

Do One Thing Differently

Objective

To do one thing differently using eight problem-solving steps.

What to Know

The founders of Solution-Oriented Therapy noticed that most of their clients were engaged in patterns of behavior that were the opposite of what they said they desired. They prescribed a technique called “do one thing differently,” in which people agreed to do just one thing differently related to their problem. The following are eight steps you can follow that will help you do one thing differently.

What to Do

Review the eight steps and answer the questions.

Step 1. Think about the things you usually do when you have a problem. Think of a time when things did not go well for you, or when you had a problem that seemed impossible to solve.

How did you solve the problem? Was it effective? Why or why not?

What would you do differently now?

Step 2. Think of other peoples’ solutions to solve problems. Think of what others do when they are solving problems. Write them down.

Step 3. Be aware of your feelings. Understand your feelings, but do not allow them to determine your actions. Feelings are a great source of information – if they do not control you! Think of feelings you have experienced related to a problem. What are some feelings that have been unproductive or harmful (e.g., lashing out in anger)? Describe what happened.

What are some ways you can cope with these feelings?

What information did you get from those feelings?

Step 4. Change what you focus on. Sometimes what you pay attention to becomes bigger – and you will increasingly notice it. To solve a problem, try changing your focus or your perspective. Think of something you are focusing on too much. Describe.

What happens when you focus on it?

What can you focus on instead?

Step 5. Imagine a future time when you are not having the problem you are having right now.
What can you do now to make that future come true?

Think of what will be different for you in the future when things are going better. How will things be different?

Think of **one thing** you can do differently before things get better in the future. Describe.

Step 6. Change your story. Instead of focusing on your current problem, talk about a time when the problem did not exist. Control what you can control and change what you can. Think of a time when you were not having the problem that is bothering you. Write about that time.

Step 7. If you believe in God or a Higher Power, focus on that. When you focus on God or a higher power, things often go better. Do you believe in God or a higher power? If so, describe ways this will help you with your problem.

Step 8. Stick to the facts. Focus on what is in front of you. Avoid worrying about what you believe others are thinking or feeling. Are you worrying about things that might not be true? Are you assuming what other are thinking or feeling? Describe.

Now, describe the current problem you have in detail.

How is that problem affecting your happiness?

Consider the eight steps described above, and your answers to the questions. What is **one thing** you can do differently in responding to this problem? Choose to change one thing, such as what you say or the order you do things. Be specific.

How do you feel about trying something different?

If you are uncomfortable, that may indicate doing something different will lead to meaningful change. What can you do to cope with any discomfort or obstacles you might face?

After you do the one thing differently, describe what happened.

Reflections on This Exercise

How helpful was this exercise? _____
(1 = not very helpful, 5 = moderately helpful, 10 = extremely helpful)

What did you learn from this exercise?
