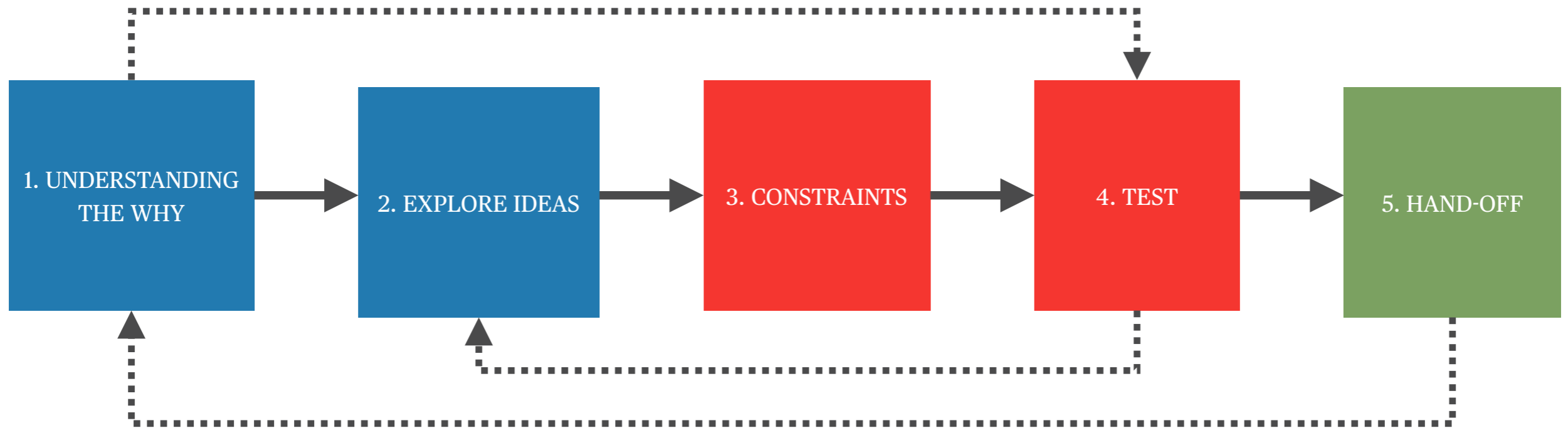How I Address Design Challenges

by Rasmus Gripenfrid

My Work Process

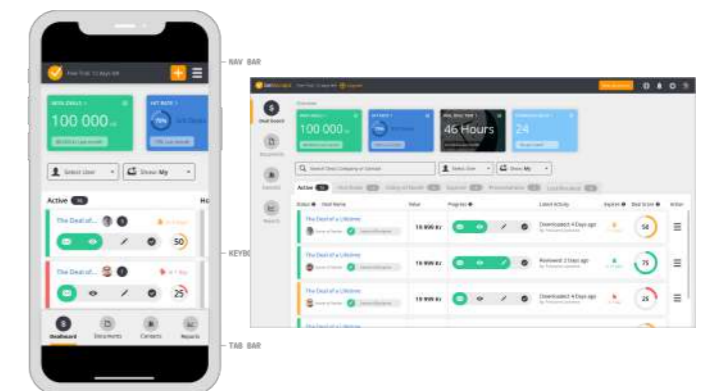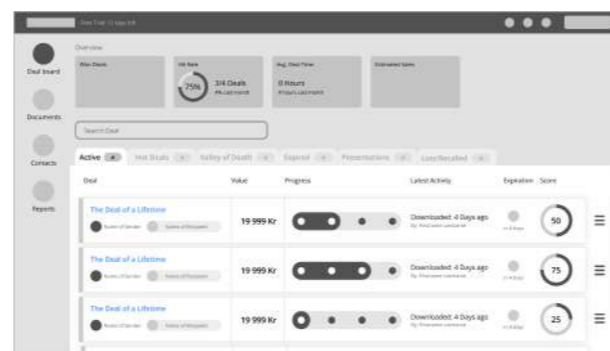# My Work Process

| 1. UNDERSTANDING THE WHY | 2. EXPLORE IDEAS | 3. CONSTRAINTS | 4. TEST | 5. HAND-OFF |

| QUICK SKETCHES | LO-FI WIREFRAMES | HI-FI WIREFRAMES |

The Design Thinking Process

Design Thinking: A 5 Stage Process

Empathise → Define → Ideate → Prototype → Test

INTERACTION DESIGN FOUNDATION   INTERACTION-DESIGN.ORG
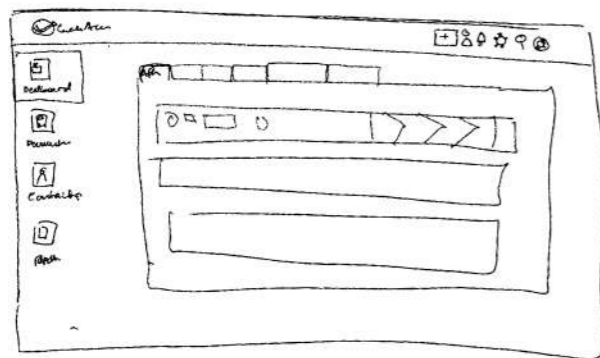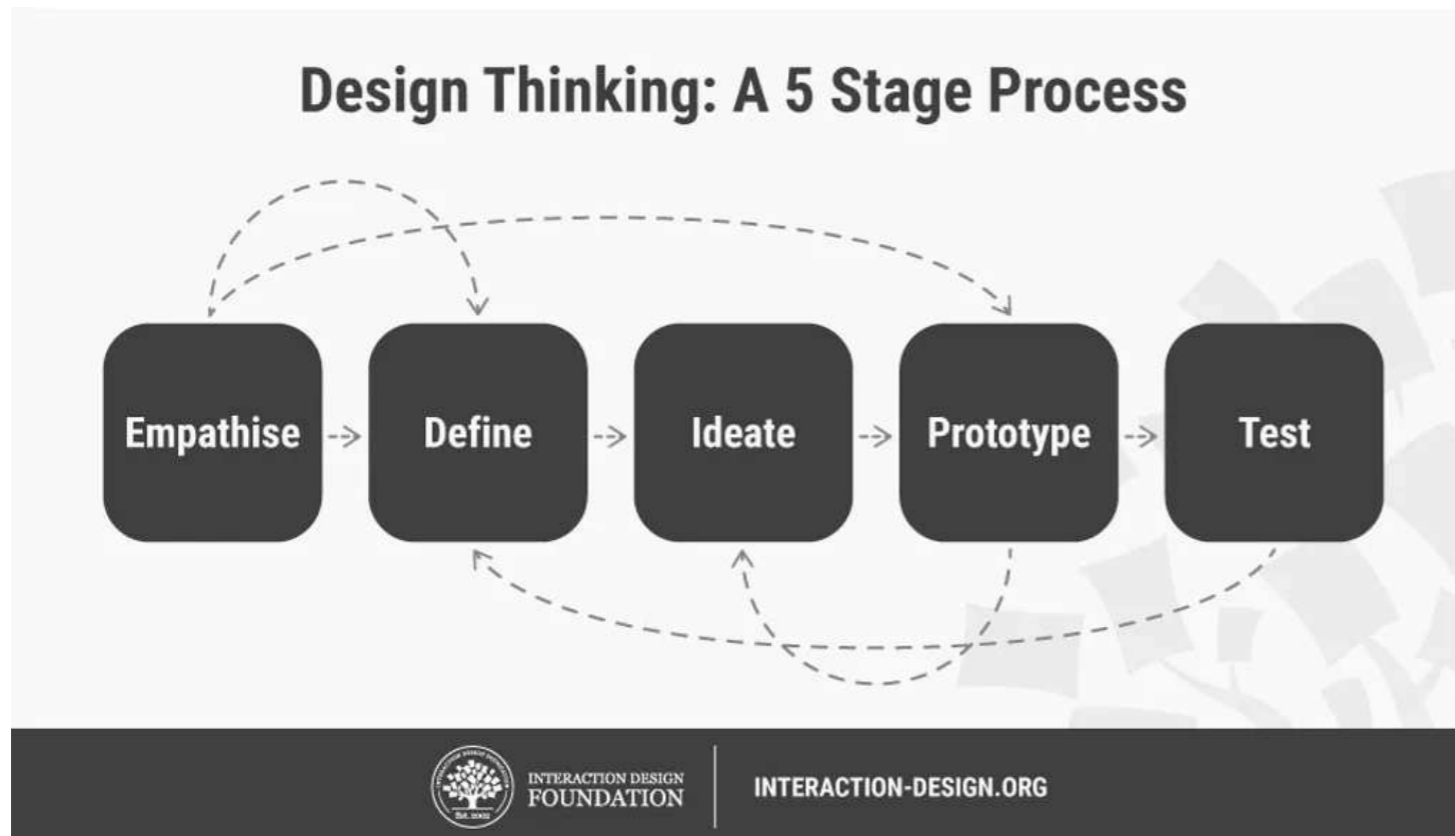
My work process is heavily influenced by the **design thinking process**.

Image source: https://www.interaction-design.org/literature/article/5-stages-in-the-design-thinking-process

1. Understanding the Why

Not understanding the WHY won't help in solving the HOW or WHAT...

I find Simon Sinek's Why model (from his book *Start With Why*) very inspiring.

The why in the context of UX, at least from my personal point of view, starts with where the issue/problem first derived. Was it internal or external? Who experienced it first: end-users, engineering, customer success or stakeholders?

It involves research as well. What do we already know and if we don't have any research what do we need to find out in order to understand what drives the problem/issue at hand.

When we know the core essence of why we want to solve it, for whom are we solving it and what we'll gain by solving it; we can move on to the next steps of how it can be solved and what the solution might look like.

Furthermore, we'll know how we can measure the success of the design solution (e.g. users spending more time on the site, achieving conversions faster, etc). This is a crucial step in terms of retrospective and debriefing to the stakeholders and will ultimately help us answer the question of was the effort worth it?

One way of framing all this (I find) is with the help of the *opportunity canvas* (see page below).

Opportunity Canvas

Users & Customers

What types of users and customers have the challenges your solution addresses?

Look for differences in user's goals or uses that would affect their use of the product. Separate users and customers into different types based on those differences that make a difference. It's a bad idea to target "everyone" with your product.

2

Problems

What problems do prospective users and customers have today that your solution addresses?

What needs, goals, or jobs-to-be-done done should your solution address?

1

Solutions Today

How do users address their problems today?

List competitive products or work-around approaches your users have for meeting their needs.

3

Solution ideas

List product, feature, or enhancement ideas that solve problems for your target audience.

1

How will users use your solution?

If your target audience has your solution, what will they do differently as a consequence? And, how will that benefit them?

5

Adoption Strategy

How will customers and users discover and adopt your solution?

7

User Metrics

What specific user behaviors can you measure that will indicate they try, adopt, use, and place value in your solution?

6

Business Challenges

How do the customers' and users' and their challenges above impact your business? If you don't solve these problems for your customers and users, will it hurt your business? How?

4

Budget

1. What might it cost your organization if you don't create this solution?
2. What might your organization earn or save if you do?
3. Given that, what would your organization budget to create this solution?

9

Business Benefits and Metrics

What business performance metrics will be affected by the success of this solution? These usually change as a consequence of users actually buying and using your solution.

8

Jeff Patton has morphed the Business Model Canvas and the Lean Canvas into what he calls the Opportunity Canvas.
http://jpattonassociates.com/opportunity-canvas/

2. Explore Ideas

Moving on to the HOW...

Continuing on Simon Sinek's Golden Circle, as it is referred as, is the matter of how.

My personal interpretation of this is how one might address the problem.

As a designer you might have to do this solo, but involving others (e.g. stakeholders, engineers, customer success, end-users etc.) in the process will help diversify ways in solving the issue/problem at hand. Thus, increasing the chances of finding a successful solution.

One way of involving others is by doing a so called design sprint.

The sprint can last a week but in my experience it can be done in a shorter amount of time. Also, it can be done remotely.

The sprint will start in many ways like the golden circle, understanding and defining the problem.

Next, the main goal is to generate as many ideas as possible, without any constraints.
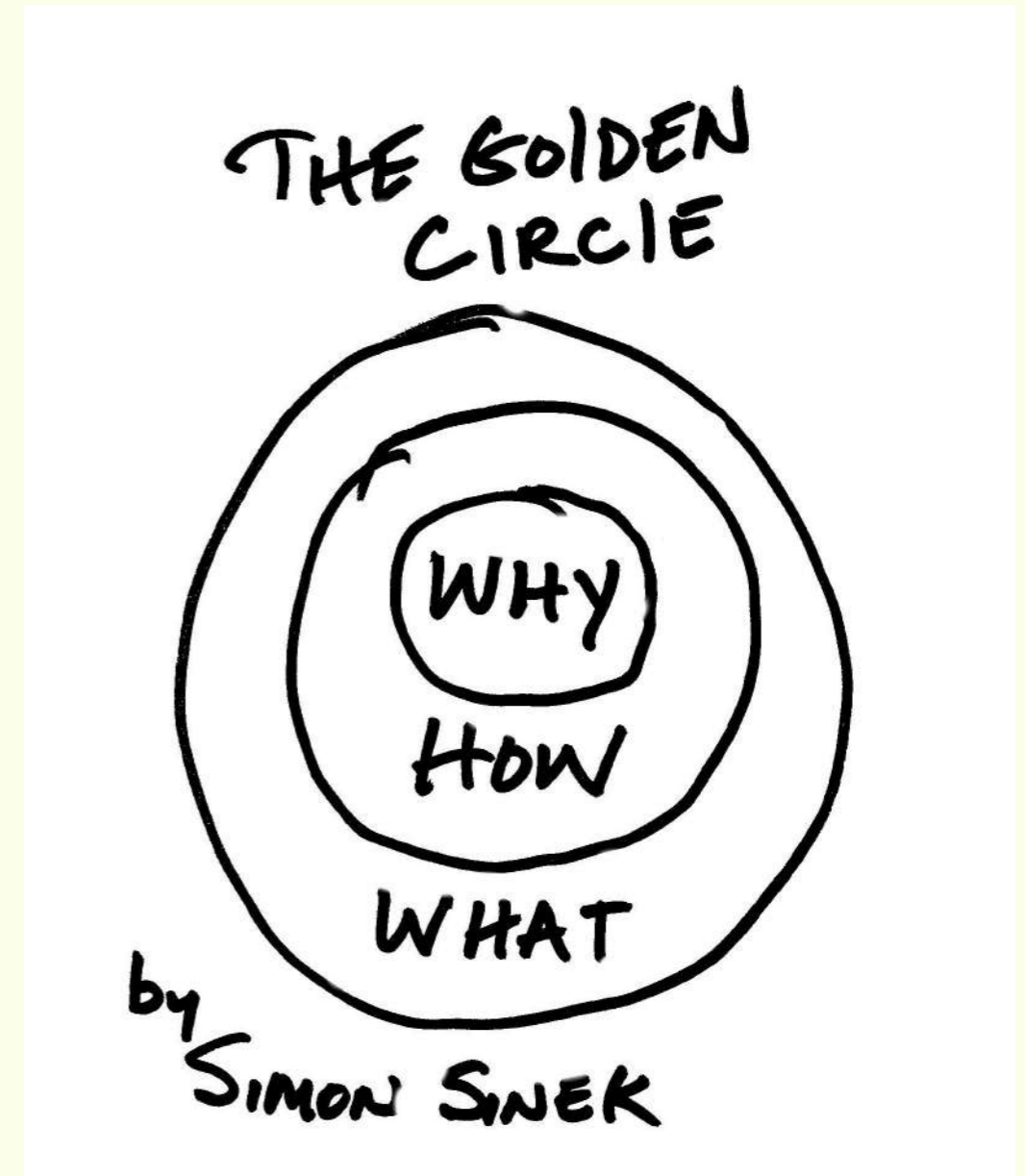

Image source: https://liveinnovation.org/interesting-marketing-concepts-the-golden-circle/
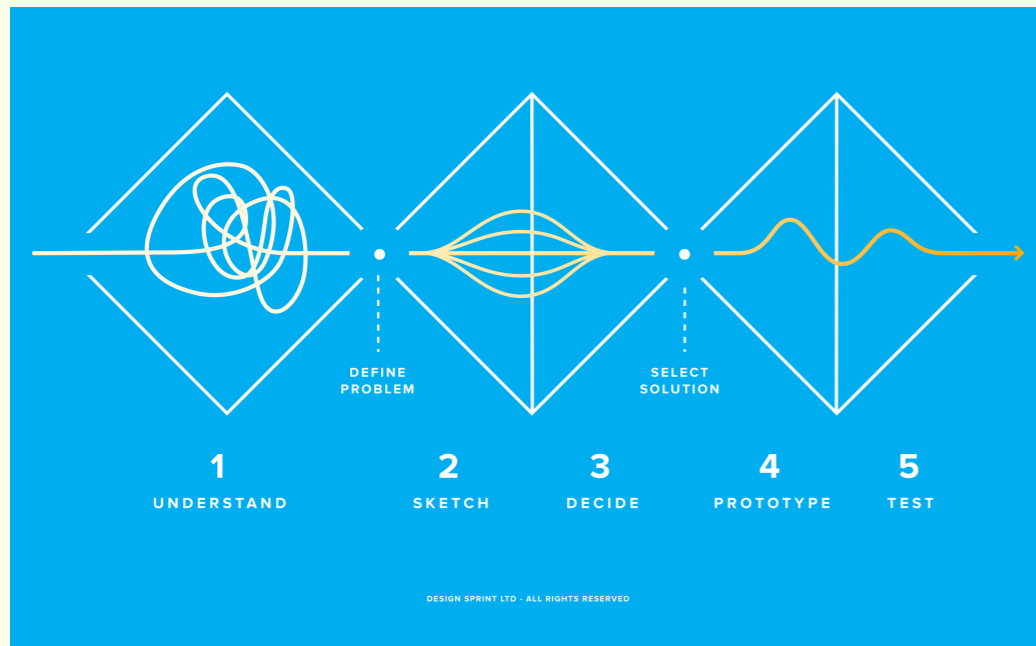
3. Constraints

Image source: https://design-sprint.com

Drafting the WHAT...

Once ideas has been generated, the process of sorting them out can be done by adding constraints.

Constraints can be technical constraints, time constrains, budget constraints or other relevant factors within the context.

When a selection of ideas has been selected I begin to prototype by creating low-fidelity (lo-fi) wireframes.

Referring back to Sinek's golden circle I define the prototyping as drafting the what…

4. Test

User Testing and Feedback

Although testing early and often is desirable and something to always strive for, it is heavily dependent on the time frame.

Also, depending on the context, it might be difficult to recruit relevant users. Without relevant users the feedback might be deceitful.

From experience I do find it very helpful to test at least on a friend or colleague, bearing the above in mind while doing so.

The process is repeated and wireframes iterated until a design solution addressing the original core problem/issue has been addressed.

Again, this is best achieved by involving others in the process as well, agreeing upon the results. Which leads to the final step…

"Focus ruthlessly on facing the most serious problems first"
– Steve Krug, 2014, Don't Make Me Think.

> "Testing one user early in the project is better than testing 50 near the end."
>
> – Steve Krug, 2014 Don't make me think

Image source:
https://www.sensible.com

5. Hand-off

Presenting the result and handing it over to development

The "Hand-off" expression is a bit misleading in my opinion. It sounds like the designer resigns after this step, moving on to the next challenge.

I strive for a continuous dialogue between the designer and developer.

Hopefully, it has already occurred during the design sprint (mentioned earlier) by involving the developer in the process early on.

Successful designers work hands-in-hands with developers in order to deliver the best of the project's potential.

The final step is to generate a pixel-perfect design, a flow chart and/or prototype displaying different stages depending on interactions within the design.

In the best of worlds, the design process is more circular, rather than linear (as seen in the *problem solving process* illustration to the left). Meaning that the design solution might be revisited at a later stage, when data has been collected and conclusions can be drawn, working on continuous improvement.
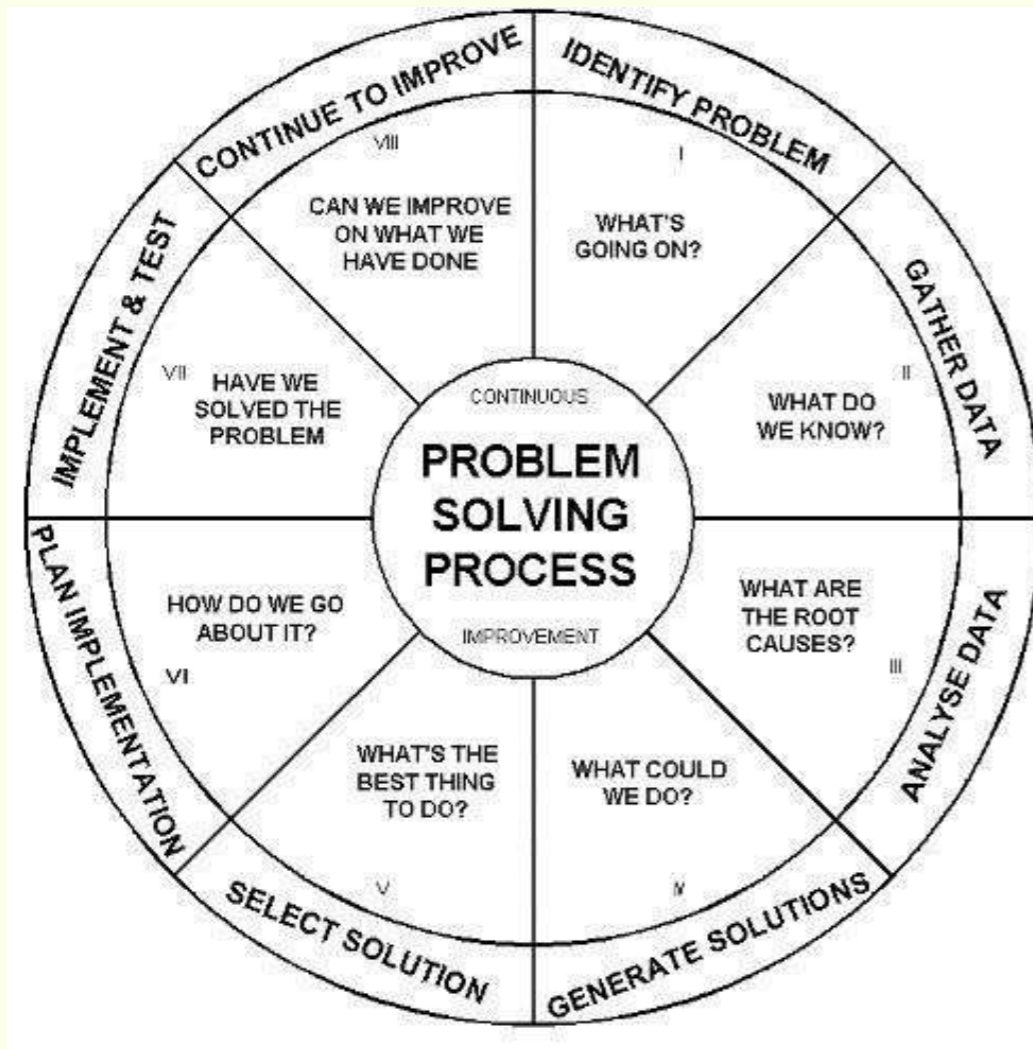
Thanks for viewing! 🙌

Please let me know if you have
any questions or feedback 📬

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https://uxunicorn.se