

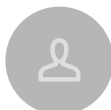
company culture: they become psychological friction points, accepted as corporate conventions. They hamper growth. They stifle productivity. They strangle creativity. This lack of psychological/intellectual agility is, as Heuer says, unavoidable. This isn't anything new. Schopenhauer observed it when he wrote that "Every man takes the limits of his own field of vision for the limits of the world." Once our mindsets are formed, they begin forming us; that is, we continually reinforce them.

What *can* loosen our grip on our resistant mindsets is collaboration. Seeing, hearing, and being exposed to different people and ideas while in pursuit of a common goal or solution can help us stay psychologically agile and can help us reset – at least to some degree – our perceptions by forcing us to inquire of our biases, "*is this true?*" This, of course, requires an environment that is receptive and conducive to collaboration. As Heuer points out, "new, but appropriate ideas are most likely to arise in an organizational climate that nurtures their development and communication." What I've observed about collaboration and creativity is that those things often run counter to office or corporate hierarchy: they run bottom-up, starting with the people least likely to be thoroughly institutionalized, the people who have more than one lens through which they view the world.

This is one reason why I am such a strong proponent of hiring veterans, particularly those from Special Operations backgrounds. They tend to be psychologically nimble, exceptionally creative, keenly analytic, and highly adaptive: they have intellectual toolboxes and skill sets that they've developed and relied upon through training and the crucible of war. Moreover, they tend to be fearlessly candid in collaboration: they know that sharp honesty is sometimes necessary to push a mission forward and that placating egos only leads to stagnation or decay.

The processes and mindsets that cultivated in workplaces eventually become conventions, which is exactly why it's so important to pursue new ideas, develop new processes, and continually interrogate assumptions: these intellectual resets need to be as resilient as mindsets. Tedious corporate exercises designed to inspire "thinking outside the box" aren't enough: you need to question the need for a box in the first place... and keep questioning it.

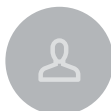
An abbreviated version of this appeared in the [Quartermaster Newsletter](#).



K.S. Anthony

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