EVERYBODY HAS TROUBLES

ED U. GATOR GETS THE JOB DONE

TWO GREAT PROBLEM-SOLVERS
There's one thing that everyone in the world has in common: problems. It doesn't matter what color you are, or how old you are, or where you were born. We all have things that are sometimes difficult to do, and we all have broken stuff that needs fixing. That's what a problem is, really—something that needs fixing. Some problems are easy to fix. If you tear a piece of paper, that's a problem. How can you fix it? With a piece of tape. If you break a toy, that's a problem. How would you fix that? Well, maybe some glue or rubber cement would do the trick.

But some problems are bigger, and require more than a piece of tape or a dab of glue to fix them. Let's say you get in an argument with your best friend. That's a problem. Now how would you go about fixing that? Well, hopefully you could sit down and talk with your friend. Hopefully you can respect each other's side, and come to an understanding. It may take one of you apologizing, and one of you forgiving. It might even take both of you apologizing, and both of you forgiving! Whew, that's very hard to do sometimes, especially when your feelings are hurt. But if you can work out your differences, you can get back to the best part about being friends: having fun!

Sometimes we need help fixing our problems. You might need to ask a friend, your brother or sister, your mom or dad, or your teacher. And that's okay to do. Because you never know when they're going to need your help, too! Once you've figured out the solution to your problem, you can fix it. And the next time it happens you might be able to fix it all by yourself! That's called learning. That's called growing up and acting responsibly. That's called becoming a great problem solver!

VOCABULARY:
- **Require**: necessary.
- **Argument**: a fight or a disagreement.
- **Understanding**: an agreement, especially one that settles an argument.
- **Apologize**: to say that one is sorry.
- **Forgive**: to give up feeling angry at someone.
- **Solution**: an answer, or a way to fix a problem.

ACTIVITY:
Try to think of the last time you helped a friend solve a problem. Maybe you helped your friend tie a shoe, find a lost glove, or figure out where a puzzle piece fit. Or maybe you comforted your friend when he or she was sad. Then, think of a time when you had a problem, and one of your friends helped you.
SOLVING PROBLEMS • 3

Hi friends. Ed here. Last night, Dad took El and me to see a great movie called "ESCAPE FROM RED PLANET 5." It was really cool! There were strange looking aliens and these incredible spaceships that were as big as a city! My favorite character was a guy named Zuke Starglider, who was very brave. He saved Duchess Baya and thousands of other people from Red Planet 5 just before it blew up! When we got into the lobby, there was a man selling models of Zuke Starglider and the Duchess. Dad said since we both enjoyed the movie so much, he'd buy us each one of the models. So I picked up Zuke, and El of course grabbed Duchess Baya.

As soon as I got home I tore open the box. Yikes! There were a million pieces! It was going to take a year to put Zuke together! But I sat down and began sorting them out. It came with a sheet of instructions, but they were kind of hard to figure out. Once Dad poked his head in my room to see how it was going. He asked if I needed any help. "No thanks," I said, "I'm sure I can do it myself!" So, I just started doing the best I could, gluing here and there, sticking pieces up and down and every which way. After an hour I looked at my model. It looked nothing like Zuke Starglider did in the movie! It looked more like Mr. Zucchini Head! I was really frustrated, but I wasn't ready to admit to Dad that I couldn't do it myself.

Then suddenly, a terrible thing happened. While I was forcing Zuke's right arm into a hole that was too small, it broke in half! Oh no, what was I going to do now? I decided to finally get some help from Dad, before I ruined the whole model. He came upstairs and started by reading the instructions. "Ed," he said, "these are pretty complicated. I was really frustrated, but I wasn't ready to admit to Dad that I couldn't do it myself.

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Ed Asks for Help and Gets the Job Done

QUESTIONS

1) What did Ed discover about the Zuke Starglider model when he got home?

2) Why did he say he didn't need his dad's help?

3) What made him change his mind?

4) What was Ed able to accomplish with a little help? Why was he so proud of his finished model?

5) Why do you think Ed was so willing to help his sister with her model?
HELP BE A PROBLEM-SOLVER

Directions: Here is a picture of a man who could use some help. He has a box that he needs to put away high up on a shelf. How can he get there? Well, maybe he could pile up those boxes with the different letters you see below. There are enough letter boxes to spell S-O-L-V-I-N-G P-R-O-B-L-E-M-S, but they need to be in the correct order to do the job right. Can you cut out the letters and rearrange them to accomplish this task? You can? What a great problem-solver you are!
SOLVING PROBLEMS • 5

IN THE NEWSPAPER

Directions: Look through the comics section of the newspaper with an adult. Many times comic strip characters encounter problems which they have to solve or overcome. Choose one that shows problem solving, cut it out, and glue it to the space below.

EVERY PROBLEM HAS A SOLUTION

Directions: On the left side below there's a list of problems. On the right side is a list of possible solutions. Can you match each problem with the solution that will fix the situation? Ask an adult if you need some help.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Problem</th>
<th>Solution</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a broken cup</td>
<td>soap and water</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a stained shirt</td>
<td>a peanut butter sandwich</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a flat bicycle tire</td>
<td>a piece of tape</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>an empty stomach</td>
<td>a hammer and a nail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a tired, crying baby</td>
<td>laundry detergent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a torn piece of paper</td>
<td>a nap</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a loose chair leg</td>
<td>glue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a dirty hand</td>
<td>an air pump</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
nce a long, long time ago, in a land far away, there lived a wise king named Gladius. King Gladius was a very fair ruler, and he was known for his ability to solve problems. People would travel many miles to hear his wonderful wisdom. He was a great listener, and he would take his time thinking before answering. Sometimes he would retreat to his library, where he would search for hours through thousands of books and letters. When he finally discovered his solution to the problem, it was always right and just, and the people returned home happily, feeling like a tremendous weight had been lifted from their shoulders.

But sometimes, even wise kings have problems of their own. King Gladius had a large and powerful army, which protected the people of his kingdom from invaders from other lands. There were two knights, Alton and Tomar, who were especially gallant and courageous. King Gladius counted on these two brave warriors to carry out his orders. But over time, a great jealousy grew between the two men. Tomar was convinced he was the smartest and the bravest, and should therefore be the one and only leader of the king’s army. Alton, on the other hand, was certain he was the most capable man. Jealousy turned to rage, and the men who were once good friends, never spoke.

Once, in late spring, the king’s army was nearly defeated. Tomar shouted his orders, and Alton shouted his orders, and there was much confusion amongst the soldiers.

Word got back to King Gladius, and he realized that something needed to be done about the problem. He knew his entire kingdom was at risk, unless he could bring peace between the two leaders. For three days he sat in his library, consulting his books and letters. In the evenings, he kneeled in the garden, thinking of the right and just answer to this predicament. He had great respect for both men, but he knew only one could be the leader of the army. But how could he choose? On the fourth day, King Gladius took a stroll through the village. There he saw a young boy playing on the ground with wooden toy soldiers. The boy had two armies set up on a pretend battlefield. King Gladius watched the boy for a while, and suddenly the answer came to him. “Two armies!” he thought to himself. “That’s the solution I’ve been searching for!” And, in a not-very-kinglike fashion, he ran excitedly back to his castle.

That afternoon, he called Tomar and Alton to his chambers. “I have thought long and hard about this problem,” he said to the men, “and I feel there is a simple solution. Since you are both extremely courageous and loyal, you shall both be leaders of my army. We are never certain from which direction our invaders will come. Tomar, you shall lead the North Army, and Alton shall lead the South. In that way, the kingdom will be protected from both sides, at all times.”

Tomar and Alton shook hands. It was a perfect settlement. King Gladius slept very soundly that night, feeling a great weight had been lifted from his shoulders. Finally, there would be peace again in the kingdom!
Throughout history, great thinkers have changed and improved the way we live our lives. We have benefited from their hard work, and their dedication to solving problems. Many brilliant people have made important contributions to the field of science. Two of the most famous ones are Sir Isaac Newton and Louis Pasteur.

Newton was born in England on January 4, 1643. He was an excellent student, and graduated with a Masters Degree from the University of Cambridge. Throughout his school years, he was most fascinated by math and science. Using his extensive knowledge, Newton made important discoveries about light, motion and gravity. Newton also invented a type of math called calculus.

Louis Pasteur was born in France on December 2, 1822. Like Newton he was a hard-working student, and he graduated with a Doctorate degree from the Ecole Normale in Paris. He discovered a process for keeping milk fresh, which we now call pasteurization. He also made remarkable advances in the field of medicine, and developed vaccines for several diseases, including rabies.

The world will always need great thinkers. Many of the things we take for granted today started as ideas or solutions to simple problems. Sir Isaac Newton and Louis Pasteur loved learning, and their discoveries have helped us in many ways.

**VOCABULARY:**

- **Benefit:** something that helps.
- **Brilliant:** very smart.
- **Extensive:** large or applying to many things.
- **Gravity:** the force that pulls objects to the center of the earth.
- **Process:** a method of making or doing something.
- **Advances:** progress.
- **Vaccine:** a substance put in the body to prevent disease.
TIPS

1) It’s important for your child to realize that everyone experiences problems from time to time. Many kids (and adults, too) feel as if they are the only ones dealing with a particular hardship or difficulty. Problems are “par for the course,” and in the most positive way should be viewed as challenges to overcome as part of a life-long learning process.

2) Television shows are often a good format for observing people working out problems with friends and families. However, due to the limitations of a 30- or 60-minute time slot, many problems are “wrapped up” much faster than they could possibly be in real life. It’s important to explain that this “quick fix” might be an unrealistic expectation for a “real” family.

3) Problems need to be dealt with, not “swept under the carpet” or just set aside in the hope they will just disappear. Also, teach your child that whining and complaining about a problem is not the most productive way of getting to the solution.

4) Many young people carry unnecessary stresses and emotional burdens because they’re afraid to talk to someone about their problems, or feel it’s not okay to ask somebody for help. Try to create an environment of open communication, and encourage working things out together.

5) Help your young child to understand the concept of “cause and effect.” For example, if he pushes against a lamp, it will probably fall and break. If he writes on the wall or furniture with markers, it may not come out. Although these things may seem very obvious to you, your child may need some guidance in developing problem prevention skills.

RESOURCES


FAMILY ACTIVITY

As stated in tip the fourth above, kids sometimes have difficulty reaching out to others to help solve problems. It might be a useful exercise to reverse the situation as a learning experience. Tell your child that you have a problem, and you were hoping he might be able to give you some assistance in finding a solution. Experiencing this process might make it easier for your child to ask for help solving his own difficulties.

FAMILY PLEDGE CARD

Our family has completed the Family Page together.

______________________________
Child’s name

______________________    ___________________
Family members:

______________________    ___________________

School: ___________________________________
Teacher/grade: ___________________________

For more information about Project: Solution, call 726-8918 or 1-800-351-1227, ext. 8033 or 8918.