

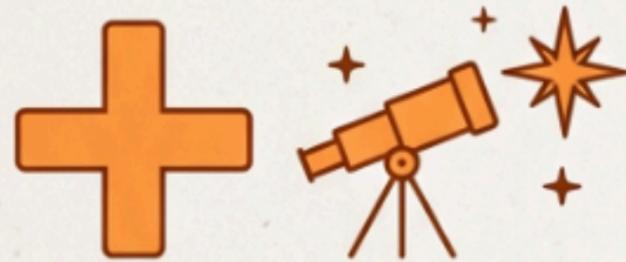
 **Conference**
2026

CREATIVITY AT 30,000 FEET

Rick Smith & H David Garcia

STRATEGIC ARITHMETIC

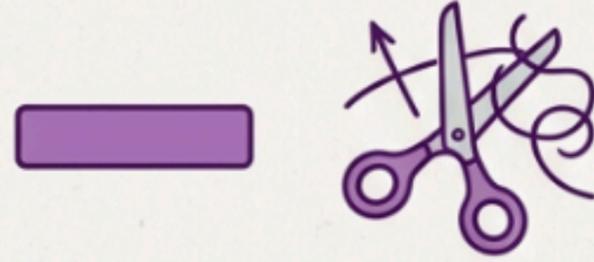
THE CREATIVE'S 30,000-FOOT FRAMEWORK FOR STAYING ON TASK



ADD CONTEXT (The North Star)

Review "The Why" Daily: spend 5 mins before every session. Does this serve the core vision? If not, pause.

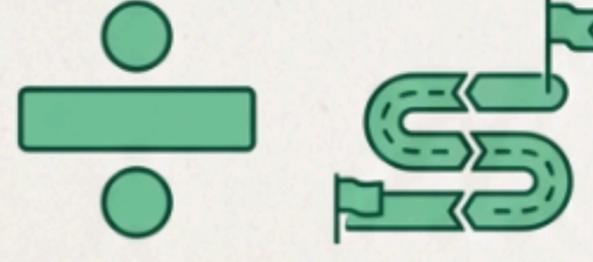
Define Non-Negotiables: Establish hard constraints (e.g., "Minimalist," "Mobile-First") to narrow the focus and block feature creep.



SUBTRACT DISTRACTIONS (The Occam's Razor)

Apply "Kill Your Darlings": If a detail is beautiful but irrelevant to the main objective, remove it mercilessly.

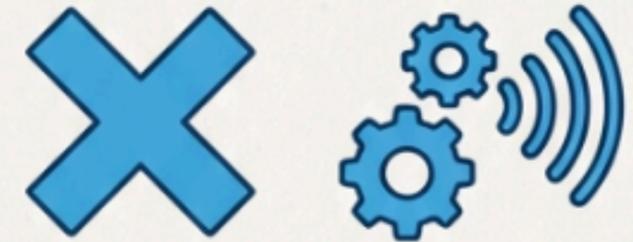
Pause the "How": Don't build the technical solution yet. Identify *what must be done*, save the execution for later.



DIVIDE THE LABOR (The Roadmap)

Separate Thinking from Doing: Dedicate specific times for high-level strategy and separate times for tactical production. Never do both simultaneously.

Divide by Milestones: Break the project into 3-4 distinct "Horizons." Finish Horizon 1 before defining Horizon 3.



MULTIPLY THE IMPACT (The Leverage)

Build Systems, Not Details: Create a shared style guide, component library, or template. Solve the problem once, multiply the solution everywhere.

Seek High-Level Feedback Early: Share the *concept* (the foundation), not the polished polish, to ensure strategic alignment before deep execution.

PRO-TIP

If you have spent more than 30 minutes on a single pixel, sentence, or technical detail, YOU ARE DRIFTING TO GROUND LEVEL. **Subtract** the task immediately and move to a different high-level section.