

FIRST STEPS IN THE CONDUCT OF INQUIRY

First steps in the conduct of inquiry are the focus of this statement. Help through the first stages of getting research started is the concern.

The Original Impetus and Primary Focus

The original impetus was recognition many years ago that undergraduate and graduate students, young faculty members, staff people in business and government, even consulting and advisory people frequently seemed confounded in their efforts to get started on problem finding and problem solving.

Closer observation suggested more difficulty with problem finding than with problem solving. For a time, my own hunch was that some people more than others probably have a yen and a capacity for coping with poorly-structured and ill-defined beginnings. This may be true. It may even be that such people have less interest, even less talent for other facets.

Bit by bit, however, it also dawned that there was and we continue to have available far more written on broad questions of science and specific rigors of hypothesis testing than on the middle and difficult stage of developing theoretical foundations, questions, problems and hypotheses in the first place. It was then and after further experience in guiding research efforts that I wondered whether it might be possible more effectively than up to that point to extend the capacities and successes of larger numbers of people.