

Problem Solving



NAME _____

DATE _____

PROBLEM SOLVER PROFILE

Generally, most problem solvers...

- Have a positive attitude.
- Don't whine or complain (it wastes time and energy).
- See a problem as a challenge.
- Listen or research all sides.
- Willingly work with others.
- Try to create a win/win situation.

5-STEPS TO PROBLEM-SOLVING

1. **Describe** the problem as clearly and completely as possible.
2. **Analyze** what is right and wrong with the situation.
3. **Identify** the likely causes of the problem.
4. **Generate** a variety of options (best to collaborate and/or brainstorm).
5. **Decide** on the best course of action (and in the real world – try it out).

*If things don't turn out as expected, the next step is to assess the results and find another possible solution. Solutions may come only after a series of trial and error.

PROBLEM CARDS

Problem Card #1 (Whole Class) **Worked Up Over Unfair Grades!**

Your school is using a new online assignment and grade-reporting system. Teachers, parents, and students are still adjusting; it's supposed to make life better. You are good about checking for assignments due each day, but you forget to look at graded work. Teachers don't always post grades right away, so you check once in a while. Today, you check and five in-class math assignments have zeros! You definitely did the work! You hand it to the student in front of you who hands it to the teacher. (She collects work from the front of each row.) You email the teacher and she says she never got the work. She's not super organized. It is impossible to prove you did it. How unfair! You tell your mom and she says you are partly to blame. You could have caught the problem sooner if you looked online more frequently. Ugh - Unfair! What to do?

Problem Card #3 **Dog Walker Gets Walked All Over!**

You have always loved dogs and have a knack for getting them to behave. You were hired by a professional dog sitting/walking service that has insurance and an online scheduling system. They even provided extra training for how to deal with aggressive dogs. Right away, you are given several clients with dogs that need regular daily walks - good money! One client is forgetful. Too many times, you arrive to get her dog and she has forgotten to cancel the appointment. The first couple of times you let it slide; but she got really upset last time when you said you'd have to charge her. She uses the company's other premium services, like extended boarding. If she went elsewhere because of you, it might cost you the job. Other dog walkers have complained of similar issues with their clients. You are not ready to walk away, but you can't waste time and not get paid. Surely, there is a solution!

Problem Card #2 **Recreation Center Is a Wreck!**

Everyone in your community has utilized the local recreation center for years. You just got hired to supervise the swimming pool. There is also a climbing wall, weight room, basketball court, par course, and dance room. There has been a lot of turnover in the staff which is made up of mostly high school students. The managers are desperate to fill spots to keep activities going and the center open. To get you started right away, the manager gave you a safety manual to review before your first shift. You are feeling a little nervous. Lately, there has been an increase in injuries, especially among children. If it continues, it could be bad for the business. As a new employee, and loyal fan of the center, you want to help solve this problem. You are afraid to start your first day. What if somebody gets hurt and you don't know how to respond?

Problem Card #4 **Movie Theater Drama**

You and your best friend got jobs at the local movie theater. The best part is you can see all the movies you want for free! You and your friend work the same two shifts during the week, right after school. You work concessions together so it's way more fun. Your schedules are not the same on Saturdays. You work the shift before him so you can get to band practice at 5pm. Your friend replaces you at the ticket counter each Saturday, and he is often late. You can't leave until he gets there and that stresses you out. It's making you angry. The band takes practice seriously and has threatened to kick you out. Each time your friend is late, he swears it won't happen again...but it does! You know it's not personal, but it puts a strain on your friendship.

Career Success: Action Plan



NAME _____

DATE _____

CAREER SUCCESS

BECOME A LIFELONG LEARNER

- ☐ Write down a topic or skill that interests you and learn more about it or practice it on your own.
- ☐ Research professional people you admire and learn what they did to reach their goals.
- ☐ Try to research and learn about something new every week.

TOPICS/SKILLS OF INTEREST:

1.

2.

3.

PEOPLE WITH CAREERS IN THESE FIELDS:

1.

2.

3.

ADAPT TO CHANGES

- ☐ Think about a time when things didn't go as expected. Write down what happened and how you'll do things differently next time that situation happens.
- ☐ Think about a time when you felt stress or anxiety. Write down how you reacted. Talk with a friend or teacher about what you can do differently the next time you feel those emotions.
- ☐ Write down things that make you uncomfortable (i.e., public speaking, exercising, or networking) and try one of those things every month until you become more comfortable.

Reflections and lessons for next time:

BE A TEAM PLAYER

- ☐ Find opportunities to join a club or project that will let you work with a group to learn something new.
- ☐ Think about the last time you worked on a group project. List all the ways you made the group better. List the ways you would like to improve next time.

Reflections and lessons for next time: