



element eleven: DENSIFYING

PRACTICING THE 13 ELEMENTS OF ALCHEMY

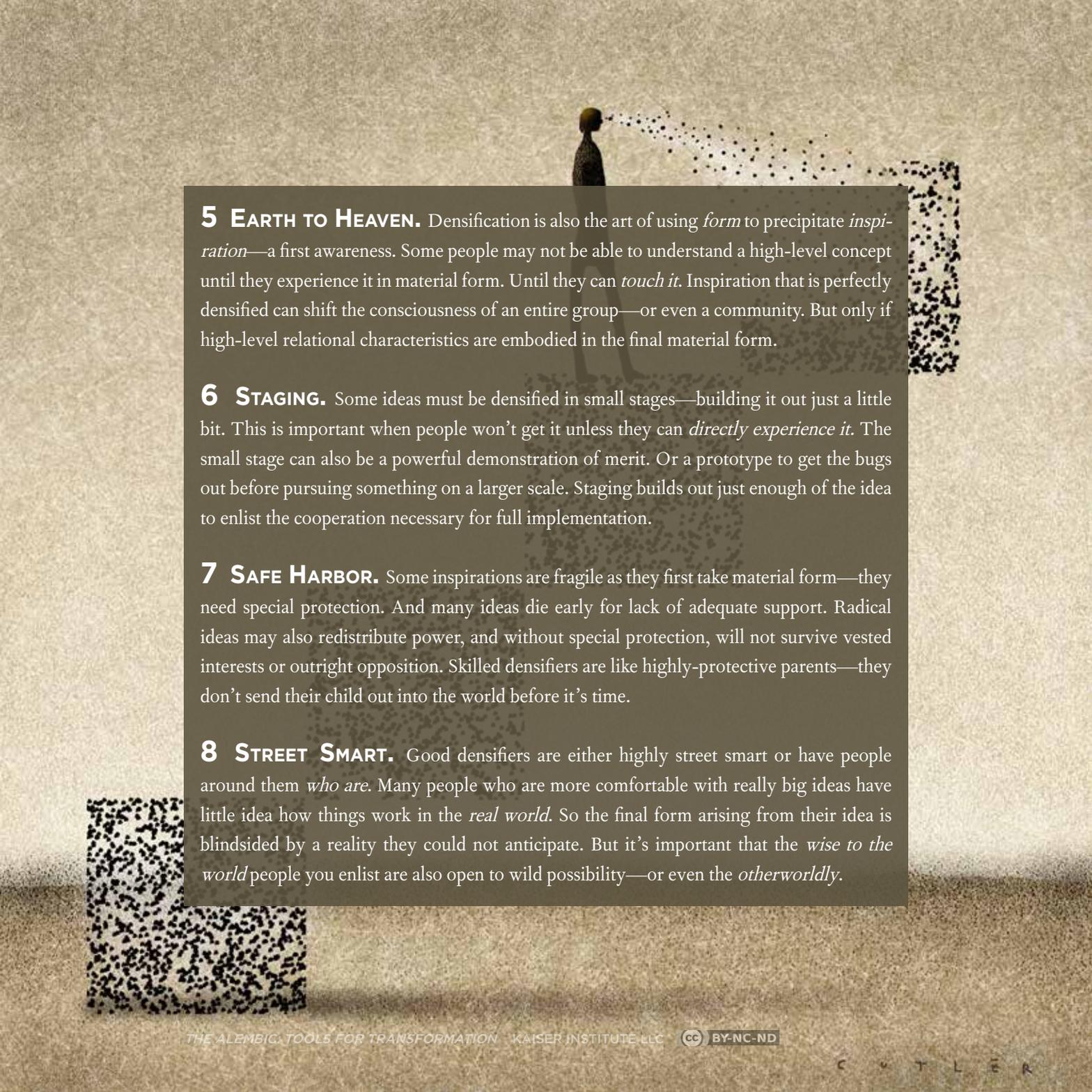


1 SPECTRUM OF DENSITY. Everything in the world exists along a spectrum of density. A *brick* is denser than an *emotion*. And an *emotion* is denser than an *idea*. Densification is about adding mass. An idea becomes a new school, or an inspiration becomes a new product. The alchemist works along the entire spectrum—bringing something from its most subtle form all the way down into its most physical expression.

2 PATH OF DESCENT. The alchemist provides a pathway of descent from pattern to form—seamlessly drawing the idea down into increasingly material expression. Densifiers have an exquisite sense of pace. If the idea is drawn down *too quickly*, it loses much of its essential nature as it takes form. What's built is only a ghost of the inspiration. If the idea is drawn down *too slowly*, it will lose energy, start to evaporate, and eventually be lost.

3 THE GAP. Some of the best ideas never become material reality because somewhere along the journey from idea to form somebody couldn't span the gap. When this happens, it's important to quickly collaborate with somebody *who can*—somebody with a different perspective who can help you take the next small step. Great ideas that could become great things are usually stopped because of the gap.

4 REDUCTION. Densification is different than reduction. Reduction seeks to identify and isolate fundamental parts. An idea that is over-reduced may become more easily shared and understood, but be devoid of the subtle qualities that matter most. So we end up building something that's *missing the magic*. Densification, on the other hand, seeks to build increasingly material forms that retain all of the subtle qualities of the original inspiration—that *retain the magic*.



5 EARTH TO HEAVEN. Densification is also the art of using *form* to precipitate *inspiration*—a first awareness. Some people may not be able to understand a high-level concept until they experience it in material form. Until they can *touch it*. Inspiration that is perfectly densified can shift the consciousness of an entire group—or even a community. But only if high-level relational characteristics are embodied in the final material form.

6 STAGING. Some ideas must be densified in small stages—building it out just a little bit. This is important when people won't get it unless they can *directly experience it*. The small stage can also be a powerful demonstration of merit. Or a prototype to get the bugs out before pursuing something on a larger scale. Staging builds out just enough of the idea to enlist the cooperation necessary for full implementation.

7 SAFE HARBOR. Some inspirations are fragile as they first take material form—they need special protection. And many ideas die early for lack of adequate support. Radical ideas may also redistribute power, and without special protection, will not survive vested interests or outright opposition. Skilled densifiers are like highly-protective parents—they don't send their child out into the world before it's time.

8 STREET SMART. Good densifiers are either highly street smart or have people around them *who are*. Many people who are more comfortable with really big ideas have little idea how things work in the *real world*. So the final form arising from their idea is blindsided by a reality they could not anticipate. But it's important that the *wise to the world* people you enlist are also open to wild possibility—or even the *otherworldly*.