

# YES! AND... CREATIVE GORILLA # 89

*Our style of communication can influence how we make decisions in the creative problem solving process...*

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## Make Team Decision Making Easier...

*"We don't know the effect of our actions. That is because we are either too embarrassed to (want to) know what actually was implemented or are too busy to track what was implemented."*

*Pete Senge, Management Consultant, in "The 5<sup>th</sup> Discipline"*



**"Approachable and Credible"**

*Does your team struggle to make decisions or make them too quickly?*

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I was re-reading a book this week on the science of non-verbal communication, "The Elusive Obvious" by Michael Grinder. (Buy it at [www.michaelgrinder.com](http://www.michaelgrinder.com)).

In the book, Michael describes two types of communication style; Approachable and Credible. The Approachable style, he says, tends to be more People focussed and the Credible style more Issue focussed. Groups tend to form a culture over time which we can describe as mostly Credible, mostly Approachable or a mix.

What was especially interesting for me, as someone who uses creative solution finding (CSF) processes with groups, was Michael's comments (see Page 57 of the book) on how groups with a bias towards one style or the other work through the basic problem solving process

of Gather (information); Evaluate; Decide; Implement.

The mostly Credible groups tend to shorten the Gathering stage and are quick to make a decision. Whether they have gathered the appropriate information to make the decision is questionable.

The mostly Approachable groups spend a long time gathering information and tend to be reluctant to move from the Gathering stage. They seek consensus and harmony and so can take an age to make a decision in case they offend an individual.

Which group makes the better decisions? Neither has a monopoly on good decisions. The Approachable groups can make bad decisions because they consider people too much and the Credible groups can make bad decisions because they are in such a hurry to gather sufficient information.

As a result, we end up with Peter Senge's quotation above; the Approachables are embarrassed and the Credibles are too busy making the next decision to track if people implemented their last decision well.

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## SO

As you might expect, to improve on decision making in groups, we highlight and value both styles. We err towards the Approachable style when Gathering and towards the Credible when Evaluating and Decision making.

I don't have space here to define all the ways to spot Credible or Approachable people, but one way is to listen to the voice. If it tends to be flat and then goes down at the end of a sentence, it is Credible. If the voice is rhythmic and goes up at the end of the sentence, it is Approachable.

## ACTION

Consider if your team is having trouble making the best decisions. Could it be because of the Credible / Approachable mix?

## TO CLOSE

Whilst reading Michael's book (and having attended a lengthy course with him) I reflected on how his Credible / Approachable styles might relate to Min Basadur's ([www.basadur.com](http://www.basadur.com)) creative problem solving styles? Min outlines four styles of creativity that fit with his Simplex Model of CPS:

- Generators (of new problems and opportunities)
- Conceptualisers (who define and understand the challenges and create new and potentially useful ideas)
- Optimisers (of practical solutions)
- Implementors (of the new solutions)

Min states that each style has different kinds of thinking skills and what is interesting (in relation to Michael's work) is that Generators and Conceptualisers may procrastinate and that

Optimisers and Implementers may rush to make decisions and implement before considering a sufficient number of ideas.

I wonder, is there a correlation between styles of communication and a preference for different stages of CPS? Perhaps there is a doctorate in that for someone?

Have a credibly approachable week...

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