Overcoming the Four Dilemmas of Problem Solving and Decision Making

Bruce Winner & Dennis Wade

A few things to ask yourself about problem solving in your workplace:

- Do your employees worry about or postpone dealing with workplace issues?

- Has instant access to the internet given your employees the means to solve the difficulties they encounter every day?

- Could a poor decision cost you clients, sales, or even damage your professional reputation?

If you are like most businesses or public agencies today, the answer is yes, though you may wonder why. The reason lies in the four dilemmas.

The Four Dilemmas of Problem Solving & Decision Making

1. No Consistent Method
Most people in the workplace don't have a consistent method for solving problems.

2. Lack of Tools
Many employees lack a set of tools to use as they go through the steps of problem solving and decision making.

3. Too Much Information
Having access to more information doesn't necessarily lead to better decisions; in fact it often results in worse decisions.

4. The myth of multitasking!
Multitasking may save time, but it lowers the quality of decision making.

The authors of this paper have years of experience training in the workplace, speaking with managers and supervisors, and keeping up with problem solving research findings. Research and experience point to these four dilemmas being the major stumbling blocks to wise decision making. These four obstacles prevent smart, organized, and well-intentioned people from becoming the superior problem solvers and decision makers they ought to be.

Can these dilemmas be overcome? Yes they can, and more easily than you might imagine. Read on.

Before the dilemmas and their solutions, let's start with a few examples from the workplace. These stories will help illustrate some common problem solving roadblocks.

Story # 1: Where Do We Start?

A client recently expressed frustration with all the time she felt was being wasted in meetings. The client said, "I get called into my project groups after they have met two and three times and they seem to have made little progress. When I ask someone to define the issue, I hear multiple explanations, but often there is little agreement from the group. In fact, it seems like many times my employees have leapt into the search for solutions as the first step in the process. There is a lot of arguing about alternatives, ideal solutions, and when to implement. I've been taught that when you get a new problem you should start the process with a problem definition. Am I wrong?"

Story # 2: Does the Stack Equal the Solution?

This story always unfolds something like this. "I asked two of my new, but quite capable, people, to attack a problem and they seemed eager to get going. They asked no questions of any substance, so I assumed they knew what they were doing. I didn't hear back from them for many days and then they asked to show me what they had. They put two stacks of paper in front of me and assured me they had documentation for all web and other sources. What they didn't give me was a solution. In fact they didn't even give me a summary of the process they had used. They told me what they thought about the problem, based on the information, but they didn't seem to understand that just getting all the information together was not the same as solving the problem. I wanted to see the steps, hear about alternatives, and then have them show me the solution and why they chose it. Am I expecting too much?"

If the behaviors depicted in these scenarios sound familiar, don't worry. You're about to receive some good news.

1) The four dilemmas can be overcome.

These dilemmas have time-tested solutions that are easily learned. With practice, anyone can improve their ability to solve problems and make better decisions.

2) The solutions can be implemented with little time or money.

In fact, this paper ends with a short section showing you how easily you can address these dilemmas in your workplace, and for surprisingly little investment of time or money.

But first, let's dive in to dilemma number one.

Dilemma # 1 – No Consistent Method

Most people in the workplace don't have a consistent method for solving problems.

A question for you:
What is happening in your workplace because employees don't employ a standard problem solving method?

Answers:

- **Problems are approached and solved slowly.** Like many workplaces where there is no culture of problem solving, people spend (waste) a lot of time trying to determine how to approach a problem, instead of spending time on the actual problem.

- **Employees procrastinate, worry needlessly, and expend energy on the wrong thing.** In other words, employees waste your precious resources.

Does this need to be the case? The short answer is "Of course not!"

SOLUTION to Dilemma # 1:
Find, learn, and then use a consistent problem solving method.
Could it be that easy? Yes, it is. Read on.

Problem Solving Methods

Problem solving is not new and it is not complicated. Problem solving methods have been developed, tested in the workplace, and proven to work time and time again. Some problem solving techniques are very simple. They run the gamut from trial and error and asking an expert, to the less-than-dependable flip of a coin. More reliable processes are logical, multi-step methods that have evolved over time to gain widespread acceptance. There are dozens of these accepted and time-tested problem solving methods.

A Simple Problem Solving Method

Let's examine a problem solving method in detail. This paper uses a simple four-step problem solving process. This method is the first step in a powerful approach, described by Dan Roam in his best-selling book of 2008, "Back of the Napkin." The process is short, memorable, and it reflects the essence of the more complex methods you will see, if you use the reference section at the end of this paper for further exploration. In fact, if everyone in your workplace learned and used this one simple technique, you would see dramatic improvements, including less time wasted, better decisions, and generally more satisfied employees. What is this mind blowing, organization altering model of problem solving?

It is called the LOOK, SEE, IMAGINE, AND SHOW method.

L O O K

Summary: Stop, "look," collect information and consider the problem before taking another step.

Roam says we should stop and take the time to really "look" at a problem. He advocates that we shouldn't start with looking for alternative solutions, or how much a solution will cost, or how long it will take to institute the solution. Instead he says our first action should be to simply stop, take a breath, and look at what this problem is all about. Roam says to ask yourself, "Have I looked at something like this before? Is the situation novel? What surrounds this problem?"

Now let's look at a real situation. Imagine that your boss shows up one morning and has a problem for you. When you hear the problem, should you simply listen and say, "OK, I'm on it?" Instead, might you consider taking the time to question the origin of the problem, the assumptions made, and the background?

If your boss says, "We have a morale problem. Get somebody in to boost this team's morale!" Should you view your problem as getting someone to build morale, or should you instead say, "OK, I'm happy to do that, but can you tell me a little more? How long has this been going on? Who is involved?"

What you are saying to your boss, by asking these probing or "looking" questions, is that you want to help her, but first you need to take a good long "look" at this situation. You are making it clear that you need to examine the background, the foreground, and the details. You are making a statement. The statement is, "I need this information to do a thorough job of problem solving."

S E E

Summary – Take time to "see" what is behind a problem. Probe for more information, patterns, assumptions, and root cause(s) of the issue.

Looking, though essential, is not the end of the problem solving model. In order to understand a problem, you need to "see" well beyond the surface. You will need to probe for significant details.

You should ask questions to uncover the root cause or causes of the problem. You ought to dig deep, using all the problem solving tools at your disposal.

Let's continue to examine the boss looking to improve team morale. You could say, "OK, Boss. I'm happy to tackle the "morale" issue, but what is it about the team's behavior that convinces you we have a morale problem? What have you seen? What have you heard? What proof do you have that the problems you have identified are caused by low morale? Boss, tell me more."

In order to really "see" a problem, you need to probe for the root cause. In this case, after probing, you discovered there was no morale problem. You discovered there were two relatively new team members who were never given a proper orientation to the team, never heard about the team goals, and were unaware of the deadlines they were expected to meet. Because of the behavior of two team members, the rest of the team was frustrated, confused, and angry.

IMAGINE

Summary – After discovering the cause of a problem, it is time to "imagine" alternative solutions, and eventually choose the best alternative.

After gathering the information needed to "see" what is behind a problem or the root cause(s), it is time to "imagine" what some of the alternative solutions to the problem might be. Using many tools and methods, the goal is to generate multiple and viable alternative solutions. In fact, by the end of this step, the goal is to be able to choose the best solution from the larger group of alternative solutions. If you looked, saw, and imagined well, you will have made a good decision.

As the example of the boss and the morale problem progresses, the following occurs. After hearing all the facts and generating a number of options, you decided that the best way to solve the 'morale' problem was to arrange an orientation session for the two new team members, let the rest of the team know this orientation took place, and then reassemble the team to reset goals and objectives with all team members. At this point, everyone should be back on board again and the morale problem quickly disappears.

SHOW

Summary – Now it is time to use the information uncovered to "show" the solution, the process, and why this solution will result in a positive outcome for the boss, the team, or the firm.

Finally, as in any workplace situation, you have to "show" someone the solution. This "showing" might take the form of a PowerPoint presentation, a written solution to management, or simply a conversation with a supervisor or a colleague. This final step, whether presentation or conversation, should include elements from the problem solving process and focus on the needs of the person to whom the presentation is being made.

In the ongoing morale situation, now is the time you return to your boss to explain what you've found. You explain the situation, a few of the alternative solutions you examined, and finally the solution you chose and why you chose it. This is a good time to provide the proof for the solution you have chosen. It would be appropriate to talk about the group dynamics and why morale seemed to be so low. You should give enough information to make a strong case for the solution you chose. This is the time to describe the results expected, or how group morale will improve once the solution has been instituted. This is when you describe what the group will be doing better in the future, and the impact this will have on the future performance of the department or division.

Summary - Why use a problem solving method?

Remember Dilemma #1: No Consistent Method.

Most workers don't have a consistent method for problem solving, but when employees do have a model it ensures thoroughness and a logical way to approach a problem. When a model is used, employees make fewer mistakes, waste less time, and avoid frustration or even failure.

With a problem solving method, your employees will have the ideal starting point to improve problem solving and decision making. They can always fine tune their chosen method, or add a more sophisticated one, but they will have taken the first step.

Steps to being a better problem solver:
    1) Learn a method
    2) Remember the method
    3) Practice it on problems big and small

That's it!

Dilemma # 2 – Lack of Tools

Many employees lack a set of tools to use as they go through the steps of problem solving and decision making.

What are these Tools?

Do your employees have the tools needed to:
    1) **Look:** look at a problem from a fresh perspective?
    2) **See**: examine a problem in detail and probe for the root causes?
    3) **Imagine**: generate original and viable alternatives?
    4) **Show:** make a convincing case as they show or try to "sell" the solution?

This is a dilemma, because many employees have few, if any, problem solving tools at their disposal.

But do these tools exist? Yes they do, and therein lies the solution to Dilemma #2.

The SOLUTION to Dilemma #2
Find some effective tools, learn how to use them, and go to work.

Tool # 1 – Learn how to ask powerful questions.

Questions are a tool? Yes they are, and they are one of the most powerful and flexible tools you can use. Questions can not only be used in a wide variety of situations, they can offer some of the highest returns for the lowest expenditure of effort.

What are some of these powerful questions and when should they be used?

When trying to define a problem:
- What is the real issue here?
- Why is this causing a difficulty?
- So what? *(What is going to result from this? Why should we worry about this?)*

When looking for root causes of a problem:
- When did this trouble start?
- Who was involved?
- What else do we know?

When seeking to generate alternative solutions:
- If this issue was resolved, what would that resolution look like? What would be happening that is not happening now?
- Have I ever seen a problem like this before? How was it solved?

Note: Some additional questions were introduced in the Look, See, Imagine, Show Model on pages 5 and 6. At some point, reread this section with a focus on the questions asked in the workplace 'morale' scenario.

Tool # 2 – Drill Down
The drill down tool is a relatively simple method for breaking down a complex problem into manageable parts. Drill down is a good tool to use as a first step in the problem solving process. Note: The first step in most problem solving models involves defining or clearly stating the problem.

Drill down is a method used to break a complex issue into parts that are easier to attack or understand. Drilling down helps you avoid the frustration of staring at a problem that looks unmanageable or confusing.

Are there other tools? Yes! Take a look at the ten tools in the sidebar. These tools are ones that the authors recommend and use in their problem solving and decision making training practice. If you are interested in learning more about these tools and how to use them, go the reference section of this paper under Problem Solving Tools.

Want some more good news? Though there is not enough space in this paper to explain these methods fully, you can find loads of information about these methods on the internet or via a few reliable hard copy resources.

> 1 Brainstorming
>
> 2 Fishbone Diagrams
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> 3 Plus/Minus/Interesting
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> 4 Force Field Analysis
>
> 5 SWOT Analysis
>
> 6 Mind Maps
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> 7 Lateral Thinking
>
> 8 Checklists
>
> 9 The Five Whys
>
> 10 The Thinking Map
> (See Dilemma # 3)

Dilemma # 3 – Too Much Information

Having access to more information doesn't necessarily lead to better decisions; in fact it often results in worse decisions.

You might be thinking, "This can't be true." Now that my employees have the internet, Google, social networking, and crowd-sourcing, don't they have all the information they need? Don't they have more than enough data to make fast and dependable decisions all the time?

Unfortunately, you can have too much information. Information that is easily and quickly accessible doesn't necessarily lead to rapid or correct decisions. In fact, there is good evidence from recent research, in the social and psychological sciences, that more information leads to poorer decision making. Some are even referring to the phenomena of constant, uninterrupted, information overload as the "twitterization" effect. Like twitter, more and more information is available all the time, but there is little or no time to sort and digest this information.

Example: A Columbia University study found that as people received more and more information about 401K plan options, participation in any plan fell. Participation went from 75% of the workforce opting into a plan when they were given information about two alternate plans, to only 61% opting in when there were 59 plan options presented. In addition, those who did choose a plan (when more options were offered) made poorer choices; they made worse decisions.

Study after study shows that when our working memory is overloaded, we make poorer decisions. The brain can hold roughly seven items in working memory (which is why seven digit phone numbers have survived). Research further shows that people give more credence to information just received, and tend to discount that which came earlier. This is known as the "recency trumps quality" effect. The modern employee, swamped with a flood of information, needs a way to cope. They need a means to assure that their decision making doesn't suffer, due to too much information.

The SOLUTION to Dilemma #3

Use critical thinking skills to minimize the information you wish to analyze, then critically evaluate what you have.

If an employee can gather loads of information about a topic, shouldn't all that information be analyzed? The answer is, *not necessarily.* A much sounder approach involves organizing and reducing the information before analysis. But how can this organization and reduction be accomplished?

The answer lies in critical thinking. What is critical thinking? Critical thinking is disciplined, rational, and stepwise analysis. In this paper, critical thinking will refer to a few reliable methods to reduce the amount of information being analyzed; it is designed to sort quality information from suspect (or less valuable) information. But how is this done?

Discard information from unreliable sources.
It sounds simple, but people often fail to consider the source of the information they gather or they judge all sources of information as equally valid.

How can we judge the reliability of information? Start by examining the source of the information. Is it from a source with a perceived 'agenda' or bias? Is the source one you are familiar with, or is this the first time you've ever seen or used it? Is the source from an academic source (presumably without an agenda) or from a vendor with an intent to sell you something? Do you see assumptions embedded in the information that don't seem valid or supported? All these questions can serve you as you judge the value of information sources.

Combine similar information
Reduce the amount of information by combining distinct items into similar groups of information. This simple technique will result in a more manageable, understandable, and more easily analyzed set of information.

Use "The Thinking Map"
A more in-depth critical thinking tool is promoted by Alec Fisher, author of "Critical Thinking: An Introduction."Fisher proposes a method called "the Thinking Map." It consists of a list of seven key questions one should ask in the process of weighing a written or oral argument.

The first set of questions in the process is designed to gain understanding of the argument (the Analysis or Understanding Phase). See the four questions below.

Analysis (Understanding)
1. What are the main positions, recommendations, or conclusions (may be stated or unstated)?
2. What are the reasons (data, evidence)?
3. What is assumed?
4. What needs to be clarified (terms, claims or arguments)?

Fischer advocates turning one's efforts towards evaluating the argument in order to decide whether you should be persuaded by them (the Evaluation or Deciding Phase). See the three questions below.

Evaluation (Deciding)
5. Are the reasons acceptable?
6. Does the reasoning support the conclusions?
7. What is your overall evaluation (in the light of steps 1 through 6)?

If you process your information source(s) through this disciplined method or map, you will have a piece of information that you not only understand, but that can be used as a source from which to make a reliable and sound decision.

Dilemma # 4 – The Myth of Multitasking.

Multitasking may save time, but it lowers the quality of our decision making.

Though the internet, cell phones, non-stop social media, and other distractions have put increasing pressure on your employees to multitask, it is evident that multitasking is not the best path to effective problem solving and decision making. Research from the world of cognitive neuroscience provides absolute evidence that we are incapable of simultaneously conducting two mental activities at once, without sacrificing the quality of the resulting decision(s).

Consider the evidence on multitasking
What most consider multitasking is not multitasking, but instead rapidly switching from one task to another. When we switch from one task to another, no matter how rapidly, the flow of our problem solving is interrupted and we lose information, recollection, and focus. The result is inefficiency and even danger. If you have a child, a partner, or spouse who insists on texting while driving, that person is in serious danger of losing their life in an accident. Though this message seems obvious, and is being reinforced by national media to highlight the danger, multitasking has a very seductive appeal to the modern plugged-in commuter. Many people find the lure of the cell phone impossible to resist, even though they know the danger of multitasking.

Given the reluctance of many to give up this potentially lethal habit of texting while driving, it is no surprise that employees are attracted to multitasking at their desks. In Winifred Gallagher's fascinating book, "RAPT: Attention and the Focused Life," the limitations of multitasking are made abundantly clear. She concludes that multitasking at work results in inefficiency, time wasted, and poorer results. This is no surprise, given what goes on in the brain during multitasking. Gallagher says, "Using fMRI (functional Magnetic Resonance Imaging), UCLA psychologists found that when you focus on a demanding task, your brain's hippocampus, which is important to memory, is in charge. However, if you try to work while distracted by instant messaging or the like, the striatum, which is involved in rote activity, takes over. As a result, even if you get the job done, your recollection of it will be more fragmented, less adaptable, and harder to retrieve than it would be if you had given it your undivided attention."

Given the significant evidence that multitasking has a negative effect on a person's decision making capabilities, what is the solution to the dilemma of multitasking?

The SOLUTION to Dilemma #4
When engaged with problem solving or decision making, focus on a single task.

Let's examine some of the practices recommended by experts to develop the attentiveness necessary to be accomplished problem solvers and decision makers.

Be attentive in short spans of time

It is understood that people are unable to be fully attentive all the time. Humans are simply not wired this way. Jonathan Schooler, a psychologist at the University of British Columbia, has studied reading and attention. He has discovered that even when we think we are paying attention, we are daydreaming approximately 15-20% of the time. But we can train our minds to be more attentive for short times. The practice of attentiveness or mindful engagement is like a muscle that can be exercised. Encourage your employees to focus for short periods of time, then take a few minutes to breath, stand up, take a walk around the office. Many offices provide a sitting and standing desk combination for employees. The act of switching from sitting to standing aids in attentiveness. These approaches are much more effective than forcing ourselves to sit and try to power through two to three hours of uninterrupted productivity.

And, there is an added bonus to boosting attentiveness. Being fully engaged in a task at work makes us happy. Really! There are many experts in the field of attentiveness who have documented a direct correlation between happiness and attentiveness (even in the workplace). In "Flow: The Psychology of Optimal Experience," Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi reports that people experience many of their most optimal experiences, feelings of accomplishment or "flow", while working. He finds that people need to be working on something somewhat challenging, be in a situation where one can succeed, and, perhaps most importantly, be able to concentrate on the task at hand. Though many people say they would like to spend less time working and more time on leisure activities, Csikszentmihalyi finds that when these basic criteria are met, people report feelings of flow or exhilaration at work much more often than they do during their leisure time.

Batch your emails

Would you like a very simple method to boost your attentiveness? Many attentiveness and productivity experts recommend the simple act of batching your response to emails. This batching, or delaying a response to emails until 30 - 60 minutes have passed, allows an employee to focus their attention on one thing at a time. While your emails are silently accumulating (turn off the sound), you can focus on the task at hand. At the end of 30-60 minutes, you can take a few minutes to actively engage in thoughtful responses to your email traffic. Batching emails prevents what many experience as an almost constant series of interruptions to the task at hand. Batching allows you to 'flow' more, or be more attentive and productive with whatever you are working on. Do you remember the effect mentioned in Dilemma #3? That effect was the 'recency trumps quality' effect, or the tendency to give more weight or importance to information just received, even if it was of less quality or importance. Batching emails will help you with this as well. Batching emails negates this effect, and gives you a better perspective of the actual importance or relevance of the information received.

Explore what a simple mindfulness practice can do for you

If the reader is so inclined, they should try a simple meditation course or yoga as a means to explore what mindfulness feels like or can do for them or their employees. These mindfulness or attentiveness practices are becoming increasingly mainstream in the US. Several business schools have incorporated mindfulness into their curricula, as a means to reduce stress and boost productivity. The US Military is teaching engagement or attentiveness practices, as well as

many of the other tools and techniques from the field of positive psychology, to build a more psychologically resilient military force. UCLA has a Mindful Awareness Research Center (MARC) dedicated to research and education of neuroscience and human behavior. In the last ten years, the research center at UCLA has shown mindfulness to increase attention and focus, as well as thicken the brain in areas in charge of decision making, emotional flexibility, and empathy. See references to these three programs in the reference section of this paper.

If you are able to train yourself to be more mindful in a class or a controlled environment, you can transfer this skill to the workplace. You can absolutely learn to be more attentive, be more mindful, and be more fully engaged in what you are doing at work. The benefits, as discussed before, are enormous. You can be more productive, become a better problem solver, make better decisions, and even be happier while making these productive changes in yourself. The authors predict that you will be hearing more about mindfulness and attentiveness as a workforce tool in the coming months and years.

Conclusion

You have seen the four dilemmas and their recommended solutions. If you don't see these problems or issues in your workplace, then you are a lucky individual and you need go no further.

If you do find any or all of these issues where you work, now you have a number of solutions designed to overcome these issues or dilemmas. Reread the solutions to the four dilemmas and choose which would have the most impact in your workplace.

Now all that is missing is a strategy for implementing these changes.

Implementation or Application

A promise was made early in the paper: to give you the means to implement these solutions in your workplace and to do so with little cost or time. Read on to see how this can be done.

How to easily and quickly implement these solutions:

1) Use staff meetings. Yes, for better or worse, we have staff meetings. Consider using them to inject good problem solving methods and tools into your workplace. Use these meetings to build a culture of problem solving and decision making. How? Use the dilemmas and solutions from pages 4-13 to spark a 10-15 minute discussion at your next staff meeting. Discuss a specific problem solving method or a tool. Ask a question of your employees. If we used this method or tool, and made better decisions, what would that do for us? Get your people to buy into the positive results, then teach the method, the tool, or the technique.

2) Use your in-house social media platform(s) to promote the discussion of problem solving, decision making, attentiveness, and multitasking.

3) Use your best problems solvers. Use your best problem solvers to teach others in staff meetings, in team projects, or in on-the-job training sessions. Consider learning about or incorporating SOJT (Structured On the Job Training) in your workplace, if you don't already. SOJT is a means to pair experienced people with inexperienced ones, using job aids and short time increments in a structured manner to achieve big results. SOJT would be a great way to encourage and support better problem solving in your organization.

4) Use your training department. A good training department deals in results! They can influence what people learn, apply after training, and ultimately make sure that training has an impact after the course is completed. Use your training department to get the problem solving and decision making results you want. If you have a good trainer on staff, show that trainer this article. A good trainer could use this article and the many references included to craft a problem solving course(s) that will get results.

5) Use a trusted contract training firm. Reach out to a trusted training firm. If you don't have a trusted training partner, see the authors' page. The authors would welcome the opportunity to show you the many custom problem solving and decision making solutions we currently use in our practices. We'd be happy to send you a catalog, arrange an informational session, or make a short presentation for your firm or agency. If geography poses a problem, we'd be happy to give you a short consult via phone or webinar.

Good luck on your path to creating better problem solvers and superior decision makers!

References

Below are some books, articles, websites, and other resources recommended by the authors, for improving Problem Solving and Decision Making in the Workplace.

Models or Methods – for Problem Solving and Decision Making

"Back of the Napkin," Dan Roam, 2008, Voted by Business Week and Fast Company to be the best innovation book of the year, 2008. It is a true original approach. Dan's second book is "The Napkin Revisited" (a 2-day workshop in a book) and recently published "Blah, Blah, Blah: What to do When Words Don't Work."

http://www.decisionmaking.org. Though not the most visually interesting website, this is packed with time-tested models and techniques from founder and President of Edmund Scientific Co. This is a no copyright site.

"The Thinker's Toolkit: 14 Powerful Techniques for Problem Solving," Jones, 1998.

Tools – for Problem Solving and Decision Making

"Asking the Right Questions," Neil Browne and Stuart Keeley, 2007.

"Decision Traps: The Ten Barriers to Brilliant Decision-Making and How to Overcome Them," Russo and Shoemaker, 1989.

www.mindtools.com. Search for the problem solving section. Excellent and wide range of tools, tips, techniques, exercises or purchase their e-book for $20. Great site, resources on the website, publications, and even a monthly fee-based option for continuing education.

Dealing with Information Overload and the Myth of Multitasking

"Critical Thinking: An Introduction", Alec Fisher, 2001.

"Flow: The Psychology of Optimal Experience," Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, 2008.

"RAPT: Attention and the Focused Life," Winifred Gallagher, 2009.

"Business Skills and Buddhist Mindfulness; Some Executive-Education Professors Teach Ways Students Can Calm Their Minds, Increase Focus," Wall Street Journal, April 3, 2012.

"Master Resilience Training in the U.S. Army," Reivich and Seligman, American Psychologist, January 2011.

"Fully Present: The Science, Art, and Practice of Mindfulness," Susan L. Smalley PhD and Diana Winston, 2010 (both authors are from MARC, the UCLA Mindful Awareness Research Center).

Other

"How We Decide," Jonah Lehrer, 2009 – A very engaging read on the many concepts surrounding behavioral psychology and economics, and how these affect our decision making.

About the Authors

Bruce Winner, MBA, Custom Training Manager, the Training Source and the Government Training Academy, Los Rios Community College District, Sacramento, CA.
Bruce has developed an extremely successful Problem Solving and Decision Making Training Program that has been used by dozens of California State Agencies and used to improve the problem solving skills of several thousand analysts in the past eight years. The application of these methods has positively changed the behavior of employees and had an impact on the agencies, as measured via quality, output, time, and cost in Return on Investment studies done for many of the programs.

Bruce is currently working on a white paper on Creative Decision Making and a book to be published in 2013 entitled "MORE: Satisfaction and Success in the Workplace and Beyond". He is the 2011 President of the Sacramento Chapter of the American Society of Training and Development. Bruce received his MBA from UC Davis and began his career in the Peace Corps in West Africa, where he was an oxen driver and agricultural extension agent. Bruce was the founder and president of the American Brewers Guild, the nation's first brewing school for the micro-brewing industry, before joining Los Rios. Bruce lives in Davis, California with his wife and an empty nest that has recently launched his three children into colleges and universities throughout California.

Dennis Wade, Principal, People Development Systems, PplDev, Folsom, CA.
Dennis Wade has been involved in private and public employee development for over 20 years. His experience in Human Resources Development, Information Technology, and Intel Corporation management prepared him to work with Robert Mondavi, Placer Sierra Bank, Affymetrix, CalPERS, UC Davis Health System, RagingWire, and other Northern California organizations in the areas of change management, team development, customer service, management/leadership, conflict management, and structured on-the-job training.

A graduate of the University of California, Davis, he also holds a Master's degree in Organization Development from the University of San Francisco. He is certified in Bob Mager's Criterion Referenced Instruction, William Bridges' Transitions, Jeffrey Nelson's Expert OJT, and Achieve Global's Leadership for Results. Dennis firmly believes that while training is not always the answer to improving performance, it is a major component. In order to be successful, training must be tied to specific organizational objectives or opportunities.

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