

## Self Management Toolbox

### Leaky Brake-Friendly Problem Solving

When it comes to problem solving, if we don't address the important underlying issues we're doomed to keep going round, and around, and round. It's important then to recognize if at least one of the people in the situation that needs solving struggles with a full beaker. Just as importantly ah we need to take those full bakers into account in how we problem solve. Commanding anyone to do something, you know, forcing them to do it through your authority or threat of punishment will fill their beaker. Uh, you could be the Dali Lama and still his beaker's gonna be a little bit fuller if someone made him do something. Now, of course, Dali Lama's not in the leaky brake club so even if his beaker was a little fuller you probably wouldn't even notice because his beaker's so empty to begin with. Us though..... (making exploding sound). I'm not saying this old school style of problem solving is bad, all I'm saying, not very leaky brake friendly. We don't have that much extra room in our beakers to deal with that kind of problem solving. So if every time we're trying to solve a problem all of a sudden we're dealing with another overflowing beaker and rage, well then we're not being very successful at problem solving. Um, we're wasting a ton of time and you know all that authority we supposedly we have, isn't worth squat. Now, for any leaky brake club members that may be watching, um it may interest you to know that your parents and other adults were probably told that this method of, of solving problems which fills a beaker is the right way to do it. That, that using this approach is the best way to show that you love your child and have their best interest at heart. What a set up for them eh? So what is a leaky brake friendly way of problem solving then? Because leaky brakes or not, full beaker or not, we still live in the real world here. I mean there's still problems to be solved. Well, number one, at its root, it would need to be an approach that doesn't fill your beaker while you're doing it and may even lower your beaker, um, as you're going along. Uh, if, if, if we can come up with an approach that actually models and, and, and teaches you uh new skills to boot while you're going through it, well then we've gone a long way towards getting off that merry-go-round we're on and getting your authority back. Number two, it would need to be an approach um that includes acknowledging what the person with leaky brakes uh is concerned about and, and validating that issue. Um, if your beaker's getting dangerously full, nothing buys you more time like feeling heard. Uh, number three would be an approach we would do with the person *with* leaky brakes rather than *to* the person with leaky brakes. This involves incorporating both people's issues into the ultimate solution. Uh, because in a sense you really are both on the same side here. I mean you're both, you're both trying to keep the leaky brakes from messing up your day, and uh, you're both trying to avoid either of you getting a full

beaker which you both hate. Uh, number four, um, it would be a approach that allows you to solve as many issues as possible outside the moment. Um, it allows you then to use that early warning system we came up with to uh deal with an issue before it becomes a full blown problem. And lastly, number five, ah, it allows us to pick our battles. It, you know, it would be an approach where we realized that you know, not every issue's worth filling a beaker over. And so we as the authority figures choose not to go there. One such leaky brake-friendly approach created by a psychologist by the name of Dr. Ross Greene is called Collaborative Problem Solving and it's an approach we here in the Brake Shop support and use frequently in our Self Management program. Now, Dr. Greene has already created some wonderful training videos for collaborative problem solving and so rather than reinventing any wheels we'll just head on over to his website and check those out. Once you're done I'll meet you back here when we'll next talk about how to take a detour. I'm Dr. Dunc...that tool...stick it in your toolbox.