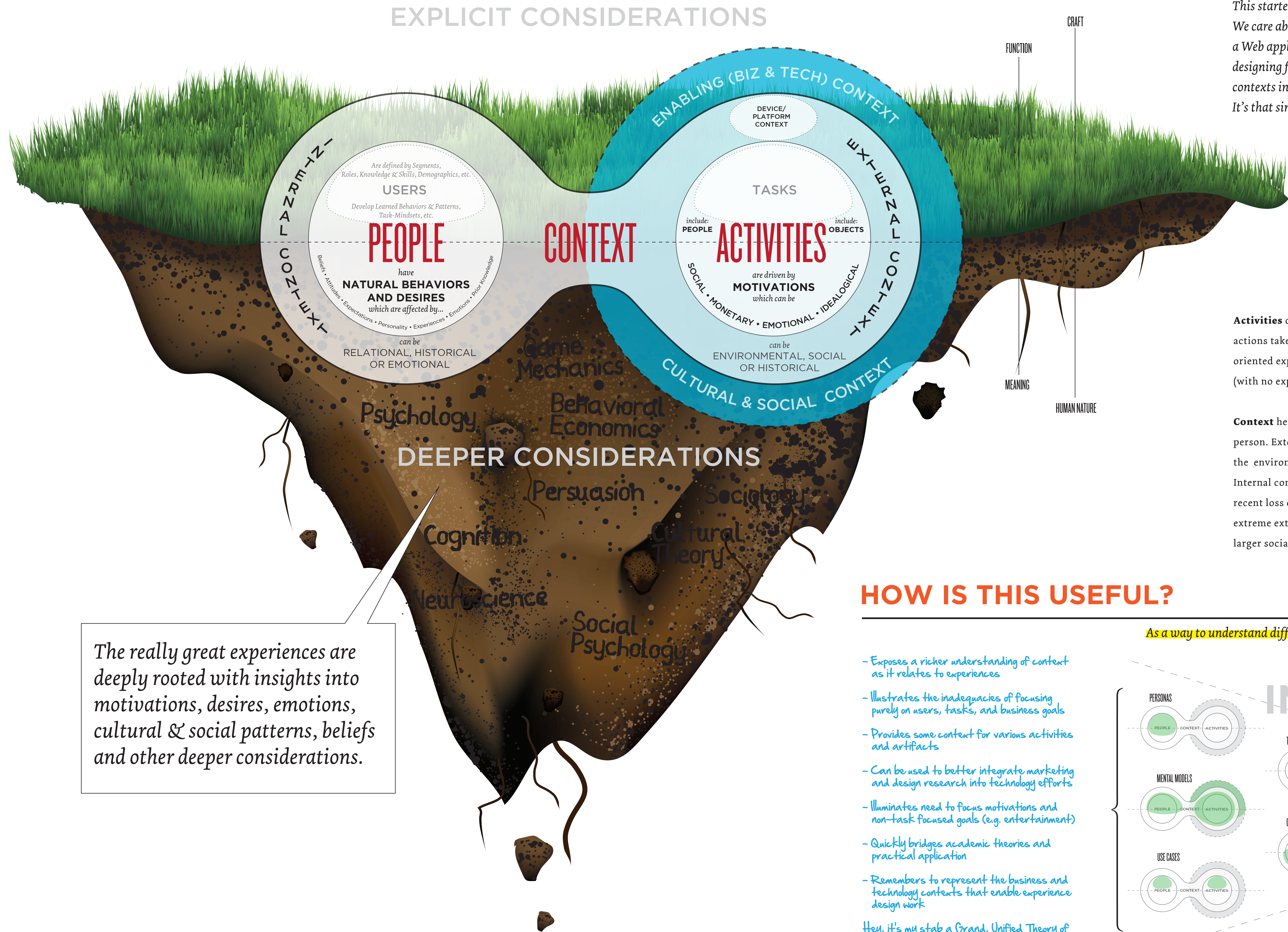


# THE FUNDAMENTALS of EXPERIENCE DESIGN

by Stephen P. Anderson  
www.poetpainter.com

“Designing for experiences is fundamentally about people, their activities, and the context of those activities...”



This started as a simple phrase to explain what it is we do when we design for experiences: We care about people, their activities and the context of those activities. Whether designing a Web application or a new office building, simply ask: Who are the people we are designing for? What is the activity (or activities) they are trying to do? And what are the contexts in which they are trying to operate? And ‘people’ can be an individual or group. It’s that simple. At least on the surface...

**People** refers to us (as individuals or like groups) and the things that make us who we are, independent of any activities. This includes learned and natural behaviors, desires (which may or may not be verbalized) as well as related things like belief systems, prior experiences, emotions, personality and more. In respect to specific activities, we do assume roles such as user, producer, consumer, fan, stakeholder, partner or employee. But, in defining people by these roles, we lose a complete picture of the person.

**Activities** describes the things people do. This can be a task-focused item, but might also include actions taken that aren’t necessarily directed toward accomplishing a goal (e.g. entertainment oriented experiences.). Activities can also be simply things done to make me feel a certain way (with no explicit task, per se).

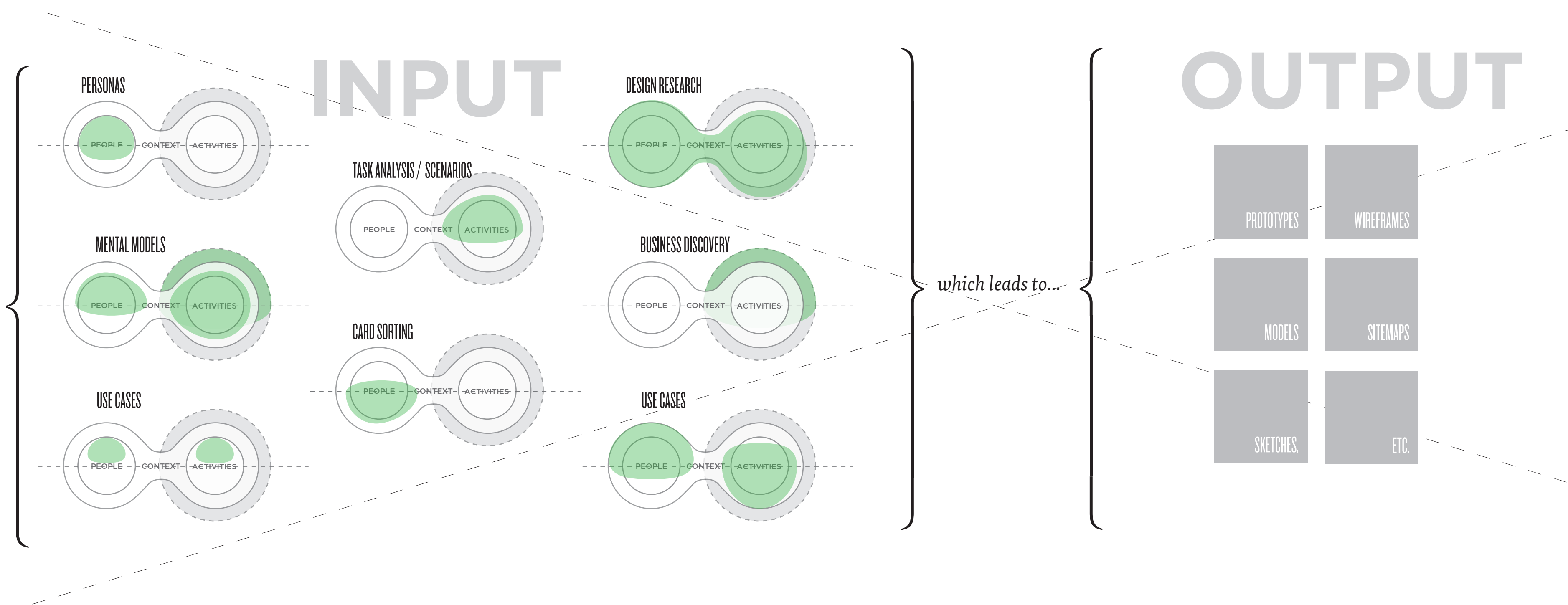
**Context** here is defined as any information that might affect the activity being carried out by a person. External contexts are those things directly affecting the activity itself, and might include the environment, social groups, historical patterns or simply the constraints of particular device. Internal contexts are those things affecting the person’s behavior or mental state, such as the recent loss of a job or being elated by a kind deed. From this perspective, it’s worth noting that the extreme external context will include the business and technology environments, as well as the larger social and cultural context in which activities occur.

## HOW IS THIS USEFUL?

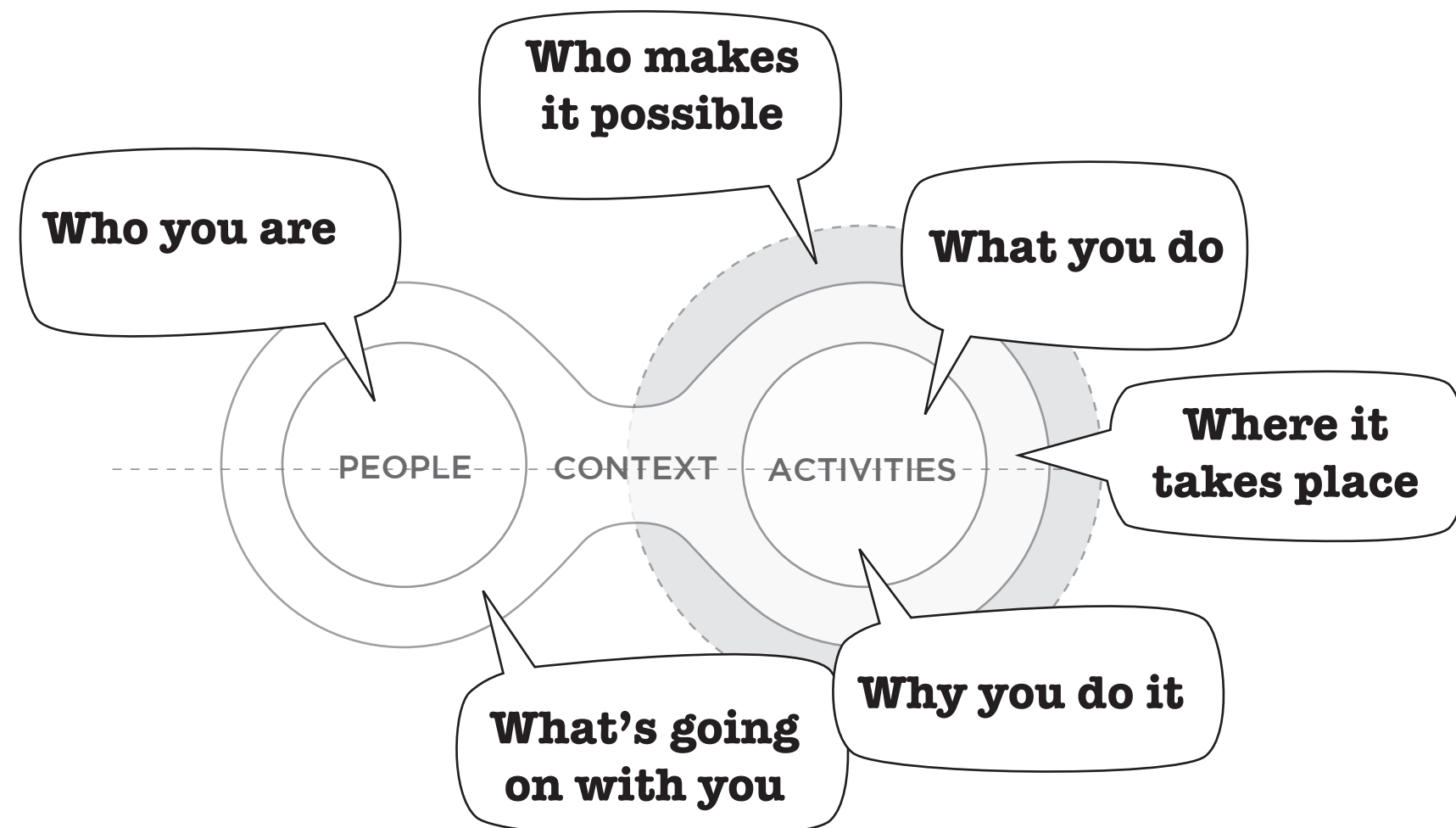
- Exposes a richer understanding of context as it relates to experiences
- Illustrates the inadequacies of focusing purely on users, tasks, and business goals
- Provides some context for various activities and artifacts
- Can be used to better integrate marketing and design research into technology efforts
- Illuminates need to focus motivations and non-task focused goals (e.g. entertainment)
- Quickly bridges academic theories and practical application
- Remembers to represent the business and technology contexts that enable experience design work

Hey, it’s my stab a Grand, Unified Theory of Everything!

As a way to understand different input tools, activities and artifacts?



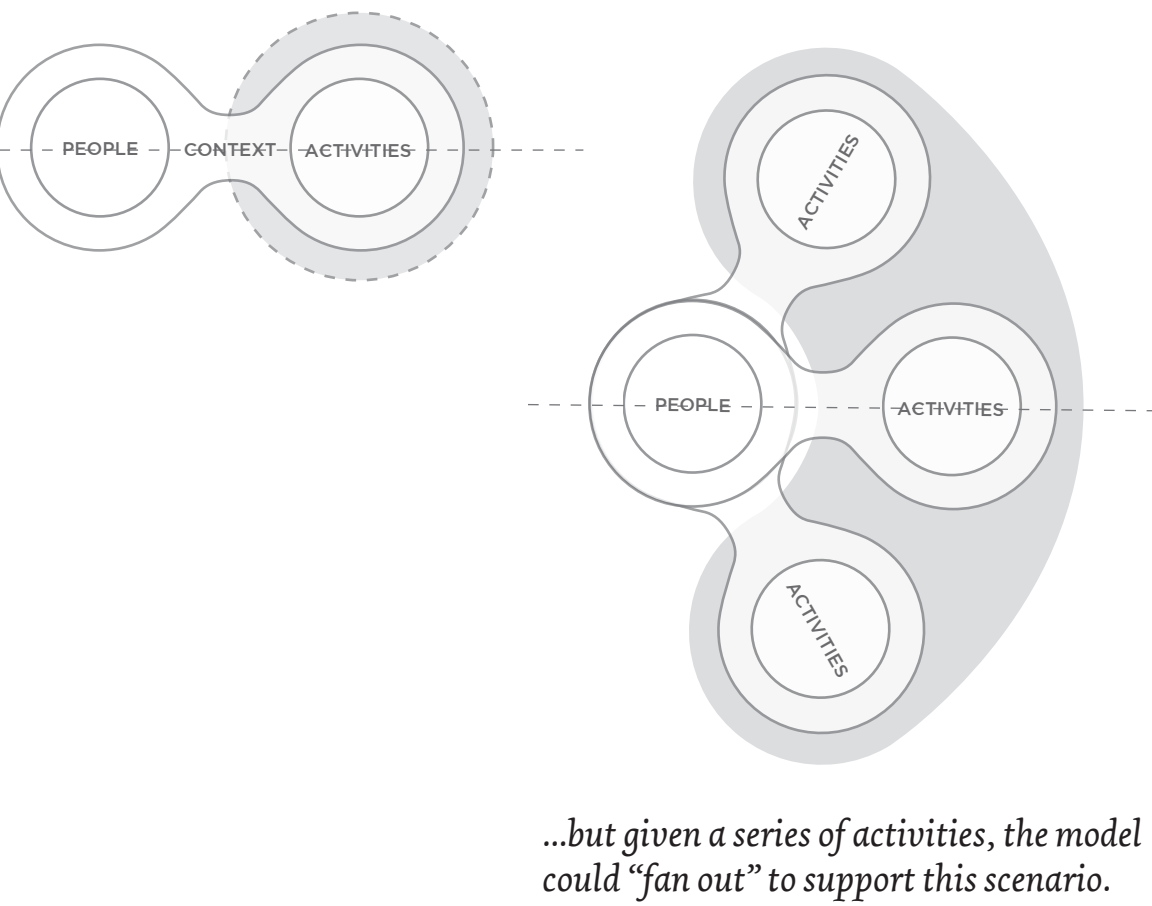
THE CLIFFS NOTES VERSION:  
(1st person intro)



WHAT ABOUT...?

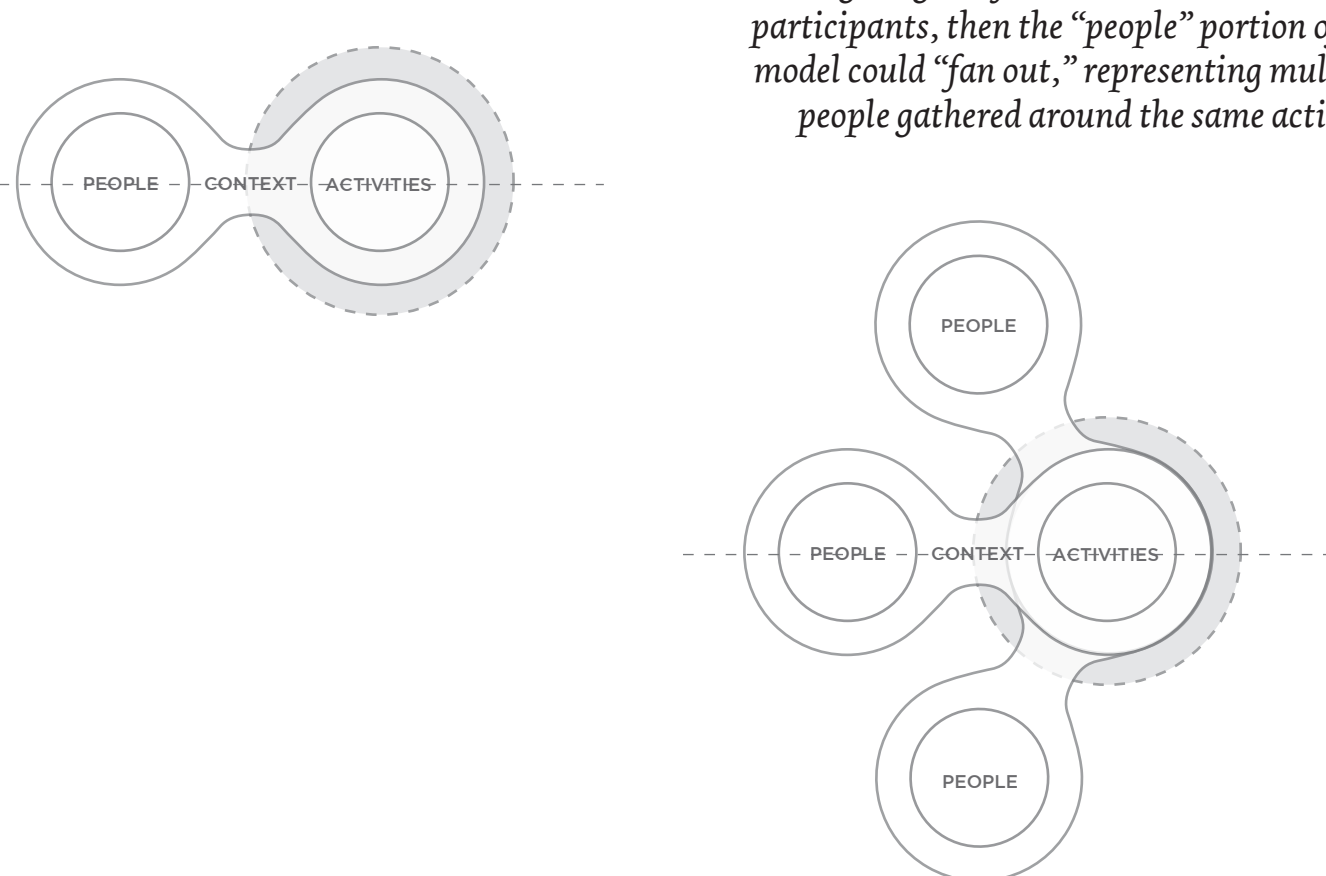
“Cross-Channel Scenarios”

Within an identified activity, there may be several “channels” that are crossed...



Social Activities

If other people are passive objects in the activity, then the model is fine as is.



As a way to organize questions for project kick-off meeting?

