Design thinking : A curious approach to problem solving.

- Sukraat Dang

Problems are the first thing we learn to identify, tackle and shy away from.
It's just human nature. Problems with school, friends, work, parents, food, home, hormones, finances and the list goes on and on.
How many times have you not started anything because you assumed you'd just fail?
How many times have you given up midway, because you found something that works better?
It's never a good feeling to know that something, someone, somewhere is dealing with problems, and not getting out of them.

In Design Thinking, this is the exact issue we wish to address.
Design Thinking, although may sound like a weird set of words just put together, but upon dwelling further, we find that it deals with Human Centric Problem solving.
Afterall, we are all we have. So let's look further into this.

Solutions are a tough thing to come by and it takes deep introspection and a lot of observing to understand and identify what the real problem is and how to deal with them.
Henry Ford once said "If I had asked people what they wanted, they would have said faster horses." Customers can easily describe a problem they're having -- in this case, wanting to get somewhere faster -- but not the best solution.
Identifying the best answer to the problem is the critical challenge for a disruptor and is where design thinking can help bridge the gap between company and customer.

There are many rewards to this approach. You end up with a product that provides customers with something they want and need, gain their trust and loyalty and, in turn, achieve higher conversion rates and more lifetime value.

In the module facilitated by IIT Madras Online BSc. Degree's Design Thinking Course, we learn to identify how to apply this approach and how to blend human centric data, to make solutions.

We first seek who we are solving for. Humans have to be the center focus of everything. And the best and the most fun part is that to experience and apply this approach, all you need is a bunch of humans who are willing to accept help and share their experiences and pain points.

As kids, we all have gone into the irritating spiral of questions - Asking Why?
Why is the water wet? Why is the earth round? Why must we do anything that we do?
In design thinking, we take this most human and curious technique and label it as a Multi-Why approach.
To get to the root of the problem, is the best way to tackle it.
So next time, you're faced with a tough situation or a repeated loop of troubles, instead of getting flustered, ask - Why?

Once we get to a point where we can actually make a change - we start the process of generating a solution. Let’s take some real life examples - Back in the day, we used to get anxious about missing a train or not being able to reach somewhere because there would be no mode of conveyance - Someone somewhere, asked Why? And that originated the idea of taxis and cabs - which after hundreds of iterations brought along technology giants like Ola and Uber.

Every major product or company that you see in your surroundings has at some point in their ideation phase used Design Thinking to come up with something so simple yet so unique and helpful - which has understood and eliminated customers’ problems.

Now comes the question - How does ‘Data’ get linked to all of this?

It is impossible to overstate the value of reliable data. In order to come up with a workable solution, it is exchanged during design experience sessions and also gathered by data scientists. Human data helps identify potential solutions, while scientific data might reveal patterns of behavior that may need to be addressed.

Think about the difficulties encountered during the pandemic to comprehend the symbiotic relationship between data and design. Data-driven research produced vaccines that saved lives, but it was hampered by skepticism, false information, and fear among people.

Together, data and design experience can solve problems by getting to the root of what people's issues are.

A solution must be continually tested to ensure that it is accurately solving the problem and satisfactorily answering human needs once it has been designed based on real-world human input and data.
Being human means that attitudes, values, and experiences change over time, therefore it's critical to continuously monitor user feedback and incorporate fresh information into the solution to make it better.

Since technology is merely a tool that enhances human experience overall, start there and work toward the solution. This way of thinking will become more and more apparent in the near future as data and design are brought together to drive innovation — but innovation not for the sake of innovation, but innovation for the sake of bettering human experiences.