

FIRST STEPS IN THE CONDUCT OF INQUIRY:

HOW TO GET RESEARCH STARTED*

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Abstract

The purposes of this treatise are two. One is to provide assurance that difficulties in getting research started are ordinary. The other is to set forth a way of working out of the uncertainties, ambiguities and elusiveness that can exist at the start. Consistent with the first purpose, Part I poses two questions. Why are first steps in the conduct of inquiry so taxing? And why have people been so little forewarned? Consistent with the second purpose, Part II sets forth two propositions. One is that the processes involved in working out of a poorly structured context at the start are similar in a great variety of uncertain, ambiguous, judgmental and creative situations in life. The other is that the questions presented and discussed, cycled and recycled, will help in working out of the apparent maze involved in getting research started. The intended readership is noted at the outset. The special demands in writing were to discuss the nebulous without being nebulous and the non-linear one page at a time.

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