

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The story of how this book came to be begins in Fall 2012 with a comment from my friend and mentor, Professor Charles Cooney of MIT: “I think you may have a book.” I have Charlie to thank for a lot, from giving me the opportunity back in 2007 to begin building innovating as a new field to seeding the hunch that gave rise to this book.

Professor Edward Roberts of MIT had an overwhelmingly positive reaction after reading the manuscript and wrote a foreword that is a far better endorsement of my work than I could ever have hoped for. I am deeply grateful for Ed’s caring and straightforward mentoring, and for the knowledge that I can always trust Ed to tell me when he thinks I am wrong—the attribute I value most in people.

I have many students, colleagues, and friends to thank for the opportunity to develop this field by “doing.” I must single out the opportunity I was given to develop a month-long Innovation Workshop—evolved from collaborations across the globe—for the new Skolkovo Institute of Science and Technology. It was Skoltech’s first course offering ever (given at MIT) and has since become the entry experience for all incoming students on the campus in Russia.

Worldwide, more than 3,000 individuals ranging from undergraduates to senior executives have experienced different aspects of the book’s content

through my teaching. Their sharp questions and insights have made me better. I am indebted to them all for keeping me honest.

I knew nothing about writing a book. Following the “hunch” (a central concept in this book) that grew out of Charlie’s comment, and my own advice, I “sought out people” (another central concept) who knew far more about writing books than me. I found many. I am especially grateful to Gita Manaktala and John Covell of the MIT Press for educating me and supporting me on the steps from that hunch to book proposal over a two-year period. Among other MIT Press staff, I am particularly indebted to Emily Taber—who took over as my acquisitions editor when John retired—for making everything happen.

Many others helped me along that process with support, advice, and sometimes patient tolerance of my inclination for hyperbole and finding a path for every idea to evolve into an absurd plan for world domination (you know who this is for): Prof. Duane Boning, Maren Cattonar, Elizabeth Cooper, Kelly Courtney, Daniela Couto, Prof. Ed Crawley, Ilia Dubinsky, Jose Estabil, Gadi Geiger, Bryan Haslam, Prof. Douglas Hart, Tylor Hess, Christopher Holland, Winston Larson, Marilyn Levine, Katey Lo, Mariana Matus, Vicente Montes, Lisa Natkin, Andrew “Ozz” Oswald, Amadeo Petibò, Julian Rodriguez, Rosangela dos Santos, Harry Schechter, Jim Schumacher, Patrice Selles, Prof. Maurizio Sobrero, Diane Soderholm, Prof. Bruce Tidor, and Rebecca Walsh. Not helpful was Ignatius J. Reilly.

I must also acknowledge MIT for giving me the opportunity to deploy in classes and workshops the thinking that underlies this book, and particularly to evolve iTeams into an innovation reactor from which we’ve steered more than 150 MIT technologies to impact. The challenges of navigating the strong disciplinary silos at MIT steeled my resolve to advance with my ideas and this book project. *Future-me* will be thankful for that.

Two people deserve a special mention:

Scott Cooper has been my editor; I am most grateful for his dedication, astonishing attention to detail, patience, and explanations. I had no real idea what an editor did before I endeavored to write a book, and I’m still not sure, but whatever an editor is supposed to do, Scott did more: He joined me with

tremendous enthusiasm, pulled no punches, taught me how to write better, and worked tirelessly with me to wield the English language into delivering an unassuming and forward-looking prose that makes the writing as direct as I perceive the content to be. Then he handled many things with the publisher one would expect of an agent. Thank you, Scott; it has been a lot of fun (the antecedent of it here is at once both “the covenant” and “future English”).

Nick Fuhrer helped me realize a vision I was told by many could not be achieved (“that’s not how these books are supposed to look”). His detailed artwork is nothing short of exquisite. I wanted to offer readers’ imaginative and creative side an experience that traditional diagrams (whether technical or simplistic) and cartoon representations simply can’t provide. I am convinced Nick summoned the spirits of Escher and Dalí to produce the dynamic artwork that will surely help many appreciate innovating as the highly rewarding, industrious, yet accessible process it is. I am indebted to Nick for helping me realize my vision, and for making it so easy to work and translate the concepts I visualized into exquisite art. I am looking forward to find an excuse to work together again.

One last thing about my collaboration with Nick: I also knew nothing about talking to illustrators or even how to find one. For as long as I tried to find an “illustrator,” I was unable even to define what I thought I needed. At some point in the future, in hindsight (another important concept in the book), I’ll gloss over the full story of how I found Nick and will say I found an illustrator. But that’s not how it happened. The acknowledgements section is not the place to begin developing the content, so suffice it to say that the beginning of our collaboration benefited from the same kind of happenstance I suggest readers embrace (chapter 4). Nick introduced himself as a sculptor, I spoke of myself as a doer, and it turned out we knew each other already. But it took a third person and a casual encounter at the Shady Hill School in Cambridge, Mass., for us to connect the dots. Because of that, I am also grateful to the Shady Hill School community.

While they did not participate directly in this project, I would also like to acknowledge Noubar Afeyan and Fiona Murray. The conversations we

have had over the years in our various collaborations have made me a better thinker. I also thank the following people for having believed in me every time I transgressed a disciplinary boundary: Manlio Allegra, Michel Brune, Tommi Jaakkola, Enric Julià, Luis Piera, Tommy Poggio, and Ken Zolot.

Like many of you doers, I did not have the luxury of halting everything else to write this book. Along the process, I gave up sleep and comfort to find the time. I can't imagine succeeding without the help from Susana, Pedro, and Maria Jose, and without the support of my parents Pilar and Jose Antonio and my brothers Jose Antonio and Manuel.

Finally, three people made this book possible above all others in the three years that followed the hunch that began the project. My daughter Erin graciously conceded the time we typically devote to building contraptions and doing experiments. My son Owen has had to wait to join us in our crazy inventions. And my wife Marta has always been there for me. I can't imagine life without her, her unwavering support, sharp insights, and straightforward advice. Through the duration of this project she was also our family's only practicing entrepreneur. That she managed to keep us all afloat while she effectively executed her senior management responsibilities in a biotech startup is nothing short of awe-inspiring. More important than what Marta, Erin, and Owen gave up is the enthusiasm with which they carried me through the entire project. They are my family and board of directors. And each one of them got to decide something about what you are about to experience. They deserve this prime spot in my acknowledgments.