

BE CREATIVE:

Let everybody have their say and problems will be solved says Acton nurse

LEGION BINGO

TONIGHT

And Every Wednesday at 7:45 p.m.

By ANI PEDIERIAN
Herald Staff Writer
If business isn't looking good, an Acton woman may be able to help you

solve your problems. In fact, Elizabeth Lambden's method can be used to solve any troublesome situations being faced by service

clubs, hospitals or people organizations. Called creative problem solving, the approach is taught at the Creative Education Foundation at New York State University College in Buffalo, New York.

Mrs. Lambden recently completed courses with the American Institute, qualifying her to teach the problem solving method.

FORMER NURSE
"This fascinates me so much," she said enthusiastically. A part-time obstetrics nurse at Guelph General Hospital, Mrs. Lambden's involvement grew two years ago when she began taking management courses and was financially backed by the Alberta firm Gordon S. Bonner and Associates Inc.

Bonner and Associates is currently in the process of relocating its head office to Burlington, and Mrs. Lambden, as an associate, is doing public relations work in southern Ontario trying to drum up interest in creative problem solving.

What is creative problem solving?
"Any organization has certain problems all the time," Gordon Bonner, 52, acknowledged recently in an interview with The Herald. "With the creative problem solving technique, you help them to help themselves, you don't do it for them."

Solutions to company problems come from the company employees, not from Bonner and Associates, he said.

A colleague of the Creative Education Foundation, he begins tackling business problems with the decision makers, helping them determine what are the real problems facing the company.

PROBLEM DEFINING
"When you work with this process, you find people aren't defining the real problem," Mrs. Lambden said.

"Most people cause more problems by trying to solve the wrong problems," Mr. Bonner agreed.

In a five-step process, Mr. Bonner and his asso-

ciates lead a company and its staff to do some fact finding, determine the problems, brainstorm for ideas, determine the solutions, then gain acceptance for them.

"We know companies have the resources from within to solve their own problems. It's like the saying: Give me a fish and I will eat for today,



ELIZABETH LAMBDEN

teach me to fish and I will eat for the rest of my life," Mr. Bonner said.

Task teams of about five employees each are set up and spend five days in training, learning the creative problem solving technique. Once they learn the technique, they apply it to where the problems are in the organization.

The people closest to what's happening are in the best position to assess the problem and point out the solution. All they need is some nudging to get going, Mr. Bonner said.

CREATIVITY
With creativity present in every human being, the brainstorming session brings out a number of solutions to be weighed and narrowed down to the one most acceptable for

implementation, he said. "Creative problem solving helps them to deal with problems better by encouraging them to look at the five W's (who, what, where, when, why)," Mr. Bonner said.

In the future, people at the bottom of all organizations, the little people, are going to have more and more input, he anticipates.

"Five or six years ago, companies weren't ready for this," Mr. Bonner said. "But now they're hurting so badly I think they are."

A free flow of creative ideas throughout an organization, touching all levels, from president to volunteer is vital to the technique. All too often, barriers between various levels of management restrict this flow of information within an organization, Mr. Bonner said.

Everyone should know what's going on.

Productivity, cost reduction, quality, and safety are the four areas considered with an organization's decision makers. Upper management generates the problems and monitors the task teams to reach solutions.

"A lot of managers don't have the training to solve problems, and this is sometimes the problem with companies in which only the heads make the decisions," Mr. Bonner said.

"Managers should be

doing a global thing; not getting involved in the day-to-day stuff. They should be developing strategy for three to five years down the road."

To remain competitive these days, businesses are finding they must fully utilize their existing staff and resources, and this technique exploits this realization.

"It isn't only for businesses, it's for every facet of living," Mrs. Lambden stressed. "It can be used in the community. For example, a lady in Washington used the technique for a fund-raising drive."

Calling it a philosophy of life that can also be applied to the business world, Mr. Bonner said it is an excellent way of dealing with negative changes in one's life because it stresses the ability to consider options.

"Life goes along very smoothly. You channel your energy in a positive direction and give yourself time to think about

it," she said. In the creative problem solving process, quick judgement is taboo, she said.

Mrs. Lambden gave an example from her own life. After a nine-month sabbatical in Europe, her husband recently announced the possibility

of a job in Saudi Arabia. Instead of getting angry and immediately reacting to the negative aspects of such a move, Mrs. Lambden said she kept her cool and deferred judgement, leaving the issue to be discussed when she felt more relaxed and had time to think about the beneficial side of it.

Meet the President



HUGH PATTERSON
Citizen's Band formed in 1874

When the Acton Citizens Band was formed in 1874, the major goal was to provide recreation through music. This goal survives through the years making the Acton Citizens' Band the oldest in Ontario.

It's the bright red jackets that allow people to "pick us out in a parade", says band president Hugh Patterson. Mr. Patterson has been president since November 1981, and four years prior to that Mr. Patterson's wife became the first woman president.

Dedication to the band and being able to play an instrument are the requirements if you'd like to become a member.

The band performs concerts, at parades and has played with the Georgetown Choral Society. Mr. Patterson says the band "will perform at the drop of a hat".

Mr. Patterson's daughter is attending Wilfrid Laurier University's music program. His son flies and sells Ultralights. When Mr. Patterson wants to relax, he sails at his cottage.

Those wishing to become a member of the Acton Citizens' Band may contact bandmaster George Elliott at 833-0385. Beginners will be given lessons.

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