

THE CLARITY PRINCIPLE

How to See the Real Problem Before You Try to Solve It

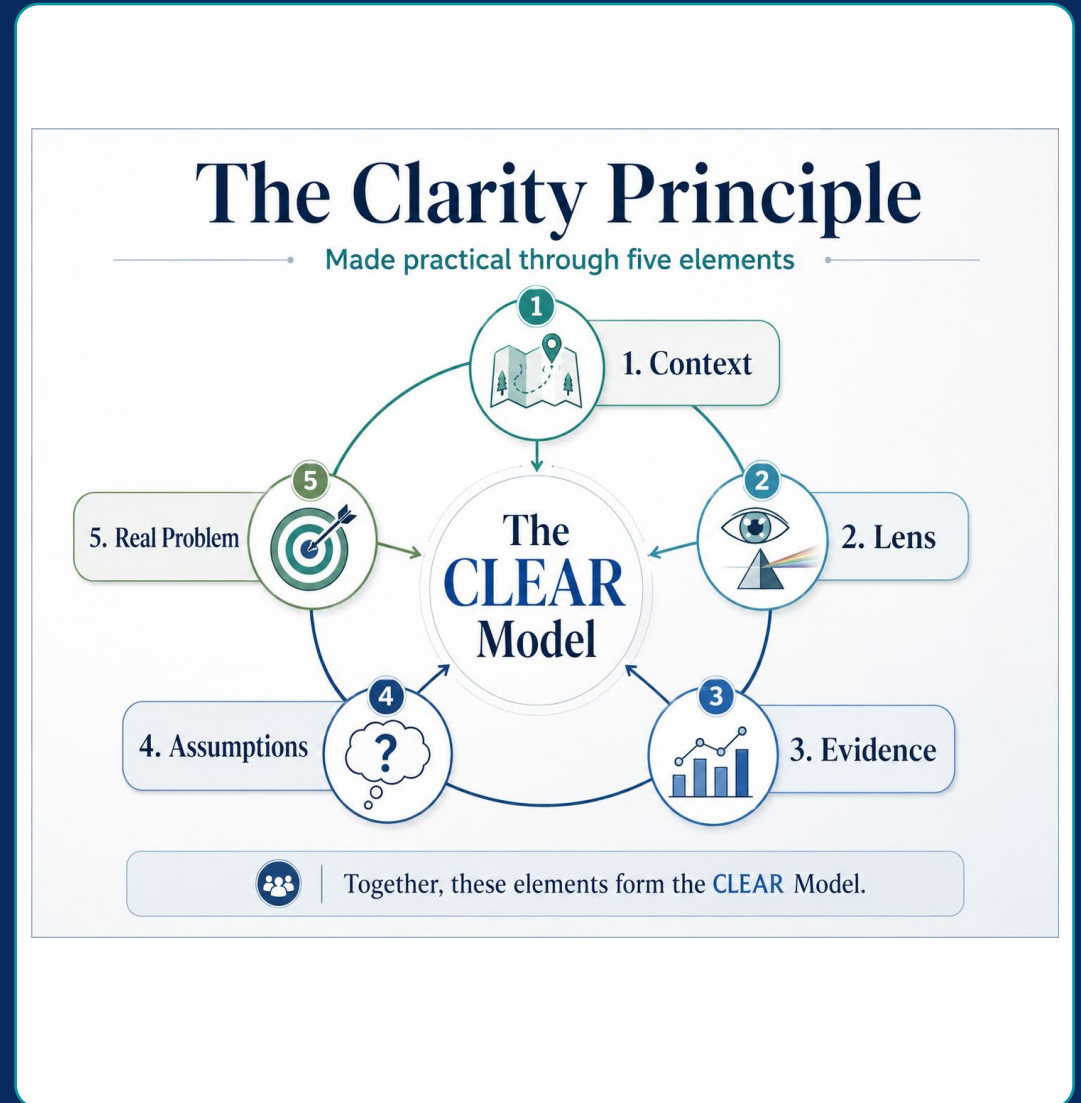
A practical framework for seeing the real problem before choosing the solution.

Context • Lens • Evidence • Assumptions • Real Problem

A whitepaper for leaders, project teams and decision-makers.

Ronald Kohlman

Concept deck for the book “The Clarity Principle”



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Before the decision, there is a problem frame

Many failures do not begin with a bad decision.

They begin earlier, when the problem is misunderstood, softened, exaggerated or confused with a symptom.

The Clarity Principle asks: Are we even solving the right problem?

WHY IT MATTERS

From Signal to Outcome

How early framing shapes every later decision

When weakness enters early, it travels forward and can lead to a Disappointing Outcome



The *earlier* the weakness enters the chain, the *more expensive* it becomes later.



CLEAR protects the early stages of thinking before major action begins.

Why clarity matters

Organisations can deliver exactly what they planned and still leave the real issue untouched.

When early framing is weak, later delivery inherits the cost.

The greatest waste is disciplined execution applied to the wrong problem.

WHY IT MATTERS

Poor Framing

The problem is misunderstood, softened, exaggerated, or framed around a symptom



Framing debt is the *hidden cost* created when unclear problem definitions are carried into decisions and delivery.

The longer poor framing survives, the more expensive correction becomes.



CLEAR helps reduce framing debt by improving the problem before action begins.

From Signal to Outcome

A signal becomes an interpretation.

The interpretation becomes a problem definition.

That definition shapes decisions, action and outcome.

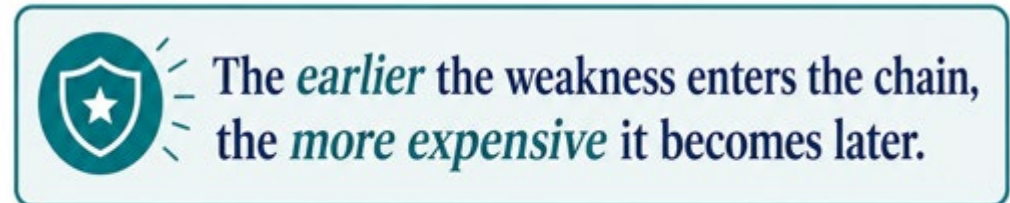
CLEAR protects the early stages before major commitment begins.

WHY IT MATTERS

From Signal to Outcome

How early framing shapes every later decision

When weakness enters early, it travels forward and can lead to a
Disappointing Outcome



CLEAR protects the early stages of thinking before major action begins.

The cost of confusion compounds

Poor framing creates weak scope, rework, cost growth, stakeholder conflict, delayed benefits and heavier governance.

The longer poor framing survives, the more expensive correction becomes.

WHY IT MATTERS

Framing Debt Cycle

How poor framing creates downstream cost and confusion



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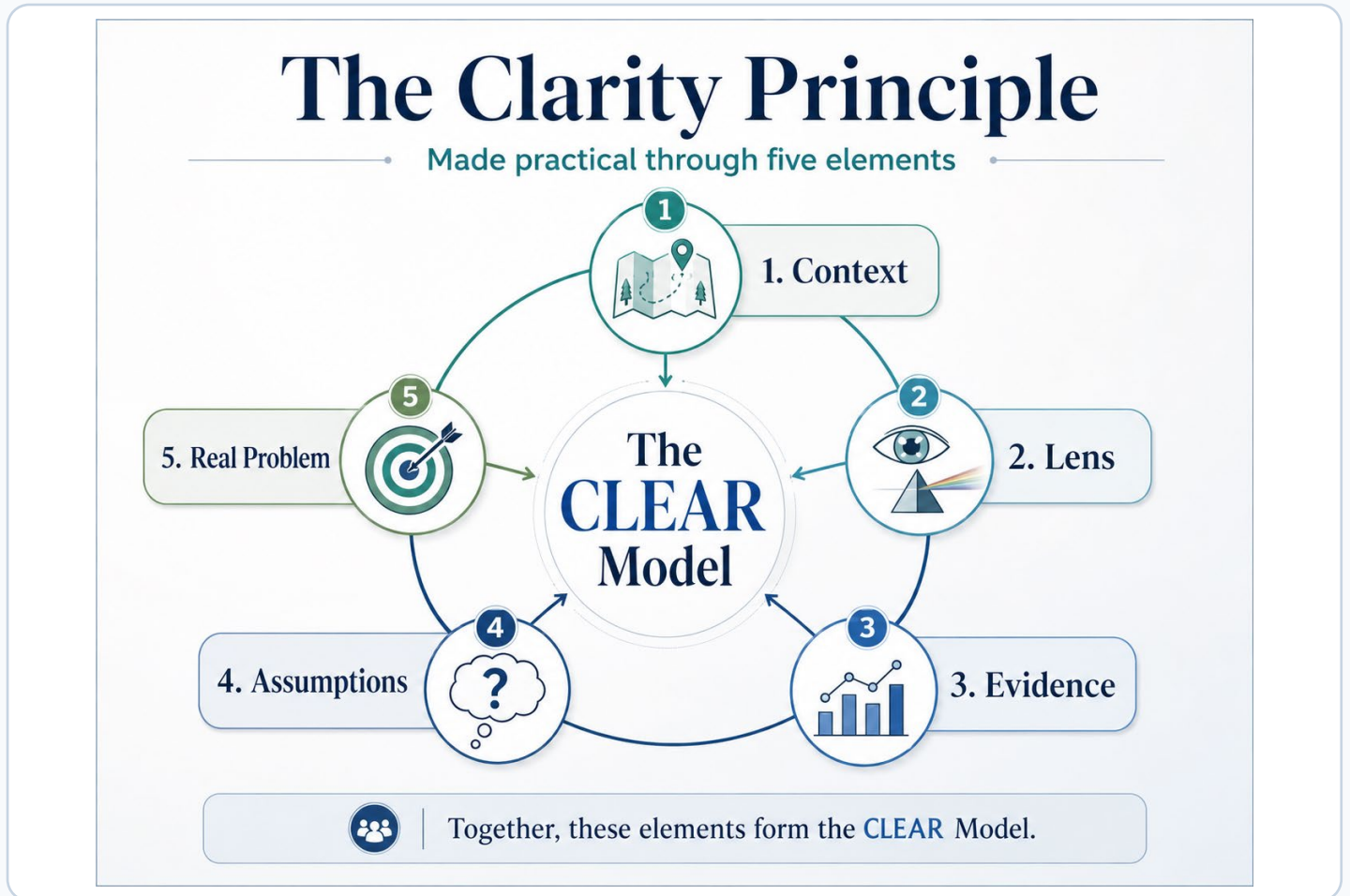
The CLEAR Model

CLEAR helps move from an initial concern, symptom or proposed solution towards the condition that genuinely requires attention.

Context • Lens • Evidence • Assumptions
• Real Problem

Clarity is not certainty. It is sufficient understanding for the next responsible step.

WHY IT MATTERS



C — Context

Context asks what is happening, where it is happening, when it began and why it matters now.

It prevents overreaction by placing the issue in its actual environment before diagnosis begins.

THE CLEAR MODEL

Context Map

A practical tool for understanding the situation before naming the problem



 Use this tool to frame the issue before diagnosis or action.

L — Lens

Different stakeholders see different versions of the same issue because their responsibilities, risks and interests differ.

Clarity improves when perspectives are compared before the problem is defined.

THE CLEAR MODEL

Stakeholder Lens Map

Different stakeholders may describe the same issue differently.

ONE ISSUE

No single perspective tells the whole story



Clarity improves when perspectives are compared before the problem is defined.

E — Evidence

Evidence is sorted into facts, signals, opinions, assumptions and unknowns.

The discipline is not to gather more information, but to understand what deserves confidence.

THE CLEAR MODEL

Evidence Sorting Model

Separate what is known from what is suggested, believed, assumed or still unresolved.

ONE ISSUE

Sort information before defining the problem



Clarity improves when evidence is separated from volume.

A — Assumptions

Assumptions act as invisible bridges between what is known and what is concluded.

THE CLEAR MODEL

Assumption Exposure Process

Make hidden assumptions visible before they shape the problem or solution.



Visible assumptions lead to stronger problem definition and better decisions.

R — Real Problem

The Real Problem is not always the first visible symptom or the deepest theoretical cause.

It is the most credible, material and useful condition requiring attention.

THE CLEAR MODEL

The Problem Ladder

Move from what is visible to what actually needs to be solved.



 Do not solve the first thing you see. | Climb from symptom to the real problem.

Apply clarity to projects and programmes

Projects can become busy delivering outputs while drifting away from the problem they were created to solve.

Traceability keeps delivery connected.

THE CLEAR MODEL

Project-to-Outcome Traceability

Keep delivery connected to the problem it exists to solve.



A strong project delivers more than outputs – it maintains a clear line from the real problem to measurable improvement.

Make governance decision-ready

Governance improves when papers and escalations are clear about the issue, evidence, Real Problem, decision required and decision authority.

A governance forum should not have to reconstruct the problem during the meeting.

APPLYING CLEAR

Governance Clarity Flow

A clear path from issue to actions and accountable outcomes.



CLARITY LEADS TO CONFIDENCE. CONFIDENCE ENABLES ACTION. ACTION DELIVERS OUTCOMES.

Clarity in crisis

In a crisis, clarity does not mean knowing everything. It means knowing what matters next.

The focus shifts from current problem to recovery, diagnosis and systemic improvement.

APPLYING CLEAR

Crisis Problem Progression

How the focus shifts as understanding deepens and stability returns.



The problem you solve first will change. Stay aware of where you are in the progression and focus on the right problem at the right time.

DISCERN • DECIDE • DELIVER • LEARN

Reframe stakeholder conflict

Many disputes continue because stakeholders argue from different problem definitions.

CLEAR turns positions into interests, evidence, assumptions, shared conditions and a common problem.

APPLYING CLEAR

Stakeholder Conflict Reframe

From opposing positions to a shared understanding of the real problem.



DIFFERENT POSITIONS ARE NORMAL. A SHARED PURPOSE IS POSSIBLE. | CLARITY CREATES CONNECTION. CONNECTION ENABLES SOLUTIONS.  DISCERN • DECIDE • DELIVER • LEARN

Clarity is personal too

Personal decisions often begin as discomfort, pressure or emotion.

CLEAR helps distinguish the feeling from the condition that genuinely needs to change.

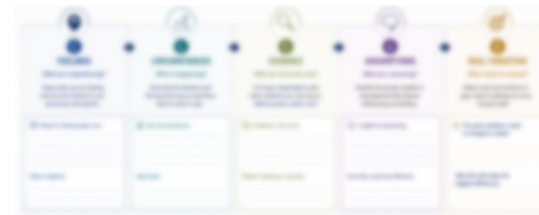
This makes the book more human, practical and accessible beyond business.

APPLYING CLEAR

Personal CLEAR Reflection

A simple framework for clearer thinking in your personal and life decisions.

Goal: Replace confusion with clarity so I can choose what truly matters



CLEAR THINKING • BETTER CHOICES • A LIFE OF INTENTIONAL ACTION



Meetings that clarify

Clear meetings move through seven stages: presenting issue, context, lenses, evidence, assumptions, Real Problem and next action or decision path.

The aim is to leave with shared understanding, not just another action list.

APPLYING CLEAR

The CLARITY Meeting Structure

A seven-stage meeting that moves from presenting the issue to a clear problem and decisive next step.



Clarity is not about having all the answers. It is about asking the right questions, in the right order, to reach the best understanding.

From clarity to decision

Clarity does not replace decision-making. It prepares the ground for better decisions.

The Clarity Principle defines the real problem.

The Decision Compass helps choose the best path forward.

Clarify → Decide → Commit → Learn

APPLYING CLEAR

CLEAR To DECISION COMPASS

Clarity creates the right problem. The Decision Compass guides the right direction.



CLARITY LEADS TO CONFIDENCE. CONFIDENCE ENABLES ACTION. ACTION DELIVERS OUTCOMES. LEARNING CREATES EXCELLENCE.

A culture of clarity

Clarity becomes powerful when it becomes cultural: leadership, questions, meetings, evidence, psychological safety, governance, decisions and review.

The daily habit is simple:
Notice → Pause → Question → Clarify → Act.

CULTURE & DECISION

Culture of Clarity

Clear thinking. Better decisions. Stronger results.
A culture of clarity is built when everyone understands the real problem, challenges assumptions, uses evidence and commits to the right actions.



A CULTURE OF CLARITY DOESN'T HAPPEN BY ACCIDENT. IT IS DESIGNED, PRACTISED AND PROTECTED EVERY DAY.

The book in one sentence

The Clarity Principle is a practical guide for seeing the real problem before committing time, money, authority and trust to solving it.

Ideal for executives, programme and project leaders, governance professionals, consultants and anyone making decisions under pressure.

Available on [Amazon](#).

Better action begins with clearer understanding.

CULTURE & DECISION

The CLEAR Model

How to See the Real Problem Before You Try to Solve it.

A practical framework for problem framing and clarity before decision-making



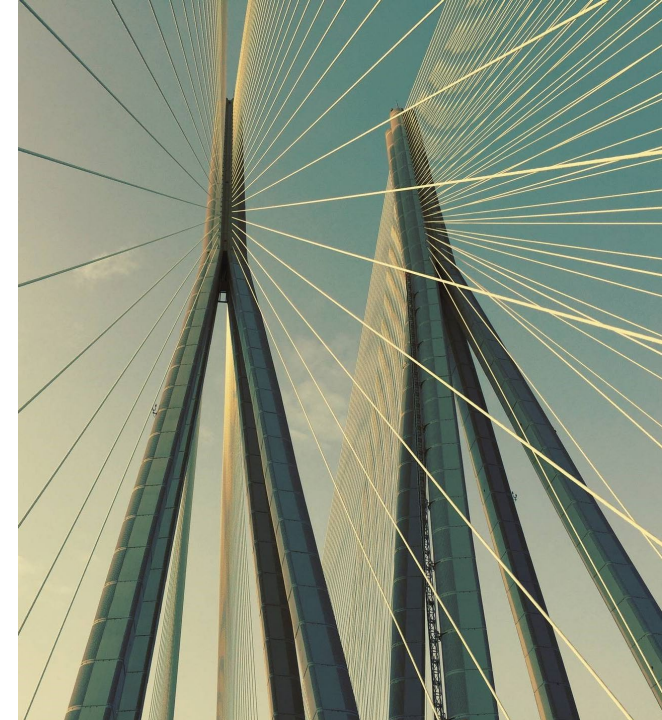
CLEAR = Context • Lens • Evidence • Assumptions • Real Problem

Clarity comes before decisions, solutions and action.

About Ronald



- Ronald is a seasoned IT professional with deep expertise in program management, test management, and the successful delivery of complex enterprise technology solutions.
- With a proven track record across global transformation initiatives, he brings strong leadership in governance frameworks, cross-continental team coordination, and executive-level consulting.
- Drawing on decades of hands-on experience, Ronald has authored a series of practical, industry-focused guides that support IT professionals, project leaders, and organisations in navigating modern delivery challenges. His publications offer actionable frameworks built from real-world insight.



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...Technology enablers & facilitators

Thank You



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