Ten tips to be a better designer
By Eibert Draisma

1. **Focus on Human Values** (This approach is called a *human-centered design process,* and is fundamental to good design)
   The problems you are trying to solve, are rarely your own; they are those of particular users.
   Build empathy for the people for whom you are designing; learn what is important to them, to really understand who they are. To empathize, you will need to observe, engage and be part of it.

   - Observe:
     - view users and their behavior in the context of their lives;
     - identify the right users to design for (men, women, age, hobbies etc.);
     - identify behavior and needs, users may or may not be aware of;
     - discover the emotions that guide behaviors.

   - Engage:
     - conduct interviews with those affected by the problem;
     - ask the right questions (to the right people);
     - use all available resources to even better understand users' needs;
     - guide innovation efforts.

   - Immerse:
     - experience what your user experiences (for better understanding)

2. **Be clear and organized**
   - Define problems to solve, as clearly as possible (if necessary, include backgrounds)
     Provide information that is relevant, appropriate, consistent and engaging;
   - Establish goals: define what the product, service or solution should do. And make a good planning;
   - Before making the next step, identify what you will need to proceed (answers, materials, help etc.).

3. **Research**
   - Define what to look for (and why);
   - Look at the right places, to find the right information (use all available resources);
   - Also research solutions that may already exist (identify if they are appropriate to a given situation);
   - Focus and focus even more!

4. **Collaborate**
   - Focus on team work, do not rely on the ideas of a single designer;
   - Add outsiders and innovators to the team, with varied expertise, backgrounds and viewpoints;
   - Brainstorm to enable breakthrough insights and solutions to emerge from the diversity.

5. **Brainstorm**
   - Establish a diverse team: best size is somewhere between six and twelve people;
   - Develop as many creative ideas as possible, look for (more) inspiration;
   - Don't criticize during session: encourage creativity and build on each other's ideas.

6. **Be Mindful**
   - Know where you are in the design process, what methods to use in that stage, and what your goals are;
   - Respect others, nature and natural resources.

7. **Do it**
   - Take action: design is more about *doing* than thinking;
   - Bias towards *doing and making*, over *thinking and meeting*.

8. **Experiment**
   - Experimenting and prototyping, are integral parts of any design process. Build, learn and improve;
   - Unlike problem solving in other fields of study (in which *absolute,* or *"right answers"* can be found), in a design process there are always multiple solutions to a problem. *Remember: persistence pays off!*

9. **Show (Don't Tell)**
   - Communicate your vision in an impactful and meaningful way by creating experiences, using illustrative visuals, and telling good stories.

10. **Be self-confident: know when to break the rules!**