# Problem Solving Techniques

There are a variety of problem-solving techniques available to use and which one you choose is partly down to your preference.

Basically, most techniques involve the **IDEAL** process:

- **I**dentify
- **D**efining the problem clearly. Often, we jump to solutions before we clearly understand the problem.
- **E**xplore alternative ways of addressing the problem.
- **A**ction – carry out the best option available.
- **L**earn or Look Back by reviewing whether the problem has been resolved and what learning you can take from the process for next time.

## A simple method we use naturally for everyday problems:

1. Analyse the problem in relation to:
   a) How things are,
   b) How you want things to be.

2. Define your aims and objectives in terms of the change you want to see.

3. Identify the alternative courses of action available to you to achieve this aim and objectives.

4. Define the criteria and characteristics that must be achieved.

5. Choose the best option to meet the criteria.

6. Implement the option.

7. Check if you have achieved the aim and objectives.

## An illustrated example:

1. Analyse: I am at home in Lockerbie and I need to get to Preston.

2. Define: Get to Preston by 11am tomorrow.

3. Identify courses of action: Car, bus, train, get a lift.

4. Define the criteria and characteristics:

a) I need to get there by 10:30 so I am not late
b) I need to get there unflustered.
c) It would be useful to re-read the meeting papers beforehand.
d) I don't want to stay overnight.

5. Choose the best option: The train meets all the criteria.

6. Implement the option: Catch the train.

7. Check: Did you get there ok, fresh and having done the pre-reading?

Consider recent problems you have tried to solve and see if you can identify the steps you took, against the structure above.

## Need help?

You can contact at us and arrange a call at: sedg@tsdg.co.uk