

Come
Together

Nehemiah

Solving the Right Problem

Recap

If you want to build a ship, don't summon people to buy wood, prepare tools, distribute jobs, and organize the work, rather teach people the yearning for the **wide, boundless ocean.** **Antoine de Saint-Exupery**

How do a **diverse** group of people **come together** for a **common goal**?

Recap

Four Elements to Creating Common Mission

Remove - declutter your life

Rebuild - prioritize values

Repair - confront whatever drove you away

Strengthen - create new bonds of community

mission is a **who**, not a **what**

Come and see a man who told me everything I ever did! Could he possibly be the Messiah? **John 4:29**

One day some **parents brought their children to Jesus** so he could lay his hands on them and pray for them. **Matthew 19:13**

Then **Andrew brought Simon** to meet Jesus. **John 1:42**

four men arrived **carrying a paralyzed man** on a mat. **Mark 2:3**

As he was speaking, the teachers of religious law and the Pharisees **brought a woman** who had been caught in the act of adultery. **John 8:3**

As Jesus walked by, John looked at him and declared, **“Look! There is the Lamb of God!”** When John’s two disciples heard this, they followed Jesus. **John 1:36-37**

Are You Solving the Right Problems?

Thomas Wedell-Wedellsborg, HBR

How good is your company at problem solving? Probably quite good, if your managers are like those at the companies I've studied. What they struggle with, it turns out, is not solving problems but **figuring out what the problems are.**

The point of **reframing** is not to find the "real" problem but, rather, to see if there is a better one to solve. In fact, the very idea that a single root problem exists may be misleading; **problems are typically multicausal and can be addressed in many ways.**

How Reframing A Problem Unlocks Innovation, Tina Seelig

Albert Einstein is quoted as saying, “If I had an hour to solve a problem and my life depended on the solution, I would spend the first fifty-five minutes **determining the proper question to ask**, for once I know the proper question, I could solve the problem in less than five minutes.”

At the Stanford school, students are taught how to **empathize** with very different types of people, so that they can design products and experiences that match their specific needs. When you empathize, you are, essentially, **changing your frame of reference** by shifting your perspective to that of the other person.

What is the **problem** that Nehemiah is trying to **solve**?

The Journey Thus Far

When I heard this, I sat down and wept. In fact, for days I mourned, fasted, and prayed to the God of heaven. **1:4**

Please grant me success today by making the king favourable to me. Put it into his heart to be kind to me. **vs 11**

The king, with the queen sitting beside him, asked, “How long will you be gone? When will you return?” After I told him how long I would be gone, the king agreed to my request. **2:6**

But when Sanballat the Horonite and Tobiah the Ammonite official heard of my arrival, they were very displeased that someone had come to help the people of Israel. **vs 10**

Then Eliashib the high priest and the other priests started to rebuild at the Sheep Gate. **3:1**

When We Partner in God's Mission

Our enemies know us

The problem will always be greater than us

Our response defines us

The Players

Sanballat the Horonite (Moabite) - Governor of Samaria

Tobiah the Ammonite - Governor of Ammon

Geshem the Arab - Official Southern Judah

Sanballat was very angry when he learned that we were rebuilding the wall. He flew into a **rage** and **mocked the Jews**, saying in front of his friends and the **Samaritan army officers**, “**What does this bunch of poor, feeble Jews think they’re doing?** Do they think they can build the wall in a single day by just **offering a few sacrifices?** Do they actually think they can make something of stones from a rubbish heap—and charred ones at that?” Tobiah the Ammonite, who was standing beside him, remarked, “**That stone wall would collapse if even a fox walked along the top of it!**” **4:1-3**

if you magnify the problem, you minimize the God

Then I prayed, “Hear us, our God, for we are being mocked. May their scoffing fall back on their own heads, and may they themselves become captives in a foreign land! Do not ignore their guilt. Do not blot out their sins, for they have provoked you to anger here in front of the builders.” **vs 4-5**

what we work on with enthusiasm is
what we find important or pleasurable

At last the wall was completed to height around the entire city, for the people had worked with **enthusiasm.** **vs 6**

But when **Sanballat** and **Tobiah** and the **Arabs**,
Ammonites, and **Ashdodites** heard that the work was
going ahead and that the gaps in the wall of
Jerusalem were being repaired, **they were furious**.
They all made plans to come and fight against
Jerusalem and throw us into confusion **vs 7-8**

But we prayed to our God **and guarded** the
city day and night to protect ourselves. **vs 9**

we pray and act
belief before behaviour

Then the people of Judah began to complain,
“The workers are getting tired, and there is
so much rubble to be moved. We will never be
able to build the wall by ourselves.” **vs 10**

External attacks reveal internal doubt

Then as I looked over the situation, I called together the **nobles** and the rest of the **people** and said to them, “Don’t be afraid of the enemy! **Remember the Lord**, who is great and glorious, and fight for your **brothers**, your **sons**, your **daughters**, your **wives**, and your **homes!**” vs 14

Nehemiah’s solution appeals to the leadership and the people, **unites** them as a community

We worked early and late, from sunrise to sunset.
And half the men were always on guard. I also told
everyone living outside the walls to stay in Jerusalem.
That way they and their servants could help with
guard duty at night and work during the day. During
this time, none of us— not I, nor my relatives, nor my
servants, nor the guards who were with me— ever
took off our clothes. We carried our weapons with us
at all times, even when we went for water. vs 21-23

Personal note: What I love most about
Nehemiah is that he leads by example

What is the problem that Nehemiah is trying to solve?

They are in great trouble and disgrace. 1:3

The wall was a **symptom** of the problem

Our enemies know us

The God of heaven will help us succeed. **We, his servants**, will start rebuilding this wall. But you have no share, legal right, or historic claim in Jerusalem. **1:20**

The problem will always be greater than us

Don't be afraid of the enemy! **Remember the Lord**, who is great and glorious, and fight for your brothers, your sons, your daughters, your wives, and your homes! **4:14**

Our response defines us

for days I mourned, fasted, and prayed to the God of heaven **1:4 ff**

Nehemiah's Response

for days I mourned, fasted, and
prayed to the God of heaven **1:4**

listen to my **prayer**! Look down and see me **praying** **1:6**

O Lord, please hear my **prayer**! Listen to the **prayers** **1:11**

With a **prayer** **2:4**

Then I **prayed** **4:4**

But we **prayed** **4:9**

It's easy to have faith when everything is going great. The real test of faith is when you're facing something **that only your faith in God will get you through.** **Geoffrey Canada**

Dear friends, don't be **surprised** at the fiery trials you are going through, as if something strange were happening to you. **1 Peter 4:12**

Xenizo: to receive as a guest, to entertain, to surprise or astonish by the strangeness and novelty of a thing

we invite/receive surprise because
we have misunderstood the situation