

Experienced investigators may concede that if any original discovery and learning take place, much of the effort may seem more crystal clear after rather than before the fact. It is always easier in retrospect and for the edification of subsequent readers to trace a discernible scientific logic than it is in transit to work one's way out of a maze. Recognition that effective decisions on first steps must anticipate later ones at least in part and that later decisions must fit earlier ones may only add to the sense of unease in getting launched. That is especially for newcomers who may not realize that making and reporting mid-stream adjustments, even corrections, may be par for the course. In the established language of mathematics, now embraced in many other fields, the thinking processes involved in every stage of research are likely to be more heuristic than algorithmic.

Inquiry is incorporated in the title as a term more embracing than research because the latter might connote a limitation only to specific academic or scientific pursuits and methods. No such limitation is intended. The dilemmas addressed in this presentation also arise for many policy and position papers, for term papers, for staff studies, consulting projects and a great variety of problem finding and problem solving activities especially in the less traditional and pluralistic areas of inquiry that make up more and more of the world's agenda today.

The generic problem of starting any kind of inquiry is interpreted as broader than the term research might commonly imply. Also, the term inquiry might, as intended, suggest the curiosity and conjecturing of the early stages more than the procedural rigor of later ones. That is granting that the stages are not watertight which is part of the whole and essential understanding.

The sub-title is intended to communicate the "how to get started"