

# The ROCK #17 - Preparing for Problems & Controversy

**It is not IF a problem or controversy will occur, BUT WHEN.  
How you solve the problem or controversy will determine your success.**

## The Problem-Solving Process

- There are no problems, only opportunities.
- Define the opportunity that you have.
- Define the goal.
- Create an action plan to achieve the goal.
- Create the action steps to accomplish the action plan.
- Evaluate what you are doing in each step.
- Plan the follow-up.
- Make needed changes to action steps.

## The 7 Phases of Problem Solving

Identify the problem.

Keep an open mind.

Gather information.

list the possible solutions.

Test the possible solutions.

Select the best solution.

Put the solution into action.

These phases are in order, however, these phases usually overlap. Often, it may be necessary to be working on several phases at the same time.

By Dr. T.A. Staton, U.S. Air Force Academy, *Problem Solving Made Simple*

## Preparation -Problem Solving

- When you prepare for a course of action, do the following things first.
- Gather all the information available on what the problem is. What are the things that are different than what they should be? They are not easy to spot, and there are normally more than one. Each will call for a separate solution and action. Put them in order of importance. Also, find out what is wrong and what is not wrong. Both are important.
- Develop an action plan to correct the problems. One way to do this is to find the cause-of the problem. Once that is found, the action to solve it will be easily determined.
- Test your conclusions on the actions to be taken. If you test before acting it will save you time and heartbreak. This will eliminate wasted actions and wasted time.
- Set out what is to be accomplished. Act with a clear goal in mind. There are things you **MUST** accomplished and things you want to accomplish. Both are important.
- Be sure and weigh the consequences of your actions before acting. This will help to minimize bad results. Search for potential trouble before it happens. Look for any possible unintended consequences. Consider other possibilities and alternatives. It may come down to which action has the best chance to succeed and will do the least harm.

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## What to Do When Controversy Comes. And It *Will* Come!

- ❖ Anticipate controversy and prepare for it.
- ❖ Know your audience.
  - Don't underestimate the intelligence of your audience. Don't talk down to them.
  - Don't overestimate the knowledge of your audience. Watch out for bad assumptions or misinformation.
  - Don't scold your audience indiscriminately.
- ❖ Stress the good for other people.
  - The greatest good to the greatest number of people.
- ❖ Understand conflicting points of view, and people that have them.
  - Know who your opponents are.
  - What is their exact position?
  - What are their arguments and what do they mean?
  - How effective are their arguments?
- ❖ Expose opposing falsehoods. Is the truth on your side?  
Do the facts support your point of view?
  - Blunt statements can be effective if the opposition is incompetent or untruthful.
- ❖ Remember the value of repetition. Repetition creates retention.
  - Present and represent information and opinions.
  - Remember, "out of sight is out of mind."
- ❖ Avoid humor or the so called "slick approach".
  - Controversy is a serious thing.
  - Touchy subjects cannot be treated with humor effectively.
  - Be sincere.
  - Be authentic.
- ❖ Use emotional appeals.
  - "Just the facts", does not get it.
  - Emotion shows "your heart is in the right place."
- ❖ Show your good intentions.
  - Demonstrate that your motives are good.
  - Show that you want to be involved in the solution.
- ❖ Create action.
  - Develop an action plan to deal with the controversy or touchy subject in a positive manner.
  - Make sure your action and your involvement show that you have good intentions.
- ❖ Listen for feedback from people.
  - How do people react to the action you took to resolve the controversy?
  - What was the intended purpose?
- ❖ Creditability is essential.
  - You must be truthful to be believed. You must be authentic to be creditable.
  - You must be honest to be trusted.

*When you are honest, trustworthy, and authentic,  
controversy and what it brings will be a faded memory.*