



Conquer Your Problems, Top '7' Tips

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It's that time of year again - the Holidays are fast approaching. Whatever we can put off until the first of the year is delayed.

This is not the wisest approach when you have a problem emerging. During the last quarter of each year, I ask clients to reflect upon the entire year to see what needs to be cleaned up prior to starting a brand new year.

It's too easy to drag problems from one year into the next. Then January comes and we get busy with other issues like budget or reviews. Just because a problem isn't demanding your immediate attention, doesn't mean it does not exist.

Problems don't simply vanish; they simmer until they explode. Then, it's too late to implement creative solutions. The collateral damage could take months to repair.

If you have a problem that you'd like to conquer this year, please follow my Top '7' Steps to resolve.

1. **Sense something is just not right.** Intuition (or gut feeling) is the strongest tool a leader can possess. We often think things are okay if a problem isn't staring us right in the face. Pay attention to those 'feelings' that say something is off. Early detection can prevent catastrophes.
2. **Compile Facts.** Ask around; the source of the problem may not be directly apparent. Who is involved? Is the problem contained or widespread? How severe is it? Who is affected and how? What have others observed, heard, suspected?
3. **Clarify the problem.** Get specific. Generalities or assumptions are only time-consuming. Instead of "we have a communication problem," try: "We've somehow lost respect for one another. This is becoming evident in our interactions and damaging to our effectiveness."
4. **Define solutions.** There is never only one solution. When you ask people what they want, they typically do not know. Explore 2-4 possible solutions to collectively determine the one that will work. People want options, not to be 'told' what to do. This creates buy-in and teamwork.
5. **Implement solutions.** Prepare a plan to implement your chosen solution with specific responsibilities, timelines, follow-up and consequences.
6. **Evaluate your outcome.** This important step is often missed when things settle down. Start from the beginning. In hindsight, how well did your process work? How have things changes? How successful was your solution? What will you do differently next time?
7. **Create new policy.** No one is excited about new policies. However, to prevent the same problem from occurring in the future, a new policy may be called for. This shows injured parties how serious you are about protecting them and others in the future.

In any relationship, it is much easier to avoid a problem than to act upon it. Taking steps to conquer your problems in or out of work takes strength and determination. It also shows how much you care about those involved.

People don't care how much you know until they know how much you care. I challenge you to be the leader those around you need you to be in tackling problems quickly and effectively.

Read all of Ann's Writing and Wisdom at: <http://gvasuccess.com/writing-and-wisdom.htm>

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