

Generate terrible ideas to find the good ones hiding underneath.

## Background

IDEO · Design Thinking practice

Asking for the worst possible idea removes the fear of judgement and unlocks genuine divergent thinking. The real power is in the inversion: each terrible idea violates a principle, and that principle — once named — becomes a design requirement.

## How to Run This

- 1 State your challenge clearly.
- 2 Spend 5 minutes generating the worst possible ideas — the more absurd the better.
- 3 Select the 3–4 most productively terrible ideas for inversion.
- 4 For each, name the principle it violates.
- 5 Invert each violated principle into an actionable direction.

## Facilitator Tips

### Common mistake

Ideas that are just "bad business" rather than violating a real design principle.

### What good looks like

An inversion that produces an idea you'd actually want to test.

### When to move on

When you have 2–3 actionable directions that emerged from inversion and at least one you could prototype cheaply.

## About Wade Institute

Wade Institute of Entrepreneurship is Australia's leading centre for entrepreneurial education, based at the University of Melbourne. The Studio is Wade's free, AI-powered innovation workshop platform — making 24 structured frameworks available to anyone, each one facilitated by Pete, an AI coach trained in Wade's methodology.

## Try this interactively in The Studio

Pete will push you to make ideas truly terrible, then guide the inversion process to extract the genuine insights. You'll leave with actionable directions and a session report.

[studio.wadeinstitute.org.au](https://studio.wadeinstitute.org.au) →

## 1 THE CHALLENGE

What problem are you solving? State it clearly.

## 2 WORST IDEA 1

The more terrible, the better. Break every rule.

## 3 WORST IDEA 2

The more terrible, the better. Break every rule.

## 4 WORST IDEA 3

The more terrible, the better. Break every rule.

## 5 WORST IDEA 4

The more terrible, the better. Break every rule.

## 6 WORST IDEA 5

The more terrible, the better. Break every rule.

## 7 WORST IDEA 6

The more terrible, the better. Break every rule.

## 8 SELECTED WORST IDEAS

Pick the 3-4 most productively terrible ideas.

## 9 INVERSION

What principle does each break? Now flip it.

## 10 ACTIONABLE DIRECTIONS

What real ideas emerge from the inversions?

## 11 KEY INSIGHT

What did the exercise reveal about the problem?