

Critical Thinking As It Relates To Problem Solving



1. Identify the Problem.

The first task is to determine if a problem exists. Sometimes when you think this point through, you may come to the conclusion that there really isn't a problem, just a misunderstanding or a communication issue that you can resolve. If you determine that there is indeed a problem, you need to identify exactly what it is. According to Barry Lubetkin, a New York clinical psychologist, how systematically someone weighs the pros and cons of a problem and how clearly the person can define and state it, is also an indication of highly developed intelligence.

2. Analyse the problem, look at it from different angles.

Once you've determined the problem, analyse it by looking at it from a variety of perspectives. Is it solvable? Is it real or perceived? Where has it come from? Can you solve it alone or do you need help? Sometimes by looking at it from many angles you can come up with a resolution right away. You may also reveal a bias or narrow point of view that needs to be broadened.

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3. Brainstorm and come up with a several possible solutions.

Problems can be solved in many ways. Brainstorm a list of several possible solutions and what you anticipate to be possible positive or negative consequences but be careful here not to make assumptions. Put down anything that comes to mind and then go over the list and narrow it down to the best possibilities. Having several viable options leads to the best results.

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4. Decide which solution fits the situation best.

Go over your list of possible solutions. Different situations call for different solutions. Quite often what works in one situation, may not work in a similar one. Take time to determine what will work best for the problem at hand. One solution usually does not fit all.

5. Take action.

Implement your solution. Every problem has a solution; even if it is to accept the situation and move on. Instead of approaching problems and challenges as insurmountable obstacles, we can view them as opportunities to hone our [critical thinking](#) and problem-solving skills.