Welcome to
Interconnecting Thinking to Action:
An overview of Edward de Bono’s Six Action Shoes

Presented by Dale S. Deardorff April 12th 2007

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Overview

Overview presentation is adapted from:

- Intro to Actions
- Six Styles of *Action*
  - Navy Formal Shoes
  - Grey Sneakers
  - Brown Brogues
  - Orange Gumboots
  - Pink Slippers
  - Purple Riding Boots
- Combination of Shoes
  - *Action* not Description
  - Simple and Practical
  - Language & Terminology
  - Conclusion
- Next *Action* Steps
Actions

Overview presentation is adapted from:

• Training of Action Skills

• Allows the breaking down of Action into six distinct modes

• Shoes imply Action…reaching a destination

• The Action needed to paint an egg shell is different from the Action needed in a boxing match.

“Do the Right Thing” are instructions that are easy to give but do not contain specific guidance.
• **Action’s** create beliefs – What is a belief:

- A belief is an idea, a hypothesis, a theory or a way at looking at the world which…..Forces us to look at the world in a way that supports that belief.

- Paranoid people use complicated logic to show that all events are directed towards themselves.

"You must be the change you wish to see in the world." ~ Mahatma Gandhi " ...
Presumptions

Overview presentation is adapted from:

• Often we assume that Action is easy and obvious – that thinking lays out the roads and decides which road should be taken.

• We may presume that it is as simple as walking along the correct road…it’s not that easy!

• Forks in the road may make it impossible to select the correct road, you only have a limited distance down the path before you have uncertainty.

Operacy is a skill of Action
Presumptions

Overview presentation is adapted from:

• Too often education is about description and analysis…. not how to act.

• Thinking is only one side of things – Action is the other side.

• Thinking is an end in itself, but usually the purpose of thinking is to chose or design a course of Action.

• The real world involves Action as well as knowledge.

Sometimes there is a distinct thinking phase and then an Action phase
Background

Overview presentation is adapted from:

- Written on a flight from London, England to Auckland, New Zealand.

- The purpose of Thinking is to chose or design a course of *Action*!

- Sometimes there is a distinct Thinking phase & then an *Action* phase.

- At other times Thinking and *Action* are intertwined so that Thinking takes place in the course of *Action*.

*Situations require different styles of Action*
Self-Organizing Systems

Overview presentation is adapted from:

• Each pair of Action shoes is assigned a different color and covers one particular style or idiom of Action.

• Provides a framework thru which a person can become familiar with different types of situations & then uses this familiarity to react suitably in similar situations.

• The brain works as a self-organizing system in which information arranges itself into patterns – not unlike rain on a landscape. Experience follows these patterns just as rain follows streams.

The Mind sees what it is prepared to see & notices what it is ready to notice
Coded Communication

Overview presentation is adapted from:

• Many police forces have a “code” for situations so that communication can be simplified (411, 911, Amber Alert).

• This useful communication shorthand sets up both expectations and *Action* patterns.

• The “coding” describes the nature of the situation but not the *Action* required.

• Examples would be CDR, PDR, DTC, EAC – the process defines the individual understanding.

*We need process standards to establish common understanding*
Introduction

Overview presentation is adapted from:

Navy Formal Shoes – used for situations requiring routines and formal procedures

Grey Sneakers – used for situations requiring exploration, investigation and collection of evidence

Purple Riding Boots – used for situations requiring authority and command

Orange Gumboots – used for situations requiring Danger and emergency action

Pink Slippers – used for situations requiring care, compassion and attention to human feelings and sensitivities

Brown Brogues – used for situations requiring practicality and pragmatism
Introduction

Overview presentation is adapted from:

• Must be different colors from Six Hats so that the organization can use both aspects of the metaphoric system without confusion.

• Visualizing the *Action* shoes in color and shape is an important part of the learning process.

• The “Six Shoe” framework indicates the type of behavior that may be needed in a *Simple* situation.

*Situations are rarely pure – they often require a combination of two types of Action.*
Navy Formal Shoes
Routines & Repeatable Procedure’s

• Routines help to avoid making a dangerous mistake – make comprehensive checklists.

• Automobile drivers can not choose what side of the road to drive on (4-way stops: The driver on the right side is supposed to have the right of way).

• Standard Forms & Routines simplify life and allow us to cope with complexity.

• In organizations the protocols are defined by the individuals.

Computers use Routines in order to communicate with each other - so do people in an organization
Many people are irritated by routine because they tend to stifle initiative and creativity and make for inflexibility.

It is easier to use a routine checklist than to figure everything out each time (Establish Processes).

Society & Organizations need rules, laws, procedures and routines or they find themselves in Confusion and Chaos.

Doctors go through a diagnostic routine with patients to be sure they have covered all disease possibilities.

*Sometimes routine helps us avoid making dangerous mistakes*
• The Brain sets up patterns so we can effectively with the understand the world - This is the “Nature of Perception”.

• Instead of analyzing each new experience we recognize the situation by using a perceptual pattern.

• You know exactly the next step because you are following a known routine.

In some ways Routines provide freedom
Navy Formal Shoes

Routines & Repeatable Procedure’s

Overview presentation is adapted from:

There is a difference between:

A Restrictive Structure  A Liberating Structure
A Railway Line  A Ladder
A Locked Room  A Cup

A Mathematical Notion

LETS EXPLAIN HOW

A Routine is an Action Pattern that has been laid down in advance

2007 Forum
Some basic questions can be asked about Routines:

- Which Routine should be used here?
- What are the steps of this Routine?
- Is it necessary to combine Routines?
- Is some flexibility necessary?
- Where can flexibility be used?
- Can this Routine be improved?
- Can I check the application of this Routine?
- What output or result do I expect?

_The better a Routine is known, the less trouble there is in using that Routine (NASA Countdown)_
NAVY Formal Shoe Situation

Storm batters shuttle Atlantis

By Traci Watson, USA TODAY

Hailstones as big as golf balls put more than 7,000 dings into space shuttle Atlantis’ fuel tank Monday night and may delay the ship’s launch from March until June, NASA officials said Tuesday.

The news of the fuel tank problem came the same day a safety panel released a report warning that the International Space Station faces a "high safety risk" from small space rocks and space debris.

Wayne Hale, the shuttle’s program manager, said the storm did "the worst damage we've ever seen from hail" on the tank, which is covered in foam insulation with roughly the texture of a picnic cooler.

Not all of the thousands of dings in the foam will need to be fixed, said John Chapman, the tank manager. The deeper holes will be filled, and abrasions to the shuttle’s heat-shielding tiles will be repaired.

GRAPHIC: How hail forms

That means Atlantis won't launch as planned during March to help finish the space station, the half-built scientific laboratory orbiting the Earth. Hale said if repairs are completed quickly, it could be rescheduled for late April.

Hale said the delay would not affect the shuttle's ability to make 16 flights to build and supply the space station in the next 4½ years as planned.

According to the new report, commissioned by Congress, once the station is completed, there is a 9% risk it could be destroyed or its crew killed by a collision with space debris. The $100 billion lab also faces an 18% risk that damage from space debris would force humans to abandon it.

Protective panels for the station's most vulnerable sections have been sitting inside the station waiting for installation for months, even years. Some are scheduled to be hung outside the station in early 2007, where not until...
Grey Sneakers
Investigation and Information

Overview presentation is adapted from:

• You must ask...at this moment – what is the central purpose of my activity (to collect information).

This action depends upon several factors:
• What is the time pressure – is there a hurry or will delay have negative consequences?
• What are the dangers of precipitate Actions or what are the benefits of quick Action?
• What is the trade off between more thorough data collection and the need for Action?

Supports or leads to other Actions
• Grey Action mode implies removing the fog of ignorance and includes both collecting information and thinking.

• You don’t know what you will do next – what you find determines your next step.

• Similar to conduction of conversation that may turn in any direction.

There is no desire to be noticed or even to affect the other people.
• Grey Action mode includes all activities that are necessary in order to obtain the information.

• Thinking is involved in collecting information which may trigger ideas…which may trigger an information search.

• Information is not a substitute for ideas or thinking - the key is to sustain an active interplay between thinking & information collecting.

Thinking directs information collecting & makes the best use of what has been collected.
Grey Sneakers
Investigation and Information

Overview presentation is adapted from:

- Sneakers are quiet to allow listening & exploring.
- Casual and relaxed with energy directed at getting information from surroundings.
- Includes both collecting Information & Thinking.
- You don’t know what you are going to find…what you find determines your next step.

Similar to conducting a conversation that may turn in many directions
• Persistence is probably the most important characteristic needed for the Grey sneaker mode.

• Grey Sneaker Action Style also includes thinking in general.

• **Action** is required to collect information, and skill is involved in deciding “HOW” to collect the information & making the best use of it.
Grey Sneakers

Investigation and Information

Examples would be............

- A Scientist pursuing a theory
- Investigative Journalist
- Detective solving a crime
- Market researchers trying to assess a new product
- Pollsters
- Investment Bankers contemplating a takeover
- Tax inspectors

Overview presentation is adapted from:

Anyone who is Exploring Situation’s
Grey Sneakers Situation

More fliers face long runway waits

Updated 1d, 12h ago | Comment | Recommend

By Marilyn Adams, USA TODAY

Long waits on the taxiway of two-plus hours by domestic airliners nearly doubled in January from a year earlier, federal data released Monday show.

The report by the U.S. Bureau of Transportation Statistics says 693 flights sat for more than two hours on taxiways before taking off in January. Although that's just 9.5 incidents for every 10,000 domestic flights, the number was up from 296 in January 2006. The January 2007 rate was lower than the overall 2006 rate of more than 10 such incidents for every 10,000 flights operated.

The report does not include flights that waited on taxiways and then were canceled, so the number of flights with long taxiway waits is probably higher.

The monthly accounting from the unit of the Department of Transportation comes amid growing public and congressional concern about how many flights are forced to wait hours after leaving the gate, especially during severe weather.

On Valentine's Day last month, nine JetBlue (JBLU) flights sat for more than six hours in an ice storm at New York's John F. Kennedy airport. The storm stranded hundreds of passengers, for up to 10 hours, prompting calls for federal regulation to prevent recurrences.

FIND MORE STORIES IN: American Airlines | JetBlue | Long | John F Kennedy International Airport | Tim Wagner | Expressjet

Describe what your Action plan would be in small teams and out brief
Brown Brogues
Practical Behavior & Flexibility

Overview presentation is adapted from:

- Do what is Sensible and Practical at every moment.

- The general skill of “Operacy” (Doing) are best illustrated by Brogues Action.

- There is no rigidity about Brogue Action - You can do *What* can be done…and adapt *Why* you can do it.

- Good principles do not include “the End justifies the Means” – a concern for the Truth is both a Principle & a Value.

*Action without Principles is dangerous and intolerable*
Brown Brogues
Practical Behavior & Flexibility

• Determined initially by the needs of the situation, the understanding and appreciation of the situation.

• Do the obvious – except in a conflict situation where surprise may have a benefit.

• Avoid letting the situation get out of control – try to control the situation so that you are not carried along or have to respond to the initiatives of others.

Have plans but don’t be trapped by them
Brown Brogues
Practical Behavior & Flexibility

Overview presentation is adapted from:

• This means trying out different perspectives & establishing priorities.

• Priorities set Objectives & Guidelines for Action

  - What do you want to achieve?
  - What matters most?
  - What needs to be done first?

Practicality is an acknowledgement of what is actually Do-Able
• Brogue Action is a combination of Good Values, Good Sense & Good Principles.

• Good Sense is a combination of Sensitivity, Priorities and Practicality.

• Sensitivity means clear understanding of the situation and the people involved.

Asking what is the most effective course of action is a good Brogue habit
Efficiency and Effectiveness are not the same thing – efficiency is a balance between input and output.

Effectiveness means making sure the Resources are available to get the results you want.

Effectiveness does not mean inefficiency – it means focusing directly on what you want to achieve.

Brogue Action is concerned with getting effective results.
Brown Brogue Situation

Fox's '5th Grader' makes smart moves

By Gary Strauss, USA TODAY

What makes a game show a hit?

Start with the name.

Fox's Are You Smarter Than a 5th Grader? (tonight, 9 ET/PT) earned honor-roll status last week, with three episodes averaging more than 24 million viewers a night, second only to its lead-in, American Idol.

"It's a catchy title," says Shari Anne Brill, programming chief at media buyer Carat USA. "It implies that if you're not smarter than your kids, it's humiliating. That's priceless."

Clearly, 5th Grader, whose premiere Feb. 27 was the highest-rated debut on any network since 1998, gets a huge boost from Idol. Whether 5th Grader can make the grade on its own is unclear; March 15 is the first of six 8 p.m. Thursday shows untethered from Idol.

FIND MORE STORIES IN: Fox | American Idol | Mark Burnett | Who Wants to Be A Millionaire | Millionaire | Jeff Foxworthy | Host | Grader | Shari Anne Brill

But observers suggest that 5th Grader's premise — adults coming off as dummies when trying to answer grade-school questions — could vault it to the powerhouse status of NBC's Deal or No Deal and ABC's Who Wants to Be a Millionaire. "This could play any time of year," Brill says. "There are so many ways to work this."
Orange Gumboots
Safety and Danger

Overview presentation is adapted from:

• Directly concerned with emergency situations or a situation that threatens danger.

• The timeframe in an emergency is much shorter than other situations which may be unstable & suddenly become worse.

• The situation may be unappreciated and require that an Action of some sort is necessary with urgency.

In Emergency Situation’s Human lives are at risk
Orange Gumboots

Safety and Danger

Overview presentation is adapted from:

• Orange mode actions need to be designed – simply thinking of the ultimate objective is not enough.

• Alternate steps have to be generated, considered and assessed.

• The possible outcomes of each step must be examined.

• The priorities are clear – minimize the danger – everything is assessed against this priority.

There is no room for hunches or intuition
• In the end people type crisis are solved thru shifts of perception.

• Change in perception proceeds changes in behavior & emotion.

• Because perceptions are fragile they can easily be destroyed by a false move.

• Ego’s, Pride & Turf battles are counter productive when orange mode is needed.

*Time and the use of Time are important*
Orange Gumboots
Safety and Danger

The Strategic Focus becomes:

- Set up methods of decision making and planning
- Determine who needs to be involved
- Decide on the initial strategy
- Develop parallel strategies to minimize or prevent
- Develop & Review a variety of Action options
- Reassess the situation periodically
- Never panic or permit Panic!

Emergency Situation’s
Orange Gumboots
Safety and Danger

The Immediate Focus becomes:

- What is the existing danger?
- What are the potential dangers?
- How can the dangers be **Removed**?
- How can the dangers be **Contained**?
- How can the dangers be **Minimized**?

*Think ahead to deal with eventualities*
Describe what your Action plan would be in small teams and out brief
Feeling has value, but not as much as feelings put into *Action*.

Pink Slipper Mode is not just about being sensitive and feeling the right feelings: it is about *Action*.

What matters most is not the actual feeling of empathy or sympathy but the intention to care and the actions that arise from this intention.

Caring is a human emotion and not an intellectual exercise.

*Caring actions are designed to show caring and offer help*
**Pink Slippers**  
Attention to Human Feelings & Sensitivities

Overview presentation is adapted from:  

- Changes in attitudes occur in people who view videotapes that illustrate poor customer service.

- When this sort of behavior is highlighted and captured people tend to avoid it.

- Caring means what it says – small gestures can be important.

- Using the Slippers mode does not mean play-acting, being artificial or insincere.

*The practical nature of actions will vary with situations (Listening)*
There are several possible levels of caring:

- Intention: The desire to care
- Feeling: Empathy and Sympathy
- Gesture: Visible actions that show caring
- Action: Actual help and caring

You can not order people to feel Caring, but you can ask them to carry out caring actions
In their perceptions some people draw a line around the real people for whom they should care – outside that line are the enemy!

This is a brutal form of the “Us versus Them” mentality.

Pink slipper action removes these lines and barriers in order to realize that everyone deserves human care.

Not easy especially if you expect equal consideration in return.

The Pink Slipper action applies to everyone!
Pink Slippers
Attention to Human Feelings & Sensitivities

Overview presentation is adapted from:

• People caring for people is the essence of Family.

• People caring for people defines a Successful Community.

• People caring for people is the basis of Civilization.

• Pink shoes or boots are a little absurd and difficult to visualize.

• Slippers suggest comfort, and Humanity fits directly with the Pink action mode.

It's difficult to visualize being aggressive in pink slippers
Pink Slippers Situation

Describe what your Action plan would be in small teams and out brief
Purple Riding Boots
Leadership and Command

- Purple is an Imperial color and suggests authority.
- An Official position is not necessarily a superior one.
- A person may be in an Official role because there seems to be a need for that role and for having someone play that role.
- Organizations require that decisions be made and carried out to function effectively and efficiently.

Riding boot action mode indicates that a person is acting in the capacity of an official role.
Purple Riding Boots
Leadership and Command

- The role of a judge is to administer justice - a good judge carries out that role properly even though in their private life they may not act fairly or reasonable.

- The Official role is played by someone with expert training
  - The doctor has studied medicine
  - The lawyer has studied law

- Other Official roles, however, have no grounding in expert training

The Purple boot action style is Authoritarian but Civilized
Purple Riding Boots

Leadership and Command

Police Officers
Fire Fighters
Judges
School Principles & Ambassadors carry out the functions of their Official roles.

• The Official role gives authority and power to some people and not to others.

• Even in communes that actively resists bureaucratic hierarchy people usually perform temporary Official roles.

No role takes a person above the law – not even the role of the President of the United States
Purple Riding Boots
Leadership and Command

• Quite ordinary people become judges and quickly learn to act with the wisdom & dignity of a judge.

• Behavior is guided by the behavior expected of the role.

• There are two main requirements for carrying out Purple actions
  - The behavior must be clearly signaled
  - The behavior must be consistent

The general principle is that if orders are illegal or criminal they should not be carried out.
Purple Riding Boots
Leadership and Command

• Consistency & Purple boot signaling are complimentary – you cannot switch IN and OUT as suits you!

• In the Purple action mode the person performs the role without referring to formal steps.

• On occasion there also may be a close synergy between the Purple action mode and the Orange action mode because the Leadership and Authority conferred by the role may be useful in emergency situations.

With the power of the role also goes the responsibility of that role
Purple Riding Boots Situation

Anna Nicole Smith burial case heads to appeal

Updated 2/27/2007 6:41 PM ET

WEST PALM BEACH, Fla. (AP) — An appeals court was set to hear arguments Wednesday about whether Anna Nicole Smith should be buried in the Bahamas or Texas — a dispute that has dragged on for more than two weeks after the pinup's death.

In filings Tuesday with the Florida 4th District Court of Appeal, attorneys for Smith's boyfriend and her infant daughter claimed Smith's estranged mother was trying to "place her in death where she never wanted to be in life" — Texas.

The three judges assigned to the case haven't said when they will rule. Smith, 39, died in a Florida hotel Feb. 8.

Florida Circuit Judge Larry Seidlin last week gave control of Smith's body to the attorney for her 5-month-old daughter, Dannielynn. The judge said he wanted to preserve Smith's dignity by having the funeral occur quietly after being told by the medical examiner that her body was decomposing.

The girl's attorney, Richard Milstein, quickly said he would bury Smith in the Bahamas, where witnesses said she wanted to be laid to rest.

But Smith's estranged mother, Virgie Arthur, filed a petition Monday challenging the decision. In filings Tuesday, she claimed that Seidlin had no authority under Florida law to grant custody of Smith's body to the girl's advocate, and that she is the "legally recognized person" to take her daughter's remains.

Smith's death has also sparked a dispute over her infant daughter. Smith's boyfriend, Howard K. Stern, is listed on the birth certificate, but two other men also claim to be the girl's father.

Describe what your Action plan would be in small teams and out brief
Combinations

Overview presentation is adapted from:

• Use of combinations may indicate that either action shoe is required.

• One action shoe may reveal that another complimentary shoe would allow you to discover something important.

• There is no formal framework for combining the different modes of Action.

The shoe metaphor fits for wearing a pair of action shoes

2007 Forum
Having two shoes in a pair provides flexibility – six shoes have 15 possible combinations
Combinations

Overview presentation is adapted from:

• Balanced Combination: The situation demands an equal measure of two different **Action** modes.

• An Uncertain Situation: The balance of **Action** may tip one way or the other. Two colors are needed to cover the possibilities.

• A Modifying Situation: One **Action** mode dominates but another **Action** mode acts as a modifier.

*In practice, these situations are rarely pure examples of one or another action mode.*
**Action Mode Summary**

Overview presentation is adapted from:

- NAVY Blue suggests routines, drills and formality.

- Routines can be improved and may need to changing but that is a separate *Action*.

- Don’t seek to improve a routine while your using it.

- Once you have switched into the NAVY Shoe action mode then apply the routine as perfectly as possible.

*NAVY Formal Shoes*
Grey suggests grey matter of the brain. Grey also suggests fog and mist.

Sneakers are quiet and casual.

It may be necessary to have a hunch, a theory, or a hypothesis to start collecting information.

The purpose of information collection is to be as comprehensive and neutral as possible: it is not to support your hypothesis.
Brown is the color of the earth, and the *Action* style is down to earth.

The Brogue is a hard-wearing shoe suitable for most occasions.

Moment-to-moment adjustment and flexibility in response to the situation are called for.

Behavior is guided by objectives, priorities and basic values and principles.
Action Mode Summary

Overview presentation is adapted from:

- Orange is the color of danger, fires and explosions.

- Gumboots are worn by fire fighters and emergency crews.

- When situations are unstable, unpredictable and likely to get worse, urgent *Action* is required.

- Determine who is in charge and establish communication between the different parties involved.

Orange Gumboots

2007 Forum
• Pink is a gentle, feminine color, Slippers represent comfort.

• The prime consideration is that People matter as People.

• Listening is an important part of Caring.

• Understanding the perceptions and values of others is a key part of caring. Understanding precedes appropriate actions.
Action Mode Summary

Overview presentation is adapted from:

• Purple is the traditional color of authority as in ancient Rome. Riding boots suggest a special function.

• Actions must be consistent with the duties, obligations and expectations of that role. Within this framework initiatives are possible.

• Once you have indicated you are acting in an official capacity, be consistent and don’t keep switching back and forth between official and unofficial roles.

Purple Riding Boots
Final Action Shoe’s Situation

By Traci Watson, USA TODAY

WASHINGTON — Al Gore returned today to the Congress where he once served, touting new ideas for attacking global warming and taking questions from some of his biggest supporters — and most persistent critics.

Fresh from winning an Academy Award for An Inconvenient Truth, his documentary on global warming, Gore implored members of Congress to take action on the problem and proposed an immediate freeze on the emissions of the gases responsible for the Earth’s rising temperature.

‘HOT’ TOPICS: Purpose found off the campaign trail

“What we’re facing now is a crisis that’s by far the most serious we’ve ever faced,” Gore told a meeting of the House committees on energy and science. “We do not have time to play around with this. We do not have the luxury of playing political football.”

Gore, a former Democratic presidential nominee, vice president, senator and House member, has made global warming a personal crusade. He long has warned that dramatic climate changes in upcoming years, caused largely by increased carbon dioxide in the atmosphere, will trigger a cascading series of problems, including rising ocean levels, more dangerous weather patterns and widespread flooding in some areas and drought in others. He is taking questions from a Senate panel this afternoon.

WARMING WORLD

The Earth’s surface temperature has risen by more than 1°F since accurate measurements began in 1860.

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Source: University of East Anglia in Great Britain; www.mrlse.uoe.uk

By Frank Pipas and Doyle Rice, USA TODAY

Which Action Shoe(s) would you use? – create your final plan and out brief
Conclusion

Overview presentation is adapted from:

• Limited framework of the Six Action Shoes is *Inadequate* to describe extremely *Complex* Actions.

• Suitable as a *Action-to-Thinking* style framework.

• They are not analytical descriptions of behavior but style suggestions for behavior – they are concerned with what is about to be done and not what has already been done!

*Action Shoes should NOT be used to categorize people!*
For more information on *Six Action Shoes*
Please contact: The McQuaig Group
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Or from the De Bono website location:
http://www.edwarddebono.com/concept7.htm

The book can be purchased thru Amazon.com at: