If 2 Heads are Better than One…

If 2 heads are better than 1, then…3 is even better, right? If so, let's add 4, 5, 6…20! That's surely better…right? Maybe. Maybe not!

If all those "heads" think the same, no new ideas get injected into the group and a very narrow range of solutions to problems is found. The odds of the group coming up with the "same old thing" are high.

If the "heads" have a variety of background, education, exposure to varieties of ideas, we're more likely to come up with a range of solutions. Diverse groups have long proven to deliver the best results than.

Beware that groups which may have be diverse can evolve to behave as a homogenous one. They may evolve into "group think" and discount new approaches by saying "we've always done it this way".

To find new solutions on tough technical problems, "more diverse heads" really helps. To find these "heads", *a key question to ask* is "***who else has solved (or even worked on) this problem?***"

Think about the functional mapping in "Finding Order in Chaos - Part 2". I ask, "who else knows how to enable this function or has used this technology"?

When I do, I often have an insight. A major insight – one that inspire a new direction.

How broadly should we look? Obviously, it's convenient to ask others in your company/university. But, it may not be the best. Keep in mind "group think" and don't limit yourself to "comfortable, well-known peers". Ask people you don't know.

I've found it ***most helpful*** *when I look* ***far outside*** *my normal realm*. For example, once I was working on diapers and trying to reduce leakage (keeping baby's pee and poo inside). I had studied how others had done this, and most people have gravitated to very similar approaches over time. I asked myself "who else has to succeed at the function of keeping liquid from passing beyond point A to point B"? I realized this is a critical function in many other industries…such as construction (keeping buildings from leaking), automotive (keeping oil, coolant, etc. inside the engine), and more.

So, I studied "how to they do it?". And, I was able to group their approaches into a few logical groups based on how the approaches worked

Confidentiality limits prevent me from sharing details, but *I came to a very important conclusion*. ***"We'd been doing it all wrong…for years."***

That led me to a solution that saved money, improved performance, and eliminated the possibility of one of our most common manufacturing defects. I didn't use the "exact" solutions I found in other industries. Instead, their approaches inspired one in my field.

This is the power of looking outside our comfort zone. And, while the example I used was looking at how humans solve the problem – looking at how nature solves problems can provide tremendous insights.

Leverage all you can outside your industry…after all, 2 heads ***with diverse thinking*** are better than 1.

