

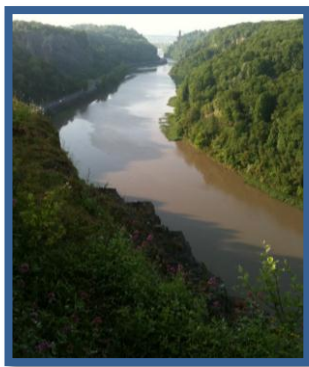
# THE CREATIVE GORILLA #115

*Continually using the same approach is very efficient, but it can lead to stale thinking ...*

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## Avoid Stale Thinking

*"If you always do what you've always done, you'll always get what you've always got ... JB  
(after Anthony Robbins, motivation guru)*



The Avon Gorge

*Need a new approach to problem solving?*

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Last week, I gave a talk to a company in Bristol. Having had my diary changed at the last minute, I decided to stay the night in a hotel and so immediately followed my usual approach for booking a hotel; go online and book through my regular hotel chain. Alas, all their hotels in Bristol were booked as were all the other chain hotels.

So I Googled "Bed and Breakfast Bristol" and instead of staying in a prefabricated block just off the motorway, I stayed at a lovely Edwardian hotel overlooking the Downs. In the morning I went for a long walk across said Downs, found a fabulous

view of the Avon Gorge and had time to rehearse my talk in my mind.

Having been forced to take a fresh approach to booking my hotel I was delighted it had paid off so well. It also gave me an opening story for my talk, which challenged the use of only one approach to tackling problems.

Like many companies, the one I talked to uses a structured approach to problem solving, in this case, "Define, Measure, Analyse, Improve and Control". Essentially, this type of approach senses a problem, identifies the symptoms, finds the root cause and looks for solutions.

Companies have been using these types of problem centred approaches for many years because they usually work and they have become very efficient at using them; just like my approach to booking hotels.

The danger though is that use of the same approach can become routine, and perhaps lead to suboptimal solutions. ly way.

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## SO

It is important that we stay open minded to how we approach problems, to ask ourselves occasionally if our usual approach is the right one in this context and to have a repertoire of alternative approaches to use.

In this talk I offered the attendees “Solutions Focus” as an alternative to their existing approach ([Down load an article here](#)) and demonstrated some of the tools which are so valuable in problems involving people. However, I could have suggested a myriad of approaches including Creative Problem Solving, Syntectics and Appreciative Inquiry.

## ACTION

Consider if your organisation is using only one approach to tackling challenges. If it is, what else might you consider introducing?

## TO CLOSE

Cycling at the weekend, I stopped at the entrance barrier to our local lake. A young man was struggling to force his bike around an entrance gate designed to prevent horses entering but allow people through. It’s just about possible to get a bike through if you contort it.

I watched for a few seconds before asking if he had tried pushing his bike through the odd shaped gap along side the gate, designed to let cycles through. He looked blankly at me, so I

demonstrated by wheeling my bike through.

He smiled, “I never realised that was for bikes, I’ve always struggled through this gate.” If you always do, what you always done...

The learning point from this? It’s useless having different approaches if you don’t let people know they exist and teach them how to use them.

Try a different approach this week....

*John Brooker | Facilitate, Innovate, Transform.*

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