

Solvation

Saving Ourselves by Solving Our Problems

By “Philosophical Bob” Pacelli

Solvation is a practical method people can use to solve their every-day problems. Problems come with stress. If we don't solve our problems the stress tends to build-up like straws on the proverbial camels' back. We're built to handle a fair amount of stress but with too much our system can become overloaded. This comes with an uncomfortable feeling of being overwhelmed.

When we do solve our problems, the stress that comes with them is reduced. This takes some of the straws off the camels' back. It lightens the load. This causes a natural sense of relief. Solving our problems makes us feel better. Being less stressed means feeling less disturbed. This causes our happiness level to go up. It makes the needle move. This is a goal of the Solvation method.

The Principle of 2

Einstein pointed out that the universe, in all its' vastness and complexity, when broken down into its' fundamental elements consists of 2 things, matter and energy. The universe provides itself as the ultimate example of the Principle of 2. Trying to explain this natural phenomenon would be like trying to explain what's making our hearts beat or where our thoughts come from. These things cannot be

explained however they can be observed. Being observable in the natural world is what makes them real. Human beings are also subject to the Principle of 2. (you will see many examples as we go along). Once we apply the principle of 2, solving our problems becomes simple. It's a series of choices between 2 things. You could say it's the "simplicity on the other side of complexity". Oliver Wendell Holmes referred to this as something for which he would give anything he had.

You may ask, what kind of problems are we going to try and solve Bob? Good question, let's take a look.

The Principle of 2 applies.

Problems

When it comes to problems, there are 2 kinds

Technological and Human

When it comes to technological problems, we've been doing great. We have been able to work together to make meteoric advances in technological fields that produce things like computers, automobiles, cell phones, airplanes, medicine and so on. When it comes to solving our human problems, we're not keeping up. Humanity has not been keeping up with technology. The field of being human is languishing. When it comes to our human problems, people fight instead of solve. This leads to conflict. Where there is conflict, there are human problems.

Human problems are all over the big world and can also be found in our own little world. As individuals we may not be able to solve big world problems. Our percentage of effect on them is infinitesimally small. Unless we are willing to dedicate our life to a particular cause, the best we can do is volunteer our time, donate money, vote or pray for change. Even if we do these things, big world problems continue with no end in sight.

However, when it comes to the human problems in our own little world, our percentage of effect on their solution is very often one hundred percent. We're going to apply the Stoic philosophy and not try to solve big world problems. Our focus will be to solve the human problems in our own little world.

Solvation is a practical method. It is not religious or mystical. We are not going to believe anything or rely on someone else to solve our problems for us. Solving our human problems is something we have to do for ourselves. Positive results will be the product of our working in harmony with the laws of cause and effect and our bodies natural ability to heal itself.

By solving our problems and reducing the stress on our system, our bodies natural abilities are no longer overloaded. This enables them to do their job and restore our level of wellness to its' natural undisturbed state which I like to call "in the green". It's the same natural process that

restores a broken bone or a cut in the skin. When we do our part, Nature does hers.

Know Thyself

When it comes to philosophy the ancient Greeks were heavy hitters. Great minds like Socrates, Plato and Aristotle contemplated the mysteries of life for 900 years. As a result, they came up with 147 Delphic Maxims. Delphic Maxims are useful bits of philosophical information. Legend has it they carved these bits into the stone walls of the Temple of Apollo. Doing this showed the highest form of reverence. At the very top of the list, the Delphic Maxim the ancient Greeks considered most important of all were 2 simple words, Know Thyself.

Having this golden nugget of philosophical information is good but just having it is not enough to cause the needle to move. Information is inert until it is applied. Think of this epic piece of information as a T-bag (a little bag of thought). All of its' potential is contained in the T-bag, but unapplied it remains inert. If we are to benefit from this powerful substance, we must dunk this T-bag in the hot water of our mind. Believing alone causes nothing. We have to think about and apply the information if we are to enjoy the benefits of its' wisdom. One dunk will not do much but with regular dunking, the substance will emerge.

Why is Knowing Ourselves Important?

Before we knew a lot about the world, it was accepted as fact that the earth was flat. People believed if you ventured too far out to sea, you would fall off the edge. This superstitious belief made people afraid to explore what was beyond the horizon. Back in those days if anyone dare question this belief, they were ostracized or even accused of heresy. Humanity was stuck in this belief for a long time.

When people finally summoned the courage to look beyond the superstitious and think for themselves, advancements were made. When we came to know the world better, the abstract flat-earth belief was discarded. The study of the earth and its' place in the cosmos became the practical field of astronomy. A practical field that has been developing, advancing and evolving ever since.

Before we knew our physical body, medicine was archaic. Many areas were shrouded in superstition. One of these superstitious beliefs was that bloodletting cured disease. (That's what killed George Washington.) Another was drilling a hole in a patients' skull would let out evil spirits that were causing some kind of illness. Yikes!

It was only in the last century or so some of these superstitions were abandoned. As we have come to know our physical bodies better, we have risen out of the fog of

superstition and modern medicine has become a practical field. A practical field that has been developing, advancing and evolving ever since.

The knowledge of our physical body has advanced significantly but what about our other part? What about the part of us that is not physical? What about our energy body? Do we know everything there is to know about our energy body? Do we even think of ourselves as having an energy body? Are we still stuck in the realm of superstition in this area? If so, what must we know to get ourselves un-stuck? What must we know order to develop, advance and evolve? What do we need to know about our energy body in order for being human to become a practical field? Lets' dunk that T-bag.

The Energy Body

There's a lot of information out there about the energy body. Much of it is in the doctrines of religion and mysticism. The information from these areas tends to be abstract. To keep things practical, let's start with the mind and the heart. (For more on sorting out abstract and practical information, check out my blog page at Philosophicalbob.com) The brain is part of the physical body and the mind is part of the energy body. The physical heart is a blood pumping muscle and the energy heart is a spiritual organ with which we feel. Although the energy heart has remained somewhat of a

mystery, one thing seems fundamental. What the mind thinks, the heart feels.

Abraham Lincoln said, “when I do good I feel good, when I do bad, I feel bad, that is my religion”

While we’re getting to know ourselves better, let’s take a crack at answering the 2 main philosophical questions.

Question #1

Who am I?

If you ask one hundred different people, chances are you’ll get one hundred different answers. There’s confusion in this area and it seems to be causing an ever-worsening identity crisis. There are many ways people identify, race, color, religion, occupation, culture, geographical location, political affiliation, gender, sexual orientation and so on. These are ways we are different but how are we the same?

Before we are white, black, brown, yellow or green, we are human. Before we are American, Chinese, Mexican, Russian, Asian or Tasmanian we are human. Before we are rich, poor, man, woman, it, they, gay, strait or trans, we are human.

The things with which people identify tend to separate us. These things are not who we are, they are merely characteristics. If we are going to solve our human problems and advance in the field of being human, we must do so as human beings. So, who am I? How do I identify?

I am a human being.

That was simple wasn't it?

Leonardo Da Vinci was quoted as saying

“Simplicity is the ultimate sophistication”

Question #2

What is life?

George Harrison of the Beatles asked this age old question in a song entitled “What is life?” way back in 1970. It's a great song but the question remained unanswered. Let's try and clear it up.

The Principle of 2 applies.

Human life, (like the universe) in all its' vastness and complexity consists of 2 things;

Blessings and Problems

This is a good thing to know about ourselves. Blessings and problems can be observed in every human life. If human beings came with an owners-manual, this information would be on the first page. Knowing this makes it clear what we must do to have balance in our lives. If human life consists of blessings and problems, it only makes sense we count our blessings and solve our problems. Pretty simple.

Counting our blessings (science is counting) is essential to our level of well-being. When we count the good things in our life, we get a sense of appreciation and gratitude. These positive expressions generate healthy energies. (I like to think of them as spiritual nutrition). Expressing appreciation and gratitude is how we feel the joy of life. This is why solving our problems is so important. How can we feel the joy from our blessings when we're overwhelmed with the stress from our problems? Did you ever think, "I would be so much happier if it weren't for all these daggon' problems"?

News Flash! Problems are a part of the deal. No one is exempt. Along with a wealth of blessings comes a never-ending stream of problems. This is the universal recipe for a human life. There's no getting around it. If we are to ascend out of the fog of superstition and advance in the field of being human, we have to make some changes. A good place to start is to identify as human, count our blessings and become better problem solvers.

Counting our blessing is simple enough but it takes practice. It's a matter of consciously observing our life, recognizing the good things and writing them down. Making a written list of our blessings takes them out of the abstract and brings them into the realm of cause and effect. It makes them real. It gives them substance and weight. Weighing the good things gives us something to put on the positive side of the scale.

Blessings are the source of our happiness. If we have any chance of being happy in this mad world, it will be a result of the recognition and appreciation of the good things in our lives. This does not happen by itself. Counting our blessings and cultivating an environment of gratitude is a conscious endeavor. It's a skill that must be developed. Like karate or playing the piano, it takes practice to develop the skills.

Counting our blessings is a pretty straightforward process. Now for the challenging part. How do we solve these pesky human problems?

Albert Einstein said,

“We can't solve our problems with the same kind of thinking we're using to cause them”

That makes sense, doesn't it? What exactly was our old friend Al talking about? How many kinds of thinking are there? It seems this could be an unanswerable question. One might think the possibilities could be endless. Nope, it's simple. There are 2 kinds of thinking.

Instinctive and Conscious

This was a main pillar in Stoic philosophy. They referred to it as “Reaction or Response”. This concept was of primary importance to the Stoics and they did a great job of pointing out the differences between them. Solvation expands on this ancient wisdom and provides a practical method by which it can be applied.

Isaac Newton said,

“If I have seen further it is by standing on the shoulders of giants”

The instinctive kind of thinking stems from our survival mechanism a/k/a, the fight or flight reaction. This kind of thinking is an automatically triggered reaction to a perceived threat. In a life or death situation, it could save our life. In non-life or death situations this instinctive reaction is conflictive, emotional and stressful.

The conscious kind of thinking is rational. A rational, well considered, formulated response is much more likely to result in a solution. When we consciously solve our problems, we enjoy a peaceful, harmonious outcome instead of stressful conflict. When it comes to dealing with our every-day, non-life or death problems, we either instinctively react or consciously respond. These are our 2 choices. Knowing the difference and becoming able to choose between them is our goal. Let's sort them out.

Instinctive and conscious thinking each have their own area of the brain. This information can be found in the field of neuroscience. (The Stoics did not have the benefit of this information.)

Areas of the Brain

The Limbic System and the Cerebral Cortex

The field of neuroscience is relatively new. Many neuroscientists or brain researchers will freely admit they are just scratching the surface. New information is coming in all the time and the field is in a constant state of development. Although it's always being updated there are some things that seem to be fundamental.

There is a lot going on in the brain over which we have no control. The brain runs many systems of our body without our conscious participation. Things like heartbeat, body temperature, digestion and so on are happening without our conscious involvement. These functions are a part of homeostasis or the body's natural ability to regulate itself. No one can explain how this is happening and we will not try to unravel the mystery here. We will only concern ourselves with the functions of the brain over which we are capable of having a practical effect. These functions reside in the limbic system and the cerebral cortex.

The limbic system is where our survival instinct is located. It is also thought to house our emotions. The survival instinct is triggered when we perceive a threat. If we were being chased by a hungry bear or a psycho with a machete, our survival instinct would be triggered. This automatically overrides the rational part of our brain. When this happens the

heart races, chemicals like adrenalin are released into our system and BOOM! It's fight or flight. The limbic system is the area of the brain where the instinctive kind of thinking resides. This kind of thinking typically results in an automatic "Reaction".

The cerebral cortex is the conscious part of our brain. It is capable of rational thought. It is the area of our brain we use for solving problems, critical thinking, working things out, creativity, making advancements in technology, being nice and so on. It's the area of the brain with which we are capable of observing ourselves and the world around us. It is the part capable of making conscious decisions. It's the part that makes us human. The cerebral cortex is the area of the brain where the "Response" kind of thinking resides.

The Cause of Our Human Problems

If we are to formulate solutions to our human problems, it is helpful to know their cause. What is causing the conflict in our own little world? Before I knew myself I couldn't see it but now it seems obvious. We're not using the conscious part of our brain to solve our every-day human problems. We somehow misinterpret non-lethal human problems as a threat. Instead of using our cerebral cortex to solve them, we automatically default to a limbic reaction. We fight instead of solve. This results in conflict, drama and stress.

It's common lately to hear the term "trigger warning". We are vaguely aware of the limbic triggering mechanism but not having a clear understanding of how it works, it remains out of our control. This is why it is so important to know ourselves. It's important to recognize that we have become thin-skinned or overly sensitive to non-lethal human interactions. In other words, we've developed a hair trigger.

This hair trigger goes off at the slightest provocation and automatically shuts off the problem solving part of the brain. When a human problem arises, the limbic system is automatically triggered and people get emotional and blame others for upsetting them. (Does any of this sound familiar?)

These situations cause what I refer to as un-necessary conflict. Unnecessary conflict causes un-necessary stress. This kind of stress is often the culprit in a system overload. With learning and practice it is possible to over-ride the limbic reaction to fight and become able to make the conscious decision to solve in all of our non-life or death human interactions. By solving instead of fighting, it is possible to eliminate a significant amount of un-necessary stress from our daily life. This is one of the goals of the Solvation method.

Before I figured this out my system was overloaded. In spite of my many blessings, I was totally stressed-out and my level of happiness was in the red. When I became able to solve my every-day human problems, my unnecessary stress levels

were significantly reduced. No longer overloaded, my bodies' natural abilities were able to kick in and my level of happiness went up. It went from deeply in the red to comfortably in the green and remains there till this day. (Being in the green feels way better)

To achieve this result, I had to upgrade my programming.

Upgrading our Programming

There are 2 programs on which human beings run. The Conflictive Operating Program and the Solution-Based Operating Program. They are both in there at the same time. If we are unaware of them, they can get mixed-up and out of control. This can be confusing. Getting to know ourselves better in this area serves to alleviate this confusion.

Before I was aware of the difference, I was running primarily on The Conflictive Operating Program. You could say I was on auto-conflict. I had the same problems over and over. My life situations were not getting better in fact they were getting worse. I complained a lot and blamed others for my conflictive outcomes. As a result, my system became overloaded with stress.

Consciously running on the Solution-Based Operating Program gave me a measure of control. It's how I became able to control myself in pressure situations. It's how I control my negative emotions. It's how I became a better

problem solver. Running on the Solution Based Operating Program is how I reduced the stress load on my system. As a result, the needle moved.

If we are to reduce the unnecessary stress on our system, naturally raise our level of happiness and advance in the field of being human, it will be by consciously over-riding the Conflictive Operating Program and choosing to run on the Solution-Based Operating Program. Let's sort them out.

The Conflictive Operating Program (C.O.P.)

The Conflictive Operating Program stems from our natural instinct to survive. The survival instinct resides in the area of the brain known as the limbic system. It has been installed into our brain by nature. It is designed to automatically override the conscious part of our brain in life or death situations. It is incapable of solving problems or rational thinking.

Over the millennia, humanity has become somewhat civilized and life and death situations have decreased. In spite of the unlikelihood of being confronted by a marauding band of barbarians or chased by a sabre toothed tiger, the survival instinct is still an integral part of our human system. Over time this kill or be killed instinct has given root to the win/lose paradigm. The win/lose paradigm is the foundation of the Conflictive Operating Program.

In non-life or death situations, the Conflictive Operating Program becomes about winning and being right. This kind of thinking is operated by what is commonly referred to as the ego. (We'll talk about this a little later) The conflictive or win/lose kind of thinking is tightly woven into the fabric of our being. In spite of our advancements in technological fields, this kind of primal thinking has been seemingly impossible to overcome. Running on the Conflictive Operating Program is the root cause of our human problems. It is the underlying cause of conflict. Uncontrolled it seeps into every aspect of human life.

Every story ever written is about conflict. There is always a good guy and a bad guy, a hero and a villain, a protagonist and an antagonist. There is always a struggle in which one must win and one must lose. Every school has a fight song. It passionately expresses how we will courageously fight, fight, fight to the end, vanquish our rivals (win) and bask in the glory of victory. The thing people seem to fear most is losing and suffering the humiliation of defeat.

When you turn on the news, what do you see? A never ending stream of conflict. Individuals are fighting and killing each other. Countries are at war. Different factions of people in the same country are at odds. Political opponents are criticizing and blaming each other for the endless, ever-worsening problems in the world. (They're fighting over problems they should be working together to solve). When

people are divided, nothing gets solved and the wheel of conflict keeps spinning. This causes things to get worse. This downward spiral is the result of human beings running on the Conflictive Operating Program.

The Solution-Based Operating Program (S.B.O.P.)

The Solution-Based Operating Program is based on the win/win kind of thinking. This kind of thinking resides in the cerebral cortex part of the brain. True to its' name, we use the Solution-Based Operating Program to solve problems. We also use it to advance technologies, get along with our fellow human beings, make compromises, help each other and in general, make things better. The result of a solution-based, win/win approach is positive, harmonious and symbiotic.

“Good for you, good for me, good for the flower, good for the bee.” A symbiotic outcome is win/win and good for all involved.

Being aware of the win/win approach gives us an option. I like to think of it as Option B. Running on the Solution-Based Operating Program enables us to solve instead of fight. We can have harmony instead of conflict, serenity instead of stress. Life doesn't always have to be about winning and being right. If it's not a life or death situation, we can solve instead of fight. Solving is not losing. Solving is evolving.

These 2 programs have a number of distinct characteristics.

Recognizing their differences and becoming able to choose between them is the first step towards putting the solution-based operating program into practical application. Let's sort them out. (You can download this page for free from our website)

C.O.P.	S.B.O.P.
Limbic System	Cerebral Cortex
Instinct-survival	Conscious
Triggered-Automatic	Purposeful
Reaction-Fight or Flight	Response-Solve
Win/Lose	Win/Win
Conflictive	Harmonious
Emotional	Serene
Negative	Positive
Toxic	Healthy
Ego	Human
Lower Self-Primal	Higher Self

Study the differences between these 2 operating programs. Dunk the T-Bag. Sort them out in your mind. Create a membrane of separation between them. Practice

recognizing these characteristics as they come up in your every-day life. Don't worry if they slip past you. It takes time and practice to get the hang of it. Try not to be in a hurry. Life will provide an endless stream of opportunities for you to practice this skill.

The Ego

We are all familiar with the term and have some idea what it means. When we think of someone being egotistical, we may think of them expressing narcissistic traits. We may think of an egotistical person as someone who has an inflated view of themselves. They may act as if they are better than everyone else. Egotistical people are often abusive, critical of others and display a lack of empathy. They may seem selfish and always put their own interests first. Some may show it more than others but, the same way every human has a liver, every human has an ego.

Nature put the ego in charge of our survival mechanism. Our ego runs our limbic system. It is our protector. It is our inner warrior. The ego is incapable of kindness, empathy, patience, being nice or any other endearing human quality. The primary function of the ego is to make sure we survive a life or death encounter. If our human part is a little angel, our ego is a little devil. They are both in there together. This is a good thing to know about ourselves. I named my ego Beelzebub.

The ego is exactly like a guard dog. In an ideal relationship between a human and a dog, both are happy. The human is the master and the dog is a faithful companion and guardian. In a troubled relationship, the human suffers at the hand of their protector.

The dog is a pack animal. It is either pack leader or takes its' place in the pecking order. The animal that nature created to be a faithful guardian will instinctively take over as pack leader if it senses the human is not fulfilling the role. When the dog takes charge, the relationship becomes full of conflict and stress. The dog is incapable of solving problems. Every situation becomes combative and emotional. Things get out of control and the human comes to perceive the situation as hopeless. The human becomes desperate and needs help.

The Dog Whisperer

Most people have heard about or watched the T.V. show "The Dog Whisperer". It's about people calling in an expert to help solve their dog problems. When the dog whisperer arrives he recognizes the problem right away. It's the major connecting thread of the show. In just about every case, he finds the human has not embraced and asserted their role as pack leader in the relationship. As a result, the dog has instinctively assumed the role of pack leader. This results in the human unwittingly becoming submissive to the dog.

The dog whisperer knows there is nothing wrong with the dog. It's only following its' natural instincts. If there is any fixing to be done, it's on the human side. This is not an easy task. The dog whisperer tries to point out the problem but the human resists. The human denies responsibility and blames the dog. They have difficulty grasping the concept. By the end of the episode, with the help of the dog whisperer, the human starts to come out of the fog of denial and begins to see their role in the problem.

Only by becoming aware of their role in the problem can they begin to embrace their role in the solution. The problem is finally solved when the human takes on the role of pack leader and becomes able to control the dog. As such, the human can go on with their life in peace and the dog, no longer in charge, can take its' natural place in the hierarchy. This is a relief to both.

Objectivity Partnership

The dog whisperer is the objectivity partner of the troubled human being. The human cannot see themselves objectively. They can't see the problem from the inside looking out perspective. They can't see the forest through the trees or the nose on their face. Seeing oneself objectively requires an outside looking in perspective. In my own life, a doctor was my objectivity partner. (Find this in a blog entitled "The Hudson River Syndrome" on my website Philosophicalbob.com) I recommend finding a like-minded

person to walk this path with you. Become each-others objectivity partner. It takes 2. (Free download, Objectivity partnership agreement) Objectivity is a function of the cerebral cortex. It is key to becoming aware of our role in solving our problems. I like to refer to this moment of clarity as the Loud Popping sound. (Use your imagination)

Loud Popping Sound

If we are to evolve out of our instinctive tendencies and become fully functioning human beings, we must embrace the role of pack leader and gain control of our inner guard dog. It is imperative we consciously over-ride our ego dominated limbic reactions and start solving our human problems with the cerebral cortex part of our brain. It breaks down to making choices between 2 things, fighting or solving. When we consciously choose to solve, we evolve. This helps us to become free thinkers and leads to a state of what Kant referred to as “emotional maturity”.

The enlightenment era philosopher Immanuel Kant suggested we become enlightened when reach emotional maturity. This occurs when we emerge from what he referred to as a state of “self-imposed non-age”. In this state of “non-age” or not aging, we believe without question instead of thinking for ourselves. Emerging from this limited state frees us from the inner tyranny of our ego. We become free to use our cerebral cortex to think for ourselves. As free thinkers, we are no longer subjected to our automatic limbic

reactions, uncontrolled negative emotions or limiting superstitious beliefs. Being free thinkers makes us better problem solvers and enables us to operate as our higher selves. (Find my “Enlightenment” blog at Philosophicalbob.com)

Using the Other Ninety Percent of our Brain

There’s an old expression that suggests human beings only use ten percent of our brain. Could this mean we use the limbic system ninety percent of the time and our cerebral cortex only ten percent? What would happen if we balanced out these percentages? What if we increased the percentage of use of our cerebral cortex? Is this something within our control?

Using the other ninety percent of our brain is a conscious endeavor. It takes a measure of objectivity or self-awareness to make the needle move. Without our cerebral cortex, we would be like the rest of the animals. We would be limited to whatever was programmed into our natural instincts. An animal, no matter how intelligent, can only be what nature programmed it to be. A dog can only be a dog, a monkey a monkey or a dolphin a dolphin. Human beings have something extra. We are consciously aware.

Being conscious makes us capable of being anything we want to be. All we have to do is pop our heads out of the

darkness and start using the other ninety percent of our brain.

We can't completely shut off the limbic system, we need it. It's performing a bunch of necessary tasks. What we can do is tweek the knobs and up the amperage on our cerebral cortex. We are at the controls. It's a matter of balance. Look how far we've come with ten percent. Imagine what we could do if we boosted our cerebral cortex to twenty or thirty percent. It's a T-bag worth dunking.

Indicators of a Conflictive Operating Program

Complaining, Criticizing, Blaming, Judgment

Limbic Phrases

"It's not my fault". "I'm right". "You're wrong".

Be mindful of these types of expressions. Take note of the emotions that come with them. It takes a measure of objectivity to do so. Recognize them as indicators of the conflictive operating program. By observing ourselves and becoming aware when we are expressing these indicators, we are on track. It doesn't happen all at once. There's a learning curve.

Energy as a Substance

In the preparation of any healthy recipe, healthy ingredients are necessary. As developing human beings, it's important we perceive energy as a substance. Energy substances are

like material substances in the sense they possess particular qualities, quantities and characteristics. We're already familiar with the words that represent them. We know their names. The next step is to begin using them in our every-day lives. Remember, information is inert until it is applied and we can't do this with our limbic system.

Here are seven energy substances that are necessary ingredients in the recipe of Solvation.

The Magnificent Seven

1. Respect- A positive feeling or action shown toward someone; to hold in high esteem or regard. (These definitions come right out of the dictionary)

Treat others the way you would like to be treated. This is nothing new. Many know it as the golden rule. We are all capable of showing respect. When we do, we're generating positive, healthy energy. When we express respect, we feel respect. What the mind thinks, the heart feels. It a win-win situation.

Respect is the first on the list because it is what's needed most in the world. Respecting people doesn't mean you have to agree with them. Live and let live is the ancient wisdom that embodies the concept. Respect is the main ingredient in a harmonious outcome.

To get respect, one must give respect. Don't wait for the world or other people to change (It ain't gonna happen).

Apply the timeless wisdom bestowed upon us by Gandhi and “be the change”. Take the initiative and set the tone in your every-day human interactions by making respect the main ingredient. It’s a conscious choice. R-E-S-P-E-C-T

2. Patience-calmly tolerating delay, confusion, ect...

How much patience we have can be measured by how long a disturbance takes to get us upset. Patience is a quantitative substance. It’s common to hear people say, “I’m about out of patience” or “my patience is wearing thin”. On the other hand, “that person has the patience of a saint” or “they must have a ton of patience.”

Patience is our defense against flying off the handle in a pressure situation. It’s a necessary ingredient in our efforts to over-ride our triggered limbic reactions. Stoicism recommends responding with a pause, a few deep breaths or simply choosing to not let it bother us when we feel ourselves getting annoyed. Developing patience is a skill. It takes awareness, forethought, self-control and lots of practice.

Patience is a spiritual muscle. The more we exercise it, the stronger it gets. Life provides an endless stream of opportunities to exercise our patience. Recognize, appreciate and make the most of them.

3. Kindness-sympathetic, gentle, benevolent ect...

Kindness comes from the heart. It is a conscious human expression. It is often referred to as being nice. It's easy to be nice when everything is going smoothly but when the stuff hits the fan and the limbic reaction kicks-in, being nice goes out the window. Back when I was living in the dog eat dog world and swimming with the sharks, there were many times I found myself in situations where other people weren't being kind. When I was running on the conflictive operating program, this was likely to trigger a conflictive reaction. Things would often go downhill from there and the stress would pile up.

With awareness and determination, I found that in conjunction with respect and patience, I could respond with kindness even in stressful situations. This approach would often disarm the other person, de-escalate the situation and set the tone for a harmonious outcome. This is especially rewarding when it happens with someone you love.

4. Humility-to lower in pride, make modest

From the win/lose kind of thinking, humility is lowering oneself into a submissive position. (No Bueno!) From the solution-based perspective, there is no dominant or submissive position. In the win/win frame of reference, humility is being eye to eye and in equal standing.

In my own experience, trying to hold a dominant position or allowing myself to become submissive in a relationship resulted in conflict and stress. In my efforts to practice humility, I lowered my position where dominant and elevated it where submissive. Doing this was one of the most significant changes I've ever made in my life. This one skill reduced my stress-load dramatically and the benefits have been on-going.

Humility is placing ourselves in an equal, eye to eye position in all of our non-life or death human interactions.

5. Courage-Bravery

There are different situations where people display courage. We mostly associate the word with bravery on the battlefield or people risking their lives during a dangerous rescue mission. What about every-day situations that aren't life or death like dealing with an abusive boss or a sensitive loved one. These areas can be pretty scary to change.

When asked what it meant to him, the actor John Wayne replied, "courage is being scared to death but saddling up anyway". It takes a measure of courage to make changes in our lives. Sure we may feel a twinge of fear but saddle up anyway. Courage is essential in solving our human problems. Courageously moving forward or being paralyzed with fear, these are our 2 choices.

6. Gratitude-the quality of being thankful, appreciation, Human life has both good and bad things going on simultaneously (Blessings and Problems). I like to think of it as heaven and hell happening at the same time. When my mind was focused on the negative, I became disturbed. Complaining and blaming didn't solve anything and for a long time the scale was tipped way over to the negative side. This was stressful.

When I began solving my problems, it made sense to start recognizing and appreciating my many blessings. I didn't have to search very far to find them. They were right here in my every-day life and in the wonderful world around me. When I weighed the good things, the scale began to balance. It wasn't long before the needle moved from deeply in the red to comfortably in the green. The interesting part was my life and the world didn't change. What changed was my perception. It's been said, "perception is reality".

Changing our perception doesn't happen accidentally. It can't happen with instinctive thinking. Changing our perception is a conscious choice. It is a function of the cerebral cortex or the higher self. Choosing to appreciate the good things and express gratitude caused a significant rise in my level of happiness. Do what the old standard suggests, "accentuate the positive, eliminate the negative".

Gratitude or dissatisfaction, these are our 2 choices.

7. Forgiveness-there's no other word for it

Out of the seven, forgiveness is probably the most challenging. It is not possible from the conflictive operating program. From the win/lose, forgiveness is perceived as losing, defeat or weakness. It is especially hard to forgive when the offender hasn't apologized. If we are to forgive, it must be a conscious choice.

Without forgiveness, the wounded party has a tendency to harbor resentment. These harbors can become infected spiritual wounds. They are painful festering sores that never go away. Not only do they not go away, they get worse! Having one or more of these festering wounds in my view is a form of spiritual leprosy. Yikes!

Nature provides us with all kinds of remedies. Human beings have been using them for thousands of years. Many of today's modern medicines are derived from these natural substances. A wonderful example is the aloe plant. Where I live in Florida it grows in abundance. It has thick, fleshy leaves that when the skin is peeled back you find a gooey substance inside. It's commonly used on burns.

Aloe helps in the healing process. It soaks into the skin and immediately soothes the affected area. Depending on the severity of the burn, it may have to be applied a

number of times but you can't put on too much. When applied regularly, it helps the body's natural abilities do their job and before long the pain subsides and the disturbed area is restored. Forgiveness is to the energy body what aloe is to the physical. Think of forgiveness as spiritual aloe. It is a natural remedy.

Forgiveness I discovered, is not for the benefit of the offender. It is something we do for ourselves. (You could say it's selfish in a good way.) The other person could be far away or no longer living. They may have no idea they hurt you or just don't care. You may never see them again or you may see them every day. In any case, do not rely on them, rely on yourself.

Sometimes we have to forgive ourselves. It's a common expression, "I could never forgive myself". It's better if you can. Give it a try.

Whether they were caused by another person or yourself, slather a generous amount of forgiveness on your spiritual wounds every day. When you do, they will be naturally restored.

No one can give you these seven substances. They are a part of the inexplicable universe. They cannot be explained but they can be observed. When applied they cause a measurable effect. They make the needle move. This is what makes them real. Practice using these healthy ingredients in

your every-day life. When the opportunities present themselves (and they will) summon them. Simply think of the word that represents them and say them in your mind. (Respect! Patience! Kindness! Courage!) When you do, they will be available to you in unlimited supply. With practice comes advancement.

Main Indicator of the Solution-Based Operating Program

Thick Skin

This expression is often used to describe someone who is not easily upset. A person with thick skin is able to remain calm in situations where other people are losing control. They are less likely to fly off the handle during a stressful encounter than a person with thin skin or a hair trigger.

Thomas Jefferson was quoted as saying, “nothing gives one person so great an advantage over another as to remain always cool and unruffled under all circumstances.”

Is the person who can remain calm under pressure weaker or stronger than those who snap at the slightest provocation? Who is more likely to solve the problem instead of being sucked into a vortex of drama and conflict? Who is going to be less stressed and disturbed when the dust finally settles? Who is happier?

In my mind, it's not about having an advantage over another person. It's not about winning or being right. For me, running on the Solution-Based Operating Program is about

consciously choosing to solve instead of automatically being triggered into conflict. It's about using the other ninety percent of our brain.

Doing this results in less unnecessary stress on our system. Less stress equates to being less disturbed. Being less disturbed equates to being happier. It's a three legged stool. It's being human, solution-based and symbiotic. It's win/win.

Practical Application

The Cell Phone Problem

Cell phones came to be when I was in my mid-thirties. At that time, I was in the middle of raising a family and my life was full of wonderful blessings. I had a spouse (I would call her my wife but we weren't married), two awesome kids, a relatively successful small business, a roof over our heads, good health, a cat and too many others to list. Along with a wealth of blessings, my life was full of problems. My problems were many and of varying degrees but one was the grand-daddy of them all.

My relationship with my spouse was extremely conflictive. We were good people but we fought a lot. We were both from homes that could be described as dysfunctional and had no idea how to solve relationship problems. This wasn't good because we had a bunch. Not only were we unable to solve our problems, we couldn't even talk about them without becoming defensive and emotional.

Unable to solve our problems, things got worse over time. We blamed each other and the cycle of conflict went on and on. This was extremely stressful. The conflict monster reared its' ugly head in just about every aspect of our relationship but our cell phone conversations were particularly toxic. They happened every day and would often leave me seething in anger for hours.

Like clockwork, she would call me every afternoon at three thirty. Knowing they were coming, I would start feeling anxious about three-fifteen. By the time she called, I was primed and ready to fire. Right at three-thirty the phone would ring.

"Hello", I'd answer. I knew what she was going to say because she said it every day.

"Where are you" she asked.

Those three little words would trigger an automatic limbic reaction. At the time I perceived them as an extension of some underlying trust issues we couldn't resolve. So, I'd snap back in an angry tone,

"What are you conducting some kind of investigation?" This triggered her limbic reaction and she would get emotional and say,

"What's wrong with you, why are you being such a jerk?" As you can guess, it went off the rails from there.

During that time, I had been exploring the Solution-Based Operating Program and suddenly realized these cell phone calls were the perfect opportunity to put it into practice. The idea came to mind that instead of thinking of these calls as fights I had to win, I would think of them as problems I had to solve. Instead of blaming her and waiting for her to change, I consciously made the decision to “be the change”.

My goal became for these calls to end harmoniously, relieving some of the stress that had come to overwhelm my system. With the objectivity to see my role in the situation and the will to be the change, I formulated a solution. All the information I needed was already at hand.

It was certain she was going to call at three-thirty.

It was certain she was going to ask, “where are you?”

It was certain that if my reaction was the same, the outcome would be the same.

Einstein said,

“The definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over and expecting different results”

Instead of allowing these three little words to trigger a limbic reaction and end up in a fight, I made the conscious choice to solve. Instead of reacting with anger, I decided to deflect that poison arrow and respond with respect, patience and kindness. The universe provided the opportunity for me to

practice this skill the very next day. I was a bit surprised that at three-fifteen I wasn't feeling the usual pre-call anxiety.

Ding-a ling-a ling, (three-thirty, right on time)

"Hello", my regular answer.

"Where are you", came a familiar voice from the other end of the line.

This is the precise moment where things would go wrong. Instead of the same old conflictive reaction, I was ready with a solution-based response.

"Hi honey", I replied in a kind tone. "I'm in my truck driving through Jensen and was planning on stopping by Joey and Dave's. "What time do you want me home for dinner?"

"About six", she replied.

"Do you need me to pick something up at the store?" I asked nicely.

"No, I have everything we need" she answered.

"Okay", I said. "See you at six. Bye, bye."

"Okay, bye", she replied.

We hung up.

The conversation ended harmoniously. That was my goal. Neither of us were angry. The outcome was significantly improved. Instead of becoming enraged and seething in

anger, I was undisturbed. An added bonus was a sense of accomplishment from my success in transforming the outcome. What a relief!

“It’s not my fault” does not solve problems. To solve this problem, I had to embrace the full measure of responsibility (100%), consciously over-ride my automatic limbic reaction and apply a solution-based response. This was the beginning of a new way of life. A better way of life. A solution-based way of life.

All The Lights Were On Problem

It almost seems ridiculous that something as insignificant as the lights being on would be so disturbing but, for me it was. Back in my family raising days all the lights being on was yet another source of stress on my already overloaded system. Like the cell phone problem, it happened every day.

In the morning the lights would be off because I was the first one up and had shut them off the night before. When I got home from work all the lights were on.

Looking back, it should have come as no surprise. For the five or so years we were together before we had kids, my spouse would leave all the lights on at her place. It only makes sense that the children of a parent that leaves all the lights on would inherit the gene. In any case, it was a problem. Before I applied a solution-based approach, I found

myself blaming and complaining. This only made things worse.

I gave up trying to talk about it with my spouse. Trying to tell her to not leave the lights on was like trying to tell a rooster not to crow at the sunrise. My kids weren't intimidated by my rantings in the least. If I made a fuss over the lights being on their typical reaction would be a rolling of the eyes and a smug, "whatever Dad". This only amped up the disturbance level and was not solving the problem. My life was stressful enough without this nonsense. I didn't need any extra, unnecessary stress. Resistance was futile so I chose to try and solve this stubborn problem.

I remembered the Stoic philosophy that suggests if it's out of our control, accept it as such and don't allow it to be disturbing. This made sense for big world problems like global warming and inflation but this was happening in my own house. This problem contained elements of both. It was out of my control and it was in my own little world. So now what? How can I solve this problem? Let's consider the data.

First and foremost, the lights were going to be on. This was a genetic certainty. It was up to me to decide whether or not to allow the lights being on to be disturbing. I could dwell on the questions; Why are these people not listening to me? Why are they disrespecting my feelings? Do they have any idea how much it costs to pay the electric bill?

Asking myself these questions only added weight to an already heavy situation. Being angry and frustrated over such a minor and unchanging problem was getting old. The lights were going to be on so I began accepting the reality of the situation. It was clear other people were not going to change so again, I decided to “be the change”.

Instead of complaining, criticizing, blaming and judging my cherished family members, I decided to simply go around the house and turn off the lights myself. I didn’t make a big deal about it, just quietly went from room to room happily bringing down my mountainous electric bill. When reaching in to flick off the switch in the main bathroom, I could see my reflection in the mirror. Instead of an angry look of frustration, I saw a happy look of accomplishment. The lights were still on but the problem was getting solved because it was no longer causing a disturbance in my system. The stress from the problem dissolved. I figured out how to not let it bother me. Yet one more straw off the camels’ back.

This could not be done from the win/lose kind of thinking. Trying to win and be right would make the problem worse. Running on the conflictive operating program could only damage my relationships with the people I loved the most.

I didn’t want that to happen so I made the conscious choice to solve. I’m glad I did.

Road Rage

Going back as far as I can remember, I suffered from a severe case of road rage. All it took was an obnoxious beep from the person behind me to trigger the monster (Beelzebub). There were quite a number of instances over the years where my being in a psychotic state of road rage put the safety of my family members and other innocent people at unnecessary risk. Of the dozens of examples in my repertoire, these two are at the top of the list.

My brother and I were driving down I95 some years ago on our way to visit our mom in Ft. Lauderdale. Some guy in a big Chrysler came up behind me and was riding right on my bumper (which I hated). I did what I would normally do in that situation which was to take my foot off the gas and slow down until the perpetrator went around me. This tactic pushed his button.

He then sped past me while angrily yelling obscenities. This seemed funny until he cut me off and sent me a universal hand signal (otherwise known as the finger). This triggered a severe limbic reaction. I descended into the primal kill or be killed state of mind commonly referred to as road rage. In this primal state, I was out of control or more accurately, temporarily insane.

Blinded by anger and unable to formulate a rational response, I reacted. In a psychotic rage, I put the pedal to

the metal, sped past him, cut him off as close as I could and slammed on the brakes. It could only have been by divine intervention we didn't wreck. The other guy surely thought I was insane (he was right) and headed for the hills. Luckily, his level of insanity wasn't as high on the scale as mine or there may have been a murder. My poor brother was visibly shaken-up.

Once the ego took over, I gave no thought to the consequences of my actions. There was no consideration for the safety of my brother or any other person. There was no formulating a solution-based response. That part of my brain was shut down by the kill or be killed reaction. In this limbic state, it was all about winning and being right. I had to get him back for what he did. At the time, I considered this a win. Yikes!

Years later, my spouse and I were driving our daughter to the airport. There was a point where traffic was bumper to bumper in all four lanes. We were completely stopped for a few moments then traffic began to move. Before my foot had time to move from the brake to the gas, there was an obnoxious horn blast coming from directly behind my vehicle. Glancing in my rear-view mirror I saw a guy in a Cadillac yelling and angrily waving his arms. This triggered Beelzebub and the road-rage session was on.

When traffic started to move, I intentionally drove extra slow just to piss him off. After a minute the lane to my right

opened up. He swung over, gunned his engine and tried to pass. Seeing this I deliberately swerved out into his lane and he had to slam on his brakes to avoid a collision. I was laughing like a madman and he looked as if his head was going to explode. It was then I noticed the look on my spouses' face. She was always a bit jumpy in the car, even when everything was fine. Being an unwilling participant in this psychotic episode had both her white-knuckled hands vice-gripped to the arm rest.

Finally, I let him come up beside me. We rolled down our windows and screamed obscenities at each other until we were blue in the face. When the screaming subsided, I noticed he had his wife on the passenger side and what looked to be his elderly mother in the back seat (We were essentially the same guy doing the same stupid thing). After that there was a sense it was over and we rolled up our windows and deliberately put some space between us. When I had time to cool off, I realized how insane it was to put my family at risk over something as trivial as getting beeped at in traffic.

My road-rage problem was put on the path of Solvation when I applied the solution-based operating program. It was this kind of thinking that transformed these potentially criminal traffic situations from fights that had to be won to problems that could be solved.

Solving the Road-Rage Problem

With instinctive, limbic reactions, solutions are impossible. The ego is all about winning and being right. When I was running on the Conflictive Operating Program, I believed the problem was not my fault and my reaction, no matter how extreme, was justified. My psychotic limbic reactions were triggered automatically and once the mechanism was engaged, the scenario played through to the end. There was no stopping the madness. It was when I stopped blaming other people and accepted 100% of the responsibility for solving this problem I began making progress.

Solving this dangerous problem required objectivity and conscious forethought. First and foremost, I had to admit I had a problem and was totally responsible for its' solution. (Hi, I'm Bob and I have a road rage problem. "Hi Bob!"). The next step is to ask the question, "is someone beeping at me in traffic a life or death situation?" The answer is an obvious no. O.K, if it's not life or death, I'm going to try the Solution-Based approach. Let's look at the data.

My road-rage was triggered by the sound of a car horn, people yelling angrily and universal hand signals. It made sense to pre-determine a solution-based response to these stimuli. With forethought and objectivity, I decided ahead of time that when the horn sounded, instead of allowing myself to be triggered into the typical psychotic reaction, I would

consciously respond with the holy trinity of human expressions; respect, patience and kindness.

Now when I hear the obnoxious horn blast, instead of flying off the handle, becoming enraged (and doing something not smart), I think of the beeper as an old friend just saying hi. Even though Beelzebub may raise his head, I assure him it's not life or death and he keeps cool. This ensures the situation will not escalate out of control and end in tragedy.

The concept may seem simple but changing from the limbic reaction to a solution-based response is challenging. It requires conscious awareness, a plan of action and the self-control to execute that plan.

Doing this made my life better. Being in traffic has become less stressful. Even in the rare occasion I do become annoyed on the road, the days of being triggered into a psychotic episode seem to be behind me (thank goodness). Now when the horn blows, instead of losing my mind, I smile and wave. By doing this, I enjoy a harmonious outcome and a sense of accomplishment.

Summary

Before I figured out how to run on the Solution-Based Operating Program, my system was overloaded with stress. It was impossible to feel the joy from my many blessings under its' crushing weight. You could say the weight of the world was on my shoulders. My system was getting worn

and tired and the load kept getting heavier. In a word, I was disturbed. Something had to give. I had a dire sense the last straw that broke the camels' back was right around the corner.

If necessity is the mother of invention, The Solvation Method is one of her many children. It was born of necessity. For me it was do or die. It was absolutely necessary for me to figure out a way to take some of the straws off the camels' back and relieve some of the stress that was overloading my system. Hoping, wishing and praying weren't working. I needed a practical, cause and effect-based method that produced measurable results.

If you take a karate lesson, you will not become a black-belt on your first day. Just like in any practical field, there's a learning curve. It takes learning and practice to make advancements. It takes dedication and the development of skills. After a while you start to get the hang of it and become a practitioner in the field. As such, you make steady progress.

This is how the Solvation Method works as well. It's not a belief. It's a cause and effect-based practical field. With learning and practice comes advancement.

The information in this book is useful however, it inert until it is applied. Believing alone causes nothing. It is something we must do.

Getting Started

Keep a journal. Write a list of your blessings and count them every day. Appreciate and weigh them. Doing this will sow the seeds of gratitude. These seeds will bear healthy fruit.

Sort out the big-world problems from the problems in your own little world. If you are compelled, do your part to help with big world problems. Even though they may endure, accept them as part of life and do not allow them to be disturbing. Don't let them bother you. Apply this ancient Stoic wisdom.

This leaves us to deal with the human problems in our own little world. Identify your stress causing problems and write them down in your journal. Ask yourself, "are these problems life or death?" (If they are, you won't have to ask) If the answer is no, then ask, "how can I solve them?" Use your cerebral cortex to formulate solutions.

Remember;

Know Thyself.

Be Human.

Count your blessings. (write them down, that's what makes them real)

Upgrade your programming. Consciously over-ride the win/lose, ego-based Conflictive Operating Program and

choose to engage the win/win Solution-Based Operating Program.

Solve your problems. Consciously choose to solve in all non-life or death human interactions.

Use the other 90% of your brain

Use the Magnificent Seven-They are at your disposal.

Be The Change-Don't wait for the world or other people.

Be Symbiotic-Win/Win, good for all

Measure your progress. Write down the before and after results in your journal.

Solving is evolving, there's no pill for it, it's a skill.

If you use the method contained in these pages to solve a problem, I would love to hear from you. Please send me your stories.

Thank you for reading this book. I hope it helps. Good luck and God Speed!