

# WHY AM I ALWAYS PICKING ON MYSELF?

A Special Curriculum  
To Help Young People  
Understand The Inner Bully

Ages 9-14



by  
**Dr. Terrence Webster Doyle**  
with Adryan Russ

based on the  
Education for Peace Series books  
by Dr. Terrence Webster-Doyle

## Because I am...

- ❑ Focusing only on my flaws, on what is wrong, and ignoring my strengths.
- ❑ Assuming that I know what others think about me — and it's never good.
- ❑ Discounting the good things I do, as if they didn't matter.
- ❑ Making things much worse than they are.
- ❑ Believing that I'm either a hero or a villain — with no in-between.
- ❑ Setting rigid rules for myself: I “should” do this; and “must” do that.
- ❑ Believing that what I feel is fact — whether it is or not.
- ❑ Exaggerating how the world “always” does me wrong.
- ❑ Labeling myself in negative ways, based on a single experience.

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## LESSON 1

# We All Have Knots in Our Brains!

### Breakdown of Lesson 1:

- What happens when we get scared?
- What happens when our thoughts aren't real?
- How does our brain get tied in knots?

### Materials & Tools Needed:

- Activity 1: Before class, prepare a chart, "What I Do When I'm Scared," p. 3.
- Activity 2: Make 2 copies of roleplay, "Just A Thought," p. 6.

**Note to Instructors:** Welcome students to this new curriculum. Tell students that now that they understand the basic *causes* of bullying, let's look what happens in each of our brains when we *bully ourselves*, inside our heads.

## What Happens When We Get Scared?

### 1. Ask students:

- ☐ Have you ever had the thought: "I'm scared"? *Encourage all responses. Allow students to tell brief stories about what frightened them.*
- ☐ When you had that thought, "I'm scared," how did it affect what you said or did next? For example, if you saw a growling dog coming toward you, and you thought, "I'm scared!" — how did you act?
- ☐ Did you act, or did you re-act? Do you know the difference?

**Go to Activity 1, "What Happens When I'm Scared!"  
on the next page.**

## ACTIVITY 1 – ACTIVITY

# What Happens When I'm Scared!

- ✓ Create a large chart called “What I Do When I’m Scared!” (see next page). It should be large enough to put up on your classroom wall. Prepare the chart before class.
- ✓ Be the first volunteer. Write something YOU do when YOU are scared. Your admitting this to your students will free them to talk about their experiences.
- ✓ Then, ask for volunteers to write something they do when they are scared.
- ✓ As volunteers walk up to the chart to write something they do when they’re scared, ask:
  - ❑ What’s your “state of mind” when you’re scared? What happens inside you? Do you feel happy? Angry? Do you get confused? Do you forget what you were thinking before? Does your pulse rate increase?
  - ❑ Why do you think this happens? Why do we get mixed up, disoriented and confused when we get scared?
  - ❑ Is it because we human beings are cowards? Are we really weak? Spineless?
  - ❑ Does something happen in our BODY that gets triggered by our THOUGHT that we’re scared?
  - ❑ What happens in your BODY when you feel scared? Do you sweat? Does your blood pump quickly? Does your heartbeat become irregular?
  - ❑ Does something get triggered in your MIND when you feel scared? What kinds of thoughts run through your head?
- ✓ Review what your students have written on the chart. Give every student who wants to contribute a chance to do so, but it’s important to move as quickly as you can.
- ✓ Congratulate students on their new awareness of what happens in their bodies and in their minds when they feel afraid.



**ACTIVITY 1 – THART**  
**What I Do When I’m Scared!**

**What I Do  
When I’m Scared**

I run away.

I stop right where I am.

**What Happens  
In My Body**

I sweat.

My pulse increases.

**What Happens  
In My Mind**

I feel like a weakling.

I forget where I was  
going.

## What Happens When Our Thoughts Aren't Real?

### 1. Tell students:

- Look at all the different ways we get scared, and all the things that happen inside our bodies.
- And look at what happens in our minds! Thoughts run through our minds that are frightened thoughts — thoughts we would never have if we weren't scared!
- A scary thought seems to have great power over us!

### 2. Ask students:

- What do you think would happen if you said to yourself, "I'm scared!" — but you did not REACT in all of the ways we've noted?
- What do you think would happen if, for example, you saw a dog that scared you, you had the thought "I'm scared" — and then stopped, right where you are, and said to yourself: "I'm scared" is just a thought in my head. It's not real, because I can see the dog looks friendly.
- What if, right in that moment, you said to yourself, "I know why I'm scared. I was once bitten by a dog that looks a lot like this dog. That's why I feel scared. This dog is not THAT dog. This dog may be a friendly dog. So, I don't have to be scared."

### 3. Tell students:

- Sometimes we have thoughts that are not REAL! We get a thought that frightens us, and even though the thought is in our head, it isn't REAL! The thought is an automatic, conditioned REACTION!
- Thoughts like these pop into our minds all the time, every day — and because we're not used to thinking about them, we don't SEE that they aren't REAL!
- Fear can be based on a very real threat. In today's world, we all know that's true. But what's important to understand is that often fear is NOT based on a real threat — it's based only on a thought!



- Since you and I want to get really intelligent about telling the difference, let's do a roleplay and find out how AWARE we are!

## ACTIVITY 2 – TOLEPLAY PREPARATION

### Just A Thought!

- ✓ **BEFORE THE ROLEPLAY**, ask for two volunteers to roleplay the parts of **Hamlin** and **Engel**. (Make two copies of roleplay.)
- ✓ Ask the volunteers to get the full benefits of roleplaying by really getting involved in the parts they are playing.
- ✓ Bring to their attention any words in *italics* — which are private thoughts said out loud, but not to the other person in the roleplay, and to words in parentheses ( ) which are instructions and should not be said out loud.
- ✓ Give volunteers a minute to read silently, as you tell the class:
  1. As you listen to what these two characters say, see if you notice any thoughts that aren't real.
  2. See if you can spot someone who has been “conditioned” to be afraid.
- ✓ **DO THE ROLEPLAY (next page).**
- ✓ **AFTER THE ROLEPLAY, RETURN TO THIS PAGE and ask:**
  1. Do you think Hamlin was scared? What was Hamlin scared of?
  2. Did Engel say or do something that triggered Hamlin's fear?
  3. How did Hamlin get scared?
  4. When Hamlin got the thought “I'm scared,” what happened in Hamlin's body? What happened in Hamlin's mind?
  5. Was Hamlin's fear based on something real — something that happened in the past?
  6. But was Hamlin's thought real? Did Hamlin really have something to be scared of, in that moment?
- ✓ **Thank students for their good work.**

## **ACTIVITY 2 – TOLEPLAY**

### **Just A Thought!**

**Attention Roleplayers!** Read your part with enthusiasm! Have fun!

**HAMLIN**

(Angry:) What do you think you're doing?

**ENGEL**

(Reaching down to pet a black and white dog:) I'm petting this dog. What do you THINK I'm doing?

**HAMLIN**

(Scared:) You're going to get bitten by that dog! I know you are! All black and white dogs are mean and bite people!

**ENGEL**

What's the matter? What are you talking about? This dog isn't mean!

**HAMLIN**

(Breathing heavily:) Are you sure? I'm getting out of here. (Runs.)

**ENGEL**

Hamlin, wait! Wait! (Gets Hamlin to stop.) Look at me! Do I look like I've been bitten by that dog?

**HAMLIN**

(Breathing heavily, looks at Engel:) Okay, no. No, you don't.

**ENGEL**

Will you please come and sit down and tell me what's going on?

**HAMLIN**

(Calming down a bit:) I'm sorry, Engel. I see what happened. (Takes a deep breath.) I was walking down the street last week and a ferocious black and white dog jumped out and tried to bite me! It was scary! When I saw THIS black and white dog, I thought it was the one who tried to bite me, and I panicked! The thought of the dog scared me!

**ENGEL**

(Very surprised:) Wow, I'm really sorry. I guess you couldn't see that this dog was friendly. He was wagging his tail! He didn't look scary at all!



## How Does Our Brain Get Tied in Knots?

### 1. Ask students:

- ☐ When you have a thought that's triggered by something real that scared you in the past — but isn't real because it's a distorted perception of what's happening now — do you think you have the ability to RECOGNIZE that distortion?
- ☐ Does our brain get tied into such a tight knot that we cannot RECOGNIZE that what we are thinking is NOT real?
- ☐ Do you think that we identify so strongly with a thought like "I'm scared!" — that it's unconscious and we have no control over it?
- ☐ Do you think that such a thought becomes such a part of us that we experience it as "Me"? Do you think we say, "That thought is who I am," and we never stop to question it, because we are convinced that we need that thought in order to be who we are?

### 2. Tell students:

- I have news for you. Even though, every human being on this planet is filled with such thoughts — thoughts that are not real — and even though most of us believe that we need these thoughts to be who we are — we don't!
- I have more news. Thoughts we have that frighten us are mechanical thoughts in our brain that we can learn to let go of!
- All of us have been *conditioned* to think certain thoughts that lead us to act in certain ways. Those of us who have been bullied have been conditioned to get scared, which ties a knot in our brain. This knot causes us to either want to fight or run away.
- Those of us who ARE bullies BECAME bullies because someone once bullied *us*. We have been conditioned to act tough, to threaten or intimidate others. This behavior has tied knots in our brains so that we don't know how to act respectfully toward others. We think we ARE terminal bullies, and that's how we act!
- THINK ABOUT THIS! Whether you ARE a bully, or HAVE BEEN a bully, when you're scared, you REACT out of fear. But when you can see that what you're scared of is not real — only a thought in your mind — then you can ACT out of confidence.

- I'd rather act out of confidence than fear! Wouldn't you?



## LESSON 2

# Living in an “All or Nothing” World

### Breakdown of Lesson 1:

When I aim to excel, why does my self-esteem go down?

When I do something well, why do I disregard it?

When I act intelligently, why don't I give myself credit?

### Materials & Tools Needed:

Activity 1: Before class, prepare a chart, “I Think in Black and White,” p. 10.

Activity 2: Make 4 copies of roleplay, “My Black and White World,” p.14-15.

## When I Aim to Excel, Why Does My Self-Esteem Go Down?

### 1. Ask students:

- ☐ When you aim to do something well, and you don't succeed, are you hard on yourself? *Encourage students to share their thoughts.*
- ☐ Does “not succeeding” at something make you feel unworthy? Incompetent?
- ☐ When you make a mistake, do you tear yourself down, or feel guilty?
- ☐ Why do you think we feel this way? Why do you think we do this to ourselves?
- ☐ When we're hard on ourselves, when we feel unworthy or guilty — are these thoughts real?

**Go to Activity 1, “I Think in Black and White!”  
on the next page.**

### ACTIVITY 3 – THART

## **I Think in Black and White!**

- ✓ Create a large chart called “I Think in Black and White!” It should be large enough to put up on your classroom wall.
- ✓ Give students an example of something YOU do to put yourself down. Write your example on the chart (you can do this ahead of time).
- ✓ Ask if anyone will volunteer to add another example to the list. The more “black and white” thinking your students write on the chart, the more they will experience — in the moment — that this is something we all do.
- ✓ Encourage students to add to this list on an ongoing basis. Make it the first activity they do when they enter your classroom!
- ✓ Ask students, with regularity:
  1. Who did some black-and-white thinking today?
  2. Did you catch yourself doing it in the moment?
  3. What thoughts did you have?
  4. How long did it take you to realize that this was a black-and-white thought?
  5. Were you amazed that you could stop yourself, right in the middle of your black-and-white thought, and SEE that your brain was about to be tied in a knot?
  6. How did it make you feel to SEE yourself ACT from confidence instead of REACT from fear? Did it make you feel powerful?
- ✓ Congratulate students on their good work, and remind yourself to invite your students to add to this chart, first thing, every time they come to class! This chart will be used again in other lessons — so DO take the time to add to it on an ongoing basis.



### **ACTIVITY 3 – THART**

## **I Think in Black and White!**

**One thing I say or do to put myself down is:**

1. When called on for an answer in class, I get nervous and usually mess up.
2. I'm not very smart, and every time I open my mouth, I prove it.
3. Some people make me feel nervous, or inadequate
4. I'm not a popular kid, and I never could be.
5. If my clothes aren't right, I feel ugly.
6. I have a hard time saying what's on my mind.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.
- 11.
- 12.
- 13.
- 14.
- 15.

2. **Tell students:**

- We all feel insecure about ourselves from time to time — even those of us who seem self-assured — and you know who you are!
- What's important to know is that it's not healthy to put ourselves down.
- People who put themselves down all the time need help, and we can give it to them. If we ARE one of those people, we can help ourselves, and help each other!

3. **Ask students:**

- ☐ Did you know that the reason we put ourselves down is that we are “conditioned” to do so?
- ☐ Do you know what it means to be conditioned? *Encourage all responses. There are no wrong answers.*
- ☐ When we're conditioned, are we *trained* to think and act according to what we've been taught — for example, doing only what we are told to do — by our parents, teachers, friends, family, leaders?

4. **Tell students:**

- Every day, we are conditioned by what we see, what we hear and what we learn from people around us.
- This conditioning has a major effect on how we think. And, as you can guess, how we think has a major effect on how we act.
- If we are conditioned to **believe** that we never do anything right, we are going to have a hard time **doing** anything right!

## **When I Do Something Well, Why Do I Disregard It?**

1. **Ask students:**

- ☐ Have you ever done something really well and convinced yourself that you didn't do anything worthwhile at all?
- ☐ Why do you think you didn't give yourself credit for doing well?

- ❑ If someone else had done that deed as well as you did, would you give THAT person credit for doing it?

**2. Tell students:**

- Every day things that happen to us in life condition us to think and act in certain ways. Some of that conditioning helps us, and some of it doesn't.
- When we are conditioned to stop at a stop light, that's helpful. This behavior helps us be safe in the world — and do what we need to survive.
- When we are conditioned to disrespect other people, and ourselves, this behavior is not helpful. This behavior makes us think and act in negative ways that promote conflict. If there's something we don't need more of in the world, it's conflict.

**When I Act Intelligently, Why Don't I Give Myself Credit?**

**1. Ask students:**

- ☐ Do you think that falling short of perfection makes you less of a person? Or does it just make you human? Why do you think so?
- ☐ When you make an intelligent move — perhaps you think quickly and save someone from getting hit by a car, or from falling down the stairs — why wouldn't you allow yourself to think that you did something really smart?
- ☐ Is it your approach — your formula — to live in an “all or nothing” world — you're either perfect, or you're not? Why do we do that?

**2. Tell students:**

- Let's look at two students having a conversation and see if we can figure out their conditioning, and how they got that way!
- Who wants to roleplay? We need two volunteers!

**Go to Activity 4, “My Black and White World!”  
on the next page.**

## ACTIVITY 4 – TOLEPLAY PREPARATION

# My Black-and-White World!

- ✓ **BEFORE THE ROLEPLAY**, ask for four volunteers to roleplay the parts of **Shadow**, **Sunbeam**, **Gloom** and **Sunrise**. (Make four copies of roleplay.)
- ✓ Invite the volunteers to get the full benefits of roleplaying by really getting involved in the parts they are playing.
- ✓ Bring to their attention any words in *italics* — which are private thoughts said out loud, but not to the other person in the roleplay, and to words in parentheses ( ) which are instructions and should not be said out loud.
- ✓ Give volunteers a minute to read silently, as you tell the class:
  1. The two primary characters in this roleplay are Gloom and Sunrise.
  2. Shadow and Sunbeam are their alter-egos — the voices that influence Gloom and Sunrise in their decision-making. Shadow's voice tends to be dark and threatening. Sunbeam's voice tends to be light and positive.
  3. We all have Shadow and Sunbeam voices in our heads. Let's see how they work for these two characters!
- ✓ **DO THE ROLEPLAY (next page).**
- ✓ **AFTER THE ROLEPLAY, RETURN TO THIS PAGE and ask:**
  1. In general, how was Sunrise conditioned to think? And in general, how was Gloom conditioned to think? Why do you think so?
  2. Are there some days when you have Sunrise in your head, and all the voices you hear are positive, healthy and uplifting?
  3. Are there other days when you have Shadow in your head, and your thoughts are dark, gloomy and tied in knots? Listen to those voices the next time you hear them! Ask yourself, in all honesty, which is real!
- ✓ **Congratulate students on their good work.**

## **ACTIVITY 4 – TOLEPLAY**

# **My Black-and-White World!**

**Attention Roleplayers!** Read your part with enthusiasm! Have fun!

### **SUNRISE**

I love the first day of class! I wonder what teachers I'll get!

### **SUNBEAM**

(To Sunrise, whispering loudly:) That's good! You're thinking positively. How you think is how you feel. How you feel is how you act. Good for you!

### **GLOOM**

I hate the first day of class! It's always torture!

### **SHADOW**

(To Charcoal, whispering loudly:) Of course you hate it! Last year, on your first day, a bully beat you up, your math teacher said you needed to think harder, and the coach said you might not make it on the team! No use thinking this year is going to be any better!

### **SUNRISE**

How can you say that? The first day gives you the chance to start over, make a new beginning. Whatever went wrong last year is gone. This is a new year, and you can make things better!

### **SUNBEAM**

(To Sunrise, whispering loudly:) That's the spirit! Show Charcoal the bright side!

### **GLOOM**

Some people can improve. I'm just not one of them.

### **SHADOW**

(To Charcoal, whispering loudly:) You tell it like it is! You know you'll never be any good to anyone! Just admit it! You're not smart, you're not athletic, and there's no one who really likes you!

### **GLOOM**

I'm not smart, not athletic, and there's no one who thinks I'm good at

anything! What's the use of going to school?

**SUNBEAM**

(To Sunrise, whispering loudly:) Oh! This kid needs some help. Why don't you offer something positive, something agreeable!

**SUNRISE**

How can you say that about yourself? You got an A in English. You're a terrific writer. And you're on your way to getting a black belt in your martial arts class — I'd say that's pretty athletic! And besides, I think you're a good person, and I really like you.

**SUNBEAM**

(To Sunrise, whispering loudly:) Nice going, Sunrise! Good work!

**SHADOW**

(To Charcoal, whispering loudly:) Don't you accept that nonsense! You know it's a lie! Sunrise is just trying to be "nice" — probably wants something from you.

**GLOOM**

Come on! You're just saying that. You think you have to say that because I'm standing right here. But you don't have to say things like that! They're not true.

**SUNRISE**

Wait just a second! Stop right where you are! Did you or did you not get an A in English last term?

**SHADOW**

(To Charcoal, whispering loudly:) Uh-oh. Got you now!

**GLOOM**

I did.

**SUNRISE**

And did you or did you not get an award for the piece you wrote in the school paper about non-violent conflict resolution?

**SHADOW**

(To Charcoal, whispering loudly:) You're done-for.

**GLOOM**

I *did*.

**SUNRISE**

And did you or did you not get a brown belt in your last martial arts tournament?

**SUNBEAM**

(To Sunrise, whispering loudly:) This is so good. I'm having the best time.

**SHADOW**

(To Charcoal, whispering loudly:) My lips are sealed.

**GLOOM**

I did.

**SUNRISE**

Then why wouldn't you give yourself credit for these terrific things?

**GLOOM**

I don't know, really. I just don't think I deserve credit for them. I did them, and that's that.

**SUNRISE**

If I was the one who got an A in English, wrote a prize-winning article and earned a brown belt — wouldn't you think I had accomplished a lot?

**GLOOM**

Yes, but that's you. You DO accomplish a lot. I'm not —

**SUNRISE**

Okay. Stop right now. You and I are going to walk home from school every day, and we are going to take that dark, fearful, ebony side of you...

**SHADOW**

(To Charcoal, whispering loudly:) Uh-oh, it's all over for me.

**SUNRISE**

...and we're going to lighten it up. We're going to practice thinking realistic thoughts, and I'm going to help you see that you are really a terrific person. Okay with you?

**SHADOW**

(To Charcoal, whispering loudly:) Don't do it!



**SUNBEAM**

(To Sunrise, whispering loudly:) WE are good, aren't we? We are really, really good.



### LESSON 3

## Assuming and Expecting the Worst!

### Breakdown of Lesson 3:

Why do I assume and expect the worst?  
Do I make things worse than they are?  
Let's assume the worst!

### Materials & Tools Needed:

Activity 5: Before class, prepare areas A, B and C; make signs, see p. 18.

Activity 6: Make 2 copies of roleplay, "I Can Handle This Disaster," pp. 21-22.

### Why Do I Assume and Expect the Worst?

#### 1. Ask students:

- ☐ Have you ever assumed that everything you planned is going to go wrong? When did you last think that? *Encourage all responses.*
- ☐ Why would you assume that everything will go wrong, when there's at least a 50% chance that things will go right? Do you think there's some fear involved? Do you think it's fear based on something that happened in the past?

#### 2. Tell students:

- We all have events in our past that trigger fear in the present.
- What's more important to know is that the *event* is not what causes us to feel afraid. Instead, it's our *belief* about the event — the things we tell ourselves about the event — that cause the fear!
- So, if we change our belief about the scary event, we can actually get the fear to go away!

**Go to Activity 5, "Shifting My Thoughts!"  
on the next page.**



## ACTIVITY 5 – TCTIVITY

# Shifting My Thoughts!

- ✓ Create three “areas” on your classroom floor (you may want to create a sign for each area), divided as follows:  
  
Area A: My Worry Place!  
Area B: My Fearful Thought Place!  
Area C: My New Thinking Place!
- ✓ Ask for a Volunteer to go to Area A: “My Worry Place” and express something that worries that Volunteer. (Provide an example, such as “I have awful feelings,” or “I get very upset when things don’t go my way.”)
- ✓ When the Volunteer has expressed this worry, ask the Volunteer to then go to Area B: “My Fearful Thought Place” and tell us what he or she thinks is the fearful thought that arises from this worry. (Be sure the Volunteer can distinguish between the worry and the thought that comes from the worry.)
- ✓ Then, ask the Volunteer to go to Area C, “My New Thinking Place” and come up with a new way of thinking about this worry — a realistic thought that will replace the thought in Area B — a thought that recognizes the fear but is more positive about the outcome. You can ask the Volunteer questions, such as:
  1. Yes, bad things could happen, but what’s the probability of it happening? More than 50%? Why do you think so?
  2. Can you think of a reason why this bad thing might *not* happen? Can you think of a reason why something *good* might happen?
- ✓ Give as many students as you can a chance to walk through these areas. As students respond, ask other students:
  1. How did this Volunteer shift his or her thinking? Did you SEE it happen? Do you think it’s a good thing? Why do you think so?
  2. Do you think it’s positive to be able to shift your thoughts when you want to? Does it give you a sense of power over your own mind?

3. Would you rather think thoughts that are confident and realistic rather than thoughts that are fearful and negative? Are you glad that you have this power to shift from negative to realistic?

## **Do I Make Things Worse Than They Are?**

### **1. Ask students:**

- ☐ Have you ever thought that something is so awful that you just cannot deal with it? When, for example? *Encourage some brief responses.*
- ☐ When you had that thought, did you feel it grow inside you and take over you, so that you began to get sweaty, or feel yourself get anxious and upset?
- ☐ Did this thought make you feel worthless, helpless, frightened?

### **2. Tell students:**

- The important thing to remember is that a thought is something we human beings create in our minds!
- Since we are the ones who create a thought, we are also the ones who can change it!
- The best way to change an awful, horrible thought is to STOP where you are and ask yourself: “Is this thought real, or is my mind creating it?”

## **Let’s Assume the Worst!**

### **1. Tell students:**

- When we can stand “outside” ourselves and SEE that what we are thinking is merely an invention — alive only in our imagination — then we can “turn it around.”
- When we can LOOK at what our mind is doing to make us afraid, and SEE in the moment that it’s playing tricks on us, we can STOP and THINK, “I know what’s going on here. I can handle this. I can turn it around.”

**Go to Activity 6, “I Can Handle This Disaster!”  
on the next page.**

## ACTIVITY 6 – TOLEPLAY PREPARATION

# I Can Handle This Disaster!

- ✓ **BEFORE THE ROLEPLAY**, ask for two volunteers to roleplay the parts of **Iffer** and **Thenner**. (Make two copies of roleplay.)
- ✓ Invite the volunteers to get the full benefits of roleplaying by really getting involved in the parts they are playing.
- ✓ Bring to their attention any words in *italics* — which are private thoughts said out loud, but not to the other person in the roleplay, and to words in parentheses ( ) which are instructions and should not be said out loud.
- ✓ Give volunteers a minute to read silently, as you tell the class:
  1. As you listen to what these two characters say, notice how Iffer looks at the world.
  2. Ask yourself if you see the world in the same way!
- ✓ **DO THE ROLEPLAY (next page).**
- ✓ **AFTER THE ROLEPLAY, RETURN TO THIS PAGE and ask:**
  1. Did Iffer go directly to Iffer's worry place? What was Iffer worried about?
  2. Did Iffer turn that worry into a strong fear? Do you think it was a real fear, or was Iffer strengthening that fear?
  3. Did Thenner turn Iffer's thinking around? How did Thenner do that?
  4. Did Thenner come up with a new way of seeing that Iffer could use whenever Thenner is struck with fearful thoughts?
  5. Do you think this kind of seeing could work for you too?
  6. Can you think of a situation in which YOU could use this kind of new thinking? What's the situation? *Encourage responses!*
- ✓ **Thank students for their excellent work.**

## **ACTIVITY 6 – TOLEPLAY**

# **I Can Handle This Disaster!**

**Attention Roleplayers!** Read your part with enthusiasm! Have fun!

### **IFFER**

Today is the day we move to a new town. I'm terrified. It's going to be horrifying. I'm not going to fit in. Everyone will refuse to talk to me. I'll be a freak and I'm going to have a rotten time for the rest of my life!

### **THENNER**

That's crazy! Why would you think that? It could be that where you're moving is a great place, and everyone will like you more than here!

### **IFFER**

You and the kids here all know me. What if this new crowd doesn't understand who I am? What if they make fun of me and I get ticked off and start picking on people like I did that one time?

### **THENNER**

Okay, I don't think that's going to happen. But, let's assume the new kids make fun of you and you get ticked off. Do you HAVE to pick on people who make fun of you?

### **IFFER**

Yes.

### **THENNER**

Would you like to re-think that answer?

### **IFFER**

No.

### **THENNER**

You know, the way you act toward people is really YOUR decision — not theirs. You don't HAVE to react violently, just because people are mean. You can actually take MORE CONTROL of a situation if you DO NOT react violently. Did you know that?

### **IFFER**

What do you mean? If someone says something mean and nasty, I'm not just going to stand there like an idiot!



**THENNER**

You know what? The person who's the REAL idiot is the one who lets other people affect how they think! If someone says something mean and nasty, you can STOP, take a deep breath and SEE that it is only a name, a word, and you don't have to let it affect you! You can stare that kid down and not say anything, just walk away. That's real control!

**IFFER**

What if that kid then thinks I'm a wimp?

**THENNER**

What that kid THINKS about you has nothing to do with who you are!

**IFFER**

Wow. I guess that's true. I'm not a wimp.

**THENNER**

If you THINK that you're a bad person, and ACT like you're a bad person — you ARE being controlled by how you think!

**IFFER**

I get it! If I THINK that I'm worthless, and ACT like I'm worthless — then I AM worthless!

**THENNER**

That's right! Can you actually SEE that?

**IFFER**

But if I STOP thinking like I'm a terrible person and ACT without that image, then I AM...

**THENNER**

I think you've got it. Now you can SEE what your thinking is doing to you!

**IFFER**

If I don't THINK I'm bad and don't ACT like I'm bad, then I am not bad.

**THENNER**

I think you're ready to move now. I think you SEE it.

**IFFER**

Yeah. But what if the TEACHERS don't like me?

**THENNER**

Here we go again!



## LESSON 4

# Focusing on the Negatives!

### Breakdown of Lesson 4:

- Why do I see less instead of more?
- Why do I focus on negatives instead of positives?
- Let's separate the event from the thought!

### Materials & Tools Needed:

- Activity 7: Make 2 copies of "My Negatives Are Getting Me Down," pp. 25-26.
- Activity 8: Read this exercise, p. 28, before class.

## Why Do I See Less Instead of More?

### 1. Ask students:

- ☐ Have you ever had the feeling that because something negative happened, that if you're in the same situation again, it's ALWAYS going to happen the same way? *Encourage responses!*
- ☐ Are there times when you assume that because one person seems to not like you, that EVERYONE is not going to like you?
- ☐ Do you think it's dangerous to assume that if you've NEVER had an accident or been hurt, that you NEVER will?

### 2. Tell students:

- There are times in all of our lives when things go wrong! It's part of being alive and part of being human!
- When things go wrong more than once, some of us may have a tendency to start to believe that things will ALWAYS go wrong!

**Go to Activity 7, "My Negatives Are Bringing Me Down!"  
on the next page.**

## ACTIVITY 7 – TOLEPLAY PREPARATION

# My Negatives Are Bringing Me Down!

- ✓ **BEFORE THE ROLEPLAY**, ask for two volunteers to roleplay the parts of **Hieland** and **Loland**. (Make two copies of roleplay.)
- ✓ Ask the volunteers to get the full benefits of roleplaying by really getting involved in the parts they are playing.
- ✓ Bring to their attention any words in *italics* — which are private thoughts said out loud, but not to the other person in the roleplay, and to words in parentheses ( ) which are instructions and should not be said out loud.
- ✓ Give volunteers a minute to read silently, as you tell the class:
  1. As you listen to these two characters, notice who is being negative.
  2. See if you can spot what's making this person negative.
- ✓ **DO THE ROLEPLAY (next page).**
- ✓ **AFTER THE ROLEPLAY, RETURN TO THIS PAGE and ask:**
  1. Was Loland the negative person in this duo? What was Loland negative about?
  2. Do you think that Loland's experience with the bully frightened him?
  3. Do you think that Hieland did a good job of trying to remind Loland of the positive things that Loland had done?
  4. Why do you think that Loland wasn't able to take credit for these things?
  5. Were Loland's negative thoughts being triggered by a previous experience? How does Loland's father figure into Loland's experience?
  6. Can you see how negative experiences can get us down and sometimes control our thinking process? Has that ever happened to you?
- ✓ **Thank students for their excellent work. Then go to the next section on page 27.**

**ACTIVITY 7 – TOLEPLAY**  
**My Negatives Are Bringing Me Down!**

**Attention Roleplayers!** Read your part with enthusiasm! Have fun!

**LOLAND**

(Very serious:) I'm admitting, right here, right now, that I am a full-fledged, total, complete coward! I'm worthless, useless, and ought to be put in jail.

**HIELAND**

(Concerned:) Okay, if you say so. What did you do?

**LOLAND**

It's not what I did. It's what I didn't do. And what I didn't do is stop that bully from beating up on the new kid.

**HIELAND**

I'm sorry to hear about this. Are you okay? You didn't get hurt, did you?

**LOLAND**

I am VERY okay. I am a little TOO okay. That kid really got hurt.

**HIELAND**

Hey, Loland. You can't blame yourself for that!

**LOLAND**

It's just like me! I fail at everything I do! I can never do anything right! For once in my life I'd like to do something that's right!

**HIELAND**

You did the right thing! You went and got help! You told the teacher and principal. They came right away, didn't they?

**LOLAND**

They came in about three minutes, but not soon enough to keep the bully from beating up the new kid. It's what I ALWAYS do — make the WRONG choice every single time. I am absolutely useless!

**HIELAND**

What about the time last month that little kid was being picked up by one of the jocks and you stopped it by taking the jocks out of it.

**LOLAND**

That was nothing. Just a little kid. I did what anybody would have done.

**HIELAND**

What about the time your sister was on the playground and a stranger walked up to her? You saw her and ran over and chased that creep away!

**LOLAND**

So what? She was fine!

**HIELAND**

Are you only counting the times when people did NOT turn out fine? What about the times when people DID — and you're the one who helped them?

**LOLAND**

Listen, Hieland! My dad is a police officer. When he finds out about this, I'm a goner. He'll never speak to me!

**HIELAND**

That's crazy! Wouldn't he be happy that you ran for help — and that you're okay?

**LOLAND**

Police officers are taught to stop bullying by peaceful means. I didn't think that way. I thought of myself first! I didn't really try.

**HIELAND**

If you had tried to stop the bully yourself, you might have gotten hurt yourself. You did the right thing by calling the teacher and principal!

**LOLAND**

I should have done more.

**HIELAND**

There was nothing more you could do!

**LOLAND**

Wait until you hear my father. He'll tell you exactly what more I could have and SHOULD have done! He'll never let me hear the end of it.

**HIELAND**

Hey! Come take a walk with me. Let's talk about this. Thinking like this is not going to help. It's just going to make you unhappy.



## Why Do I Focus on Negatives Instead of Positives?

### 1. Ask students:

- ☐ What are some reasons you think that we humans focus on the negatives instead of the positives?
- ☐ Do you think it might have something to do with our “conditioning” — the way we’ve been trained to think?
- ☐ Is negative thinking alive in your family? At school? In the world today?

### 2. Tell students:

- Feelings such as disappointment and guilt can create great pain and take a heavy toll on our thoughts.
- It’s important to remember that we are all human beings, and human beings make mistakes! Human beings have accidents! Human beings cannot always live up to the expectations of other people!

## Let’s Separate the Event from the Thought!

### 1. Ask students:

- ☐ Can you think of the last time you had a negative experience — an occurrence when something went wrong, and you didn’t feel good about yourself afterward?
- ☐ When you think of that experience, can you SEE that this was ONE incident in your life, and that not every experience — even if you’re in the same place, with the same people — will happen the same way?

### 2. Tell students:

- We all have weak moments when we see ourselves as mistaken, wrong, weak or inept. In these moments, it’s good to STOP, find a place to sit and be quiet – and see if you can just let that thought go!

**Go to Activity 8, “Turning My Troubles Into Bubbles!”  
on the next page.**



## **ACTIVITY 8 – TXERCISE**

# **Turning My Troubles Into Bubbles!**

- ✓ **Ask students to sit as comfortably as they can (this can be in their seats, on the floor, outside on the grass, wherever you are). Tell students:**
  - Close your eyes, and think of a time when you had a negative experience.
  - Focus on your breathing. Breathe in and breathe out as comfortably as you can.
  - For one minute, let's not say a word, and just relax. If thoughts creep into your mind, let them do so. Look at them, notice they are there, and then simply let them go.
  - Let whatever thoughts you have float like bubbles to the top of your mind, and disappear. Any troubling thought you have is now a bubble, and you're letting it float away and then burst. (Stay silent for a whole minute.)
  
- ✓ **After a minute, call time and ask students to open their eyes. Tell them:**
  - Whenever you're angry, disappointed, worried, sad — you can sit down, close your eyes and go to this thoughtful, peaceful place.
  - This place helps you to LET GO of unnecessary thinking and FREE YOURSELF of feeling afraid, sad or angry.
  - By letting go of unnecessary thinking that makes you feel bad, you stop any conflict inside you in an instant. This exercise helps you STOP and find a place where you can turn your thinking around — take a negative thought and free yourself from it — think of something that went wrong, and figure out something good that you learned from it.
  - You did excellent work today. Before our next class, see how many times during this week you can catch yourself thinking a negative, scary or black-and-white thought!

- As you leave the classroom today, add to our charts, “What I Do When I’m Scared!” and “I Think in Black and White!”



## LESSON 5

# My Accomplishments Are Not Worth Mentioning!

### Breakdown of Lesson 5:

Why do I lessen my accomplishments?  
Do my achievements not matter?  
Let's admit credit where it's due!

### Materials & Tools Needed:

Activity 9: Prepare blackboard /chart paper, plus area markers (see pp.30-31).  
Activity 10: Make 3 copies of roleplay, "My Serpent & My Cherub (pp. 33-34).

## Why Do I Diminish My Accomplishments?

### 1. Ask students:

- ☐ Is it ever difficult for you to give yourself credit for something good that you've done? What, for example? *Encourage responses! If students are not forthcoming, offer some examples from your own life.*
- ☐ Why do you think it's difficult to take credit, even though you've done something that other people value? *There are no right or wrong answers. Encourage students to say what they think.*

### 2. Tell students:

- We've all been taught to not brag, boast or toot our own horn. Still, it's important to express thanks when we've done something praiseworthy that someone acknowledges.
- If we cannot agree that we've done something good, especially when we really have — then it's hard for us to feel good about ourselves, which is important!

**Go to Activity 9, "I'm Glad I Did That!"**

**on the next page.**

## ACTIVITY 9 – TXERCISE

# I'm Glad I Did That!

- ✓ **Have ready a clean blackboard, chart paper, or several pieces of 8" x 10" paper. Tell students:**
  - Let's do an activity now that will help us see the difference between being *modest* and being *self-aware*.
- ✓ **Divide students into three groups: A, B, and C, just like the area groups that were created on page 18. This time, the area names will change (you may want to create signs for these areas):**
  - Area A: My Fact Place!
  - Area B: My Humble Place!
  - Area C: My Self-Aware Place!
  - ▲ Ask students in **Area A** to write one factual accomplishment each has achieved (on the blackboard, chart, or piece of paper). Give students a few (3-5) minutes to do this.
  - ▲ Ask students in **Area B** to write one accomplishment they feel humble about. Even though they know they did the right thing, it's not likely something they will boast about to other people.
  - ▲ Ask students in **Area C** to write one accomplishment they know they've achieved and are comfortable reporting to others.
- ✓ **After five minutes, call time! Ask students in Area A to read aloud their accomplishments. Then, Area B, then Area C.**
- ✓ **Ask students:**
  1. Can you see any differences between these groups? What are they?
  2. Do you think they are all worthwhile endeavors? All good, positive deeds that are worthy of being acknowledged and appreciated?
  3. Do you think that, although it isn't best to walk around boasting about our accomplishments, that we should not *discount* the good things we do? Do you think that, instead, should we celebrate them?

## Do My Achievements Not Matter?

### 1. Ask students:

- ☐ Have you ever been told by someone that you're stupid? That you're worthless? That you're no good?
- ☐ If we're verbally abused this way, over and over again, do you think that we start to believe it, even if isn't true?

### 2. Tell students:

- **Obvious Action:** A bully on the playground can call us names and condition us to believe that what the bully is saying is true. This is an *obvious, visible* action by the bully — one that's easy to see.
- **Secret Action:** Family members, teachers, coaches, people in our community, even TV advertisements can also condition us to believe that we are not worthy. This conditioning is more *hidden* —we're *not aware* that we're being trained to believe what isn't true.

## Let's Acknowledge Credit Where It's Due!

### 1. Ask students:

- ☐ Have you ever stopped to think about names people call you, or things people tell you that lead you to create a certain image of yourself?
- ☐ Do you think that sometimes people you know may have a hard time giving you credit for something good you've done, because they are envious, or angry that you've done something better than them, or just not willing to give you credit because they're upset about something?

### 2. Tell students:

- Whenever we're in doubt, we can go to our self-aware place, and turn our troubles into bubbles. There's usually a reason why someone's mean, and it rarely has anything to do with YOU!
- We can sit and talk to ourselves, and imagine a bad figure on one shoulder, and a good figure on the other.

**Go to Activity 10, "My Serpent & My Cherub!"  
on the next page.**



## ACTIVITY 10 – TOLEPLAY PREPARATION

### My Serpent & My Cherub!

- ✓ **BEFORE THE ROLEPLAY**, ask for three volunteers to roleplay the parts of **Remy**, **Serpent** and **Cherub**. Type-casting works well! (Make three copies of roleplay.)
- ✓ Ask the volunteers to get the full benefits of roleplaying by really getting involved in the parts they are playing.
- ✓ Bring to their attention any words in *italics* — which are private thoughts said out loud, but not to the other person in the roleplay, and to words in parentheses ( ) which are instructions and should not be said out loud.
- ✓ Give volunteers a minute to read silently, as you tell the class:
  1. We're going to watch a student named Remy sit alone, accompanied only by Remy's good guy (Cherub) and bad guy (Serpent)!
  2. Listen as Remy goes through a self-awareness moment.
- ✓ **DO THE ROLEPLAY (next page).**
- ✓ **AFTER THE ROLEPLAY, RETURN TO THIS PAGE and ask:**
  1. Why do you think Remy believed that Remy deserved to be beat up? Do you think Remy was right?
  2. What did Serpent try to get Remy to believe?
  3. What did Cherub try to get Remy to believe?
  4. What really helped Remy SEE what was real and what wasn't?
  5. Do you sometimes have voices like those of Serpent and Cherub sitting on YOUR shoulder, telling you what to do?
  6. Does it help you to know that you have the power to STOP and LOOK at your negative feelings, and SEE that they are based on something that happened before, but aren't REAL now?
- ✓ **Thank students for their excellent work.**





## **ACTIVITY 10 – TOLEPLAY**

# **My Serpent & My Cherub!**

**Attention Roleplayers!** Read your part with enthusiasm! Have fun!

### **REMY**

(Sits alone, puts hand over one eye:) Ouch! My eye hurts. That bully is the curse of my existence! He keeps telling me I'm no good, and it's true! I really AM no good! I SHOULD be beat up! I deserve it!

### **SERPENT**

(Speaks loudly to Remy:) That's right, Remy! You SHOULD get beat up! You have earned every bruise you get! That bully is right, and you better get used to getting beaten, because that bully knows what you deserve!

### **CHERUB**

(Speaks softly, sweetly to Remy:) That's awful! Why would you think you deserve to be beaten up? You're not a bad person. You don't deserve to feel bad! You deserve to be treated well! Don't listen to that wicked Serpent!

### **REMY**

If I didn't deserve to get knocked around, then I WOULDN'T get knocked around! It must be something I'm saying or doing! Something I'm doing wrong! I can NEVER do anything right!

### **SERPENT**

(Speaks loudly:) That's right, stupid! You are too dumb to do anything right! You can't be yourself, because you are no good! You are my servant! Everything I tell you is true!

### **CHERUB**

(Speaks softly, sweetly:) Remy, you are a very fine person. You have to close your eyes and listen to me and understand that what you are feeling isn't real! The real you is not stupid or dumb. The real you is a wonderful young person who needs to STOP and SEE who you are!

### **REMY**

I want both of you to stop talking to me! Just stop! I'm closing my eyes and waiting, and I'd prefer to not have a sound out of either one of you!

(Remy waits quietly, peacefully, for about 20 seconds, then opens eyes and looks at everyone:)

**REMY**

My troubles are bubbles in a glass of soda. I watch them surface and they don't hurt me. I don't do anything but watch them! Wow. This is amazing! What's interesting is that I don't have to DO anything or SAY anything. I think Cherub is right — I AM not a bad person. I'm not perfect. But I can't believe I actually thought that I DESERVE to get beaten up! How could I think so little of myself!

**CHERUB**

(Speaks softly, sweetly:) Good work, Remy! I'm proud of you! You're seeing the light!

**SERPENT**

(Growling:) Of course you're not perfect! Human beings could never be perfect! I, however, am the most perfect serpent you could ever meet!

**CHERUB**

(Speaks a bit angrily to Serpent:) You ARE a perfect serpent! A tattle-rattlesnake! A hyper viper! A beast! You made this lovely young person believe that it's okay to feel worthless, to not give yourself credit for being a good person! Only a perfect python would do that!

**SERPENT**

Thank you! It's what I do best! It's my job to play at being dishonest!

**CHERUB**

You can be as wicked as you wish, but you have no right to make young people believe that THEY are bad, or that they don't DESERVE to be treated well!

**REMY**

It's okay, Cherub! It's okay! I can SEE who I am now. I can SEE that I do NOT deserve to be mistreated, or beat up, or disrespected! When I turned my troubles into bubbles, I suddenly became AWARE — just by sitting and watching my negative feelings — like watching a movie! So, you two can go off and work your wizardry on other kids now. I think I'm going to be okay!

**SERPENT**

But you're not SUPPOSED to be okay!

**CHERUB**

(Starts to push Serpent away:) Take care, Remy! Remember: We are

what we think! All that we are arises with our thoughts! With our thoughts,  
we make the world!



## LESSON 6

# Never Seeing the Whole Picture

### Breakdown of Lesson 1:

When I make smaller (minimize), what do I overlook?

When I make bigger (magnify), what do I miss?

Let's take a look at the scene — the full picture!

### Materials & Tools Needed:

Activity 1: Make 2 copies of the roleplay, "When Less Needs to Be More", p. 37.

Activity 2: Review exercise, "All Sides of the Story," pp. 39-41, before class.

## When I Make Smaller (Minimize), What Do I Overlook?

### 1. Ask students:

- ☐ Have you ever thought that everyone you know is smarter than you? More clever? Better looking? More popular? Better liked?
- ☐ Do you think that this kind of thinking makes your view of yourself "smaller"? How so? *Encourage all responses!*

### 2. Tell students:

- When we shrink the importance of who we are and what we do, we are unfair to ourselves!
- How we think determines how we act. If we think of ourselves as "less," we will act as if we are less. If we act as if we are less, other people will respond to us as if we are less! We are what we think!
- Once again, we're not talking about boasting or bragging! We're talking about the right to feel good when we've done well!

**Go to Activity 11, "When Less Needs to Be More!"  
on the next page.**



## ACTIVITY 11 – TOLEPLAY PREPARATION

### When Less Needs to Be More!

- ✓ **BEFORE THE ROLEPLAY**, ask for two volunteers to roleplay the parts of **Les** and **Morrie**. (Make two copies of roleplay.)
- ✓ Tell the volunteers to get the full benefits of roleplaying by really getting involved in the parts they are playing.
- ✓ Bring to their attention any words in *italics* — which are private thoughts said out loud, but not to the other person in the roleplay, and to words in parentheses ( ) which are instructions and should not be said out loud.
- ✓ Give volunteers a minute to read silently, as you tell the class:
  1. One of these characters tends to magnify everything, and the other, just the opposite, tends to minimize.
  2. See if you can determine why these two people never see the whole picture.
- ✓ **DO THE ROLEPLAY (next page).**
- ✓ **AFTER THE ROLEPLAY, RETURN TO THIS PAGE and ask:**
  1. What do you think of Morrie and Les? Are they both missing the “big picture”? What makes you think so?
  2. When Morrie exaggerates, do you tend to not believe what’s being said? By distorting the truth, does Morrie create a colorful picture, or one that you tend to not believe? What is Morrie missing?
  3. When Les plays down personal value, do you sympathize, or do you want to shake Les and wake Les up to what s/he’s missing?
  4. Do you think that both Les and Morrie have talked themselves into believing that what they’re saying is true?
  5. Do you sometimes talk yourself into believing what you’re saying without really considering whether or not this talk is real?
- ✓ **Thank students for their excellent work.**

## **ACTIVITY 11 – TOLEPLAY**

### **When Less Needs to Be More!**

**Attention Roleplayers!** Read your part with enthusiasm! Have fun!

#### **MORRIE**

I will NOT — I repeat, NOT go to the party! The way kids carry on is unbearable! I hate what happened at the last party! I will never feel safe again! These kids are the most violent, treacherous, hateful, stupid people on the planet! They know nothing about having a good time! They play music at 10,000 decibels, and make punch with 20 bottles of liquor in a punch bowl, and carry on like crazed gorillas! YOU go!

#### **LES**

You know, Morrie, I don't think I'm going either. Nobody I know is going, I don't think I belong with these kids — they all have more friends, more money, better clothes. The party's going to be at Brad's house up in the hills. I don't belong in a house like that — too high class for me. I won't know how to act. These kids all know how to dance, how to move to the music — I don't think I could ever learn how to dance — too clumsy.

#### **MORRIE**

You are nuts, Les! You are two thousand times better than ANY of these people! Just because they SPEND more money doesn't mean they HAVE more money, or that they're better! Brad's parents' house is a money trap! My Dad says they had to re-do 95% of the house in order to move in, because the place was such an overrated dump when they bought it. If I were you, I'd go up there and rejoice that you don't have to spend in a year what those people spend in a week!

#### **LES**

Brad's dad is a doctor. My dad is a fireman. I don't think I should go up there. My dad never goes to company parties when they're at the home of a doctor. He says he gets uncomfortable sitting on silk chairs.

#### **MORRIE**

Like my mother always says, "Don't make a mountain out of a molehill." Go hang out with the upper crust! Maybe YOU should start a riot. Push someone into the pool with their clothes on! That would be great!

#### **LES**



I don't think I'd feel very good about doing that, Morrie. I need to do something that makes me feel good.

## When I Make Bigger (Magnify), What Do I Miss?

### 1. Ask students:

- ☐ Do you ever blow things out of proportion — overstate and distort what really happened?
- ☐ Why do you think we humans have this tendency — to make something that happened, or something we said or did, MORE than it was, larger than life?

### 2. Tell students:

- When we magnify everything that happens to us, it's usually because of a need to make our life seem more important. The problem is, people begin to see through our exaggerations. Eventually this causes them to stop believing what we say.
- When we magnify what's happened over and over again, we start to believe what we're saying ourselves! We become unable to see that what we are saying isn't really true!

## Let's Take a Look at the Scene — the Full Picture!

### 1. Tell students:

- It's important in life to see "the big picture" — to be able to stand back and see all sides of a story. That's how detectives operate. They listen to one person's story, then another, and another. They put all the pieces of the puzzle together to figure out who committed the crime. This helps them solve the crime.
- Some people *magnify* what's happened to them in life to create a sense of importance — to get the attention they crave. They think, "If I make this sound worse, it will have more meaning."
- Some people *minimize* what's happened to them in life to remove attention from themselves. "Yes, I saved that person's life, but it was nothing. I was lucky. There was no skill involved."

**Go to Activity 12, "All Sides of the Story."  
on the next page.**

## ACTIVITY 12 – TXERCISE

# All Sides of the Story!

- ✓ **Ask students to sit in a comfortable place. Tell them you are going to read them a story and you'd like them to just relax and listen.**
- ✓ **Read to students the story on the following page.**
- ✓ **After reading this story, RETURN TO THIS PAGE and ask students:**
  1. What did you think of this tribe as you listened to how their customs had formed? Do you think they had good reason to establish the customs they created? Why do you think so?
  2. Did it appear at first that all tribe members saw “the big picture” — that they understood that they were all members of a group that had to work together to survive?
  3. What happened when Yako refused to dance to the sun? Do you think he was just a wild kid?
  4. Do you think that Yako saw a different bigger picture – perhaps a changed world from the one his tribe lived in?
  5. Do you think Yako was right to protest the tribe’s conditioned habits? Did Yako *minimize* the importance of dancing to the sun? Or did Yako “miss” seeing the full picture of what the tribe was about?
  6. Do you think the tribe leaders *maximized* the importance of dancing to the sun, punishing Yako the way they did?
  7. Do you sometimes refuse to do something your tribe, your family, your team, or your friends want you to do? Do you think they *magnify* the importance of their “rules”?
  8. Do you think that there are times when you *minimize* what’s important to your family or community — not taking the time to SEE and UNDERSTAND what’s important to them in THEIR big picture?
- ✓ **Congratulate students on their excellent powers of observation!**

## **The Dance to the Sun\***

The night was black, and the jungle came alive with the sound of hooting owls, howling wolves and the crackling sound of branches breaking under the stealthy steps of hungry saber-toothed tigers. Several human beings were huddled together in silence inside a bare, cliff-side cave. The sun had fallen and a sliver of a moon was their only light. Dark clouds hid the stars.

The people knew that the night meant danger. They were aware that the purpose of every night-time gathering in the cave was only to survive the darkness and live through the long wait for the first sign of morning light.

Being with the group made each of the people feel more secure. They knew that if they wound up alone after nightfall, they might be helpless against the attack of a larger animal.

Suddenly they heard, “Hoot! ” “Growl! ” “Squawk! ” They jumped and turned their heads toward where the sounds appeared to be coming from. Pressed close together, their ears were sharply attuned to every sound, and their eyes scanned the darkness slowly and carefully. As tired as they were, they knew that falling asleep was risky. But since they were gathered together, they felt more safe. They took turns watching the younger children and taking short naps.

At last dawn began to break, which signaled their survival of another night. As the sun came up, the people felt more relieved. Their thoughts now turned to what they had to accomplish to survive the day.

They worked together, sharing the labors each could do. One woman cooked food that had been gathered the day before. Another cleared the area. Still another tidied up, and one of the older children cared for the smaller ones. The men hunted and brought back food. Each member of the group had a job to do — each relied on the others. Their very lives depended on everyone contributing to the whole.

### **The Rock Tribe**

In their own language, they called themselves the Rock Tribe, because everywhere they looked, they could see rocks. There were many children now in the tribe, and it was becoming more difficult to keep track of them. To keep the tribe together, the older people — the elders — created rituals to be performed by members of the group. One of these was that all tribe members would create a pile of rocks, which the tribe would worship. The elders were superstitious. They believed the rocks represented images of the mysterious forces of nature and that if the tribe did not worship these images, the tribe would perish. This belief made them fearful.

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\*From the Atrium Society book, *Why Is Everybody Always Picking on Us?* by Dr. Terrence Webster-Doyle, where it is called “The Roots of Prejudice.”

Another repeated practice specified that all tribe members must paint their faces with a specific design to show that they all belonged to the Rock Tribe. The patterns drawn on their faces ensured that members would recognize their own people. In another ritual, the elders determined that, every day, everyone in the Rock Tribe would dance to the sun to frighten away wicked spirits.

Over time these rituals were carried out again and again — so often that they became customs — practices the tribe carried out on a regular basis. They would paint their faces, no matter what. They would dance to the sun — even if it rained or snowed, even if they were exhausted from the day's work. These recurring practices gave them a sense of belonging.

The group members became so accustomed to their repetitious ways of life, that painting their faces and dancing to the sun soon became habit — something they did without thinking. When the sun arose, they painted their faces; when the sun set, they danced. And so it was, day after day, month after month.

### **From Habit to Patriotism**

These habits were passed from one generation to the next, by the elders to their children, and then those children became elders and passed these customs down to *their* children. In so doing, these beliefs became firmly ingrained in the minds and hearts of tribe members — beliefs held so closely that they became traditions. Everyone would sit around a fire at night, and the elders would describe the traditions that had come down from their ancestors. Storytelling kept the beliefs and traditions alive.

One day, something different happened. With the tribe's customs and habits permanently ingrained in their lives, the cry, as usual, came as the sun descended: "Time to dance to the sun!" But for the first time, a tribe member refused to do what the others were doing.

"Yako is not dancing to the sun! He says he is tired and refuses to dance! He must be punished!" cried one of the elders. And so the young member of the Rock Tribe was made to stay home, to not hunt with the others, and to take in nothing but water for three days. Yako did not see why they had to continue performing these practices. He preferred to simply *watch* the sun set on the horizon, without dancing. His protests were short-lived. After three days of being alone with no food, Yako rejoined the tribe in the dance to the sun.

The tribe's beliefs went on to become a community culture, which became an established "belief system" and, eventually, a nation. And the nation developed pride and honor, which caused a feeling of patriotism in all tribe members. This path from ritual to nation to patriotism bonded the tribe members for centuries, continually carrying the past into the present. And what this provided tribe members was something they valued more than anything: survival!





## LESSON 7

# How I Feel Is Who and What I Am!

### Breakdown of Lesson 7:

I feel like an idiot!  
I feel like a genius!  
Let's be what we see!

### Materials & Tools Needed:

Activity 13: Before class, add your own strips to "Pick a Strip," p. 44-45, cut them into strips and put them in a hat, box or basket.  
Activity 14: Make 2 copies of roleplay, "I Am What I Think!" pp. 48-49.

## I Feel Like an Idiot!

### 1. Ask students:

- ☐ Have you been adding to our "What Happens When I'm Scared" chart, and our "I Think in Black and White" chart? Let's do it! We'll need to use these charts later, so let's add something every day!
- ☐ Have you ever done or said something you regretted afterward and then said to yourself, "I feel like an idiot!"?
- ☐ When that happened, did you ask yourself, "Why do I feel like an idiot? I know that I'm NOT, but something made me feel like one!"

### 2. Tell students:

- Nobody is perfect. We all have "idiot" moments. But even when we do have such moments, we can make a choice. That choice is: Do I think of myself as an idiot, or do I look at what I did and learn something so I don't make that mistake again?
- Let's do an exercise that helps us make the right choice!

**Go to Activity 5, "Defend? Or Learn?"  
on the next page.**

## **ACTIVITY 13 – TICK A STRIP**

### **Defend? Or Learn?**

- ✓ **Cut the situations on the following two pages into strips, along the dotted lines. Fold each strip in half, then drop into a hat, box or basket. Make up some of your own and add them in!**
- ✓ **Tell students:**
  1. This exercise is called “Pick A Strip.” In this container is a bunch of strips. Each strip has a situation, or event written on it — something that happened to someone.
  2. When it’s your turn, pick a strip, read it aloud. Then, make a choice: Either say what YOU would do in this situation to DEFEND yourself from getting hurt emotionally. Or say what YOU would do in this situation to LEARN something. (Repeat this, if necessary.)
  3. Whatever choice you make, point to someone who will take the OTHER side. In other words, if you DEFEND the situation, the other person will be asked to think of a way we could LEARN from this situation. If you pick a way to LEARN from the situation, the other person will need to come up with a way to DEFEND him- or herself. Understood?
- ✓ **Listen carefully as students respond. If the student who picks the strip chooses to say what we can LEARN from this situation, whoever this student points to will then be asked to say what he or she would do to protect him- or herself in this situation.**
- ✓ **After each student has had a chance to pick a strip and make a decision, ask:**
  1. Which do you prefer — *defending* your position, or finding a way to *learn* something from your position?
  2. Do you think it’s good to know how to do both? Do you think it’s helpful to be able to see all sides of a situation? Why do you think so?
- ✓ **Congratulate students on their good work!**





## ACTIVITY 13 – TICK A STRIP

### Defend? Or Learn?

A bully on the playground has threatened to beat you up if you don't give him all the money in your pocket.

**I defend myself by:**

**I learn from this situation by:**

---

Your parent insists that you finish your chores before going to see a movie with your friends, even though your parent said yesterday that you could go.

**I defend myself by:**

**I learn from this situation by:**

---

Your teacher scolds you in front of the class for not getting your assignment in on time and assigns you an extra assignment that's due tomorrow.

**I defend myself by:**

**I learn from this situation by:**

---

Your older brother steals a cell phone from a local store and tells your parents that you did it.

**I defend myself by:**

**I learn from this situation by:**

---

A TV commercial offers you a lot of money to bring in your present computer and buy a new one.

**I defend myself by:**

**I learn from this situation by:**

---

You tell a friend a secret and ask that it not be shared. Your friend tells your secret to someone you'd rather didn't know it.

**I defend myself by:**

**I learn from this situation by:**

---

After school, some kids follow you home and beat you up because they say that you don't belong there, because you look "different."

**I defend myself by:**

**I learn from this situation by:**

---

An adult community leader asks you to do something that you don't think is right, but you're afraid to say no.

**I defend myself by:**

**I learn from this situation by:**

-----

An internet emailer encourages you to reveal where you live so that you can become friends.

**I defend myself by:**

**I learn from this situation by:**

---

A family member hides your CD player and music and says that no one likes your choice in music, so you better not play it.

**I defend myself by:**

**I learn from this situation by:**

---

Your parent announces that since your overall grades are down, you will need to quit the soccer team until your grades are good again.

**I defend myself by:**

**I learn from this situation by:**

---

A kid you know from school bugs you to buy candy bars he's selling, which will cost you a week's allowance.

**I defend myself by:**

**I learn from this situation by:**

---

A kid from school purposely bumps into you and calls you stupid for bumping into him.

**I defend myself by:**

**I learn from this situation by:**

---

A bully who picks on you all the time is coming toward you again. You think, "I am very tired of this bully. Here's what I'm going to do."

**I defend myself by:**

**I learn from this situation by:**

---

Everyone at your house eats meat, but you've decided that you want to be a vegetarian. Your Mom says there's meatloaf for dinner and you better clean your plate.

**I defend myself by:**

**I learn from this situation by:**

---

You think about the bully who called you an idiot. You say to yourself, "That bully is right. I really AM an idiot."

**I defend myself by:**

**I learn from this situation by:**

---

I don't like it when I make mistakes, but I just called the school principal by the wrong name.

**I defend myself by:**

**I learn from this situation by:**

-----

## **I Feel Like a Genius!**

### **1. Ask students:**

- ☐ Aside from the days we have negative thoughts, are there days when you feel really good, really in shape, really intelligent?
- ☐ What do you think makes the difference between a day you feel smart and a day you feel like an idiot?
- ☐ Do you think it's possible that the only difference is in your mind — that the only difference is HOW YOU THINK?

### **2. Tell students:**

- Our brain is a powerful force! In one moment, it can make us believe we are the best, and in another, it can make us believe that we're worthless!
- Once we are AWARE of this power, we can change our thinking, and BE WHAT WE SEE!

## **Let's Be What We See!**

### **1. Ask students:**

- ☐ Are you ready to believe how powerful your brain is?
- ☐ Would you like to see a roleplay that could help you change your thinking, so you can learn to be what you see whenever you wish?

### **2. Tell students:**

- As we do this roleplay, keep in mind that this is something you can do anytime, whenever you wish, to strengthen your mind.
- Like turning your troubles into bubbles, this roleplay shows how even intelligent philosophers may slip up from time to time — but when they are open-minded, they can learn!

**Go to Activity 14, "I Am What I Think!"  
on the next page.**

## ACTIVITY 14 – TOLEPLAY PREPARATION

### I Am What I Think!

- ✓ **BEFORE THE ROLEPLAY**, ask for two volunteers to roleplay the parts of **Socrates** and **Plato**. (Make two copies of roleplay.)
- ✓ Tell the volunteers to get the full benefits of roleplaying by really getting involved in the parts they are playing.
- ✓ Bring to their attention any words in *italics* — which are private thoughts said out loud, but not to the other person in the roleplay, and to words in parentheses ( ) which are instructions and should not be said out loud.
- ✓ Give volunteers a minute to read silently, as you tell the class:
  1. As you listen to these Plato and Socrates, notice how Plato responds to Socrates' accusation.
  2. Ask yourself what you would do in this situation.
- ✓ **DO THE ROLEPLAY (next page).**
- ✓ **AFTER THE ROLEPLAY, RETURN TO THIS PAGE and ask:**
  1. How did Plato do in Socrates' experiment? Did Plato prove Socrates' point?
  2. Did Plato quickly accept Socrates' "fact" that all brown-eyed people are wicked, or did he put up a fight?
  3. Did Plato finally give in to Socrates' accusation? Why do you think he gave in? Because Socrates is someone he knows? Because he might have felt insecure about himself? Because he didn't sleep well and being exhausted made him more weak?
  4. Was Socrates not being a good friend, trying this experiment on Plato? Or do you think, since he told Plato the truth very quickly, he was able to make a good point and help Plato learn something in the moment?
  5. How do you think YOU would you have responded to Socrates' "fact"?

✓ **Thank students for their excellent work.**



## **ACTIVITY 14 – TOLEPLAY**

# **I Am What I Think!**

**Attention Roleplayers!** Read your part with enthusiasm! Have fun!

**PLATO**

Good day, my philosophical friend Socrates. How are you today?

**SOCRATES**

Ah, Plato, my profound and intelligent colleague! I am well, thank you. And you?

**PLATO**

Didn't sleep well — too busy exploring the stars last night, but what's a few hours sleep compared to the glory of the heavens!

**SOCRATES**

Very true, my friend. I've been contemplating an experiment, and if you would be so kind, I would be grateful if you'd allow me to try it out on you.

**PLATO**

Always happy to help a fellow thinker! How can I assist?

**SOCRATES**

I have just discovered that people, such as I, who have blue eyes, are the good people of the Earth. And people, such as you, who have brown eyes, are the wicked-doers.

**PLATO**

(Pauses to think:) What?!!! My dear friend, Socrates, that is outrageous! How can this be true? There is no wisdom in this argument!

**SOCRATES**

Well, I've heard it from the best of authorities, and I thought you would like to know, because if you're having wicked thoughts, we need to keep an eye on you — perhaps even put you in prison, to make certain that you don't do any harm!

**PLATO**

Socrates, this is impossible! You know me! I am devoted to exploring the moon, the stars, the earth — I would never do any harm. I am NOT a bad person!

**SOCRATES**

It grieves me to give you such news, Plato. But I now know for certain that this is true!

**PLATO**

(Angry:) Whatever have I done to the Fates to have them punish me in this way! I shall be a wicked person for the rest of my days! If they say it is so, it must be true! I am wicked! I am corrupt! I am depraved! I shall die a villain! I am the scum of the earth! I am WICKED!!!

**SOCRATES**

(Pauses) Wait, Plato! Wait! Please, stop blaming yourself! Stop! What I have told you about blue eyes and brown eyes is NOT true.

**PLATO**

What? Oh, my, Socrates. Which is it? Am I wicked, or am I not? I do have brown eyes — not even light brown, or hazel!

**SOCRATES**

My friend, this was my experiment. You see, just because I TOLD you that all brown-eyed people are wicked, you BELIEVED it. You, one of the greatest questioners of all time, simply accepted the words I spoke!

**PLATO**

But Socrates....

**SOCRATES**

And not only did you completely accept my words, but you REACTED to them! You did not ACT from your own wisdom — and it is known all over our providence that you are one of the wisest of people.

**PLATO**

I DID accept your words! I attempted to PROTECT myself from the information! Instead of wanting to LEARN from what you told me, I simply REACTED! How human of me! How fascinating!

**SOCRATES**

Yes, well, you won't do that again, I'm willing to bet!

**PLATO**

I think not, my friend! I think not! (Thinks for a moment.) However, when you just said that everyone knows I'm one of the wisest, greatest questioners of all time — I would like to ask, "How do we know this is

true? What is the intelligent way to find out?"



## LESSON 8

# Rules for Perfection Are Hard to Live By!

### Breakdown of Lesson 8:

The demands we make!  
Our shoulds, musts and oughts!  
Let's accept that we're not perfect!

### Materials & Tools Needed:

Activity 15: Before class, read "Breaking the Perfection Barrier" pp. 51-52.  
Activity 16: Make 10 copies of roleplay, "My Imperfect World," pp. 55-56.

## The Demands We Make!

### 1. Ask students:

- ☐ What demands have you made on YOURSELF today? *Encourage all responses!* Have you demanded that you be stronger? Smarter? Quicker? Better? That you never make another mistake?
- ☐ What demands have you made on THE WORLD today? That it give you what you want, all the time? That wrong things never happen?
- ☐ Why do you think we make such demands on ourselves, and on the world around us? What's going on in our brains?

### 2. Tell students:

- We have all been "conditioned" — trained to believe that our lives "should" go a certain way in order for us to be satisfied.
- The fact is —trying to be perfect can lead to disappointment!
- Here's an exercise that helps us break the perfection barrier!

**Go to Activity 15, "Breaking the Perfection Barrier!"  
on the next page.**

## **ACTIVITY 15 – TXERCISE**

# **Breaking the Perfection Barrier!**

- ✓ **Ask students to form a circle (if you have the space, indoors or outdoors), or they can remain in their seats.**
- ✓ **Tell students:**
  1. I'm going to read you the first part of a sentence. When I stand in front of you, complete the sentence!
  2. We're going to move very quickly, so you have to be brave enough to say the first thing that pops into your mind!
  3. There are no right or wrong answers! The point is to think quickly, on your feet — and to have fun!
- ✓ **Begin by standing in front of a student. Read one of the incomplete sentences you'll find on the following page. Read as quickly as you can, so that the student is inspired to respond quickly. MOVE! As fast as you can!**
- ✓ **It's okay to repeat some of these, because different students will give different answers. It's also okay to make up some of your own sentences, since you know your students best!**
- ✓ **Make this a fun exercise for everyone!**
- ✓ **Afterward, ask students:**
  1. Did you feel uncomfortable admitting your mistakes to a room full of fellow students?
  2. Did you think, "I'm the only one who ever makes mistakes?"
  3. Do you think that all of us humans are "conditioned" to be perfect creatures? Why do you think so?
  4. Do you think it's POSSIBLE for us to be perfect all the time? Or do you think perhaps we're lucky to have some perfect moments?
  5. Can you remember an actual perfect moment you had? What was

it? How long did it last?

## ACTIVITY 15 – SENTENCES

# Breaking the Perfection Barrier!

1. What happened to me isn't fair! I should not have:  
-----
2. With the crisis that I'm going through this week — people should understand that:  
-----
3. Before I take any risk, I need to be absolutely sure that:  
-----
4. The reason I cannot allow myself to mess up ever again is:  
-----
5. I should never, ever:  
-----
6. I made a big mistake this year by:  
-----
7. I hope to never make a mistake again, because:  
-----
8. The thing I really despise about mistakes is:  
-----
9. The reason people need to understand why I'm late is:  
-----
10. The reason I need complete control over my life is:  
-----
11. The reason I cannot show my feelings to others is:  
-----
12. Friends always let you down, because:  
-----
13. Life today is harder than it used to be, and that's why we should:  
-----
14. The situation when I should have acted better was:  
-----
15. The time my parents should have seen MY side of the story was:  
-----
16. The time my teacher should have given me a better grade was:  
-----
17. Instead of setting strict curfews, parents should:  
-----
18. People who do not have confidence in me should:  
-----
19. The worst mistake I ever made was:  
-----

20. The best mistake I ever made was:

-----



## Our Shoulds, Musts and Oughts!

### 1. Ask students:

- ☐ Have you noticed how many times a day we use the words “should,” “must” and “ought”?
- ☐ Whenever you hear anyone say to you, “You SHOULD have....” is your first inclination to protect yourself by making an excuse?
- ☐ When someone says, “I know that’s what you THINK we should do, but we really OUGHT to....” do you allow their suggestion to enter your brain, where you can think about it?

### 2. Tell students:

- No one’s perfect! Still, no one likes to hear that we could have, should have, ought to, or really must do *anything*!
- When we hear these words, it’s good to be able to STOP, THINK and then ACT instead of REACT!

## Let’s Accept That We’re Not Perfect!

### 1. Ask students:

- ☐ Are you ready to accept that none of us is perfect?
- ☐ Do you think the world is ready to accept that we are not perfect? How about your parents? Your teachers? Your friends?
- ☐ And are you ready to accept that the WORLD is not perfect? That you cannot always get what you want, when you want it?

### 2. Tell students:

- Life can be disappointing when we can’t get what we want.
- But like Plato, we can learn to STOP and THINK before we REACT in situations that disappoint us — and learn to ACT intelligently. Let’s do a roleplay that demonstrates this!

**Go to Activity 16, “My Imperfect World!”**

**on the next page.**

## ACTIVITY 16 – TOLEPLAY PREPARATION

### My Imperfect World!

- ✓ **BEFORE THE ROLEPLAY**, ask for two volunteers to roleplay the parts of **Mozart** and **Bach**. Ask six or eight more volunteers to play the **Greek Chorus**. (Explain to those who do not know that a Greek Chorus is a group that comments on the action of a play.) (Make 10 copies of roleplay.)
- ✓ Ask the volunteers to get the full benefits of roleplaying by really getting involved in the parts they are playing.
- ✓ Bring to their attention any words in *italics* — which are private thoughts said out loud, but not to the other person in the roleplay, and to words in parentheses ( ) which are instructions and should not be said out loud.
- ✓ Give volunteers a minute to read silently, as you tell the class:

As you listen to this roleplay, try to stand in the shoes of these characters and think about what you would do in their place.

- ✓ **DO THE ROLEPLAY (next page).**
- ✓ **AFTER THE ROLEPLAY, RETURN TO THIS PAGE and ask:**
  1. What did you think of the work of the Greek Chorus?
  2. Do you think they finally taught Mozart something about shoulds and oughts?
  3. Do you sometimes have a little Greek Chorus in your brain talking to you, reminding you of things to say and do?
  4. Do you think that, despite being a great composer, Mozart was not satisfied because he couldn't afford to hire the musicians he wanted? Is that why he had a lot of shoulds and oughts?
  5. Do we all have moments like that of Mozart — days when, for one reason or another, we can't do or get what we want, but still have to learn how to accept it?
- ✓ **Thank students for their excellent work.**

## ACTIVITY 16 – TOLEPLAY

# My Imperfect World!

**Attention Roleplayers!** Read your part with enthusiasm! Have fun!

### BACH

Good day, Amadeus. What is that lovely piece you're playing on the piano? It's perfect. Absolutely perfect.

### MOZART

Thank you, Johann. Actually, it's a new piece — hardly perfect at all. I would say that it's competent — nothing extraordinary. To make it perfect, I should have 20 violins, three French horns, two cornets, and a partridge in a pear tree!

### GREEK CHORUS

He **SHOULD** have 20 violins, three French horns, two cornets, and a partridge in a pear tree!

### BACH

Do you hear voices? Amadeus, you are very modest indeed. I can hear on the piano alone what a magnificent piece this is. I can *imagine* where you use the violins, the French horns, even the cornets!

### MOZART

Yes, I suppose we could do without the partridge, but it really **OUGHT** to have all the other instruments.

### GREEK CHORUS

It really **OUGHT** to have all the other instruments!

### MOZART

There's a strange echo! Do you hear it?

### BACH

Yes, my friend, I do. It's the Greek Chorus. They always show up when we humans get carried away with saying, "I should have this," or "I ought to have that!"

### MOZART

And what's so wrong with uttering shoulds and oughts? My budget for producing the music the way it **SHOULD** be played is very thin,

and I find myself muttering these words all day long!

**GREEK CHORUS**

My budget for producing the music the way it SHOULD be....

**MOZART**

STOP! I say! I cannot tolerate this chorus mocking me!

**BACH**

Well, Amadeus, therefore, it would do you a great deal of good to learn to never use those words. If you do, the Greek Chorus will disappear! By the way, did you notice that I did not suggest that you (whispers) SHOULD (normal voice) learn to not use those words? I merely suggested that it would do you good!

**MOZART**

Johann, this is foolish! I speak the way I speak! I compose music the way I compose music! People SHOULD accept me for who I am and they SHOULD accept my music for what it is, don't you think?

**GREEK CHORUS**

People SHOULD accept me for who I am, and....

**MOZART**

All right! STOP! Thank you, Chorus members! I think I understand. We are NOT living in a perfect world! We can NOT always have what we want when we want it — even if we DESERVE it! Even if we write the best music every written. Even if there is no one else on earth who could write a more perfect....(pauses) Oh, dear, Johann. Forgive me. YOU, of course, have written many perfect pieces. How rude of me to forget. I SHOULD have....oh! I mean, I could truly benefit from acknowledging a great master such as yourself.

**BACH**

No problem, my friend. I think you are beginning to understand the value of acknowledging and learning rather than defending your position strongly while learning nothing!

**MOZART**

Well said! Ah! It's noontime! Should we go feed ourselves?

**GREEK CHORUS**

SHOULD we go feed ourselves?

**MOZART**

(To Bach:) Will they never go home? They really SHOULD, you know! It's time for lunch!



## LESSON 9

# Identifying with Weakness Instead of Strength!

### Breakdown of Lesson 8:

- I recognize my shortcomings!
- I tag myself with names!
- Inside every mistake is a positive lesson!

### Materials & Tools Needed:

- Activity 17: Before class, read “My Shortcomings Are Alive!” p. 58.
- Activity 18: Make 2 copies of roleplay, “ My Defense Place and My Learning Place,” pp. 61-62.

## I Recognize My Shortcomings!

### 1. Ask students:

- ☐ Are you aware of parts of your behavior that you would call your “faults,” “imperfections” or “shortcomings”?
- ☐ Do you think that we are more aware of our “shortcomings” than we are of our accomplishments? Why do you think that’s so?
- ☐ Do you think we’re conditioned to look at our “faults” more than our achievements? Our weaknesses more than our strengths?

### 2. Tell students:

- It’s just plain true that many of us are conditioned to recognize our weaknesses more readily than our strengths — our shortcomings more quickly than our accomplishments!
- The fact is — our “weaknesses” and “shortcomings” are good to look at, because they have a lot to teach us! We can learn how to turn them into positive learning experiences!

**Go to Activity 15, “My Shortcomings Are Alive!”**



**on the next page.**

## ACTIVITY 17 – EXERCISE

# My Shortcomings Are Alive!

- ✓ **Go to your chart “My Black and White World” originally used in Lesson 2, p. 10. Hopefully by now, your list has grown long, with many additions!**
- ✓ **Tell students:**
  1. Let’s each take a turn. Pick any item on the chart and tell us what you believe is the “shortcoming” or “mistake” that was made by this person.
  2. Then, take a moment to think, then tell us one thing you think can be learned from this mistake or this experience.
- ✓ **Give each student at least one turn. If time allows, you can give each student more than one turn.**
- ✓ **An alternative to this exercise is to invite other students to offer their opinions after each student has responded.**
- ✓ **Give students plenty of time to think when it’s their turn. Give other students time to respond if they have more thoughts.**
- ✓ **Taking a few minutes to allow students to come up with what can be learned from “mistakes” is time well spent! Write the following on your blackboard or chart:**

=====

## HOW TO HANDLE MY MISTAKES!

### GO TO MY FEARFUL PLACE? GO TO MY LEARNING PLACE?

Where I DEFEND what I believe  
and accept no responsibility  
for learning.

Where I accept responsibility  
for my mistake and find out what  
I can learn from it!

=====

- ✓ **Congratulate students on their powerful brains!**

## I Tag Myself with Names!

### 1. Ask students:

- ☐ When you make a mistake, do you feel foolish, or self-conscious?
- ☐ We have learned in our society to feel embarrassed when we make a mistake. It's unfortunate, but true! When you do make a mistake, do you tell yourself, "I'm a jerk!" "I'm a fool!" "I'm a loser!"?
- ☐ Do you think it's simply an easy way out to just call ourselves a name and move on, without stopping to think about what we can learn from any mistake or false move we make?

## Inside Every Mistake Is a Positive Lesson!

### 1. Tell students:

- Many of us believe the best thing to do, when we make a mistake, is to call ourselves a name, admit our guilt, and move on.
- The truth is — there's at least one lesson in every mistake, and the way to strengthen your mind is to figure out what that lesson is, and learn it!
- When we make a mistake, we can go to our *fearful* place and attempt to *defend* ourselves from accepting responsibility for the mistake — or we can go to our *learning* place, where we accept *responsibility* for our mistake and see what there is to *learn*!
- Remember when we spoke about the importance of seeing "the big picture" — seeing ALL sides of a situation, not only our own? Recognizing our mistakes for what they are — human error — is like that. It gives us a broader picture of our situation.
- When we remember to ask, like Plato, "What's the intelligent thing to do?" we always learn something, which empowers the greatest weapon we have — our mind! Are you ready for a roleplay?

**Go to Activity 18, "My Defense Place & My Learning Place!"  
on the next page.**

## ACTIVITY 18 – TOLEPLAY PREPARATION

### My Defense Place & My Learning Place!

- ✓ **BEFORE THE ROLEPLAY**, ask for two volunteers to roleplay the parts of **Armor** and **Sage**. (Make two copies of roleplay.)
- ✓ Ask the volunteers to get the full benefits of roleplaying by really getting involved in the parts they are playing.
- ✓ Bring to their attention any words in *italics* — which are private thoughts said out loud, but not to the other person in the roleplay, and to words in parentheses ( ) which are instructions and should not be said out loud.
- ✓ Give volunteers a minute to read silently, as you tell the class:
  1. One of these characters tends to go to a protective, defensive place, while the other tends to be open and anxious to learn.
  2. Watch as they play out who they are and how they think!
- ✓ **DO THE ROLEPLAY (next page).**
- ✓ **AFTER THE ROLEPLAY, RETURN TO THIS PAGE and ask:**
  1. Did you see a difference in the way Sage and Armor handled their situations? What was the difference?
  2. Was Armor more likely to be self-critical and start to “name call” for mistakes that were made? Was Armor hard on her/himself?
  3. Did Sage look at mistakes with a more open, accepting eye? Was Sage embarrassed about his/her self-admitted mistake?
  4. Was Sage helpful in getting Armor to see that the mistakes Armor had made were nothing more than human error? Do you think that every time we make a mistake, we’re better off looking at it the way Sage did?
  5. Sometimes a mistake can be very serious and cause great harm, and we may not want to treat it lightly. Still, it’s healthier to think of our mistakes as a path to learning, and whenever possible, to find the lesson, and learn it!

✓ **Thank students for their excellent work.**

## ACTIVITY 18 – TOLEPLAY

# My Defense Place & My Learning Place!

**Attention Roleplayers!** Read your part with enthusiasm! Have fun!

### SAGE

Hi, Armor! I hear you played a great soccer game yesterday. Sorry I missed the game. I had to practice for the music recital.

### ARMOR

Let's not even TALK about the game. It was awful.

### SAGE

But I hear we won!

### ARMOR

Ha! Yes, we won, but yours truly blew it three times during the game. I missed the first point by unknowingly letting the guard see exactly where I was going to kick! That was so stupid! I am a real jerk!

### SAGE

But we won the game!

### ARMOR

Then, I go and trip on some stupid clump of grass — and fall, completely missing getting the ball in. I am such a loser! Of course, it wasn't my fault. It was that stupid clump. A really sad story! How was your music practice session?

### SAGE

Good. Very good. When we got to the part where the violins come in on the concerto, guess who was the only one to play the wrong note on the crescendo — the part that's supposed to get loud?

### ARMOR

Uh-oh! Must've been you! You must have been embarrassed to have your note stick out like a sore thumb!

### SAGE

Well, I couldn't believe it when it happened. It was almost as if it wasn't me playing. The orchestra stopped and I said, "Where did THAT note come from?" And everybody laughed, because they knew it was me!

**ARMOR**

You must've felt really dumb!

**SAGE**

I didn't! Right after it happened, the music director told me this incredibly neat way of approaching the note on the string that will ensure that I never play that awful note again! It was a great discovery! Something I can use on just about everything I play. Isn't that amazing?

**ARMOR**

So you didn't feel dumb?

**SAGE**

Dumb? No, I didn't. Actually I felt pretty smart, because when I goofed, I actually wound up learning something cool.

**ARMOR**

And you didn't feel stupid?

**SAGE**

Stupid? No. Why should I feel stupid. I just made a mistake. We all make mistakes. Like when you missed getting a point in the game — that was a mistake in judgment. Didn't you learn something from that?

**ARMOR**

(Thinks.) I learned never to do that again! (Thinks again.) If I think about it, I guess I learned that the player who got in my way is very fast, and I need to be aware of that whenever I'm near that kid. And as for that clump of grass? I guess I learned that grass sometimes has clumps.

**SAGE**

That's pretty funny.

**ARMOR**

I guess nobody's perfect, huh?

**SAGE**

Speak for yourself!



## LESSON 10

# Blaming Without Considering Responsibility!

### Breakdown of Lesson 10:

- I blame myself without considering who's responsible!
- I blame others without considering my behavior!
- What happens to blame when we're aware?

### Materials & Tools Needed:

- Activity 19: Before class, add your own strips to "Pick a Strip," p. 64-65, cut them into strips and put them in a hat, box or basket.
- Activity 20: Make 2 copies of roleplay, "To Act or React," p. 68.

## I Blame Myself Without Considering Who's Responsible

### 1. Ask students:

- ☐ Who added a "black or white thinking" item to our chart today? Did your item have anything to do with blame? How so?
- ☐ When something goes wrong, do you tend to blame yourself, or someone else? *Encourage all responses!*
- ☐ For those of you who blame yourself before anyone else, do you ever stop to think first about who's responsible for what happened?

### 2. Tell students:

- When something goes wrong, there's usually more than one reason why it happens — which is why it's good to look at ALL sides of a situation before deciding to blame someone.
- The truth is — if we're really intending to LEARN something from things that go wrong, we need to not blame at all!

**Go to Activity 19, "Turn Your Blame into a Game!"  
on the next page.**





## **ACTIVITY 19 – TICK A STRIP**

### **Turn Your Blame into a Game!**

- ✓ **Cut the situations on the following page into strips, along the dotted lines, just as you did in Lesson 7. Fold them in half, then put them in a hat, box or basket. You can always make up some of your own, or make two copies and repeat the strips. No two students are likely to respond in the same way.**
- ✓ **Ask students:**
  1. Remember when we played a game called “Pick A Strip” in a previous lesson? In this container is a bunch of strips. Each strip has a situation written on it.
  2. When it’s your turn, pick a strip, read it aloud. Then, finish the sentence! If the situation isn’t one you’ve actually experienced, use your imagination and make up a response!
  3. This game strengthens your mental awareness, so you need to read the strip quickly and finish the sentence as fast as you can!
- ✓ **Listen carefully as students respond. You will want to be AWARE of what each student says.**
- ✓ **You may want to write on your blackboard or chart one column called “Blame Self” and another called “Blame Others” and keep a tally of how many people tend to blame themselves and how many blame others.**
- ✓ **After all students have had a chance to pick a strip and respond, tally the score, and ask:**
  1. How did we do?
  2. Do you think we’re human beings who prefer to blame others when things go wrong, or are we people who blame ourselves?
  3. Does it feel good to blame others? Does it feel good to blame yourself?
  4. Should we never blame anyone for anything ever again?

✓ **Congratulate students on their good work!**

**ACTIVITY 19 – TICK A STRIP**  
**Turn Your Blame into a Game!**

1. When something goes wrong at our house, the person who usually gets blamed is \_\_\_\_\_, because:  
-----
2. When I get upset, the first person I tend to blame is \_\_\_\_\_, because:  
-----
3. The last time I got a bad grade in school, I knew without a doubt that the person to blame was:  
-----
4. When I get grounded for not doing what I'm told, I know that the person to blame is:  
-----
5. Whenever there's an argument between my brother or sister and me, my parents tend to blame \_\_\_\_\_, because:  
-----
6. When those horrible killings happened at the school that was on the news, the newspapers blamed violent filmmakers. I think the real blame belongs to:  
-----
7. When I was attacked by a bully on the playground for the fourth time this week, I blamed:  
-----
8. Whenever I get to school late, I blame:  
-----
9. When things happen that I don't like, and that I have no control over, I tend to blame:  
-----
10. When I don't do well on an exam, I blame:  
-----
11. When I have to do homework that I don't understand, I blame:  
-----
12. When I'm forced to eat food at home that I don't like, I blame:  
-----
13. When I don't get enough sleep at night, I blame:  
-----
14. When my black-and-white thinking gets me into trouble, the person I blame the most is:  
-----
15. When my parents don't understand me, I blame:

-----

## **I Blame Others Without Considering My Behavior**

### **1. Ask students:**

- ☐ Do you think, more often than not, you are a person who tends to blame others, without taking the time to STOP and THINK about your own behavior?
- ☐ When you do, do you then blame yourself for not stopping to think about your behavior — so you wind up blaming yourself again?

### **2. Tell students:**

- When we're upset, hurt or angry, we're sometimes quick to point a guilty finger, either at ourselves or someone else.
- But blame is an unreal reaction! Remember that it's more intelligent to ACT than REACT. If we were to always be able to ACT instead of REACT in situations, we would NEVER blame anyone for anything — ever again!

## **What Happens to Blame When We're Aware?**

### **1. Ask students:**

- ☐ If we are part of an event that turns out badly, if we accept responsibility for the PART WE PLAYED in that event, do you think we need to BLAME anyone for anything?
- ☐ When we STOP and THINK about what went wrong in any situation and really look at the facts, what happens to blame? Where does it go?

### **2. Tell students:**

- Blame is an unreal reaction! It does no good to blame anyone for anything and sometimes only does more harm.
- It's more intelligent to ACT than REACT. When we are able to condition ourselves to ACT instead of REACT in any situation, we will never feel the need to blame anyone, including ourselves!

**Go to Activity 20, "To Act or React – That is the Question!"  
on the next page.**



## ACTIVITY 20 – TOLEPLAY PREPARATION

### To Act or React – That Is the Question!

- ✓ **BEFORE THE ROLEPLAY**, ask for two volunteers to roleplay the parts of **Lee** and **Sammie**. (Make two copies of the roleplay.)
- ✓ Ask the volunteers to get the full benefits of roleplaying by really getting involved in the parts they are playing.
- ✓ Bring to their attention any words in *italics* — which are private thoughts said out loud, but not to the other person in the roleplay, and to words in parentheses ( ) which are instructions and should not be said out loud.
- ✓ Give volunteers a minute to read silently, as you tell the class:

As you listen to this roleplay, notice the difference in feel between an action and a reaction!
- ✓ **DO THE ROLEPLAY (next page).**
- ✓ **AFTER THE ROLEPLAY, RETURN TO THIS PAGE and ask:**
  1. Who was the person who ACTS, and who was the person who RE-ACTS?
  2. Did you notice a difference in the way Sammie and Lee use language? Who did more questioning, and who did more announcing?
  3. Did Sammie tend to say things like, “ I think...” and “In my opinion,” while Lee tended to blurt out a thought without thinking first?
  4. Who do you think sounded more intelligent — Sammie, who acted from personal thinking, or Lee, who reacted to Sammie’s statements?
  5. Do you think that Lee is someone who blames other people a lot? What makes you think so? Are you more like Lee or Sammie?
- ✓ **Thank students for their excellent work.**



## **ACTIVITY 20 – TOLEPLAY**

### **To Act or React – That Is the Question!**

**Attention Roleplayers!** Read your part with enthusiasm! Have fun!

**HAM**

Did you hear the news? The school's going to start teaching a conflict education class.

**LET**

What? What a ridiculous waste of time! That's the most stupid thing I've heard. We should be studying math, science, languages — not conflict education. What do they think we are, the UN?

**HAM**

I think it's terrific. I think a class in conflict education could be helpful — to all of us. We live in a pretty violent world, and I think it's good to review all the ways we get into conflict, so hopefully we can learn how to prevent it by understanding what causes it.

**LET**

How can you think that this course will be helpful? It's a cop-out! All people do is talk about what they think and what they feel, instead of learning the real stuff — how to get into science research and invent new medicines and equipment that will save lives.

**HAM**

I think talking about how we think and feel is just as important as learning factual information. And if we can't all learn how to get along with each other, what's the good of inventing medicine to save lives? If we're going to always be at war, there will be nobody left to save!

**LET**

Nothing's more important than facts! Facts are the food of life! Getting along with people is a piece of cake. Anyone can do THAT!

**HAM**

Studying conflict education is a science. It is studying the facts that create conflict, just like seeing what makes a clock tick, or an engine work. We have to understand who we are and how we work, and how the way we think creates conflict. Does that make sense?



## LESSON 11

# My Behavior Always Embarrasses Me!

### Breakdown of Lesson 11:

My focus is on what's wrong!

My focus needs to be on what's right!

How can I see more?

### Materials & Tools Needed:

Activity 19: Before class, read "I Can Budge Instead of Judge" p. 70, and prepare paper and pencils for all students.

Activity 20: Make 2 copies of roleplay, "I Can Grip Instead of Trip," p. 73.

## My Focus Is on What's Wrong!

### 1. Ask students:

- ☐ Do you think our brains get tied into mental knots, because more often than not we focus on what's wrong instead of what's right?
- ☐ Why do you think we focus more on what's wrong? Why would we focus on something negative instead of something positive?
- ☐ Is it your view that, for some reason, we are all "conditioned" to think that way? Who, would you say, teaches you to focus on what's wrong? *Encourage all responses!*

### 2. Tell students:

- Because family, friends, teachers, people in our community sometimes judge us — we learn to judge ourselves.
- Whenever we feel ashamed of our behavior, we judge ourselves. But we don't have to! We can budge instead of judge!

**Go to Activity 21, "I Can Budge Instead of Judge!"  
on the next page.**

## **ACTIVITY 21 – TXERCISE**

# **I Can Budge Instead of Judge!**

- ✓ **Divide students into small groups of three or four, and provide students with blank paper and some pencils.**
- ✓ **Tell students:**
  1. When I say “Go,” talk with your group members (and let’s keep our voices down, because we have several groups working) and come up with five ways you have judged yourself when something happened that made you feel embarrassed about your behavior.
  2. You don’t have to reveal who said what — just five different ways you have judged your SELF at a time when you made a mistake, or did something everyone seemed to think was “wrong.” You need to work quickly, quietly and efficiently. You’ll have five minutes. Are you ready? Go!
- ✓ **Listen as students write down their five ways. Don’t interrupt unless they ask you a question.**
- ✓ **After five minutes, call time. Ask which group would like to read their list first. After each group reports, ask:**
  1. Was it difficult to report these times when you felt ashamed of your behavior, or were you glad to be able to talk about it?
  2. Do you think that when we judge ourselves, we have a unique opportunity — to LEARN something? What can we learn?
  3. Can we learn that we don’t have to feel ashamed when we make a mistake — that nobody is perfect and that times such as these are perfect for taking a few moments to turn our troubles into bubbles?
  4. Can we learn that there is no need to beat up on ourselves, because we are good human beings who’ve simply made a mistake — and that everybody makes mistakes?
  5. In these situations, can we act instead of react? Can we budge instead of judge?

✓ **Thanks students for their outstanding work!**

## My Focus Needs to Be on What's Right!

### 1. Ask students:

- ☐ Do you think it's healthier to focus on what we did right instead of what we did wrong? Why do you think so?
- ☐ If we focus on what went right, where does blame go?
- ☐ Do you think that paying attention to what we did *right* helps us do the right thing more often? Why do you think so?

### 2. Tell students:

- We do not need to ignore things that went wrong — that could be avoiding what's real. But being able to look at what went wrong without feeling embarrassed or ashamed — that's our goal!
- Our world is full of black and white, up and down, right and wrong — everyone sees things differently. One person's junk is another person's treasure!
- That's why it's beneficial to be able to look at life through a wide-angle lens and SEE, be AWARE, NOTICE other people, other opinions, other cultures, other countries, other points of view!

## How Can I See More?

### 1. Tell students:

- Being able to SEE more isn't difficult. All we have to remember to do is NOTICE when we're feeling afraid — of a thought, a feeling, or a person — this is our old computer program at work.
- When we can STOP and LOOK at our old program in operation — just WATCH without doing anything — the fear stops right in its tracks!
- Here's a simple example: If, on your way to school every day, you trip over a rock, and one day, you NOTICE the rock, and step over it — you stop tripping! Just really LOOK! That's how it works!

**Go to Activity 22, "I Can Grip Instead of Trip!"**

**on the next page.**

## ACTIVITY 22 – TOLEPLAY PREPARATION

### I Can Grip Instead of Trip!

- ✓ **BEFORE THE ROLEPLAY**, ask for two volunteers to roleplay the parts of **Gripper** and **Tripper**. (Make two copies of roleplay.)
- ✓ Ask the volunteers to get the full benefits of roleplaying by really getting involved in the parts they are playing.
- ✓ Bring to their attention any words in *italics* — which are private thoughts said out loud, but not to the other person in the roleplay, and to words in parentheses ( ) which are instructions and should not be said out loud.
- ✓ Give volunteers a minute to read silently, as you tell the class:
  1. Listen to how Gripper and Tripper respond to the same information.
  2. Notice how Tripper comes around to a small insight.
- ✓ **DO THE ROLEPLAY (next page).**
- ✓ **AFTER THE ROLEPLAY, RETURN TO THIS PAGE and ask:**
  1. Can you see a difference in how these two people — same age, same family — look at the world around them? What's the difference?
  2. Is Tripper a person who blames others, or a self-blamer? How can you tell?
  3. Did you notice any black-and-white thinking going on? How can we spot that kind of thinking?
  4. Is it more difficult to spot negative thinking in ourselves than in other people?
  5. What do you think are some ways to practice spotting negative thinking in ourselves — and stopping it?
- ✓ **Thank students for their excellent work.**

## ACTIVITY 22 – TOLEPLAY

# I Can Grip Instead of Trip!

**Attention Roleplayers!** Read your part with enthusiasm! Have fun!

### TRIPPER

Ouch! That hurts! Wow! This is the third time this week I've tripped over that stupid rock! You'd think I would remember by now!

### GRIPPER

Do you need help? Are you okay?

### TRIPPER

I'm fine, just fine. It just adds more pain to my life. Everything I do these days feels like a battle. Mom and Dad, my classes, the kids at school!

### GRIPPER

So who's creating the battles?

### TRIPPER

Everyone!

### GRIPPER

Sounds to me like YOU are the one creating them.

### TRIPPER

Hey, I thought you were on MY side!

### GRIPPER

I am! I'm trying to help you see the truth. You are my twin. We have the same parents, the same teachers, and we run into the same kids at school. I'm not experiencing any battles with any of them!

### TRIPPER

Why not?

### GRIPPER

Because I think I may be seeing more of the whole picture than you are.

### TRIPPER

Well, how do you explain the big picture about Mom making us do chores



this weekend instead of going to the movies with the other kids?

**GRIPPER**

I don't know what YOUR big picture is, but mine is: Mom and Dad both work and they need someone to handle the chores, and it's our turn.

**TRIPPER**

(Pauses.) Huh. Just like that. You make it so simple.

**GRIPPER**

It IS simple! That's all there is TO it! The only battle is in your mind!

**TRIPPER**

How do you explain the coach making me last in the line-up for the game next weekend?

**GRIPPER**

That's REALLY easy. The last time the coach created the line-up, you mouthed off about being last.

**TRIPPER**

So?

**GRIPPER**

It's the coach's way of saying that it would better if you did NOT mouth off! The coach has a lot of ideas about how to manage the team, and it's not our job to bully the coach about how to do it. Now, if you have something positive to suggest....

**TRIPPER**

So, we can't complain. We can only say things that are NICE! You know, Gripper, that I get very uncomfortable with "NICE"!

**GRIPPER**

When you learn how to say things in a positive way, Tripper, people tend to be more open to what you have to say. You might want to try it sometime. It won't hurt you to do something new and different.

**TRIPPER**

(Thinks for a moment:) It's sort of like not tripping on the rock, isn't it. You NOTICE that someone would rather hear something said in a positive way, and you don't trip over the rock of their feelings.

**GRIPPER**

(Surprised and happy:) Wow. I think we've learned something today.

**TRIPPER**

Yeah, I think we did. Good thing I'm the intelligent twin.



## LESSON 12

# Everyone Is Better Than I Am!

### Breakdown of Lesson 12:

What happens when I compare myself to others!  
How I make my feelings facts!  
Can I beat my “fight or flight” feelings?

### Materials & Tools Needed:

Activity 23: Before class, read “Experience Is My Teacher,” p. 76 and create signs for the new areas!  
Activity 24: Make 2 copies of roleplay, “My ‘Aha’ Moment,” pp.79-80; provide paper and pencils for all students.

## What Happens When I Compare Myself to Others!

### 1. Ask students:

- ☐ How often do you see someone wearing great clothes, riding in a beautiful car, living in a fabulous house, and think: “I wish I were good enough to have those clothes, drive that car, live in that house?” *Encourage all responses!*
- ☐ Have you ever envied the fact that someone can hardly study at all and still do well in school? That someone can eat any food they want and never gain weight? That someone can do something better, faster, more powerfully than you can?

### 2. Tell students:

- Welcome to the club called “Everyone Is Better Than I Am”! We all compare ourselves to others! It’s human nature!
- The important thing to remember is that: We may know what we are, but we do not know what we may be.

**Go to Activity 23, “Experience Is My Teacher!”  
on the next page.**



## ACTIVITY 23 – TXERCISE

# Experience Is My Teacher!

- ✓ Create three new areas on your classroom floor (you may want to create a sign for each area like you did before), divided as follows:  
  
Area A:        My Explanation Place!  
Area B:        My Example Place!  
Area C:        My Experience Place!
- ✓ Ask for a Volunteer to go to Area A: “My Explanation Place” and *explain*, as best as s/he can, the following thought: **“I am conditioned to beat up on myself every time I make a mistake.”** (You may want to also put this thought on the blackboard, or create a sign for it as well, since students need to remember it.)
- ✓ Ask for a Volunteer to go to Area B: “My Example Place” and, instead of explaining it, to think of an *example* of this thought: **“I am conditioned to beat up on myself every time I make a mistake.”**
- ✓ Ask for a Volunteer to go to Area C: “My Experience Place” and give us an in-the-moment *experience* of the following thought: **“I am conditioned to beat up on myself every time I make a mistake.”** Note: The student must SHOW, rather than TELL, what is happening NOW!
- ✓ Give as many students as possible a chance to walk through these areas and respond to them. As students respond, ask:
  1. How is **explaining** a thought different from giving an **example** of it? Is an example more colorful? Does it make the statement more clear?
  2. How is **experiencing** the thought different from both? Is creating the experience the most difficult, but the one that makes the incident most clear? Why do you think so?
- ✓ **Tell students:**
  1. When we **experience** how we’ve been conditioned, we gain insight. This insight helps us **see** our conditioned reaction as it happens.
  2. In this moment of insight, our conditioned brain does not operate as it has in the past. In this moment , when we **see** how our brain has

conditioned us — all reactions stop, because we are, in the moment, **seeing**! That's our focus, and nothing else is visible!

## How I Make My Feelings Facts!

### 1. Ask students:

- ☐ Have you ever had an “aha!” moment? This is a moment when you suddenly SEE, suddenly REALIZE that what you’ve said or what you’ve done may have been a mistake, or may have triggered a certain response.
- ☐ Do you remember what happened in this “aha” moment? What were you thinking? Where were you? What was happening?  
*Encourage all responses!*

### 2. Tell students:

- This “aha” moment is insight! This moment lets you know that what you were feeling may not be a fact! Your belief may not be true!
- This “aha” moment is insight! This moment lets you know that what you were feeling wasn’t real! It was only a misunderstanding in your mind!

## Can I Beat My “Fight or Flight” Feelings?

### 1. Tell students:

- When we look at the world through “black and white” glasses, and accuse ourselves of being either 100% right or 100% wrong — if we can CATCH ourselves judging this way, we can experience an “aha” moment!
- If we can STOP and SEE that we are dwelling only on the negatives in our life, or decreasing our personal value — in that moment of stopping and seeing, we can have an “aha” moment! Then the negative action STOPS.
- If we can EXPERIENCE ourselves blaming ourselves for things that go wrong, or feeling ashamed of ourselves when we’ve made a mistake — then we can SEE, in that moment, what we are doing! This is an “aha” moment!

**Go to Activity 24, “My ‘Aha’ Moment!”  
on the next page.**



## ACTIVITY 24 – TOLEPLAY PREPARATION

### My “Aha” Moment!

- ✓ **BEFORE THE ROLEPLAY**, ask for two volunteers to roleplay the parts of Edison and Alex. (Make two copies of roleplay.)
- ✓ **Provide paper and pencils for all other students.**
- ✓ Bring to roleplayers’ attention any words in *italics* — which are private thoughts said out loud, but not to the other person in the roleplay, and to words in parentheses ( ) which are instructions and should not be said out loud.
- ✓ Give volunteers a minute to read silently, as you tell the class:
  1. Keep a close watch to find out if there will be any “aha” moments in this roleplay.
  2. If you notice a moment of insight, make a mental note of it!
- ✓ **DO THE ROLEPLAY (next page).**
- ✓ **AFTER THE ROLEPLAY, RETURN TO THIS PAGE and ask:**
  1. Did you see any “aha” moments? What did you see?
  2. Is Alex the one who had an “aha” moment? What did Alex realize?
  3. Do you have friends or know students who are like Alex, and because of conditioning from outside sources, do not realize their talent or potential?
  4. Do you think that Edison was a good friend to Alex? In what way? Did Edison help Alex reach that “aha” moment?
  5. Are there ways you can think of to help family and friends reach an “aha” moment — or ways other people could help you?
- ✓ **Congratulate students on their new thinking and intelligent actions. Tell them, “Now that this part of the bullying program is finished, let’s think about how bullying creates conflict between people in *Why Is Everybody Always Picking on Me?*”**

## ACTIVITY 11 – TOLEPLAY

# My “Aha” Moment!

**Attention Roleplayers!** Read your part with enthusiasm! Have fun!

**EDISON**

Hi, Alex. What are you doing?

**ALEX**

Trying to figure out why I’m such a dunce when it comes to science. We’re learning inductive reasoning and deductive reasoning, and I can never keep them straight. I’m stupid, and I should just give up.

**EDISON**

Giving up isn’t going to help. Trust me, I’ve tried it and it doesn’t work.

**ALEX**

It’s hopeless for me. Anything scientific I try to learn just melts in my brain. My Dad is always telling me what a nitwit I am, and he’s right.

**EDISON**

Do you really believe that — that you’re a nitwit?

**ALEX**

Well, it’s pretty clear, isn’t it?

**EDISON**

I don’t know. For a kid who gets A’s in music, you’re a pretty intelligent nitwit. How many instruments can you play?

**ALEX**

(Happy:) Five — piano, guitar, saxophone, viola and VIOLIN. (Sad:) But music is a subject that doesn’t count.

**EDISON**

What do you mean it doesn’t “count”?

**ALEX**

My Dad says the most important subject is science.

**EDISON**

Is it safe to assume that he's a scientist?

**ALEX**

How did you know?

**EDISON**

Just a lucky guess. Listen, Alex, any subject you get an “A” in means that it’s something you do WELL, and I would like, right in this moment, to stop and congratulate you on getting an “A” in music.

**ALEX**

Congratulate me? Are you serious?

**EDISON**

I think, buddy, this means you may be destined to become a musician — maybe play in a band, or orchestra. Have you considered this?

**ALEX**

(Thinks for a moment:) Wow! I guess it COULD mean that! That’s amazing! Why haven’t I thought of that before?

**EDISON**

Probably because you had yourself convinced that you’re supposed to be Einstein instead of Bernstein, and you were bummed, because I strongly suspect that becoming Einstein would not work well for you.

**ALEX**

(Very happy:) Wow! A musician! (Suddenly sad:) Uh-oh. My Dad is not going to like this.

**EDISON**

No, he’s not. He’s not going to like that you are YOU and not HIM.

**ALEX**

But it’s okay to be me, isn’t it! It’s really okay!

**EDISON**

Are you going to insist on being happy about not being a scientist?

**ALEX**

Wow, a musician. Have you heard me on the violin? I LOVE the violin.

**EDISON**

Maybe your Dad would be okay if you told him the scientific method of playing the violin. What do you think?

**ALEX**

There isn't one. (Smiles.) But we're going to create one, aren't we.