

CREATIVE PROBLEM SOLVING

21st CENTURY



CLARIFY THE PROBLEM
GENERATE IDEAS
DEVELOP SOLUTIONS
PLAN FOR ACTION



USE THE WORKSHEETS IN THIS BOOKLET TO HELP GUIDE YOU THROUGH THE CREATIVE PROBLEM-SOLVING PROCESS.

If you need a little coaching or want to review one of the stages of the CPS process, go to <https://rogerfirestien.com/online-course/>

That's where you will find videos on the following:

| Video | Topic |
|-------|--|
| 5 | Identify your goal/wish/challenge |
| 6 | Gather Data |
| 7 | Clarify the Problem – Creative Questions |
| 8 | Why? What's stopping me? |
| 9 | Selecting the Best Problem |
| 10 | Generate Ideas |
| 11 | Brainwriting |
| 12 | Selecting the Best Ideas |
| 13 | Develop Solutions PPS |
| 14 | Generating Actions Steps |
| 15 | Create Your Action Plan |
| 16 | CPS: The Whole Process |



Identify Goal/Wish/Challenge

In order to help give you a direction for your Creative Problem Solving efforts, it is essential to have an idea of your goal or wish or challenge. Defer your judgment and answer the following questions.

What are some things you have done lately that you would like to do better?

What sorts of challenges might be on your mind?

What do you wish worked better?

Who has been on your mind lately?

Why has this individual/s been on your mind?

CLARIFY THE PROBLEM



What are some objectives that you would like to meet?

Now scan your life. What sort of opportunities might be on your mind?

Imagine yourself ahead in times one year from today. What are some goals, some dreams, some visions you would like to accomplish or begin working on in the next year?

You have just been given a magic wand, and any wish in relation to any aspects of your life can come true. What might those ideal goals or wishes for your life be?

Now, let's select a goal/wish/challenge to work on.

1. Place a check mark next to all of the items that you have some ownership or decision-making authority.
2. Then place a check mark next to all of the items that you are motivated to do something (i.e., deal with in the next three months).
3. Last, check the items that require some imaginative thinking to accomplish.
4. Select one item that has three check marks next to it.
5. This is a Goal/Wish/Challenge that is appropriate for Creative Problem Solving.

CLARIFY THE PROBLEM



Gather Data

Write the Goal/Wish/Challenge that you want to make happen.
Use the phrase: “It would be great if...” or “I wish...”

To **Gather Data** about your **Goal/Wish/Challenge** write down your answers to the questions below. These questions are designed to give you a **clear picture of the situation surrounding your Goal/Wish/Challenge**. Write down a response to the question even if you think the response is obvious. By writing down those obvious responses, you free up your mind to generate more information about your situation.

1. What is a brief history of your situation?

2. Who is involved?

3. Why is this a concern for you?

4. How might this be an opportunity for you?

5. What have you already thought of or tried?

6. What are your gut feelings about this situation?

7. How are your feelings affecting your behavior?

8. When does this situation seem to occur?

9. What might be your ideal outcome or your ideal goal for dealing with this situation?

Review the information you just wrote about your goal/wish/challenge. Mark the key data that reveals a new insight into the situation or that is important for you to consider throughout the remainder of the CPS process.

CLARIFY THE PROBLEM



Clarify the Problem

Generate many creative questions or problem restatements about your goal/wish/challenge. Phrase your questions beginning with: "How to...? H2...?" "How might...HM...?" "In what ways might...IWWM...?" "What might be all the ways...WMBATW?" If you get stuck, try turning the key data you identified at the end of the Gather Data step of the process into creative questions.

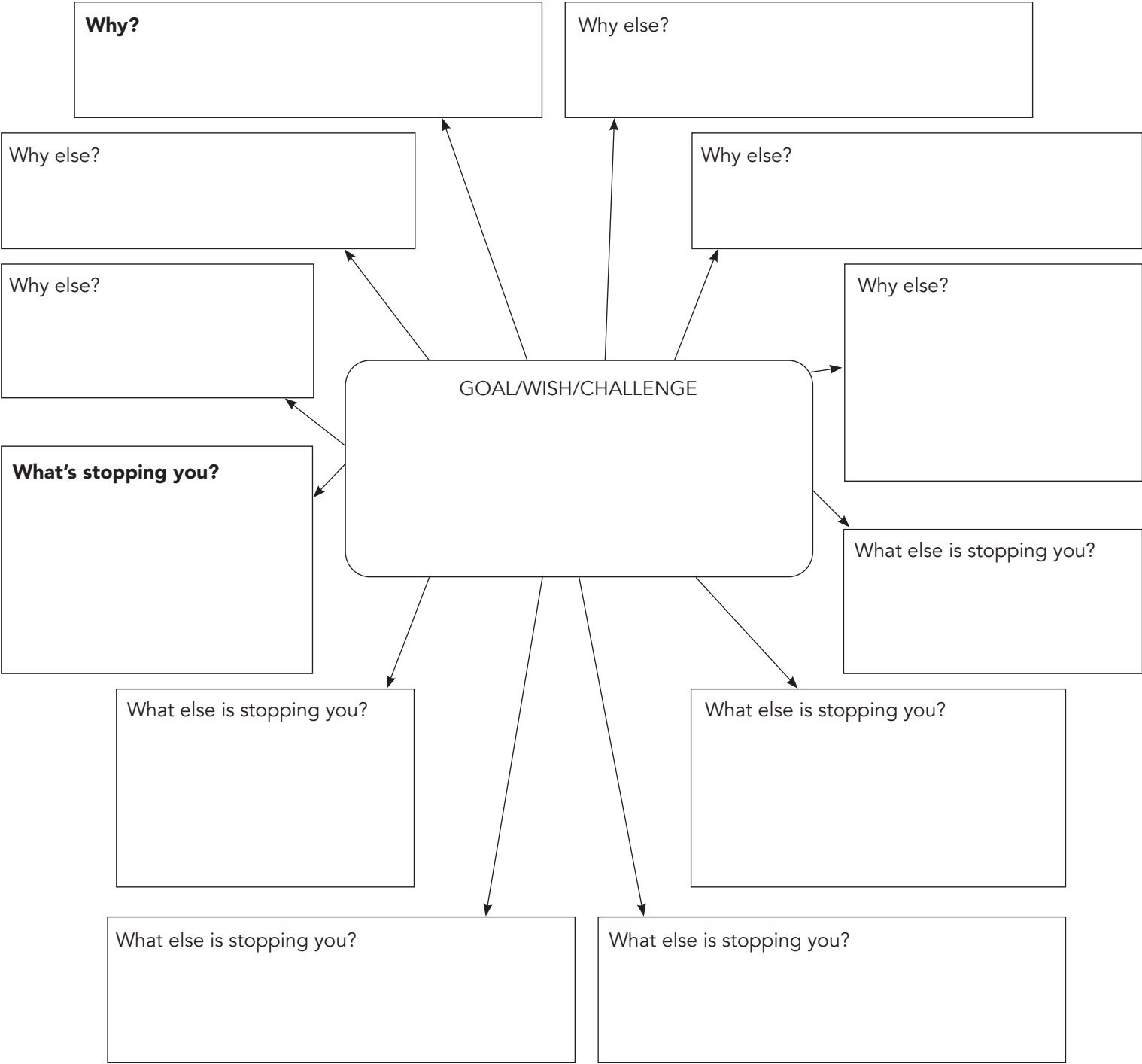
| | | | | |
|----------------|----------------|------------------|--------------------|-----------------|
| 1 H2... | 2 HM... | 3 IWWM... | 4 WMBATW... | 5 HMI... |
| 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 |
| 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 |
| 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 |
| 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 |
| 31 | 32 | 33 | 34 | 35 |
| 36 | 37 | 38 | 39 | 40 |



Why? What's Stopping Me?

Remember to use Creative Questions:

How to... How might... What might... In what ways might... What might be all the...



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This is the Highlighting technique that we did in the video. However, in the video we used Post-its®. Here is a way to do highlighting when you are not using Post-its®.

Select the most promising and intriguing creative questions to consider. Look through your list of “hits.” Cluster the “hits” that relate to each other. List the numbers of the hits that make up your cluster below.

CLUSTER 1 _____
CLUSTER 2 _____
CLUSTER 3 _____
CLUSTER 4 _____

Look over your clusters. What does each one mean to you?
In other words, what does each cluster represent?

List below what each cluster represents to you as a problem statement beginning with the statement starters, “How to...? H2...” “ How might I...? HMI...?” “In what ways might I...? IWWMI...? or “What might be all the... WMBAT...?”

CLUSTER 1 REPRESENTS: (IWWMI: HMI: H2: WMBAT:)

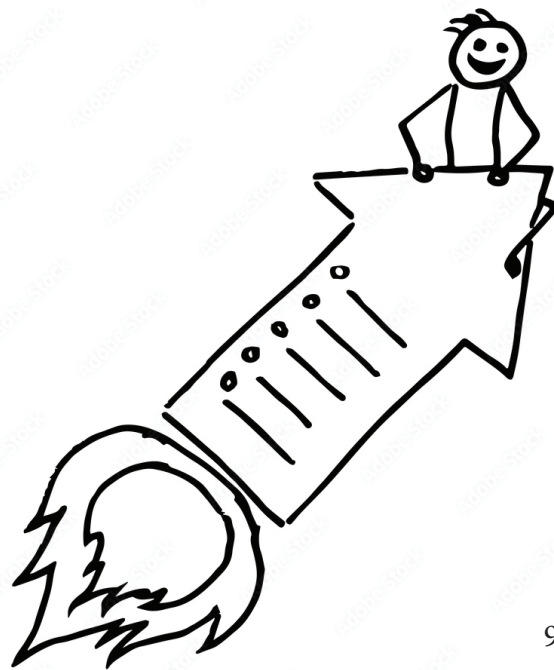
CLUSTER 2 REPRESENTS: (IWWMI: HMI: H2: WMBAT:)

CLUSTER 3 REPRESENTS: (IWWMI: HMI: H2: WMBAT:)

CLUSTER 4 REPRESENTS: (IWWMI: HMI: H2: WMBAT:)

Select the cluster that stands “head and shoulders” above the others, or synthesize the essence of several clusters together to create a creative question that best identifies the challenge you want to work on now. Write it below.

IWWMI: HMI: H2: WMBAT:





Generate Ideas

Start here when you have the best definition of your problem or a specific creative question. The best way to create a breakthrough is generate lots of ideas. Write your creative question or problem statement below beginning with the words, “How to... H2...?” or “In what ways might...IWWMI...” or “How might... HM...?” or “What might be all the....” “WMBAT...?”

CREATIVE QUESTION: _____
Generate at least 40 ideas. Use more paper if necessary.

| | | | | |
|----|----|----|----|----|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 |
| 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 |
| 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 |
| 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 |
| 31 | 32 | 33 | 34 | 35 |
| 36 | 37 | 38 | 39 | 40 |

1. Select the most promising and intriguing idea(s) to pursue.
2. Look through your list of ideas and mark your “hits.”
3. Cluster the “hits” that relate to each other.
4. List the numbers of the hits that make up your cluster below.

| | |
|------------------|------------------|
| CLUSTER 1 | CLUSTER 2 |
| CLUSTER 3 | CLUSTER 4 |

Look over your clusters. What does each one mean to you?
 In other words, what does each cluster represent?
 List below what each cluster represents to you as an action. USE A VERB.

| | |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| CLUSTER 1 REPRESENTS | CLUSTER 2 REPRESENTS |
| CLUSTER 3 REPRESENTS | CLUSTER 4 REPRESENTS |



Pluses, Potentials, Concerns – Overcome Concerns (PPCo)

Review your clusters of ideas and blend them into a “story.” Imagine what your solution would look like when it is implemented. Create a picture with rich details in your mind.

Begin your story with the phrase, “What I see myself (us) doing is...” This is your idea phrase.

What I see myself (us) doing is:

List at least **three pluses or specific strengths** of your idea phrase.
What is good about your idea right now?

1.

2.

3.

List three **potentials, opportunities, speculations, spin-offs or possible future gains**.
What might be the result if you were to implement your idea?
Use the phrase, “It might,” to list your potentials.

1. It might...

2. It might...

3. It might...

Finally, list the **concerns** you have about your idea.
Be sure to phrase each concern as a question that will allow you to overcome each one and move forward.
Begin your concerns with “How to...”

- How to...

- How to...

- How to...



Review your concerns. Decide which one is the most important to you.

Generate at least 12 ways to overcome that concern.

Once you have enough ideas to overcome your most important concern, go to your next most important concern and generate ways to overcome that concern.

Do this until all of your concerns have been overcome.

Issue 1. How to...

Ideas for overcoming concern one:

- | | |
|----------|-----------|
| 1. _____ | 7. _____ |
| 2. _____ | 8. _____ |
| 3. _____ | 9. _____ |
| 4. _____ | 10. _____ |
| 5. _____ | 11. _____ |
| 6. _____ | 12. _____ |

Issue 1. How to...

Ideas for overcoming concern two:

- | | |
|----------|-----------|
| 1. _____ | 7. _____ |
| 2. _____ | 8. _____ |
| 3. _____ | 9. _____ |
| 4. _____ | 10. _____ |
| 5. _____ | 11. _____ |
| 6. _____ | 12. _____ |

Issue 1. How to...

Ideas for overcoming concern three:

- | | |
|----------|-----------|
| 1. _____ | 7. _____ |
| 2. _____ | 8. _____ |
| 3. _____ | 9. _____ |
| 4. _____ | 10. _____ |
| 5. _____ | 11. _____ |
| 6. _____ | 12. _____ |

Now review the information that you wrote for Pluses, Potentials and Concerns on the previous page, and especially the ideas that you generated for overcoming your concerns. Re-write your concern on the next page beginning with the phrase, **“In order to...”**

Then select the best ideas to over your concerns and place them below the phrase, **“I will...”**



Strengthening Your Solution
Pluses, Potentials, Concerns – Overcome Concerns (PPCo)

In order to: _____

I will: _____

In order to: _____

I will: _____

In order to: _____

I will: _____



**“What if we don’t change at all ...
and something magical just happens.”**

Plan for Action



Review your Pluses, Potentials, Concerns and the ideas you generated to overcome your concerns.

*Now **generate at least 16 action steps** that will detail everything that might need to happen in order to bring your solution to reality. If you get stuck or begin to slow down, ask yourself the following questions to stimulate more action steps.*

1. What might you do to make your solution easy to understand?
2. What might you do to demonstrate the advantages of your solution?
3. What might you do to you gain acceptance of your solution?
4. What special places or locations might you use to implement your solution?
5. What are some places or locations to avoid?
6. What special times might you use to implement your solution?
7. What might be all of the things that might assist you when implementing your solution?
8. What might be all of the things that might resist you when implementing your solution?
What might be all the ways to overcome the resistance to your solution?
9. What additional resources might help you to implement your idea (e.g., individuals, groups, materials, money)?
10. How might you pretest your solution?
11. What first steps might you take to put your solution into action?

1. _____

9. _____

2. _____

10. _____

3. _____

11. _____

4. _____

12. _____

5. _____

13. _____

6. _____

14. _____

7. _____

15. _____

8. _____

16. _____

FORM A SPECIFIC PLAN OF ACTION

When you have generated all of the steps that might be taken to bring your solution to reality, select the ones that you need to accomplish and then put them into the following format so that you know:

- What is the specific action step that is going to take place (be as specific as you can)
- Who is going to do this action step?
- When will this action step be completed?
- Who will check to make sure it is done (to provide support; also, sometimes it helps to check on the person who will do the action step, to make sure it isn't forgotten) Or, to whom do you need to report completion.

Be sure to make one of your first steps something you can accomplish within the next twenty-four hours. Momentum is essential in the creative process!

Plan of Action

| ACTION What is going to be done? | Who will do it? | By when? DATE | Report completion to: Check or Support |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------|------------------|---|
| SHORT TERM ACTIONS | | | |
| DATES From: To: | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| INTERMEDIATE ACTIONS | | | |
| DATES From: To: | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| LONG-TERM ACTIONS | | | |
| DATES From: To: | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
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| | | | |

Notes

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

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