

# Think Beyond The Ordinary<sup>1</sup>

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Organizations are made up of people who collaborate to serve customers. One of the most important attributes of people in a collaborative group is a *problem-solving mindset*. They ask “How do we fix this?” when faced with a problem. True collaborators don’t greet problems with fault-finding, blaming, and finger-pointing.

When people work from a problem-solving mindset to solve problems or overcome barriers, they brainstorm in search of solutions. They think bigger. They think beyond the scope of what they normally might do. When you look beyond your normal behaviors, you are more likely to come up with solutions that will really make a difference!

For many people, it means changing the way they look at things. Comfortable with life-long habits, it’s easy for them to slip complacently into daily routines. It’s very difficult for them to change those habits. When it comes to any kind of change, they get lazy. They make no extra effort. Problems become obstacles instead of opportunities to learn.

Looking at problems as opportunities to learn instead of obstacles is an essential attitude of people working collaboratively in any organization. *Everyone* benefits when problems are solved, when processes are made more efficient, when new ways of doing things make their jobs less stressful. Working together, people are capable of achieving soaring visions of excellence.



## Steps to Help You Stretch Beyond Yourself

So how do you break shopworn routines? How do you move beyond your level of comfort and open yourself up to new possibilities? How do you help others to do the same?

### Step One

***The first step is to commit yourself to being flexible and open to change.***



- ◆ It means you will consciously challenge the way you do things, instead of clinging to old habits simply because that’s the way you’ve always done it before.
- ◆ Consciously challenging means *really* consciously challenging. It means developing a habit of deliberately asking yourself, “Is there any way I can change the way I do this to make it easier, more efficient, and more effective, so I accomplish a higher level of excellence?”
- ◆ Constantly changing starts with being open to change—willing to consider other ways of doing things.

<sup>1</sup> From: [http://www.arniedahlke.com/120229\\_Think\\_Beyond\\_The\\_Ordinary.pdf](http://www.arniedahlke.com/120229_Think_Beyond_The_Ordinary.pdf).  
Take a moment to explore my previous Timely Tips at: <http://www.arniedahlke.com/timelytips.htm>

## Step Two

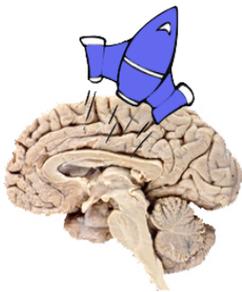
***The second step is to increase your appetite to learn.***



- ◆ Constantly be hungry to learn!
- ◆ Learning is food. It nourishes your mind, it facilitates your ability to develop your competence. According to brain researchers, it even grows your brain and prolongs your life.
- ◆ Learning is what I'm talking about when I say a problem is an opportunity, not an obstacle. Every problem we face brings the challenge of solving it. And every such challenge is a opportunity to learn something.
- ◆ The more you open yourself up to learning, the more capable you will be of stretching beyond yourself. The more you will be open to other perspectives.
- ◆ The more you learn, the better prepared you will be to innovate and move forward.

## Step Three

***The third step is to develop a vision of what you want to accomplish***



- ◆ Determine the level of excellence you want to achieve. Then let your imagination take off like a rocket!
- ◆ Leap into the future and create an ideal image of your vision—what it would be like—even if, at the moment, it seems unrealistic or beyond your reach.
- ◆ You stretch your mind by aiming high.
- ◆ Searching for ways to reach your vision of excellence, you will find yourself more open to solutions than you were before.

## Step Four

***The final step is to promote, encourage, and even inspire everyone around you to take the same steps.***



- ◆ Help your organization build a collaborative climate in which people see problems as opportunities instead of obstacles. Help them do this by demonstrating how well it works for you.
- ◆ And then, together, you can meld your personal visions into a collaborative vision.
- ◆ Together, you can use that collaborative vision to establish goals and processes for reaching those goals.

Big visions attract big people, ready to be challenged, ready to learn and grow and enhance their performance. People want to make a difference, but people need a reason to hope, a goal to work toward.

**Small Ideas Don't Bring Out Your Best.  
Big Ideas Do.**



**Think Beyond The Ordinary!**