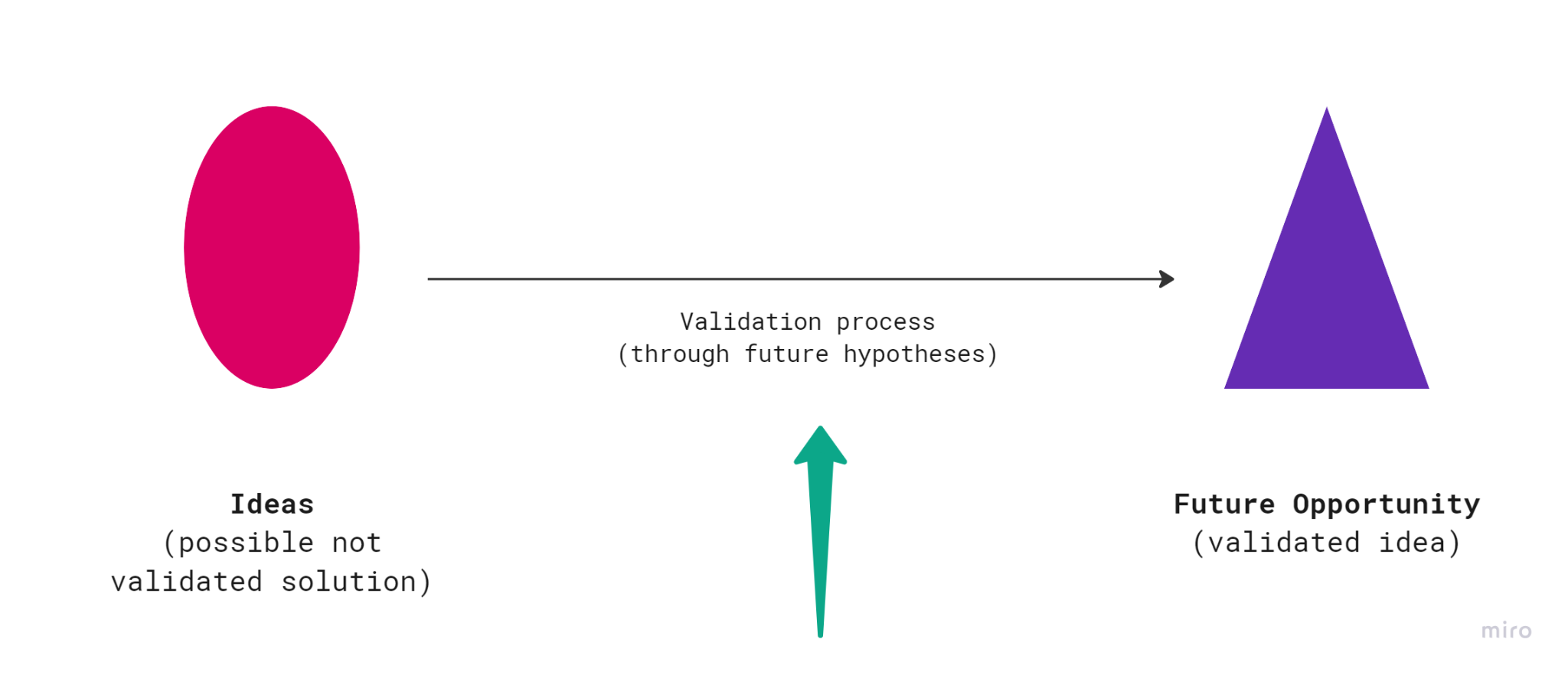
**Mission 5 – Pretotyping and Testing**

**Mindset**

“Nothing is a mistake. There’s no win and no fail, there’s only make.”

Sister Corita Kent and John Cage's rules for artspaces

**General instructions**

The key is to always keep learning. This project stage focuses on learning through solutions by transforming your Product Hypotheses into Future Opportunities. This week, the objective is to test some of the hypotheses you've developed about people by creating quick, rough prototypes (called "pretotypes") to validate specific needs and explore them further through user testing. Building prototypes should now become a routine part of your project. 

While in the previous phase you learned about needs and challenges by engaging with users and understanding the context, now you need to assess whether the identified needs are truly relevant by reflecting on possible solutions. This approach will deepen your understanding of the challenge and enhance your interactions with users. It’s time to start building—turning concepts and questions into tangible experiences that will help you think both critically and practically, while also helping users better understand and articulate their needs.

The term "prototype" comes from the Greek *prototypos*, formed by the term “*protos*” (- first) and “*typos*” (-print, model, impression) and meaning "first model" or "impression." In this early stage of exploring solutions, we focus on presenting ideas in a rough, unfinished form—this is known as low-fidelity prototyping, or pretotyping. Unlike high-fidelity prototypes, which are more polished and require significant time and resources, low-fidelity prototypes are quick and easy to make. Their purpose is not to impress users or stakeholders but to learn from them. Rather than surprising people with a finished product, low-fidelity prototypes aim to gather insightful feedback from users, enhancing listening and learning rather than selling. High-fidelity prototypes, on the other hand, often shift the focus to details, which can distract from the core concepts and provide less useful feedback for determining whether a Product Hypothesis truly represents an opportunity.

You'll know your pretotype is effective if it sparks conversations where users' needs, designers' intentions, and stakeholders' hypotheses are discussed and aligned. If the focus shifts to details, it’s a sign that the pretotype isn't working as intended.

Be cautious! This may seem obvious, but it’s easy to forget. Designers often fall in love with their ideas, overdeveloping a pretotype by adding unnecessary details or making it "pretty" for presentation. To avoid this, regularly ask yourself: "Why are we doing this?" "What need are we investigating with this idea?" "What question are we trying to answer with this prototype?"

When testing, remember that at this stage, the goal is not to learn what people think about your pretotype, but rather what the pretotype reveals about people. A pretotype is a way to test your assumptions and simultaneously uncover new questions that you hadn’t considered.

**Example: Pretotype for Testing a Hypothesis**

Hypothesis: "People need quick meals and want to save time in meal preparation."

The team created a conversational prototype by writing a script and designing a menu that highlighted order and consumption times. They then tested this by engaging in conversations with people in a café or cafeteria during lunch, asking whether and how saving time is a factor in their meal choices. The menu options clearly indicated order and consumption times, and they asked users which option they would choose and why.

**Tools**

**Activity 1: Pretotyping**

Now it’s time to start and make your principal ideas tangible. Pretotyping, or a physical representation of your concept, allows you to share your idea with other people, gain feedback and explore your research question. Remember you are testing an hypothesis and the pretotype is a means to an end, not the end itself.

Prototyping involves several key steps: preparation (what do we need to test?), construction (creating a testable and "experimentable" representation of your idea), testing (putting your prototype to use and gathering feedback), and reflecting on the results to decide how to influence the direction of your projects. It’s an iterative process of smart planning, building, and reflection.

These are the General Guidelines:

* **Ensure your prototyping is well-focused**: Without focus, you might end up developing non-critical parts of your project.
* **Prototype early and often**: If you wait too long, you might run out of time. The only way to fail at prototyping is by not prototyping at all.
* **Take time to reflect on test results**: Without reflection, you risk not learning from your work and might end up chasing your own tail.

Use this approach to ensure there’s a clear *why* behind each prototype: Start by writing down your hypotheses:



Repeat until you will gather interesting feedback!

**Activity 2: Testing**

Now it's time to use your prototypes to gather user feedback, which is one of the most valuable tools in developing an idea.

In design thinking, there are at least two crucial points where talking to people is essential: at the beginning of a project to gain inspiration, and when you have prototypes, to get feedback. At this stage, the feedback you collect should be generative, allowing you to continuously adapt your prototype.

The feedback will still be exploratory, rather than validation-based; it's not about determining whether the idea is right or wrong—it's about understanding how the idea might meet a need. This is where the opportunity lies: in understanding which hypotheses can create value.

Feedback interviews at this stage are similar to earlier interviews, but with a greater focus on learning what users think about your prototype, rather than understanding their lives in general. You want honest feedback, both positive and negative, to help your ideas evolve.

REFLECT

Feedback is invaluable for developing an idea, but it could also be quite confusing. The input you receive from different users might be contradictory or may not be aligned with your goals. It’s essential to organise the responses you receive and decide what to incorporate into the next iteration of testing. This activity is all about learning, let it guide you.

SHARE IMPRESSIONS

Start a conversation within your team and compare others’ learnings. Take notes while considering the following suggestions:

* What did participants appreciate more?
* What excited them?
* What would convince them about the idea?
* Which aspects would participants like to see improved?
* What didn’t work out?
* What needs further investigations?

**Activity 3: Identify Product future Opportunity**

Share your captured impressions as soon as the conversation with a user ends. Write down received feedback on post-it notes and organise them by topics: what was received positively? What concerns were raised? What suggestions did you identify? What “activates” people? What elements of the idea are recognized as valuable?

Take a moment to revisit your starting point: 

What were you trying to learn? Look back at your learnings and previous ideas. What was your original intent? Is it still valid, based on the received feedback? Did your prototype address or clarify the original intent? Did it successfully explore the unmet needs and original hypotheses?

Based on your learnings, identify the Product Opportunity that seems more relevant. Write down why it represents an opportunity, what value it holds for stakeholders, and why it should be of interest to the organisation or challenge context. Remember, an opportunity should:

* Address a need;
* Be tangible for users;
* Have an impact on society.

Keep up the good work!