

Leadership Skills Activity Manual

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ACRO Publishing

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Leadership and Experiential Learning

Introduction

A few months ago I was at a seminar where a speaker stated that, “what we believe becomes our truth.” How true. Sometimes others also embrace our truth as truth. Then there are the times when truths are proven to be untruths. Sometimes when a truth becomes an untruth, it can cause a major shift in the way people view the world. Consider some of these previous “truths” – the Earth is the center of the universe, the Earth is flat, humans were not meant to fly, and the market for personal computers will be too limited to make production profitable.

The people responsible for shattering old beliefs, and thereby creating new ones, are certainly examples of leaders. And I’m reasonably sure that none of them just woke up one morning and said, “Gee, I think I’ll become a leader and change the world today.” I’m also fairly certain that many of the people responsible for changing conventional thinking or making new discoveries over the centuries held no formal leadership position and may not have even viewed themselves as leaders. What each of them did have was burning desire fueled by a compelling vision of what could be and the courage to act on that vision.

And that is what this book is about. All of us, at some point in our lives, find ourselves in positions, of leadership or faced with an opportunity to provide leadership. Whether in our families, careers or community lives, we all have the ability to influence others, to change beliefs, to have an impact on another person’s life. Unfortunately, not everybody receives training in being an effective leader.

What follows is an attempt to provide some tools for developing the kind of leadership skills that everyone can benefit from. It is based on my truths which have been developed over the last four and a half decades by a series of experiences unique to me alone, just as the accumulated experiences of your life to date are uniquely yours.

This book begins with an explanation of what I believe to be important traits for any leader to have. That is followed by a look at something called experiential learning, a powerful tool when seeking to develop effective leadership skills. And finally, a collection of activities, each focused on building specific traits. **If you read no other portion of the introductory material, at least read the pages that cover the Experiential Learning Cycle and Facilitating Activities.** Those pages are vital to your success with these activities. The activities come from a variety of sources. A few are my own creation or adaptations of other activities, some I have forgotten where I first picked them up from, several come by way of my friends at Odyssey Performance Enhancement Network in Chico, CA.

In my mind, what sets this apart from other collections I’ve seen is the Extended Learning pages accompanying the activities. They are intended for follow-up and repetition with the hope of providing seeds that may eventually grow into habits. As you probably know, habits are made by repeatedly doing a thing until it becomes second nature, with three to four weeks generally being the accepted time frame for developing new habits. By taking your students through an activity, facilitating a dialogue during the debrief stage, and then assigning the Extended Learning and discussing those results, you’ll begin to develop habits in your students that will help move them towards being a successful person and effective leader.

What does it take to be a Leader?

There are many definitions of leadership and I bother to offer up some elaborate definition of my own. In simplest terms, a leader is somebody others are willing to follow. While there are people who seem to be “born” leaders, who naturally possess traits and skills associated with leadership, anyone can learn the to be a leader.

Over the past 35 years, I have found myself in leadership positions that includes elected offices in youth and professional organizations, appointed positions such as committee chair and site representative for the Teacher’s Association, and informal leadership roles that occasionally resulted in a change of belief for the associates I was involved with at the time. My martial arts training has supplied additional experience first as an advanced student, later as senior instructor of the school, and as a tournament organizer. As an Activities Director and FFA Advisor, I have had the opportunity to train many wonderful students to be better leaders.

I have observed a fair share of leaders – some good, some not so good according to General Norman Schwarzkopf, the poor leaders can be the best ones to learn from because they show you what not to do. In that regard, I have been able to learn from some exceptional role models.

Taking advantages of books, tapes and seminars is another excellent source of learning that I have utilized. Some on leadership specifically, and others covering personal development, organizational management, psychology, and philosophy.

So based on all these different experiences, here is my perception of the essential skills required for effectively leading others.

There are four broad categories of skills, with the first being **Self-mastery**. If you can’t lead yourself, you can’t expect others to allow you to lead them. People are generally not willing to follow somebody that lacks personal leadership skills, at least for the long term. Mastering yourself is certainly not easy. It is hard work, and it is also never completed. None of us is capable of achieving perfection so we should always being striving to grow and improve.

More specifically, self-mastery will include these skills:

- 1. Be Proactive.** Chose how you respond to any situation rather than reacting to external forces. Look for solutions to problems rather than falling into the trap of seeing yourself as a victim of circumstance with no control over your situation. Focus on activities that prevent problems before they happen. When problems do arise, deal with them immediately before they can reach crisis proportions and put everybody into reaction mode. Understand that you are the only one that has control over what you think, how you feel, how your day goes; and those thoughts and feelings can and do influence the people you come into contact with. If you are positive and happy, others will be affected positively. If you are negative, gloomy and whining about everything, you will affect others in a negative way.

2. Your beliefs and values. People are more willing to follow someone whose value system is congruent with their own. Valuing universal and time-honored principles like honesty, trustworthiness, responsibility, and compassion, will also prove advantageous over the long-term.

There are many examples throughout history of principled leaders such as Abraham Lincoln, Mahatma Ghandi, and Jesus Christ. There are also many examples of leaders whose values were not aligned with universal principles. This category includes people like Adolph Hitler, Idi Amin, and Joseph Stalin. All can be described as strong leaders, men of vision that had many followers, accomplished much, and impacted the history of the world. But which ones would you prefer to be led by? Being a non-principled leader may bring success for a time, but those types of leaders eventually fall and when they do, they fall hard.

3. Real leaders, including the six previously mentioned, know where they are going and what they want to accomplish. They have Vision. While values should be aligned with those of society, your vision need not be. In fact, the most compelling and inspiring visions can be those that bring about radical change, such as Ghandi's vision of independence for India. Sometimes radical visions can be tough to sell to others, Columbus campaigned several years before securing funding for his personal vision of a voyage west.

Personal visions need only inspire and motivate you, the visionary. Many times, as perception changes, others will see the value of the vision, begin to embrace it and also be inspired by the vision. Organizational visions however, should inspire the majority of the organization's stakeholders. An organization not united behind a common vision is just a group of people going in different directions and accomplishing very little of value.

4. Effective leaders manage time rather than letting time manage them. The majority of their effort goes into achieving goals that continually move them, and the organization, towards their vision. They avoid time wasters and effectively delegate tasks and responsibilities to others instead of trying to do it all themselves. They schedule their most important activities first and fill in the remaining time with lower priority activities. Leaders recognize that seeking perfection is one of biggest time wasters there is, because perfection does not exist. Real leaders instead strive for excellence.

Once you have mastered yourself, you are ready to refine the skills needed to successfully lead others. These skills are concerned with building and maintaining **Relationships**. As a leader, your success will be determined by the quality of your relationships with those around you.

5. Listen. Perhaps the most important skill in this area is the ability to listen. We put tremendous emphasis in our education system on reading , writing, and even speaking, and all but ignore listening, the most critical of the communication skills.

Being able to truly listen to someone, to understand empathetically what a person feels, will contribute more to your success than any other single skill. Real listening is hard work and requires concentration, which may be why so many people don't listen well, as human nature tends to choose the path of least resistance. Instead, we pretend to listen while actually ignoring the speaker, listen half-heartedly while preparing a response in our mind to what is being said, or impose our own perceptions on what is being said rather than trying to fully comprehend from the view point of the speaker.

The words that we speak only account for 7% of spoken communication. Tonality and quality of voice account for another 38% and physical expressions and motions, body language, provides the remaining 55%. If you are not fully focused on the person speaking to you, you may be missing over 90% of what the speaker is trying to communicate.

Really listening to a person shows that you respect and value them and their opinions, and validates them as a person. Simply listening to someone, acknowledging that you understand their point of view, is the fastest way to build healthy relationships. It produces an almost magical effect in developing trust and respect, the foundations of any healthy relationship. Once the other person knows that they have been listened to and that you truly understand their point of view, they are a lot more open to hearing what you have to say. That is when true dialogues happen.

6. Follow the Golden Rule and treat people with respect. Remember that a person will only do something that they choose to do, consciously or subconsciously. People that know they are respected and valued do the tasks that their leader asks of them willingly and effectively, especially if they can also see how that task at hand fits in to the overall scheme of things. Someone that is coerced or bullied into an assignment becomes resentful and may choose to oppose the leader through passive-aggressive behavior or outright defiance.

As a leader, you need to tell people you appreciate their efforts, compliment them on a job well done and use simple courtesies such as "please" and "thank you". Celebrate the successes of the individual and organization, while viewing mistakes as valuable learning tools. And include those in your organization in the decision making process. While the final decision should rest with the leader in many instances, soliciting input from the diverse group of individuals that make up an organization gives the leader perspective that he/she may not have otherwise considered.

7. Effectively delegating responsibility is another thing that good leaders do. They recognize that they cannot do everything themselves, that more can be accomplished collectively than individually. So the leader needs to trust in the process and allow others to participate.

8. Allow others to participate. How you delegate a task is going to depend on who it is delegated to and that individual's, or the group's, level of expertise with the assigned task. There are those that you will be able to explain what needs to be done and by when and then turn them loose. They will define how it is to be done and complete the task by the specified time. Others may require some supervision by establishing checkpoints to monitor progress. Still others may need some initial training or to have the entire process as well as the outcome defined for them. The effective leader knows his/her people and how best to deal with each individual.

Leaders also must be **Risk Takers**. That doesn't mean extreme sports are a requirement, or taking ill advised high-risk gambles. Leaders must be willing to step out of their comfort zones and do the unfamiliar, for this is how any individual or organization grows. Some of these risks may not go as planned. Which is okay as long as the lessons to be learned from those mistakes are identified and used to produce different, hopefully better results the next time. Many times risk taking is nothing more than being willing to take action when nobody else will, which in most cases is really what separates leaders from followers.

I'll give you an example. During my tenure as an Activities Director at a small rural high school, my leadership students and I were working on preparations for Homecoming Week. Two of my student leaders approached me with an idea they had. When the Senior players were introduced prior to the Varsity game, they wanted to spotlight the individual players as they were announced and ran onto the field. Simultaneously, that player's picture would be displayed for the spectators. We had access to spotlights, so that part was no problem. As this was several years ago, what we lacked was the kind of technology I felt it would take to project the players image. Naturally, the first words out of my mouth were, "There's no way we can do something like that." I've since learned better than to use phrases like that. Luckily the two students weren't ready to accept defeat, and as the three of us sat and kicked ideas around, a plan began to form. Working on a small budget and with the most low tech equipment you can imagine, the three of us found a way to make it work. The event turned out to be so successful that this once impossible stunt has become a tradition at that high school. A tradition that wouldn't be if two students and I hadn't been willing to change our beliefs and take a risk on a hair brained scheme.

Have you ever been part of an organization where it seems everyone is going in different directions and the things that need to be accomplished aren't getting done? I'd be willing to bet it was because the vision and mission had been laid aside for personal agendas, and that the best interests of the group and its stakeholders were no longer being met.

Once the organization has defined itself through vision and mission statements, the simplest tool you have for staying on course is simply to ask, "Are my actions contributing to or taking away from the objective?" If what you are doing isn't moving you to where you want to be, stop and make some corrections to get yourself back on course. And start asking this question of those around you. Cause others in the organization to also focus on the results of their actions.

9. Servant Leadership. Finally, while there are many models of leadership currently available, I believe that **Servant Leadership** is the model best suited to the majority of situations. This model means that the leader's actions are based on what is in the best interest of the organization and its stakeholders. The easiest way to do this is to define the organization's vision and mission and then to use that document for the basis of all decisions.

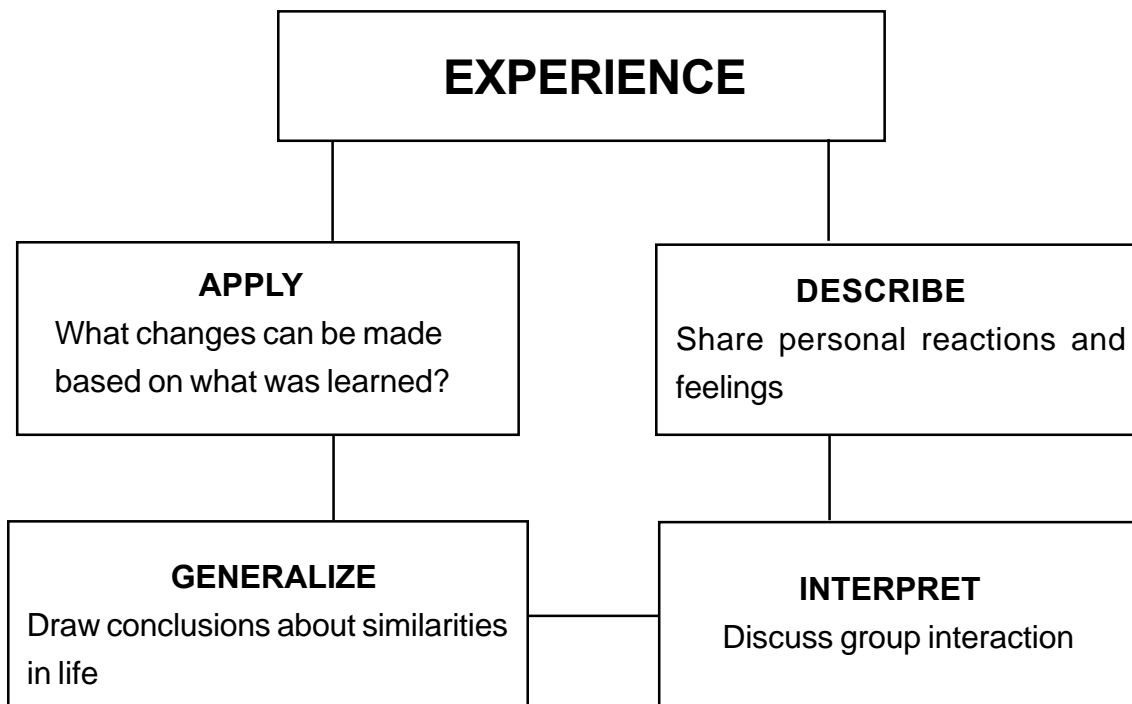
The Experiential Process

While experiential learning has been alluded to and touched on by a variety of researchers over the past 40 years, development of the Theory of Experiential Learning is generally credited to David Kolb and was developed from the mid-1970's to mid-1980's. This theory says that learning occurs when a person has an experience, reflects and analyses that experience, is able to draw out some useful insight from the experience, then implement the insight through a change of behavior.

Of course, this whole process occurs at a subconscious level in each of us almost every day. When a young child touches a hot stove, this processing occurs and a new behavior of not touching that hot surface is implemented.

The same results can be achieved by using structured activities that are then debriefed using a facilitative process to draw out the lessons from the participants. Every person will experience an activity in their own way depending on their own previous experience and beliefs. Because of this, each person involved in the activity is capable of finding different lessons within that experience. The facilitator cannot expect learning to happen by telling the participants what they should have learned. The learning process needs to be driven entirely by the participants with the facilitator acting as an observer and guide.

The stages of the learning cycle are:



The Stages of the Learning Cycle

Stage 1 - Experience

The experience or activity will form the basis for the entire learning cycle and provide the stimulus for the lessons to be learned.

Stage 2 - Describe

In this stage, the facilitator helps participants examine feelings and reactions to the experience. The focus is on the individual rather than the group. Ask questions such as:

“How do you feel?”

“What did you do?”

“What happened to you?”

Stage 3 - Interpret

This stage focuses on the interaction between group members during the experience. As a facilitator, your objective is to develop collective ideas from the individual responses in the previous stage. Questions to ask could include:

“Why do you feel the way you do?”

“What caused that particular result or feeling?”

Stage 4 - Generalize

In this stage, participants are asked to draw similarities between what was experienced in the activity and situations in their own lives, and how the results of this experience can apply to other situations. The questions to ask could be:

“What did you learn from the experience?”

“What other similar situations have you experienced?”

“How does this relate to other areas of your life?”

Stage 5 - Apply

This is where the whole bundle gets tied together. Participants are being asked to identify what behavioral change they can make in the future based on what was learned in the activity. Ask questions such as:

“What would you do differently in a similar situation?”

“How can you apply this to your everyday life?”

Facilitating Experiential Learning Activities

Experiential learning is student driven, not teacher driven. As mentioned earlier, the facilitator acts as an observer and guide. Once the activity has been introduced to the group, the facilitator relinquishes ownership and allows events to develop as they will. Giving up control like this can be difficult, even a bit scary. For participants to have an experience that will lead to the most learning opportunities, it must be **their** experience. The facilitator's primary roles during the activity are to guarantee the safety of all participants, to observe the processes and interactions, and to enforce whatever guidelines were laid out for the activity.

Observing the group during the activity is the best way to get material for questions used during the debrief. Mentally or physically make note of occurrences, interactions, what planning is done, who assumes leadership, is that leadership granted or taken, the types and effectiveness of communication, if all members are involved, and so on.

As a facilitator, you have the option of changes the rules as you go. If an activity seems to be too easy for a group and they are getting through it very quickly, you can stop the activity and makes some changes. You can justify this by pointing out that unexpected obstacles and barriers are part of everyday life and that you are just providing a realistic twist. Changes that can be made will depend on the activity, and may include blindfolding a key member(s) of the group, not allowing participants to move their feet, or not allowing use of one hand, imposing silence, etc.

By the same token, a group that is struggling and becoming frustrated may need some extra allowances. Or you may want to stop the activity and through out some questions and observations to help get them on track.

Every group is different and will respond in their own way during the debrief. In a group with a higher maturity and confidence level, you'll be able to have some really serious and lively discussions. In a group that is less mature or lacking in confidence, the approach may need to be simpler, at least until they feel more comfortable with sharing their innermost thoughts and feelings.

It is not necessary to remember all the stages of the learning cycle and what questions to get asked when. I use a very simply method to keep me on track with the questions. I call it the "3 What's" and they are, "What happened?", "so What?", and "now What?"

"What happened?" applies to the Describe stage and is when you draw out the individual feelings and reactions. With "so What?", you're looking for participants to tell you why their responses to "What happened?" are important. This covers the Interpret and Generalizing stages, trying to process the participants experiences into why interactions happened the way they did and seeking to draw similarities with other aspects of their lives. "Now What?" is of course the 5th Stage of the cycle and asks participants how they can apply their experiences to future situations.

Rather than ask the same questions all the time, a facilitator needs to find different methods for asking the same question. For example, rather than asking, "What happened?", ask participants to make a drawing of their experience, write a journal, or to choose one word that describes how they felt. Be creative and keep your questions fresh, it will help to keep the interest level up.

Because people often speak in non-specific language, your facilitator role will also include seeking clarity on participant responses. This non-specific language will take the form of universals, rules, non-specific verbs, and non-specific nouns.

Universals are the words all, every, and never. Your response is simple, just through the word back as a question; “All?”, “Every?”, “Never?”

Rules will include words such as should, shouldn't must, can't, have to. The way to respond to rules is by asking, “What would happen if...?” or “What causes or prevents...?”

Non-specific nouns and verbs are dealt with simply by asking for clarification from the speaker, “How specifically?”, “Who specifically?”, “What specifically?”

By being a good observer, and with some practice, helping your students draw learning from these activities will become an exciting process for all. As facilitator, you play a unique leadership role within the group. You must be willing to step out of your own comfort zone and turn over control to the learners. Be a risk taker, be innovative, have fun!

Conflict Management

In Your Face

Topic:

Communications, relationship building, conflict resolution.

Objectives:

To understand that our choice of words can often have a negative impact when there are conflicting opinions.

Materials:

None.

Time:

10 minutes plus discussion.

Procedure:

Pair students up, choose A&B, and have them orient themselves so that they face their partner. Tell them they will be discussing a controversial topic with one partner arguing in favor and one against. You can either have the class agree on an issue that everyone will use, or have each pair select their own topic.

Explain that certain conjunctive words that are commonly used when people are discussing two sides of an issue can actually have a negative impact. These words include “but”, “however”, “although”, and “because”. When we hear somebody say, “I agree with you, but....”, our brain can register that as the signal for a negative statement to follow. If we are involved in an emotionally charged discussion, those negative conjunctives can serve to escalate the conflict rather than allowing us to get our point across. For this exercise while students may use “and”, they can’t use any negative conjunctives. Member “A” will start & state his/her position and reasons why. Member “B” then states his/her reasons for supporting the opposite point of view.

If at any time one of the members uses a “disallowed” word, his/her partner will jump up, get in their face and say loudly (yell), “You said_____.” (insert appropriate word in the blank).

Set a time limit of 2-3 minutes and have them begin.

Variations:

Use groups of 4 with one pair discussing, the other pair observing and then switch. Or use triads with member “C” acting as an observer. Be sure to have a rotation so that all members can be involved in the discussion.

Adding “I” to the disallowed word list is another variation that adds an interesting twist.

In Your Face

Extended Learning Activity

Name _____

Date _____

Period _____

1. Watch your friends during the school day. Observe the words they use when talking; especially when they are debating or arguing with someone. Write down any conjunctive words you hear during the day. Examples: But, because, however, although, therefore, moreover, then, consequently, besides.

2. How do you feel when people use these kinds of words in a discussion with you? Do they make you feel defensive, mad, sad, frustrated? Explain your feelings below.

3. How can a knowledge of the conjunctive words help you deal with conflicts and disagreements with other people?

Know What I Mean?

Topic:

Communication, relationship building, conflict resolution.

Objectives:

To develop an understanding of the power created by understanding others, rather than listening to respond.

Materials:

None.

Time:

10 minutes plus discussion.

Procedure:

One of Stephen Covey's "7 Habits of Highly Effective People", is to "seek first to understand, then to be understood". By making sure we understand the other persons position, we build trust with that person. It also allows us to find the common ground on an issue, help us to see the issue from a perspective that we may not have seen before, and can aide in diffusing the anger in a conflict.

This activity can either be done as a demonstration with two students having a dialogue in front of the class, or by pairing up students so that all participate. Select a topic of discussion that can easily be argued pro and con.

Student 'A' will state their position and reasoning on the topic. Student 'B' must then restate/rephrase that position to 'A's satisfaction before they can state and defend their own position.

This pattern will be used each time the speaker changes, rephrasing what was said before responding to what said. Set a time limit of about 5 minutes.

It is important that students summarize the content of what was said in their own words, not just recite back what was said. Summarizing in your own words shows the other person that you truly understand them. This creates an atmosphere of cooperation, can help to defuse hostility, and generally makes the other person more receptive to hearing your point of view.

Know What I Mean

Extended Learning Activity

Name _____

Date _____

Period _____

1. Locate a friend, relative, parent, or coworker; one that you have some differences or a disagreement with. This must be something that can be discussed with the other person.

Write their name here: _____

2. Briefly explain the differences you have with them.

3. Ask the person you have selected to discuss the issue with you. Explain that you would like to come to a mutual agreement with them; one that will help keep your relationship from being ruined. Explain the process covered in the “Know What I Mean” activity. Record the results of this conversation below.

4. Did this process help or hurt the communication process with the person you selected? Explain how it helped or hurt the communication process.

Did You Hear?

Topic:

Communication, rumor control.

Objectives:

To understand how rumors can cause a great deal of problems within an organization.

Materials:

None.

Time:

15 minutes to set up the activity with students.

1 day outside of class activity.

30 minutes for debriefing with the class.

Procedure:

1. Develop a list of rumors; enough for all students in your class.
2. Give each student one rumor. Do this orally and in secret.
3. Ask students to secretly spread the rumors to as many members of the class as they can during the next 24 hours.

Debriefing:

1. During class on the next day, ask each student to describe the rumors they heard. Compare the original rumors with the ones being reported. Many will probably be very distorted.
2. Explain how rumors are spread and how distorted the information can become.
3. Explain how distorted information, from rumors, can damage an organization and its members.
4. Discuss methods of stopping the rumor mill problem.

Don't spread rumors.

If you need to know something, go to the person and ask them for the truth.

Give others the opportunity to defend themselves before you make a hasty judgement.

Types of Damage that can Occur:

1. Hurt feelings.
2. Anger.
3. Frustration.
4. Breakdown in communication.
5. Division of the group or team.
6. Fights.
7. Disruption of the organization.
8. Bad image to other people.

Have students list some of their own thoughts.

Did You Hear?

Example Rumors:

1. Mr. Jones wears a wig.
2. Suzy eats worms for lunch.
3. Mrs. White likes to climb trees.
4. Bob plays with a cap gun.
5. Rick thinks he is batman.
6. Lori has a purple cat.

Communication

Four Second Drill

Topic:

Communication, and public speaking.

Objective:

Students will practice “connecting” with their listener by making strong eye contact, while at the same time practicing extemporaneous speaking.

Materials:

None.

Time:

5-10 minutes plus discussion.

Procedure:

Break students into groups of 4 to 6 each. Explain that in our culture, we connect with people that we are talking to by eye contact. This lets speakers know that listeners are paying attention, and lets the listener know that the speaker acknowledges them and feels they are important.

Have the group stand or sit in a circle facing in. Explain that each member of the group will take a turn as a speaker. They are to tell a story or of a personal experience to the rest of the group. Studies suggest that it takes 4 seconds of eye contact for a speaker to make eye contact with a listener. Too little eye contact and the connection is not established, too much eye contact and the listener may become uneasy. Instruct the listeners that when the current speaker makes eye contact, they are to start counting silently, one thousand one, one thousand two, one thousand three, one thousand four. At 4 seconds, the listener will raise their hand, signaling to the speaker that time is up and the speaker will shift their eye contact to another member of the group. This is repeated until the speaker has held eye contact with each member of the group for 4 seconds. The whole process is then repeated with a new speaker until each group member has had a chance to speak.

Barriers to Success

Topics:

Cooperation, decision making, team building.

Objectives:

To develop cooperation and decision making skills, promote team building.

Materials:

Masking tape, floor space, note cards.

Time required:

About 45 minutes to 1 hour.

Procedure:

Use the masking tape to create a grid pattern on the floor. Each box in the grid should be just large enough for a student to stand in, and there should be one more box than there are students. If your student numbers make this unworkable, have some of the students acting as observers and/or directing movement of students in the grid.

Each box in the grid needs to be numbered. This can be done with the masking tape. Have the students stand anywhere in the grid, one per box, leaving one box empty. Then hand each of them a note card on which you have written a number. The number on the card needs to be different from the number they are on in the grid. Once everyone is in place and the cards are distributed, give them these rules;

1. No one can step off the grid.
2. Only one person can move at a time. Then instruct them to move themselves around until everyone is standing in the box that matches the number on their card.

This activity is one that can create a very high level of frustration, and bring out the best/worst in many students. Themes that can be touched on in the debrief might include the need to work together to accomplish anything and that control is usually necessary to get things done.

Barriers to Success

Extended Learning Activity

Name _____

Date _____

Period _____

1. Describe a recent situation where you felt like someone was standing in the way of your accomplishing something.

2. How do you normally respond to obstacles and how does your response affect the outcome?

3. How could you change your response to obstacles that might make it possible to overcome more of those challenges? Remember, you should be looking for solutions that benefit everybody involved.

Barriers to Success #2

Topic:

Goal setting and overcoming obstacles.

Objective:

To help students to realize the difference between an excuse and an obstacle when setting and achieving goals.

Materials:

None.

Time:

10-15 minutes if done in class.

Procedure:

The only true obstacles we face when working to accomplish a goal are those things which we have no control over. Any obstacle that originates within us is not really an obstacle, it is an excuse, a personal limitation. The way to overcome limitations is by changing ourselves-learning new skills, changing our attitudes and perceptions.

Amazingly enough, the way we overcome obstacles to our success is by changing ourselves. If the obstacle we are facing is another person that refuses cooperation or whose actions are in opposition to what we are doing, we must realize that changing them is not the answer. We must change the way we interact with that person to find ways to work with them. If those efforts fail, we must find a way to accomplish our goal without involvement from that person.

Some obstacles cannot be overcome. At 5'10" and 165 pounds, the odds of me playing center in the NBA are pretty remote. In those kinds of cases, we accept reality and move on to something that is realistic and achievable.

One of the most important steps to consistently achieving goals is learning to be proactive rather than reactive. The first step to becoming proactive is recognizing what we can and can't control, then focusing on what is within our control while moving beyond what we can't control. The most powerful thing we can do is take responsibility for ourselves rather than believing we are victims of some external factor.

Have the students complete the Extended Learning for this activity and then discuss the results.

Barriers to Success

Extended Learning Activity

Name _____

Date _____

Period _____

Barriers to Success - #1

List the 5 most important obstacles or barriers that are currently preventing you from achieving success in some area of your life.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Write out a possible means of overcoming each obstacle.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

It is necessary that you accept full and complete responsibility for where you find yourself now. If you say it is because of your parents, or your lack of skills, or you don't have enough money, you are not taking responsibility. Your present reality, everything you have and see in your life, is the result of your past beliefs, thoughts, feelings, and actions.

Any obstacles or barriers you identified as preventing you from achieving complete success that are exterior to yourself are simply excuses. The problem is never really "out there", all problems originate from within. Once you do take responsibility, you realize that you have the power to create your future by choosing your beliefs, thoughts, feelings, and actions.

Charades

Topic:

Body language, communication.

Objective:

Only 7% of what is communicated in spoken language comes from the words used. Quality of voice, such as inflection, accounts for another 38%. The remainder, 55% of what we communicate to others, is through body language. This activity allows students to examine just how important, and powerful body language is to our everyday interactions.

Materials:

Small pieces of paper with a different emotion printed on each.

Time:

5-30 minutes, depending on how many rounds are played.

Procedure:

This activity may be done with one student in front of the class or in groups as small as 4 or 5.

The person acting out the emotion will draw one of the slips of paper with an emotion printed on it, of course, they will not allow the others in the group to see it. They may not use any of the usual gestures and abbreviations normally associated with charades. The emotion is to be acted out to the rest of the group using only body language/personality projection.

A time limit may be set for each round, and there can be as many rounds as you are inclined to run.

Jigsaw

Topic:

Communication, team-building, goal setting.

Objective:

Whether on an individual or group basis, many of the things we do in our daily routine are just small pieces of a larger puzzle. It becomes very easy to look at our daily chores out of perspective and lose sight of the overall goal. This activity gives students the opportunity to see how their small piece of the puzzle contributes to the bigger picture. *Reaching our goals requires that we accomplish the small steps to get there – i.e., building a puzzle. The goal is to build the puzzle.*

Materials:

Jigsaw puzzles. Depending on the size of the class and difficulty desired, you can use one large puzzle of 1000 or so pieces, or several smaller ones. Just remember, you will need to put the puzzle(s) together beforehand in order to separate the pieces.

Time:

20-60 minutes depending on the puzzles used.

Procedure:

Assemble a puzzle and then break into smaller portions of around 10-15 pieces. Each of these portions should be able to be assembled as is and then joined to other portions to make the actual puzzle. I suggest you assign a number, letter, or symbol of some type to each of the pieces in the small groups, and then mark that identifier on the back of each piece in the group.

This makes using this activity in the future much more simple. Put the pieces from each group into a Ziploc-type sandwich bag.

To run the activity, give each student one of the bags and instruct the group that they will be assembling a puzzle by first putting their pieces together and joining with others to create the final puzzle. Displaying the puzzle box with the picture of the completed puzzle is optional. Your debrief can certainly include a discussion of how seeing, or not seeing, the desired outcome affected the process. Using several smaller puzzles, rather than one big one, can offer an atmosphere of competition and/or confusion to the activity.

Paying Attention

Topic:

Communication.

Objective:

This is a quick and simple activity that illustrates how much of our verbal communication relies on the visual, normally subconscious cues of body language, and on the focused attention of the receiver of information.

Materials:

None.

Time:

5 minutes.

Background Information:

This activity can be preceded by a brief discussion about verbal communication being only 7% what we actually say. How words are said, their pitch and tone, account for another 38%, with the remainder being body language. Paying close attention to what people say, as well as how they say it is very important.

Procedure:

Hold up one hand and place the tip of your thumb and forefinger together to form a circle. Ask the students to do this also. Now, tell them to place the circle they've formed on their chin as you place your hand on your cheek. If the group is typical, there will be one or two that actually put their hand on their chin. The vast majority will have followed your visual cue and placed their hands on their cheek.

Have the students spell the word silk (out loud). Ask them what cows drink. Most will say, "milk." A good example of a lack of focus and attention.

Twin puzzles

Topic:

Communication, cooperation.

Objectives:

To explore how using an intermediary in communicating with others affects the process.

Materials:

Two identical puzzles. I make mine from pieces of mat board that is a different color on each side to add an extra element. Cut the mat board into identical pieces. Making your own puzzles also allows you to adjust the degree of difficulty as needed.

Time required:

15-20 minutes.

Procedure:

Students will need to be in groups of three. Two of them will each get the pieces of one of the puzzles. The third member is the runner. It is their responsibility to shuttle directions from member 'A' to member 'B'. As 'A' assembles his/her puzzle, he will give the runner directions so that both puzzles not only look the same when completed, but also go together in the same order. 'A' and 'B' should be far enough apart that they can't see each other's puzzle, and the runner will not be allowed to see either puzzle. Also, 'A's instructions to the runner need to be quiet enough as to not be overheard. Put a time limit on the puzzle construction of up to 20 minutes dependent on the difficulty of the puzzles.

Critical Thinking

Thinking Outside The Box

Topic:

Critical thinking.

Objective:

All the major advancements in human history occurred when somebody chose to look at a problem differently than everybody else at the time. This exercise provides three different activities which provide an opportunity for students to think outside of the normal parameters.

Materials:

Paper and pencil.

Time:

10-20 minutes for each activity.

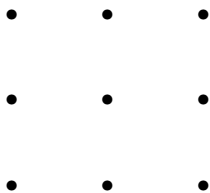
Procedure:

Activities may be used stand alone or as one lesson.

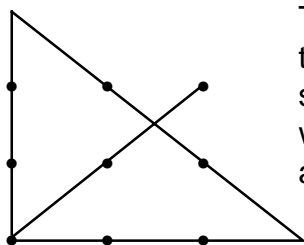
#1-Nine Dots:

This was originally developed by a psychology professor at Cornell University. His students provided 32 different solutions, although I am only providing the original solution.

Have students draw nine dots on a piece of paper in the following pattern:



Instruct them that they are to connect all nine dots with 4 (or less) straight lines. Once they begin drawing, they may not lift their pen/pencil off the paper, and while they may cross another line, they may not trace back over any lines.

Nine Dots solution:

This is a good activity to start with as it really illustrates visually, the concept of “thinking out of the box.” The nine dots by themselves form a visual box that students will stay within. The only way to solve this problem, however, is by breaking the boundaries of that box.

#2-Squares:

The instructions are simple, to count the number of squares (not rectangles, but squares) in this figure.

#3-Continuous Line:

Lay a long, narrow strip of paper on the table (about 4' by 24'). Ask if anyone can draw a line down the length of the paper and without removing their pen/pencil from the paper, continue the line down the other side for the entire length of the paper.

Continuous Line solution:

This is done with a mobile strip. Lay the paper down flat on a desk or table. Draw a line about $\frac{1}{2}$ way down the paper and then have an assistant pick up one end and turn it 180 degrees so that there will be a twist in the paper. Then join the two ends together. It now will be possible to draw a line on both sides of the paper.

RAS

Topic:

Perceptions and critical thinking.

Objective:

To demonstrate that we must look beyond the obvious and see the whole picture, to think outside the box.

Materials:

Paper and pencil/pen for each student.

Time:

5 minutes plus discussion.

Procedure:

Several years ago, my wife decided she wanted a mini-van. After driving several models, we purchased a blue Dodge Caravan. Even though mini-vans had been on the market for about 5 years at the time, I'd never really paid much attention. After that purchase, I was completely amazed by the number of mini-vans on the road, especially blue Caravans!

Had there suddenly been a tremendous increase in mini-van sales? Not at all. I just hadn't been seeing them. This is because of something called the Reticular Activation System, or RAS, a connection between our eyes and brain. It allows us to see only what we choose to focus our attention on and filter out everything else.

Now, for an NBA player shooting free throws, this is good. That player has a need to see only the backboard and hoop, not all the towels waving behind it. On the other hand, if we can't step back at times and see things more holistically, we miss out on many opportunities and learning.

This is a quick and simple exercise that demonstrates just how effective the RAS is. Instruct your students to look around the room for 1 minute and find every item of a specific type. You can name colors, shapes, textures, etc. For example, you may have them find everything that is green, or in the shape of a circle. This is to be a silent, visual inventory only.

Now, have them write a list of items on their paper of everything in the room of a different category. So if you had them looking for green objects, tell them to write down everything that is red. If they looked for round shapes, they'll write down everything rectangular. While they are writing, they can only look at their paper so that this list has to come from memory. Put a time limit on their list of 30-60 seconds. Typically, they'll each only get 1 or 2 items written down.

RAS

Extended Learning Activity

Name _____

Date _____

Period _____

1. You probably know people who always seem to be lucky, good things happen to them a lot. You probably also know people who have nothing but bad luck. Knowing what you now know about RAS, how can you explain the difference between these two types of people?

2. How can you use RAS to help make your life better? That is, to be happier, improve your performance in school or sports, have more opportunities available to you.

3. For the next 24 hours, be more aware of your surroundings. Look around more, see everything, hear the sounds you haven't really heard. Keep a log of all your "discoveries", things that have probably been there all along but went unnoticed.

Decision Making

Survivor

Topic:

Communication, cooperation, values, decision making.

Objective:

To examine how each of us, and our culture determines a persons value to society, while applying decision making skills.

Materials:

One 8 1/2x11 piece of scratch paper for each group.

Time required:

25 minutes plus discussion.

Procedure:

Divide the class into groups of 5-7 each. Give each group member one of the character descriptions and explain that as part of this activity, each of them will portray the character they described on their card/paper. Then distribute a copy of the scenario to each group and allow a couple of minutes for them to read their instructions before starting. You may want to read the scenario out loud as one group and then be sure there are no questions before beginning. Put a piece of 8 1/2x11 paper on the floor by each group and explain that it is the "tree stump" that they will use for their escape. The debrief should include questions that draw out how the group arrived at their decision as to who to save.

Character Descriptions For Survivor

Rick Dundee – Famed guide and crocodile hunter. Raised by Aborigines, Rick knows all there is to know about the rugged Outback.

Dr. Larry Lawrence – Famed cancer researcher, his team has made great gains lately. He believes he is on the verge of discovering a cure that would be effective against most forms of cancer.

Barbara McComb – 2nd term Senator from Florida. Considered by many to be a serious contender to become the first woman president in the next election.

Jennifer Lobo – Superstar recording artist and actress. Her four CD's have all gone platinum plus, and she draws enough crowds to command \$10 million per movie.

Jerome Smithers – High school history teacher, honored last year as teacher of the year by the National Historical Society. He has made a major impact on the lives of many of his students. He just closed a movie deal with ABC about his teaching career.

Amanda Parker – Homemaker and mother of three.

Jessica Parker – Amanda's 15 year old daughter. Average student involved in several extra-curricular activities at school. Jessica plans a career in marketing.

*These characters may be rewritten with different first names to change the gender as needed to balance out the make-up of your groups.

Survivor

Extended Learning Activity

Name _____

Date _____

Period _____

1. Identify a person, living or dead, that you admire and respect as somebody you would like to be like.

2. Why do you admire this person. What traits or skills do they have that makes you look up to them.

3. What specific steps could you take in the next 30 days to be more like this person?

Goals

Defining The Why

Topic:

Goal setting.

Objective:

Generally, most people will acknowledge the importance of goal setting. Why then do so few people actively practice goal setting? This activity helps to define the importance of goal setting and teaches students that by finding the underlying “why” of a goal, they can be more successful at accomplishing goals.

Materials:

Worksheets, pages 49-50.

Time:

Varies depending on whether worksheets are used in class or as homework.

Procedure:

I believe the primary reason people don't practice setting goals is because they've been unsuccessful, or seen others fail, in their attempts to accomplish goals. I also believe the lack of success can be attributed to a level of motivation insufficient to carry them through to the conclusion of the goal. That lack of success gives rise to fears that can only be overcome with an intense desire, motivation, to attain the goal.

That intense desire comes from understanding the ultimate reason that you have for wanting to achieve a goal. If your goals move you towards achieving whatever you've defined as your ultimate purpose, it becomes that much more powerful.

Distribute the worksheets to the students and have a preliminary discussion with them. More information is on the worksheets so that the students have it in front of them. Then have them do the exercise.

Why is writing out your goals important?

Consider the results of these two studies:

In 1953 a study at Yale University found that only 3% of that year's graduating class had written goals. Twenty years later, that 3% had accomplished more than the other 97% of the students combined.

In 1984, Harvard Business School conducted a study on the graduating class of 1964. Only 5% of that class had taken the time and effort to write their goals down. Of this group, 95% had achieved their goals. Of the 95% who didn't have written goals in 1964, only 5% had achieved their expected goals 20 years later.

Goal setting focuses your intent, which is the first step to accomplishing anything. Okay, you might get lucky along the way and have some successes without writing out specific goals. Long-term success though, comes only through defining what you want and taking steps that move you towards making that want a reality.

Now the stuff everybody tells you about goals. They need to be specific, have deadlines attached, be realistic and reachable but not too easy, and they need to be written down and referred to often. It is also a good idea to only share your goals with those people that will support you in achieving them. Why share your goals with someone who is negative and tries to discourage you? That certainly doesn't help move you towards success.

Now for the really important part, the stuff that usually doesn't get taught in goal setting. The reason so many people don't set or fail to achieve goals is that they haven't figured out why they want what they want. Once you know the real 'why' behind a goal, you will also know whether that goal is something you really want or just think you want. The right 'why' creates the motivation and drive needed to achieve any goal.

Our needs as humans can be sorted into a few basic categories. The first needs that we will seek to fulfill are those that keep us alive, the need for survival. If you are deprived of Oxygen, you will seek to satisfy that need before any other because your need, or desire, to survive will be stronger than any other need at that point in time.

Once all our survival needs are met, we focus on our social needs. We are social creatures after all, and must have that sense of belonging in order to be complete.

Only after those two needs are met will you be able to focus on creative and productive needs. This includes being able to understand how things work, learning, realizing your potential, or helping others to achieve and grow.

If you have a goal of owning a car because it would be cool, you're not attaching that goal to anything that will create adequate desire for you to be successful in your goal. If, however, you decide that owning a car would allow you more acceptance by your peers, you've now attached that goal to a basic need creating more desire, or motivation, to achieve that goal. You did need to recognize

though, that this particular example does pose a trap. If you are owning a car to be accepted, are people accepting you or your car? Be careful about what you want and why you want it.

The strongest motivation is provided by those goals attached to creative and productive needs. Setting goals that move you towards your ultimate purpose will provide more desire and energize you more than anything else you can do.

Consider this. When president Kennedy set a goal in the early 60's that the United States would land a man on the moon by the end of the decade, less than $\frac{1}{2}$ the technology needed to accomplish that goal existed at the time. In 1969, the U.S. landed its first pair of astronauts on the moon at Tranquility Base. Written goals are powerful tools.

Defining The Why

Name _____

Date _____

Period _____

Now you're going to have a chance to develop some goals of your own. The first step is to determine what you want. You can use Activity #2 from the "Why am I here?" activity where you listed what you want to be, do and have. Or just take a couple of minutes to write out a list of what you want out of life. Write it all down for now, don't worry about how realistic an item is or how far into the future accomplishing a goal may be. Just write down everything you can think of.

Next select the one item on your list that is currently most important to you and write it below as a positive action statement. (i.e., I will be a starting linebacker for an NFL team.)

Why do you want this goal? Keep asking why to each response until you are able to attach your goal to a basic need as discussed earlier. Write your answer here.

Finally, you'll need to make that goal easier to accomplish by breaking it into a series of small, "baby steps". How are you going to do this? Here's an example of what your completed goal might look like.

By the end of this school year, I will increase my GPA from a 2.5 to a 3.0. I want this because I know I am capable of more and am not using my full potential. Raising my GPA will also make my parents happy and earn more respect from my teachers. It will also increase my chances of being hired when I start job-hunting because it will show potential employers that I can change and grow. I will accomplish this goal by:

1. Getting all assignments done and turned in on time, and putting a strong effort into every assignment.
2. Paying more attention in class and asking questions when I don't understand.
3. Earning at least a 'B' in every class.
4. Get help from peer tutors whenever needed.

Choose four more items off your list and write out in this format so that when you are done, you'll have your top five priorities written out. Then review these goals daily. You'll be amazed by the results.

Who Am I, Why Am I Here?

Topic:

Values clarification and personal mission.

Objective:

We are all born for a reason. Each of us has something to accomplish or a specific vocation that we need to do. For any of us to be truly happy and successful in life, we must be working towards achieving that purpose. This activity provides an opportunity for students to begin examining what their particular purpose in life may be.

Materials:

None.

Time:

Variable depending on whether worksheets are used as an in-class activity or a homework assignment.

Procedure:

This is a personal, not a group activity that is such an important subject that doesn't get enough attention. Defining who you are and why you're here gives you the 'whole' picture of your life. It allows you to be more effective at setting goals by focusing your attention on those activities that will move you closer to your ultimate purpose. People that are fulfilling their purpose in life are happier and more successful than those who are just drifting.

This activity will initiate the self-examination process and provide a foundation for discussing purpose and eventually developing a mission statement. We are taking that first step of planting the seeds, and hoping that many of those seeds will grow to be productive and fruitful.

Regardless of age, self-examination activities such as these make a lot of people real uncomfortable. While some students may be willing to share the results of the worksheets, others will not. If any class discussion occurs after students have completed the worksheet, the personal nature of this activity and the three that follow, must be respected. Ground rules need to be established so that students may safely share their thoughts if they choose to do so.

You may want to remind them at the beginning of each worksheet that only positive responses are acceptable.

Who Am I, Why Am I Here?

Extended Learning Activity

Name _____

Date _____

Period _____

We each come into this world for a reason, and it is up to each of us to discover that purpose. Why? Living life according to your purpose brings happiness, success, and usually enough money to at least be comfortable. Not living according to your purpose leaves a person unfulfilled and dissatisfied.

The way to discover your purpose is to go into your memory and look at the kinds of things you enjoy doing. Examine your past accomplishments and what specific actions on your part contributed to those successful moments. This process includes defining who you are and what you believe in.

The exercises that follow should help you in this discovery process. Keep in mind that you only get what you give. Putting little or no effort into this activity will produce little or no results. Giving serious consideration to the questions however, will literally open the door to a new world. The choice is yours.

Activity #1

Recall a time in your life when you were successful. It could be recent or several years ago, happened through school, family, little league, etc. The important thing is it was an event that made you feel like you accomplished something important and that you felt really good about.

Describe that event below with as much detail as you can. Include things like your age at the time, who else was involved, what skills did you use, and why you consider this event an accomplishment.

Activity #2 - Be, Do, Have

Think about what you want your life to look like several years from now. What do you want to be, do and have?

Be – What kind of person do you want to be? To help you with this question, think of people that you respect and admire. What traits, characteristics, or skills do they have that you admire? (Examples: confident, funny, good listener, honest, athletic, etc.)

Do –

What things do you most want to do with your life? (What level of education, type of career, travel the world, build homes for the homeless, etc.)

Have – This is not limited to owning material possessions (cars, boats, a bunch of money), it can also relate to the intangible items in life that you can't place a monetary value on (good health, family, friends).

Activity #3

Imagine that it is your 65th birthday and many of your friends and family from over the years have come to your birthday party. Your life has been happy and successful, and three people are preparing to give some brief remarks about the impact you have had on their lives. The first is a family member, the second represents your career life, and the third is a community member. What remarks will these people make about how you have lived your life, the contributions you have made, and the kind of person you are?

Family –

Career –

Community –

Activity #4

While the first three activities have started the thought process, this activity will help you to more clearly identify your purpose. Please be thoughtful about the questions and complete each list before going to the next.

Part A

List 5 things that you want most out of life.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Part B

List 5 things that you most want to see happen that would benefit the planet and it's inhabitants.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Part C

List 5 things that make you special. What unique skills and abilities do you possess?

- 1. _____
- 2. _____
- 3. _____
- 4. _____
- 5. _____

Part D

List 5 things that you can achieve (do) now.

- 1. _____
- 2. _____
- 3. _____
- 4. _____
- 5. _____

Part E

Now that you've got 5 more items on each list, please identify the one most important statement on each of the four lists. You will need this for the next part, so if you haven't yet completed those lists, please go back and do that before continuing.

- 1. _____
- 2. _____
- 3. _____
- 4. _____
- 5. _____

Part F

Complete the following sentence using what you selected as the most important statements from each list.

I will (list D)

using my (list C)

to accomplish (list B)

and so doing, also achieve (list A)

The First Step

Topic:

Goal setting and accomplishment.

Objective:

Now that the students have had a chance to focus on why they're here, it's time to get them used to setting goals based on that purpose. Determining how to accomplish something as grand as your purpose in life can be rather intimidating. This exercise will focus on breaking that big task down into a more manageable first step. Any task becomes more realistic if it is looked at as a series of "Baby Steps" rather than one big leap.

Materials:

None.

Time:

10-15 minutes if done in class.

Procedure:

Discuss with the class how a goal can be better accomplished by focusing on steps that keep moving you towards the final goal. Have them complete the worksheet that has them identify the first step needed to start fulfilling their purpose.

The First Step

Extended Learning Activity

Name _____

Date _____

Period _____

Visualize yourself five years or more into the future. You are fulfilling your purpose that you identified in an earlier exercise.

Ask yourself: What does it look like?

How does it feel?

What will have had to happen to me to be there?

What will I have done for me to be there?

What steps will have to have been completed for me to be there?

Write down some of your responses to these questions.

Slowly move back in time with your visualization. 3 years from now, 1 year, 6 months, 1 month. Review the successive steps being completed to accomplish your purpose until you come back to today.

What is the first step that you need to take? Write it down now. Commit now to taking this first step.

Listening Skills

Listening For Doughnuts

This is a good activity to do at the beginning of a listening unit.

Topic:

Listening skills.

Objectives:

Learn the value of good listening skills.

Group Size:

The entire class.

Materials:

Article on the page 61.

Quiz on page 62. Photocopy enough for the class.

One dozen doughnuts, (don't let the class know you have these).

Time:

30 Minutes

Procedure:

1. Read the article to the class. Tell students you have an important article to read to them. Do not repeat anything as you read.
2. After you have read the article, hand out the quiz. This can be graded if you choose, but it is not necessary.
3. Have students switch papers and score the quiz. Hand back to owner when finished.
4. Pull out the box of doughnuts and give one to each student who scored 100% on the quiz.

Debriefing:

1. Lead a discussion about effective listening.
2. Why were there so few 100%'s, if any, on the quiz?
3. Why did most of you fail to listen effectively?
4. What kinds of barriers are there that prevent people from listening effectively?
5. Do you think your listening behavior is typical of most people?
6. What could you do to improve your listening skills?

What Is Parliamentary Procedure?

Parliamentary Procedure is used by many organizations, including businesses, government agencies, leadership clubs, school boards, fair boards, and community groups to help run organized and productive business meetings. The procedures used are merely a set of rules based on parliamentary law. Parliamentary Procedure is a democratic method of conducting business because it assures that all sides of an issue are treated fairly, and that everyone is given an opportunity to voice an opinion and to vote.

Why Should You Learn Parliamentary Procedure?

Parliamentary Procedure is useful to everyone. Knowing how to use the basic skills of Parliamentary Procedure will help you to express your ideas and opinions in meetings and other group functions. It will also help you to develop confidence in your speaking ability. Have you ever sat in a meeting knowing that you had ideas you wished to share, but could not because you were unsure of how to bring your ideas forward to the group? Parliamentary Procedure will help you to develop your oral communication abilities, and help you to explain your ideas.

The Four Objectives of Parliamentary Procedure:

1. Only one subject may be dealt with at a time.

2. Extend courtesy to everyone.

Each person in the meeting should be treated respectfully and should be given an equal opportunity to speak and present ideas.

3. Observe the rule of the majority

When items of business are voted on, the resulting decision will be based on the will of the majority.

4. Ensure the rights of the minority.

Even those with opinions different from that of the majority shall have an equal opportunity to express their ideas.

Parliamentary Procedure Article Quiz

True or False

1. Parliamentary Procedure helps groups run organized and productive business meetings. _____
2. Parliamentary Procedure consists of a set of rules based on Federal law. _____
3. Parliamentary Procedure is a democratic method of conducting business. _____
4. Parliamentary Procedure is not a fair method of conducting business, but things will get accomplished. _____
5. Parliamentary Procedure allows everyone the opportunity to voice an opinion. _____
6. Parliamentary Procedure allows only those who speak up to vote on issues. _____
7. Parliamentary Procedure is only useful to business people _____
8. Parliamentary Procedure will help you express your ideas and opinions. _____
9. Parliamentary Procedure cannot really help you with your speaking ability. _____
10. Parliamentary Procedure allows several items to be dealt with at one time. _____
11. Parliamentary Procedure extends courtesy to everyone. _____
12. With Parliamentary Procedure the rights of the majority are observed. _____
13. Parliamentary Procedure ensures the rule of the minority. _____

Perceptions

Do You See It?

Topic:

Perceptions, critical thinking, and problem solving.

Objective:

This activity is similar to the RAS activity and demonstrates how we can sometimes not see the real problem because our focus has been directed elsewhere.

Materials:

Several objects of similar size and shape. Marking pens work well and are generally something on hand.

Time:

10 minutes plus discussion.

Procedure:

This is more of an interactive demonstration than an activity. You will need to position yourself on one side of a desk or table, or kneel on the floor, with the students in front of you. Tell the students that you are going to show them a specific pattern and that they are to determine what number is represented in the pattern. Arrange your marking pens, or whatever objects you are using in a pattern. The pattern you use doesn't really matter, because the real pattern is going to be displayed with your fingers. Once you have arranged the objects ask, "What number do you see in the pattern?" As you do this extend several of your fingers as you bring your hands down in front of you to rest the extended fingertips on the table top. The number in the pattern will be the number of extended fingers on both of your hands. After several guesses by the students, tell them the number.

Then rearrange your objects and repeat the procedure. Be sure to tell the students that if they figure out how to "read the pattern", they are to keep it to themselves until you ask them to explain. Continue repeating the procedure until it appears several have caught on, or until the frustration level is at a maximum. This should be about 6-10 rounds.

Do You See It?

Extended Learning Activity

Name _____

Date _____

Period _____

1. To solve any problem, you must first identify the problem. Once it has been identified accurately, the solution will present itself. Many times people are presented with a challenge that they are unable to overcome. That is until they are able to look at the challenge from a different perspective. Recall an instance when this was true for you. Describe the challenge you faced, what you did to solve it, and how it was eventually solved.

2. Describe a problem or challenge that you currently face and haven't yet been able to resolve. Try looking at that problem differently than you have in the past and list some possible solutions that you haven't previously thought of or tried.

3. Select one of the above solutions and explain how you will implement it, include a time frame.

Problem Solving

Bridges

Topics:

Cooperation, team building, critical thinking/problem solving.

Objective:

Students will work cooperatively to accomplish a task, and provide food for donation to a charitable organization.

Materials:

Lots of newspaper, masking tape, canned food – quart size cans (cans supplied by students).

Time required:

20 minutes plus discussion.

Procedure:

If your school has a canned food drive, that would be a great time to do this activity. Students will need to each bring a can of food in, be sure to specify the larger quart size cans.

Working in groups of 2 or 3, their task is to construct a bridge from newspaper and masking tape that is tall enough for their upright cans of food to pass under, and strong enough to support the weight of the can. Give them a time limit of 15-20 minutes.

Your discussion afterwards can include themes such as service and compassion in addition to the more obvious ones like: Cooperation, team building, critical thinking, and problem solving. Of course, the final task is to gather up the cans of food and get them to a collection point.

Passing the Problem

Topic:

Problem solving, communication.

Objective:

Help students to realize that problems (challenges) are sometimes easier to find a solution for when looked at from a different perspective, and many times we aren't able to find a workable solution when we are too close to the problem.

Materials:

Paper (letter or legal size) and pen/pencil for each student.

Time:

10 minutes plus discussion.

Procedure:

Students will need to be in groups of 6-8 seated in a circle or around tables. Each student will write out an explanation of a current, school related problem they are experiencing. Once everyone in the group has finished writing, they will each pass their paper to the right. Each person will then have 30 seconds to write out a possible solution to the problem currently in front of them before again passing papers to the right. This process continues until each member of the group has responded to each problem, and the problems return to the original owners.

You may want to require all solutions offered to be legally and morally acceptable. Killing or otherwise harming somebody would not be an acceptable solution.

Passing the Problem

Extended Learning Activity

Name _____

Date _____

Period _____

1. How many solutions did you receive for your problem that you hadn't previously considered?

2. How many do you consider to be valid solutions?

3. Did any of the solutions help you to think of additional solutions?

4. State your problem and describe how you will solve it. Is this solution based on any presented in the activity.

5. After implementing the solution, evaluate how effective it was. Was the problem solved to everybody's satisfaction? If not, can modifications be made that would allow a solution, or do you need to try something different?

6. How will you apply this process in the future, including to problems outside of school?

Team Work

Lend Me A Hand

Topic:

Teamwork, communication, disabilities, and diversity.

Objective:

Students will work cooperatively with a partner to complete a task.

Materials:

Depending on the task used, may include newspaper, writing paper, rubber bands, balloons, ruler, sewing needle and thread.

Time:

5-10 Minutes.

Procedure:

Have the students pair up and join one hand each so that both partners will only have one hand free. They will have no use of the joined hands during the exercise. Give each group the appropriate materials for a task they are to perform. Possible tasks to give them would be:

- . Construct a paper airplane.
- . Roll up a newspaper and put a rubber band around it.
- . Untie and retie shoes.
- . Inflate and tie a balloon.
- . Thread a sewing needle.
- . Use a ruler to draw geometric patterns of specific sizes.

Straw Towers

Topic:

Teambuilding, critical thinking, and communication.

Objective:

Through teamwork and creativity, students will work together to construct a freestanding structure.

Materials:

Plastic drinking straws, and masking tape.

Time:

15-30 minutes.

Procedure:

Organize students in groups of 2 or 3 each. Give each group an equal supply of straws and masking tape. Tell them they have ____ minutes (time may vary, no less than 5 minutes and no more than 15 minutes) to construct a freestanding structure as tall as they can make it. Depending on the amount of time they have, somewhere between 30 and 75 straws per group should be adequate. You may also make this a competitive activity with a reward for the tallest structure.

Comfort Zones

Topic:

Adapting to Change.

Objective:

To demonstrate how uncomfortable change, or moving out of our comfort zone, can be, and that we tend to resist change due to that discomfort.

Materials:

None.

Time:

5 minutes plus discussion.

Background Information:

Have a quick discussion session to make sure everyone understands the concept of comfort zones. This phrase has become fairly commonplace the last few years and most people have a basic understanding already. We all have places and things that we feel comfortable about. They are familiar to us. When we venture out of our comfort zones, we venture into unfamiliar territory, which for most of us causes a level of fear and anxiety. Stepping out of our comfort zone and having new experiences is how we grow and learn. But that requires a change and the accompanying fear causes many of us to resist change.

Procedure:

This can be very easily illustrated with two simple exercises. First, have the students clasp their hands together, as they would if they were praying. Have them look at which thumb is on top, their right or left. There is certainly no wrong or right as to which thumb is on top, it is just a habit. I have heard claims that it corresponds to which side of the brain is dominant, but I don't know how valid that is.

Once they have established which thumb is dominant, ask them to re-clasp their hands so that the other thumb is on top. This can actually be a challenge for some, and all will find it somewhat uncomfortable and awkward.

Next, ask the group to fold their arms across their chest. Then have them refold them the opposite way. If their left hand was on top the first time, it should be under the right arm when they refold them.

Debriefing:

Debrief the exercise focusing on why those simple changes felt so awkward or uncomfortable, why people resist change, and what can be done to make change easier for those involved.

Dead Zone

Topic:

Team building, communication and critical thinking.

Objective:

The group will have to work cooperatively to move across a “contaminated” area safely.

Materials:

Masking tape and 2 pieces of paper or thin carpeting approximately 3'x5'.

Time:

25 minutes plus discussion.

Procedure:

You will need to do some preparation by laying out the boundaries for the Dead Zone. Use the masking tape to outline an area 20'-25' across, with the mid-point also marked.

Put half of the group on one side of the Dead Zone and half on the other side. Each group will also have one of the pieces of paper or carpet. Read the following instructions to the group: A chemical spill has occurred involving two very lethal chemicals. While there are no toxic fumes, contact with either of the extremely corrosive liquids would cause immediate loss of any area of the human body coming into contact with it.

As dangerous as these are by themselves, if the two chemicals were to mix, a poisonous vapor would result causing instant death to anyone breathing it. This vapor takes several takes months to deteriorate and could conceivably be carried on the wind to encircle the earth and kill millions. Workers on-site at the time of the spill were able to erect a temporary barrier that is currently keeping the two chemicals separated.

The two groups on either side of the spill represent two teams of specially trained technicians with the capability to neutralize and clean up the substances. Each team is specifically trained and equipped to deal with only one of the chemicals. Unfortunately, due to faulty information the teams now find themselves on the opposite sides of the spills than where they should be.

The team leaders calculate that they have 15 minutes to relocate their teams and still have time to neutralize the spills before the temporary barrier is corroded away by the chemicals.

Each team has a “magic carpet” available to them. This is the nickname of a small, corrosion resistant floatation device, which can safely move over the chemicals (these are the paper/carpet pieces). While the “magic carpets” are resistant to both chemicals, they will only get their passengers half way across the spill because they cannot cross the barrier.

Good luck to you. The fate of millions rests in your hands.

Daisy Chains

Topic:

Communication, team-building, diversity.

Objective:

To work cooperatively, with an imposed handicap, in a competitive environment.

Materials:

For each group, 2-3 pairs of scissors, several long strips of masking tape, and several sheets of scratch paper, and cloth or twine to bind wrists.

Time:

15-20 minutes plus discussion.

Procedure: Five team members sit in a circle with their wrists bound to the person next to them. Each group has 8-10 minutes to make a paper chain as long as they can. This can be competitive with the team making the longest chain earning some kind of reward/recognition.

Variations:

Have each team member put a hand behind their back, or bind wrists of each person separately rather than to each other, and/or blindfold 1-2 members of each team, or cannot touch more than 1 item (paper, scissors, tape) at a time.

The discussion afterward should include an explanation of what effect the physical limitations (binding wrists) imposed on each student had.

Daisy Chains

Extended Learning Activity

Name _____

Date _____

Period _____

Whether a physical handicap or lack of skills and experience that hamper our efforts, we all face limitations. How you overcome or compensate for those limiting factors will determine how successful you will be at accomplishing your goals. Answering the following questions will help you understand how you deal with limitations in your life.

1. Do you generally work to overcome limitations when they arise, or do you tend to use them as an excuse for not being able to do things?

2. How does this attitude affect your personal happiness and potential for success?

3. Describe a recent experience in which you faced limitations to being able to accomplish a task or goal?

4. How did you overcome your limitations, or, how could you have overcome them?

Team Juggle

Topic:

Communication, team building, working together.

Objective:

Each of us has multiple demands on our time every day. This activity will examine how the “juggling” of different projects impacts individuals and groups.

Materials:

3 or 4 soft, small balls, each of a different color. Kesh balls, tennis balls or nerf balls would work.

Time:

20-30 minutes plus discussion.

Procedure:

You'll need a fairly large, open area for this activity. Have the students stand in a circle facing in. Give one ball to any member of the group and instruct them that for this first round, they will toss the ball to someone in the circle, saying the person's name before the toss. This process is repeated until the ball is returned to the person that first tossed it. Everyone in the group must get the ball, nobody can receive it twice. Have them repeat that pattern 2 or 3 times to make sure everyone remembers it.

With the second ball, the same procedure will be followed except each person will say a word other than the person's name. These words should have a theme such as animal, flower, color, etc. Participants may not throw to the same person they threw to previously. Have them practice that pattern 2 or 3 times until it appears to be memorized.

Now, both patterns will be run simultaneously. At first this should be fairly easy, but will soon become more difficult as students try to keep track of both balls.

When it looks as if the group is having some success, give the 3rd ball to someone in the circle and instruct them to pass that ball to their right. This ball continues to pass to the right as the 4th ball is introduced and passed to the left.

To add more difficulty, limit the group size to no more than 10 and run multiple groups. Put a time limit on the group by saying that all four patterns must be completed simultaneously in less than 1 minute. Add more balls or use balls of varying sizes.

Faulty Towers

Topic:

Team-building, overcoming obstacles.

Objective:

We are faced daily with being asked to accomplish goals while working within a set of constraints. Obstacles to achieving our goals also present themselves along the way. Some of these obstacles are of our own creation, some come from outside sources. This activity requires students to work together towards a common goal. To accomplish the task, they will be working within a set of constraints and have various obstacles and set-backs to overcome.

Materials:

Masking tape, large marshmallows, blindfolds for 2/3 of the group, and lots of uncrushed, clean aluminum beverage cans. This activity could also focus on recycling. Have the students bring in cans, uncrushed, and take them to a recycling center afterwards.

Time:

10 minutes plus discussion.

Procedure:

Divide the group into teams of 3 each. You will need to have marked out enough 4 foot squares with masking tape on the floor so that each team has a square. There should be sufficient room around each square for a person to move freely without having to infringe into a square.

In each square, place 12 aluminum cans, 2 marshmallows, 2 blindfolds and 1 team. Have two of the team members put on blindfolds. Tell the teams that they have 5 minutes to build a tower of aluminum cans as tall as they can. Offer the winning team a prize of some kind if you desire. Only the blindfolded members may build the tower, and the sighted team member is going to supply more cans from a central supply area. This person may only carry 2 cans at a time (no throwing cans), and may not enter another team's square. This team member may also use the two marshmallows to throw at competitor's towers, attempting to knock them down. Marshmallows may only be used once. A thrown marshmallow cannot be picked up and rethrown. Any violators of these rules will be forced to suspend construction of their tower for 30 seconds for each violation.

Faulty Towers

Extended Learning Activity

Name _____

Date _____

Period _____

1. Describe a recent situation where you felt like someone was standing in the way of your accomplishing something.

2. How do you normally respond to obstacles and how does your response affect the outcome?

3. How could you change your response to obstacles that might make it possible to overcome more of those challenges? Remember, you should be looking for solutions that benefit everybody involved.

The Box Factory

Topic:

Develop group cooperation and team work skills.

Objectives:

Understand the importance of cooperation and team work skills.

Group:

Teams of 4 or 5 students.

Time:

One class period (55 minutes).

Materials:

Roll of tape

One pair of scissors

Marking pen

Student handout - Box pattern, page 84. (one per team)

25 sheets of 8 1/2 x 11 paper - scratch paper will work fine

Procedure:

1. Divide students into teams.
2. Explain that each team works at a local box factory. There is a shortage of boxes and each team will need to build as many boxes as possible within a single shift at the factory. Teams will need to trace boxes from the pattern.
3. Allow 5 minutes for each team to select a name for their factory. The name will need to be written on each box they produce.
4. Demonstrate the proper construction of a box. Cut the box pattern on the dotted lines, fold sides up, fold ends up, apply tape.
5. Allow each group to practice making one box.
6. Explain that each team will be in competition with the other teams to make the most, high quality, boxes. Points will be given as follows:
 - 4 = Top quality box
 - 3 = Good quality box
 - 2 = Average quality box
 - 1 = Poor quality
 - 0 = Reject box

Playing the Game:

Round 1

Give the teams 5 minutes to work

After 5 minutes, stop the teams and score their production, record production and scores on the board.

Round 2

Announce that every worker in the factory has been injured and cannot use their right or dominant hand.

Give the teams 5 minutes to work

After 5 minutes, score their production again

Round 3

Announce that the person operating the scissors has gone blind. That individual must keep their eyes shut for the remainder of the game. (Teams cannot switch scissor operators)

Give the teams 5 minutes to work

After 5 minutes, score their production again

Round 4

Announce that 2 members of each team must stand up because of their back problems.

Give the teams 5 minutes to work

After 5 minutes, score their production again

Debriefing Questions:

1. Ask each group how they organized their production --- were they successful compared to other teams?
2. How important was team work?
3. What kind of problems were experienced?
4. Were some groups unable to keep a balance between quality and quantity?
5. Explain that team work and cooperation are essential in all group activities and projects.
6. Groups can accomplish their goals much better when there is team work.

BOX PATTERN

Cut Here

Cut Here

Cut Here

Cut Here

Officer Development

Strong Right Arm

Topic:

Self-talk, character, or relationships, depending on variations used.

Objectives:

To demonstrate that our thoughts and actions have a major impact on not only our personal performance, but on those around us, also.

Materials:

None required.

Time required:

20 minutes to 1 hour, depending on number of variations used in one session.

Procedure:

This is an extremely powerful activity for demonstrating how our thoughts and actions really do affect all of us in a profound way. For those of you that would like explanation of how it actually works, I have included a few paragraphs of my thoughts on the matter at the end of this section. The basic structure of the demonstration is performed the same each time, the 'catalyst' is what changes.

Variation # 1:

Ask for a volunteer to come forward. Honestly, the biggest, strongest student in the class will be the most effective volunteer you could have. Ask the student if they are right or left-handed. Whatever their response, your reply should be, "So that would probably be your strongest arm, right?" Once they have agreed with that statement, ask them to hold that arm straight out to the side, level with their shoulder. Tell your volunteer that you are going to pull the arm down and they are to resist as much as possible, then try to push the arm down. This will serve to establish a benchmark for the rest of this exercise.

Now you need to have the volunteer look another student right in the eyes and say, "I have a weak right arm." (or left arm if that is the one being used) They will repeat this a total of six times with six different students. The reason they are to look the person in the eye is that, other than psychopaths, we are generally incapable of lying while maintaining eye contact. If you tell them this up front, you'll probably have several students not only want to debate the matter, but also try to prove you wrong. Use your discretion.

Okay, your volunteer has told six people they have a weak arm. Have them again hold the arm out and ask them to try and resist while you push it down. You will find a brief moment of resistance followed by a total collapse of the arm.

Explain to the volunteer and the class that you really don't want to leave them in that condition, so you are going to make that arm strong again. Have them again look another student in the eye and say, "I have a strong right arm." This again is repeated with six different people.

One final time, have them hold that arm out, and tell them not to let you pull it down. You will find that the arm can be moved even less than during the benchmark attempt. You can also do this using another volunteer to pull the arm down, rather than doing that yourself. If you're really feeling brave, just use the index and middle finger of your hand and place on the volunteers wrist to pull the arm down.

The discussion of this activity should include the degree to which the volunteer was affected after only making their statement six times. Consider the overall results when a person tells themselves something repeatedly over the course of several years!

Variation #2:

Follow the same procedure through the benchmarking phase, preferably with a different volunteer.

Have your volunteer recall an instance in their life when they did something they are ashamed of. Something they knew at the time it was wrong by every standard of society, but did it anyway. Have them fix that moment in their mind, visualize it as if it were happening right now, "taste it, feel it, smell it." Have them hold their arm out and you'll pull it down easily.

To create the opposite effect, have them recall and visualize an accomplishment that they are extremely proud of. The arm will again be strong and unmovable.

Variation #3:

This is probably the most interesting variation, and you may want to send your volunteer out of the room for a moment while you explain to the class what is to happen. The rest of the class will be involved in this one and will be instructed that on a predetermined signal from you, maybe a key-word or gesture, they will first think negative, mean, hateful thoughts directed at the person who is the volunteer. Stress that there is to be nothing verbal, strictly thought. After the volunteer's arm is pulled down, the class will direct positive, supportive, loving thoughts towards them. Supply these directions, bring your volunteer back in, and proceed with the benchmarking phase and then the other steps.

Strong Right Arm

Extended Learning Activity

For the next 24 hours, keep a log of your self-talk. You don't need to write down everything that the little voice in your head is saying, just the major comments. Indicate whether it is a positive comment (+), or one that needs to be replaced with something more positive (++). If it is one that needs to be replaced, write out a possible replacement phrase. See the example.

Your self-talk	+	++	possible rephrasing of ++
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How does this activity work?

This is an extremely powerful activity for demonstrating how are thoughts and actions really do affect all of us in profound ways. I feel that it does require some explanation, however, so here it is. At least as I understand it.

The basic activity addresses that which we have come to call self-talk. The activity demonstrates to students that how they think about themselves – physical appearance, skills, abilities, social acceptance, etc. – is a major determining factor as to how those characteristics are manifested. While there are those with legitimate physical or mental disabilities, limitations are created strictly by our thoughts.

The best estimates of researchers indicate that the average person utilizes just 10% of their brain. In my mind, that figure allows for an amazing amount of potential in each and every person. Let's teach student's to focus on potential and possibilities rather than on what can't be done.

The variations of this activity demonstrate how strength of character affects an individual, and how our behavior towards others affects people, even when the behavior is nothing more than thoughts. There is a single explanation as to why this activity and its variations work, and we'll get to that later. Right now, a few words on strength of character.

When I ask people what the word integrity means, most say it refers to having strong morals and principles, someone that is honest and sincere. Which is certainly one definition. However, if you were to look up the word integrity in a dictionary, you would find it has additional meaning. According to Webster's third edition, it also means the quality or state of being complete; unbroken condition; wholeness; being unimpaired.

Engineers like to talk about systems having integrity, and to that extent, let me use your car's engine to form an analogy. That engine represents a system composed of other systems that are made up of various components. In order for it to operate effectively, all the components of each system must be performing their specific functions as intended by the designers. If just one part is lacking integrity and not performing to the standard it was designed to, the entire system

will lack integrity.

For example, spark plugs exist to ignite the fuel-air mixture in the cylinder. Most cars now days have either four or six spark plugs, although there are still some eight-cylinder cars. If one of those plugs becomes 'fouled', it will produce insufficient spark, or none at all. The fuel-air mix in that cylinder will fail to ignite properly causing less power delivered from that cylinder and additional pollutants escaping out the exhaust. Because one cylinder is not providing the power it is supposed to, the driver of the car ends up applying more pressure to the gas pedal trying to drive at their accustomed speed. This sends additional fuel to the cylinders so that more power can be produced in the fully functional cylinders to compensate, which of course decreases fuel economy and puts more stress on the entire engine. All because one small component is lacking integrity.

Integrity, or lack of also affects biological systems, such as humans. Our bodies are systems composed of other systems. And each of us exists as part of even more systems. In fact, we generally are part of other systems – families, schools, athletic teams, student organizations, our work places, and so on.

The human population has established over the centuries a certain belief system concerning just what exactly constitutes right and wrong. The details of these belief systems may vary somewhat from culture to culture, but the basic framework will remain the same. Humans in general believe it is wrong to take another human life without just cause, for example. These beliefs are what we call morals or principles. How an individual lives in regards to these belief systems is what determines that person's integrity of character. A person of character will be honest, responsible, trustworthy, respectful of others. In short, someone that lives by the "Golden Rule".

Because we are all part of other systems, if an individual is lacking in integrity, they cause the entire system to be lacking in integrity to a degree. The system in question may still function, but not at the level it is capable of, and will waste resources as others find themselves trying to compensate for the inefficiencies of the person, or persons, with the lack of integrity.

As the final variation shows our thoughts alone may also have an impact on those around us, which eventually impacts us as well. This is true for a couple of different reasons. Certainly we have to consider body language which we could send at the subconscious level and likewise be picked up by the receiver subconsciously. There may also be some phenomenal influence involved that reveals unspoken feelings towards those we interact with.

There is one explanation however, that ties into all three variations of this activity. Quantum physicists tell us that beyond atomic particles, beyond sub-atomic particles, everything exists as energy. You and I, and every single thing in our environment, be it animate or inanimate, is composed of energy either in wave or particle form. How that energy organizes and the speed at which it vibrates determines what form it takes, whether as a basic element such as Hydrogen or Carbon, or as a complex living organism. Ultimately, we are all derived from the same raw energy.

Further, these same physicists now believe that our thoughts exist as energy and that in ways thoughts are able to manifest themselves in the physical world as this activity demonstrates. Beliefs about others or ourselves manifest themselves as reality. We also know when we are living harmoniously with principles and we are violating principles. That knowing, even if it is subconscious, is a thought that will manifest itself either negatively or positively in our being.