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Performance Systems

Version 5.0

*Performance  
Problem  
Solving™*



**Activity Workbook**

*Part of an Interact video-based training program to be conducted by an authorized certified trainer using authorized and proprietary Interact videos in conjunction with the **Performance Problem Solving – Manager's Guidebook** and to be utilized by each person being trained.*

This *Performance Problem Solving Activity Workbook* is your personal copy to be retained as a reference of the skills taught during the authorized training of Interact Performance Systems' *Performance Problem Solving* program. It will also serve as your workbook for the in-class activities that are an integral part of the course.

This Workbook is part of an Interact video-based training program to be delivered by an Interact Certified Trainer.

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*Performance Problem Solving for Managers 5.0 Version*

Last Print: January, 2021

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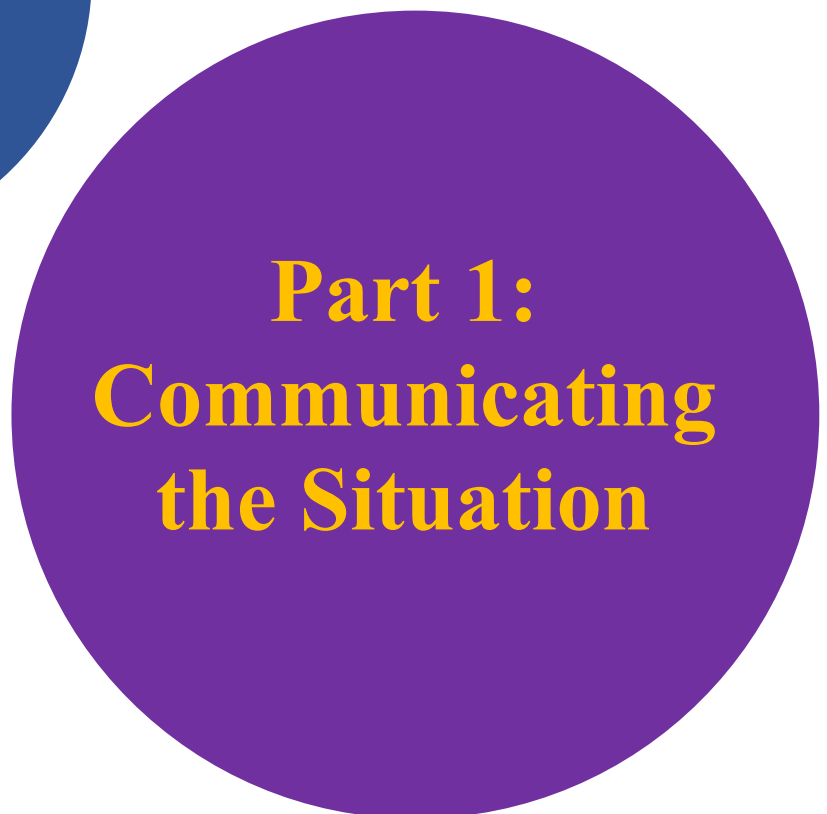
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### *Part 1: Communicating the Situation*

#### Session Objectives

As a result of this session, you will be able to:

1. Initiate problem-solving discussions without creating defensiveness, hostility, or confusion.

*Elements of this skill include discussing performance in a way that is direct, specific, and non-punishing.*

2. Discuss performance issues in a way that solves problems and maintains work relationships.

*Elements of this skill include focusing on the behavior rather than on the person and distinguishing between expectations and observations.*

3. Reinforce and recognize effective performance.

*Elements of this skill include making positive reinforcement specific, relating positive actions to their impact on the job, and finding rewards that fit individuals.*

### Activity 1.1: Routine People Problems

What are some of the routine “people problems” which you encounter in your job?

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## Part 1: Communicating the Situation



### Activity 1.2: Problem Solving and Maintaining Relationships

As we've noted, skilled problem solvers are exceptionally able to solve the problem at hand and do it in a way that actually builds the relationship.

As you watch the following video, record the skills the problem solver uses to solve the problem in the left column below. Record the skills the problem solver uses to maintain or build the relationship in the right column

To Solve the Problem (Task-Oriented Skills)	To Maintain the Relationship (People-Oriented Skills)



### Activity 1.3: Being Direct

When describing problems, avoid these typical mistakes:

Behavior	Cost(s)
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	

It's worth the time and effort to choose your words and actions carefully. Each of the above examples of what not to do when describing a problem share one element in common—they are all indirect. Because they were indirect, they left others feeling uncomfortable.

People prefer a direct approach to problem solving.

### Activity 1.4: Behavior Description

In the two situations below, first give a vague description, then list the details that must be included to make the description specific.

1. A person working for you is supposed to run a grinding machine at 1400 rpm, but is actually running it at 1100 rpm.
2. You and your neighbor agreed to jointly shovel the snow from the walkway that runs in front of your houses (alternating turns). You've had three snowstorms during the past two weeks, and you ended up shoveling the walk each time. On two occasions your neighbor specifically promised to do it, but ended up leaving it until you could stand it no longer. It's just snowed. You've gone outside to pick up your mail and have run into your neighbor.

Vague Description	Details Needed

### Activity 1.5: Behavior Description 2

For the two situations below, communicate the situation in a specific way:

1. You have an ancient machine in your department, and it requires special maintenance. Because of this, you've always been given a special maintenance budget that is separate from the maintenance department's overall budget. The maintenance department does not like your department having its own budget for maintenance, but you fear that if your budget is not kept separate from theirs, your ancient machine won't be kept running. This morning you saw next month's budget, and your boss has not given you your own maintenance budget. You need to begin problem solving with your boss.

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2. Your manager gave you permission to work with the Purchasing department to stream-line the inventory system for your area. Purchasing set up a task force to address your concerns, and has asked you to attend their meetings. This means one hour per week away from your job. At first your manager said that it would be fine to attend these meetings, but each time a meeting comes up, he/she says that there is too much work for you to go. What can you say to your manager?

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### Activity 1.6: Be Non-Punishing

You can be perfectly specific when describing a problem and then destroy the interaction by being punishing.

*What behaviors can make a description punishing?*

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When you treat someone badly, you create problems rather than solve problems. When people are mistreated, they tend to focus on how they've been treated instead of on the problem you want to solve.

The easiest way to avoid problems is to focus on the behavior or the action you observed and not the person.

Communicating in a punishing way can come back to haunt you in the long run.

## Part 1: Communicating the Situation



### Activity 1.7: Out of Class Activity - Contracts

*The people I will practice using positive reinforcement with:*

	Person	Time	Situation
1			
2			
3			

*Record 2 situations where you started a conversation by being Direct, Specific, and Non – Punishing:*

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

#### **Performance Problem Solving – Activity Workbook**

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### Activity 1.8: 3-2-1

1. What are three things key takeaways from the lesson that were important for you?

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2. What are two things you want to know more about?

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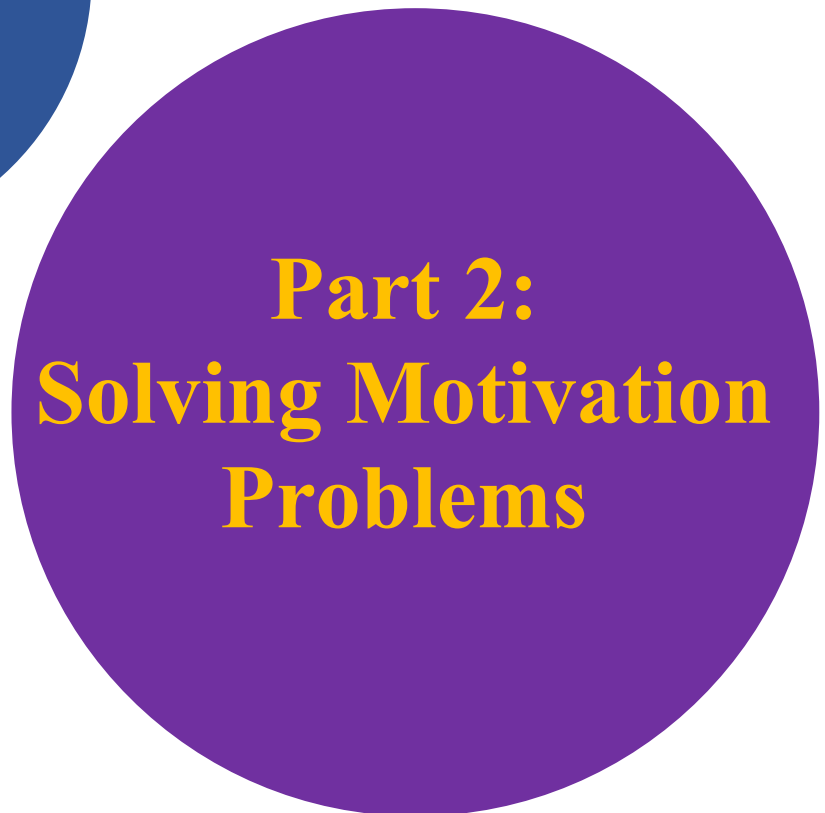
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3. What is the one question you have?

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### *Part 2: Solving Motivation Problems*

#### **Session Objectives**

As a result of this session, you will be able to:

1. Recognize performance problems that are motivational - due to differences in priorities rather than ability.

*Elements of this skill include diagnostic questions and cues that indicate motivational causes.*

2. Motivate people by sharing information in an involving way.

*Elements of this skill include strategies for explaining the reasons behind priorities and for determining commitment.*

3. Enlist appropriate progressive disciplinary actions.

*Elements of this skill include ways to recognize when other motivational strategies have failed and to determine short-term and long-term disciplinary actions.*

4. Set clear action plans and follow-up dates.



### Activity 2.1: Diagnose

There are three causes to consider when facing a problem:

- The person can't do the job.
- The person is unwilling to do the job.
- Both.

When beginning a discussion with a person who is not completing a task to your standards, first ask yourself: *“Is this a motivation or an ability problem?”* (More simply stated, ask: *“Is this something the person doesn't want to do or is this something the person is having trouble doing?”*)

*Ability Blocks sound like:*

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*Motivation Blocks soundlike:*

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### Activity 2.2: Natural Consequences

We've looked at how to motivate through consequences and have suggested that it makes sense to start with natural consequences rather than with imposed consequences. Now, let's examine the reasons.

*What are some of the reasons for starting with natural consequences?*

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*Examples of natural consequences:*

**T**ask: 

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**O**thers: 

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**Y**ou: 

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### Activity 2.3 Recognizing Commitment

Sometimes it's hard to tell if other people are really committed, particularly if they give you a vague answer like: "Okay, we'll give it a shot" or "We'll see."

If you're not sure the other person is really committed, probe with questions to clarify whether or not the person is serious.

Examples of probes:

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What else can you do besides probe?

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If you consistently follow up, people won't try to get you off their back by giving you a weak commitment.

### Activity 2.4: Out of Class Activity - Contracts

1. *The people I will practice using positive reinforcement with:*

	Person	Time	Situation
1			
2			
3			

2. *Three people I will need to have a planned discussion with at some point:*

	Person	Time	Situation
1			
2			
3			

3. *Record three conversations where motivation was the root cause:*

	Person	Time	Situation
1			
2			
3			

### Activity 2.5: So What?

Identify the main idea of this session. So, why is it important?

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**Part 3:**  
**Solving Ability and  
Mixed Problems**

### *Part 3: Solving Ability and Mixed Problems*

#### **Session Objectives**

As a result of this session, you will be able to:

1. Recognize performance problems that are caused by a lack of ability (either internal skills or external obstacles).

*Elements of this skill include diagnostic questions and cues that indicate ability causes.*

2. Involve people in participative problem solving.

*Elements of this skill include ways to ask for ideas and strategies for incorporating input.*

3. Search out long-term as well as short-term solutions to problems.

*Elements of this skill include diagnostic questions, cues, and strategies for handling problems that combine motivation and ability blocks.*



### Activity 3.1: Ask For Ideas

If the other person communicates that he or she can't solve the problem alone, why ask for suggestions?

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Why don't we ask for suggestions?

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In what circumstances should you not ask?

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What else can you do?

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### Activity 3.2: Mixed Problems

Most of the problems faced by the people you work with are due in part to motivation and in part to ability. They are a mix of each type. Solving these “mixed” problems requires the greatest skill.

		Is Motivation a Problem?	
		NO	YES
Is Ability a Problem?	YES	Pure Ability	Mixed Problem
	NO	Problem Solved	Pure Motivation

What action do you take when you face a Pure Ability Problem?

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What action do you take when you face a Pure Motivation Problem?

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If both Ability and Motivation are involved, then which do you address first?

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### Activity 3.3: The Critical Question?

If you're dealing with a "mixed problem," don't stop problem solving until both motivation and ability solutions have been identified and agreed upon. If you address one block without addressing the other, the problem isn't completely resolved. You may be in for recurring difficulties.

Just because someone makes a commitment immediately doesn't mean the person isn't facing a long-term block. The job may be more difficult than it needs to be. The Critical Question still needs to be asked.

What are some ways of asking the Critical Question?

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**The Critical Question surfaces:**

- Whether other blocks exist.
- Whether a long-term solution is required.
- Whether a job is more difficult than it needs to be.
- Whether immediate commitment masks a long-term problem.

### Activity 3.4: Out of Class Activity - Contracts

1. *The people I will practice using positive reinforcement with:*

	Person	Time	Situation
1			
2			
3			

2. *Three people I will need to have a planned discussion with regarding Ability or Mixed Problems at some point:*

	Person	Time	Situation
1			
2			
3			

3. *Record three conversations where Ability or Mixed Problems was the root cause:*

	Person	Time	Situation
1			
2			
3			

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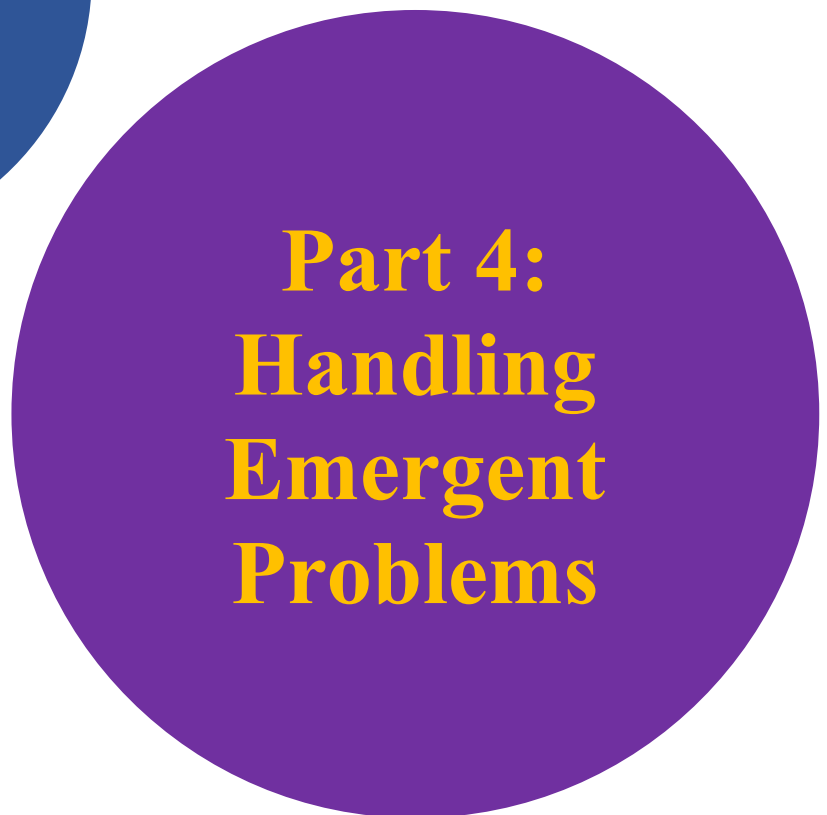
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### Activity 3.5: Intrigue Search

List the five most intriguing, interesting, controversial, or resonant ideas you found in a session. You can use your Guidebook or Workbook in this search. Include the page numbers and a short rationale for each section.

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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### *Part 4: Handling Emergent Problems*

#### **Session Objectives**

As a result of this session, you will be able to:

1. Recognize when strong reactions and emotions are blocking or undercutting effective problem solving.

*Elements of this skill include cues to listen and watch for.*

2. Reduce anger and defensiveness.

*Elements of this skill include strategies for focusing on the strong reactions and ways to show concern and seek information.*

3. Listen and better understand what others are trying to say.

*Elements of this skill include styles of paraphrasing and questioning.*

4. Deal with problems such as lying, lack of follow through, and other problems involving trust and respect.



### Activity 4.1: Responding To Strong Emotions

It's important to respond appropriately to the person's emotion:

1. The way you say "*Message received*" is by describing the anger you see and showing concern.

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2. The way you find out what's going on below the surface is by asking questions in a non-punishing way.

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3. More examples of phrases you can use to convey the message "I care and I'm listening":

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### Activity 4.2: When Understanding Content Is An Issue

Suppose you communicate a problem situation to someone, and the person responds by saying something so complicated you can't understand. This is an emergent problem—you can't go on solving the problem until you understand the complex response.

To understand a complex response, paraphrase. Summarize the key points in your own words.

Don't force the other person to repeat what he/she has just said. The person might say it in just as complicated a way. Instead, let the person know what you do understand, so all he/she needs to do is fill in the details. Communicate as much of the situation as you can in a tentative way. Be assured, the other person will correct you if you're wrong.

*Key lead-in phrases to signal your intent to paraphrase:*

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Paraphrasing should be used when . . .

- You have doubts about your understanding.
- You want to demonstrate to the person that you're trying to understand.

Paraphrasing communicates to the other person that:

1. You are listening
2. You are trying to understand
3. The situation is important to you

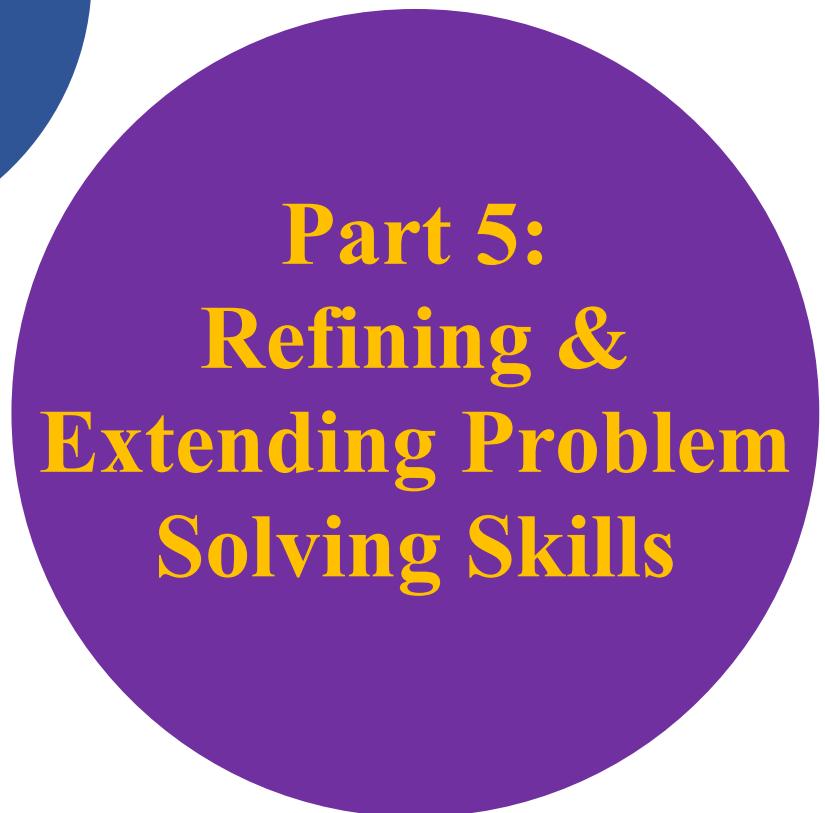
### Activity 4.3: Out of Class Activity - Contracts

*The people I will practice using positive reinforcement with:*

	Person	Time	Situation
1			
2			
3			

List the facts, concepts, definitions, or other items learned in this session and any of the other sessions that are fresh on your mind. Note that the instructor will start with one participant and work around the room until we run out of words, concepts or definitions to add.

[illegible]



### *Part 5: Refining and Extending Problem Solving Skills*

#### **Session Objectives**

As a result of this session, you will be able to:

1. Extend the use of problem-solving skills to other management activities. Learn how to use the skills in different combinations and in new contexts. Develop skills' applications in quality meetings, with customers, with team members, in performance reviews, and in other tough situations.
2. Apply the skills in preventing problems as well as solving them. Learn how to anticipate and prevent problems when delegating assignments, setting objectives, and coaching and counseling.

### Activity 5.1: Establishing a Growth Plan

1. What are your next steps?

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2. Which of those steps will come easiest?

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3. Where will the terrain become rocky?

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4. What can you do now to navigate the road ahead with the most success?

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5. What do you need to change?

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