A generic model of common sense applicable to problem solving or product development
Ideas as precursors to actions

Rolf Lövgren
Dept. of Innovation, Design and Product development (IDP)
Mälardalen University
Eskilstuna, Sweden.

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Paper for the course: Filosofiska tankar i lärarens vardag (feb-mars 2005)

Abstract

In this paper we have argued that common sense, documented in reflective proverbs and sayings, and the presumption of the wisdom extracted from the work of Jean-Paul Sartre and Martin Buber in five (5) basic assumptions, give useful qualitative tools for problem solving or product development processes.

As a practical example, the system group strategy, advocated by E. Roland Andersson & Carl Rollenhagen, gives a wise application of the five basic assumptions in innovative problem solving.

The five basic assumptions are:

A1: We have a choice in every unique situation present.
A2: We cannot foresee the hidden possibilities in the unique situation present.
A3: The interplay between I-You and I-It determines the outcome of the unique situation present. The more powerful the interplay the richer is the outcome.
A4: The potential power of the interaction I-You depends on my ability to invite the other person (You) to a dialog and that person's (Your) willingness to interact with me with the full strength of a human being - full of potential ideas and experiences.
A5: Ideas are the precursors to conscious actions.

Contents

A generic model of common sense applicable to problem solving or product development
Ideas as precursors to actions
Paper for the course: Filosofiska tankar i lärarens vardag (feb-mars 2005)

Introduction

The simple and general idea presented in this paper is that all human endeavours, e.g. problem solving or product development, are driven by interplay between ideas and actions. To start a resource demanding endeavour you must have an idea of what to get from it – you must have a goal or a purpose with your actions. This is the precursor to what will happen in practise namely trials – and errors! – in your attempts to reach the goals.

This paper will show that common sense knowledge documented from human history in proverbs and sayings are applicable ideas for implementing practical tools in a strategy to reach goals in general and in particular goals applied to product development processes.

Theory and basic assumptions

The notion of an animal which has a mind is exclusive to human beings. Human beings have the ability to reflect upon strategies, ways of reaching goals and thereby the freedom of choice. This freedom, albeit confined to situational constraints, to choose among alternative ways to reach a goal is advocated in an abundant way by the philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre [1-4] and his followers in the philosophy of existentialism. We can imagine alternative future scenarios from our standpoint in the present situation. We have a choice!

A1: Thus our first basic assumption for our discussion is that we have a choice.

The way we choose depends on what we think is best, from some point of view, and what is possible to accomplish depending on available resources – in essence people, tools and time. An important notion is that we do not comprehend, of obvious reasons (our senses are limited as well as our ability to process signals in our consciousness), all the inherent complexity of hidden circumstances and possibilities which are prevalent in the present situation we are facing.

A2: Thus the appreciation of hidden possibilities in the present unique situation and the nearby future is the second basic assumption to bear in mind when we seek solutions to problems - especially if we look for innovative solutions!

Another aspect of human endeavours is that I interact both with other human beings as well as with everything else in my world. Martin Buber [5] has put explicit emphasis on those relations by forming the dyads I-You and I-It respectively. You interact with me in a way I cannot foresee and it is You who actively can determine "the force of that interaction"! I as a human being am acted upon by an active force or agent –You - whenever we recognize each other. The relation I-You in every meeting with people starts an interaction the result of which we cannot foresee in every detail. Likewise I interact with everything else in my world which according to Buber is an I-It relation which is a more passive interaction, where I actively can influence how much information or knowledge I may extract. The I-It-relation is a relation between I and an object and Buber make us aware of that we can also treat our fellow human beings as objects too! Thus our relation to a fellow human being can be both an I-You-relation and an I-It-relation! Something to bear in mind in the following discussion.

A3: Thus awareness of the significance of our interaction with other human beings and the world around us is the third basic assumption for this discussion.

A generic model of common sense applicable to problem solving or product development
Ideas as precursors to actions
Paper for the course: Filosofiska tankar i lärarens vardag (feb-mars 2005)

A4: The forth assumption is the possibility that a relation to another human being can be either I-You, where I and You interact as human beings, or I-It, where You are an object to me. According to Buber it isYou, as an active agent, who invites me to a relation I-You.

How do we act consciously?

The basic assumption in this paper is that we can act consciously when we have embraced the situation at hand with intelligible thoughts occupied by words, symbols, sentences, assertions and conclusions following accepted rules of inference in our minds. Thus ideas, intelligible thoughts, of reachable goals and strategies, which we believe may lead to the goals are the precursors of the practical actions we pursue. When we do not consciously "think about" why we are doing certain actions we imitate what we already have learned or are ordered to do. Many actions in our daily life are just pursued out of habit, what we are used to do in similar situations. The quality and inherent diversity of possible actions opens up for the conscious mind, whereas the unconscious mind probably acts according to learned habits or pre-programmed behaviour or by external agents like a machine. In both cases unpredicted results may be the outcome, but the conscious mind will probably be much more able to reach the perceived goal. The living creature versus the robot. If we can foresee the coming sequence of actions the robot (optimized!) will probably do the better job. But if we have to adapt to unforeseen actions and circumstances the human being will, no doubt, be more successful.

A5: Thus the fifth basic assumption in this paper is that ideas, conscious thoughts, are the precursors to conscious actions.

To summarize our basic assumptions:

A1: We have a choice in every unique situation present.

A2: We cannot foresee the hidden possibilities in the unique situation present.

A3: The interplay between I-You and I-It determines the outcome of the unique situation present. The more powerful the interplay the richer is the outcome.

A4: The potential power of the interaction I-You depends on my ability to invite the other person (You) to a dialog and that person's (Your) willingness to interact with me with the full strength of a human being - full of potential ideas and experiences.

A5: Ideas are the precursors to conscious actions.

These are the basic assumptions that will guide us in the following discussion and application of common sense actions for human beings already summarized from human history in proverbs and sayings – conclusions of reflective ideas of human minds.

A generic problem story

Let us imagine the following generic problem:

A problem is posed to a group of people. A solution to the problem is the goal. We have restricted resources of people, tools and time. We are confined to pass certain gates in our

A generic model of common sense applicable to problem solving or product development
Ideas as precursors to actions
Paper for the course: Filosofiska tankar i lärarens vardag (feb-mars 2005)

journey to a solution. Let these gates, for the sake of argument; be defined by the following questions:

G1: Show us the problem solving team.
G2: Show us a strategy for the problem solving
G3: Show us the tools you are intending to use
G4: Show us plausible solutions
G5: Show us a solution to the problem

Intelligible answers to a gate question are accepted passwords to let us pass to next gate. The gate guards will examine the passwords with regard to their general wisdom – assembled through years of experience - and especially, where appropriate, to our five (5) basic assumptions in the previous section.

Of course a generic problem solving strategy only shows plausible ways to act. Explicit results are found using explicit problems and an actual problem solving process. The purpose of this paper is only to show the applicability of common sense ideas to the creation of practical tools for whatever the problem is.

Now, let us look into the library of human proverbs and sayings to find reasonable passwords to pass the gates of our imagined generic problem. The reference for proverbs used is [6].

Will it be possible? Let us give it a try!

Diggings from the library of human proverbs and sayings

Our first problem is to put up a problem solving team (G1). Answers or tools – proverbs and sayings - to find intelligible answers are numbered 1, 2, 3 etcetera. The gate guards comment on our answers and give us approval or not to pass the gate.

G1: Show us the problem solving team

Proverbs which may guide us in choosing the problem solving team may be:

1	A bad workman blames his tools
2	A chain is no stronger than its weakest link
3	A good beginning makes a good ending
4	A house divided against itself cannot stand
5	A lazy sheep thinks its wool heavy
6	A little help is worth a deal of pity
7	A living dog is better than a dead lion
8	A man is known by his friends
9	A trouble shared is a trouble halved
10	A wise man esteems every place to be his own country
11	Adversity makes men wise
12	All things are easy that are done willingly
13	Eagles do not breed doves
14	Empty vessels (barrels) make the most noise (sound)

A generic model of common sense applicable to problem solving or product development
Ideas as precursors to actions
Paper for the course: Filosofiska tankar i lärarens vardag (feb-mars 2005)

15	Every little helps
16	Every man does his own business best
17	Every man has his faults
18	Evil communications corrupt good manners
19	Experience is the best teacher
20	Experience is the father of wisdom, and memory the mother
21	Experience is the mother of wisdom (science/knowledge)
22	First try and then trust
23	Fools may invent fashions that wise men will wear
24	Fools rush in where angels fear to tread
25	Friends may meet, but mountains never greet
26	Good advice is beyond all price
27	Good company on the road is the shortest cut
28	Good hand, good hire
29	He gives twice who gives quickly
30	He that can stay, obtains
31	He that fears leaves let him not go into the wood
32	He that has not served knows not how to command
33	He that nothing questions, nothing learns
34	He that will conquer must fight
35	He who has an art has everywhere a part
36	Hunger is the teacher of the arts
37	It is easy to do what one's own self wills
38	It takes all sorts to make a world
39	Know thyself
40	Likeness causes liking
41	Make short the miles with talk and smiles
42	Many are called but few are chosen
43	Many hands make light work
44	No man is indispensible
45	No man is infallible
46	No man is wise at all times
47	Nothing is impossible to a willing mind
48	One rotten apple can spoil the whole barrel
49	One sheep follows another
50	The gunner to his linstock, and the steersman to the helm
51	The workman is known by his work
52	Union is strength
53	United we stand, divided we fall
54	When the will is ready the feet are light

A generic model of common sense applicable to problem solving or product development
Ideas as precursors to actions
Paper for the course: Filosofiska tankar i lärarens vardag (feb-mars 2005)

55	Where there is a will there is a way
56	Wisdom is an age
57	Wise men learn by other men's harm, fools by their own
58	Years know more than books
59	You must not expect old heads on young shoulders

Our answer to the gate question: Common sense wisdom documented in the proverbs above will guide us in choosing our problem solving team. We argue that the wisdom in the proverbs #1-#59 is a well of tools to a wise choice of team members. Let us give some examples.

E.g. it is important that the team can work together, so that the ability of every man is at hand. Thus, team members must be able to be friends to meet
  Friends may meet, but mountains never greet (#25) and
therefore be able to show likeness
  Likeness causes liking (#40) because
  Every man has his faults (#17) but
  Evil communications corrupt good manners (#18) and
start to disintegrate good team work.

In general team members should be wise because
  A wise man esteems every place to be his own country (#10) and, of course,
  Union is strength (#52) and
  Good company on the road is the shortest cut (#27 or #41, #43) or otherwise
  A house divided against itself cannot stand (#4 or #53).

Diversity in the team opens more possibilities. Thus,
  It takes all sorts to make a world (#37) and, of course,
  He who has an art has everywhere a part (#35) and
  The workman is known by his work (#51 or#16).
It is important to be aware of the fact that
  Empty vessels (barrels) make the most noise (sound) (#14) and
  One rotten apple can spoil the whole barrel (#48),
but also that hearsay may be a bad advicer, so
  First try and then trust (#22).

Generally we know that
  Where there is a will there is a way (#55 or #54, #47) so,
  A living dog is better than a dead lion (#7 or #44, #30).
Also important to know is that
  He gives twice who gives quickly (#29) and
  Wisdom is an age (#56).

In general
willingness Hunger is the teacher of the arts (#36) or
  It is easy to do what one's own self wills (#37),
curiosity He that nothing questions, nothing learns (#33) -,
courage He that fears leaves let him not go into the wood (#31) or

A generic model of common sense applicable to problem solving or product development
Ideas as precursors to actions
Paper for the course: Filosofiska tankar i lärarens vardag (feb-mars 2005)

He that will conquer must fight (#34) and
persistence   He that can stay, obtains (#30)
are important qualities of the team members chosen.

Gate guards comments:
Your arguments are compelling. We find no reason to stop your efforts at this first gate.
Please continue to next gate.

G2: Show us a strategy for the problem solving

Proverbs which may guide us in choosing a strategy for the problem solving may be:

1	(Learn to) take things as they come
2	A bad beginning may make a good ending
3	A chain is no stronger than its weakest link
4	A flow will have an ebb
5	A fool always rushes to the fore
6	A foul morning may turn to a fair day
7	Actions speak louder than words
8	After the work is done, repose is sweet
9	All is not lost that is delayed
10	All lay load on the willing horse
11	All roads lead to Rome
12	An oak is not felled at one stroke
13	Appetite comes with eating
14	Attack is the best form of defence
15	Better late than never
16	Better spare at brim than at bottom
17	Circumstances alter cases
18	Courtesy open all doors
19	Every beginning is hard
20	Every little helps
21	Experience is the best teacher
22	Experience is the father of wisdom, and memory the mother
23	Experience is the mother of wisdom (science/knowledge)
24	Experience must be bought
25	Experience without learning is better than learning without experience
26	Faith moves mountains
27	Festina lente (latin=Make haste slowly)
28	First come, first served
29	Four eyes see more than two
30	Give and take
31	Good advice is beyond all price

A generic model of common sense applicable to problem solving or product development
Ideas as precursors to actions
Paper for the course: Filosofiska tankar i lärarens vardag (feb-mars 2005)

32	Good things come to some when they are asleep
33	Good works take long in doing
34	He gives twice who gives quickly
35	He that does not sow does not reap
36	He who begins many things finishes but few
37	Hoist your sail when the wind is fair
38	Honesty is the best policy
39	Hope for the best (and prepare for the worst)
40	Idleness is the mother of poverty
41	If you do good, good will be done to you
42	If you play with fire you get burnt
43	If you run after two hares, you will catch neither
44	If your lose your time, you cannot get money or gain
45	Industry is fortune's right hand, and frugality her left
46	It is good fishing in troubled waters
47	It is good to work wisely lest a man be prevented
48	It is no use crying over spilt milk
49	It is one thing to promise and another to keep
50	It is the pace that kills
51	It is too late to call back yesterday
52	It is very hard to shave an egg
53	It you want peace, you must prepare for war
54	Laughter is the best medicine
55	Let begones be begones
56	Little by little, bit by bit
57	Little wit in the head makes much work for the feet
58	Lost time is never found again
59	Make hay while the sun shines
60	Make not your sail too big for the ballast
61	Many a little makes a mickle
62	Mills will not grind if you not give them water
63	Nature, time and patience are the three great physicians
64	Necessity is the mother of invention
65	New meats begets a new appetite
66	Never do things by halves
67	Never put off till tomorrow what you can do today
68	Never trouble trouble till trouble troubles you
69	No man can have two masters
70	No news is good news
71	No pains, no gains
72	No sweet without sweat

A generic model of common sense applicable to problem solving or product development
Ideas as precursors to actions
Paper for the course: Filosofiska tankar i lärarens vardag (feb-mars 2005)

73	Nothing stake, nothing draw
74	Nothing ventured, nothing gained
75	On a long journey, straw weighs
76	One beats the bush and another catches the bird
77	One cannot take true aim at things to high
78	One good forewit is worth two afterwits
79	One hand washes the other
80	One hour today is worth two tomorrow
81	One of these days is none of these days
82	Opportunity seldom knocks twice
83	Paper won't blush
84	Patience is a flower that grows not in everyone's garden
85	Patience overcomes all things
86	Piss not against the wind
87	Politeness cost nothing
88	Procrastination is the thief of time
89	Promise is debt
90	Rome was not built in a day
91	Seek and ye shall find
92	Seek mickle and get something. Seek little, and get nothing.
93	Sink or swim
94	Slow but sure wins the race
95	Speak and speed, ask and have
96	Strike while the iron is hot
97	Take things as they come (as you find them)
98	Take time while time is, for time will away
99	The best advice is found on the pillow
100	The cow that's first up, gets the first of the dew
101	The dog that trots about finds a bone
102	The early bird catches the worm
103	The eye of the master makes the cattle thrive
104	The first step is the hardest (all the difficulty)
105	The last mile is the longest
106	The mill cannot grind with the water that is past
107	The tide must be taken when it comes
108	The tide never goes out so far but it always comes in again
109	The unexpected always happens
110	The world goes on wheels
111	There is a first time for everything
112	There is a time an place for everything
113	There is no place like home

A generic model of common sense applicable to problem solving or product development
Ideas as precursors to actions
Paper for the course: Filosofiska tankar i lärarens vardag (feb-mars 2005)

114	There is no royal road to learning	
115	There is nothing permanent except change	
116	Things done well cannot be done quickly	
117	Think on the end before your begin	
118	This morning knows not this evening's happenings	
119	Thought is free	
120	Time and tide wait for no man	
121	Time cures all things	
122	Time has wings	
123	Time is a great healer	
124	Time is money	
125	Time is the rider that breaks youth	
126	Time shall teach thee all things	
127	Time will tell	
128	Time works wonders	
129	Times change, and we with them	
130	To err is human	
131	Too much consulting confounds	
132	Two heads are better than one	
133	Union is strength	
134	United we stand, divided we fall	
135	Unlooked for often comes	
136	Use is all	
137	Wake not a sleeping lion	
138	Want is the mother of industry	
139	What is a workman without his tools	
140	What may be done at any time is done at no time	
141	Where there is a will there is a way	
142	You don't get something for nothing	
143	You must not put all your eggs in one basket	
144	You must sow ere you reap	
145	You never know what you can do till you try	

Our answer to the gate question: Common sense wisdom documented in the proverbs above will guide us in choosing our problem solving strategy. We argue that the wisdom in the proverbs #1-#145 is a well of tools to a wise choice of a problem solving strategy. Let us give some examples.

E.g. it is important to try to lay out milestones and deadlines because our time is limited and
        One of these days is none of these days (#81 or #140) and, of course,
        Time and tide wait for no man (#120).
But because
        The unexpected always happens (#109)

A generic model of common sense applicable to problem solving or product development
Ideas as precursors to actions
Paper for the course: Filosofiska tankar i lärarens vardag (feb-mars 2005)

due respect to unforeseen problems must be planned for. Also as
> One hour today is worth two tomorrow (#80),
> Time is money (#124) and
> The early bird catches the worm (#102)

we have to make the project time as short as possible.

In planning for activities we must remember that
> A chain is no stronger than its weakest link (#3),
> Good works take long in doing (#33),
> Seek mickle and get something. Seek little, and get nothing. (#92),
> Opportunity seldom knocks twice (#82)
> You must not put all your eggs in one basket (#143)
> You must sow ere you reap (#144)
> You never know what you can do till you try (#145)

but also that
> Circumstances alter cases (#17) and
> The tide must be taken when it comes (#107).

In planning for individual work we have to consider that
> He who begins many things finishes but few (#12)
> What is a workman without his tools (#139)

so we plan for using appropriate tools and divide the work onto team members in a wise way.

In planning for milestones, deadlines and the decision making we are aware of that
> Procrastination is the thief of time (#88) and, of course,
> Time is money (#124).

Well, these arguments are rules of wisdom that will guide our time planning and strategy in our problem solving process.

Gate guards comments:
Your arguments are still compelling. We find no reason to stop your efforts at this second gate. Please continue to next gate.

G3: Show us the tools you are intending to use

Proverbs which may guide us in choosing tools for the problem solving may be:

1	A drowning man will clutch at a straw
2	A fool ask more questions in an hour than a wise man can answer in seven years
3	A fool believes everything
4	A full belly does not understand an empty one
5	A full belly neither fights nor flies well
6	A golden key opens every door
7	A good example is the best sermon
8	A great tree attracts the wind
9	A handfull of trade is handful of gold
10	A small leak will sink a big ship

A generic model of common sense applicable to problem solving or product development
Ideas as precursors to actions
Paper for the course: Filosofiska tankar i lärarens vardag (feb-mars 2005)

11	A small stone in the way overturns a great wain
12	A stich in time safes nine
13	A thief believes everyone else also a thief
14	Abundance is welcome
15	Action and reaction are equal
16	Afterwit is everybody's wit
17	All cats are grey in the dark
18	All good things go in threes
19	All meats please not all mouths
20	All that glitters is not gold
21	All the craft is in the catching
22	All things are difficult before they are easy
23	All things thrive at thrice
24	All think their own geese are swans
25	An empty belly has no ears
26	An open door may tempt a saint
27	An ounce of practice is worth a pound of precept
28	Anger and haste hinder good counsel
29	Any port in a storm
30	Appearances are deceptive
31	As you make your bed, so you must lie on it
32	Barking dogs seldom bite
33	Beauty draws more than oxen
34	Best is best cheap
35	Best is cheapest
36	Between two stools you fall to the ground
37	Better a bare foot then none
38	Better an open enemy than a false friend
39	Better be safe (sure) than sorry
40	Better bend than break
41	Better give the wool than the sheep
42	Better half an egg than an empty shell
43	Big fish eat little fish
44	By asking for information you find the way to Rome
45	Cast not out the foul water till you bring in the clean
46	Children and fools cannot lie
47	Cloudy mornings turn to clear afternoons
48	Courtesy open all doors
49	Crooked logs make straight fires
50	Cunning surpasses strength
51	Custom has the force of law

A generic model of common sense applicable to problem solving or product development
Ideas as precursors to actions
Paper for the course: Filosofiska tankar i lärarens vardag (feb-mars 2005)

52	Custom rules the law
53	Destroy the lion while he is yet but a whelp
54	Do not cast your pearls before swine
55	Do not kill the goose that lays golden eggs
56	Don't make yourself a mouse, or the cat will get you
57	Don't sell the skin till your caught the bear
58	Don't throw the baby out with the bathwater
59	Dreams are lies
60	Easy come, easy go
61	Every bird likes his own nest
62	Every bird loves to hear herself sing
63	Every cloud has a silver lining
64	Every dog is a lion at home
65	Every grain has his bran
66	Every light is not the sun
67	Every potter praises his own pot
68	Every saint wishes a candle
69	Every time a sheep bleats, it loses a mouthful
70	Every tub must stand on its own bottom
71	Every why has a wherefore
72	Everyone after his fashion
73	Everyone can find fault, few can do better
74	Everyone knows best where the shoe pinches
75	Everything comes to him who waits
76	Example is better than precept
77	Experience is the best teacher
78	Experience is the mother of wisdom (science/knowledge)
79	Experience must be bought
80	Extreme justice (right) is extreme injustice (wrong)
81	Facts speak louder than words (opinions)
82	Failure teaches success
83	Fair and soft goes far in a day
84	Far from eye, far from heart
85	First learn and then discern
86	First think and than speak
87	First try and then trust
88	Fish bred up in dirty pools will taste of mud
89	Fool's haste is no speed
90	Forbidden fruit is sweet(est)
91	Fortune favours fools
92	Fortune favours the bold

A generic model of common sense applicable to problem solving or product development
Ideas as precursors to actions
Paper for the course: Filosofiska tankar i lärarens vardag (feb-mars 2005)

93	Four eyes see more than two
94	Gifts break a rock
95	Good and quickly seldom meet
96	Good cheap is dear
97	Good wine praises itself
98	Grasp all, lose all
99	Great trees keep down little ones
100	Gut no fish till you get them
101	Habit is second nature
102	Half the truth is often a great lie
103	He that asks faintly begs a denial
104	He that can stay, obtains
105	He that is secure is not safe
106	He that nothing questions, nothing learns
107	He that will eat the kernel must crack the nut
108	He that would have the fruit must climb the tree
109	He who works begins well, he who economizes ends better
110	Hear all parties
111	Hear much, speak little
112	Honesty is the best policy
113	Honey cathes more flies than vinegar
114	If at first you don't succeed, try, try, try again
115	If in excess even nectar is poison
116	If the beard were all, the goat might preach
117	If the lion's skin cannot, the fox's shall
118	If the mountain will not come to Muhamet, Mohamet must go to the mountain
119	If the old dog barks, he gives counsel
120	If water cannot be had, we must make shift with wine
121	If you run after two hares, you will catch neither
122	If you want a thing well done, do it yourself
123	In doing we learn
124	Industry is fortune's right hand, and frugality her left
125	It is best to be on the safe side
126	It is hard to hunt for a hare with tabor
127	It is not the gay coat that makes the gentleman
128	Knowledge is power
129	Let another's shipwreck be your sea-mark
130	Let sleeping dogs lie
131	Let your purse be your master
132	Like question, like answer
133	Little knows the fat man what the lean man thinks

A generic model of common sense applicable to problem solving or product development
Ideas as precursors to actions
Paper for the course: Filosofiska tankar i lärarens vardag (feb-mars 2005)

134	Look before you leap
135	Love doesn't make the pot boil
136	Love is blind
137	Make hay while the sun shines
138	Many a true word is spoken in jest
139	Money will do anything
140	More ways to the wood than one
141	Nature passes nurture
142	No rose without a thorn
143	No sweet without sweat
144	Not every change is for the better
145	Not only ought Fortune to be pictured on a wheel, but every thing else in the world
146	Nothing is certain but the unforeseen
147	Of a small spark, a great fire
148	Of saving comes having
149	Of two evils choose the less
150	Old habits die hard
151	One and none is all one
152	One good forewit is worth two afterwits
153	One rotten apple can spoil the whole barrel
154	Practice makes perfect
155	Prevention is better than cure
156	Procrastination is the thief of time
157	Put an old cat to an old rat
158	Quality not quantity
159	Save a stranger from the sea and he'll turn your enemy
160	Seeing is believing
161	Silence means consent
162	Slow but sure wins the race
163	Sparing is the first gaining
164	That which proves too much proves nothing
165	The afterthought is good for naught
166	The anvil fears no blows
167	The best cart may overthrow
168	The best defense is offense
169	The bird is known by his note, the man by his words
170	The coat makes the man
171	The cowl does not make the monk
172	The darkest hour is that before dawn
173	The dog that trots about finds a bone

A generic model of common sense applicable to problem solving or product development
Ideas as precursors to actions
Paper for the course: Filosofiska tankar i lärarens vardag (feb-mars 2005)

174	The early bird catches the worm
175	The end justifies the means
176	The lame post brings the truest news
177	The more the merrier
178	The third is a charm
179	The way to be safe is never to be secure
180	The wish is father to the thought
181	There is some difference between Peter and Peter
182	Things are not always what they seem
183	Things are not so bad as they look
184	Thinking is very far from knowing
185	Third time's lucky
186	Too much consulting confounds
187	Trust makes way for treachery
188	Truth may be blamed, but cannot be shamed
189	Try the ice before you venture on it
190	Use is all
191	Wake not a sleeping lion
192	Want is the mother of industry
193	We must learn to walk before we can run
194	Well begun is half done
195	What can you expect of a pig but a grunt
196	What is a workman without his tools
197	What you don't know can't hurt you
198	What you lose on the swings you gain on the roundabouts
199	When in Rome do as Romans do
200	When need is highest, help is nighest
201	Where we least think, there goes the hare away
202	You can have too much of a good thing
203	You cannot always get what you want
204	You cannot have the cake and eat it
205	You cannot make bread without meal
206	You cannot make omelette without breaking eggs
207	You cannot please everyone (all the time)
208	You can't whistle and drink at the same time
209	You don't eat pottage as hot as it is cooked
210	You must not put all your eggs in one basket
211	You must sow ere you reap
212	You never know what you can do till you try

Our answer to the gate question: Common sense wisdom documented in the proverbs above
will guide us in choosing our tools for the problem solving. We argue that the wisdom in the

A generic model of common sense applicable to problem solving or product development
Ideas as precursors to actions
Paper for the course: Filosofiska tankar i lärarens vardag (feb-mars 2005)

proverbs #1-#212 is a well of tools to a wise choice of tools for the problem solving. Let us give some examples.

E.g. it is important in the problem definition (product specification) to realize that
Old habits die hard (#150 or #101) and
Like question, like answer (#132)
as to open our eyes to new possibilities in the problem definition and problem understanding phase. We have to be aware of that
Where we least think, there goes the hare away (#201) but
You can have too much of a good thing (#202) and
Not every change is for the better (#144) so
Let sleeping dogs lie (#130)
Things are not always what they seem (#182) and
A full belly does not understand an empty one (#4) so
Hear all parties (#110) and remember that
He that nothing questions, nothing learns (#106) and
He that will eat the kernel must crack the nut (#107).

In coming up with plausible solutions (product concepts) we know that
Abundance is welcome (#14)
but solutions must be chosen according to specifications so
When in Rome do as Romans do (#199)
although
Appearances are deceptive (#30) we know that form is important because
The coat makes the man (#170) and
Everyone after his fashion (#72).

In choosing solutions we know that
The afterthought is good for naught (#165) and
Facts speak louder than words (opinions) (#181) so
A good example is the best sermon (#7) but
The best cart may overthrow (#167) but
The anvil fears no blows (#166) and
Seeing is believing (#160) and
Good cheap is dear (#96) and
Good wine praises itself (#97).

In general, of course, Honesty is the best policy (#112) in applying our tools and examining the results.

Well, these arguments are rules of wisdom that will guide us in choosing appropriate tools in our problem solving process.

Gate guards comments:
Your arguments are still compelling, discussing a generic problem solving process, so we find no reason to stop your efforts at this third gate. Please continue to next gate.

G4: Show us plausible solutions

Proverbs which may guide us in choosing plausible solutions may be:

A generic model of common sense applicable to problem solving or product development
Ideas as precursors to actions
Paper for the course: Filosofiska tankar i lärarens vardag (feb-mars 2005)

1	A chain is no stronger than its weakest link
2	A clear conscience fears no accusations
3	Afterwit is everybody's wit
4	All good things go in threes
5	Change brings life
6	Counsel is irksome when the matter is past remedy
7	Deeds are fruits, words are but leaves
8	Do not cast your pearls before swine
9	Do not kill the goose that lays golden eggs
10	Do well and have well
11	Don't sell the skin till your caught the bear
12	Everyone after his fashion
13	Everything has an end
14	Everything has its time
15	First come, first served
16	Fortune favours the bold
17	Gifts break a rock
18	Giving the poor increases the store
19	Good cheap is dear
20	Good wine praises itself
21	Grasp all, lose all
22	Gut no fish till you get them
23	Industry is fortune's right hand, and frugality her left
24	Little knows the fat man what the lean man thinks
25	Of two evils choose the less
26	Other times, other manners
27	Provision in season makes a rich house
28	Seeing is believing
29	Slow but sure wins the race
30	Sparing is the first gaining
31	Strike while the iron is hot
32	The coat makes the man
33	The cow that's first up, gets the first of the dew
34	The cowl does not make the monk
35	The early bird catches the worm
36	The end justifies the means
37	The world goes on wheels
38	Truth will come to light
39	Want is the mother of industry
40	What you don't know can't hurt you

A generic model of common sense applicable to problem solving or product development
Ideas as precursors to actions
Paper for the course: Filosofiska tankar i lärarens vardag (feb-mars 2005)

41	What you lose on the swings you gain on the roundabouts
42	When in Rome do as Romans do
43	You don't eat pottage as hot as it is cooked
44	You shall have as good as you bring

Our answer to the gate question: Common sense wisdom documented in the proverbs above will guide us in choosing plausible solutions. We argue that the wisdom in the proverbs #1-#44 is a well of tools to a wise choice of plausible solutions. Let us give some examples.

E.g. it is important in showing plausible solutions to a problem (or concepts in a product development process) that

Truth will come to light (#38) sooner or later … so

Gut no fish till you get them (#22) and because

A chain is no stronger than its weakest link (#1) you have to prove the ability of all links in your solutions. But in that process be sure you

Do not kill the goose that lays golden eggs (#9)

But your plausible solutions should be appropriate and wise

Do not cast your pearls before swine (#8) and, of course,

The cowl does not make the monk (#34).

But don't be too afraid as

Fortune favours the bold (#16) and, of course,

it is important to deliver in time because

First come, first served (#15).

In general

Do well and have well (#10)

A clear conscience fears no accusations (#2)

In showing the strength of your plausible solutions to your employer, client or steering group you know that

Seeing is believing (#28)

Afterwit is everybody's wit (#3).

Well, these arguments are rules of wisdom that will guide us in showing plausible solutions to our problem.

Gate guards comments:
Your arguments are still compelling, discussing a generic problem solving process, so we find no reason to stop your efforts at this fourth gate. Please continue to next gate.

G5: Show us a solution to the problem

Proverbs which may guide us in choosing a solution to the problem may be:

1	A chain is no stronger than its weakest link
2	Afterwit is everybody's wit
3	All good things go in threes
4	All things come to an end

A generic model of common sense applicable to problem solving or product development
Ideas as precursors to actions
Paper for the course: Filosofiska tankar i lärarens vardag (feb-mars 2005)

5	Better a small fish than an empty dish
6	Better an apple given than eaten
7	Change brings life
8	Cheapest is dearest
9	Counsel is irksome when the matter is past remedy
10	Deeds are fruits, words are but leaves
11	Do not cast your pearls before swine
12	Do not kill the goose that lays golden eggs
13	Do well and have well
14	Don't sell the skin till your caught the bear
15	Everyone after his fashion
16	Everything has an end
17	Everything has its time
18	First come, first served
19	Fortune favours the bold
20	Gifts break a rock
21	Giving the poor increases the store
22	Good cheap is dear
23	Good wine praises itself
24	Grasp all, lose all
25	Gut no fish till you get them
26	Industry is fortune's right hand, and frugality her left
27	Little knows the fat man what the lean man thinks
28	Of two evils choose the less
29	Other times, other manners
30	Provision in season makes a rich house
31	Seeing is believing
32	Slow but sure wins the race
33	Sparing is the first gaining
34	Strike while the iron is hot
35	The coat makes the man
36	The cow that's first up, gets the first of the dew
37	The cowl does not make the monk
38	The early bird catches the worm
39	The end justifies the means
40	The first blow is as much as two
41	The world goes on wheels
42	Truth will come to light
43	Want is the mother of industry
44	What you don't know can't hurt you
45	What you lose on the swings you gain on the

A generic model of common sense applicable to problem solving or product development
Ideas as precursors to actions
Paper for the course: Filosofiska tankar i lärarens vardag (feb-mars 2005)

	roundabouts
46	When in Rome do as Romans do
47	You don't eat pottage as hot as it is cooked
48	You shall have as good as you bring

Our answer to the gate question: Common sense wisdom documented in the proverbs above will guide us in choosing a solution to the problem. We argue that the wisdom in the proverbs #1-#48 is a well of tools to a wise choice of a solution to the problem. Let us give some examples.

All rules of wisdom presented in the previous gate (G4) are, of course, appropriate but in showing a solution to a problem (or embodied concept in a product development process) you must be absolutely aware of that

> All things come to an end (#4)
> Want is the mother of industry (#43)
> Better a small fish than an empty dish (#5)
> Provision in season makes a rich house (#30)
> Other times, other manners (#28)
> Cheapest is dearest (#4)

Well, these arguments are rules of wisdom that will guide us in showing a solution to our problem. This gate also finishes our generic problem story. After the final comments from the gate guards, we will discuss the whole process and reflect on the results accomplished.

Gate guards comments:
Your arguments are still compelling, discussing a generic problem solving process, so we find you have been able to pass also the fifth gate. Congratulations, you have proved, according to our wisdom and experience in problem solving, that the wisdom inherent in proverbs and sayings are good general rules to follow in a wise problem solving process.

Discussion

What about the five (5) basic assumptions presented at the beginning of this paper. The gate guards comments in the generic problem story, didn't discuss those assumptions in their examination of our "passwords" to the gate questions. Why?

It's a good question. By the way, those assumptions will be used in the arguments for the rational of the system group strategy for innovative problem solving discussed in the following section. But why didn't the gate guards use them in the generic problem story?

What is the message of the basic assumptions? Let us assemble them once more and discus their message.

A1: We have a choice in every unique situation present.
A2: We cannot foresee the hidden possibilities in the unique situation present.
A3: The interplay between I-You and I-It determines the outcome of the unique situation present. The more powerful the interplay the richer is the outcome.

A generic model of common sense applicable to problem solving or product development
Ideas as precursors to actions
Paper for the course: Filosofiska tankar i lärarens vardag (feb-mars 2005)

A4: The potential power of the interaction I-You depends on my ability to invite the other person (You) to a dialog and that person's (Your) willingness to interact with me with the full strength of a human being - full of potential ideas and experiences.
A5: Ideas are the precursors to conscious actions.

What is their general message? Their general message is that every situation following the arrow of time is unique, assembled by people and circumstances interacting in a way we cannot foresee in detail. As is said "The truth is in the detail", so the detail is important - it makes the difference. The conscious actions taking by the people are guided by ideas, ideas of a problem, ideas of possible solutions, ideas of possible tools to use, ideas of how to use a tool, ideas of other persons etcetera. And in every situation we have a choice, although not every choice is possible to realize at all times or at all. The message is also the importance of the interpersonal dialog. These are all general basic assumptions applicable to all human enterprises. And they can only be meaningfully discussed when a detailed situation is presented. Thus, they are not meaningfully discussible in the generic problem story presented, although the gate guards presumed they are underlying a wise problem solving procedure, as they are basic to the thoughts and the arguments in this paper.

In the following section, their significance to innovative problem solving will hopefully appear more clearly.

Corollary: The rational of the system group strategy to innovative problem solving

Here the rational of the system group strategy to innovative problem solving, presented by E. Roland Andersson & Carl Rollenhagen in reference [7], will be discussed as a corollary to the basic assumptions presented in this paper.

What is a system group? It is a group of people representing a model of all types of people representative of a problem generally presented. If it is a product development problem at focus in a company, the system group will consists of people from all functions in the company, e.g. a representative from design, engineering, production, purchasing, marketing, sub-suppliers, administration and costumers where appropriate. The idea is that the system group should be a good representative of "all important stakeholders in the reality", when a new product is processed from an idea to "the final embodiment in the market". The idea is that concepts in every stage of the product development process will be possible to be "realistically tested in advance" by the system group. Therefore, through the process, the possibility that the final solution will be a success in the real market will be "maximized".

What is the system group strategy? The strategy is built on sequential or iterative seminars (S1 to S4 defined below) where the system group (the model of "the reality") together in consensus decides on
S1: What is really the problem? (Brainstorming phase and choice of problem)
S2: Ideas to solutions? (Brainstorming phase)
S3: Ideas for choice of plausible solutions (concepts)
S4: Ideas for development (embodiment) of chosen solutions (concepts)

By using the system group "all aspects" of pertinent problems, concepts and embodiments are taken care of. The strategy is built on the presumption that every stakeholder's aspect is discussed in an impartial way, whereby the ability and experience of every I-You in the

A generic model of common sense applicable to problem solving or product development
Ideas as precursors to actions
Paper for the course: Filosofiska tankar i lärarens vardag (feb-mars 2005)

system group is used. Thus, the basic assumptions A3 and A4 are underlying this aspect of the strategy.

Another idea of the system group strategy is that we cannot in advance know what will happen when the group gathers in every unique situation at hand and therefore unforeseen circumstances may alter the direction of the group choices of problem, concepts and embodiments etcetera. Thus, the basic assumptions A1 and A2 are underlying this aspect of the strategy.

Of course, the system group strategy is built on the assumption that ideas are the precursors to action, thus, using the presumption of the basic assumption A5.

Thus, we find that the system group strategy is evidently based on our five (5) basic assumptions explicitly formulated in this paper.

Also, inherent in innovative solutions is that we probably don't know them in advance, especially if we were not aware of the real problem at the beginning. Thus, the system group strategy is showing a wise application of our five basic assumptions in finding innovative solutions to problems and is thus a corollary to the assumptions. Q.E.D.

Conclusions

Common sense, documented in proverbs and sayings, are wise thoughts often born out of hard individual experiences, which adult human beings easily can adhere to and appreciate.

However there are also other aspects of human life, which when they are formulated in words as assertions or basic assumptions seem very self-evident. Those thoughts, often based on hard work and individual experiences, fit easily to our own individual experiences as adult human beings. But deep simple truths are seldom self-evident in practice. They seem to be buried so deep in our behaviour as human beings, that we are not consciously aware of them. That's an example of the important difference between passive and active knowledge.

In this paper Jean-Paul Sartre and Martin Buber are messengers of such deep simple truths, which when they are made active in our minds may make an important difference in the quality of our human behaviour. This consciousness may give extra quality to all our endeavours in general and in particular to problem solving or product development.

As a consequence the discussion and the conclusions in this paper are very simple and self-evident. Or as a proverb tell us: There's no disputing a proverb, a fool, and the truth.

We have argued that common sense, documented in reflective proverbs and sayings, and the presumption of the wisdom extracted from the work of Jean-Paul Sartre and Martin Buber in our five (5) basic assumptions, give useful qualitative tools for problem solving or product development processes.

As a practical example, the system group strategy, advocated by E. Roland Andersson & Carl Rollenhagen, gives a wise application of the five basic assumptions in innovative problem solving.

A generic model of common sense applicable to problem solving or product development
Ideas as precursors to actions
Paper for the course: Filosofiska tankar i lärarens vardag (feb-mars 2005)

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