



THREE TYPES OF PROBLEMS



Problems behave differently. The approach that works well for one type can be inadequate – and sometimes backfire – for another.

1 SIMPLE	WHAT MAKES IT THIS TYPE?	HOW IT BEHAVES	EXAMPLE	APPROACH
	The problem is easy to identify. The cause is direct and the solution is known.	Cause and effect are clear. Apply the solution and the problem is resolved.	A blown light globe. Replace the globe. The light comes back on. You're done.	Identify the cause and apply the known solution.

2 COMPLICATED	WHAT MAKES IT THIS TYPE?	HOW IT BEHAVES	EXAMPLE	APPROACH
	There are many separate parts, skills and tasks to coordinate.	It can still be broken into parts, planned and managed towards a reasonably predictable result.	A kitchen renovation. Plumbing, cabinetry, electrical work, appliances, measurements, budgets and trades all need to come together.	Break it into parts. Plan the sequence. Coordinate the expertise.

3 COMPLEX	WHAT MAKES IT THIS TYPE?	HOW IT BEHAVES	EXAMPLE	APPROACH
	The parts are interconnected. Changing one thing can alter something else.	A sensible decision in one area can change the circumstances surrounding the next and create outcomes you did not predict.	Caring for an ageing parent. Health, safety, independence, finances, friendships, living arrangements and family support cannot be neatly separated.	Investigate the whole situation. Expect interactions and unintended consequences. Update your understanding as circumstances change.



THE KEY DISTINCTION

Complex does not simply mean there are lots of things to consider. It means the things being considered are interconnected and affect one another.

WHY THIS MATTERS FOR REPEATED WEIGHT REGAIN

A repeating pattern of weight loss and regain has the characteristics of a complex problem. Previous attempts change the conditions surrounding later attempts. Expecting a simple solution to resolve a complex problem leaves important information outside the investigation.



Weight regain isn't a simple overeating problem with a simple dieting solution.

