

EveryDay Matters - Tough Decisions

Let's say that you are faced with a challenging dilemma. The first thing to decide is the true nature and scope of the dilemma. In other words, is this: (1) *a problem to solve* - its elements, however difficult and/or complex, are mostly under my control; or is it (2) *a situation to manage* - there are critical elements clearly beyond my control.

As a refresher: most reasonable people hold and understand the concept that they cannot control other people, places, things, the weather, etc. However they also recognize that they can choose to modify their own thoughts, perceptions, judgments, choices, attitudes, moods, as well as their ability to act creatively rather than to react habitually. And they understand that changing one's mind, which is what the above sentence asks of an individual, is some of the hardest, albeit most rewarding, work that humans can undertake.

If, after consideration of the elements of the dilemma, you determine that the dilemma is a *problem to solve*, you can ask yourself:

- How do others solve similar dilemmas?
- What resources would I need to solve it?
- What steps would I need to take to resolve it?
- Who can I reasonably expect to provide resources or assistance to help solve this problem?
- What is the best way to gain that support?

If you determine that the dilemma is a *situation to manage*, you can ask yourself:

- What do I need to do to manage it?
- Do I have the necessary skills to manage it?
- Where might I pick up skills for those elements which I do not yet know how to manage?
- Where do I go to bolster the skills I do have?
- What does 'long term management' of this kind of situation look like?
- Who has done this successfully before - from whose example can I learn?
- Do I need to ask for outside help?

Determining the nature and scope, determining the steps that you can take, will do much toward reducing the natural feelings of overwhelm that a true dilemma can present. And determining if any additional supports are needed will clarify the need to call in 'bigger guns' in the way of professional help. Clarity and resolve are dynamic dilemma reducers.

Which frees us to move on to the next dilemma.....