A Problem Solving Approach

1. **Identify the Problem**
   a. Define the problem.
   b. Be very specific.

2. **Understand the Problem**
   a. Look at all the aspects of the problem.
   b. Identify reasons for concerns, the values and feelings which underlie the problem.

3. **Clarify your Goal or Purpose**
   a. What do you want to accomplish?
   b. State your goal.

4. **Gather Information**
   a. Consult with others, collect information that you need to make an informed decision.

5. **Brainstorm Alternatives**
   a. Think of all possible alternatives and list them.

6. **Evaluate the Alternatives**
   a. Examine each alternative and identify the pros and cons.
   b. Examine the outcomes and consequences.
   c. Also consider the resources needed.

7. **Select the Best Alternative**
   a. Review the consequences and possible outcomes.
   b. Look at the advantages and disadvantages and decide which alternative is the best.
   c. Consider the following:
      i. Will it help me reach my goal?
      ii. Is it realistic?
      iii. Is it something I can control? Is it achievable?
      iv. Is it what I want?

8. **Take Action**
   a. Approach your decision with a positive attitude.
   b. Put your energies into making it work.
   c. Develop a plan of action.
   d. Ask yourself:
      i. What steps do I need to take to reach my goal?
      ii. What obstacles are in the way that I have to overcome?
      iii. Who might be able to help me reach my goal?
      iv. What are the time lines needed?