

Thoughts on Critiques and Critics

Why Are the Articles in TRIZ-Journal Subject to Mockery?

Pentti Soderlin
Management Consultant
Helsinki
Finland
pentti.soderlin@netlife.fi

Introduction

Since November 1996 the TRIZ-Journal has been a forum to those interested and enthusiastic about the TRIZ methodology. A brief look at the archives shows that from the slow start with some 1 to 3 articles per month we now have a monthly score of 8 to 10 articles if we include book reviews and letters to editors. In the very beginning it seems that the editors and some frequent authors were the prime contributors but soon many others were involved.

Who have the authors been? It seems obvious that most of them have either something to share with other TRIZ analysts or business to do with this fascinating methodology. Some articles describe successful cases; some others try to develop TRIZ further, to 'improve' TRIZ by their very own overjoyed thoughts. Some are trying to explain everything through the eyeglasses of TRIZ; some have simply misunderstood the content of various TRIZ heuristics.

I have understood that the editors of this electrical journal have their daily work and living to do. So there are no hired hands but voluntary work for the Journal? This has of course pros and cons. Without any cost we have a monthly bulletin, but alas, also very different kinds of articles from the quality point of view. We have easy to read articles with a clear message, but also those very thorough and boring ones not so easy to find the kernel of the poodle and the value added.

The question arises how are the authors and the articles chosen? How is their value for the TRIZ society evaluated? Are these articles beyond any critiques? Are the critics objective or do they have fuel from personal ambitions, hatred or disappointments? Before answering these questions I will refer to a recent conference where I heard some ideas of human behaviour and trust in man.

A Philosopher's Favourite Theme: Trust in Man

Super Register, Weekday and Negative Register

According to the philosopher [1] we ourselves as human beings are greater than the Weekday allows. There exists a Super Register, which includes Greatness, Joy, Splendour and the ability to Regenerate, and which makes it possible to be more than we realise. "Wouldn't it be great if we would create something really worth of?" This is simply idealism and enthusiasm.

On the other hand there exists the Sub Register, which bears all negative factors, all disappointments, fear of personal failures; realised either in the past or possible in the future. We figure our reality, our Weekday, on the terms of the Sub Register, by the negative factors.

SUPER REGISTER

- greatness
- joy
- splendour
- regeneration

-----ceiling preventing us to be greater than the Weekday being

WEEKDAY

- we ourselves as humans (in general greater as the Weekday allows)
- our daily work, routine
- hard lessons: “Siberia rules”

SUB OR NEGATIVE REGISTER

- negative factors
- past experiences, failures, lost opportunities
- laughter and mockery
- the reality, Weekday, is dominated by the terms of negative register

The Question Arises: Is Enthusiasm or Kindle Desirable?

“In general the answer is Yes, but what comes to me, definitively No”. This is our everyday philosophy. The reason is simple: either it means extra burden in form of additional projects or we want to minimize the risk of laughter. The past rules: previous losses, disappointments, persecution of religion; all these no matter how old, even from early childhood or what comes to groups of people, religion or race, hundreds of years of age; they still rule.

The ‘Yes’ is however indispensable, necessary for our Regeneration, i.e.. for human growth. It creates joy, life long learning and opportunities in life and business. The “No” simply saves us from laughter, but doesn’t create anything, leaves us in the triviality, prevents our mental growth.

There Exists the Spiral of Skimp and Revenge

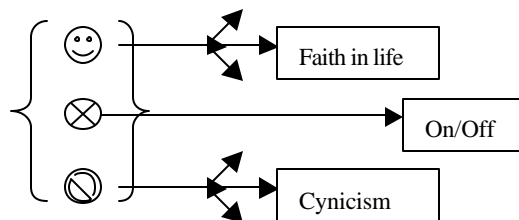
People are usually by nature positive, co-operative and willing to help. But the everyday routine teaches them other kind of behaviour, that of Skimp and Revenge: “Since you didn’t help me, told the useful information or necessary facts that could have helped me, I in turn will not help you”. “Since you were mean to me, I will revenge on you later somehow.” “Since you did revenge, I will continue to be further mean to you”. The worst example of revenge and counter revenge is that in Near East: the spiral has no end.

There is no question about the harmful factor of Skimp and Revenge. Especially it concerns people in everyday teams or working groups, married couples etc. It is useful to understand that people don’t do this on their own initiative, usually its mutual. The Weekday with its previous experiences is the origin for the Skimp and Revenge.

The Interior World of Man

A man sees himself via the point of view of an Adult Play. There are the Positive button, On/Off button and the Negative button.

The Adult Play



The interior of a man is filled with Dreams, Believes and Love. If somebody touches the upper button it gives you power and faith in life. It is the positive energy button. When e.g. somebody praises your driving skills, you could perhaps have an analogy of being almost as good as Formula 1 stars Michael Schumacher or Mika Hakkinen, guys from similar humble backgrounds, just like you.

The lowest button is that of cynicism. The enthusiasm has been followed by failure. If somebody touches this button by some hint of failure, it kills your ability to regeneration, to be greater than you are normally, and fills you with cynical attitude to anything new or different, and prevents you from regenerating. In TRIZ terms: this is the button of mental inertia.

It is very well known fact, that children can be utmost cruel and sometimes also utmost nobles. It is also amazing how cynical and mean even adults can be, no matter how high academic degree they have.

The button in between is that of On/Off. To push that one means that you are hurting the most sensitive values of the person, that of his personal being, his family, religion, or anything that is sacred to him. Once you have done it, the person will not respond to anything from you positively, but rather with hatred and anger. Sometimes you might push this button unintentionally and the damage might hardly be rectified. The worst case is usually that you do it on purpose. What can you expect to get? Maybe big laughter from the audience? Or simply also mock yourself in their eyes?

Human Warmth

How can you show your warmth or empathy? How to push the positive button? There is a simple five-phase procedure:

1. EXPRESS YOUR INTEREST

This means a positive attitude. It gives signals with positive charge. The person will be enthusiastic with such a small courtesy. The interest may concern his duties, family or hobbies, whatever he is keen on. This gives him more positive energy.

2. PRESENCE

This means that you are present in his world, interested in those things this person values.

3. LISTENING

People might have something in their mind. Do we listen to them, share the views, or do we ignore them?

4. RECOGNITION

Everybody needs recognition for a good performance. It can be as simple as qualified service in everyday job. Recognition has bonus effects: it reflects in the behaviour of man in different directions, maybe to one's family life, as love and tender of one's children and wife.

5. PRAISE

Give praise when people have earned it. Avoid excessive praise, it is simply manipulative and will turn the opposite!

Analogy to TRIZ-JOURNAL

Are the Authors Contributing in Super Register?

What has the preceding text to do with TRIZ-JOURNAL? Well, I find TRIZ-Journal authors eager to be in Super Register, to engage them. This has something to do with Ideal Final Result. What would be the Ideal Solution to the TRIZ society? To contribute to those things one has found to be of value for him. To see own article published, to gain something intangible. To create value for himself in business, to change experience and to join the TRIZ society are possible causes. Aren't these all Super Register things and good things per se?

Weekday Reality

The innovativeness needs something to avoid mental inertia. The "ceiling" above Weekday is hard to break. Further not all the articles have significant value to all readers. Even misunderstandings of basic

heuristics have occurred. But nevertheless people have tried to contribute to something, which has value for them.

To edit a bulletin or journal is not an easy job. A careful selection of the topics and articles is requested. How can this be done, if the editors receive nothing but personal joy from their job? **There should be a board of editors to be more selective with the articles published.** This should not be any problem since we have probably many qualified volunteers and the Internet to eliminate the geographical distances. **If there are not enough worthwhile articles, the Journal should be only bimonthly.**

The editors have clearly two roles: that of editor's and the one of Public Relations or marketing with own objectives: selling his or her services. **These roles however are supposed to be kept separate.**

Articles containing only moderate contribution to the methodology or even misunderstandings of the basic concepts, should of course be rewritten or simply be unpublished. To publish these articles gives ammunition to those who see their primarily duty to mock whoever they find mediocre or fallible. This doesn't hurt the authors only but the whole TRIZ society including the mockers themselves. **What would a thoughtful reader and a potential client think about that kind of service provider who in public lowers himself on such a mockery?**

One of the basic ideas in developing TRIZ was, that in order to be included in the TRIZ heuristics, the new ideas should be tested and verified in several cases. **I find this principle neglected. The TRIZ society needs to reorganize this validation procedure.** Without this procedure there will be a complete mess of heuristics.

Those TRIZ books or articles giving false testimonies or counterfeit results should be criticized hard and severe. **Unfortunately even the world of many other sciences contains these kinds of hustlers. Does the same apply to the TRIZ society and methodology?** E.g. how to promote the selling of your book best? By letting somebody, at the best your friend or even better your business partner or associate to do the critique. Result: most praising critique, but you can also be accused of fraud.

There are 75 authorized TRIZ Masters. Unfortunately there seems to be mutual disagreements amongst them and lack of co-ordination. **They should however be the first to contribute. They owe it to Altshuller. But do they understand?**

Reference:

[1] Esa Saarinen, Philosopher: Conference lecture on "Learning, good life and human growth", Eira Adult High School, Helsinki, Finland, August 2003.