



What to Say to  
Campers to Teach:



Problem Solving  
&  
Better Behaviour

*Michael Brandwein*

## I. THE PROBLEM WITH PROBLEM SOLVING

- A. Where and how do young people learn how to solve problems?
- B. What's the problem with this?
- C. There is a “s\_\_\_\_\_” for problem-solving. People who are good at solving problems ask certain questions and say certain things. This helps them be calm and confident as they look for solutions.
1. *If young people don't know what to ask or what to say, then they will make less effective choices. They will whine, complain, become overwhelmed by stress, or give up.*
- D. When a camper has a problem, it's very important to understand that there are not one but two important goals at that moment.
1. **GOAL ONE:** *getting this particular problem s\_\_\_\_\_.*
  2. **GOAL TWO:** *using the problem as an opportunity to help the young person learn and practice u\_\_\_\_\_ good problem solving s\_\_\_\_\_.*
    - a) Which of these goals is more important? Why?
  3. *Please note: if we solve the problem f\_\_\_\_\_ the camper or just t\_\_\_\_\_ them what to do, the problem may get solved but no important skills are taught.*
    - a) We want to i\_\_\_\_\_ campers in decision making and problem solving.
    - b) We want to give campers r\_\_\_\_\_ for working on their problems. We'll help guide them, but the more they can learn to do themselves, the more independent and confident they will become.

## II. PRACTICE

- A. Suppose you're helping with an outdoor special event that begins in an hour and it looks like it's going to rain big time. What are the two goals?
- B. Which goal is more important and why?

## III. THE LANGUAGE OF GOOD PROBLEM SOLVING

- A. These are good things to say to campers in a calm voice. We wouldn't use all of these at one time. Many of them are just different ways to say the same thing.
  1. *Let's s\_\_\_\_\_ the problem.*
  2. *So h\_\_\_\_\_ can we solve this?*
  3. *This is just a problem. W\_\_\_\_\_ can solve this.*
  4. *What are your o\_\_\_\_\_?*
  5. *What can w\_\_\_\_\_ do about this?*
  6. *How can we try to get what you want? How can we make this happen?*
- B. If they say, "I dunno," we can reply:
- C. When campers make bad choices, we want to teach them to make better ones. We can say:
  1. *This isn't w\_\_\_\_\_.*
  2. *That doesn't work.*
  3. *You can't get what you want this way.*
  4. *What can we do that works b\_\_\_\_\_?*
  5. *Try this. This works better.*
  6. *Let's d\_\_\_\_\_ w\_\_\_\_\_ works.*
  7. *Let's try this another way.*
  8. *Let's r\_\_\_\_\_. We'll start again.*

## IV. DOING OUR OWN PROBLEM SOLVING OUT LOUD

- A. Why do we want to use the above phrases and questions out loud, in front of our campers, when we are solving problems and correcting our own behaviour?

## V. PRAISING POSITIVE PROBLEM SOLVING

- A. When campers work through their problems in a responsible way, it's important to recognize this by saying:
  1. *You s\_\_\_\_\_ it. / You solved the problem. / You f\_\_\_\_\_ it out.*
  2. *Y\_\_\_\_\_ can s\_\_\_\_\_ problems. You're g\_\_\_\_\_ at this.*
- B. When we help campers perceive themselves as people who can solve problems, this increases their confidence so they are able to do it even better in the future.
  1. *Please remember: s\_\_\_\_\_ breeds success.*