

The D.R.E.A.M. & Implement Problem-Solving Process™
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1 Define the problem. *How are you framing the problem?*

The mere formulation of a problem is far more often essential than its solution...
Albert Einstein

- A Realize there are many ways to ask about (or frame) your problem.
- B The questions you ask will dramatically shape the kinds of answers you will get.

2 Release all your ideas. *How many ways can you answer your question?*

The best way to get a good idea is to get a lot of ideas.
Linus Pauling, two-time Nobel Prize Laureate

- A Go for quantity if you want quality.
- B First ideas tend to be the ones you know well instead of new thinking.
- C Play with creativity techniques to employ all of your senses, skills, and “intelligences.”
- D Don’t critique any ideas at this stage.
- E Gather more information if needed.
- F Got laughter? Silly solutions are sometimes the most freeing. If some of the ideas don’t make you laugh, you may be thinking too narrowly.
- G Take a break.
 - 1 Studies show that brainstorming groups that took breaks produced more ideas than those that didn’t.
 - 2 As individuals, “sleeping on it” can be the best step you can take.

3 Extract value from your ideas. *How might you use the ideas you’ve generated?*

Good ideas usually evolve out of pretty lame ones, and vice versa.
Gary Larson, Far Side cartoonist

- A Nature wastes nothing. Seeds that don’t sprout help fertilize the soil. See what benefit you can get from every seed idea.
 - 1 Find the positive element and expand. What’s good about the idea?
 - 2 Use the idea as a jumping off point for better idea.
 - 3 Find what’s missing from the idea that would make it work.
 - 4 Combine ideas, even those that don’t seem to fit together at first.

4 **Assess and evaluate your ideas.** *What are the pros and cons of your solutions?*

True genius resides in the capacity for evaluation of uncertain, hazardous, and conflicting information.

Winston Churchill

- A Step 4 is when we look for flaws, ask critical questions, offer critiques.
 - 1 Look for flaws at this stage, and see if there's ways to overcome them if the idea has merit otherwise.
 - 2 Use your reason, your intuition, and your feelings to assess each proposal.
 - 3 If a solution requires a major change, instead of implementing it fully, see if there's a way to pilot or test or prototype it to get "real world" experience in assessing the situation.

5 **Make up your mind.** *Which will you implement?*

A peacefulness follows any decision, even the wrong one.

Rita Mae Brown, author, activist

When you come to a fork in the road, take it.

Yogi Berra, baseball legend

- A Decide on what you are going to do. Not deciding is a kind of decision you usually can't afford to make. Indecision for too long typically destroys energy and momentum for any project.
- B Include your reasoning. Include your feelings. Include your intuition.
 - 1 People with brain damage who can no longer feel emotions also lose their ability to decide, even if their reasoning is completely intact. Feelings are essential.
 - 2 Numerous studies have shown we often know much more than we realize, even when we don't know how we came to our conclusions.

& **Implement.** *How can I minimize risk while maximizing success?*

The only sure way to avoid making mistakes is to have no new ideas.

Albert Einstein

- A Only by implementing will we make progress, even if that means learning we've made a mistake.
 - 1. Remember that mistakes are part of the creative process—even (maybe especially) for the most inventive minds.
- B Don't forget about piloting and prototyping to minimize risk if you are making a major decision.
- C Remember the 5 steps can be used again during implementation if questions, problems, or new opportunities arise.