

IMPROVING PROBLEM/OPPORTUNITY STATEMENTS

INSTEAD OF: "How can I make a 'perfect' problem statement?"

ASK: "How can I make my problem/opportunity statement more: clear, precise, manageable, and/or specific?"

CRITERIA:

- Single subject, single predicate.
- Direct connection to Higher Purpose(s)
- Scope: Within the resources I have or can secure within the time frame. What time frame and beneficiary is referenced?
- Sketch/describe examples of your problem/opportunity statement.
- What will success look like? Is it indicated in the way you have crafted the problem/opportunity statement?
- Have I taken steps to identify and minimize ambiguity?

STRATEGIES:

PERSONAL ACTIVITIES:

- Write out the problem/opportunity statement. Identify as clearly as possible its relationship(s) to your Higher Purpose.
- Write out the problem statement. Restate the problem (immediately, or after several hours) without looking at the first one. Compare them. What are the different emphases? Which is more appropriate for the problem that you want to address first; which is related?
- Write out your statement. Generate two examples of the problem, and ask, "How closely aligned are these examples with the statement?" Can you revise it now based on this new information?
- Have you written this as a compound problem that could more readily be worked through if it weren't compounded? (Two subjects, two objects, etc.)
- Put a time frame around this; can your thinking be more specific?
- Can you restrict this to a segment of the whole subject and find new strategies to work with this?
- Are you clear about the core concepts? Identify them and see if you need to restructure how you have set up the problem.
- Have you embedded a "hidden" solution into the framing of the statement?
- Scope: do I have the resources or can I secure them to implement my idea?

CLASS OR TEAM ACTIVITIES:

- Write out the statement. Clarify the Purpose. Write out again. Go to another person, ask them to read the 2 statements and pose 3 questions for the purpose of helping you deepen and clarify your thinking. Go to a second person and ask again. Compare all questions. Review their questions and follow them through your two statements. Were you working with a symptom? Were you focused on a solution within your statement of the problem? Should your problem statement be more specific, and if so, how could you narrow it?

