

How To Solve Your Problems

BY ROBERT N. TAYLOR

One of the greatest problems facing this country is the inability to solve problems. Indeed, most of us do not have new problems in our lives. Instead we tend to be beset by old problems which have simply gotten worse. But in order to better guarantee success in life, you must improve your problem-solving skills. In this week's column, we will briefly detail how to go about doing just that.

#1 Be dialectical! The law of dialectics simply states that everything has at least two reasons for its existence. Thus, there will always be at least two things you must do to solve any problem. Stated differently: Everything has both a "mother" and a "father". Nothing is the result of just one factor or cause. Therefore, to begin the problem-solving process you must first identify the "two" primary causes of the problem. There will always be at least two causes. This means you must always adopt a two-pronged approach to solving any problem. Further - and this is a very important point - the two primary causes of a problem will in some way be opposites of one another and so will the two aspects of the solution.

#2 Attack Causes With Their Opposites! This law is self-explanatory. For example, if you have a weight problem, you know the fundamental dynamic is that your body is storing excess fat because you are consuming more calories than your body is burning. In other words, the dialectic which is causing the problem is too many calories and not enough exercise. The solution is simple: Eat less and exercise more. This may be a simple example, but it drives home an important point: You cannot solve or eliminate a problem by attacking the problem. You must attack the causes of the problem. And you attack causes with their opposites.

#3 Maintain A Balanced Approach! While every problem will have two primary causes, the two are never equal in importance. In problem-solving, "balance" never means 50-

50. You will normally need to do 70% of one thing and 30% of another. Solving a problem is like baking a cake: Not only must you have the right ingredients but you must also mix them in the proper proportions. If you do not, you will not get a cake - at least not a good one.

#4 You Bring About Change With Addition * Subtraction! Solving a problem is the process of changing a thing or situation from the way it is to the way you want it to be. The process of change is very simple: You change things with addition and subtraction. To change a situation you must either add something to it or subtract something from it. And since you will be approaching problems in a dialectical way, you will be adding and subtracting. Just remember that all change is brought about by adding something to the situation or subtracting something from it. Thus, one of your first problem solving questions will be "what must be added and/or subtracted from this situation to change it (solve the problem).

#5 Don't Fall Prey To The Superficial! That which is easily seen (the superficial) is almost never the cause of the problem. You must learn to reason backwards from effect to cause. Yes, you must start with the superficial. But too many people start and end at the superficial. They devise plans to attack the superficial manifestations of the problem. Then they are bewildered when the problem does not go away or merely re-emerges in another form. The problem will never be solved if you do nothing but attack its superficial manifestations. Find causes and perpetuating factors and attack them.

If you want to discover more about how to solve problems dialectically, we suggest you send for an excellent guidebook entitled Super Thinking (\$7.95) from the self-help group known as the Better Life Club, P.O. Box 28422, Washington, D.C. 20038. This guide details the process for solving problems quickly and effectively.

Jewish, African-American Relationships Examined

Insights into a fragile peace in Israel and the occupied territories and a progressive Jewish response to Jewish African American relationships is the subject of upcoming talks in Portland.

Ira Grupper, an active civil rights participant, will be speaking to the newly formed progressive Jewish group and Oregon Jewish Agenda members May 17 at 7 p.m. at 3914 NE Laddington Court.

Grupper has pursued civil rights since his involvement in the South during the 1960s. He has had ongoing discussions with African American leaders on issues of anti-Semitism and racism. On May 15 at 7 p.m., he will speak at a dessert potluck of the First United Methodist Church, Fireside Room, at Southwest 18th and Jefferson. The discussion is sponsored by Oregon Jewish Agenda and the Interreligious Committee for Peace in the Middle East.

Grupper made a visit in November to Israel, the occupied territories and Jordan. The visits were at the invitation of Yesh Gvul, an Israeli army reservist who refused to serve in the occupied territories, the Society of St. Yves, a Catholic human rights group and the Palestine Liberation Organization.

He met with high level, PLO, Israeli and Jordanian government officials, Israeli peace activists, Palestinian and Israel Jewish human rights monitoring organizations, visited a right-wing Jewish settlement and stopped in Paris to meet with French Jewish progressives.

Gallery Space Available At The University of Portland

The Buckley Center Gallery at the University of Portland has space available for artists from the Portland metropolitan and surrounding areas to display two-dimensional artwork in all media.

Exhibits run from three to four weeks, September through April. Interested artists should submit 10 slides and biographical information. Send materials to: Director of Cultural Programs, University of Portland, 5000 N. Willamette Blvd., Portland, OR 97203-5798.

For more information, contact the cultural programs office at 283-7258.

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Mt. Hood Community College Offers Free Campus Tours

The Mt. Hood Community College Advising and Counseling Center is offering free campus tours on Wednesday, May 11, 3-5pm and Wednesday, May 25, 10am-noon.

The tours provide prospective students with information about the college and programs, student activities and services, tuition, financial aid and the enrollment process.

Guests will visit a variety of campus areas including division offices, classrooms, laboratories, business offices, the planetarium, the Aquatic Center, the radio station, art galleries, theatres, the gymnasium and physical education facilities. Pre-registration is necessary. To register or for more information, call the Advising and Counseling Center at 667-7315.

Say You Saw It In...
The Portland Observer

State Conference Focus On Caregivers

The 3rd Annual Conference "Survival Skills For Those Who Care The Future In Our Hands" is scheduled for June 2, 1994 at the Greenwood Inn in Beaverton Oregon. This conference is especially for owners of Adult Foster Homes, administrators and caregivers. Registration fee is \$40 and covers lunch.

Keynote speakers include world famous Dr. Lendon Smith "the Children's Doctor" and Robert Reasoner, Ph.D. former Superintendent of Schools in San Jose, California and who currently holds the position of international President of the council for Self-Esteem.

"This is the premier event of the year for health caregivers from throughout the Northwest," states Grady Tarbuton of the Washington County Department of Aging Services. "Participants get a lot of current information about healthcare issues and trends, they network with peers and colleagues, they can interact with medical suppliers, hospitals and trainers and they also receive 5 hours of continuing Education Credit for attending the conference."

Dr. Smith brings a lifetime of wit and wisdom to the conference and will present the closing address on the conference theme. Currently he hosts a radio talk show that is broadcast throughout the United States and Canada on Saturday afternoons and has recently released his twelfth book Feed Yourself Right. Other notable distinctions include being honored with a coveted Emmy Award for excellence in television programming and guest appearances on nearly every major television and radio talk show in The United States and Canada.

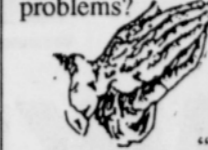
For more information contact: Grady Tarbuton, Program Developer Washington County Department of Aging Services 503/640-3489 or Michael Roth, Conference Coordinator at 503/284-3339.



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Camp Scholarships Needed For Low Income Children

Donations are needed to send children from low-income families to The Salvation Army's Camp Kuratli this summer. Any size contribution will help a needy child spend a week experiencing nature and making new friends.

Each summer, more than 750 low-income children receive full or partial scholarships to attend Camp Kuratli. The actual cost per child is \$200. Many of the campers come from Portland inner-city neighborhoods and have never before experi-

enced the excitement of summer camp.

Camp Kuratli is located 22 miles southeast of Portland and offers swimming, hiking, sports and arts on 120 acres of wooded slopes. Week-long camps will take place June 24 through August 23.

People wishing to sponsor one or more children can call The Salvation Army at 234-0825 or mail a tax deductible contribution to: The Salvation Army Camperships, P.O. Box 8798, Portland, OR 97208.

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