

◆ Alchemy in Practice ◆

Elemental Sessions

As you listen to our speakers, consider the problems you face in your world. What 'wet clay' are you working on?

- Think about the types of problems you face... organizational, people, process, tools, technology.
- What stands out to you from today's talks?
- What feels familiar or uncomfortable?





◆ Problem Ideation ◆

A strong problem describes what's happening today, names who is impacted, explains why it matters now, and avoids naming the solution.

Problem

_____ cannot _____
Who Do What

because _____ resulting in _____.
Condition Consequence

Example: *Our design teams cannot deliver differentiated customer experiences because delivery pressure pushes them toward familiar patterns, resulting in work that meets the bar but doesn't move it.*

Constraints & Trade-offs

Constraint:

What makes solving this harder than it looks?

Example: *Designers are expected to raise the quality of work while absorbing the same volume of requests with the same timelines.*

Tradeoff:

What you'd give up vs. what you're trying to protect

Example: *Experience quality and differentiation vs. speed and familiarity*





◆ Apply an Elemental Lens ◆

A good elemental lens doesn't solve the problem - it changes how you see it.

Apply Elements

Use your element cards. Try to explore at least 2 elements and how they might provide new perspective to your problem.

Example:

_____ reveals _____
Element *What your original framing couldn't see.*

Fire: *There's real energy and motivation to do better work, but it's being absorbed by delivery pressure instead of channeled toward exploration and creative momentum.*

Earth: *There's no structure that protects time for discovery, so design thinking gets skipped when schedules tighten - which is always.*

Elements at a Glance

Earth: grounding, clarity, structure, resilience

Fire: energy, imagination, momentum, transformation

Ether: cohesion, synthesis, alignment

Water: adaptability, learning, flow, connection

Air: meaning, perception, interpretation, movement





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A good approach shift changes your direction - not just your description of the problem.

From Problem

The assumption your lens helped you see more clearly.

Example:

Instead of: *expecting design excellence to emerge within the same delivery process that produced average work...*

to Opportunity

A direction that addresses the real problem without violating the constraint.

...We could: *create a defined space for creative exploration before work narrows to execution.*

