Try an experiment to rekindle your Rookie Smarts.

**Ask Naive Questions—Ask the basic questions that simplify and clarify.** Consult with the stakeholders for your work and only ask questions. Ask the questions that cut to the core and reveal the fundamental objectives or needs. Ask the questions that a newcomer would ask. Or even better yet, ask a novice to define the questions for you.

**Multiply Your Expertise—Build an expert network by seeking expert advice.** The next time you are faced with a challenge that falls within your area of expertise, avoid the temptation to jump in. Instead, reach out to at least five other experts with your questions, thus bringing in new expertise to bear on the challenge at hand. Ask the experts and keep asking them until you find new patterns.

**Disqualify Yourself—Move into your discomfort zone by taking on a job you aren’t qualified for.** Is it possible that our best work and greatest career successes come when we are working in a role that is daunting and quite uncomfortable? Perhaps it is time for you to take a job for which you aren’t fully qualified. Instead of playing to your strengths, you might consider pivoting from strength, stepping out of your comfort zone into a zone of learning. When you step out, you might feel a pull to step back to the place where you feel capable, even safe. If so, take a lesson from Cortés and burn the boats so your only option is to move through the discomfort. Try any of the following:

- Take a job in a new domain
- Take on a broader role
- Take on a stretch challenge

**Staple Yourself to a Problem—Attach yourself to a complex problem and let it drag you to a new space.** Geoffrey Moore, author, speaker, and business adviser, explained to me how he keeps his thinking and his work fresh. Geoffrey counters the temptation to come into a company, speak about what he knows, and then leave, by stapling himself to his client’s problem. Geoffrey commits to a challenge and then lets it drag him into unknown, unfamiliar places, his current models, theories, and perfunctory answers don’t suffice. He must now improvise, think, rethink, and co-create with his clients. He must not only teach; he must learn. Geoffrey said, “I don’t let go of the problem. I hold my breath knowing I will be dragged underwater. But, when I let this happen, it is a brand-new game every day.” Try stapling yourself to a problem. Let it drag you underwater and to a new place. You will not only arrive at new solutions; you too will become renewed.

**Throw Away Your Notes—Toss out your best practices and develop new practices.** The late management thinker C. K. Prahalad was repeatedly ranked as the world’s top business professor by the Thinkers50 website. At his memorial in 2010, his wife, Gayatri, revealed that C.K. threw away his teaching notes every semester. When she responded with alarm the first time she saw his precious teaching notes in the rubbish bin, he replied, “My students deserve my best, fresh thinking every time.” It is no wonder students at the University of Michigan’s Ross School of Business lined the halls trying to listen in to his perpetually oversubscribed classes, creating a fire hazard. Try shredding your crib notes, stump speeches, and the other templates that have you stuck in a rut. As you do, you will offer fresh thinking to others while also renewing your mind.