Redesigning the Gift Giving Experience
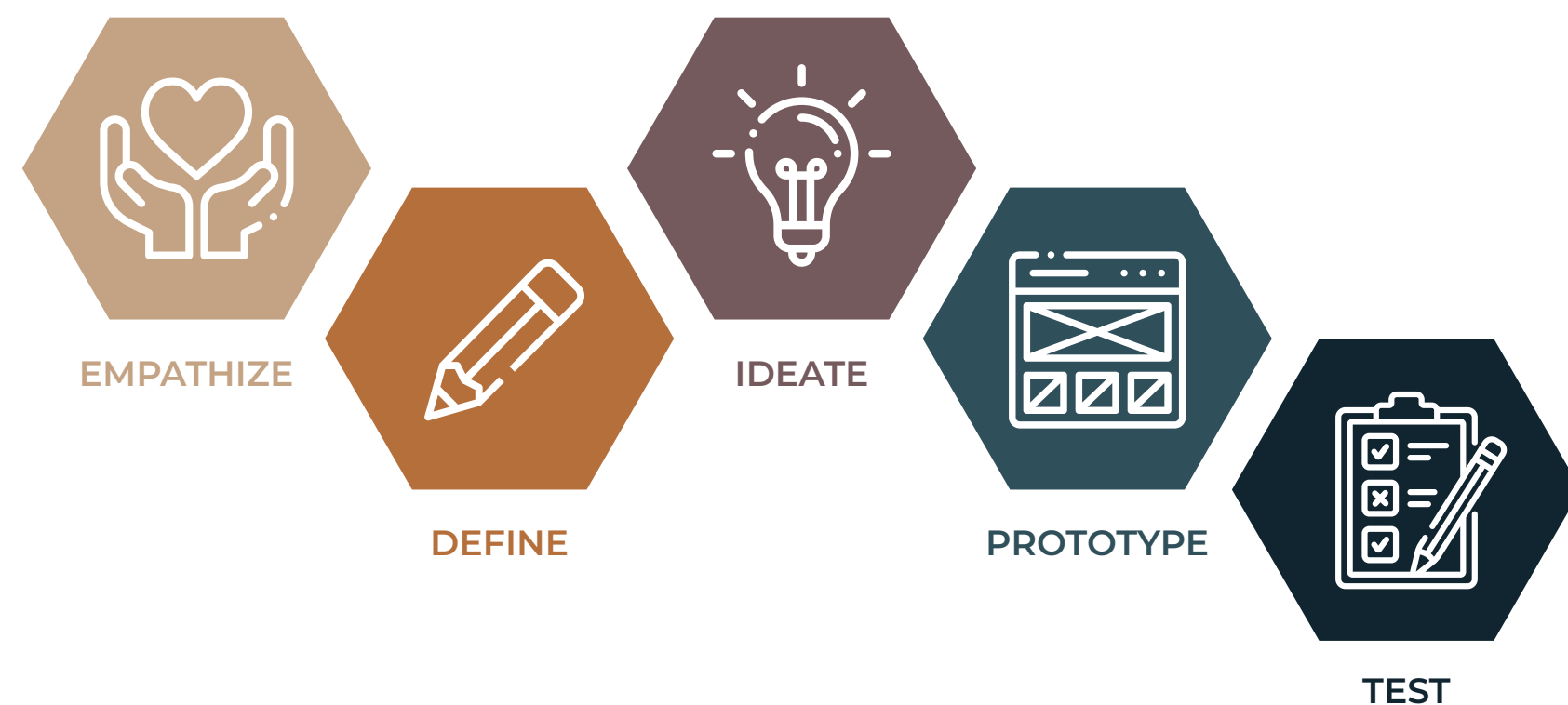
OVERVIEW

This week, I had the opportunity to partner with a classmate, Chris Blake. Chris is a Game Developer and an adjunct professor at Quinnipiac University. We sat down for 90 minutes to go through A Virtual Crash Course in Design Thinking, by Stanford University's Hasso Plattner Institute of Design, also known as the d.school. This crash course "lets you experience one of the d.school's most popular learning tools."

The course walked us through a collaborative project called the "Gift-Giving Cycle." The project consists of multiple sections that walk students through the basic principles of design thinking.

◆ **DESIGN THINKING:** *a methodology for creative problem solving.*

EMPATHIZE

DEFINE

IDEATE

PROTOTYPE

TEST

Start By Gaining Empathy

ONE: INTERVIEW

Chris's Last Gift-Giving Experience

This Christmas, Chris gave his brother a bread-making cookbook. The book contained multiple recipes for different kinds of bread. He explained that his brother is hands-on. In preparation for Christmas, Chris and his wife found the bread-baking book on Amazon and had it shipped to their home. They gifted the book in person on Christmas day. Since then, Chris's brother has been baking different kinds of bread every couple of weeks.

TWO: DIG DEEPER

Probing to Unveil Hidden Emotions, Stories, Motivations, and More

Chris's brother is in his early 30's. Chris and his brother are pretty close, as Chris is only one year older than his brother. As a pastime, Chris's brother has handmade various items, including soap and candles. He divorced recently, and this was his first Christmas alone post-divorce. Chris sought to give him a gift that would spark joy for him during the holiday season. This was also special for Chris because 2020's Stay-at-Home Order resulted in an extensive quarantine within the Blake household. Before this moment, Chris and his wife had not gone out or been around family members for months. This Christmas, Chris and his wife spent the day with his mom and brother.

BREADS

Delicious homemade yeast breads, quick breads, biscuits, muffins, scones, coffee cakes and more

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Reframe
The Problem

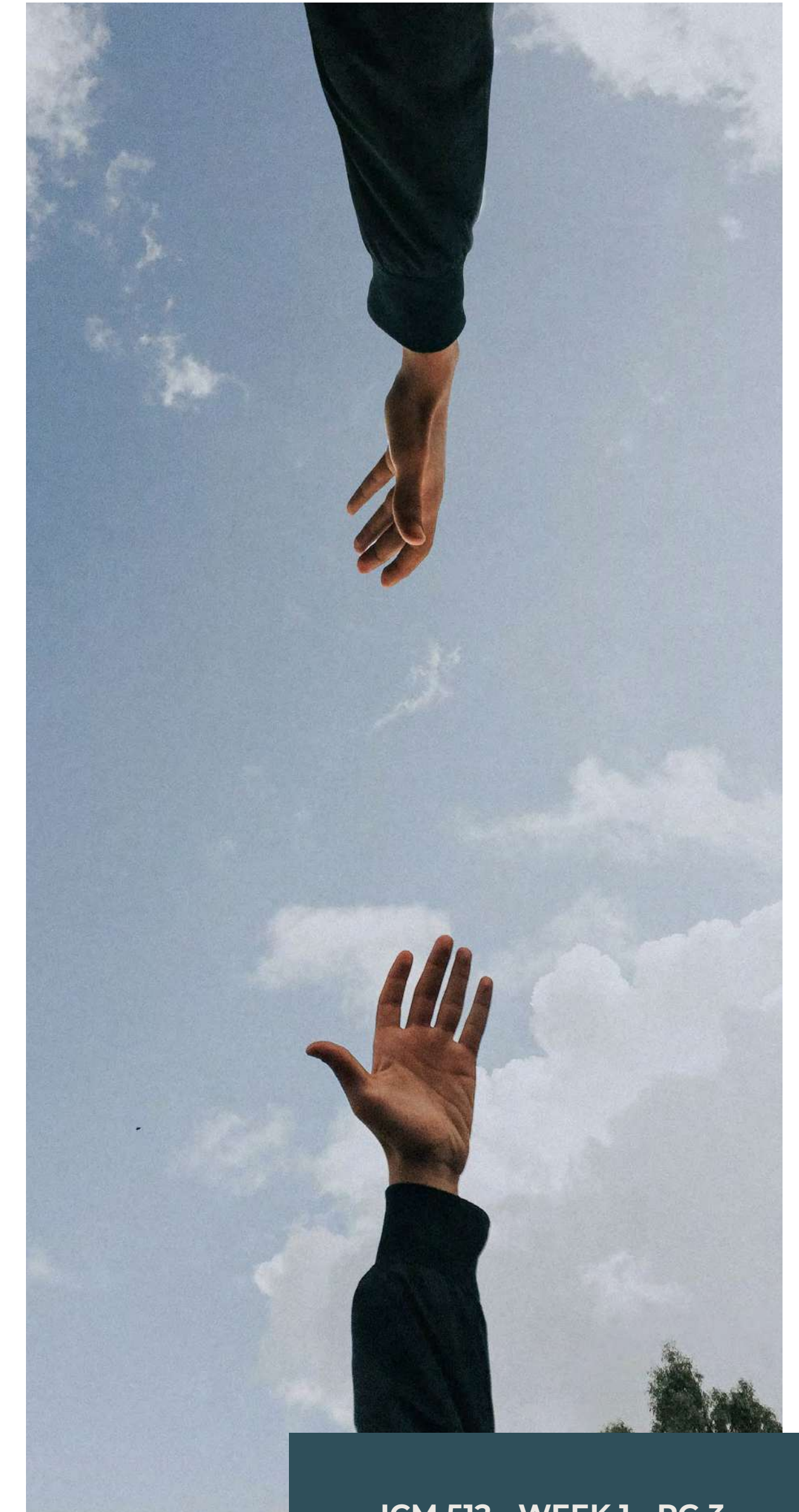## THREE: CAPTURE FINDINGS

NEEDS: Things Chris is Trying to Do

· Following hardship, Chris wants to cheer up his brother.

· He desires to make his brother feel loved and appreciated during the holiday season.

· Chris wants to give his brother a gift that he will enjoy using.

INSIGHTS: Chris's Feelings and Worldview

· Chris wants to indicate that he is present and his brother is not alone.

· Chris cares about his brother and his well-being, especially during the holiday season.

· Chris is empathetic, supportive, considerate, and understanding.

FOUR: DEFINE PROBLEM STATEMENT

◆ **Chris needs a way to encourage other people because he understands that others need support while experiencing difficult life challenges.**

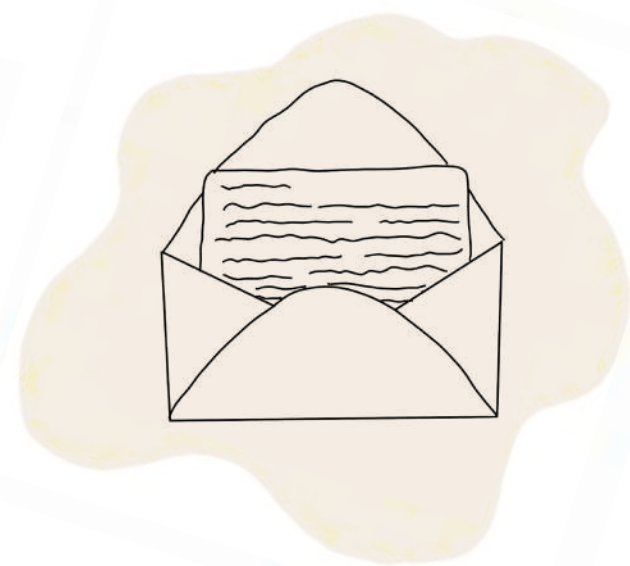SOLA AWOJOODU

Ideate: Generate Alternatives to Test

FIVE: SKETCHES OF A FEW RADICAL WAYS TO MEET CHRIS'S NEEDS

- **Chris needs a way to encourage other people because he understands that others need support while experiencing difficult life challenges.**
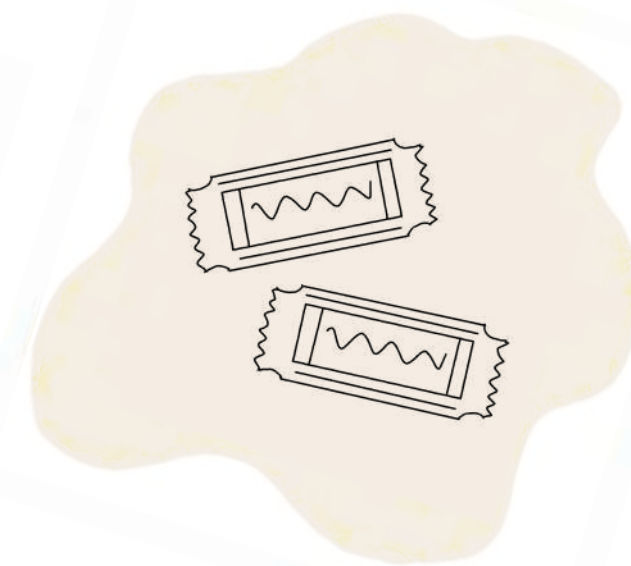
BONDING ACTIVITIES

1 Chris can select a handcrafting or team building activity to participate in alongside his brother. Some of these activities include attending a woodshop class together, painting pottery, trying glassblowing, crafting origami, and more. To bond with his brother over his brother's love for working with his hands and keep his brother in good spirits, Chris can plan to do this periodically.

AFFIRMING WORDS

2 Chris can express his appreciation for his brother and encourage him directly through conversation, messages, and/or letters. He can be an intentional confidant for his brother and offer support when his brother needs it. Additionally, Chris can rally his family together to further affirm his brother through their words and partner in bearing his brother's burdens as he goes through a lot of transition.

BUCKET LIST GIFT

3 Chris can find out something his brother really wants to do and make it happen. Helping his brother cross something off of his bucket list will foster excitement and gratification. It will indicate that Chris is thoughtful, intentional, and cares for his brother and his brother's interests.

SPECIAL EVENT

4 Chris can plan a surprise event for his brother with all of his loved ones present. An option for this event is a divorce party, a ceremony to celebrate the end of a marriage. For Chris's brother, a divorce party can symbolize turning a new leaf in life. The presence of his loved ones would show Chris's brother that he has a group of people that cherish him, despite his divorce.

GAME DEVELOPMENT

5 Chris can utilize his game development skills to create a video game to play with his brother. The game can incorporate their mutual interests and experiences. Playing the game can be a way for Chris and his brother to bond regularly. Chris can also strategically add levels to the game that cater to his brother and add thrill and excitement. Since Chris's brother will have more time on his hands, the game can become a positive pastime and a method to keep his brother lighthearted.

Ideate: Generate Alternatives to Test

SIX: SOLUTIONS AND FEEDBACK

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Chris's Preferences

Chris liked my fifth solution best. He identified with this idea the most because it aligned with his personal interests and his brother's interests. He also believed that this approach was the most achievable and good ground for him to bond with his brother, as they both enjoy playing video games regularly. This solution also provides a lot of room for them to tap into their creativity and imagination.

Chris agreed that this solution is a great way to bring more thrill and excitement into his brother's life. He thinks the best way to encourage his brother is to keep him focused on positive things as he transitions into a new phase of his life. Video games are easily accessible and offer the capability of collaborating or playing solo. Therefore, Chris would design the video game with single-player and multiplayer modes so that his brother could play at any time. This way, Chris's brother will not need to rely on others to experience the game. He can experience joy through the game just by playing.

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Iterate Based on Feedback

SEVEN: REFLECTION AND NEW SOLUTION

Chris's Pick

New Solution
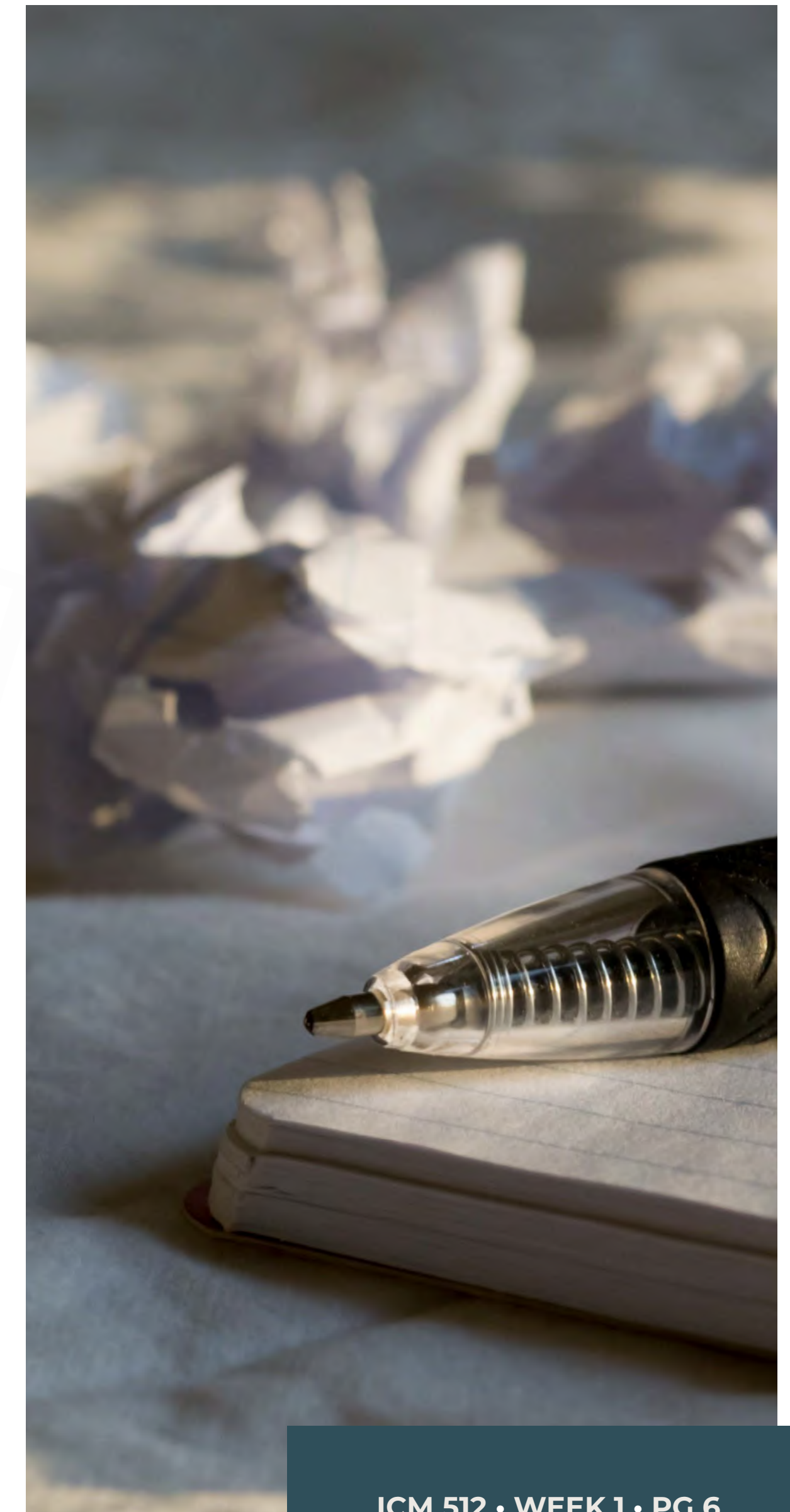

1 **2** **3** **4**

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Game Development using Dreams

1. Chris inquires about his brother's game preferences and gathers ideas of things to include in his game.

2. Chris uses Dreams to design a game that he and his brother will enjoy playing together. Dreams is a video game that houses a game universe full of community-made games. Dreams also allows users to create their own games. This game is published by Sony for use on the Playstation.

3. Chris gifts his brother Dreams so that they can play his game together via Playstation.

4. Chris and his brother play his game together, both locally and remotely. Dreams allows them to continue to build out the game and craft it to their liking.

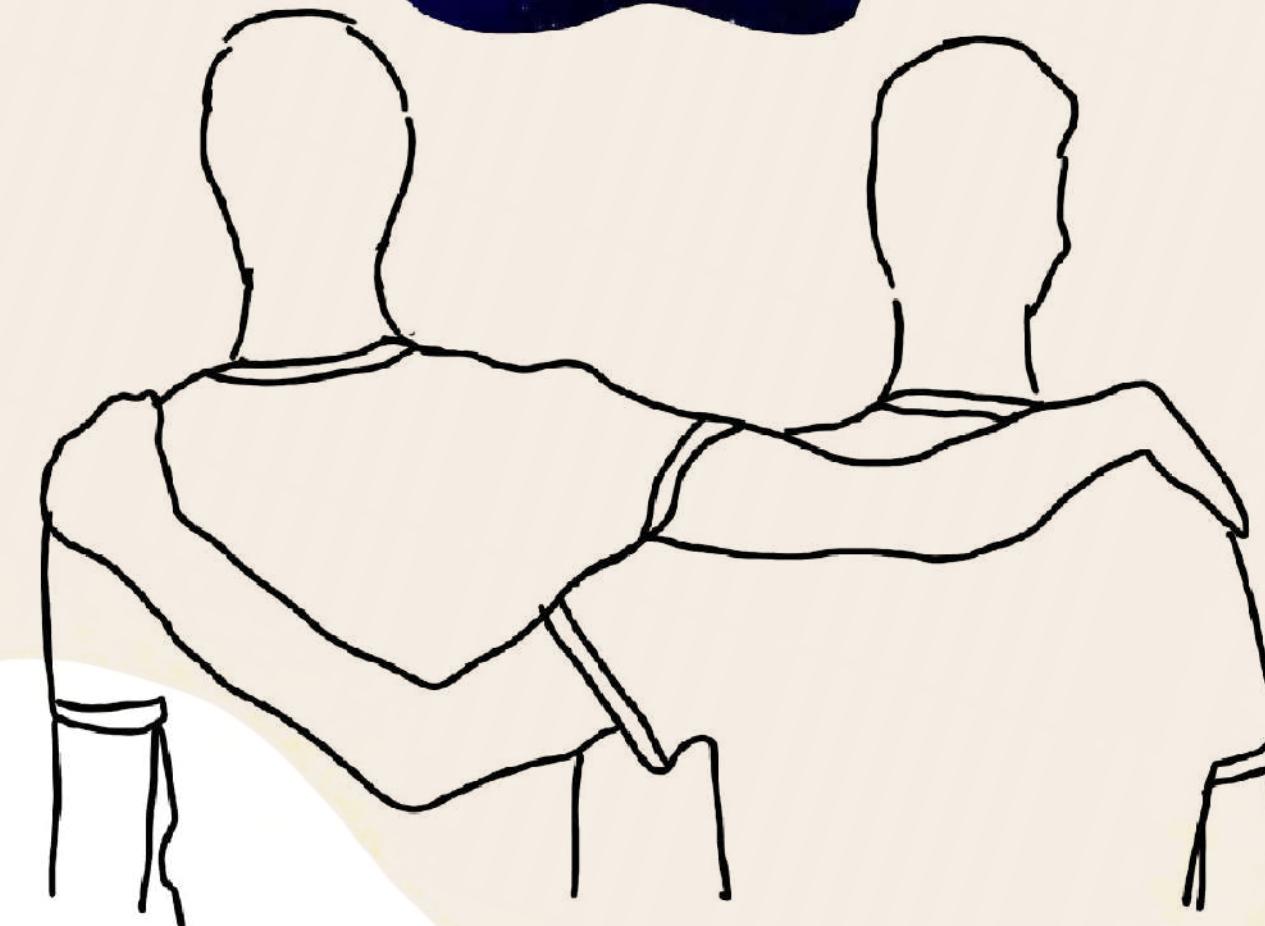SOLA AWOJOODU

Build and Test

EIGHT: MY SOLUTION

Building and Bonding through Dreams

My solution involves utilizing Dreams to build a game that Chris and his brother can enjoy playing together. Dreams provides an opportunity for Chris and his brother to explore a new platform, incorporate their interests, and spend time together playing the game. Doing this together will bring joy to Chris's brother and reinforce the fact that his brother can be present and foster positivity in his life through collaboration and game development.

Possible Obstacles

· As a game developer, will Chris benefit from using Dreams?

· Using Dreams may require learning and experimenting. The learning curve could take away from the ultimate goal and experience.

· This solution assumes that Chris and his brother both have access to a Playstation console.

· After further research, I found that although it is expected to be released soon, Dreams does not have online multiplayer capabilities yet. As of now, Chris and his brother would only be able to play the game together locally.

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Build and Test

NINE: CHRIS'S FEEDBACK

What Worked

As stated earlier, Chris loved the idea of building a game to play alongside his brother. He thought it would be a great way for him and his brother to connect regularly. He never considered Dreams for game development and thought my solution was a unique and innovative approach.

What Could Be Improved

Considering that Chris is a game developer, he mentioned that he is more comfortable developing the game traditionally. Creating the game from a familiar space eliminates the potential learning curve that Dreams might present. Additionally, he can format the game to be played using hardware that he and his brother are already using.

Questions

Chris asked: What do I need to use Dreams? What limitations does Dreams have? Can I insert my own code into Dreams?

Ideas

Chris mentioned that his brother is a competent illustrator. He suggested that this could be used to his advantage, as he and his brother could build the game together instead of relying solely on Chris to build the entire game. Working together to build the game also aligns with Chris' brother's love for working with his hands. They would both share in the satisfaction of building the game together and playing the game together.