# Tips for Solving Problems Efficiently When You Have Depression

by ERIC PATTERSON

## Improve Your Well-Being with These Problem-Solving Tips

Solving the problems, issues and conflicts of everyday life is a challenge that faces everyone. Gathering information, planning and acting is a simple way to resolve issues; at times, though, the number and intensity of problems can become overwhelming for anyone.

People with depression must manage the daily struggles of life with the added hindrance of lowered mood, increased irritability and lowered attention common with the diagnosis. This makes addressing conflicts feel like a hopeless battle.

With limited time and energy, it is very important for people with depression to solve problems efficiently. Improving your problem-solving skills will help to increase your feelings of control, reduce stress and improve your overall well-being. Here are some problem-solving strategies to start using.

### Better Problem-Solving

#### Pick Your Battles

Frequently, people with depression feel overcome with problems. When this happens, 10 problems feel like 100 and molehills feel like mountains. List current issues. Think about which is most important. Think about which is easiest to solve.

Many times, people expect too much from their skills and target very complex issues to tackle first. Working on small issues is a better place to start, as it will build experience and momentum to use next time.

#### The Unchangeable Problem

Too much time and energy is wasted trying to change the unchangeable. This results in feeling ineffective because you could not produce change when, in fact, change was impossible. Ask yourself: “Is this my problem?” and “Is this under my control?” If either answer is no then the problem is not changeable by you.

For example if someone you know is using drugs you may want to help even though the situation is not under your control and there’s nothing you can do to change this. You do have options, though: first, you can express your feelings about the situation; second, and more helpful, you can work to change your thinking.

Your thoughts are under your control. Work to find a new way of thinking that removes your responsibility. The problem may be unchangeable but your reaction to it is.

#### The Changeable Problem

This situation will be one where you have control and power. It will directly impact you. This is a good use of your resources, so identify it clearly and move forward.

**Brainstorm Options.**

Finding the best course of action takes time. Consider the advantages and disadvantages of each option. Keep in mind the short-term and long-term effect of each option. Don’t choose a poor option just because it seems easy or is a quick fix. The best choice is not usually the easy one.

**Act and Evaluate**

Failure to act is accepting things the way they are currently. Once you have found a reasonable option, go for it. Be consistent and then review the results. If the plan does not seem to be accomplishing the goal, revise your plan in the previous step and act again.

Do not give up, but if multiple attempts to solve your problem have been unsuccessful, your problem may be unchangeable after all.

**Conclusion**

Depression adds problems and makes even typical problems seem overwhelming, overly complex or hopeless. Having a system or plan like the one outlined above helps you take depression out of the equation. Assess the situation, consider your options and act. No more time and energy wasted on changing the unchangeable.