

The Three Types of Makers (And Why I'm Not Ashamed of Being a Copycat)

Lately, I've been trying to articulate a simple framework that captures the different types of *makers* in the world—the people who actually create things. Products. Businesses. Ideas. Art. Systems. Movements. Wealth. It's a thought experiment that's been rolling around in my mind as I reflect on my own strengths—and blind spots—and try to better understand what kind of “maker” I really am.

Here's the framework as it currently stands:

1. Original Thinkers

These are the dreamers, inventors, and freakishly gifted individuals who seem to create from nothing. They imagine things the rest of us can't even begin to fathom: language, the written word, mathematics, the combustion engine, computer code, electricity, the blockchain. The sheer mental horsepower and imagination it takes to be an original thinker is mind-boggling. Most of us can't relate—and that's okay.

2. Dot Connectors

This group thrives on idea sex. They take existing concepts—which to many may seem completely unrelated—and combine them in fresh, unexpected ways. They might not have dreamed up electricity, but they figure out how to use it to power the computer I'm typing from right now. They might not invent the internet, but they imagine putting a bookstore on it and eventually turning it into... well, *everything*. Dot connectors are master remixers. They curate, filter, link, mash up, and reframe.

3. Imitators, Integrators & Executors

This group takes proven ideas and runs with them. They copy, refine, operationalize, scale, and optimize. They might not have the most original concepts, but they're damn good at implementation. They make things happen. And they often make a lot of money doing it. You could call them replicators, or more generously, integrators and executors.

Let's be real: most makers aren't pure versions of one of these types. We're all some blend of the three. But like a personality profile, we all tend to over-index in one area more than the others.

Where Do I Fit?

I've never thought of myself, nor do I think of myself now, as an original thinker. And that's not false humility. I'm not the guy inventing fire or building quantum computers in my garage. But I *do* love discovering brilliant ideas and figuring out creative ways to apply, integrate, and execute them. I like remixing. I like optimizing. I like turning other people's "aha" moments into real-world results. That puts me firmly in camp 2 and 3: dot connector and executor.

And I'm good with that. Actually, I'm more than good with it—I *own* it. Because when you look at some of the most successful entrepreneurs and builders of the modern era, you realize that very few of them were truly "original."

My friend Jeo shared this with me recently (and he deserves full credit for the list):

- Was **Marcos Galperin** (Mercado Libre) original? Nope. He borrowed heavily from Jeff Bezos.
- Was **Jeff Bezos** (Amazon) original? Not really. He took cues from Sam Walton.
- Was **Sam Walton** (Walmart) original? Again, not exactly. He learned from Jim Sinegal.
- Was **Jim Sinegal** (Costco) original? Not fully. He got his playbook from Sol Price (Price Club, which eventually merged with Costco).
- As Picasso once (allegedly) said: "**Good artists copy. Great artists steal.**"

Originality isn't the only currency in the world of creation. In fact, it might be the rarest—and often not the most lucrative. Being a great imitator, integrator, and connector can lead to *massive* outcomes if you do it well.

Another friend would jump in right about now to remind me that "good ideas are only 10% new!" (Thanks, Paul.)

What Kind of Maker Are You?

This framework has been useful for me in understanding how I operate and what kind of value I bring to the table—especially when building businesses, developing products, or even writing blog posts like this one.

So now I'll turn the question to you:

If you used this framework — Original Thinker, Dot Connector, Imitator/Executor — where do you land?

Don't default to what sounds the most impressive. Go with what feels *true*. And whatever it is, *own it*.

Because the world doesn't just need more original thinkers.

It needs *makers* of every kind.

- Gen Y Finance Guy



Gen Y Finance Guy

Hey, I'm Dom - the man behind the cartoon. You'll notice that I sign off as "Gen Y Finance Guy" on all my posts, due to the fact that I write this blog anonymously (at least for now). I like to think of myself as the *Chief Freedom Officer* here of my little corner of the internet. In the real world, I'm a 30-something former C-Suite executive turned entrepreneur turned capital allocator. I am trying to humanize finance by sharing my own journey to Financial Freedom. I believe in total *honesty* and *transparency*. That is why before I ever started blogging, I decided that I would share all of my own [financial stats](#). I do this not to brag, but instead to inspire motivate, and also to hold myself accountable. My goal is to be a beacon of hope, motivation, and inspiration for *you*, the reader, by living life by example and sharing it **all** here on the blog. My sincere hope is that you will be able

to learn from me - both from my successes and my failures! [Read More](#)