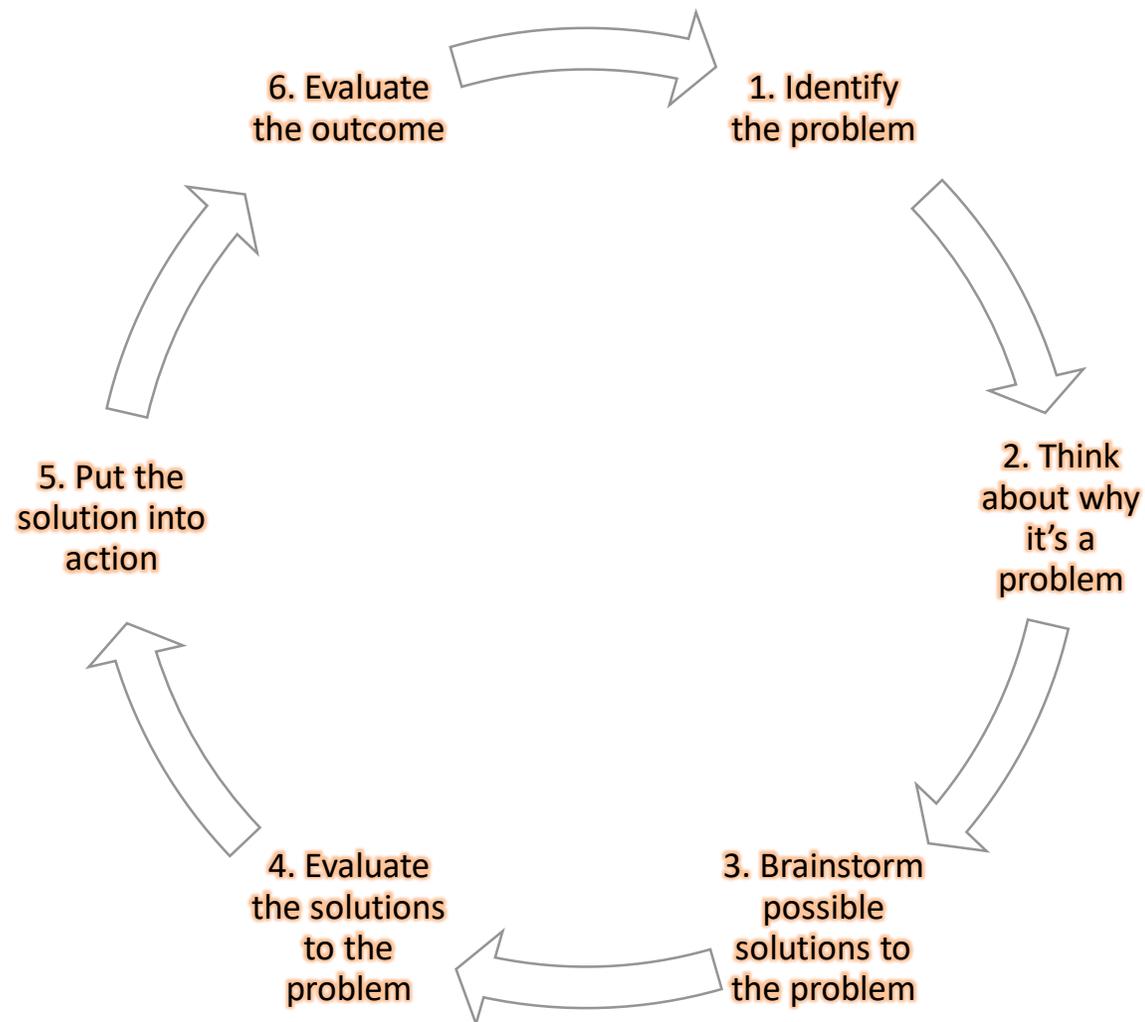


## Definitions:

- The process of finding solutions to difficult or complex issues.
  - Oxford Dictionary

## Importance:

Possessing a problem solving mind-set and problem solving skills are paramount to great leadership. Every day we are faced with problems we need to solve, whether it's unplanned situations at home or mistakes made by yourself or others. The way one approaches problems in the difference between a good and great leader.



### 1. Identify the problem

The first step in problem-solving is working out exactly what the problem is. For example:

1. 'You've been using other people's things a lot without asking first.'
2. 'You've been invited to two birthday parties on the same day and you want to go to both.'
3. 'You have two big assignments due next Wednesday.'

### 2. Think about why it's a problem

It might help to consider the answers to questions like these:

1. Why is this so important to you?
2. Why do you need this?
3. What do you think might happen?
4. What's the worst thing that could happen?
5. What's upsetting you?

### 3. Brainstorm possible solutions to the problem

Make a list of all the possible ways you could solve the problem. You're looking for a range of possibilities, both sensible and not so sensible.

Try to come up with at least five possible solutions together.

Write down all the possibilities.

### 4. Evaluate the solutions to the problem

Look at the solutions in turn, talking about the positives and negatives of each one. Consider the pros before the cons –

After making a list of the pros and cons, cross off the options where the negatives clearly outweigh the positives. Now rate each solution from 0 (not good) to 10 (very good). This will help you sort out the most promising solutions.

The solution you choose should be one that you can put into practice and that will solve the problem.

If you haven't been able to find one that looks promising, go back to step 3 and look for some different solutions.

### 5. Put the solution into action

Once you've agreed on a solution, plan exactly how it will work. It can help to do this in writing, and to include the following points:

1. Who will do what?
2. When will they do it?
3. What's needed to put the solution into action?

### 6. Evaluate the outcome of your problem-solving process

Part of effective problem-solving is being able to adapt when things don't go as well as expected.

Ask the following questions:

1. What has worked well?
2. What hasn't worked so well?
3. What could you or we do differently to make the solution work more smoothly?