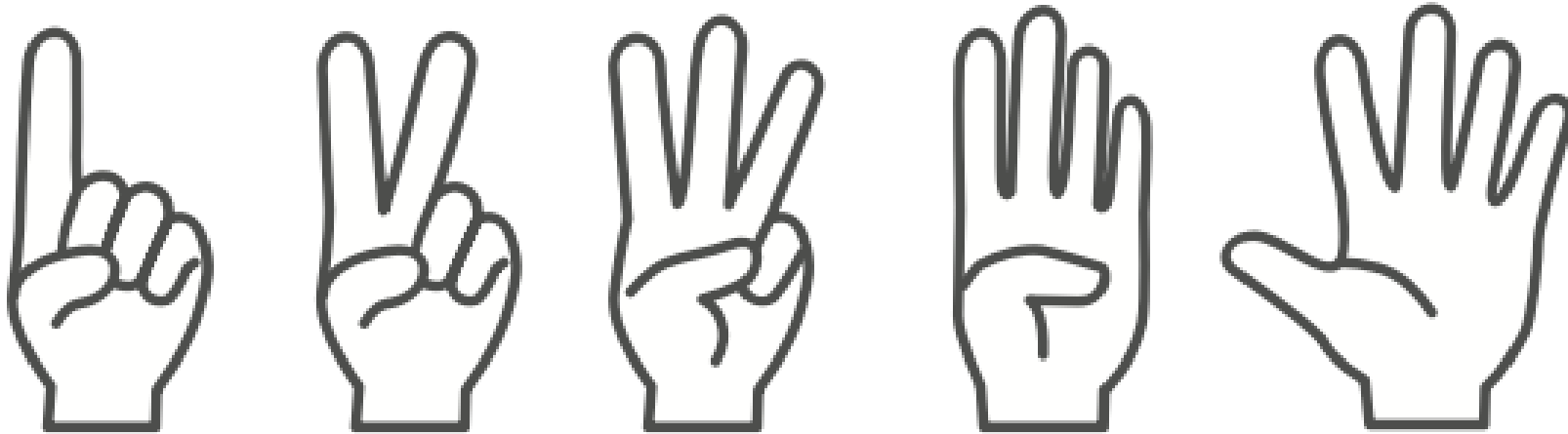
Steps:

- 1) Where are you now?
- 2) Where were you then?
- 3) Worst Future
- 4) Best Future
- 5) Last Piece
- 6) First Step

STRUGGLE VIBE CHECK



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NOW, THEN NEXT: BACK/ FORECASTING



Steps:

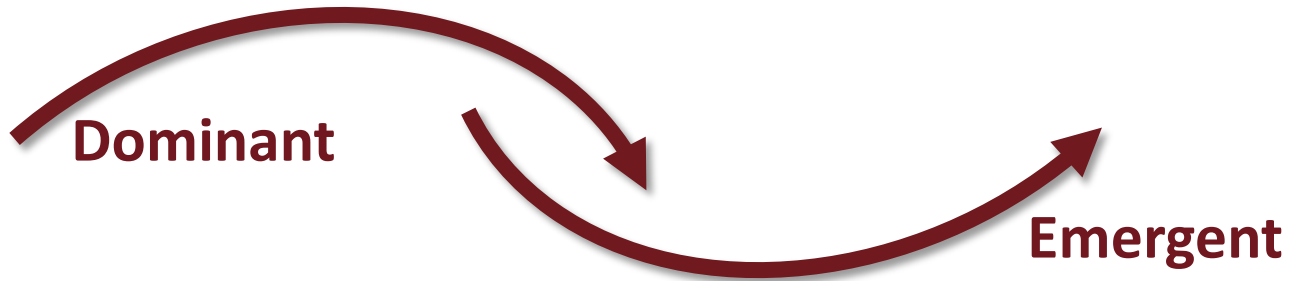
- 1) **Where are you now?** ➡ Grounding in the present, comfort of what is known
- 2) **Where were you then?** ➡ Remember you've made tough transitions before
- 3) **Worst Future** ➡ Address fears to inoculate against undesirable future
- 4) **Best Future** ➡ Imagining futures helps internalize, become memories
- 5) **Last Piece** ➡ Transports you to that tipping point moment
- 6) **Next Step** ➡ Reminder that will happen one step at a time

**WHAT IMPACT HAS
THIS WORK HAD
ON OUR LIVES?**



DEANA

- William Bridge's Transition Model
 - Endings
 - Neutral Zone (messy middle)
 - New Beginnings
- Berkana Two Loops Model by Wheatley and Frieze
 - https://youtu.be/LQWKmtx8L2s?si=tyS-LoUW_Zi57l-8



ANNIE

- Increased agency
- Increased mental flexibility
- Increased practical skepticism
- Struggling to hold onto hope over despair
- What am I doing?
 - Mending – broken things can be repaired
 - Crafting – we can make joy with simple tools
 - Art – give the pain somewhere else to live

"All that you touch you change.
All that you change changes you.
The only lasting truth is change."

- Octavia Butler



"Losing our imagination is a symptom of trauma. Reclaiming the right to dream the future, strengthening the muscle to imagine together... is a revolutionary activity."

- adrienne maree brown

RESOURCES FOR FURTHER FUTURING

- *Futures Thinking Playbook* by Katie Bishop King and Julia Rose West (2018)
- *Emergent Strategy: Shaping Change, Changing Worlds* by adrienne maree brown (2017)
- *Parable of the Sower* by Octavia Butler (1993)
- *Perseverance* by Margaret Wheatley (2010)
- *Imaginable: How to see the future coming and feel ready for anything* by Jane McGonigal (2022)
- “Ready, Set, Future!” free course from the Institute for the Future on Coursera
- More resources on SPLAT’s site
libraries.idaho.gov/splat/library-futures

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS



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“Things From Future Libraries” was inspired by and adapted from the [Futures Bazaar](#) and [The Thing from the Future Game](#), created by the [Situation Lab](#), and Filippo Cuttica and Stuart Candy. The future navigator activity was borrowed with permission from the book [“Futures Thinking Playbook”](#) by Katie King and Julia Rose Walt, in collaboration with Peter Bishop at [Teach the Future](#).



LET'S CHAT!

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