

# **A pragmatic strategy for catalyzing self-sustained progress**

by Peter Gluck

## **Essay Abstract**

The infinite interestingness of the world is actually limitless opportunity to make it a much better place for Humanity. Basic know-how elements are presented: realistic thinking and a complex, effective strategy based on original problem solving rules for achieving this (r)evolutionary task in the near future...

## **Author Bio**

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## **1. Introduction**

I have a unique life and professional experience, as everybody else. However, combining a strong ambition with the status of second class, oppressed citizen due to bad social origin in a communist dictatorship is an especially good high-school for learning about the non-ideality of the world and about the sub-optimality of the human existence. In the same time counter-stream thinking helps you to achieve decisive competitive advantages as understanding all the three antinomies of idealism, i.e. pragmatism (ability to solve real problems); materialism (to use effectively and efficiently minimalist resources) and realism (basing thinking on facts).

Therefore, when after my professional maturization- I wanted to know some essential things. I have been able to understand- in great line how our world is/works.

Two landmarks:

- a) the essence of human nature is discontent, our species is Homo discontentus;
- b) the essence of the Universe is that it is interesting above and beyond everything all.

Our world is the most interesting of all possible worlds.

After many years of thinking based on science – physics, chemistry, biology, anthropology, philosophy etc. about the essence of our world's basic functionality I have concluded:

“The World was built deliberately in order to satisfy the curiosity and the interests of the scientist, being infinitely complex and perfectible at all levels, thus opening him/her an unending area for thinking and action.”

That means the Universe seems to be ‘obsessed’ to be interesting and it will feed our insatiable curiosity forever. However, I was not able to gain deep understanding of my idea beyond the statement that the Universe is not good and not evil or it is both hostile and friendly. It does not care much for the human beings; therefore we have to learn how to cope with the open situation.

Then, in 2004 a great scientist has formulated the idea of interestingness in a bright way: *"I propose that our universe is the most interesting of all possible universes, and our fate as human beings is to make it so."* [1] By a friendly discussion on the Internet with Freeman Dyson, we could state that we have discovered this idea independently, I have used secular thinking while he has used his religious vision of the world. This exchange has reinforced my conviction that interestingness is fundamental and I have the task to investigate both its high level significance and applications in human existence.

Science and spirituality are converging in the idea that an endlessly interesting world is a huge creative opportunity for Humanity to build a great future.

The path to practical applications is a tortuous ‘obstacled’ way.

## **2. The paradox of perfect perfectibility.**

Perfection (ideal) even if we ignore that it cannot exist in the objective world is less interesting than imperfection (passive) and perfectibility (active and creative). Perfection exists only in art, outside of it e.g. in religion, politics, philosophy the idea of perfection is extremely dangerous because it justifies the idea of destruction of imperfect things and killing of less than perfect human beings.

Homo faber is the king of perfectibility and his game is technology. In 1986 I have created the so called Prum's Laws of technology:

1. Everything is perfectible.
2. If something is not improved, it decays

Yves-Henri Prum was a character created by me as a counterpart of the pessimist author of the Murphy Laws (YHPRUM is MURPHY written backwards). Prum is the apostle of technological optimism.

However optimism refers strictly to perfectibility. Things are very far from being perfect, we are fighting for truths but we are sentenced to live in a world of incomplete and fragmented.

truths. Godel's famous incompleteness theorem in mathematics is just an abstract symptom of a fundamental natural law.

Science explains this by the deep complexity, dynamicity, non-linearity, vulnerability of reality- things are not what they seem.

Religion offers a powerful metaphor story for the fragmentation of Truth.

*"It was a tie; the heavenly vote was split right down the middle ~ two in favor, two against. At issue ~ "Should man be created?" the ministering angels formed parties: Love said, "Yes, let him be created, because he will dispense acts of love," while Truth argued, "No, let him not be created, for he is a complete fake." Righteousness countered, "Yes, let him be created, because he will do righteous deeds", and Peace demurred, "Let him not be created, for he is one mass of contention." The score was even: Love and Righteousness in favor; Truth and Peace against. What did the Lord do? He took Truth and hurled it to the ground, smashing it into thousands of jagged pieces. Thus He broke the tie. Now, two to one in favor, man was created. The ministering angels dared to ask the Master of the Universe "Why do You break Your emblem, Truth?", for indeed Truth was His seal and emblem. He answered, "Let truth spring up from the earth." (Psalm 85:11)) From then on truth was dispersed, splintered into fragments like a jigsaw puzzle. While a person might find a piece, it held little meaning until he joined with others who had painstakingly gained different pieces of the puzzle. Only then, slowly and deliberately, they could try to fit their pieces of Truth together. To make sense, some sense of things." [2]*

I have introduced the concept of Pareto Truths- approximately 80% of the truth we are working with are actually true in a proportion of maximum 80%. [3] This leads to much uncertainty but we have to cope with the situation.

### **3. Priority and predominance of the negative.**

In our present human societies dominated by positivism-at-any price memes it is counter stream and uphill to accept a fundamental aspect pf reality: NO is usually more powerful and more urgent than YES but this is an undeniable aspect of existence..

My satori has started with negative definitions as by these Romanian authors: "To be intelligent means to NOT mix (confuse) the points of view" (Mihail Ralea)

"It is not the answer that enlightens, but the question". (Eugène Ionesco)  
See this simplistic puzzle [5] for the value of negative (actually missing) information and read about negative discoveries in Daniel Boorstin's essay: "The Age of Negative Discovery" [5]

Ruth, the wife of Daniel Boorstin has created a wonderful metaphor/word-play to illustrate the power of the negative: "Gordian Knots."

I am aware that dominance and priority of the negative is an unpopular idea; it is difficult to accept that it is more important what you should not do than what you do, that in many situations to not err is better than do anything. But please think- a way becomes accessible when we first remove the obstacles, building of houses starts with digging a hole for foundation. Have you calculated how many times "No(t)" appears in the 10 Commandments? Are you aware of the vision of the Cosmos as three grains of sand in a huge Cathedral; NOThingness dominates space? I have written an ode in prose to the word No. [6]

Anyway, in everyday professional and personal actions we have to use both negative and positive definitions/statements combined as in my system of problem solving rules that has to be applied for building a better future. We have to learn how to convert the negative in positive up to transforming disasters in triumphs.

#### **4. The Rules of Real Life problem Solving**

You will find easily tens of problem solving approaches and rules, however this one has a special logical structure making it both uniquely effective and efficient; I have stated this very different cases.

##### **Motto:**

*"I think, I exist. I decide, I live. I solve the problems, I live with a purpose."*

1. There are **NO** isolated problems, they always come in dynamic bunches
2. There are **NO** final solutions for the really great problems, these have to be solved again and again.

3. **NOT** solving the problem, but defining it is the critical step.
4. **NOT** the unknown data, but those known and untrue are the greatest obstacle to the solution.
5. **NOT** what we know, but what we don't know is more important for solving the problem.
6. **NOT** the main desired positive effect, but those secondary negative and/or undesired effects decide in most cases if a solution is implemented.
7. **NOT** all problems have a complete, genuine solution.
8. **NOT** the solutions that seem perfect from the start, but those which are very perfectible are the best in many cases.
9. **NOT** the bright, shiny, spectacular solutions but those elaborated, worked out with difficulty and effort and patience are more valuable and have a larger area of applicability.
10. **NOT** the solutions that are logical and perfectly rational, but those that are adequate for the feelings of the potential users, even if they are illogical, have the greatest chances of fast implementation.
11. **NOT** the quality of the solution but the speed of its implementation is the decisive factor in many cases. It can be better to have a partial solution applied fast than a slower almost perfect solution.
12. **NOT** always long hours of hard work and great efforts, but (sometimes) relaxation and fun is the best way to obtain solutions for (awfully) difficult problems.
13. **NOT** our own problems, but the problems of other people are usually more boldly and creatively solved by us
14. **NOT** the solutions worked out by us, but those borrowed. bought or stolen from others are more easily accepted and implemented.
15. **NOT** the enhancement of human strengths but the limitation

of human weaknesses is more useful for efficient problem solving

16. **NOT** the very careful perfect planning, but the smart assuming of risks and firm decision taking are the practical keys to successful problem solving.

17. **NOT** always the existent, real problems, but many times the fictive, imaginary ones are the most difficult to be solved.

18. Do **NOT** accept the premises of the problem, change them as necessary and possible.

19. Do **NOT** stop at the first solution, seek for alternatives.

However, for the really advanced problem solvers, there is a **SUPER – RULE-** the most important of all;

20. **NOT** the wise application of these rules but the finding of the specific exceptions to these, is the real high art of problem solving.

The rules are inherently perfectible. Despite their broad applicability including the most wicked problems and their availability in 20 languages the rules are till not taught in schools and are far from the stage of epidemic dissemination. This results in Humanity terrorized by myriads of unsolved, painful problems of all kind. A collateral effect of this unfortunate delay: Humanity still has not determined its true relationship with Mother Nature.

## **5. Humanity adds to the solutions of Nature**

We, humans “hungry matter that thinks it is thinking”, we are both a product and a part of Nature, however a special one. In a simplistic view, Nature has only solutions, while we have always many times more problems than solutions. Unfortunately we cannot use the solutions offered by (Step)Mother Nature and have to create our own methods and solutions. Science investigates Nature at all its levels of interestingness. We have to learn how to convert the interesting in useful, i.e. making our lives better. Science reveals us how Nature works; however technology is both more less and more than just applied things. We have to create new things never found in Nature; for me Teflon was the first example. In order to steer the future, we have to control and change a lot technology is the realm where we can

act just now. What has to be the strategy of our global technological development? See please [7].

Technology was defined by Prof. Pierre Le Goff as:  
CONTROLLED PHENOMENA OF  
TRANSPORT, TRANSFER AND TRANSFORMATION OF  
MATTER, ENERGY AND INFORMATION  
THAT CREATES SOMETHING USEFUL FOR PEOPLE.

My duty here is to apply this smart and elegant taxonomy to build a sketch of the three core technologies;

- for information we have witnessed an amazingly successful fast development, transport and transfer of information is grosso-modo solved, therefore the main task is now both psychological and technological-ascending and ennobling transformation on the DIKWP (data-information-knowledge-wisdom- prediction) scale

- for energy the things go much slower and a separate discussion in an other essay is needed to explain the strategy. It happens that just now it is the critical time of “now or never” or perhaps “now or not in my lifetime” for a very promising new source of energy based on metal-hydrogen interaction [8.9] derived in part from what once was called erroneously “cold fusion.”

- for matter nanotechnology generously generates series of technical miracles however there also are serious problems due to disappearing resources and to not disappearing ubiquitous pollution.

This Invincible Armada of problems has to be seen at its correct size, i.e. negligible if compared with the main non-technological task- to stop the three arch-enemies of the future: violence, greed and stupidity- the most harmful of all. [10]

Success breeds success- therefore we have to focus now on technology, in its most natural symbiosis with science.

I am an optimist; I don't say; “everything will go well”, I say “everything has to be improved” Eventually the exam] le of triumphant technologies will become contagious by stimulating, inspiring, catalyzing intellectual and social progress.

## **6. References**

**Note: All URL's verified on March 26, 2014.**

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[2] Old Wine, New Flasks: Reflection on Science and Jewish Tradition, Roald Hoffmann and Shira Leibovitz Schmidt, Henry Holt and Company, 1997

[3] <http://egooutpeters.blogspot.ro/search?q=pareto+truth>

[4] [http://www.mycoted.com/Four\\_Men\\_in\\_Hats](http://www.mycoted.com/Four_Men_in_Hats)

[5] [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Daniel\\_J.\\_Boorstin](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Daniel_J._Boorstin)

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