DP **0** **The Wallet Project**

Software Design Experiences
2009, adapted from
d.school.**bootcamp**.**2008**

d.

My Wallet
(1993-2005)
by David Kelley

I recently replaced my wallet. After over a dozen years of excellent if unremarkable service, it finally became so worn, creased, and marked that I was uncomfortable pulling it out in public.

No object has been as consistent as my wallet. It was my most constant companion, carried more often than any other item I own. Even my keys get left behind on occasion, but to go out in public without a wallet makes me feel naked.

My wallet has always contained a private collection of intimate items. I'm long past the time when I carried a condom in my wallet, as young men did back then. But even now I would not hand over my wallet for casual inspection. Pictures, notes, receipts, cards—all these seem too intimate to share. And money is still such a personal subject, rarely discussed even among friends; the cash and credit cards I carry are privileged information. Losing my wallet would be a catastrophe far beyond the inconvenience of losing money or the need to make a dozen phone calls to cancel accounts.

My fine old wallet was a gift, an item too extravagant to buy for myself. It came from the Connolly Leather shop in London, and it reminded me of that particular trip to England and the wonderful experience of visiting the store. Every time I pulled it out these associations came to mind.

I chose it for its simple elegance. The surface is black and free from ornament, with only a simple mark identifying Connolly Leather. The design is bifold, with only a few interior partitions to keep it thin: a single pocket for paper money, three partial pockets on the left for credit cards, a plastic window on the right to reveal my driver's license for quick access. I dislike carrying a fat wallet, so I prefer the wallet itself to be as thin as possible. It folds and unfolds easily and the surface is a delight to touch. The constant handling made the wallet grow softer and more supple with age.

And this calls forth a challenge for designers in all fields. Can you design an object that gets better with age? We register no surprise when an item we have bought—from a pair of socks to a new car—falls apart or breaks down. Socks rip, cars fail, and we eventually throw them away. Things decay; this is the way of things. Even a simple scratch in a car can diminish our pleasure in it.

However, a very few things in our lives actually get better with age, like my wallet. Leather, wood, and some metals gain a marvelous patina as they are carried, handled, used, and "broken in." Scratches can give an object character rather than detract from its perfection.

How can we use this as a lesson for design? How can we make objects that people grow to love enough to write an obituary about?
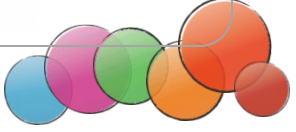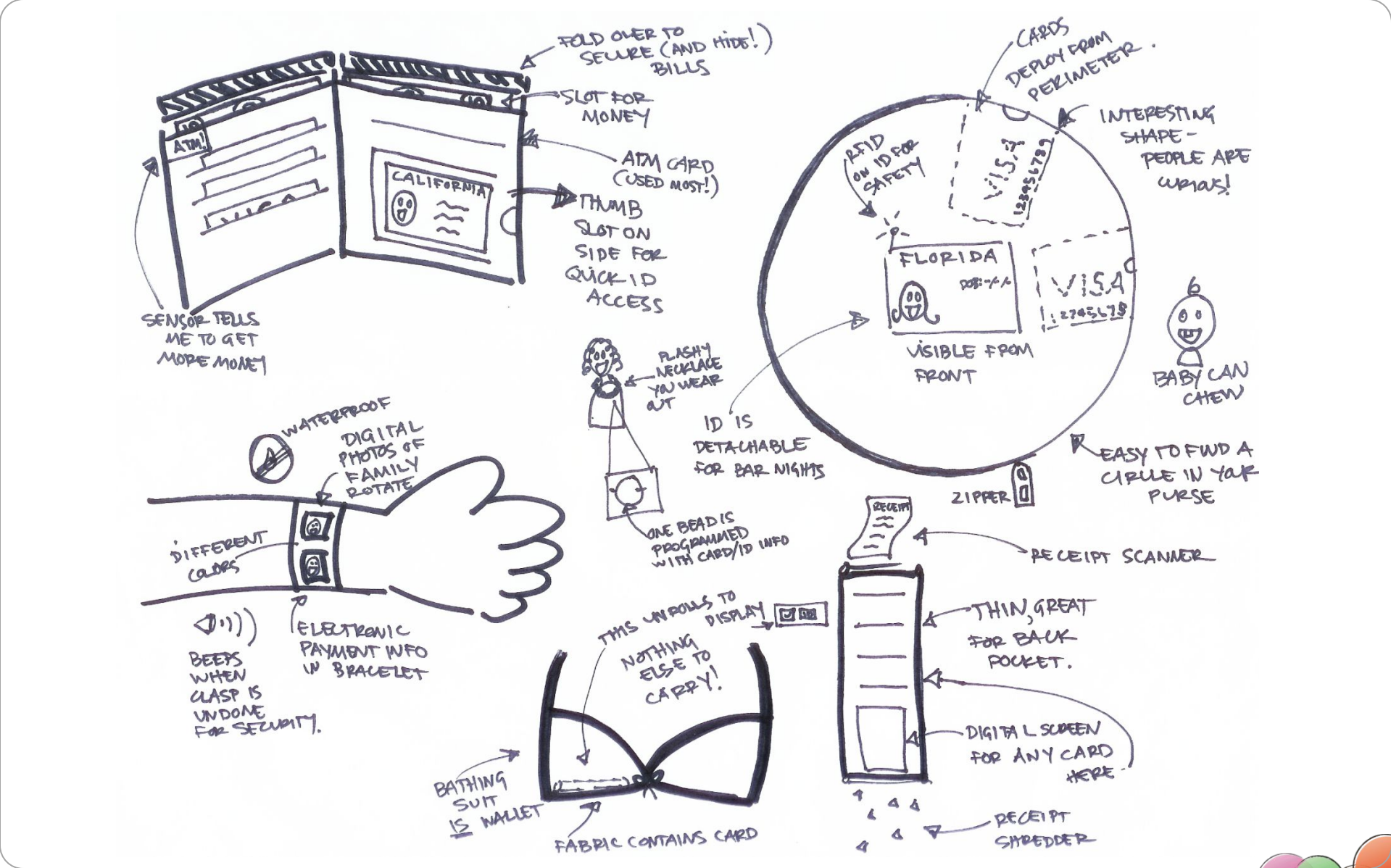
Sketch... your ideal wallet.

Don't think too much. Put your pen to paper and start drawing.

An example sketch.

Interview... to gain empathy.

Ask your partner for stories about his/her life told through the contents of his/her wallet.
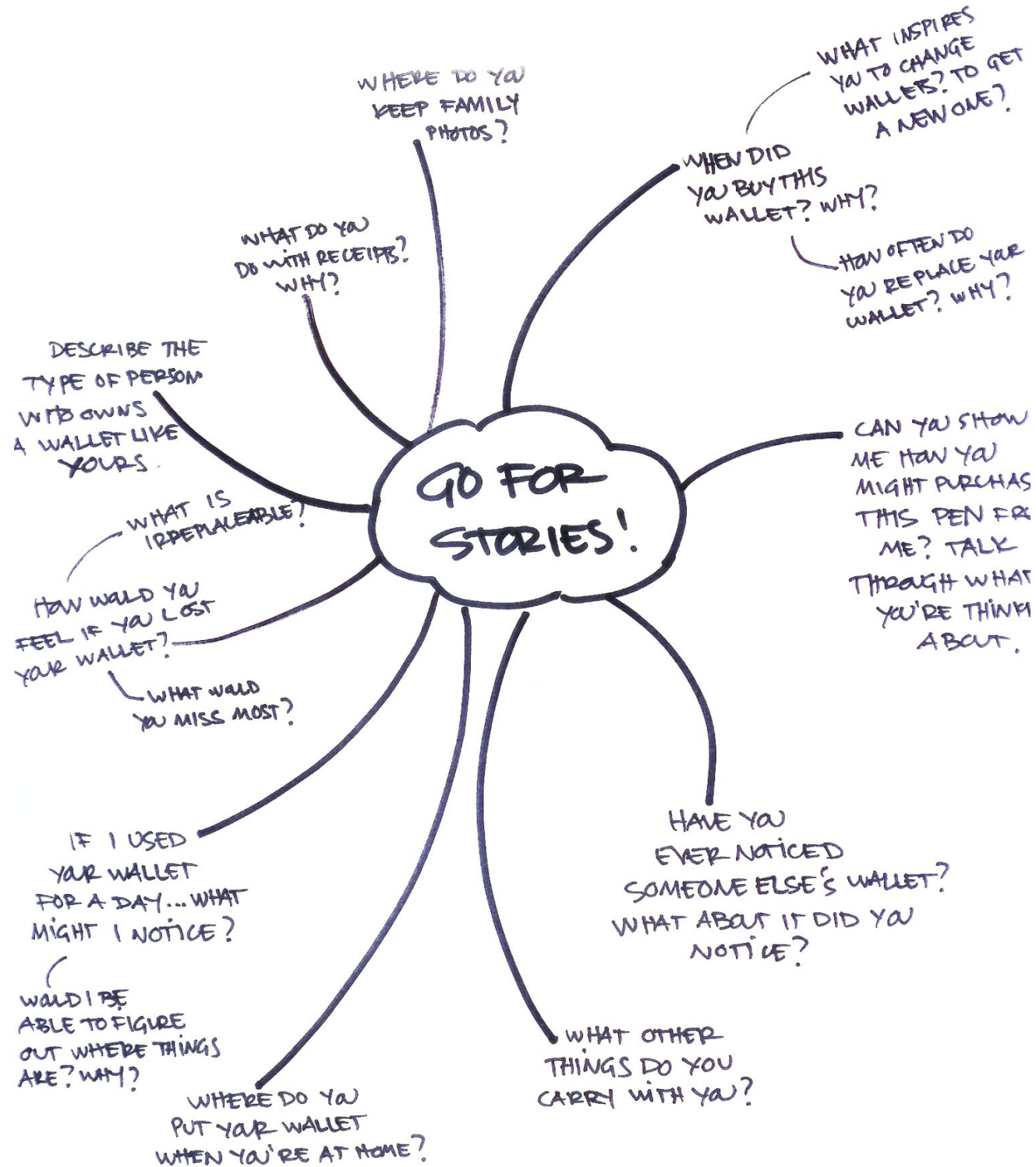
WHO is your user?	WHAT DOES HE/SHE **NEED** IN A WALLET?	WHAT DOES THE WALLET **MEAN** TO HIM/HER?

NOTES:

Some example interview questions...

WHERE DO YOU KEEP FAMILY PHOTOS?

WHAT INSPIRES YOU TO CHANGE WALLETS? TO GET A NEW ONE?

WHEN DID YOU BUY THIS WALLET? WHY?

HOW OFTEN DO YOU REPLACE YOUR WALLET? WHY?

WHAT DO YOU DO WITH RECEIPTS? WHY?

DESCRIBE THE TYPE OF PERSON WHO OWNS A WALLET LIKE YOURS.

WHAT IS IRREPLACEABLE?

GO FOR STORIES!

CAN YOU SHOW ME HOW YOU MIGHT PURCHAS THIS PEN FR ME? TALK THROUGH WHAT YOU'RE THINK ABOUT.

HOW WOULD YOU FEEL IF YOU LOST YOUR WALLET?

WHAT WOULD YOU MISS MOST?

IF I USED YOUR WALLET FOR A DAY... WHAT MIGHT I NOTICE?

WOULD I BE ABLE TO FIGURE OUT WHERE THINGS ARE? WHY?

WHERE DO YOU PUT YOUR WALLET WHEN YOU'RE AT HOME?

WHAT OTHER THINGS DO YOU CARRY WITH YOU?

HAVE YOU EVER NOTICED SOMEONE ELSE'S WALLET? WHAT ABOUT IT DID YOU NOTICE?

Define... your point of view.

Use the insights gathered from your interview to fill in the blanks and draft a point of view.

_____'s WALLET IS HIS/HER_____
user   *user's need*

BECAUSE_____
insight/meaning

_____.

_____ **BETH** 's WALLET IS HIS/HER _____ **JUNK DRAWER**
user   *user's need*

BECAUSE **FAMILY NEEDS HER TO BE**
insight/meaning
ORGANIZED EVERYWHERE ELSE! .

Ideate… To visualize alternatives.

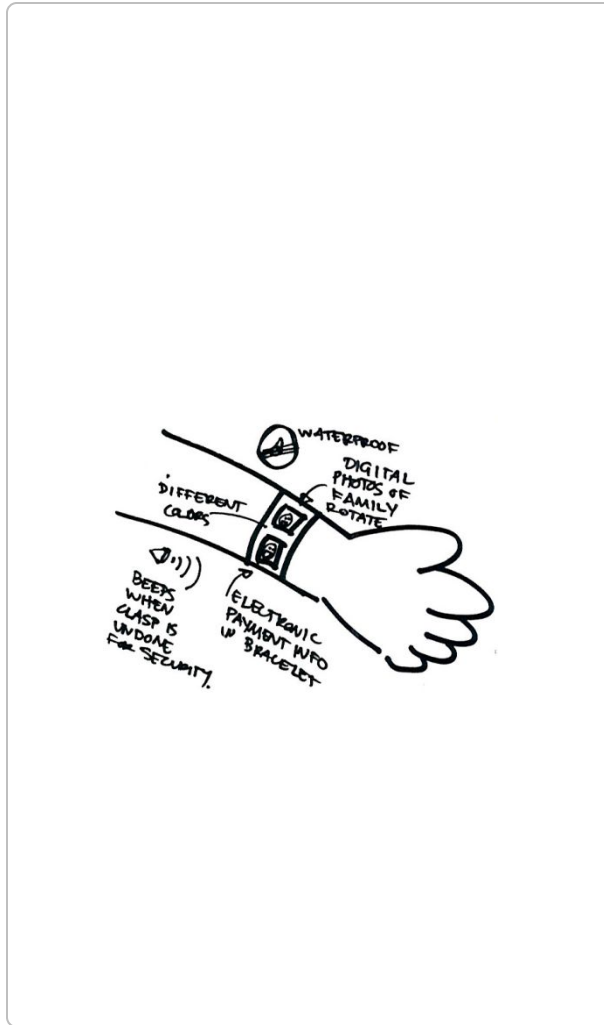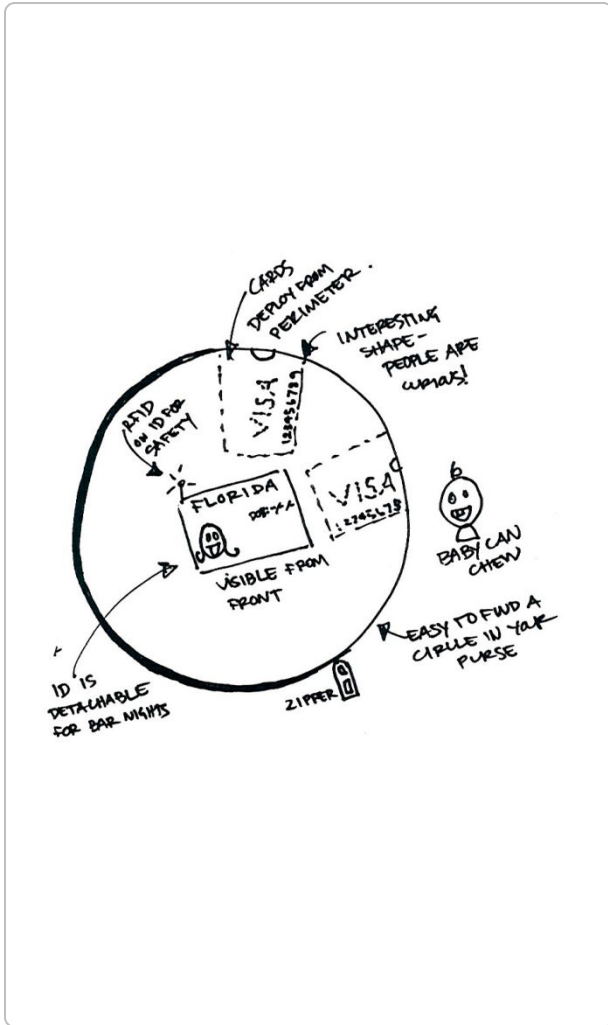*Sketch at least 3 different ideas that would meet the needs define by your point of view.*

Test... to gather feedback.

Briefly walk your partner through your sketches.
As your partner reacts capture feedback and changes directly on your sketches.
Make modifications as you go!

Iterate... with a physical prototype.

Decide which elements you will include in your new wallet concept.
Grab materials and build!

Reflect...

partner reacts capture feedback and changes directly on your sketches.
Make modifications as you go!

- Was your first wallet and your final wallet the same?

- Why were they different?

- How much did your prototype tests change your understanding?

- What would happen if you did another iteration?

- How might you continue this iterative process?

- How is this different from a traditional project approach?