

Solving Problems

When the only tool you own is a hammer, every problem begins to resemble a nail.

Abraham Maslow

Each problem that I solved became a rule which served afterwards to solve other problems.

Rene Descartes

The most exciting phrase to hear in science, the one that heralds new discoveries, is not "Eureka!" ("I found it!") but rather "Hmm....that's funny..."

Isaac Asimov

If two things don't fit, but you believe both of them, thinking that somewhere, hidden, there must be a third thing that connects them, that's credulity.

Umberto Eco

"I just don't get it." Remember in school when you said that sentence to yourself in despair, or to a teacher in hope? As a writer now, I move sideways, try something oblique, bring in new material, start over with gusto. Not getting it means I must be doing original work. The feeling of not getting it is a good sign, not a paralyzing signal... The feeling of not getting it is like rain for the dry-land farmer—uncomfortable as you hunch on the tractor seat, but the best thing for the ground. This anxious feeling is the growing place. To be an expert—assured—is death to the process that creates expertise. For expertise comes from not knowing—yet.

Kim Stafford

The design of sneakers varied little until the 1960s when competitive runners began to turn to lighter-weight shoes. Reducing the weight of shoes clearly improved performance, but problems of traction remained. A running coach, Bill Bowerman, went into the sneaker business in 1962. He paid close attention to the interest in lighter-weight shoes and the problems of traction.

One morning while he was making waffles, he had an idea. He heated a piece of rubber in the waffle iron to produce the first waffle-shaped sole pattern that became the world standard for running shoes. Subsequently, engineers and computers would be used to design and test the best waffle patterns for different athletic purposes. But the initial discovery came from Bowerman's paying attention, being open, making connections, drawing on personal experiences, getting a feel for what was possible, exploration, documenting his initial results, and applying what he learned.

Michael Patton

If we knew what it was we were doing, it would not be called research, would it?

Albert Einstein