

## Craft of Research (CoR): Chapter 4 – From Questions to a Problem

The 10 salient sentence strings presented below are lifted from the chapter as is, without modification (except, perhaps, for a bit of punctuation here or there). They are presented in order of appearance in the chapter.

1. That significance might at first be just for yourself, but you join a community of researchers when you can state that significance *from your readers' point of view*. In doing so, you create a stronger relationship with readers because you promise something in return for their interest in your report—a deeper understanding of something that matters to *them*.
2. Too many researchers at all levels write as if their task is to answer a question that interests themselves alone. That's wrong: to make your research matter, you must address a problem that others in your community – your readers – also want to solve.
3. We solve a conceptual problem not by doing something to change the world but by answering a question that helps us understand it better.
4. When you write, readers judge the significance of your problem not by the cost *you* pay, but the cost *they* pay if you don't solve it. So what you think is a problem, they might not.
5. We acknowledge a problem only when we stop asking *So what?* and say, instead, *What do we do about it?*
6. Researchers often choose projects simply because they are curious...But to make your research matter to others, you have to say more than *Here is something I find interesting*. You have to show them how solving your problem helps them solve theirs.
7. They believe that the pursuit of knowledge “for its own sake” reflects humanity's highest calling: to know more, not for the sake of money or power, but for the transcendental good of greater understanding and a richer life of the mind.
8. What distinguishes great researchers from the rest of us is the brilliance, knack, or just dumb luck of stumbling over a problem whose solution makes all of us see the world in a new way.
9. Experienced researchers dream of finding new problems to solve. A still bigger dream is to solve a problem that no one even knew they had. But that new problem isn't much until others think (or can be persuaded) that it needs solving.
10. Research is more than just accumulating and reporting facts.