Creating a Simple Personal Cloud

How to create the Evaporating Cloud

James R. Holt, Ph.D., PE
Professor
Engineering Management

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Evaporating Cloud Practice

• The method of creating the Evaporating cloud is simple. Deceptively simple. It looks so easy when others do it. But, when you try to do it, it seems much more difficult. Every time you try to put down a simple statement, all kinds of other things cloud your mind. That is one of the reasons it’s called a Cloud.

• The best way to learn Evaporating Clouds is to do one. And, then do another. And another.

• I tell students, “A cloud-a-day keeps the conflict away!”

• Your goal should be to learn to draw a good Evaporating cloud (or conflict resolution diagram as Dettmer calls it) in a minute.

• Practice doesn’t make the job any simpler, but your proficiency at thinking simply about complex things greatly improves and it becomes easier and easier to write the EC. When this happens, you know you are learning.

• Let’s start with a simple cloud right now.
Consider a Conflict

• A conflict is when you wanted to do one thing but had to do another.
• Or, when you did one thing and probably shouldn’t have.
• Seems like we just talked about this type of thing in your personal justification twig (in that first assignment, you IF...THEN... logic to show why you were justified at doing something others would have done differently). If you don’t have a better example at the moment, use that self justification twig as a start for your first cloud. Or, do another.
• Write a short story line about the conflict: _______________________
  _______________________
  _______________________

My son wants a puppy. We live in an apartment and don’t have a yard in which a dog can play. We are away from home a lot with various activities. We enjoy the freedom to leave town without having to worry about finding someone to dog-sit. On the other hand, my son feels deprived because his friends have dogs. Having a dog would help him learn to handle responsibilities. Studies have shown that kids who grew up with pets are more compassionate toward animals and humans as adults. Since my son is an only child, having a dog would give him a playmate. How should I deal with this conflict? (Paraphrased from Student.)
Let’s review the guides: Guidelines for Creating an Evaporating Cloud

- As soon as you recognize there is no room for an acceptable compromise, there is a breakdown in communication, the other side is becoming stubborn and illogical, or our relationship is in jeopardy, take a break. During the break:
  - 1. Write down WHAT I WANT (D.)
     You know this. You keep repeating it over and over.
  - 2. Write down WHAT THE OTHER SIDE WANTS (D').
     You know this. They keep repeating it over and over.
  - 3. Write down WHAT NEED I AM TRYING TO SATISFY.
     You may have to stop and think hard. Why is it you NEED the thing you want? This may be harder than you thought; the hardest part.
  - 4. Write down WHAT NEED THE OTHER SIDE IS TRYING TO SATISFY.
     If you don't know this, you haven't been listening to the other side. Think! What was their justification for their desires?
  - 5. Write down THE COMMON OBJECTIVE the one you both want.
     Yes, you have one. You are still talking aren’t you? What is the reason you are still talking to this hard headed, obnoxious other side? What do you both want to have? Why didn’t you just ‘walk away’?
Students ‘Follow the Rules’ Cloud

One way to view this conflict:

1st. What do I want?
2nd. What is the other side of the argument?
3rd. Why do I want what I want?
4th. Why is the other side important?
5th. Why I’m still considering this dilemma?

A. My son handles responsibility

B. Take care of a dog

C. Take care of the apartment

D. Buy my son a puppy

D’. Not buy my son a puppy
Let’s try another

• Story line: I’m so busy at work, I rarely get to work on things I really feel are important. My boss just came in and told me to stop what I was doing and work on something else. What should I do?

One way to view this conflict:

1st. What do I want?

2nd. What is the other side of the argument?

3rd. Why do I want what I want?

4th. Why is the other side important?

5th. Why I’m still considering this dilemma?

A. Keep my job

B. Do what is important

C. Obey the boss

D. Continue my pet project

D’. Stop work on my pet project
Check Your Evaporating Cloud

- After you have your draft Evaporating Cloud created, you need to read it back to make sure it sounds logical.
- To hear the SOUND of the logic, I suggest you read the cloud out loud. Go in a closet if this makes you nervous.
- You read the cloud from the Goal to the Conflict along both sides:
  - In order to have, A. ... I must have B. ... . In order to have B. ... I must have D. ....
  - In order to have, A. ... I must have C. .... . In order to have C. ... I must have D'. ....
- Read the conflict arrow with slightly different wording
  - I can't have both D. ... and D'. ... at the same time.
- Does it sound right?
Listening to the Logic

• You may need to adjust your reading or the wording in your Evaporating Cloud to get things right.

• In order for A. My son to learn responsibility, he must B. Take care of a dog.

• Whoops. Scratch that. What I mean is, “He must B. Be responsible with animals.

• In order for my son to B. Be responsible with animals, I must D. Buy my son a puppy.

• In order for A. My son to learn responsibility, he must C. Take care of the apartment.

• In order to C. take care of the apartment, I must D’. Not buy my son a puppy.

• I can’t have both D. Buy my son a puppy and D’. Not buy my son a puppy at the same time.
Check for Conflict in the Right Places

- One key element of the Evaporating Cloud is the conflict. The conflict should be present between D and D’ only.

- If there is no clear conflict between D and D’, you need to adjust your cloud to put it there. I suggest offering clear opposites. (Buy versus Don’t buy is a clear opposite. If you can’t write what you really mean as clear opposites any there way, then write D. Do… and D’. Don’t do … .

- Avoid spreading a continuum between alternatives (spend time with the EX versus spend time with my new friend). This almost always leads to compromise (a dirty word*).

- Well, I take that back. There are situations (one in ten may be) where you can work an extra hour and be a bit late for the cocktail party (particularly if you don’t like cocktail parties and need to self justify).

*‘Optimization’ is also a dirty word. It implies you are operating at the optimum condition and there is no way to get any better. I resent that. I believe in continuous improvement. You can always get better. But, more on that another day.
Look for Jeopardy in the Right Places

• Also check to see if you have created jeopardy in the right places. You need to expect having D. jeopardize the existence of C. If D exists you may not be able to have C.

• And on the other diagonal, having D'. should jeopardize having B.

• Its important to have this cross jeopardy. It’s a good quality control check for your Evaporating Cloud.

• If I buy my son a puppy, that could jeopardize the care and keeping of our apartment! (Yes, jeopardy but not opposites.)

• If I don’t buy my son a puppy, he won’t learn how to be responsible around animals! (Yes, jeopardy but not opposites.)

• Remember, we are exposing generally accepted logic here so don’t get try too hard to tie down solid logic (you are already thinking more about breakthrough solutions now than the rest of the population). Just report the generally accepted conditions (even if you can see that it is wrong now).
Goal<-Requirements<-PreRequisites

• Check to see if the Requirements (B and C) are both considered necessary by most people*.

• Review again if the PreRequisites (D and D’) are generally accepted as necessary conditions for their corresponding Requirements (B and C).

*Notice, you shouldn’t think too hard about the underlying assumptions and such during the Creation phase. Else, you will find some erroneous assumptions or special cases where the logic doesn’t hold and will be stymied. You will end up with a mix of ‘the problem’ and ‘the solution’ in your head and won’t be able to get it on paper.

Think about the Conflict as it is viewed by the “normal population” (the others in your office). You are quickly becoming abnormal. You are learning to think differently than others. If you, with your new insight, try to make the logic unbreakable, you will have to work too hard. Try to be normal when you make your EC. Then, you can easily find fault with the underlying assumptions others accept as truth. If will get plenty of chances to solve really tough problems (discover a solution) in the future ECs.

• Now you have a clearly defined conflict.
Presenting the Cloud

• So far, you have created the Evaporating Cloud and checked its necessary based logic structure.

• Now, it's time to ‘present’ the cloud so someone else.

• Typically this someone else is more interested in one side of the cloud being the solution rather than the other. (They have not been enlightened as you have been.)

• When you present the cloud, you present it starting with the goal and leading to the desires of the audience first.

• For example, if you are presenting to your son, you say, “Son, you know we have been working on A. teaching you responsibility. In order for you to A. show responsibility, you must B. show good responsibility towards animals. In order for you to B. show good responsibility towards animals, I need to D. Buy you a puppy for experience.” 😊

• Then the other side.

• “But son, In order for you to A. show responsibility, you must C. demonstrate you know how to care for our apartment. And, In order to B. keep our apartment clean and nice, I D’. Can’t buy you a puppy.” 😞

• The idea here is to show the other side you have been thinking and then show them why the conflict exists.
Surfacing Assumptions

- A Student’s Dog Dilemma: Of course, if your son is as creative (as most young boys are), he will return 10 to 20 quick statements that either are injections to the cloud or surfacing erroneous assumptions.

- It’s at this point, you want to continue to focus on surfacing the erroneous assumption, or selecting the assumption you want to eliminate.

- Putting energy, not on the conflict but on the assumptions, brings both sides of the discussion onto the same solution set, giving common purpose to both sides; they both want to make the injection work.

- And, you shouldn’t simply stop when you have one good idea. Surface lots of assumptions and ideas. You may end up with a Cat after all!
Surfacing Assumptions

Since these arrow between A ⇐ B and A ⇐ C are generally accepted necessary conditions, they are probably not the most fruitful area to challenge.

The tie between necessary conditions and prerequisites (between B ⇐ D and C ⇐ D’) are the most profitable regions.

A. My son handles responsibility

B. Be responsible with animals

C. Take care of the apartment

D. Buy my son a puppy

D’. Not buy my son a puppy

However, you should surface assumptions at ALL arrows to be complete.

Sometimes you can find assumptions about the conflict that can be eliminated. (Hum? Could both sides happen at the same time–Lease a dog?).
Some examples:

A. My son handles responsibility

- He need to respect others property.
- I can’t afford to repair/maintain my son’s/dog’s damages

B. Be responsible with animals

- I can’t afford a daily kennel.

C. Take care of the apartment

- My son won’t take good care of the puppy.
- The puppy will wreck the place.

D. Buy my son a puppy

- There are no other animals around.
- I don’t want to inflict my son on others’ pets.

D’. Not buy my son a puppy
Finding an Injection

• Once you have an erroneous assumption, you can cause it to go away.
• This is like taking a bacteria and creating a vaccine to prevent infection.
• Using the assumption as a pivot point or necessary condition, we can find a Breakthrough injection.
• A breakthrough is a solution that hasn’t really been tried before (usually because of the assumption).
• Examine each assumption and try and find a condition that would invalidate the assumption:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assumption</th>
<th>Injection</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No animals around</td>
<td>Have a cat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t inflict son on others</td>
<td>Son is in control</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can’t afford a kennel</td>
<td>Box train the puppy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Need to respect property</td>
<td>Practice on someone else’s dog</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can’t damage apartment</td>
<td>Live in a place we own</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No yard</td>
<td>Hire dog walking service</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Now, you do it!

• Create an Evaporating cloud. It’s only worth two points, mostly for practice.
• Share it with your peers or your family. Feel free to show it to others in the class, but you don’t have to.
• Why not post it on the DrHoltList (email to drholtlist@lists.wsu.edu). Other students may find it interesting and wish to comment. Or, if you have trouble, ask a Student Aid to assist you in scrutinizing it.
• Your first few clouds will be hard, but you will get better.
• If you need a source of well defined conflicts for practice, see the Editorial Page of USA Today which always covers both sides of an argument each issue. Or, listen to ‘Dr Laura’ on the radio. She hears 3 conflicts an hour and gives injections to callers.
• You will have an assignment later to create more evaporating clouds from an UnDesirable Effect in your work environment.
• Just enjoy this one. Practice now on ones that are not so important.
• While I encourage you to share your first EC, YOU DO NOT NEED FORMAL SCRUTINY of three other class members! Let’s wait until you really know how to do things before you do/receive SCRUTINY.
• Just do it, send it to me then Share.

• Keep Thinking! Dr Holt