Subject: Scrounging how to.
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Scrounging is the ability to determine a need and to spot-use locally items that will produce the intended functional result.   It helps to first understand the problem or how the intended result should work.

Let's take an example: It is after the PS and you need to move some valuable items (a bit too heavy to carry) though mud and slush to higher ground. The problem could be defined as how can I build a simple lightweight pull cart that will work in mud out of the available junk found in the local environment?   You recall the most mud vehicles have wide base tires. So with the idea of wide base wheels in mind you start you're scrounging (looking around).   You happen to find 4 empty 5 gallon cans (plastic or metal doesn't matter) and this gives you an idea. You could make wheels out of these by cutting a hole in the center of the lid and bottom with your knife. Now you now need an axle. You keep looking and find an old broom stick and a section of rebar. One will be used for the front axel and the other for the back axel. You find a couple of short wood boards that you put between and on top of the axels.   You find some old electrical wire that you use to hold the boards to the axels. You find a short section of PVC pipe and put a wire though this and back to the cart as a pull handle so that it will not cut into the hands.

You now load on what you need to move your heavy item off to high ground. You pull it about 10 feet and a wheel falls off. You wire a short stick to the side of the end of the axle (now notched to hold the wire) to keep the wheels from falling off.   You make it about 100 yards more when the pressure of the mud on the back wheels at one point causes the board to slip off the rear axial on one side. You now put a notch in the board to keep it from slipping with your knife and rewire it tightly. You foresee this happing on all such connections and you rework all 4 connections to have notches in the wood. Obviously it will not hold together as long as a regular cart but with care (staying in present time) and some rebuilding as you go it gets you to where you are going.

Successfully scrounging takes place when unusual forms and items are fit to useful function. With the concept of what is needed in terms of function fixed in mind, one looks around at all the available items that could be used. One does a mental mockup trying out different items. Do an extended think by mocking up the result in use, to estimate its workability.   One tries to chouse items most likely to succeed.   Sometimes after constructing it you find it doesn't work out. When this happens it's back to square one scrounging again for parts. Be patent with your self. You are learning valuable lesson each time something is tried.

In the above example suppose the ground turned out to be too bumpy or rough for the above cart to work?   You mock up in your mind a sled, then a large wheel cart and then a couple of poles that you drag along. You mentally test each one doing an extended think as to how it would work over the time of need. You chouse to make a 2 wheel pull cart out of two long poles tied to an axel with two large wagon type wheels. Looking around

you find some plywood you can cut with a hand saw into a circle. You screw several sheets together to make a thicker wheel. You find some metal strapping and screw this to the edge of the plywood sheets to make it longer lasting wagon type wheel as it roles over rough ground. The wheel ends up to be about 4 ft in diameter and you estimate they should become easy enough over semi-rough ground to pull as long as one misses the big rocks. Or maybe you chose to make a sled. You get the idea. Scrounge, make it, try it, scrounge some more and try something else.   There are no right answers.   There are only less workable or more workable answers. Those good at puzzles should take this as a puzzle fitting different parts together type of challenge.

From past experience I can say it helps to take your time and physically go around looking at each potential usefully item in your environment before deciding on what you are going to use to build for the intended result. Do a mock up of that item in place and mentally test it to see if it will work.   Do this walk around for each item you need while building.   Don't go on memory of what you have. It helps to actually see the items you can potently use each time you have a need. Planning or designing time can sometimes take as long or longer than building time.

As a side note: Once one gets good at this, one finds oneself collecting all kinds of things that others might think are totally useless.   This can be frustrating to those significant others who think it is junk. To you it has many valuable future uses.   You can see it in the items. The way out of this is to teach the value of scrounging. After a PS there will be no corner stores to get all you need. Scrounging will be your corner store. The bigger the junk pile you have to choose from the more possibility of success.

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