

Ep #421: Problem Solving 101



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Brooke Castillo

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You are listening to *The Life Coach School Podcast* with Brooke Castillo, episode 421.

Welcome to *The Life Coach School Podcast*, where it's all about real clients, real problems and real coaching. And now your host, Master Coach Instructor, Brooke Castillo.

Well, hello my beautiful friends. Today we're going to talk about problems because some of y'all don't know how to solve them, and I'm here to help. So, first of all, let's talk. We talk a lot around here in my family about rich people problems because I'm a rich person and I have rich people problems. I'm not denying it.

So today, I went out to go meet my girlfriend for a walk and I went to get in my 911 Porsche and the battery was dead. I get it, rich people problems. But here's the issue. Where's the engine on that thing? This isn't my own car. This is a car I'm renting right now.

I was trying to find the engine, I was trying to figure out how to jump it, I called the security here in my subdivision, which was very convenient. Another rich person perk is that I live in a gated community where we have a security team that comes and helps us with problems.

And a man from the security group came and was going to help me. And the problem was the Porsche was pulled into the garage, right in the middle of the garage, so another car can't fit in there. And the engine of course is in the front of the car and in order to be able to jump it, we had to have - be close enough so that the jumping cables would reach from his car to my car.

So this is a problem, right? We can all agree. Yes, it's a rich person problem, but it's also a problem. I needed to get in my car, I needed to drive, needed to go see my friend.

So as I proceeded to solve this problem, I noticed a process that I went through in my head. And I also noticed the process that the guy went

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through in his head who was trying to help me jump the car, and I wanted to share this process.

Afterwards, I came back and I kind of wrote down what I think is a proper problem-solving process. And one that I follow maybe not even consciously throughout my life during the day, but I follow very consciously in my life at work. So I wanted to share it with you.

Long story short, we did get the car jumped and I was able to drive it. But I do want to add that it was not without a lot of quitting first by my security friend. And so I want to talk about how important it is to be committed to solving problems and how problem solving is something that you can get very good at because you allow your brain to work hard on creating solutions, or you can get very bad at because you don't allow or even ask your brain to work hard on solutions.

I have seen this happen with so many people where whether it's someone serving me at an establishment, or someone that is one of my friends, or a stranger nearby that gets told no once, or faces a problem once, and then just settles in to the problem as if that is now something that we need to accept.

And I want to offer that that is not the case, and that many times we can solve problems in creative ways that make our solutions, make our lives, even better than they were before we had the problem.

So I'm going to jump in here and give you a five-step process for solving all your problems. And if you follow this process, you will not only find solutions, but you will become a better thinker. And when you're a better thinker, you're going to be able to prevent problems; you're going to be able to solve problems that you need to solve in order to have your dreams come true.

So the first thing that you want to ask yourself, and I'm going to kind of go through my Porsche car charging issue as an example, and then I'll go through a couple more examples too. So the first question you want to ask yourself is, is this even a problem?

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A lot of times, we create problems in our head, we make something into a huge problem that may not even be a problem, may not even be worth thinking about, may not even be something that you want to spend your time and energy, or even go through this step process through.

So when you are confronted with something that immediately seems like a problem, just take a breath and be like, wait, is this even a problem? So for me, I went to get in the car, it wouldn't start. So I sat there, I'm like, "Huh, I don't have a car right now that can drive me, is this even a problem? Yes or no."

So I thought through it. I'm like, "Well, I'm not going to be able to go see Kris. I wanted to go spend some time with her. I have a couple of appointments I will not be able to get to right away. But other than that, I'm going to be fine. I work from home, there's nobody that is depending on me. Like my kids aren't waiting for me to come pick them up from school or something like that."

So immediately, what seemed to be a significant problem became much less of a problem. Still a problem nonetheless. I wanted to go see my friend, I wanted to have my appointment. So the answer to the first question was yes, this is a problem. It's a problem I want to solve.

So then the second question was why. And for me, it was I want to have a functioning car, I want to go to my appointments, I want to see Kris. And that is a really important question. Really understanding why something is a problem, what the reason is for solving it may seem obvious, but I will tell you, in some situations, it's not obvious why you're making something into a problem.

Because on the first surface, it may look like a problem, it may look like something that needs to be solved. But it may not need to be solved at all. So make sure you answer the question why. I need a car to take me to and from Kris.

Now, I could have had an Uber, and I actually did think about this. I could have had an Uber come pick me up and then I could have gone and seen

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Kris, and then taken an Uber back. And I could have taken an Uber to my appointment, and I also could have asked Kris to come see me.

But the problem with that solution was that it was going to take too long. So that was one of the things that had occurred to me before I even started processing solutions. I almost eliminated it as a problem because if I have an Uber, I'm fine. Then I could just call the car rental place that will come out and fix the car.

So step three is evaluate four types of solutions. So the four types of solutions are what is the easiest solution? In that case, it could have been getting an Uber. What is the best solution? What is a temporary solution? And what is a long-term solution?

Now, if you take the time to let your brain explore these four things, it doesn't have to take a long time. Just think in different ways about the problem. You're going to come up with more solutions.

So I sat there, I'm like, what is the easiest solution? That would be to just get on my Uber app and grab an Uber, except that it's going to take a while for that Uber to get, but it would be less effort for me in terms of trying to solve this.

What is the best solution? The best solution is to be able to get the car jumpstarted here in the garage without having to call the rental place, without having to wait for an Uber, and do it in such a quick time that I still can make my appointments and I can still go see Kris.

What was a temporary solution? A temporary solution would have been, like I had said, maybe doing an Uber. And the long-term solution was getting the car jumped and making sure that it would have a charge long enough to take me to see her.

Pretty easy. So then what I decided to do was to call the security guy in my area. And notice, as I was thinking through these solutions, ideas started coming to me on, okay, if the easiest thing to do is to get a jump, does my neighbor have a car?

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This is how my thought process was. Does my neighbor have a car with jumper cables? Could I call them, interrupt their day, have them come over? But then it occurred to me, wait, I have a security crew that is here in my area and they're on call all the time and they're always driving around the area making sure it's secure. So they would probably be the quickest, fastest, easiest solution here.

So I called the front gate, they said they would send someone right over. So he comes over and is dumbfounded because the car is in the garage, taking up the whole garage basically because it's right in the middle. And he has a big truck, and he doesn't think that the jumper cables are going to reach.

And so he comes in and he looks at the car and he says, "Yeah, the jumper cables aren't going to reach." And now we have a new problem. On top of the initial problem, which is the car needs a jump, now we have this other - they're not going to reach.

And I had said to him, I said, "Well, can we try?" He had made this assumption that something was a problem, but he hadn't questioned whether it was really a problem. Do you see what I'm saying? It's like, problem number two came along, but he wasn't doing that first question, is this really a problem?

Before we determine that those jumper cables can't reach, shouldn't we bring the car over here and test it out? He's like, "No, I'm sure they won't, I'm sure they won't. And I said okay. So then he was like, "I'm really sorry, I'm not able to help you."

Well, listen, this is what I want to tell each of you. I was ready to go through my whole problem process again. We just got presented a new problem. That's the beginning of the process. Not the end. And so many people get to the beginning of a problem and just say, "Well, we can't do it, can't get a jumpstart, those cables aren't long enough."

So in my mind I was like, okay, does anyone else in the security team have longer jumper cables? Does anyone have a smaller car that they could pull

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in? Do you think that we could get my car into neutral and push it out and roll it out and then it's outside of the garage, and then we could pull them up?

So I'm coming up with solution after solution after solution, and he's just kind of already defeated that we're not going to be able to do this. And so I'm looking up in the manual how to get the car into neutral, my landscape crew is there, so they said they would help us push the car out. We kept trying to push it, figure it out.

And in the meantime, he's standing there watching me try to evaluate these solutions. So finally I said, "Hey, do you think you could just try to get your car over here? Let's see how much we would need to push this car and how close it would need to be."

So he brings over the jumper cables and he sees how long they are, and they're about the length of the car. And so I'm like, "Do you think your truck would be able to fit in here?" And he's like, "No, I don't think so." I'm like, "What about just the front of it? Because that's all that needs to fit in," and he was like, "No."

It was really fascinating to see how he wasn't thinking what's the easiest, the best, the temporary, the long-term solution. He just wasn't solution-focused. And I kept coming up with idea after idea after idea after idea on how we could get this done.

In the meantime, I'm also calling the rental car company. Jose is the guy that runs the cars for us and sometimes he delivers us a Porsche, sometimes he delivers us a Mercedes. So my assistant and I have a relationship with him.

So we called him up and I said, "Hey, I'm trying to get the car jumped, I really want to get the car in neutral." Because the long-term solution was he could just come and take care of it. But then I would have missed being able to hang out with Kris. So I was trying to figure out how to get the car in neutral so we could roll it back and get it jumped.

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So I was looking on the internet, I was looking on Google, I was looking in the manual, I was calling the rental company to ask if they knew how. And the whole time, my security friend is looking at the engine and looking at me and trying to figure out whether he should leave or not.

So I finally said, "Hey, just drive your car around." So he drives his car around and it fits perfectly. The nose of his car fits perfectly in right next to my car and we are able to connect the jumper cables.

So one of the things that was really fascinating about that for me was I had to negotiate the solution. And that is sometimes what we're going to have to do. We're going to have to negotiate solutions because the question number four is what is the cause of the problem?

So in this case, I had two problems. My first problem was my car wouldn't start. My second problem was the jumper cables weren't long enough. So the cause of the car not starting was that I hadn't turned the key all the way off. And there's a little key in the Porsche that needed to be turned all the way off, and the doors needed to be locked so it wouldn't still be running down the battery.

But what was the cause of the problem of the jumper cables not being long enough was someone's mind deciding that they weren't, without testing them ahead of time, without questioning their own mind. The mind became the problem that slowed down this process so much.

He was so convinced that they wouldn't connect. So he didn't even try the solution. He didn't say, "Hey, what is the easiest solution here? Let's at least try it." And I will say that's a huge problem with so many people. It's like, well, could we just try?

I remember, sometimes I met the front desk at a hotel, I'm like, "Well, can we just try and call and see if manager would answer? Can we just try and see if that door would open? Can we just try and see?"

A lot of times I have to make suggestions of, hey, could we just try some solutions out? Because people get convinced that problems are solid and

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non-changeable. And I will say my life is different than a lot of people's lives because I try solutions and I ask other people to try solutions.

So we hooked up the jumper cables, awesome, ready to go, and my car still won't start. So he's like, "Yeah, it's probably run too low. The battery's probably run down too low." And I said, "Hang on, let me look in the manual and just make sure we're doing everything right and everything's connected right."

So I look up in the manual on how to jumpstart a car basically, and one of the things they say and I think I knew this from how many times I'd had cars jumped before is that you need to rev the engine of the car that is running, which was his truck.

So he went and revved it a couple times, and then sure enough, my car started. So many times, my security friend wanted to give up, didn't think it was going to work. And we finally got the car started, I was able to go and see my friend Kris, and we went on a walk.

And what was so interesting was when I was coming back from this walk, I was thinking, "Oh my gosh, I hope the car starts again. I hope it's not a problem with the battery." And so when I got in the car to turn it off, it's almost like I created that reality.

I turned the key and it went click, click, click, and I went, "Oh my gosh, Kris, look, the battery's dead." She's like, "You just have to put your foot on the brake." And I did, and it was totally fine.

So it's like, compounding my own problem by creating additional problems with that negative thinking. It was really fascinating to watch happen. So that was number four. What is the cause of the problem? And a lot of times it's just our mind, so just be aware of that.

And then number five is how do we prevent this problem in the future? When you understand the cause of the problem, then you can most often help prevent it in the future. So for me, it's making sure the car is turned all the way off.

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Making sure that when someone comes to help me, that I don't take their assumption about something at face value. That I actually insist that we test it out. When someone says this won't work, well, can we at least just try? And then maybe it won't, but then we'll know for sure.

So that was my example of a problem that I had this morning that really kind of prompted this whole podcast. And because I think that there are so many little things that we end up tolerating that are unnecessary to tolerate.

And I'm thinking about things around your house, I'm thinking about things that aren't working in your own home, in your own cars, in your own lives that you've just accepted can't be solved, can't be fixed, can't be changed. And I really want you to be aware of those things.

Because when you start accepting problems as part of just reality, you're not using your brain to be solution-focused. And when your brain is solution-focused, it's also possibility-focused. And so if you are in my Reinvention class, you know how important that is to have a brain that's focused on possibility and that is constantly creating new realms and new ideas and new possibilities in your own life.

And when you accept life as it is, and this is just the way it is, and this is just the way it goes, and this is just how we have to deal, you are missing the opportunity to create something that maybe has never been created.

Most of the most magnificent inventions that we have, have come from problems that needed to be solved. So problems, actually looking out for problems to solve can be one of the great exercises that you use for your own brain.

So let's go through one more problem exercise so we can go through it again. And let's do the example of many of my students who are life coaches, who are maybe starting their business brand new aren't getting enough sales. They aren't making enough money.

So they bring the problem to this problem process, and the first question is, is this even a problem? Is it a problem that you don't have enough

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customers? And it may not even be a problem for you. You may not need to be making money, you may not need to be doing sales. It may just be something that you want to do that's fun and you're fine if you don't make any sales.

But for most of you, the answer will be yes, this is a problem because you have goals that you want to make a lot of money. And so when you ask yourself why, why is this a problem, it's basically math. I need to sell five customers a week in order to meet my goals, and by not being able to sell, I'm not able to meet my goals, therefore, this is a problem that I really want to solve.

And as soon as you ask the why is it a problem, then you can start accessing more solutions. So if the problem is I just don't have enough people to serve, I'm just not making enough sales, I'm not doing the work that I want to do in the world, by offering yourself why it's a problem, it's amazing how there's different ways to solve the problem when you really understand what it is.

When you keep yourself limited to, "I just don't have enough money in this business," you may miss out on other ways that you could solve it by evaluating what exactly is the problem and why it's a problem.

So in that example, we're going to go through the four parts of question three, which is what is the easiest solution, what is the best solution, what is a temporary solution, and what is a long-term solution. So the first one would be the easiest solution.

So one of the ways that I would say is, okay, the easiest solution is to sell to the customers I already have and to sell to the leads I already have. That's the easiest way for me to go about getting more clients, is to take the customers I already have and sell them more, or take the leads that I have and sell them again if they haven't taken the offer the first time.

Another easy solution would be to try a new offer on the same customers that you already have. What is the best solution? The best solution in this case is to figure out where the funnel marketing isn't working, right?

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Is it a traffic issue? Is it a lead issue? Is it an offer issue? By solving that issue, you're going to get the best solution because you're going to have more customers and also you're going to understand what is the actual problem with your funnel, instead of just adapting your sales tactics because it's not working.

The third one is what is a temporary solution? And again, a temporary solution is going in and just selling to the customers that you already have, or maybe going out and finding new customers and selling to them.

Hustling, trying to talk to 100 customers in a day is definitely a temporary solution. Going out and spending a lot of hours and a lot of time on something that maybe isn't sustainable could be a temporary solution.

But the best long-term solution is to solve for where something is going wrong in the funnel so you can have more consistent customers coming through for the long run. And this would be a much more detailed process, and you would make lots and lots of notes.

I highly recommend you come up with maybe three solutions, three very specific solutions for each one of those questions. Three easy solutions, three best solutions, three temporary solutions, and three long-term solutions.

And then the next question is what is the cause of the problem? Why don't I have enough customers? And for many of you, by evaluating solutions and coming up with solutions to problems, you are going to access the cause of it. You are going to see, oh, it's a funnel problem, it's an offer problem, it's a traffic problem, it's a niche problem, it's a pricing problem.

By really going in and understanding what the solutions are, you will have access to the problem. And then the last one is how do we prevent this in the future? How can we solve for this basically with a long-term best solution, and then go on to evaluate that funnel, evaluate your sales, evaluate what's going on to prevent having a sales problem in the future?

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Now, that didn't take us very long. Took us about five minutes to do it. I would recommend the bigger the problem, the more significant the solution to changing your life, the longer you would spend in this process. When it comes to getting your battery jumped, you're going to spend a lot less time than when it comes to really sitting down and evaluating what is the problem in my business.

Have I spent the time to really go through the process to understand what the problem is and what my possible solutions are? Or am I just complaining about it? Or have I just accepted defeat without evaluating what the problem is, what the solutions could be, and what the cause of it is?

Problems can make your life better if you create solutions that are better because you had the problem than your life was before you even had it. Do not accept face value. When somebody says no, that is the beginning of the conversation.

When you're not making sales, this is the beginning of your business. When something is slowing down or something's not working, or something isn't functioning, it's an opportunity for you to use your brain to process, come up with, and understand problems in a new way.

The better you get at processing problems to solutions, the better you are going to get at living your life, I promise you. I'm going to go through the steps again and then right now, pick a problem in your life and go through these steps.

One, is this even a problem? Two, why? Three, what is the easiest solution? What is the best solution? What is a temporary solution? And what is a long-term solution?

Number four, what was the cause of this problem? And number five, how do I prevent it in the future? Go process your problems, my friends. Have a beautiful week. I'll talk to you soon. Bye-bye.

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