

11 Steps To Solving ANY Problem

By Mark Anastasi

INTRODUCTION

The strategies and techniques I'm about to share with you worked really well for me, at a time when I was broke, lonely, homeless, and... very depressed.

This sad state of affairs occurred between December 2003 – when I lost my job, broke up with my long-term girlfriend, found myself \$12,000 in debt, out on the street because I was unable to pay rent... – and April 2004, when I finally could afford a (very modest) place to stay, and started getting my life back in order.

During that time, I had the good fortune of coming across a half-hour audio program by Anthony Robbins, America's leading 'success coach' (I strongly recommend you attending his seminars – check out www.AnthonyRobbins.com), called "*How To Solve Problems Quickly & Effectively*".

By applying this personal development material that I am about to share with you, I managed to take my 'problems' – that I consequently termed 'challenges' – and turned them into *an opportunity*.

THE 11 STEPS TO HANDLING ANY PROBLEM QUICKLY & EFFECTIVELY

1- Change the meaning you associate to 'problems'.

First and foremost, you need to change your whole attitude towards 'problems'!

Change what meaning you attach to them, turn them into an opportunity to expand, grow, and to discover a lesson that's begging to be learned!

DON'T get all upset and start ranting and raving... "*How come this £*&%\$ ALWAYS happens to me!?*"

When you are angry, chances are, you are not operating at the peak of your resourcefulness...

When you are upset, what you're actually doing is focusing on the PROBLEM... instead of working on the SOLUTION.

ALWAYS SPEND 80% OF YOUR TIME ON THE SOLUTION, AND ONLY 20% OF YOUR TIME ON THE CHALLENGE!

PROBLEM.... OR OPPORTUNITY?

We need to learn how to find something that we can take advantage of in ANY negative situation. Something that we can utilize, to create even greater results and success.

How do you turn a ‘problem’ into something that really empowers you?

Let me explain what a ‘problem’ *really* is, and why human beings ABSOLUTELY NEED ‘problems’ and challenges in their lives.

Yes, that’s right. We **NEED** problems.

Most people see ‘*problems*’ as something that gets in their way, something that prevents them from achieving what they want. ‘Obstacles’, ‘stumbling blocks’...

Although short-term they may *look* like stumbling blocks, in the long-run most of these things we call ‘problems’ are actually **stepping stones**.

**GET EXCITED WHEN YOU COME FACE TO FACE WITH A PROBLEM!
YOU ARE ABOUT TO LEARN A MONUMENTALLY USEFUL LESSON! YOU ARE ABOUT TO
GROW AND EXPAND AS A PERSON, AND BREAK THROUGH YOUR COMFORT ZONES!**

**YOU ARE ABOUT TO SCULPT YOUR CHARACTER, AND IN THE PROCESS, BECOME ‘BIGGER’
THAN THAT PROBLEM, THEREFORE ABLE TO HANDLE BIGGER CHALLENGES AND GET
MORE OUT OF LIFE!!!**

I know it doesn’t look like it at the time.

And I’m not talking about ‘positive thinking’, here.

**KEEP IN MIND THAT WE ARE ALWAYS GOING TO HAVE TO DEAL WITH PROBLEMS
WHETHER WE WANT TO OR NOT.**

It’s simply how the Game of Life is set up.

In reality, **HOW WELL YOU DEAL WITH *PROBLEMS* WILL PROBABLY DETERMINE THE
QUALITY IN YOUR LIFE MORE THAN ANYTHING ELSE YOU COULD EVER DO IN YOUR
LIFETIME.**

Can you still remain positive even when facing major challenges? When you’ve given it your all and then things **STILL** don’t work out?

Do you have the guts to get up and start again, try something new?

THAT’S when we get to find out what we are really made of.

PROBLEMS ARE HERE TO SERVE US

A lot of people want to ELIMINATE ALL PROBLEMS.

Well...

You can't.

Problems are going to be part of our life as long as we are alive.

It's just the way things are.

So if you can't get rid of problems... what's their purpose? How can we *USE* 'problems'?

There **MUST** be a reason why human beings get to experience these situations called 'problems'.

I posit that they are here to benefit us.

You **NEED** something that's going to test you and push you to your limits.

Besides, if you have 'small' problems, then you'll probably end up **BORED!**

Norman Vincent Peale, the author of "*The Power Of Positive Thinking*", said '*A lot of people talk about how they don't want problems, they don't want to experience problems, they hate problems*'.

'If you don't want any problems I'll take you were there aren't any, I'll take you to the cemetery, no one there has any problems, it's a great place.'

'In fact, problems are sign of life. You never have any problems – you've got some 'challenges'. If you look around in your life and you don't have any big strong problems I suggest you go home tonight and pray to God and say 'god, don't you trust me?' Because if you don't have many problems, maybe you're on your way out...'

WHAT DETERMINES THE QUALITY OF OUR LIVES IS OUR ATTITUDE TOWARDS PROBLEMS.

Norman once asked Gene Tunney, the World Heavyweight Champion of boxing, '*Gene, how do I get a body like that?*'

He said, '*It's very simple; every single day I push against tremendous resistance and this has sculpted my body into what you see in front of you today, that made me a champion.*'

Maybe that's how we develop *spiritual* muscle, and *emotional* muscle...

It's by pushing against tremendous resistance.

By the way, 'problems' = **RESISTANCE**.

People have to deal with problems every single day of their lives, but very few people do so with much vigour.

If you go to the gym and work out, do you get angry that the weights are heavy as you push against them, or do you think to yourself, '*I'm utilizing this weight to sculpt myself, to create even more strength, even more power, the ability to look, feel and behave in a way that enhances my life in every way*'?

PROBLEMS ARE THE GYMNASIUM OF LIFE!

'Problems' allow us to get a 'work-out', so that we get better, stronger, and so that we become MORE.

While lifting the weight there might be some pain, but the only way you can 'grow' your muscle is by pushing beyond the pain, by pushing yourself beyond that process over and over again.

After a while, what used to be 'painful' becomes easy to deal with.

Pretty soon you have the pride of knowing you have mastered the weights.

And maybe that's all that problems are, a bunch of weights that we can utilize effectively.

Some people, though, leave those weights lying around, ignoring them, pretending that this 'gymnasium' doesn't exist, pretending that they don't NEED the work-out...

Unfortunately, if you don't use your decision-making muscle it gets weaker. If you don't expand and push against the problems of life then you don't get to develop the muscle of courage, of passion, of emotion, of sensitivity, of caring.

We've got to change our entire perspective when it comes to problems, and realize they actually BENEFIT us.

Haven't YOU had a major problem, something that you thought was completely OVERWHELMING, but that one day you finally handled it?

And hasn't it enhanced your life now that you look back on it? Hasn't it given you greater self-esteem, greater power, hasn't it made you more confident that you can deal with almost everything else that comes up?

I now it has certainly been the case for ME!

Now, when a situation pops up, I immediately think, *"Okay, what do I need to do to turn this 'problem' into an advantage? How can I use it? How can we make this thing work?"*

PROBLEMS ARE A LESSON BEGGING TO BE LEARNT

Problems often show up simply because there's a life lesson we haven't learnt yet! Problems are a lesson begging to be learnt, so that we may grow and expand ourselves!

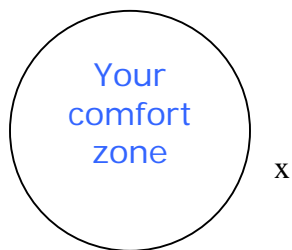
When everything is going really well in your life, you tend to lose your focus.

You might say to yourself, *"Heck, I don't need to grow, or work hard, or risk anything... after all, things are going great!"*

But when you come up against a challenge, you are **forced** to examine your life, to ponder, and come up with new understandings and distinctions that allow you to grow and break through your comfort zones.

If at a time when you come across a tough situation – a 'problem' – you retreat instead of breaking through your comfort zone and handling that problem, pretty soon.... another problem shows up.

And because you haven't expanded your SELF, you haven't expanded your comfort zones, this new problem is AGAIN outside of your capabilities.



Nb. The 'x' stands for the new challenge you are facing



Nb. Having grown by handling your problem, you now have an expanded Self, that easily handles challenges of similar magnitude.

Finally, at some point, you're going to say, *"I can't take it anymore, there's too much pain here! I MUST handle this problem!"*

That's when you push and break out of your comfort zone to handle your 'problem'.

Can you remember a major problem you had and how you felt when you handled it?

What happens is you EXPAND your sense of SELF – you can now easily handle similar-sized 'problems'.

REMEMBER, THE PURPOSE OF PROBLEMS IS TO EXPAND US AND MAKE US GROW!

2- Know what you want – Know your outcome

Clarity is POWER. What do you REALLY want to happen now?

Write down clearly how you want things to turn out. For example, you could say, “*By the 4th of October I have solved all my financial worries and have become a master of money, earning over \$20,000 a month. I am laughing at the thought of how worried I was over things that never actually happened. I am buying my dream home and moving in with the woman of my dreams.*”

Your brain is constantly screening out and deleting 99.9% of everything you perceive. Your Reticular Activating System (RAS) will bring to your attention that 0.01% that your brain feels is important.

The way you can get your RAS to work for you in an empowering way... is **by setting GOALS.**

When you write down a goal, you are in fact sending a clear order to your brain that **THIS IS WHAT I WANT – NOW GET IT FOR ME!**

3- Change the questions you ask yourself about ‘problems’.

When you ask yourself questions like...

- ‘*Why does this always happen to me??!*’
- ‘*How come I can’t turn this around??!!*’
- ‘*Why did this person do this to me??!!!*’

... well, you feel like you are no longer in control, and this just drives you crazy – **you are NOT in a state to utilize all your mental resources rationally and with clarity.**

Instead, you could ask yourself...

- ‘*How can I turn this situation around quickly and effectively and have fun in the process?*’
- ‘*What’s actually funny about this?*’
- ‘*How can I learn from this situation? What is the lesson for me here?*’
- ‘*What’s the potential opportunity for me here?*’
- ‘*Will this even matter 10 years from now?*’

The questions we ask ourselves determine the way we feel and the quality of solutions we come up with.

Your brain is an incredibly powerful, effective, and imaginative supercomputer that will come up with a myriad solutions TO ANY PROBLEM... if you simply ask it an effective question.

IF YOU HAVEN’T SOLVED A PROBLEM YET YOU SIMPLY HAVEN’T ASKED THE RIGHT QUESTION YET!

4- Change the language you use when it comes to ‘problems’.

Firstly, STOP using the word ‘problem’.

If your house is on fire, you’re stuck on a desert island, or your doctor has told you “*The good news, is we’re going to be naming this disease after you!*” ... THEN you’ve got a problem.

Everything else is just an ‘inconvenience’ or a ‘character-building challenge’!

The language you use affects the EMOTIONS you experience.

Imagine driving through the desert with a rental car, 2 other people in the back, and suddenly your car breaks down. You’re stuck, miles away from anything resembling civilization. It’s the car rental’s fault.

One says, “*I’m \$%&* enraged!!!*”

The other says, “*I’m really angry!*”

And you say, “*I’m annoyed. I’m peeved off.*”

YOU will experience the same aggravation, but you won’t incapacitate yourself and your reasoning by putting yourself in an un-resourceful state of anger and fear.

‘Problems’ are a drag... but ‘**challenges**’ are an ‘**opportunity**’! It’s ‘**exciting**’! See how that works?

Remember: every convenience we benefit from today comes from people taking ‘problems’ (say, in the 18th century, ‘*We can’t trade with far-away countries because of limited means of transportation...*’), seeing them as a challenge, solving it, and thus creating an opportunity for themselves and massive value for everyone else. Trains, steamboats, planes, container ships...

5- Change the way you are using your Body / Physiology

The quickest way to change the way you feel is by changing your PHYSIOLOGY.

By ‘physiology’ I mean the way you breathe, whether you’re standing tall or not (how you hold your body, how you’re moving, and even your tone of voice.

In order to solve problems... sorry, ‘challenges’... quickly and effectively, you need to put yourself in a resourceful mental state, and nothing does that FASTER than by CHANGING YOUR PHYSIOLOGY.

When we feel tired, worn out, exhausted, problems often seem more of a hurdle.

What you need to do immediately is get up and **START MOVING! GO FOR A RUN! GO TO THE GYM! GO FOR A WALK IN THE PARK! BREATHE DEEPLY! SHOUT ‘YES! WHILST CLAPPING YOUR HANDS WITH CONFIDENCE!’**

Get that oxygen flowing through your body! Feel that surge of energy pulse through you!

6- Radical self-honesty regarding the ‘problem’

The first step to solving a problem... is admitting you have one!

Be completely honest with yourself. Don't pretend like the problem is not there.

I told you before... this is NOT about positive thinking (although it certainly helps as well to have positive expectations about how things are going to turn out).

If there's a 'problem' **JUST FACE IT STRAIGHT ON! GET IT HANDLED! AND MOVE ON.**

Be honest, see it as it is – but don't blow it out of proportion either, and feel overwhelmed.

Then visualize your desired outcome, and **TAKE ACTION** to make it thus. Create an **ACTION PLAN** (a list of actions you need to take to resolve this – then start with the first one).

7- Take responsibility

A central tenet of all personal development philosophies – and I have studied most of them – is that in order to have a wonderful life one must take complete responsibility for it and everything that happens therein.

You see, all that exists in your life, good or bad, is there because of **YOUR** attitudes, beliefs, thoughts, choices, and actions.

You and you alone have ‘manifested’ these situations. You have attracted these situations and people into your life, through your way of ‘being’ and your thoughts.

I know this is a really tough thing to accept, but it is fact.

The flip side to this, and really inspiring thought, is that since **YOU** manifested it into your life, you can equally manifest it away or manifest all the positive things you've ever wanted.

Until you have taken responsibility for the problem – no matter **WHAT** other people have done ‘to’ you – you will not be able to move on until you accept that you and you alone are responsible.

After all, who chose to go with or accept that business partner, wife, venture, investment, friend, holiday location, having kids, etc?

If you feel like, *“I'M not the source of the problem, so how come I'VE got to solve it??”* ...
...then that will just make you angry and keep you from dealing with the situation at hand (*“It's not MY responsibility!”*)

Remember, **problems don't go away until we take responsibility for them.**

8- Control your mind's focus

Your brain is NOT designed to make you 'happy'.

It is actually a machine designed to ensure your SURVIVAL.

That is why your brain will do whatever it can TO MAKE SURE YOU IDENTIFY AND SEE PROBLEMS, POTENTIAL PROBLEMS, POTENTIAL WORRIES, INSIGNIFICANT EVENTS, etc.

In fact it will blow the most minor considerations completely out of proportion TO MAKE SURE that it has brought it to your attention... in order for you to SURVIVE.

I always advise people to live more in their hearts, where their PASSION and PURPOSE lie, instead of in that FEAR-BASED MECHANISM that is our brain.

The first way to control what your mind focuses on is this:

SPEND 80% OF YOUR TIME ON THE SOLUTION! Focus all your energy, your thoughts, and your time on the solution!

Secondly, make sure you ask yourself quality, empowering questions.

"How can I turn this situation around quickly and enjoy the process?"

People who seem overwhelmed by their problem are in a lousy physiology (drooped shoulders, little movement, etc.), they have a terrible attitude about it and are asking themselves disempowering questions ("How come this always happens to ME?"), they are not being honest with themselves and they are angry with everyone else (not taking responsibility for their situation), and are spending most of their time complaining about or focusing on the problem!

9- Don't be afraid to ask for help

In February 2004, I was really at the end of my rope. I hadn't earned any income in 3 months, couldn't find a job, and had been kicked out of my place.

I moved to London, where I would sleep a couple of nights on some friend's place floor, another 2-3 nights at another friend's, etc.

I was so overwhelmed by my debts that they were all I could focus on. I had completely lost my appetite, and had lost over 15 pounds (I wasn't that big to start off with...)

That was it. I needed help.

I took the un-imaginable step of ASKING for help.

I side-stepped my pride – (“*Pride never helps. It only hurts.*” – Pulp Fiction... what a cool movie) – and sent an email out to my 300 contacts in England, explaining my situation.

Within a week I had a fantastic job offer, from a person I now am privileged to call a mentor and a friend.

Who can YOU talk to?

Who can you ask for help from?

Who do you know has gone through a similar situation?

Have you got an extended database of contacts you could email, write to, or call?

You see, there aren't THAT many challenges a human being can face. In fact, they are all very, very common.

A health challenge, a money challenge, a job or study challenge, depression, heartbreak, bereavement...

There's ALWAYS someone out there who's been through the same things. You are never alone when in a tough situation.

10- Brainstorm 100 solutions

Now this is my favorite step in the process, for I am the ‘creative’ type.

Take a white sheet of paper, or write in your journal, 100 different things you could do to solve your challenge.

From the sublime to the ridiculous, write down whatever comes into your mind. Don’t stop to analyze it. In fact, don’t let your pen stop for 20 minutes. Be in total creativity overdrive!

Go after this challenge like it’s a prey and you are the hunter! When you adopt that behavior, YOU are in control – *not* the problem.

In fact, get a group of people together and brainstorm 100 solutions together!

Come up with 100 ways to completely eradicate this challenge.

Once you’ve taught your brain the pleasure of creative problem-solving, you never go back! Your brain will forever be open to coming up with solutions.

11- Take massive, intelligent action

Ok, now’s the time. You’ve got to JUST DO IT.

You know what you’ve got to do. You’ve ALWAYS known it. **Just...Do... It.**

Write out your action plan, put yourself in a peak physiology, and just take that first step. Complete that first item on the list. Then the next. And the next. Until it’s done.

If you feel you need to boost your Self-Confidence and Self-Esteem levels, I recommend that you visit www.Total-Self-Confidence.com where you can purchase my ebook on the subject.

I’m feel privileged to inspire you with my words. I wish you well on your journey.