



The Rule of the Power of Five (RP5)

Five fingers of a hand:

1. The Rule of the Power of Five (RP5) works with the “**ideas that fit on the fingers on one hand**”. Think of it the way we number important ideas by progressively touching each finger tip. (We will symbolize this by using a pentagon which we will call a **hand**.)
2. Five is a number that is neither too big nor too small. It is not so big that we can't get going on our thinking not so small that we are not stretched to think beyond our first idea on something. Nature has many structures this size: okra, morning glories, apples and star fruit.
3. The number five is often interpreted in the Bible as representing **grace**:
 - a. Abraham offers 5 animals in sacrifice to God in confirming the covenantal promise (Gen.15:9).
 - b. There are five ingredients in the holy anointing oil (Exodus 30:23-25) and the temple incense (Exodus 30:34).
 - c. David selected five smooth stones in order to slay Goliath (1 Samuel 17:40).
 - d. There are five offices/gifts given to equip the saints for the work of service (Ephesians 4:11,12).
 - e. The first five books of the OT, the Pentateuch, and the first five of the New Testament,
4. Hands connect together in ‘sets’ which fit together to form larger structures that make up the model or overall picture.
 - a. Some sets are ‘**parent**’ ideas that contain subsets of ideas called ‘**children**’. So any idea can be subdivided as often as needed to capture more detail.
 - b. There are also concurrent sets of ideas called ‘**siblings**’ where there is some relationship, but one is not more important than the other.
5. This rule has a number of advantages:
 - a. **It stretches our thinking**: It encourages us to playfully look for patterns and gaps. By handling these principles and sorting them according this fractal we “look for the harmonics”, the hidden relationships and important details that vibrate together. (See F&F swing illustration p.79) This allows for understanding to adapt to change as we grow/ understand and as the world changes.
 - b. **It forces constantly evaluation of possibilities** and prioritization of ideas. If everything is important nothing is important. The process is elastic and open to a continual evaluation and revision for accuracy and the best way to display the principles and their relationships.
 - c. **It allows substitution of ideas** when better ones are found. At any time in the learning you can substitute any of the 5 points for a better idea. It is never wrong to suggest a better way. (In fact you may never get to the better way if you do not pick some ideas, test them in order to see something better.)

- d. **It provides a simple starting point** instead of being paralyzed by inaction. It provides a mental structure to organize detail so you can get going with what you have, a key point of learner agency.
- e. **It allows for layers of expansion** and sub-dividing problems to guard against oversimplification. If we have more than 5 points we must subdivide the points or group them in different way. Details can still be captured by forming sub-sets , relocating or joining ideas together. If we can't number the points of an idea on one hand we must simplify. We must learn to choose.

How to use:

The first step in the RP5 to learn something or solve a problem as individuals or groups, is to “**choose the 5 most important ideas**”. These ideas can be rearranged, regrouped, subdivided or joined together at any time.

Idea categories for practicing the RP5 can always be improved but I suggest starting with:

- Want is the problem?
- What do I/we know about it already?
- What questions do I/we have about it?
- What resources (people and information) do I/we have available?
- What will I/we commit to do in the next 5 min, 5 hours, 5 weeks...."

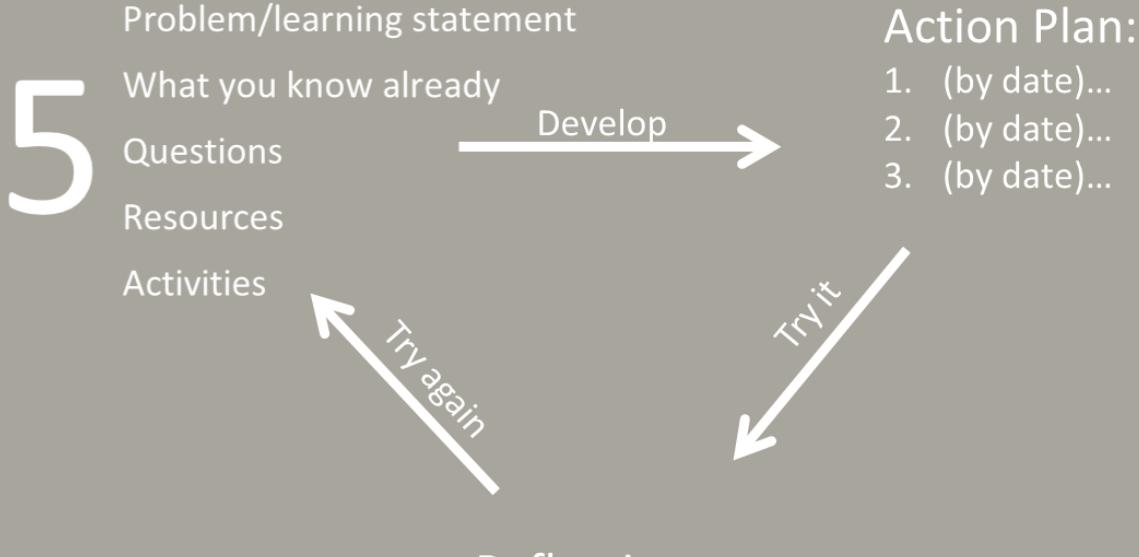
From these ideas an action plan is developed that includes who is involved, and by when what specific actions will be done. Some kind of risk together should be taken as well as constructing knowledge from the experience.

After the learning experience, take time for reflection and celebration asking such things as:

- What have we learned?
- What has worked?
- How can this be improved?
- What are new problems we have discovered?
- What have we learned about God and ourselves in the process?

Remember that apparent failure may teach us more than apparent success. After reflection and celebration of what is learned, members are release to continue their journey. They can decide to continue, reconstitute a group with others, or explore new ideas that have immerged from their collect experience. While this is written specifically for disciple-making in the church the method could be used for learning anything.

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Reflection:

What have I learned?
What has worked?
How can this be improved?
What is my new problem?

For discussion

The 1 Minute Learner offers some instruction on The Rule of the Power of Five:

<http://devedinternational.net/?p=496> , <http://devedinternational.net/?p=500> ,
<http://devedinternational.net/?p=510>

There is a RP5 worksheet that can be copied as needed:

<http://devedinternational.net/1ml/rule5worksheet.pdf>

For discussion:

1. How could you improve the RP5 worksheet?

Source: Networkchurch Appendix 1

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