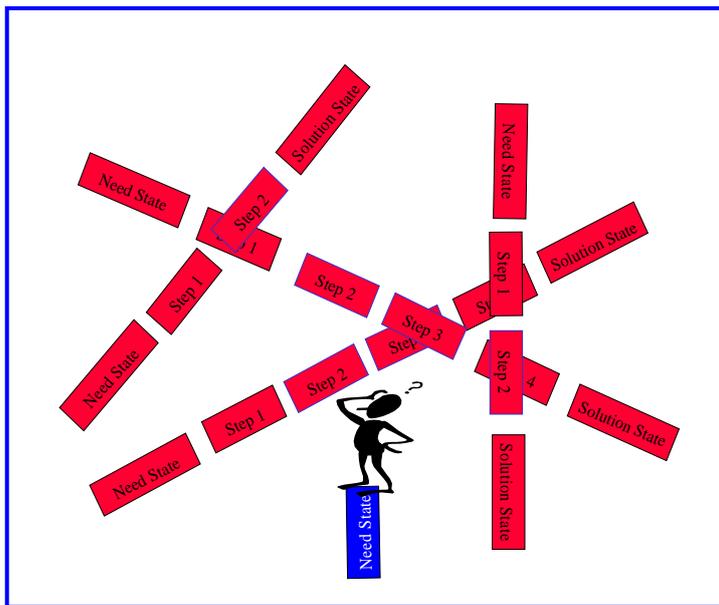


Step 4 - Analogous Train of Thought

Now we want to cast the general train of thought out to other people to solicit their analogous trains of thought. We enable this by asking them to fill in "That's like..." By exposing a person to only the general train of thought you free them to offer whatever comes to mind, without the mental hurdle of trying to solve for the solution. This can be done easily via email.



These analogous trains of thought come from our experiences. When you answer "that's like...", the offerings can come from any part of a person's experience - not just limited to their work.

"That's like the way..."
"That's like how..."
"That's like the time..."

Our zipper general train of thought was: "An enduring system that creates temporary fastening through the interlocking of one side to the other." It is reasonable to think when asked to contribute an analogy a person in the zipper company could have said "That's like at the end of my hunting trip when I have to remove burrs to keep my clothes from sticking to each other."

It is very important not to judge the analogy, and since it is simply that, just an analogy and not the potential solution, it is easy draw out these analogous contributions. This part is thinking "outside the box" because it is free from the specifics of your original, specific train of thought. But remember, all we have done here is provide the intersection of two previously unconnected trains of thoughts. We have provided the opportunity for breakthrough ideas to emerge, and the next two steps will make that happen.