

YES! AND... CREATIVE GORILLA # 99

Understanding the problem is a good step towards finding the right solution...

Know the Facts of the Problem First...

"It was some relief for Morse to recognise the fair countenance of reason once more, and she greeted him serenely when he woke, clear headed, on Monday morning and told him that it would be no bad idea to have a quiet look at the problem itself before galloping off towards a solution."

Colin Dexter in "Service of all the dead" Chapter 12



"Got a problem?"

Are you tackling the wrong problem?

In an Internet chat room the other day an elderly lady posted a problem she had. Essentially, she was wondering what she could do next in her life to give it some more challenge.

Up popped a response from a contributor advising her to take up painting "because that's what my grandmother did".

I am sure this person had a positive intent and all credit to them for contributing, but we knew nothing much about the problem and already someone has come up with a solution.

Yes, it may well have been exactly the right answer, but surely it is worth spending some time to understand more about the situation before coming up with the solutions?

This reminded me so much of what happens in organisations: Here are some symptoms of a problem, "aha" here's a solution, put it in to action and voila... the problem reappears a few weeks later with different symptoms. Then managers wonder why they are fire fighting.

SO

If you consider different methods for tackling problems you will see that they include a stage that encourages people to explore a problem e.g. Creative Problem Solving (at its simplest: Explore Problem, Generate ideas; Evaluate; Take action), or Syntectics (Identify the problem; Gather information about it; use trigger questions and strategies to generate ideas).

Even in the Solutions Focus Approach we seek to understand the facts of the situation so that we can define a Platform to move from.

So, if you want to truly tackle a situation then you need to understand it and define it better before you generate any solutions.

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ACTION

As an individual or an organisation you should have a range of models for tackling situations and all of them should include a stage to explore the problem more.

TO CLOSE

I don't normally close with a quotation but this one is so apt...

"If I had an hour to solve a problem and my life depended on the solution, I would spend the first 55 minutes determining the proper question to ask. For once I know the proper question, I could solve the problem in less than five minutes."

ALBERT EINSTEIN

So even if you don't want to believe me, I hope you can believe Albert.
Keep exploring this week...

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