

Problem Solving

Mindfulness Worksheet

Date / Time:

So far today, have you brought kind awareness to your:

☐

Thoughts?

☐

Heart?

☐

Body?

☐

None

To begin this Problem Solving Meditation, please bring kind awareness to

- why you chose this topic
- how your belly, chest, and head each feel when you reflect on this topic
- the emotions that you can associate with these visceral feelings
- the positive or negative impact of any stories you believe in regarding this topic
- the fact that many others are feeling similarly about this topic as you
- how you might feel with increased awareness around this topic
- when you can apply increased mindfulness to this topic in your day-to-day life



PURPOSE / EFFECTS

Effective problem solving is a tool that can be used in all areas of your life. Two common barriers that hinder problem solving are defining the problem too broadly, and thinking that there are no possible solutions. Learning to define your problem clearly and specifically can make it more approachable. Additionally, brainstorming multiple possible solutions can help you find ones that will in fact work.

METHOD

Summary

Specifically define your problem, and then brainstorm some possible solutions. Next, rank these solutions in terms of viability. Then try one or more and see what happens. Last, based on what happens, either enjoy the results or revise your solutions based on this new information and try again.

Long Version

- Choose a problem in your life that you would like to address.
- Specifically define the problem, focusing solely on the facts and avoiding interpretations based on feelings.

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EXAMPLE: A person might say, “My partner doesn’t appreciate me or the work I do for our home.” However, if this person focused on observable facts alone, the restated problem could be, “My partner does not help with chores around the house or thank me for the work I do.” The second kind statement is more likely to lead to real solutions.

- Once you have defined the problem in this factually focused way, begin to brainstorm some solutions.
- Get creative! Write down as many solutions as possible, no matter how implausible they may seem. This will help activate your creative thinking and perhaps reveal previously unseen solutions. It can also reveal that there are more viable solutions than you originally thought.
- Next, rank your solutions based on practicality and effectiveness. Choose the top three potential solutions and make a specific plan for implementing each one.
- Now, rate (in percentage form) the likelihood that each of these three potential solutions will solve the problem.
- After analyzing the pros and cons of each solution, select the most reasonable one and try it. If it does not work, move down your list of solutions until you successfully solve the problem.

HISTORY

This method was adapted from multiple practices created by psychologists Michelle Craske and David Barlow in their book *Mastery of Your Anxiety and Worry*.

CAUTIONS

Be wary of trying to carry out solutions that are too impractical, expensive, or time-consuming.

NOTES

Just because a solution has the highest probability of working does not always mean that it is the best one to pursue. For example, imagine your car has broken down. Although buying a new car may have the highest probability of solving your problem, it may not be financially viable. Use the cost-benefit analysis to determine the amount of time and money needed to implement your solution, and then choose a plan accordingly.