

Chapter 1 Problem and Task

1. "Problem" Solving through "Task" Realization

"Problems are for solving" and "Tasks are for realizing"

Although a few years ago it was stated in QC (Quality Control) books that "the obscurity of problem and task was an issue", these two words have a closely related meaning and generally have been used ambiguously without differentiating them.

That is, confusion occurred because sometimes instead of saying, "There is a problem", we say, "There is a task" or instead of "Solve a problem", we say, "Solve a task".

The relationship between the problem and task was not clarified.

Then, what is the difference between problem and task and what kind of interrelationships are there?

In order to clarify this ambiguous relationship between problem and task, first, the two words must be arranged into a purpose and means relationship and define their significance and contents.

By doing so, the positioning of these two confused words can be clarified.

Thus, it can be concluded that "problems are for solving" and "Tasks are for realization".

Why I can clearly assert this is because with the PMD (Purpose Measure Diagram) described in detail in Chapter 3, this question can be solved.

Let us use the PMD and see the relationship of the problem and task.

Using the PMD, check the relationship of task and problem

As can be understood from the above diagram, by attaching the same verb "solve" to "problem" and "task", the relationship (Purpose Measure Diagram) of the two words are seen with A and B.

To confirm which is the purpose and which is the means,

(1) Repetitively, compare and read A and B from the top to bottom "In order to do A, do B." and see which sounds natural.

And then check the relationship.

Next,

(2) From the bottom to the top direction, repetitively say to yourself, "First do B, then A" and see if a connection can be made and if a relationship can be confirmed.

The result is, A is more naturally related to purpose and means.

In addition, by bringing the relationship a little closer to a purpose and means arrangement, C is formed.

And, when trying to add the expression "Clarify the task" while looking at C, D is formed and the task and problem relationship becomes clear.

If such a relationship becomes clear, the following can be said.

(1) After the task is made clear, the problem of realizing it comes about.

In other words, if there is no task to realize to begin with, then no problem arises.

(2) If it is known among the parties concerned what is going to be done and if the task is implicitly understood by

all, then it is possible to directly enter the problem solving.

However, this is a social science, especially in the world of management, and so it does not apply to the study of clarifying mechanisms in nature.

For instance, if we look at "solve a problem" in mathematics, we can see that there is a common recognition of the task because the relationship of laws of nature which already exist may be expressed using a mathematical formula. Thus, by immediately entering "solve a problem" no issues arise.

- (3) However, in either case, if the parties concerned have not organized the relationship of purpose and means according to the task, there will be a difference in how the problem is grasped and its contents. And so, this is why sometimes effort is made to solve a meaningless problem.

This is solved by "problem solving" through "task realization".

Conventionally, the scientific method is used to solve problems. This is where the problem is analyzed in detail and the cause is removed to create a solution.

In other words, the act of finding the cause to the problem will be like trying to hit the mole in the Whac-a-Mole game.

I will not go as far as to say that I completely deny this kind of method.

However, even if the problem is removed, others will continually rise in its place.

Moreover, if people are involved, the cause will point to the inadequacies of certain individuals, causing them to be hurt.

In a management organization where problem solving is done using only analytical methods which are for studying natural mechanisms, in most cases the organization will fall into the Whac-a-Mole situation when problems arise, and problems are not solved.

Then how can one escape such a trap when trying to solve problems?

I think you have already guessed that the answer lies in the diagram showing the problem and task relationship.

That is, one only needs to understand that problem solving is only one of the necessary conditions for realizing the task.

Incidentally, when problem solving becomes one of the conditions for realizing the task, what happens?

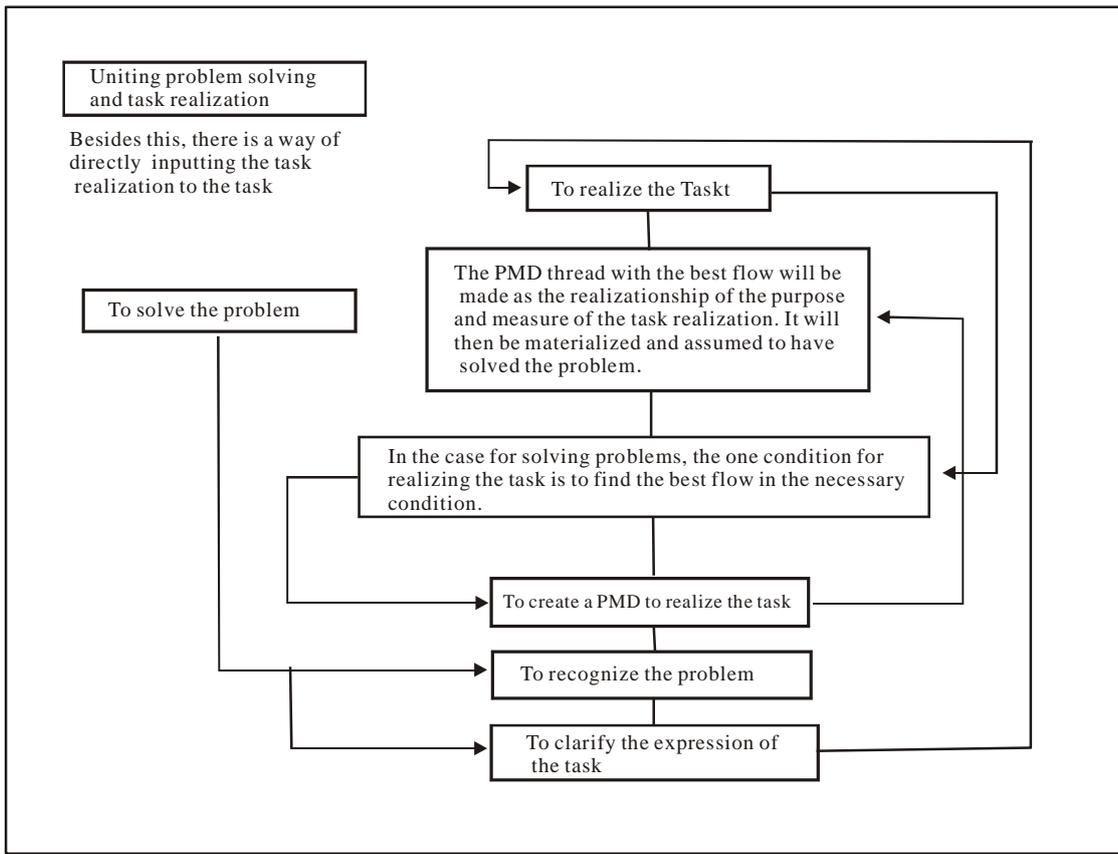
Diagram 1-1 indicates that relationship.

As can be seen from the diagram, problem solving is integrated into the task realization and so the solution will be found if the task is realized.

Moreover, by changing the line of questioning when a problem arises, a negative type of problem can be converted into a positive one.

I will expand on this on the next page.

Fig. 1-1 "Problem solving" can be solved through "Task realization"



Therefore, the uniting of the problem solving and task realization can be done.

- ① Start to solve the problem.
- ② When there is a problem, first return to the task. Then, return to the task of what you are trying to accomplish. That is,
- ③ Here, the original problem is made to be one of the necessary conditions for 'realizing the task'.
- ④ As we have now returned to the task, by viewing the whole from the perspective of 'realizing the task',
- ⑤ We stand in the perspective of 'finding clues for the easiest path leading to the necessary conditions for realizing the task by first making the solution to the problem as one of the conditions for task realization and then comparing it to the other conditions present.'
- ⑥ In order to do this, a PMD is created from the task for the task realization.
- ⑦ By doing so, it is possible to find a path to realizing the task without having to go through solving the initial problem, which is now only one of the necessary conditions for realizing the task. Of course this is strictly in certain cases that one could realize the task without having to solve the initial problem, and in other cases it becomes inevitable.

I'm sure that many of you have already experienced something similar to this. This explains the phenomenon of the disappearing problem when viewing from the perspective of the task.

2. Questions oriented for "Problem solving" and questions for "Task realization"

Questions directed to the past and questions directed to the future

About 30 years ago when the department stores were thriving in Japan, the board of directors of Mitsukoshi Department Store passed a motion to dismiss Mr. Okada, the president at that time.

In a plot within the company to overthrow the president, it was grandly reported by the media that president Okada had opposed the motion and the scene where he kept shouting, "Why?" left a lasting impression.

As can be understood from this, the question "Why?" is mostly used negatively.

That is, it is usually used to question someone as to what bad thing was committed and it mostly points to the past.

Then, what kind of questioning is there in order to point to the future?

The answer is, "In order to do what, how to go about doing it?".

As can be understood from Diagram 1-2, the question, "Why?" deals with past events and "In order to do what, how to go about doing it?" is directed to the future.

Therefore, if we allow both questions to coexist, as indicated in Diagram 1-2, the direction of the questioning becomes reversed and one of them must be denied. This would also make attaining a suitable answer difficult.

The correct line of questioning is necessary and indispensable for "problem solving", but even more so for "task realization".

Here, let us organize the method of asking the correct question.

"Why" Question: about the past, or goes back to a certain known knowledge.

Therefore, if the question "Why" is used when thinking of something unprecedented, the thought processes come to a stop.

"In order to do what, how to go about doing it?" Question: directed to the future and creates wisdom with respect to the future.

Similar to this, there is the question, "in order to do what, how to go about doing it?".

What one needs to be careful here is that the question, "For what purpose?" sometimes causes one to deal with problems quickly and carelessly. An example of this may be during pre-war times people may answer, "for the country" or "for the king".

How should questions be stated to draw correct knowledge and wisdom?

I believe it is clear now that to draw out the required knowledge, the line of questioning must be suitable.

Then, as to how the question should be asked, if stated more specifically, it will be as follows.

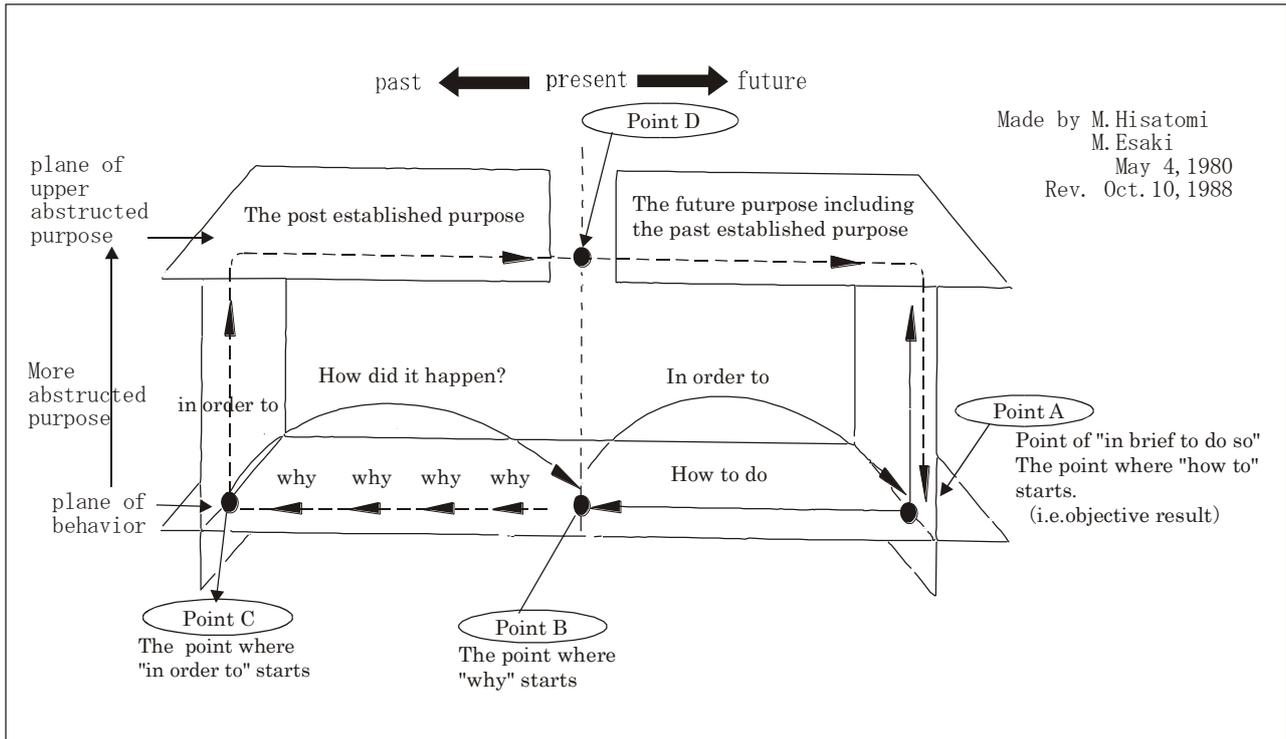
To grasp the correct knowledge of the past: The only way is to grasp the correct cause-effect relationship or the knowledge of the mechanism and component of things.

The line of questioning will be: "How did that come about?" or "How is it that that is happening?"

Let us think why it is not possible to draw correct knowledge by asking, "Why?"

If I get right to the answer, it is because the person answering the question will discontinue the reasoning when it is convenient for them.

Fig. 1-2 Exact usage of the questions "In order to do what, how to do it" and "Why"



(note)

While the "In order to do what, how to go about doing it?" question' makes the focal point of the question directly toward the future from the present point B, the "Why?" question makes the focal point of the question face the past towards point C directly from point B, making it abstract, forces one to recognize it, becomes burdened by it, reflects upon it and passes it through to point D. In the end, it reaches point A, where one recalls what the purpose was, and from point A it moves toward point B while pondering how it should be handled and returns to point B.

For instance, assume a child asks, "Why is it possible for a goldfish to live under water?"

Then, parents who do not know the answer may say, "Because God made them that way," and cut off the explanation.

On the other hand, if we change the question to "How do goldfish live under water?" what will the outcome be?

The parents must answer with a correct cause-effect relationship. That is, they will need to specifically answer, "Goldfish can live in water because there is air in the water and the fish use their gills to breathe that air".

In order to draw out the correct cause-effect relationship, one must ask, "How to do it?"

Then, it deals with things in the future. That is, in order to grasp the purpose and means relationship that has consistency, the question should be phrased: "In order to do what, how to do it?" From this, wisdom is created for the future, that is, the value direction is clarified and the purpose and means relationship can be grasped.

The question, "Why?" arrives at a dead end.

In your experience, have you ever shrunk back from being asked persistently, "Why did you do such a thing?", "Why?", "Why?" by seniors students, teachers or superiors?

This kind of questioning allows one to take a dominant stance and corner the listener. It cannot be helped if others believe that the asker has some ulterior motives.

If someone asks, "Why?" in regard to some unchangeable event and corners that individual, there is no way of evading that question.

However, if a correct purpose and means relationship or knowledge of the cause-effect relationship can be grasped, an explanation starting with "Because..." can easily solve this issue.

"Because" in regard to "Why?"

On the other hand, in government organizations, there are times according to the fiscal law that one has to answer questions that begin with "Why?".

As to the question "Why?" in such a case as this, because it was asked after the correct relationship of the contents was grasped, by answering with "Because" suitable measures and budget acquisition approvals can be attained.

In the past, when I helped with the enactment and introduction of the emergency care system by helicopter and the paramedic system, I made the KEY WORD, "Save those that can be saved" and it became the starting point of this institutionalization.