

Zettelkasten

A quick and dirty introduction to the revolutionary note-taking and personal knowledge management system

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SITOLA, 24. 11. 2021

How many of you take notes?

C1

AND COULD I SEE THEM?

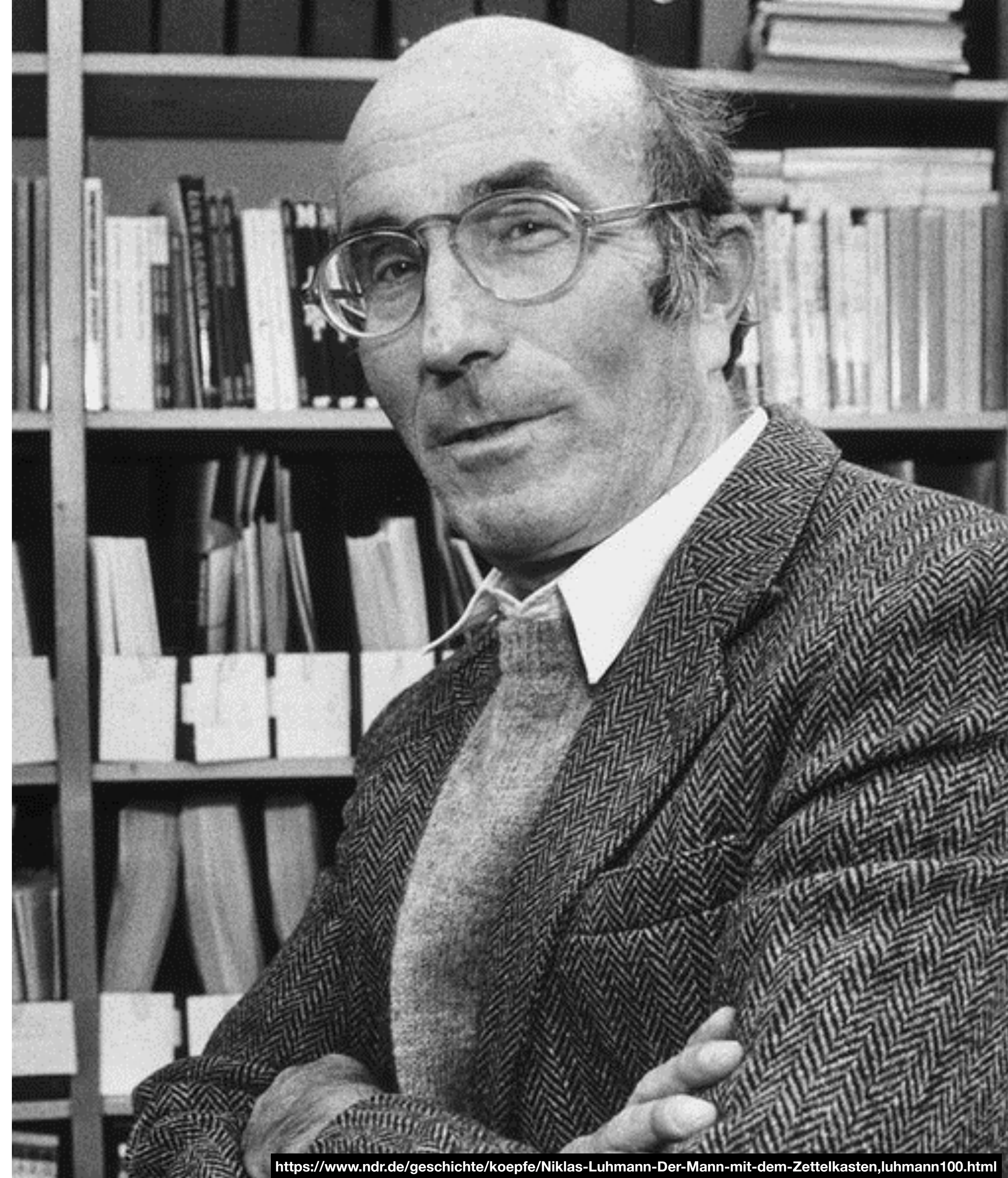
How do you take notes?

How do you process and organize them?

Niklas Luhmann

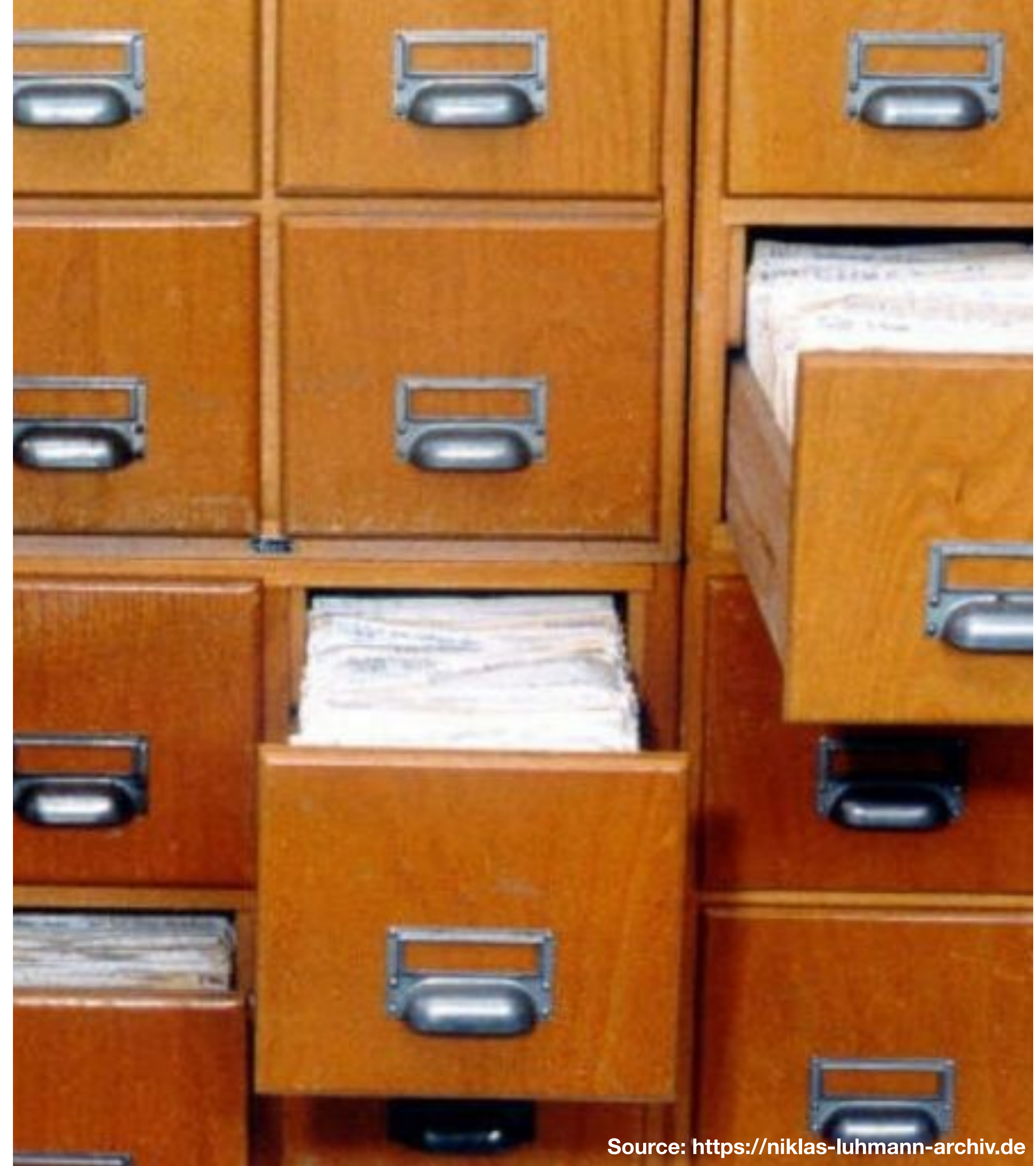
(1927–1998)

- German sociologist (systems theory), Bielefeld University
- Received his Ph.D. and habilitation in two consecutive years and professorship three years later! *Without formal education in sociology!*
- Wrote ~50 books and ~600 research papers (and over 150 unfinished)
- All thanks to his **Zettelkasten** containing 90 000 hand-written note cards

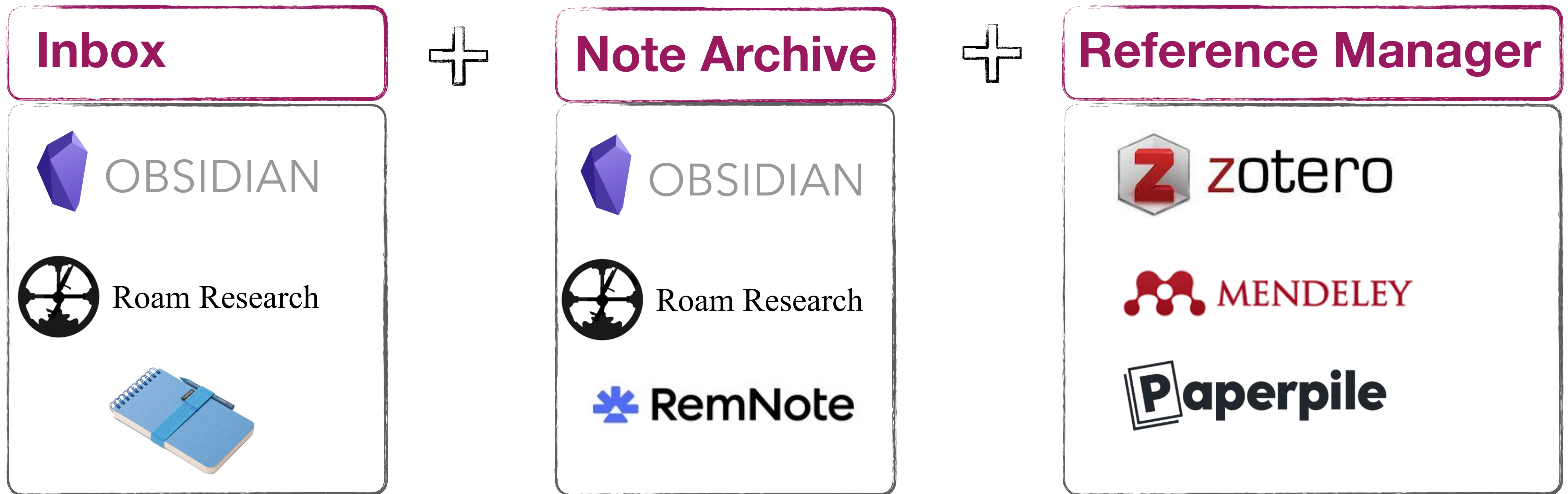


Zettelkasten is ...

- **Slip-box** (kartotéka)
- Framework rather than the step-by-step guide
- Your personal **web of knowledge**
kind of “*Second memory*” or “*External Brain*”
- Your partner in discussion



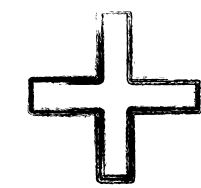
Building Blocks



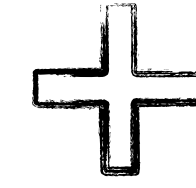
Note archive = Zettelkasten

My Building Blocks

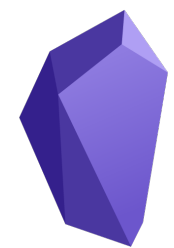
Inbox



Note Archive



Reference Manager



OBSIDIAN



OBSIDIAN



zotero

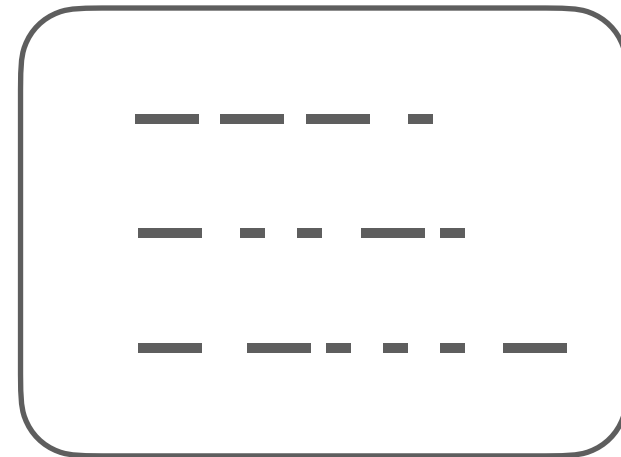


Workflow

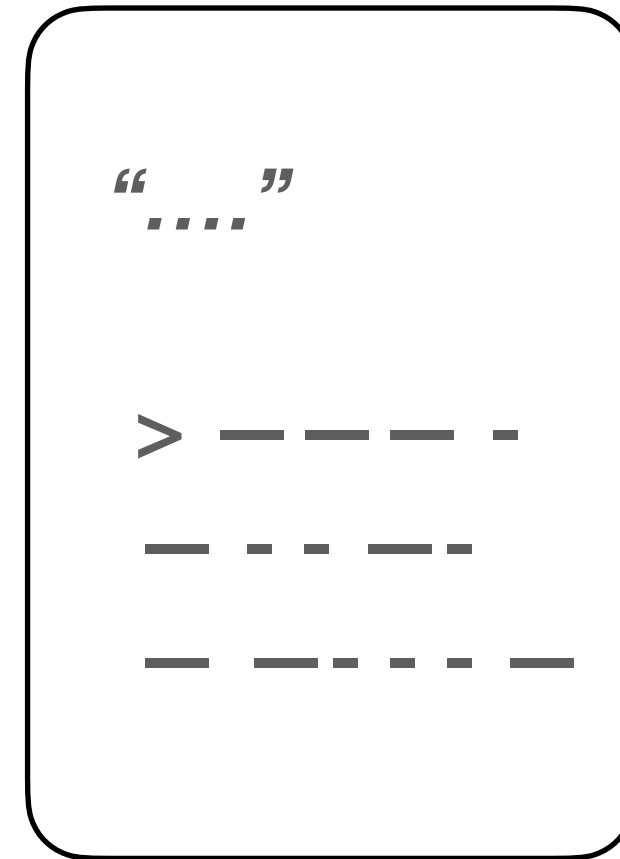
Source:
(book, article,
tweet, quote, ...)



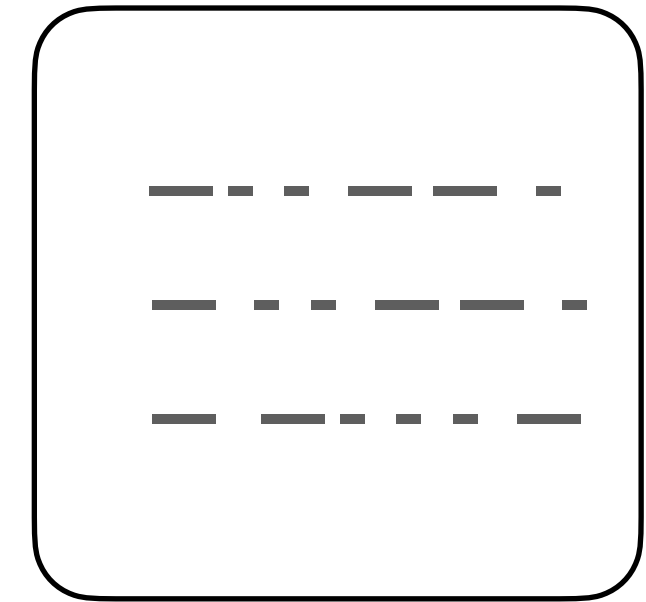
Fleeting Notes



Literature Notes



Permanent Notes



Goes to



OBSIDIAN



Store in



zotero

Store in



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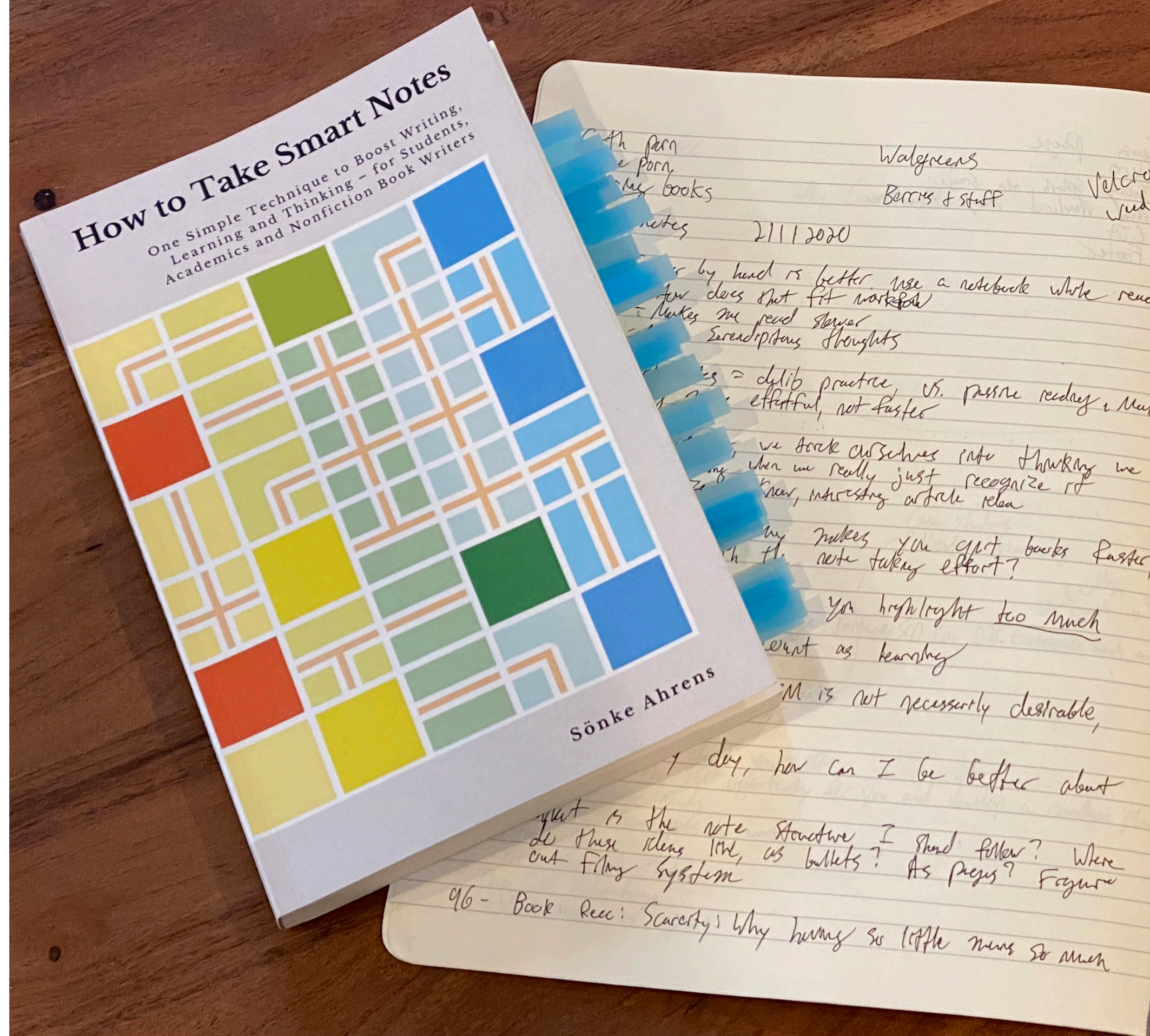
Fleeting Notes

- *E.g., quotes, ideas, book highlights, tweets, thoughts*
- Anything that pops into your mind
- Do not organize, just record them (**inbox**)
- Should be processed within a day and deleted



Literature Notes

- Summary of your understanding of authors' thoughts
 - **Do not copy-paste, rephrase!**
- Your own thoughts from book highlights
- Keep it short, the context (i.e., the source document) is close
- Be extremely selective, only those ideas that resonate you are worthy



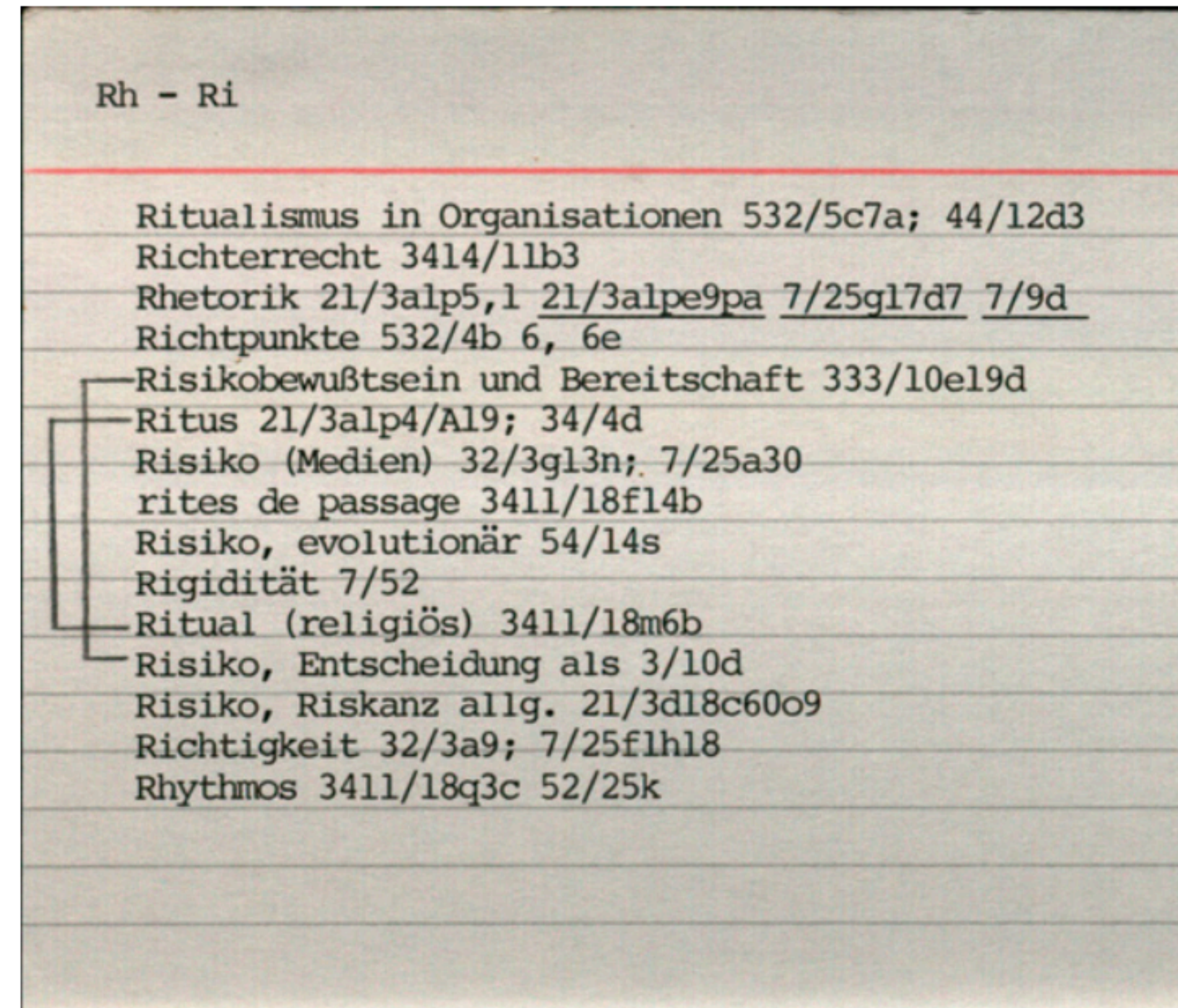


Permanent Notes

- **Atomic** and easy to understand in isolation
 - **One idea = one note**
- Based on **fleeting** and **literature** notes
- **Develop ideas and reflect arguments**, not just accumulate thoughts
- Linked to other **permanent** notes in your zettelkasten

Indexing and Linking Permanent Notes

- **Index** is a permanent note
 - Contains **topic keywords** and **references** to some initiating permanent notes that develop the topic
- **Links** are connections of our **permanent notes**
 - **#tags** (weak links) vs. **[[wikiLinks]]** strong links

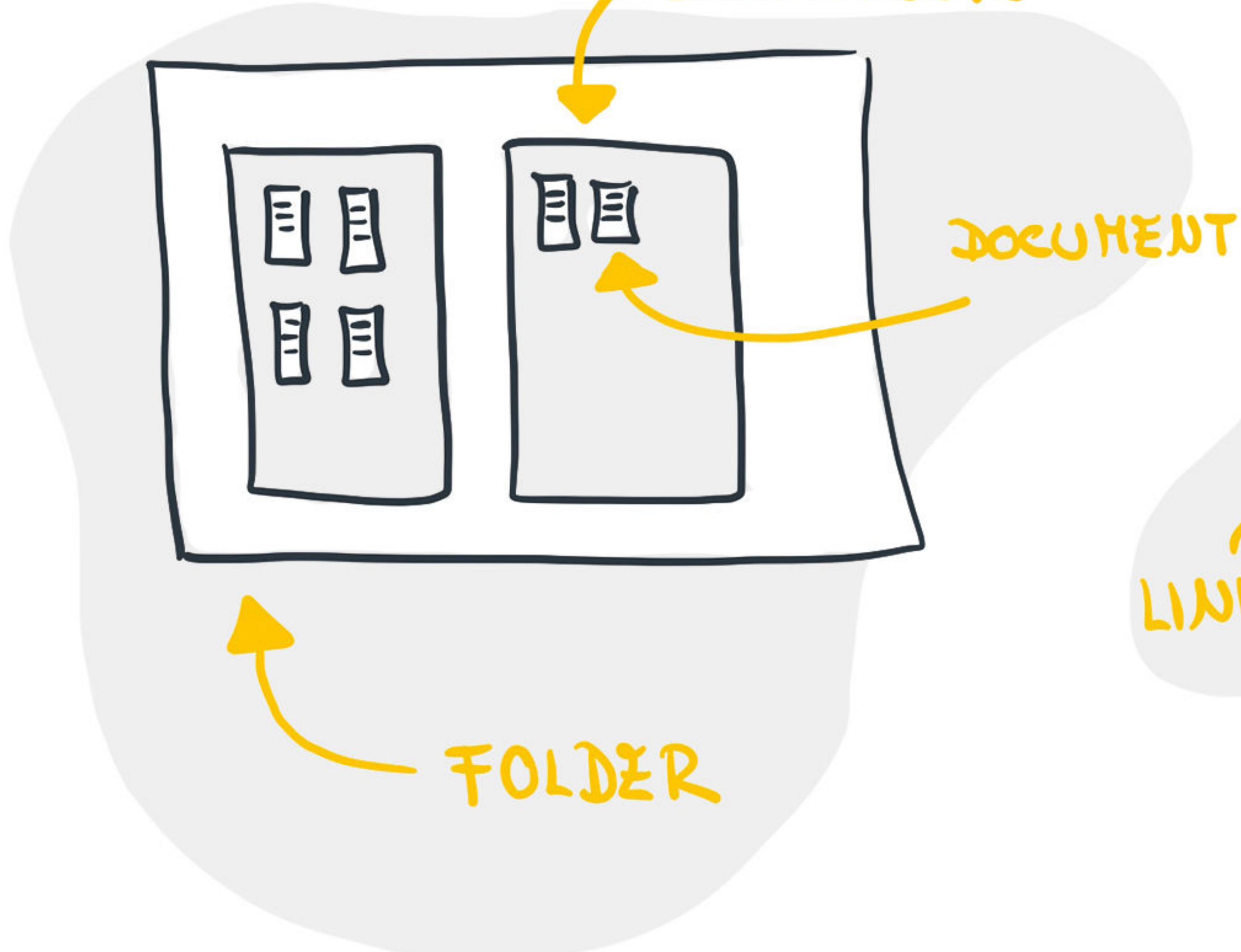


HIERARCHICAL THINKING

SUBFOLDER

DOCUMENT

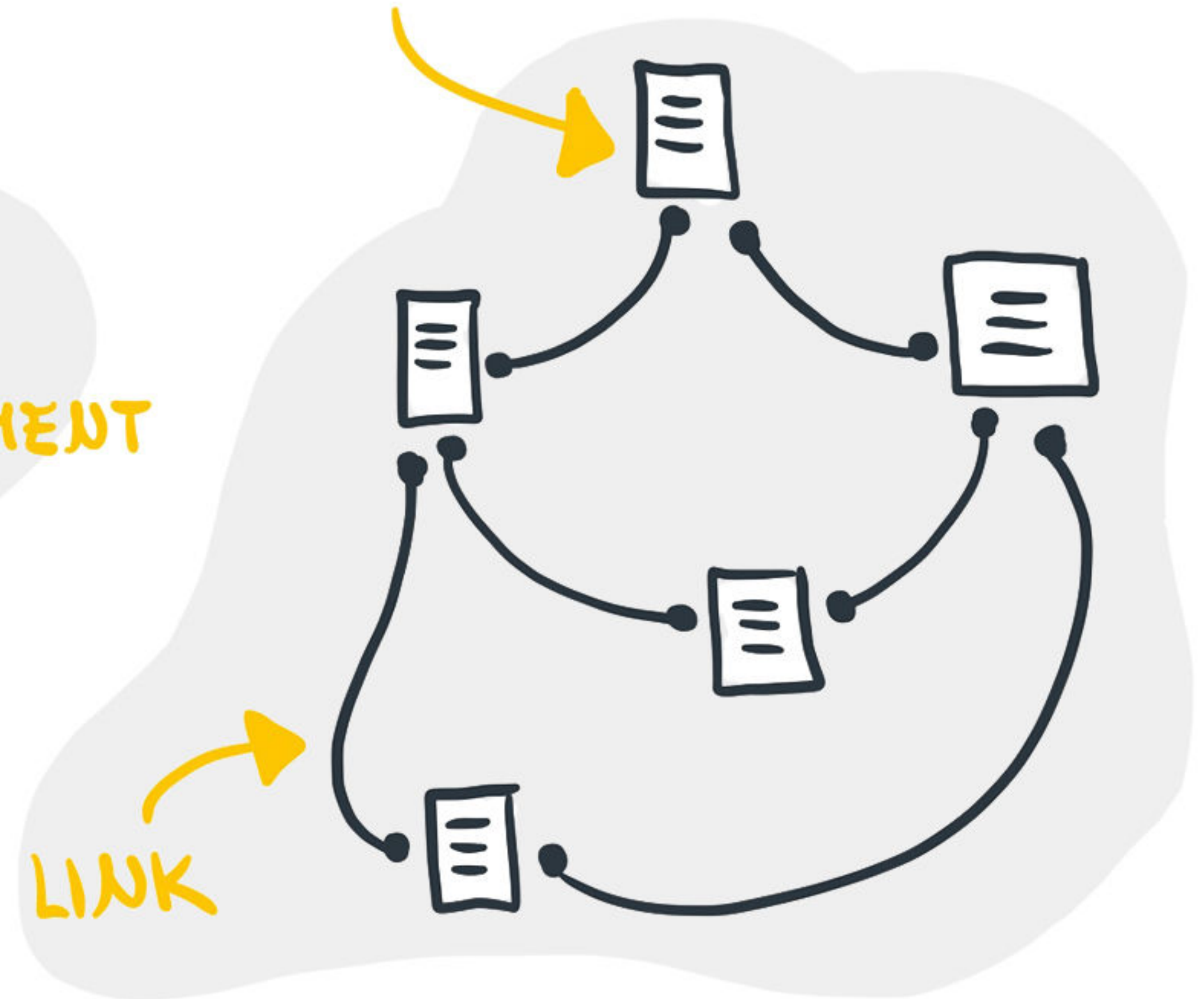
FOLDER



ATOMIC NOTE

LINK

NETWORKED THINKING



(Simplified) How-To

1. Read with a pen in your hand
2. Make **fleeting** / **literature** notes
3. Revise them the same day and think how they link to your permanent notes
4. Those which fit, transform to **permanent** notes and insert in your zettelkasten and link them with existing ones
5. Delete **fleeting** notes / save **literature** notes to your bibliographic system

Tricky Parts

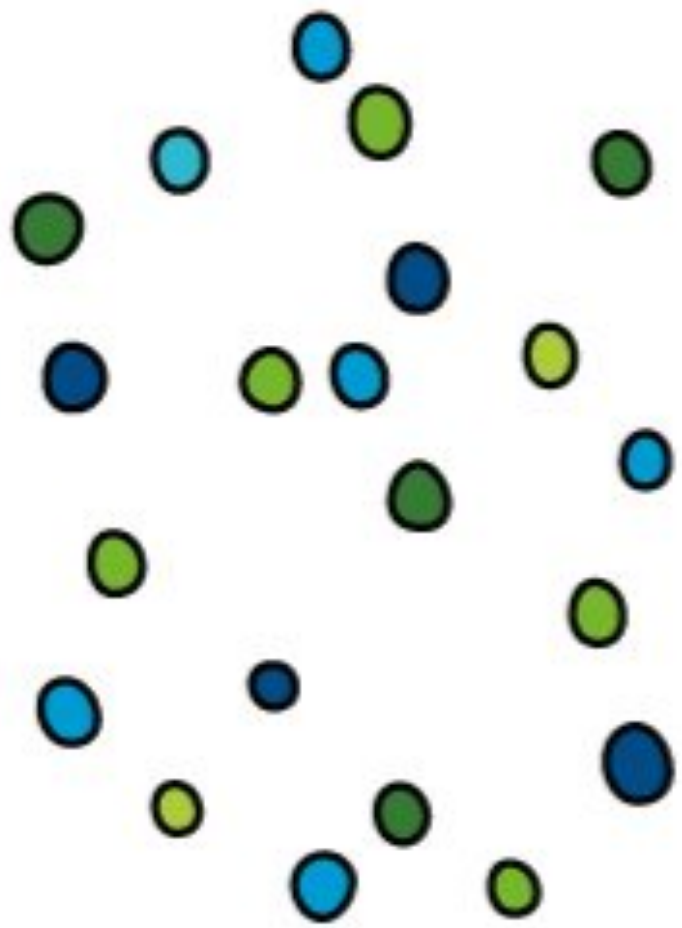
- Reading is soooooo much slower
- Learning how to rephrase the information in your own words
- Thinking about connections to existing notes
- Build trust in your Zettelkasten
- All of it takes more time before you automate it

Why It Works?

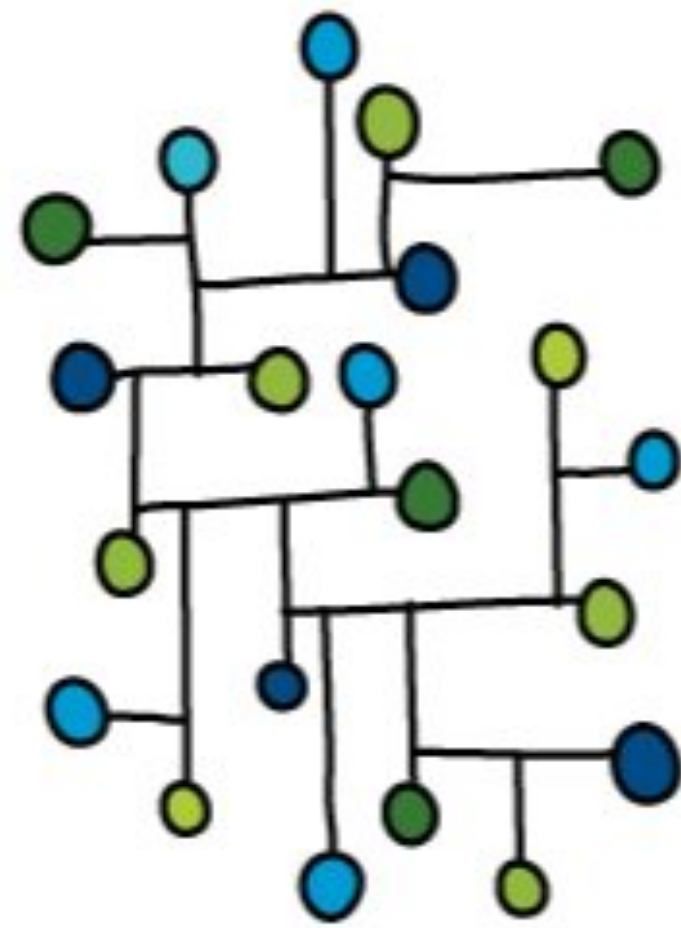
- Our brain and Zettelkasten care about what they are good at
- Our brain loves routines
- Good ideas need time
- More notes does not mean chaos; you save only those, that matter to you.
- With Zettelkasten, you will deepen your understanding

To Be Continued?

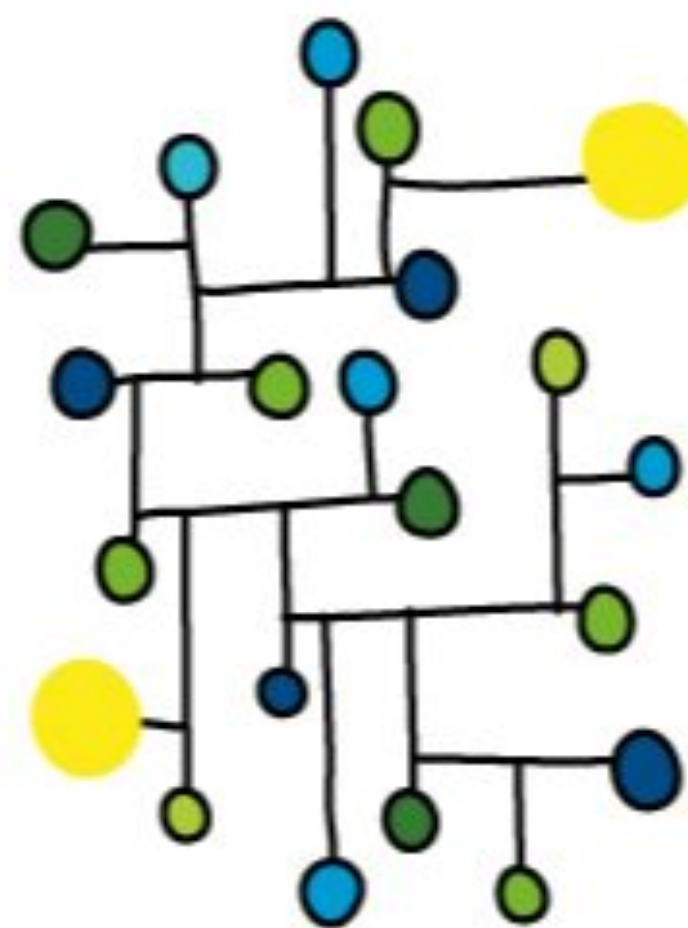
information:



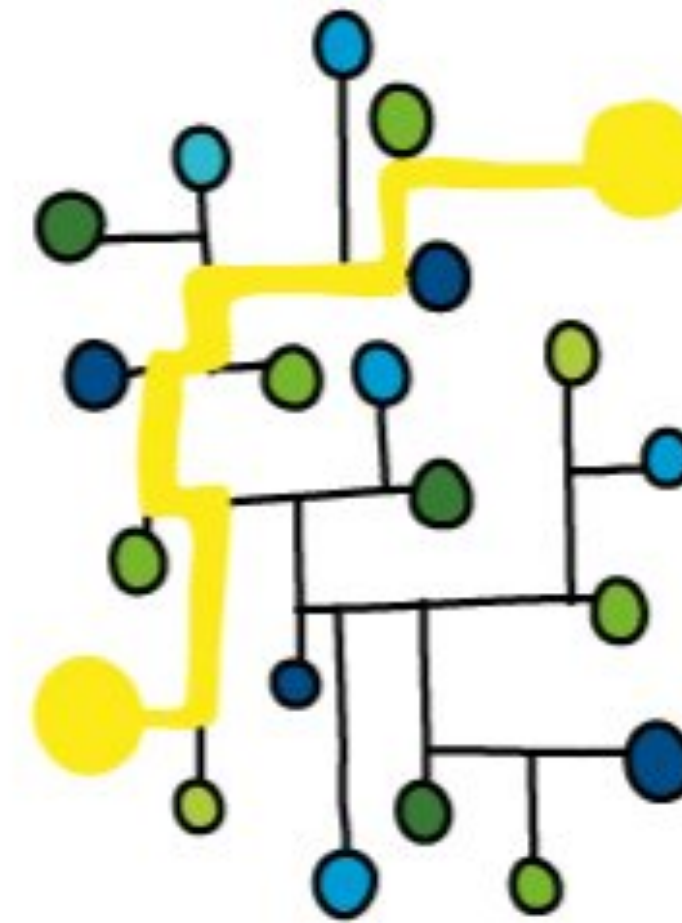
knowledge:



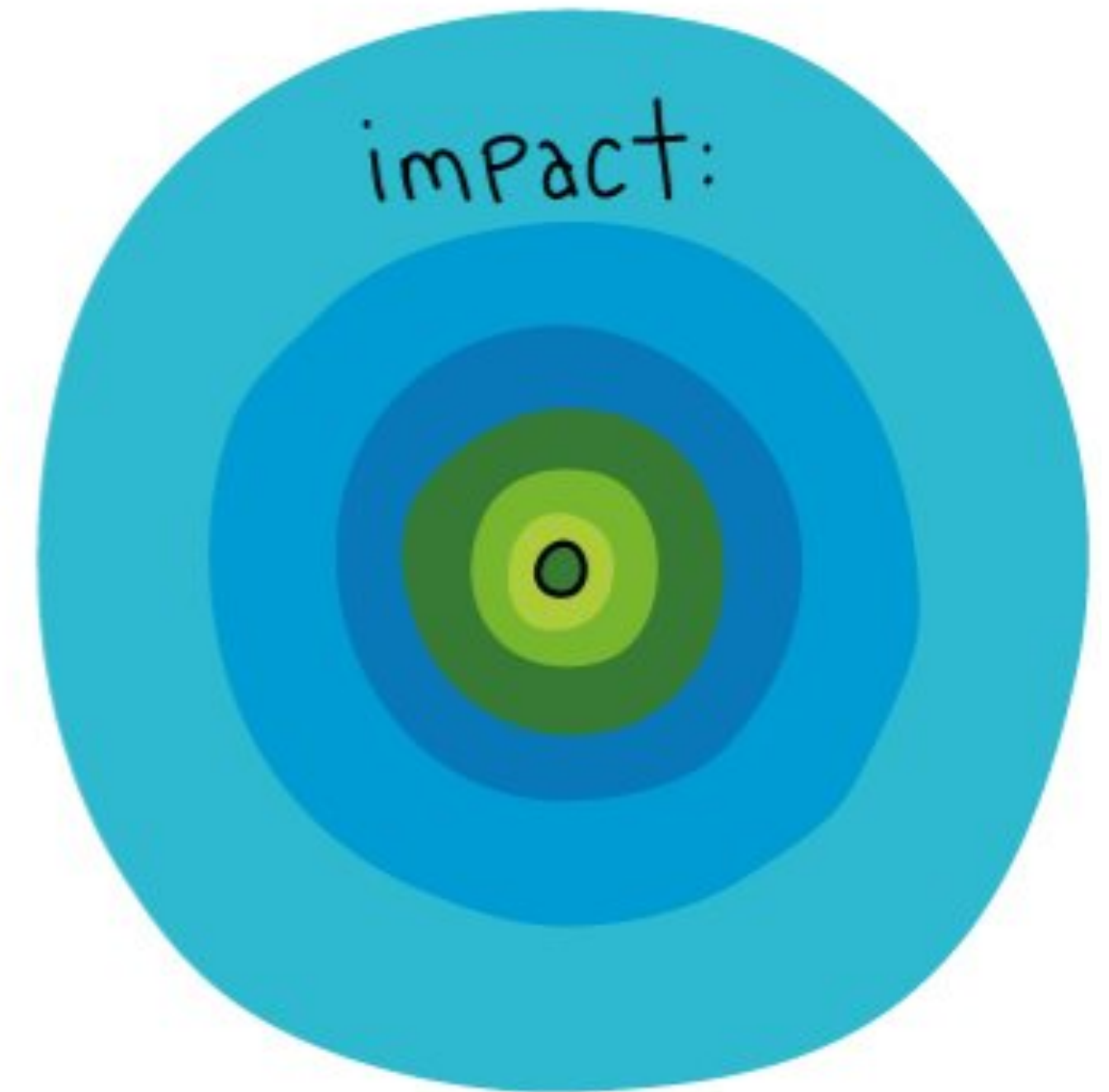
insight:



wisdom:



impact:



Resources

- <https://zettelkasten.de>
- [FB: Chytré poznánky a Zettelkasten \(CZ\)](#)
- Blog <https://eliskasestakova.cz> (CZ)
- <https://niklas-luhmann-archiv.de> (DE)
- Google, Youtube, Reddit, ...



Bonus: Other Strategies

- Evergreen Notes by Andy Matuschack
- Second Brain
- The P. A. R. A. Method