



Overcoming the Four Dilemmas of Problem Solving and Decision Making

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Eric Teitelbaum

“You take all the time you need, Larry—this certainly is a big decision.”

Next 50 minutes

- What are the big dilemmas in decision making? **BUT** more importantly...

HOW TO OVERCOME THEM

or

How you can ensure that good decision making happens at YOUR organization!

Will you “Hold a Question”?

- What would BEING a better problem solver and decision maker do for me as an analyst, specialist, admin, or OT...?
- What would HAVING superior problem solvers and decision makers do for me as a supervisor or manager ?

Two Kinds of Problem Solving

System 1 – Fast, intuitive, from the “gut”

System 2 – Slower, more deliberative, reasoned

And BOTH are prone to error!





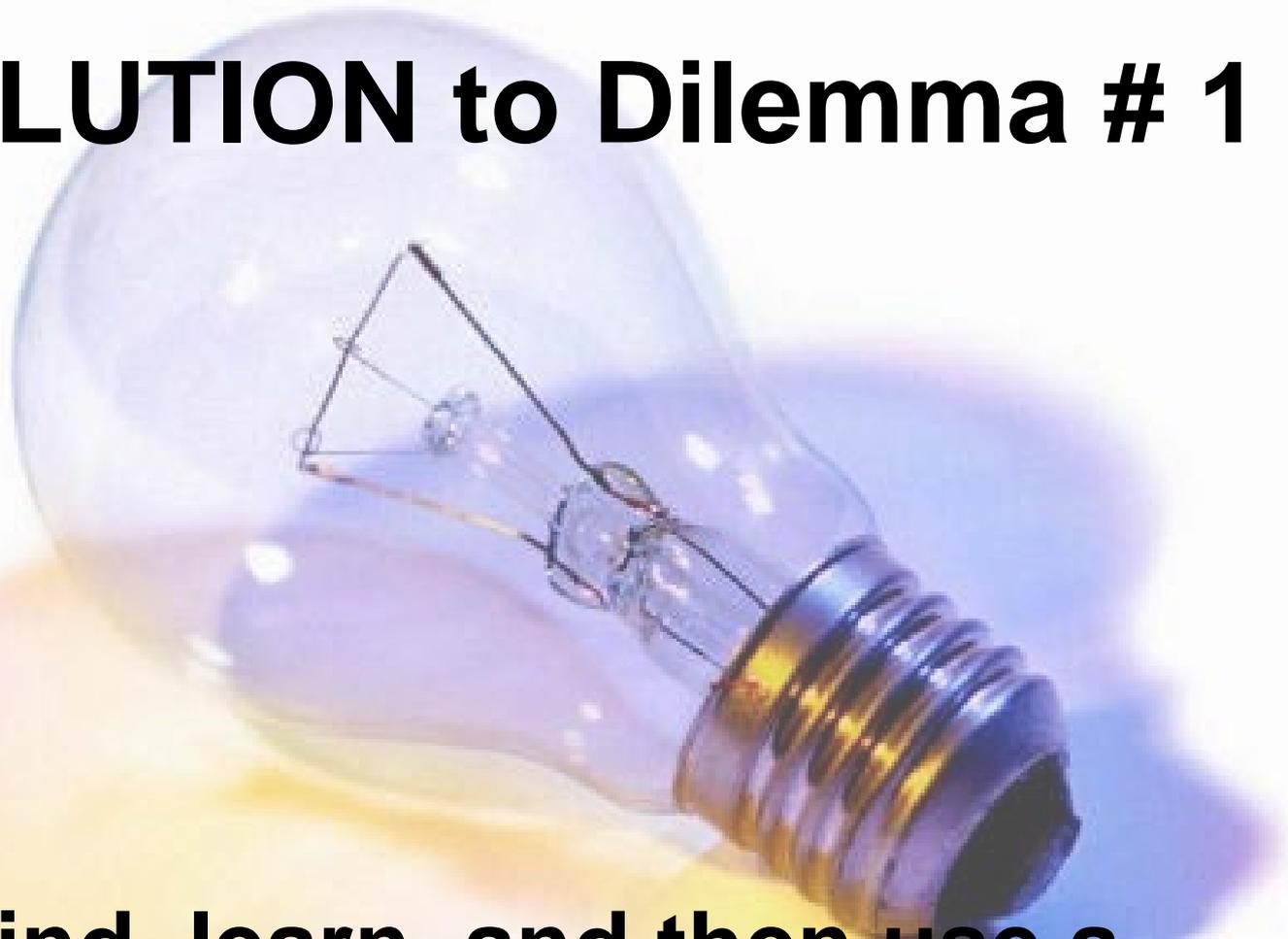
Dilemma # 1

No Consistent Method

**Most people in the workplace
don't have a consistent method
for solving problems.**

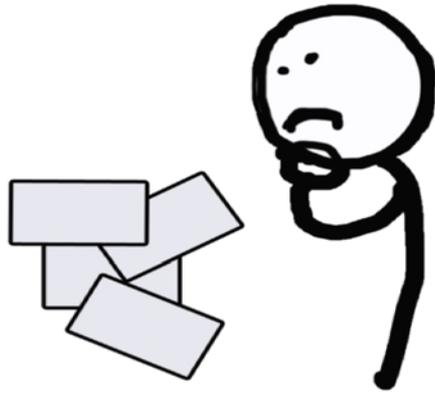


SOLUTION to Dilemma # 1

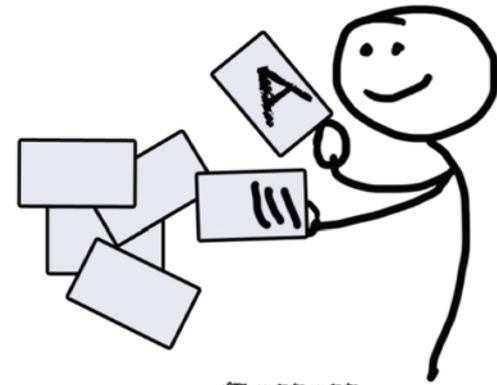


Find, learn, and then use a consistent problem solving method.

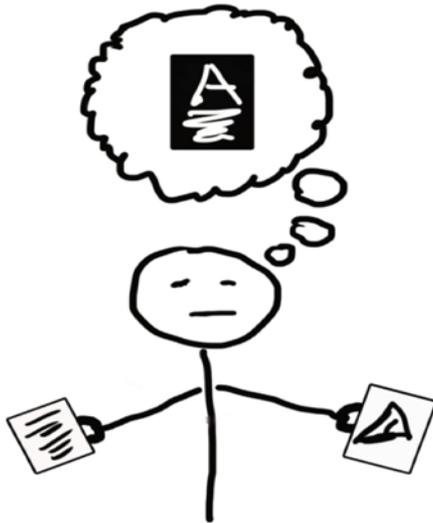
Could it be that easy?



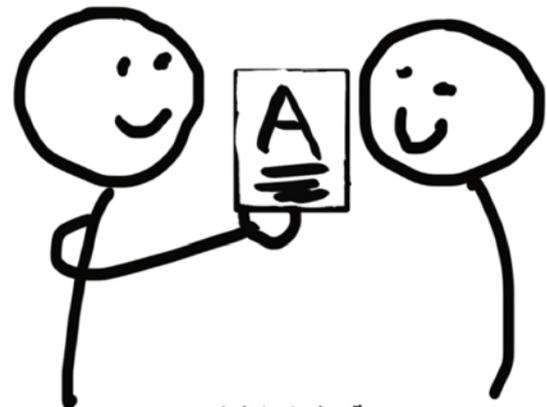
LOOK



SEE



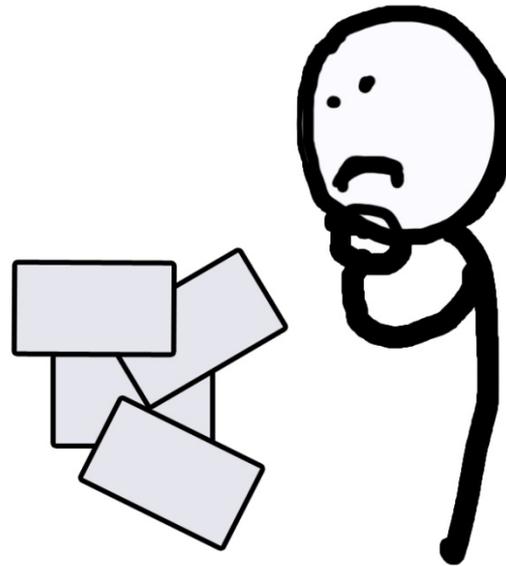
IMAGINE



SHOW



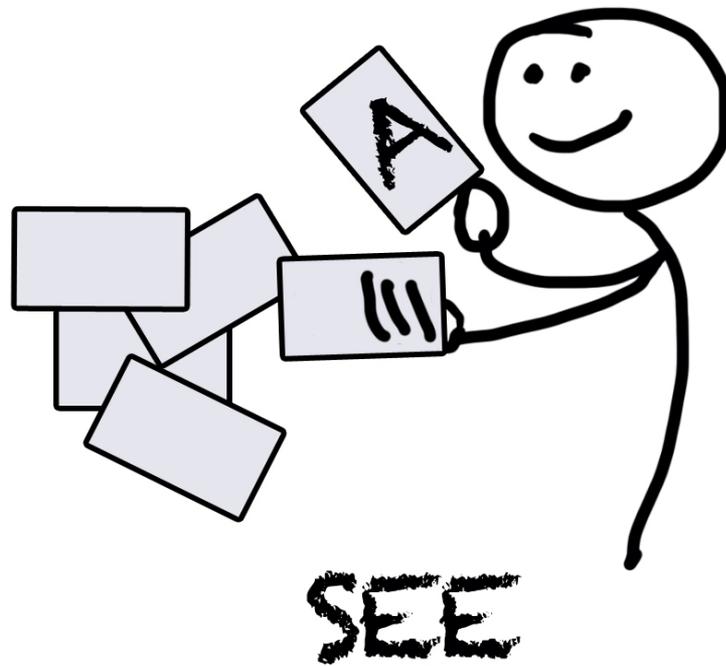
Look, See, Imagine, Show



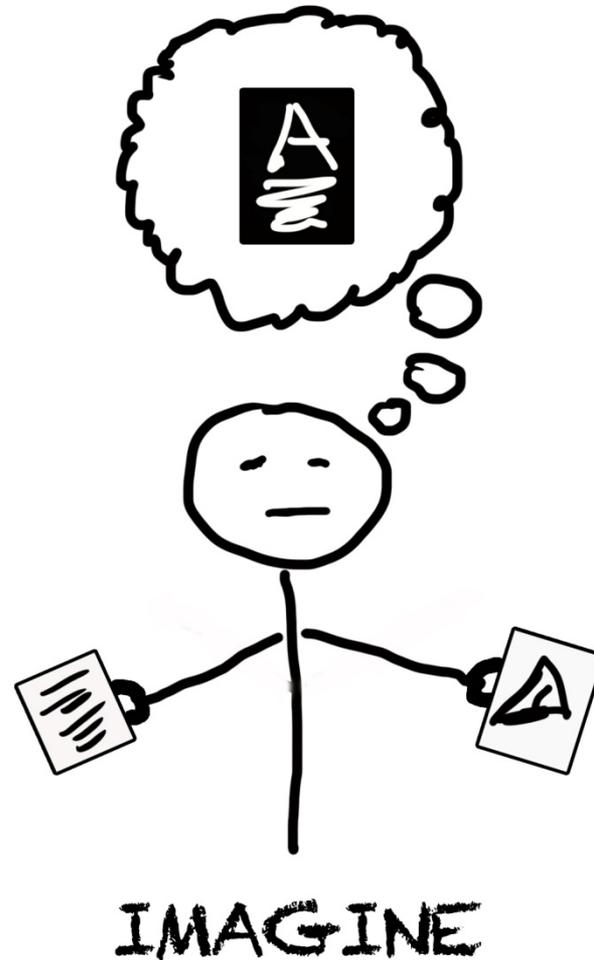
LOOK



Look, See, Imagine, Show (1)

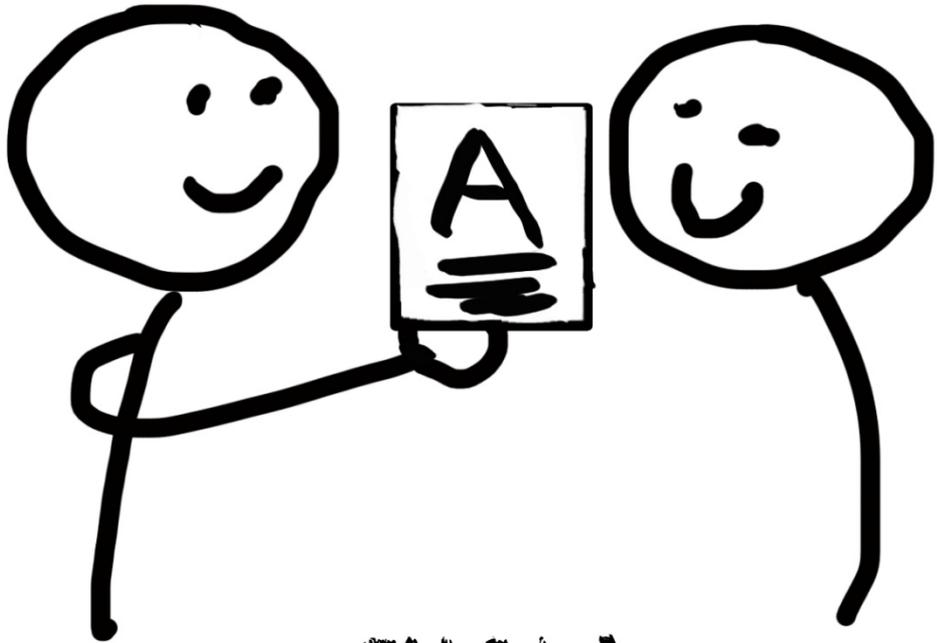


Look, See, Imagine, Show (2)

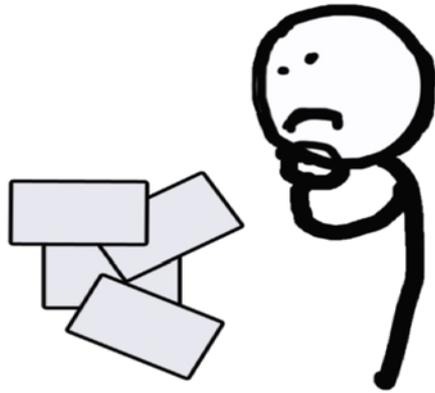




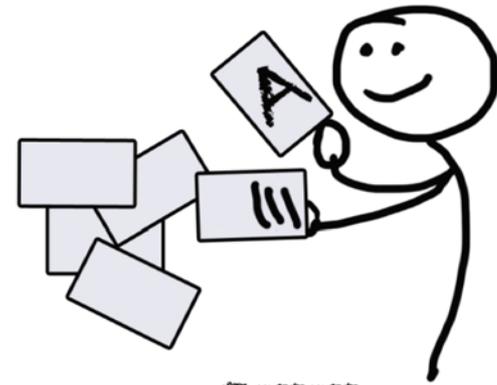
Look, See, Imagine, Show (3)



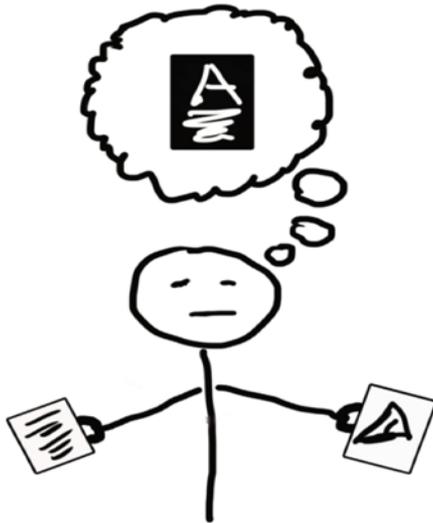
SHOW



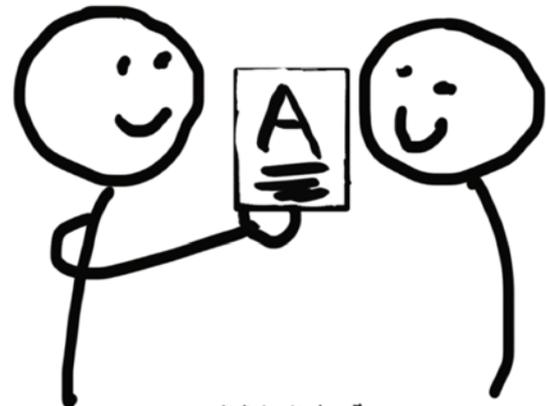
LOOK



SEE



IMAGINE



SHOW



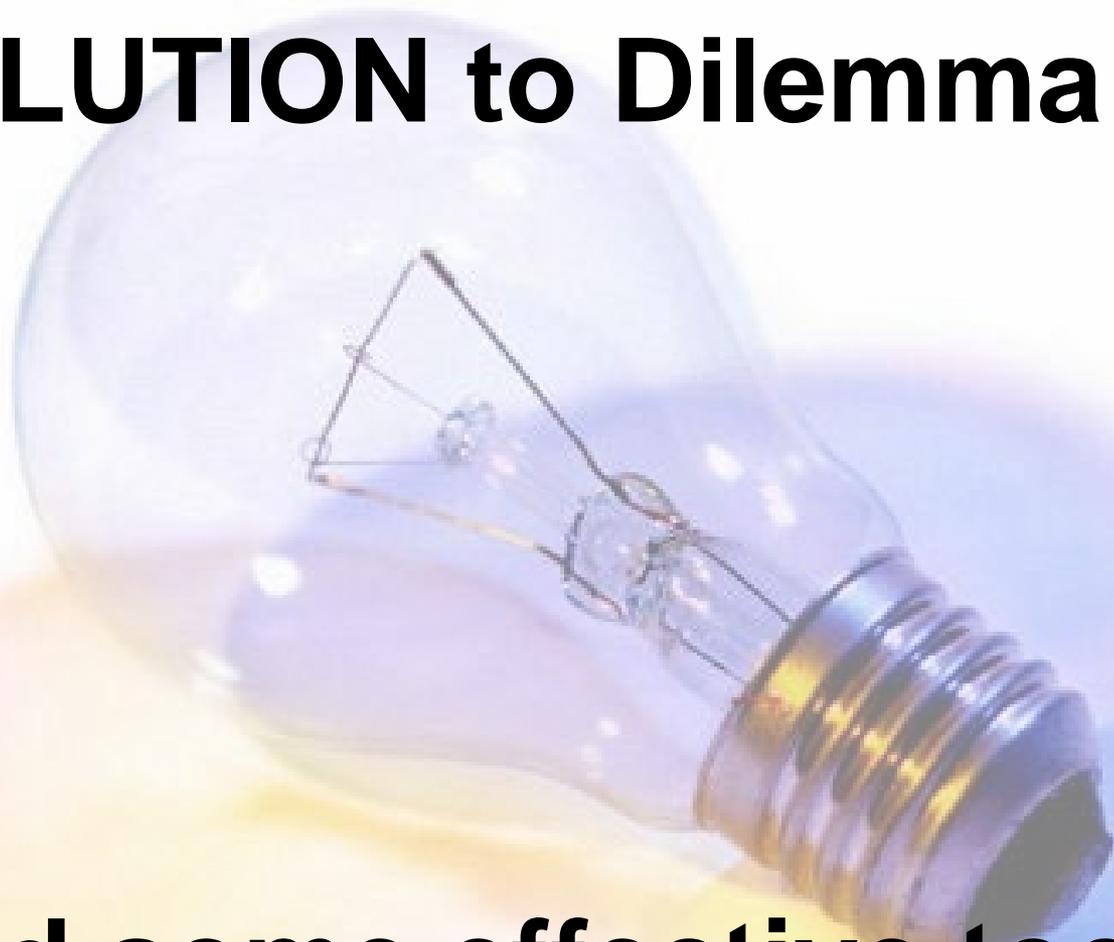
Dilemma # 2

Lack of Tools

Many employees lack a set of tools to use as they go through the steps of problem solving and decision making.



SOLUTION to Dilemma # 2



**Find some effective tools,
learn how to use them,
and go to work.**

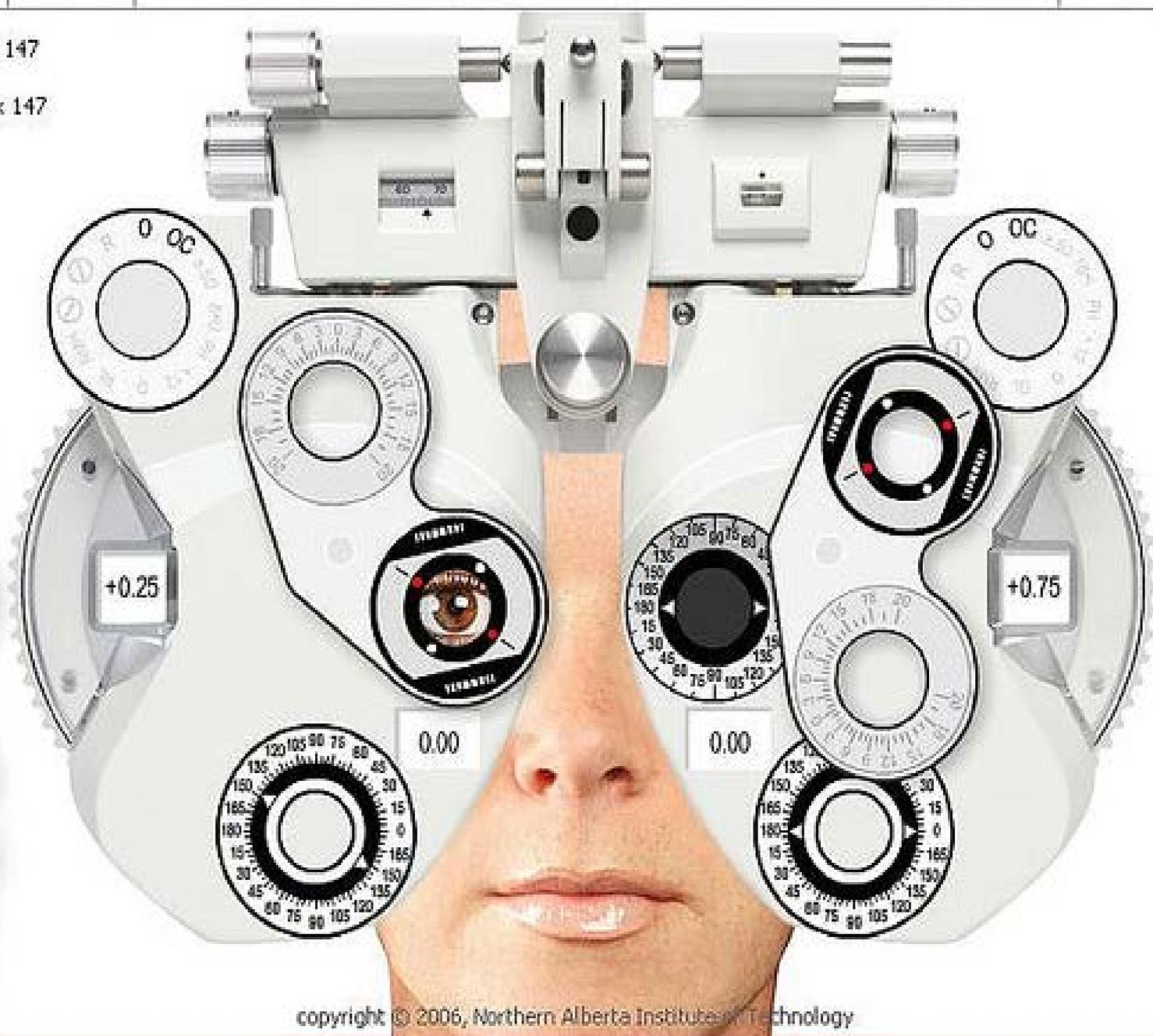


Better 1

-0.25 0.00 x 147

Better 2

+0.25 0.00 x 147





Tool #1 – Learn how to ask powerful questions

Really?

Questions are a tool?



Tool #2 – Understand Bias

- Why? - See the May 2015 Harvard Business Review (Issue devoted to Decision Making)

Featured Quote...

“There are two main causes of poor decision making: **insufficient motivation and cognitive bias.**”

- Motivation - Comes with learning a model and tools
- Bias - must be recognized to be overcome

Two “Cognitive Biases”

- **Narrow Framing**
- **Confirmation Bias**



Are there many other cognitive biases?

Daniel Kahneman, “Thinking Fast and Slow”, documents over 40!

- Priming /Anchoring
- Halo Effect
- Overconfidence Bias
- Loss Aversion

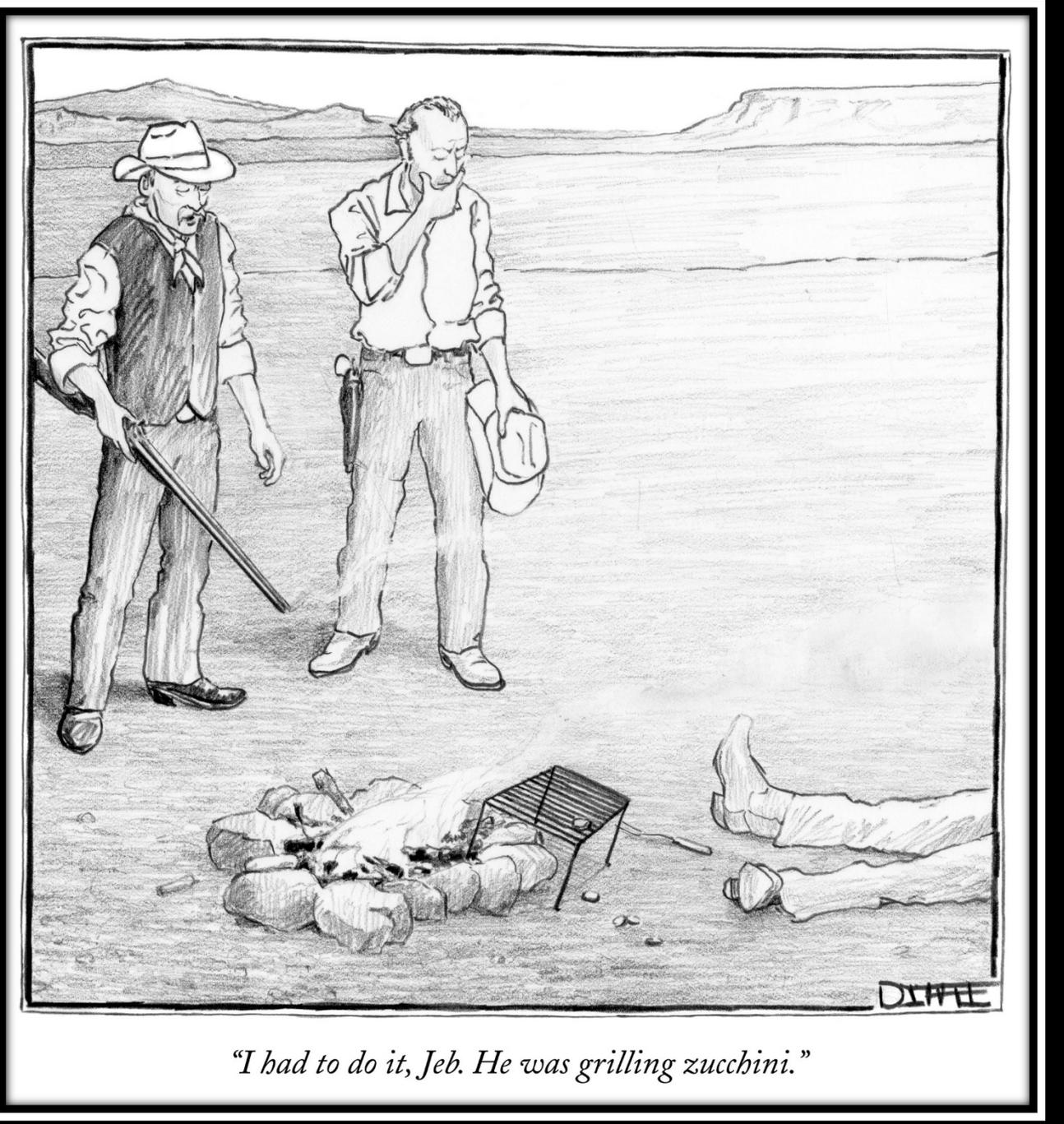


And of course there are **MANY other Tools?**

1. Brainstorming
2. Fishbone Diagrams
3. The 5 Whys
4. Force Field Analysis
5. SWOT Analysis
6. Minds Maps
7. Lateral Thinking
8. Checklists
9. Organization
10. The Thinking Map

Question?

- **System 1 or 2? (Trust your gut or slow and deliberate?)**
 - Is one more important than other?
 - Is there a place for both?
 - How does someone develop good system #1 “instincts”?



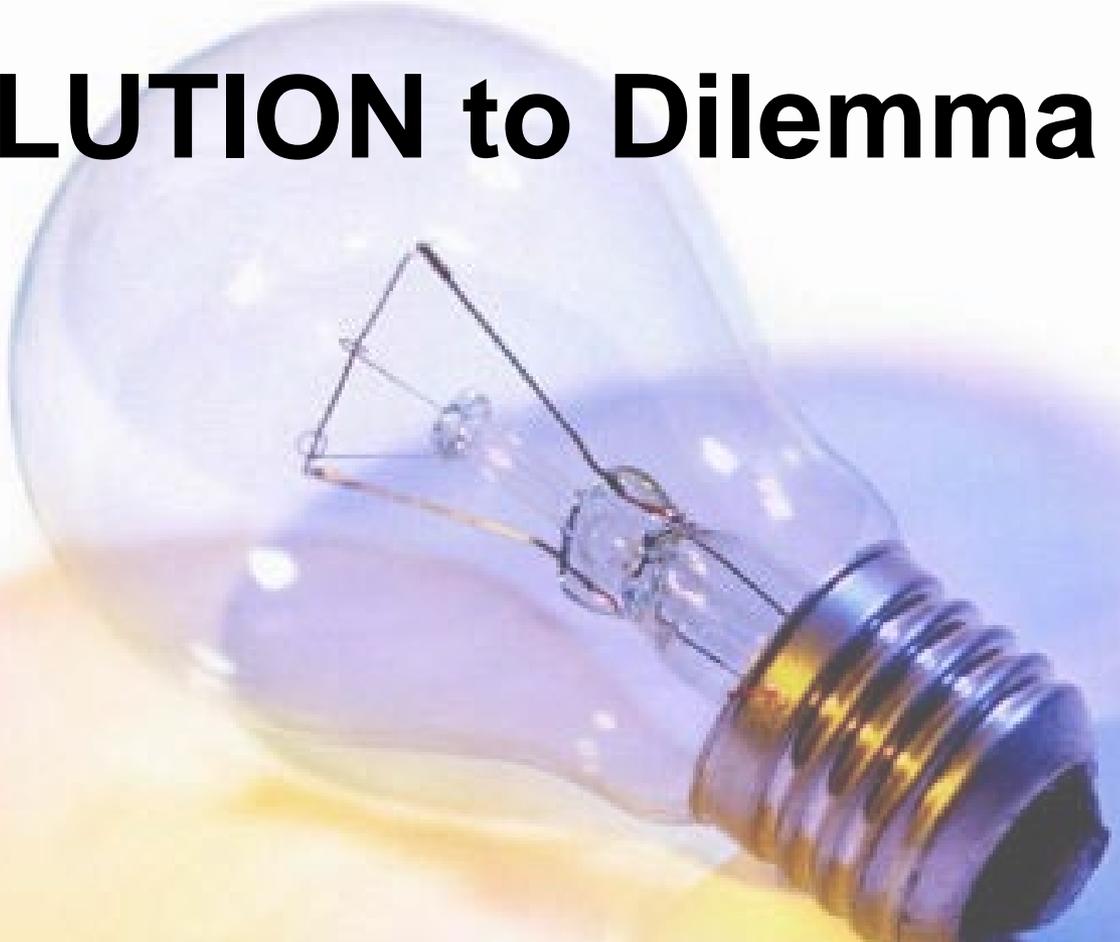
"I had to do it, Jeb. He was grilling zucchini."



Dilemma # 3

Too Much Information!

Having access to more information doesn't necessarily lead to better decisions; in fact it often results in worse decisions.

A glowing lightbulb is the central focus of the image. It is tilted and emits a warm, yellowish light that creates a soft glow on the surface below it. The background is a gradient of light colors, with a subtle blue and purple hue. The lightbulb's filament is visible through the glass, and the base is a standard screw-in type.

SOLUTION to Dilemma # 3

Use critical thinking skills to minimize the information you wish to analyze then critically evaluate what you have.

Two Easy Ways

- **Discard information from unreliable sources**
- **Combine similar information**





**Bit more difficult,
but VERY effective**

The Thinking MAP



The Thinking Map (in brief)

Analysis (Understanding)

1. What are the main positions, recommendations, or conclusions (may be stated or unstated)?
2. What are the reasons (data, evidence)?

PLUS more steps...

Evaluation (Deciding)

5. Are the reasons acceptable?
6. Does the reasoning support the conclusions?



Dilemma #4

The Myth of Multitasking

Multitasking may save time, but it lowers the quality of our decision making.



SOLUTION to Dilemma #4



When engaged with problem solving or decision making, focus on a single task.

Two Easy Ways (1)

- **Batch your email / turn off the sound**
- **Be attentive in short spans of time**
- **Take a break – take many short breaks!**



**Trust me on this one.
It's not as far out as it
sounds.**

**Explore mindfulness for the
workplace...**

**It seems to be working for Google, The
US Army, and even CALPERS has piloted
a program of effecting personal change,
which uses mindfulness as a tool...**

Dilemmas & How to Overcome

1. No Consistent Method

Many people in the workplace don't have a consistent method for solving problems.

Solution - Find, learn, and then use a consistent problem solving method.

Hint: Look, See, Imagine, and Show

2. Lack of Tools

Many employees lack a set of tools to use as they go through the steps of problem solving and decision making.

Solution - Find some effective tools, learn how to use them, and go to work.

Hint: Learn how to ask powerful questions or google more tools



Dilemmas & How to Overcome (1)

3. Too Much Information

Having access to more information doesn't necessarily lead to better decisions; in fact it often results in worse decisions.

Solution - Use critical thinking skills to minimize the information you wish to analyze, then critically evaluate it.

Hint: Discard information from unreliable sources and combine similar information.

4. The Myth of Multitasking!

Multitasking may save time, but it lowers the quality of decision making.

Solution - When engaged with problem solving or decision making, focus on a single task.

Hint: Be attentive in short spans of time, batch your emails, and develop a practice of mindfulness.



More ways to improve Problem Solving and Decision Making in your organization

1. We all conduct staff meetings. Use them to promote PS and DM ideas, models, information.
2. Use your best problem solvers as models and mentors.
3. Use your training department.
4. Use **your own CALHR (they have many, many PS and DM courses)**

Remember our Held Question?

- What would BEING a better problem solver and decision maker do for me as an analyst, specialist, admin, or OT...?
- What would HAVING superior problem solvers and decision makers do for me as a supervisor or manager?

Please turn to a person next to you and answer the question with one response...



The End

**Good luck on your path to creating
(or being) better problem solvers
and superior decision makers!**

Want more? Go to

**[Get Results From Training website](#) to download free
14 page white paper on the subject.**

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GetResultsFromTraining.com/GTA