



# PROBLEM VS. COMPLAINT



## What's the Difference?

It's easy to complain about what's not working.  
Solving a problem takes a different mindset and leads to different results.



### A PROBLEM

Focuses on solutions and next steps.

- ✓ Describes a situation clearly and specifically.
- ✓ Takes ownership.
- ✓ Looks for solutions.
- ✓ Asks: "What can I do?"
- ✓ Open to change and growth.
- ✓ Leads to action.
- ✓ Empowering.

### A COMPLAINT

Focuses on frustration and worse feelings.

- ✗ Focuses on what is wrong in a general way.
- ✗ Blames others or the situation.
- ✗ Focuses on problems, not solutions.
- ✗ Asks: "Why is this happening to me?"
- ✗ Stays stuck and repeats.
- ✗ Leads to more frustration.
- ✗ Draining.

VS.

### EXAMPLES: SAME SITUATION, DIFFERENT MINDSET

COMPLAINT (Stuck)		PROBLEM (Moving Forward)
"My boss never listens to me."	→	I need my ideas to be heard. What's a better way to communicate them?"
"My partner never helps around the house."	→	I need more support at home. How can I talk with my partner about sharing responsibilities?"
"I'm so stressed all the time."	→	I need better ways to manage stress. What strategies can I try this week?"
"Traffic is always terrible."	→	I want my commute to be less stressful. What time or route could work better?"
"I never have any time for myself."	→	I want to make time for myself. What can I schedule or say no to?"

### YOUR TURN!

Read each statement below. Decide if it is a complaint or a problem mindset.  
Then, rewrite it as a problem-focused statement.



STATEMENT Is it a complaint or a problem?	COMPLAINT or PROBLEM? (Circle one)	REWRITE IT AS A PROBLEM (What can be done?)
1. My kids never listen to me.	Complaint / Problem	_____
2. I hate my job.	Complaint / Problem	_____
3. My friends never make time for me.	Complaint / Problem	_____
4. I'm too tired to exercise.	Complaint / Problem	_____
5. Nothing ever goes my way.	Complaint / Problem	_____

### REFLECTION



What did you notice about the difference between a complaint and a problem?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



How might focusing on problems (instead of complaints) help you reach your goals?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



What is one problem you can focus on solving this week?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_