

Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iRL8ZxBhCa0>

Draw more, together, Ole Qvist-Sørensen, 2012

(Appluse)

Thank you. Good morning. I'd like to start out by asking you to join me in doing a couple of things. First, I'd like you to all imagine your childhood home or the room you grew up in. Is that possible? Okay. Second, imagine you won a lottery ticket and that made you rich enough to buy a vacation in the Maldives. You have to plan that with your family. Try to imagine that planning session, imagine you're going to the Maldives. Can you do that? That should be pretty easy. So we have this fantastic ability to recall the past. We're all visual thinkers. But we can also imagine the future. We can do something that pictures can't do. We can take photos of the past, we can draw the future.

So I'd like you to help me out a bit. How many in here would consider that you are good at drawing? Please, raise your hand. Okay. Now, how many of you would consider that you are not so good at drawing? Okay. So we might have established that in this room we have around (I think I was right to do it this way) maybe around 20 percent who consider this and the rest of us consider this. There might be room somewhere for something in between, but let's just stick to this. So that seems to be a problem. We're all visual thinkers and we have this block, maybe.

This is a drawing of Melden. He's 10 years old. He drew this drawing especially for today and, as you can see, it's a battle between dinosaurs and humans on planet Earth – humans are coming on the left side. So my question would be why might creative drawing be worth doing as adults? And the point of this talk is -- are -- these three. We're all visual thinkers and we can all draw. And then, drawing together is a very important practice if we want to create movement.

So I'll tell a story about Chris, Grace and Ben and you might have had similar experiences. They meet very regularly, on a café after work and on this particular Friday afternoon they meet up, have some coffee and sit and talk. Chris, he has this great idea he just wants to share, so he asks Grace and Ben. "Well, if we were to gather people who would do great presentations – short, crisp, about ideas that are worth spreading – what would attract you? Who should be the presenters?" He clears the table, the paper tablecloth is there and he pulls out some pens but then Grace and Ben immediately jump in and they start adding: clever people, diverse... And they draw up. And in a short time this collage emerges. Now, the night continues and they get a couple of coffees or maybe a beer and then the topic changes. They, then, Chris, he folds the paper tablecloth in his pocket and, well, they forget about it.

The following Monday morning, Chris, he [fortunately] has the same pair of trousers on, so he reaches to his back pocket and he looks at what's there and he remembers: "Ah, that's the paper

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tablecloth.” And then he pulls it out and he sees all the drawings and the sketches that they had and immediately, he’s transformed back to that Friday afternoon. He can not only remember the conversation they had, he can actually also recall the smell and the music, maybe even the atmosphere of the café. So that’s some amazing stuff that the brain does to us, or we are able to do with our brain. But the story doesn’t end there.

They, the following Monday, or that Monday, Chris, he decides to call Grace and Ben again and says, “this was a great idea, let’s meet up, let’s put it together in a different way and then send it out and gather more inputs. So during the week they send out a drawing, little bit distilled, to loads of friends, and they, within a week, come back with a lot of requests, responses, more ideas. And then, two weeks later, they send out a great invitation to something they call a TED talk, because it’s about technology, education and design. And loads of people come and they have a great event.

So, this is not the true story about how TED started but it might be similar experience that we’ve all had in some way. We draw stuff on paper and ideas emerge and they spread and potentially they become a movement.

So, why does it work to draw together? There are a couple of reasons. Well, see, we have this sense which is the most dominant of our senses. It’s how we navigate in the world, we take in a lot of information. Then we have this ability of doing visual thinking. We can imagine something. We can imagine futures. We can imagine future possibilities. Now, this should be a man on the moon. We can do this, we can imagine future possibilities and drawing together accounts the same.

Now, having this ability of seeing, listening and thinking can channel that into a drawing and it clarifies, which means that other people basically get and see what we mean. We can do that alone and we can do that together.

Now, we need to have the screen there, constantly. Thank you. Because we need to see what we mean.

Another good reason why it works is that when we draw together, we bring in multiple perspectives. Have you ever tried that? You sit and you draw, and then you can see if it fits there, and you can relate and suddenly you’re part of creating something together. And when you create something together, you invest. And that investment, that makes you own what you created together and you can then cascade. Everybody wants to tell that story and pictures are great because everybody can interpret in a little bit different way and tell their own part.

So you might be thinking this: “I still can’t draw”. That’s why I’m so happy that you have a notepad and a black marker. So I’d like you to pull out that notepad and black marker.

And the black marker is because then it can be seen.

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And I'll just go and do a couple of things on the screen. And -- Are you ready? So if you can draw a line, we're well off. And then you continue with a circle, a square. If it's going too fast -- continue. That's a triangle. And a wave. Something like that. See? That's pretty simple. That's drawing. Now, a little bit tricky is the five-pointed star. But you start at the beginning and you make five-pointed star sort of like this. Remember, it doesn't need to be pretty, it just needs to be -- symbolize. Are you good with this? So we'll draw to the next page.

Now, if you combine some of this -- you make a small circle and then you make a four-pointed star. So you just add four and then you have a person. It's a world-famous star figure.

Now, the second thing is, if you draw a square and two lines down and a little bit of blur at the bottom, then you have a signpost. You don't need to draw a house to show where things are going on. You just need to write it in a post. And then you can write "TEDx".

Now, another square starts like this but then you add a line and a line and then you make a perfect arrow. Good things about arrows is that you can write inside them. But this is an easy way to make an arrow, and then you can show a process -- how things happen.

Now, then you make a circle and a little tip down and then you continue the circle. And then you have a speech bubble and now you are able to put a story into whatever you draw -- what are people thinking or saying.

A little bit tricky one comes now. Are you ready? So you make a couple of M-s or a blur like this and a blur like this. And then you make a circle in a little bit different way but sort of like that, and a line at the bottom and then two lines here. And then you draw a line up and then a lot stuff like this and then down. And then you make a very sustainable lightbulb. Now here's an element that maybe provides a little bit of content that's relevant for today.

You don't need to do the next but I guess we can see that putting these things together can make a drawing about some people wanting to move somewhere, overcoming an obstacle by getting a great idea. And this drawing could actually help maybe one hundred teams or a thousand teams have a dialogue of where are we, where do we want to go and how do we overcome the obstacles. So the drawing helps having a conversation and you can spread that dialogue.

So why is this worth doing? If you haven't been convinced yet, at least I hope that you can go home and impress your partner or friends by doing some great new drawings. But you might also be the one who's remembered at work in the meetings because there's something personal and authentic about drawing stuff and in a PowerPoint technological age this might be just another way to include presentations in a different style.

But imagine if we also, at home, in families, drew together when we wanted to plan vacation. That could avoid misunderstanding and it could help everybody be part of that journey.

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Or even at schools, how about making historic timelines together in class or drawing up the entire year calendar of what we learned in our class and tell that to others so that they can learn too.

Maybe even you can have a neighborhood or a country or a big organization or a global network draw their shared change journey together. Wouldn't that be great?

What it does, when you draw together, is a little bit different. Because you start thinking differently, you start listening differently to what's going on when you have to co-create. And you start collaborating differently.

And you might consider practicing drawing together as you're actually practicing very important leadership skills in today's world that is very complex and we don't call the answers alone.

It takes a little bit of courage and we need to jump over that block of "I can't draw". Now, this is a drawing made by Gaya. He's 49 years old. It's not about dinosaurs. He's head of investment in the Norwegian broadcasting corporation, NRK. He created this with -- in mind -- to talk about their media player, the second version. The first version was actually -- the new version was actually launched yesterday and it seems now, updating this drawing, it helps them focus direction within the team but also in the rest of the organization.

Now, the good news about this is that technology cannot do this for you because it requires imagination. And the other good news is that we are all visual thinkers and we can all draw. So I hope that I've proved the point and that we can together create movements.

Thank you very much.

(Applause)

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