

Understanding Your 'Real' Problem

Contributed by Paul Shearstone
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{bot_wrgoogle}Everyone has heard the expressions, "We bring it all on, ourselves" and "You... are your own worst enemy!" Healthy-minded individuals - for the most part - acknowledge the wisdom in statements like these. So why then, do so many of us have difficulty [a problem] addressing and rectifying what is accepted and obvious? The answer may not be all that mysterious.

Problem solving, like other human behavioral activities, is an art and a science that is learned. The fact that some learn quicker or more naturally than others, is just a part of being human. Nevertheless, there are techniques and strategies people can learn to recognize and respond to life's ongoing challenges.

Think for a moment about the biggest problems you face today. Stop what you are doing and allow yourself a couple of minutes to fully concentrate on the obstructions in your life that are causing you stress. [Note: Stress is the natural outcome from unresolved problems.]

That completed, step back from your thoughts to reflect and ask yourself: When you thought about your problems, was your mind focused on 'The Problem' – the 'Result of the Problem' [potential or otherwise] – or was it focused on the 'Solution for the Problem'?

At this point, it may be helpful to do this exercise again.

Not surprisingly, those untrained or mentally unequipped to deal with problem solving, find that they focus single-mindedly on – are you ready for this? – the 'Result of the Problem' [potential or otherwise]. Simply put, they allow incredible life-debilitating stress into their mind and thoughts regarding what they believe could, should, might or will happen as a result of the problem. This way of thinking serves only to denigrate the healthy and stress free mental state they could be experiencing and life has to share.

Emphasis on the words 'Potential or Otherwise' is another integral hallmark of the improper, albeit, natural way people invite stress to take hold of their life. Studies by psychologists around the world on human behavior confirm unequivocally, 90-95% of all that we worry about, never comes to fruition. It simply never materializes! All that stress and worry for situations that never exist.

Try and recall all the things you did, did not do or could not do for fear of outcomes from problems that never happened. Now look forward to determine what is likely to cause stress and hold you back in the near future – which brings us to the fundamental pitfalls of concentrating only on the 'Problem'.

No one is sacrosanct [untouchable] from life's challenges both large and small. Even the most successful among us have them. Recognizing now that unwanted stress is frequently caused by nonexistent problems, one can quickly learn to minimize negative thoughts by qualifying whether a problem is, in fact, a problem.

A simple way to do this is to write the problem onto a piece of paper. This act, in itself, serves to minimize most problems simply by seeing it in print. The second step is to write:

- a) The very Best possible outcome – should the problem occur, and,
- b) The very Worst possible outcome - should the problem occur.

Having done this, there are three 'Stress-Diminishing' Laws, one can consider and also take comfort.

- 1) The problem always looks less intimidating when it is in print.
- 2) 90-95% of all problems never come to fruition. Never materialize! and,
- 3) Should the problem be real and actually occur, the outcome is 'rarely' the Best outcome or Worst outcome you have identified on paper. It is always somewhere in the middle – inevitably closer to the more favorable expectation. That discovery, serves again to minimize most problems, putting them into proper perspective while at the same time, minimizing the stress level associated with it.

This proven process also engenders more clear and enlightened thought, allowing one to better focus on appropriate solutions. Furthermore, it is the characteristic of the trained problem solver. They are quick to Qualify / Quantify a given challenge, and then if it is determined to be real, immediately turn their attention to the solution - bypassing the added stress of fruitless, negative speculation.

In simpler words, they employ a self-talk mantra that plays out something like this: "Clearly, the problem 'Is what it Is' – So what am I going to do to fix it?"

The Bottom Line:

The secret to problem solving and stress relief lie in our ability to Recognize and Respond to REAL challenges - not wasting precious time and energy on manufactured, angst-ridden influences that may never arise. Those who learn to master this strategy, are reassured to realize that they have far less stress and fewer problems than they once speculated and worried so much about!

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His 3Rs Resilience Formula improves Performance & Profitability,
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