

## THE MINDSETS



**EVERY BARRIER CAN BE PENETRATED:** This mindset can be summed up in the name of Mick Ebeling's philanthropic hacking group —Not Impossible. Approach every problem, every step of a system, every obstacle with the understanding that it can be overcome; the question is not if, but *how*. But assuming a problem can be solved is where the assumptions end. To triumph over barriers, hackers assume nothing, take nothing at face value. When approaching any task or problem, proceed as if everything is up for debate —no information is set in stone, no system is infallible, no solution is fixed, no problem is ever permanently solved. This mindset also favors simplicity — the easiest, laziest solutions can be the most elegant.

**COMPASSES OVER MAPS:** Hackers have a lot in common with history's great explorers —they have a general idea of where they're headed, but they go off into uncharted territory and maybe draw up a map later. This mindset is about curiosity and exploration. Using a map is perfunctory and it presupposes both the destination, and the best way of getting there. Using a compass admits a general direction, but surrenders playfully to the realities of the landscape, allowing the traveler to adjust course based on the lay of the land. A mountain is an opportunity, not an obstacle. Fall in love with the problem, not the solution, constantly re-navigate the problem based on the current landscape, instead of carefully retracing the mapped-out routes of previous solutions.



**NOTHING IS STATIC:** This mindset isn't about fear mongering or the quicksand-like nature of life, but maintaining a constant thirst for knowledge and self-improvement. For computer hackers, technical knowledge is obsolete almost as soon as it's learned, so hackers are committed to constantly expanding and updating their skills and knowledge bases. Complacency is simply not an option. Embrace, don't fear, change. Instead of waiting for someone else to corner you into change, constantly initiate change — actively court and choose change instead of running from it. From systems to solutions, nothing lasts forever, so relish learning, growing, and exploring new possibilities.

**QUANTITY IS A FORCE MULTIPLIER:** Two heads are better than one. This mindset isn't new, hackers just apply it more consistently and universally than the rest of us. Do away with the romantic notion of the singular genius in the attic (or the C-suite) in favor of diverse and democratized ideation. Let go of the fantasy of the midnight stroke of brilliance for the hard work of rapid experimentation. Replace VC investment with crowdfunding. Pool knowledge, resources, ideas; and be as open and excited about the ideas of others as about your own.



**COMPETENCE IS THE ONLY CREDENTIAL THAT MATTERS:** Computer hacking is literally a science, but in the hacking community, it is also something of a performance art. A hallmark of hacker culture is anonymity, so hackers can't rely on "real-world" credentials or distinguishers. All that matters is what you can do, what you can demonstrate. In the "real world," we take comfort in degrees, credentials, and familiarity to vouch for someone's capabilities, taking them as symbols of capability. Challenge how you interact with others —take risks on people based on what they do, not who they are on paper, or what they say they can do; find brilliant people who look and think totally differently than you. Challenge yourself —don't rest on the laurels of your degrees, credentials, or past achievements, but measure yourself on what you're doing now. Expertise may be found in the unlikeliest of places. Balk authority, get scrappy, get results.



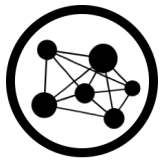
# THE 5 MINDSETS & 10 CORE TACTICS OF HACKERS

## THE TACTICS



**BRUTE FORCE:** The best example of this tactic is Rapid Experimentation. This is about using a battering ram, or three, not picking a lock. Try lots of solutions to narrow down the best options quickly.

**SOCIAL ENGINEERING:** Let others do the work for you. Customers, fans, happy employees — they can be the most powerful form of endorsement or advertisement. Make sure you are utilizing them, authentically, to their full potential.



**CROWDSOURCING:** Stop waiting for one genius to have a lightbulb moment. Bring together people from diverse backgrounds, experience, departments, even industries. Two heads are better than one, three are better than two...you get the idea.

**THE EXPLOIT:** How do you climb a mountain? One step at a time. This tactic is about focusing on a small win and then leveraging that to create bigger, longer lasting wins. Think of your problem as a wall — look for the tiniest hole, figure out how you can wiggle through, and then expand the hole until the whole wall is gone.



**BORROWING:** Stop looking in the usual places for solutions and inspiration. Look outside of your industry, look to nature, look anywhere that is totally unrelated. Find things that work really well somewhere else. Ask yourself why and see if it could translate to your work. Pretend to be someone else and approach your problem freshly, through a Different Lens.

**DECONSTRUCT:** If something isn't working or you're sure it could do better, take it apart. Break it into its smallest elements, seeing how the parts work together. Then put it back together, but differently. Add, Subtract, or Substitute elements for improved variations.



**AGILE BURSTS:** Hackathons are a great example of this tactic. Agile Bursts are about speed —attack a problem hard, intensely, even completely, in a short span of time. A few hours, one week, set a short deadline and commit 100% of your attention.

**THE REVERSE:** How should you solve a problem? Do the opposite. Whether it's flipping your first inclination upside down or following that inkling when it's the opposite of what you're supposed to do. This tactic is all about thumbing your nose at expectations and daring to do things totally differently.



**THE MASHUP:** Sometimes the best solution isn't a new one, but existing solutions combined and reimagined. Maybe you combine two strategies into one, maybe you take one of your strategies and combine it with something from another industry. The result is one elegant solution you can't imagine having lived without.

**WORKING BACKWARD:** Don't get hung up on your favorite solution. This tactic is about starting with your ideal outcome, in vivid detail, and then going backward to imagine a new solution. If you want to do something that's never been done, you probably need to go about it in a new way, too; so, start at the finish line.

