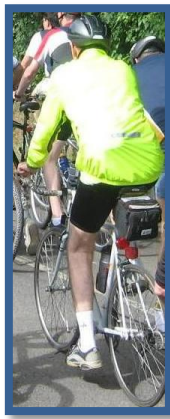


YES! AND... CREATIVE GORILLA # 53

Using principles of creative thinking can help us to avoid simple mistakes and tackle challenges effectively...

Avoid Making False Assumptions...

"The harder you fight to hold on to specific assumptions, the more likely there's gold in letting go of them." [John Seely Brown](#), Chief of Confusion



"I'm gonna beat you"

Could your mind set or your assumptions be leading you to arrive at the wrong problem definition?

On a recent weekend away I and some other parents and Scout Leaders took 35 Cub Scouts on a camping trip. I learned a lot about the noise 33 boys and a couple of girls can make and a great deal about washing up, being awarded with a silver scourer for my efforts ("I want to thank my wife for this award...").

At the end of the camp, one of the fathers came over to us and explained that he had locked his car keys in the boot (trunk) of his car. As we were a hundred miles from home and stuck in the middle of a wood, this was not an ideal situation.

"No worries," I said, "we'll just call the AA or RAC (our car break down organisations in the UK) and they'll get your keys fairly quickly or take your car home." There was silence. "I don't have break down insurance," he replied, "the car never breaks down."

With a bit of flexible thinking, we managed to get the AA to rescue him and three hours later, we left for home.

On the way home later, I pondered on his words and thought to myself that if he had adhered to a couple of precepts (or principles) of flexible thinking, we would not have had this situation and wasted three hours.

The Open University course "Creativity, Innovation and Change" (based on content in James Adams's book "Conceptual Blockbusting") outlines twelve "precepts" that can help us to tackle challenges. Two of these are:

Determine to change your mind set; Challenge implicit & explicit assumptions.

If only this parent had a mind set that his car might break down or had challenged the assumption that only a break down required support (what if he had an accident), he might have taken out breakdown insurance.

YES! AND... CREATIVE GORILLA # 53

SO

Adhering to these two principles can help to make ourselves, our team and our organisation more creative and innovative. If we challenge our mind set and our assumptions when we face a new or difficult challenge, it can help free our thinking and prompt actions that perhaps we might not have taken.

ACTION

Do you have a new or difficult challenge at present? Consider these principles and see if you can get a different perspective on it. If you would like a one page copy of all the principles to put on your desk, just let me know.

TO CLOSE

I was cycling around my favourite lake again on Saturday. On the first lap round, I passed a cyclist going in the other direction, wearing a bright yellow fluorescent jacket and blue helmet. We greeted each other in that effusive British style; a subtle nod of the head and a grin. I then did a second lap and this time he called out "We should have had a race". "We should have!" I replied cheerily.

Coming home and about three miles down the road, I saw a bright yellow jacket shining and a blue helmet bobbing a few yards ahead of me. I speeded up, got along side him and in a very childish voice shouted "beat ya, beat ya!"

I gave him a big smile and then realised to my horror it wasn't "my" cyclist. I put on a burst of speed to cover my embarrassment and zoomed away!

On the bright side, there is a lesson there about "valuing play" and "involving others". On the down side, you can probably spot a few lessons too about mind sets and the need to challenge assumptions!

Anyone who makes a pun about "cycling often but closing late" gets no brownie points!

Have an open minded week.

.John Brooker | Facilitate, Innovate, Transform.



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