

Scientific Approach, Exercise 3

One major tenet of G-S is called the scientific approach. We can apply it to just about any situation, but it contains a number of required steps.

The first step consists of gathering available data. Some of the data can be classified as factual, i.e., we can examine it with our own senses in the present time. Other data, that which someone tells us, or data which we believe we know, we consider inferential. (Most of us would not pack a parka and snow boots for a vacation trip to New York City in July). Even though second hand data appears to be true to fact, we must remember that it must be judged on the assumption and inferential scale. If you do not know the essence of this scale, ask your teacher to put an example on the board.

Once we gather all available data, we evaluate it and draw our conclusions. Our first data may be ambiguous. It may support several different conclusions, which can only be narrowed down with additional data. No matter the source of our data, the scientific approach dictates that we gather additional data to confirm or modify our first conclusions.

Example:

Over the weekend, you have just moved into a development that has an owner's association. You pay dues, and they mow your lawn, shovel your walks (of snow), trim your trees, etc.

On Monday, you open your front door, and there rests the morning newspaper. The physical presence of the paper we would call factual data. Could it be the previous owner had not cancelled his subscription? No. The house was empty for a month. If this belonged to the previous owner, there would be a stack of newspapers. Probably a mistake.

On Tuesday and Wednesday, another morning paper appeared. On Thursday you decide that this is no mistake, but probably another 'free' service from the owner's association.

On Friday, the morning paper greets you at the door, only today it has a note attached.

Welcome to the neighborhood
We thought that you would like
the daily morning newspaper.
We have delivered it to you
this week for free.
Joan and Chuck's News Service

If you would like to continue receiving
the morning newspaper for \$7.50 per week,
call 555 1255

Now you have new data. Since it consists of a note, we will still consider this data as inferential. This data explains the reason you received the newspaper, and the note instructs you how to subscribe. There is also a strong inference in this note. What is it?

Although the note does not say so, I believe it strongly infers that if you don't come up with the \$7.50 per week, you will no longer find the paper at your door.

The last data, the note, did not negate the original data (the paper at the door). It simply negated your earlier conclusion that this was a freebie. The system works.