

LIFESTYLE

PRISON EXPERIENCE
**P.
E.
W.**
WORKSHOP PROGRAM

**RENOVATION
WORKBOOK**

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First Printing 2005

Published by the Prison Experience Workshop Program

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2nd Edition Format & Editor: Brian Goody

New Cover Design: Brian Goody

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LIFESTYLE RENOVATION PROGRAM

In general your future behavior is greatly predicted by your past behavior. That is circumstances being the same; you will go on doing what you have always done. If you have typically been a drug abuser then you will continue to abuse drugs; if self-seeking you will likely continue to be self-seeking; if you steal you will likely continue to steal, etc. This picture is neither cynical nor pessimistic. It is reality. Yet you can change, certain conditions are typically associated with change and by knowing what those conditions are, you can increase the likelihood that you can effect a desired change in your life.

Since both internal and external factors are usually involved in change. This program will start the change process with the internal components and then external behavior. For a change from past life (old way of doing things), to a new life (new way of doing things) to be successful, a new balance between internal beliefs and external behavior must be achieved. This change process will start by altering your belief system, and then a change in your behavior must follow.

In the present context, you're wishing to change your life mandates your belief that change is possible and desirable, thus you must know and practice the skills associated with change. To take charge of your life implies taking calculated risks. It means a recognition that you have choices, which carries with it your willingness to live with the consequences of those choices.

Only by searching and mining, are your abilities and strengths obtained, and you can find every truth connected with your being, if you will dig deep into the mine of your soul. You are the maker of your character, the molder of your life, and the builder of your destiny. You may unerringly prove, if you will watch, control, and alter your thoughts, tracing their effects upon yourself, upon others, and your life and circumstances, linking cause and effect by patient practice and utilizing every experience, even the most trivial everyday occurrence as means of obtaining knowledge of yourself which is understanding, wisdom, and power.

In this direction as in no other is the law absolute that "He that seeketh findeth; and to those who knocketh it shall be opened". For only by patience, practice, and ceaseless effort can you enter the door of the temple of knowledge. To desire is to obtain, to aspire is to achieve!

"We are here because there is no refuge, finally from ourselves. Until we confront ourselves in the eyes and hearts of others, we are running. Until we suffer them to share our secrets, we have no safety from them. Afraid to be known we can know neither ourselves nor any others - we will be alone.

Where else but in our common ground can we find such a mirror? Here together we can at last appear clearly to ourselves, not as the giant of our dreams nor the dwarfs of our fears, but as a person, part of the whole, with our share in its purpose. In this ground we can take root and grow - not alone anymore, as in death, but alive to ourselves and others." - Richard Beauvais

SELF FORGIVENESS

The first and most important step in the process of your lifestyle change or improvement of your behavior is your willingness to accept your life as it is up to this point. Your acceptance is a choice - an active and lively process which requires your participation. Any life change requires letting go of what was by releasing grievances, blame, guilt, and doubt of yourself. Your acceptance permits you to forgive yourself as well as others. If you cannot forgive yourself, then you cannot forgive others. You will not be able to ask others for forgiveness and you will continue to burden yourself with guilt and blame. A lack of forgiveness is a failure to acknowledge the strength and essence of the precious being which you are. Forgiveness is a monumental step. You may not feel any different after forgiving yourself but don't worry forgiveness is not a feeling, it's a decision you must make.

Visualize the person (yourself) that you need to forgive. Allow yourself to feel the pain, fear, and love that are flowing through you. While keeping this picture in your mind, allow it to be melted away layer by layer. Each layer that melts away allows more and more forgiveness to take its effect.

"Grant me the serenity
to accept the things I cannot change,
the courage to change the things I can
and the wisdom to know the difference."
Reinhold Niebuhr

FEAR (acronym)

- False
- Expectations
- Appearing
- Real

INTRODUCTION

Fear is a non-specific reaction to a real or most times imagined threat to people's physical safety, intellectual, psychological, emotional, and/or spiritual well being. It serves as protection by causing people to retreat or pull back into themselves, so they can reassess the real or assumed situation and sum up the energy to fight or run away. Fear happens when people believe or feel they can no longer trust something or someone or when they anticipate the breakdown of their security system. People handle their fear in many ways. Sometimes they run from them by leaving the situation, and sometime they just ignore the problem or situation all together.

As people mature they engineer strategies to hide their fear. Some people frantically fill their lives with useless activities and habits. When in all actuality they are really searching for a way to deal with fear. Others withdraw into a fantasy world, where there are no problems or they build castles with extra high walls to protect themselves from the world of real life people who can hurt them. The paradox is that an immense amount of fear is self-created as people spend their lives trying to escape fear.

Doubts and fear must be excluded from your life. They are the elements which breaks the straight line of effort, rendering it crooked and useless. Thoughts of doubt and fear never have accomplished anything and never will. They always lead to failure. Purpose, energy, and the power to achieve cease when doubt and fear creep into your life. They are life enemies of knowledge. If you encourage them by allowing them to grow, you stop yourself at every step. People who have conquered doubt and fear have conquered failure.

Once you are willing to admit to having doubts and fears, you can conquer them. The reality is far less scary than the fantasy. It takes great courage to confront and conquer these life takers. This means you might have to share your doubts and fears with others. You might also have to receive from people or give yourself positive reinforcement every hour of every day on the way to your success. Whatever positive steps you must take to remedy the doubt and fear that you face, do it.

NOTE: "There can be no progress, no achievement without sacrifice. Individual responsibility must be absolute."

The process of individual lifestyle changes comes in three phases: *Demolition, New Foundation, and Structuralization.*

The first phase in the process of lifestyle change will be the identification and breaking of old habits, thus moving towards a new way of living. The elements associated with the Demolition phase are as follows:

1. **Personal acceptance and responsibility for past unacceptable criminal behavior, drug/alcohol abuse, gang involvement, etc.** - People have a tendency to take credit for outcomes which are positive, successful, and pleasant, but blame failures, misdeeds, and unpleasant outcomes on family, friends, and/or any condition outside of themselves.
2. **Problem identification and awareness of alternatives** - Common notions about resistance to change often ignore the fact that there is no point in giving up drugs or crime if new behavior is unknown or uncertain. An effective lifestyle change must be based upon an array of possible alternatives to the problem, because those who have lost themselves in a corner must have many doors to jump through.

You must be truthful when asked to list your known problems or when completing questionnaires. This information will provide this program and you the opportunity to address all "need areas" as a group or as an individual. This program can only help you change if it knows where to, or how to help you.

3. **The eradication of unacceptable lifestyle choices and the establishment of valid alternatives to identified problem areas** - Persuasion, logic, force, and/or threats will fail to effect lifestyle change in a person unless he/she is motivated to seek a new lifestyle through dissatisfaction with the old one.

The second phase in the process of lifestyle change will be concerned with the development of guidelines. These elements are associated with the New Foundation phase and are as follows:

1. **The development of independence and the development of commitment to change**
- These guidelines imply that you perceive conditions as they actually exist through reality testing. The program will assist in a manner which helps you become a fully functioning individual making his/her own choices and being responsible for his/her own behavior. When you determine your own solutions to problems, you are more likely to achieve and maintain change.

A change process, which is likely to be successful, is one in which attempts at a new lifestyle is perceived as successful by the person making the attempts. There is no more potent support for lifestyle change than the realization by the individual experimenting with it that "It Works." Experiences of success with lifestyle change are very important. They demonstrate successful utilization of lifestyle alternatives and provide the knowledge and skills necessary to deal with more complicated "free world" situations.

2. **Destroying a dilemma** - You are generally expected to behave in a predictable manner and to some extent a lifestyle change will be discouraged, even though you are attempting to change your behavior or lifestyle for the better. Some people will do things which punish your attempted new behavior and reward the old you. This dilemma will be one of the most important tests of your commitment to change and it will be one of the hardest tests of your commitment to change. As you will learn change, doing the right things, walking the straight and narrow path is very hard.

The third phase in the process of life change will be a change from general to specific objectives. The elements associated with the Structuralization phase are as follows:

1. Initial attempts to change behavior are described in general terms - to do a better job at work, to be a better person, to be happier. For structuralization to be successful, you will need to identify specific behavioral objectives. Established specific behavioral objectives describe behavior to be accomplished. For example, Instead of saying, "I need to make better use of my time", the offender now states, at the start of each day, "I will identify the three tasks which when completed will have made my day more productive."
2. A change to a new attitude. Where structuralization takes place - the new behavior is "Owned" by the person (you) who has gone through the change process.
3. A change to higher self-esteem. The change process is one of moving to new attitudes and behavior which will be rewarding. For structuralization to take place the actual experiences with new behavior must be viewed as more rewarding.

Pride, satisfaction, and self-esteem should accompany this new attitude and behavior. Whatever the change concerns, structuralization will depend partly on your personal senses - objective and subjective - that your new attitude or behavior is better than your old attitude and behavior.

4. New social relations. The arena of social relations in which you operate will play a very important part in you maintaining your behavior. Old groups will do whatever to maintain the old behavior of someone wishing to change. If your new behavior is to be completed, one or more of your social conditions will have to be altered to support your new behavior. You will have to establish a new set of social relations with roles and norms different from those operating in your old arena of social relations. For example, the alcoholic who stopped drinking may find friends who have also established a non-drinking pattern of behavior.

RENOVATION QUESTIONNAIRE 1

The following questions concern information about your life history and your beliefs. Please answer all questions honestly. Check your response.

1. I accept the fact that I can not change every situation I encounter in life. True False
2. I discount each time, a positive alternative is suggested, as being unreasonable, too late, or ridiculous. True False
3. I know who I am. True False
4. I practice hiding my problems. True False
5. The use of drugs and/or alcohol has made my problems worse? True False
6. I respect myself. True False
7. I truly believe I can change my life. True False
8. I reinforce my negativity as often as possible, by talking about it to everyone who will listen. True False
9. I have low self-esteem. True False
10. I have an attitude, because of how the world treats me. True False
11. Have you ever asked for help with changing your lifestyle? Yes No
12. Do you know your real needs? Yes No
13. I am accountable for my actions? True False
14. I know how to ask directly for what I need, or want from others. Yes No
15. I make choices and live courageously in the midst of uncertainty. True False

WHAT IS AN ATTITUDE?

An attitude can be defined as a strong belief or feeling toward a person, object, idea or event. Throughout life you form attitudes towards any and everything. This includes your daily life. Many of our attitudes are so strong that we encourage others to adopt our beliefs and views and copy our behaviors. Because we acquire our attitudes throughout our lives, they are deeply ingrained in our personalities; as such your attitude cannot easily be changed. Attitude is a very powerful force. An attitude of trust can improve communication between racial and ethnic groups, thus providing better cooperation and understanding.

Attitudes have a powerful influence on your life. In fact, your attitudes hold you back more often than your aptitudes. Your attitude is the cause of good and bad effects in your life. To change your future lifestyle you must change your attitude now.

1. People who possess positive mental attitudes and an optimistic view of life are more apt to achieve personal and economic success. An optimistic view of life makes people more apt to develop a plan for the future, and a series of goals that guide them each day.
2. People who have a negative mental attitude simply hope that somehow things will change or workout for them. They have no long-term goals and no plans for the future.
3. People shape their attitudes about you by what they see and hear. They interpret your attitude through your behavior.

Attitudes are formed through the following processes: Socialization, Peer Groups, Rewards and Punishments, Role Models, and Cultural Influences.

Throughout your life you have made decisions and judgments which help formulate your attitudes. These decisions are based upon behaviors of your childhood authority figures, either right or wrong, your childhood and adult behaviors, your rewards and punishments, your role models, and various cultures you embraced.

As a child, you interact with your parents and other family members. Children learn many attitudes and behaviors by watching and listening to parents and family members. In some cases the influence last into mid-age adulthood.

Peer groups (people of your age) can also have a very powerful influence on the formation of your attitude. Sometimes this influence can be stronger than those of parents and family members.

Rewards and punishments is an area that needs very little explanation. People in authority encourage certain attitudes and punish others. People tend to develop attitudes which minimize punishment and maximize rewards. Viewing rewards and punishments in this format, is incarceration a reward or punishment/

Role models, a role model should be someone positive that you admire and are likely to emulate. The media has tremendous influence on people's choices of role models. Most television programs are dominated by crime, violence, and stereotypical characters. Other programs present superheroes and superstars, thus making it difficult at times to choose acceptable attitudes and behaviors.

Culture is everything in our surroundings made by human beings. It consists of tangible items such as clothing, cars, food items, prison buildings, etc., and intangible concepts, such as education, laws, welfare, etc. Culture also includes the values and behaviors which are acceptable in society or within a specific society.

CHANGING YOUR ATTITUDE

You are constantly placed in new situations with people from different backgrounds, ethnic groups, cultures, etc. Each time you move into a different situation you may need to change or alter your attitudes to adjust effectively with a change. Knowing how to change attitudes in yourself is essential to accomplishing effective human relations, and your future success in life.

ATTITUDE

Being able to control your attitude is a powerful skill that involves these basic changes:

1. **Change your thinking.** Be aware of your negative attitudes toward other people and situations. Make a decision if your attitudes are valid, or if they are a result of socialization. They should be reexamined. The letting go of attitudes that are not appropriate can be very difficult, but it must be obtained in your lifestyle change. There will be times that you must maintain and advance your position regarding a situation. This will be your opportunity to help someone else change their attitudes.
2. **Think for yourself.** Choose your own attitudes and reasons for having them. Peer pressure and family ties are very strong influences. Take every opportunity to make your own decisions, thus taking back your power. As you make these decisions always accept the consequences of your actions, positive or negative. This willingness to accept responsibility for your actions is a statement of your attitude and your acceptance of the person you are.
3. **Keep an open mind.** People often make decisions and then refuse to consider other points of view which might lead them to question their beliefs or views. More often than not our attitudes persist even in the presence of other valid evidence to the contrary; even more so when emotions are involved.

Although many factors can influence your attitudes, people do not easily adopt new attitudes or change old ones. If you choose to, you can and will change your attitudes by changing your thinking, by learning to think for yourself, and keeping an open mind. If you allow yourself to dwell on negative thoughts or attitudes, you can expect to exhibit negative, self-destructive behaviors.

OVERVIEW POINTERS

- **Change your thinking.** Be aware of negative attitudes. Make decisions. Reexamine decisions, Let go of attitudes which are not appropriate.
- **Think for yourself!** Choose your own attitudes and reasons for having them. Peer pressure, family ties, a need to belong, what others think or feel about you are all powerful influences. Accept the consequences for your actions; whether positive or negative.
- **Keep an open mind.** Don't make decisions and refuse to reconsider or consider others points of view.

ATTITUDE

1. What is an attitude? _____

2. How do positive attitudes affect your daily life? _____

3. How do negative attitudes affect your daily life? _____

4. Do you know how attitudes are formed? _____

5. What part does socialization play in forming attitudes? _____

6. Describe your attitude now. _____

ATTITUDE REVIEW EXERCISE

Describe your attitude concerning:

1. Your past life experiences. _____

2. Your life now. _____

3. Learning new life skills. _____

4. Your lifestyle change. _____

ATTITUDE APPLICATION EXERCISE

Answer the following questions, please be detailed.

1. How do these attitudes affect you on a daily bases? _____

2. Do you feel you have a positive attitude? Why do you feel this way? _____

3. Do you understand how to change your attitude? _____

4. How did another person's attitude affect you? _____

5. Did you change your attitude during this situation? _____

6. What was the end result of this interaction? _____

WHAT IS SELF-ESTEEM?

Self-esteem is the sum of self-confidence, self-respect, self-worth, and self-responsibility. It's appreciating your importance and the importance of others. It gives you the character to be accountable for your actions and to act responsibly towards others.

Self-esteem is needed to survive in the competitive atmospheres of society. Unawareness of your self-esteem or a low self-esteem further stacks the odds against you bridging the gap between prison life and society (the free world). The following example is used to bring self-esteem into clear focus. Most offenders know the following words, have heard the following, and/or have read these words, "Love Thy Neighbor", yet most have forgotten or do not know that the phrase ends "As Thyself". The last two are prerequisite to accomplishing the first three. The importance of self-esteem as a guiding force in our lives can't be overstated.

Self-esteem equals self-confidence and self-respect. Self-confidence is the belief that you can achieve the goals you set or what you set out to do. When your self-confidence is high you know you can act appropriately. When your self-confidence is low you worry about not being able to achieve any goal because you believe that achieving them are beyond your abilities. A person's perception of their self-confidence will influence what they attempt to accomplish and what they will avoid attempting to accomplish.

Self-respect is what you think and feel about yourself. Self-respect is the deep-down-inside feeling of your own worth. The conceptions of your personal values are a primary factor in achieving success. People who respect themselves act in ways that confirm and reinforce this respect. People who lack self-respect put up with verbal and physical abuse from others because they feel they should not receive praise and deserve abuse.

A step to achieving a sense of self-worth is to set realistic standards. People who have low self-esteem set unrealistically high standards for themselves and struggle to achieve them. The result is a persistent need to prove themselves and an inability to enjoy what they have accomplished. When you respect yourself you don't feel a need to prove yourself to others. You are proud of your accomplishments and goals and are not dependent on the approval of others. One of the greatest tragedies of life is that people look for respect everywhere except within themselves.

Self-esteem also includes the personality traits you believe you have, such as honesty, creativity, assertiveness, flexibility and many more. Your self-esteem derives from your physical characteristics, your skills and your abilities.

Genuine self-esteem is not expressed by self-glorification at the expense of others or by the attempt to diminish others so as to elevate ones self.

When people maintain high self-esteem, they are confident, and are able to freely express themselves without worrying about others reactions. They exhibit strength and independence. Their goals are achievement and recognition. They have an appreciation to attain their full potential in life.

Note: Your self-esteem is a picture of what and how you think and feel about yourself. It is not a picture of what others think and feel about you.

High self-esteem will allow you to learn from your mistakes, because mistakes have lessons to teach if you are willing to learn. Possessing high self-esteem allows you to be able to accept others and respect their differences and strengths. Your acceptance of others is a great indication that you truly accept yourself.

People who have high self-esteem exhibit the following characteristics in daily life:

- They Are Future Oriented
- They Learn From Past Mistakes or Failures
- They Can Cope With Life's Problems and Disappointments
- They Can Feel Dimensions of Emotions
- They Can Help and Accept Other People
- They Have A Variety of Self-Confident Behaviors
- They Can Accept and Give Compliments
- They Have Self-Respect
- They Respect Others and Their Property

People who have low self-esteem exhibit some of the following characteristics in daily life:

- They Think Negatively
- They Possess The Fear of Taking Action
- They Blame Others for Their Failures and Problems
- They Lye and Cover Things Up
- They Fear Asking Others For Help
- They Are Rebellious
- They Follow Others
- They Quit / Give Up
- They Lack Respect For Others And Their Property
- They Are Hostile

Note: When a person lacks self-respect or feels inferior they engage in hostile actions (verbal and physical).

BUILDING SELF-ESTEEM

Now that you fully understand the powerful role that self-esteem plays in your life, and the impact of having high or low esteem; nothing should be able to hold you back from taking the necessary steps towards improving your self-esteem.

The first step starts by you viewing the picture you have of yourself and identifying what needs to be changed in the picture. This is accomplished by you having a face to face encounter with the person in the mirror. This step is not going to be easy, but remember it's necessary to bring the image that you have of yourself out into the open. Without doing so, you cannot understand who you truly are. You will never know what you are capable of accomplishing and you surely don't know where you are going. After you become aware of your level of self-esteem, you will be able to begin making plans for change.

The second step towards improving self-esteem is your acceptance of yourself as you are at this time. Your past is unchangeable; your future will be determined by your actions now. Your self-esteem was developed over many years. It will take time, courage, hard work and patience if you want to improve it.

The process of developing your esteem to a higher level will depend upon the limits you set upon yourself. You will have to learn to accept your limitations and face the reality of who you are, what you can accomplish, and the things you cannot. Always remember "No one is perfect", demanding perfection of yourself is to set yourself up for failure, because you will place undue importance on failures and mistakes, thus, removing their value to serve as learning experiences.

The third step toward improving your self-esteem is learning to accept others. It is a proven fact that self-acceptance depends on your acceptance of others. This fact might seem very strange, yet everyone deserves to be appreciated and accepted, because we are all unique and valuable individuals.

Based upon the prison society conditioning which a large percent of offenders have ingrained in their belief systems, acceptance of others will in many cases not come easy, but there is not much which does come easy in life. This is an area where you will have to work very hard to see and understand the unique strengths and positive qualities of others and in turn acknowledge them. Acceptance of yourself allows you to get rid of attitudes towards others.

SELF-ESTEEM

1. What is high self-esteem? _____

2. What is low self-esteem? _____

High Self-Esteem

Low Self-Esteem

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
6.
7.
8.
9.
10.
11.

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
6.
7.
8.
9.
10.

Place the words listed below in the correct column.

Responsible

Confidence

Negative

Quitter

Hostile

Achievement

Rebelliousness

Attain potential

Self-acceptance

Independence

Blaming others

Sets goals

Weakness

Self-worth

Fear

Incompetent

Succeed

Positive

Strengths

Denies others beliefs

Inferior

SELF-ESTEEM REVIEW EXERCISE

1. What is self-esteem? _____

2. Why is self-esteem important in you life? _____

3. What are some of the characteristics that people with low esteem exhibit? _____

4. Describe the behavior of people with high esteem for self? _____

5. List five of the characteristics that people with high self-esteem exhibit? _____

SELF-ESTEEM APPLICATION EXERCISE

Think about someone you know in your living area that you believe exhibits low self-esteem.

1. Describe the behavior that person exhibits. _____

2. What steps could this person take to improve his/her self-esteem? _____

3. How will these steps improve *their* esteem? _____

4. How would these steps help to improve *your* self-esteem? _____

WHAT IS CHARACTER AND INTEGRITY?

Character is composed of your personal standards of behavior, including your honesty, integrity, and moral fiber. Your character is based on the judgments you make about what behaviors are right and wrong.

Integrity is a dimension of character; it is your adherence to your moral values, and practicing what you preach. When your behavior is in tune with your personal standards and values, and you practice what you preach, you have integrity.

Integrity has become a valuable characteristic. People with integrity can be trusted to do what they say they will do. Others know what they stand for and what they will fight for. On the other hand, it's difficult to trust people whose behavior contradicts their words. Your character and integrity strongly influence your relationships with others. Your behavior is a reflection of what you truly believe. Values are your deep personal beliefs and preferences which influence your behavior. They are deep-seated in your personality and are more enduring than your attitude. Unless you clarify your values, your life will continue to haphazardly unfold. Once you are aware of your values, priorities and behaviors your character and integrity will be enhanced.

Everything starts with your "Core Values". These are the general statements of principles and beliefs that guide the development of short and long range goals. For example, if you set goals that aren't aligned with your values, you may accomplish a great deal but you won't ever be satisfied because you'll be neglecting the things that matter the most to you. Core values influence the actions of both individuals and organizations.

In general, the major influences that shape values are family, religious groups, the media, and people we admire. As responsible adults a strong sense of character grows out of your personal standards of behavior. When you consistently behave in accordance with your values, you will maintain your integrity. Your Values are the personal worth of importance you give to an object or idea. Your values serve as the foundation for your attitudes, preferences, opinions, and behaviors.

Once you have clarified your personal values, your ethical decisions will be easier. You must learn to distinguish right from wrong and choose people whose values you share but avoid the pursuit of immediate gratification. Shared values unify by providing guidelines for behavior and decisions. It is important to constantly monitor your commitment to your values and make changes when necessary to keep you life on track.

The steps to changing or adjusting your values and achieving integrity are neither many nor hard. These steps do require commitment, effort, patience and practice - practice - practice. They can be achieved by your commitment to follow the six "Pillars of Character" listed below.

1. **Trustworthiness** - Be honest and sincere. Don't deceive or mislead and never betray trust. Demonstrate your integrity by standing up for your beliefs, and never asking any one to do wrong.
2. **Respect** - Be courteous and polite by being appreciative and accepting of differences. Respect others rights to make decisions about their own lives. Don't abuse, demean, mis treat, manipulate, exploit, or take advantage of others.
3. **Responsibility** - Be accountable for your actions. Think about the consequences of your behavior before you act. Don't make excuses or take credit for others actions and/or work.
4. **Fairness** - Treat all people fairly. Be open-minded, and listen to opposing points of view. Don't take unfair advantage of other people's mistakes.
5. **Caring** - Show you care about others through kindness, caring, sharing, compassion, and empathy. Be considerate and sensitive to others feelings.
6. **Citizenship** - Play by the rules and obey the laws. Respect authority.

{Nathaniel Brandon, "The Six Pillars of Self-Esteem", New York, Bantam 1994}

How can you gain integrity? Keep your commitments. As you make and keep commitments, even small ones, you will begin to establish an inner integrity that will give you the awareness of self-control, courage, and strength to accept more of the responsibility for your own life. When you make and keep promises to yourself and others you are developing an important habit. You cannot expect to maintain your integrity if you fail to keep your commitments.

**FIVE PART VALUING PROCESS
TO CLARIFY AND DEVELOP VALUES**

Thinking

We live in a confusing world where making choices about how to live our lives can be difficult. A major importance is to develop critical thinking skills that help distinguish fact from opinion and supported from unsupported arguments. Learn to think for yourself. Question what you are told. Engage in higher-level thinking that involves analysis, synthesis, and evaluation.

Feeling

This dimension of the valuing process involves being open to your “gut level” feelings. If it doesn’t “feel right”, it probably isn’t. Examine your distressful feelings such as anger, fear, or emotional hurt. Discover what you prize and cherish in life.

Communication

Values are clarified through an ongoing process of interaction with others. Be an active listener and hear what others are really saying. Be constantly alert to communication filters such as emotions, body language, and positive and negative attitudes. Learn to send clear messages regarding your own beliefs.

Choosing

Your values must be freely selected with no outside pressure. In some situations telling right from wrong is difficult. Therefore, you need to be well informed about alternatives and the consequences of various courses of action. Each choice you make reflects some aspect of your value system.

Acting

Act repeatedly and consistently on your beliefs. One way to test whether or not something is of value to you is to ask yourself, “Do I find that this value is persistent throughout all aspects of my life?”

{Howard Kirschenbaum, “Advanced Values Clarification”, La Jolla, Calif., University Associates 1977}

PERSONAL VALUES

1. What is good character? _____

2. What is integrity? _____

3. What are moral values? _____

4. What are core values? _____

5. What is character composed of? _____

PERSONAL VALUES REVIEW EXERCISE

1. How do values differ from attitudes? _____

2. How do values differ from opinions? _____

3. How do values differ from behaviors? _____

4. How are values formulated? _____

5. Explain the five dimensions of Kirschenbaum's valuing process. _____

6. Explain the negative effects of immediate gratification. _____

7. Describe the advantages of sharing the same values as others. _____

PERSONAL VALUES APPLICATION EXERCISE

1. Guilt and loss of respect can result when you say or do things that conflict with what you believe. One way to feel better about yourself is to clean up your integrity. **Make a list of what you are doing that you think is wrong.** Once the list is complete, look it over and determine if you can stop these behaviors. Consider making amends for things you have done in the past that you feel guilty about.

2. Select one personal value from the following list, and clarify this value by applying the five-step process.

- Respect
- Utilize leisure time to add balance to my life
- Maintain a healthy lifestyle
- Balance the demands of my personal life

Attitude and behavior changes do very little good in the long run unless they are based on solid principles governing human effectiveness. These principles include: service (making contributions), integrity and honesty (serves as a foundation of trust), human dignity (every person has worth), and fairness. Up to this point you have learned the importance of positive principles and how they affect your daily life.

THE IMAGE YOU PROJECT

First impressions are lasting impressions; you seldom get a second chance to make a first impression. In every setting, the image you project (your behaviors) communicates a mental picture that others observe and remember. This picture determines how they will react to you. Your image depends on more than exterior qualities, such as dress and grooming. It is a variety of factors which includes: manners, self-confidence, voice quality, versatility, integrity, positive attitude, facial expression, handshake, entrance and carriage are just a few. Each of these image-shaping components is under your control.

The reward for your development of a positive image permits you to rise above the crowd. You will exhibit a dynamic blend of poise, self-confidence, control, and style which empowers you to be able to command respect in any situation. It permits you to be perceived as self-assured and thoroughly competent. You will project a confidence that others can quickly perceive the first time they meet you.

PRIMACY EFFECT

The development of positive image begins with your full appreciation of the power of first impression. The tendency to form impressions quickly at the time of an initial meeting illustrates what social psychologists call a "primacy effect" in the way people perceive one another. The general principle is that first impressions establish the mental framework (a picture of you) within which a person is viewed, and information acquired later is often ignored or reinterpreted to fit within this framework.

When two people meet their potential for building a friendship or relationship can be affected by many factors. Within a few moments either person can feel threatened, offended, and/or bored. People begin forming an opinion of you in a matter of seconds. Most people assess the other person very quickly and then settle on a general perception of that individual. Remember it is very difficult to reverse a first impression.

ASSUMPTION VS. FACT

The impression you form of another person during the initial contact is made up of both assumption and facts. Most people tend to rely more heavily on assumption during this contact. Needless to say, the impression you form of another person during the initial contact can be misleading. The briefer the encounter, the greater the chance that misinformation will enter into your perception of the other person. Depending on assumption is a one-way ticket to big surprises and sometimes disappointment.

CULTURAL INFLUENCE

Cultural influences formed during the early years of your life, lead to impressions of some people before you ever meet them. People often develop stereotypes of entire groups. Differences between cultures are often subtle, yet they can lead to very uncomfortable situations.

SURFACE LANGUAGE

As noted earlier, people base opinions about others on both assumptions and facts. Unfortunately, assumptions often carry a great deal of weight. Many assumptions you develop regarding other people are based on surface language (a pattern of immediate impressions conveyed by appearance). The clothing you wear, your hairstyle, the fragrance you use, and the jewelry you display, all combine to make a statement about you to others.

The information covered up to this point should have made you fully aware of how impressions about people are formed. The following information will help you acquire new insights regarding ways to improve your image and communicate positive impressions which will permit you to achieve your fullest potential in life. Ralph Waldo Emerson was right on target when he said, "What you are shouts so loudly in my ears I cannot hear what you say."

YOUR FACIAL EXPRESSION

After your overall appearance, your face is the most visible part of you. Facial expressions are the cue most people rely on in initial interactions. They are the "Tell All Signs" by which others read your mood and personality. The expressions on your face can quickly trigger a positive or negative reaction from those you meet. How you rate in the "Good Looks" department is not nearly as important as your ability to communicate positive impressions with a pleasant smile.

In many settings a cheerful and friendly smile is an important key to creating a positive first impression. A deadpan stare or frown can communicate a negative first impression to others. If you find it hard to smile, take time to consider the reasons. Are you thinking negative thoughts, thus have nothing to smile about? Are you afraid others may misinterpret your intentions?

YOUR ENTRANCE AND CARRIAGE

The way you enter a room can influence the image you project. Your entrance and the way you carry yourself will set the stage for everything that comes afterward. A nervous or apologetic entrance may ruin your chances of communicating a positive first impression. If you feel apprehensive, try not to let it show in your body language. Hold your head up, avoid slumping forward, and project self-assurance.

To get off to the right start and make a positive impression, always remember these words: "The person who has confidence in himself/herself indicates this by a strong stride, a friendly smile, good posture, and a genuine sense of energy." When you ask for respect visually, you'll get it. The key to making a successful entrance is simply believing and projecting that you have a reason to be there and have something important to present or discuss.

YOUR VOICE

The tone of your voice, the rate of speed at which you communicate, and the volume you speak at, greatly contributes to the meaning attached to your verbal message. You can't trade in your current voice for a new one, but with a little practice you can make your voice more pleasing to other people and project a positive tone. There is no ideal voice. Your voice should reflect at least these four qualities: confidence, enthusiasm, optimism, and sincerity. Above all try to avoid a speech pattern that is dull and colorless. The worst kind of voice has no projection, no color, and no feeling.

YOUR HANDSHAKE

When two people first meet a handshake is usually the only physical contact between them. A handshake is a friendly and professional way to greet someone or part from someone, regardless of gender. The handshake can communicate warmth, genuine concern for the other person, and strength. It can also communicate aloofness, indifference, and weakness. The message you send the other person through your handshake depends on a combination of the following factors:

- **Degree of Firmness** - Generally speaking, a firm (not viselike) grip communicates a caring attitude, whereas a weak grip communicates indifference.
- **Degree of dryness of hands** - A moist palm is unpleasant to feel and can communicate that you are nervous. A clammy hand is likely to repel most people.
- **Duration of grip** - There are no specific guidelines for the ideal duration of a grip. Nevertheless, by extending the handshake just a little, you can often communicate a greater degree of interest in and concern for the other person.

- **Depth of interlock** - A full deep grip is more likely to convey friendship and strength to the other person.
- **Eye contact during handshake** - Visual communication can increase the positive impact of your handshake. Maintaining eye contact throughout the handshaking process is very important when two people meet each other.



YOUR MANNERS

Good manners are a universal passport to positive relationships and respect. One of the best ways to develop rapport with another person is to avoid behaviors that might be offensive to that individual.

- **Avoid obscenities and offensive comments or stories** - Standards for acceptable and unacceptable language have changed considerably. Obscenity is more permissible in everyday conversation than it was in the past; however it is still considered inappropriate to use foul language. An obscenity communicates a negative message to most people.

Foul language is an implied lack of respect for the people who hear you. To use profanity among friends is a choice you make but if you broadcast it to people in general you're telling them that you don't care what they feel. Never assume that another person's value system is the same as yours. Foul language and off-color stories can do irreparable damage to your image.

- **Be aware of personal habits that might offend others** - Sometimes an annoying habit can be a barrier to establishing a positive friendship or relationship with someone else. Chewing gum and popping it is a habit that bothers many people. Biting fingernails, cracking knuckles, scratching your head, and combing your hair in public are just a few habits that you should avoid.
- **Express appreciation at appropriate times** - A simple thank you can mean a lot. Failure to express appreciation can be a serious mistake. It conveys to others that you are self-centered and possess a sense of entitlement.
- **Apologize to others** - If your actions have caused hurt feelings, danger, or deep-seated ill will, an apology is in order. A sincere apology can have a tremendous amount of healing power. In addition it may set the stage for improved communications in the future. Many people avoid apologizing because they feel awkward about admitting they were wrong. This is pride (ego) making you feel this way, but when you apologize to someone you are actually showing that other person that you are a great person.

When you apologize to someone, the best approach is to meet with that person in private, if possible, and own up to the wrongdoing. In a private setting, feelings can be exchanged with comfort. Apologize completely. Don't say, "I'm sorry about what happened, but you should not have done _____." This is not an apology; it's more of a sugar-coated excuse. Instead, own up to all that you've done, and ask for forgiveness without bringing up what they did to you. Remember an apology is you apologizing for what you've done.

- **Forgiveness** - If someone apologizes to you be quick to forgive. Forgiveness is never easy, especially when you feel that you have been wronged. But forgiveness is the only way to break the bonds of blame and bitterness. To forgive means to give up resentment and anger. To carry anger against anyone is to poison your heart. Administering more poison each time you replay the wrong done to you. Forgiveness is a necessity that provides healing.

Note: "You seldom receive a second chance to make a good first impression", learning to create a positive image is one of the most valuable skills you can master.

POSITIVE IMPRESSION

1. What is positive image? _____

2. What is the importance of the image you project? _____

3. How do other people form impressions of you? _____

4. What is entrance and carriage? _____

5. How many times do you get to make a good first impression? _____

POSITIVE IMPRESSION REVIEW EXERCISE

1. Image has been described as more than exterior qualities, such as dress and grooming. What other factors shape the image you project? _____

2. Define the term "Primacy Effect". _____

3. Why do people tend to rely more on assumption than facts during the initial contact?

4. Why should you be concerned about the image you project? _____

5. Describe the type of speaking voice that increases your effectiveness in dealing with others. _____

6. Describe the rewards of positive image. _____

POSITIVE IMPRESSION APPLICATION EXERCISE

1. Most people have shaken hands with hundreds of people but have little idea whether they are creating positive or negative impressions. It is good to obtain this information from others who are willing to provide you with candid feedback. At this time each group participant will shake hands with five other group participants whom will provide feedback that you will list in writing.

2. Most people have entered many rooms, buildings areas, etc. but few have little idea whether they are holding their heads up, slumping, or communicating a positive/negative impression. At this time each group member will enter the room area again, while the others provide feedback on the entrances in writing.

Feedback Exercise

1. After reviewing the written feedback on your handshake, with the other group participants, you will practice the five principles of handshaking.
2. After reviewing the written feedback on your entrance, with the other group participants, you will practice the principles of entrance and carriage.

CONFLICT AND PROBLEM RESOLUTION SKILLS

Most standard dictionaries define conflict/problems as a clash between incompatible people, ideas, or interests. These conflicts/problems are almost always perceived as negative experiences in our lives. But if you view conflicts/problems as negative experiences you may lose your chance of dealing with them effectively. Many books and articles imply that you must do everything in your power to eliminate the conflicts and problems in your personal life. In reality conflicts/problems can serve as opportunities for growth if you develop and use positive and constructive resolution skills.

Much of your growth and social progress comes from the opportunities you have to discover creative solutions to conflicts and problems. Dudley Weeks, professor of conflict resolution at American University, says, "conflict can be used to clarify a relationship, provide additional ways of thinking about the source of conflict, and open up possibilities for improving a relationship." When people work together to resolve conflicts/problems; their solutions are often more creative than they normally would be if only one person addressed the situation. Creatively resolved problems give you new frameworks, new assumptions, and new points of view.

CAUSE OF CONFLICTS/PROBLEMS

Conflicts are caused by a wide range of factors. Some are major and need to be addressed in a positive manner as quickly as possible. Others are minor and can be dealt with at a later or more appropriate time. Then there are the ones that may seem minor, but can still have a major impact in you daily life.

INEFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

Major sources of personal conflicts and problems come from misunderstandings, which result from ineffective communications. It is often necessary to first determine if the conflict/problem is due to a misunderstanding or a true disagreement. If the cause is a misunderstanding, you will need to explain your position again or have the other person explain their position again so there can be an understanding. If a disagreement exists, one of the parties has to be convinced to change their view on the subject of disagreement or both parties must agree to disagree. Most of the time people involved in the conflict or problem can attempt to explain their position over and over again, but until someone changes their position in the conflict or problem, the source of that situation will persist.

DIFFICULT PEOPLE

You likely have and will continue to encounter people who have no human relations skills. Most of them are very difficult to get along with. No matter what you do there is no right or wrong way to deal with these kinds of people. You do however have some options to consider.

1. Keep your thoughts to yourself.
2. Change your view about the disagreement. You may not like the person, but you can still get along with that person. Changing your view point will make the difficult person learn new ways of dealing with you.
3. Back away from the situation. Not all situations can be resolved.

DEALING WITH CONFLICTS AND PROBLEMS

You must accept the fact that anytime people are brought together, the stage is set for potential conflicts and problems. When conflicts/problems do occur, the results may be positive or negative depending on how it is approached by those involved. When a difference of opinion has progressed into open conflict you will need to engage various conflict resolution strategies to resolve the issue(s).

When you apply these strategies everyone may not be satisfied with the outcome. Generally speaking, if anyone involved is dissatisfied, the conflict will probably pop-up again in the future. Some of the most common approaches used to resolve conflicts/problems are: withdrawing from the actual or potential dispute, smoothing it over, compromising, enforcing a solution, and confronting the situation directly. These and other approaches can be grouped into their basic conflict/problem resolution strategies: win/lose, lose/lose, and win/win.

WIN/LOSE STRATEGY

When you rely on the win/lose strategy, you achieve your goal at the expense of others. Making your mind up to use this strategy depends on how severe the problem is and what results you desire from the solution. Although this approach may solve the problem on a short-term basis, it usually does not address the cause of the problem. When one person wins and the other loses, the loser, more so than not, resents the solution and may feel like a victim, thus seeking revenge.

When might the win/lose strategy be used? It can serve in situations where the people involved simply cannot agree on any solution or may not even be able to talk to each other to work out a peaceable solution. A long standing disagreement may also be an instance where you must choose the win/lose solution to solve problem.

LOSE/LOSE STRATEGY

Everyone loses when the lose/lose strategy is used. Despite the negative overtones associated with this term, the lose/lose strategy can be called upon to eliminate conflicts and problems. Again, depending on the results desired, this strategy may be applied in a few ways.

1. The people involved can ask each other to compromise. Each person involved must “give in” to the other and must decide how much they will compromise. When the sacrifices are too great, everyone may feel too much has been given.
2. You may need to ask a neutral person to decide how to resolve the conflict/problem. This often results in a solution being imposed on all involved. This “arbitration” process may take from each side as much as it gives in the effort to reach a final agreement.

In general, the win/lose and lose/lose strategies are a “we versus they” approach, among the people involved in the conflict/problem, rather than a “we versus the problem” approach. In the “we versus they” also known as “my way versus your way” approach means that the people involved focus on whose solution is the best instead of working together to find a solution that is acceptable to all concerned. Each person tends to see the issue from their viewpoint only and do not define the problem in terms of mutual needs and goals.

WIN/WIN STRATEGY

The basic purpose of the win/win strategy is to fix the problem - not to blame! People, who use this strategy, listen to all points of view, define the basic issue, and create an atmosphere of trust among all involved. Everyone must believe that the problem will be resolved. People involved in the win/win strategy must be flexible, sensitive, patient, and calm. No one should feel threatened or humiliated. The result of this strategy will be a solution to the problem that caused the conflict - one that meets the individual needs, results in mutual benefits, and strengthens relationships.

THE CONFLICT RESOLUTION PROCESS

- Step One:** Decide if there is a misunderstanding or a true disagreement. A misunderstanding is a failure to accurately understand the other person's point of view. A disagreement is a failure to agree that will continue despite the most accurate understanding. In a true disagreement people want more than your explanation and further details, they want to change your mind. When you fail to realize the distinction between these two possibilities your time and energy has been wasted.
- Step Two:** Define the problem and collect the facts. The old saying "A problem well defined is a problem half solved" is not far from the truth. This step can be very difficult. Everyone involved needs to stay focused on the cause of the conflict, not on what has happened as a result of it. At this stage it is always helpful to have the people involved write their definition of the problem. Allowing everyone to define the problem greatly aids in finding the real cause of the problem. It will be necessary to separate facts from opinion. Ask questions that focus on who or what is involved in the conflict; plus what, when, where, and why it happened. Sometimes a collection of facts may be impossible, as long as the major points are identified, the process can continue.
- Step Three:** Clarify the perception of everyone involved. Your perception is your interpretation of the fact surrounding the situations you encounter. Perceptions can have a tremendous influence on your behavior. In a conflict situation it is very important that everyone's perception of the problem is clarified. You can do this by attempting to see the situation as others see it. There are some important questions to be asked as you clarify perceptions of the conflict.
- What does each person think the conflict is about? Is the conflict over values or preferences? Is the conflict over goals or methods? Is the conflict over respect? These are the kinds of questions to be asked and any other you may think of. The answer to these questions can be important components of the conflict resolution process.
- Step Four:** Generate options for mutual gain. Once the basic problem has been defined, the facts surrounding it have been brought out and everyone is operating with the same perceptions. Everyone involved in the conflict should focus on generating options that will fix the problem. Some people do not consider options to be part of the conflict resolution process. Rather than broadening the options for mutual gain they want to quickly build support for a single solution.

CONFLICT AND PROBLEM RESOLUTION SKILLS

No one should be allowed to evaluate, judge, or rule out a proposed solution. Each person is encouraged to use their creative energies without fear of ridicule or criticism. Once all the options are on the table the ones which will not lead to the desired results need to be eliminated and a settlement made on the most appropriate ones.

Step Five: Implement options with Integrity. The final step in the conflict resolution process involves finalizing an agreement that offers win/win solutions to all those in the conflict. Sometimes as the conflict resolution process comes to an end, someone may be tempted to win an advantage that weakens the outcome. Thus defeating the purpose of Implementing options with integrity, and may even ruin the whole solution to the problem.

BEWARE OF DEFENSIVE BEHAVIOR

Progress toward conflict resolution is often slowed or sidetracked completely by defensive behaviors that surface when individuals are faced with unwarranted criticism, reminders of their shortcomings or threats to their security. When one person in a conflict situation becomes defensive others may also become that way. In a short time progress is slowed because people stop listening and begin thinking about how they can defend themselves against the other person's comments. When the needs of one or more people are jeopardized, defensive behaviors will result. In a conflict such as this, everyone involved should ask themselves what does the other person want or need so that they will feel positive about the resolution.

Another way to prevent defensive behaviors from interfering with conflict resolution is to consciously maintain a positive image of everyone involved. Clear your mind of negative thinking, contempt, and regrets about things that may have caused the conflict. Always praise suggestions made by others that contribute to resolving the problem.

Assertiveness, a strategy in the resolution process, is based on rights. Assertive behavior involves standing up for your rights and expressing your thoughts and feelings in a direct but appropriate way that doesn't violate the rights of others. It is a matter of getting the other person to understand your viewpoint. People who exhibit assertive behavior skills are able to handle their conflicts with greater ease and assurance while maintaining good interpersonal relations.

Note: Use assertive behaviors when you sense someone is taking advantage of you, ignoring your needs, or disregarding your point of view. Also don't confuse being assertive with being aggressive. They are separated by a thin line so be conscious of what you are doing when you are being assertive.

Aggressive behaviors involve expressing your thoughts and feelings and defending your rights in a way that violates the rights of others. Aggressive people interrupt and ignore others, talk fast and use sarcasm, and/or other forms of verbal abuse to maintain control. They also do not view conflict resolution as a strategy for improving relationships.

Aggressive behavior will bring out the worst in those on the receiving end. The receivers will begin to behave defensively which escalates the conflict, and the people who attempt to avoid conflict by ignoring things that bother them are exhibiting nonassertive behavior. Nonassertive people often give in to the demands of others. Their passive approach makes them unlikely to make their needs known. If you fail to take a firm position when such action is appropriate others will take advantage of you.

HOW TO BECOME MORE ASSERTIVE

If you are aggressive, nonassertive, or less assertive than you would like to be in certain situations, do not be discouraged. With practice you can acquire the sense of well-being that comes with knowing that you can communicate your wants, dislikes, and feelings in a clear, direct manner without threatening or attacking others. Many books have been written describing assertiveness skills, so it would be impossible to explain the various techniques within the context of this section. However, we will help you develop assertiveness skills using the following techniques.

1. **In the beginning take small steps.** Being assertive may be difficult at first, so start with something that is easily handled. You might decide to not go to lunch or you might suggest making a new dish for dinner, whichever easy thing you decide to do, approach the person and voice your opinion. Remember, keeping others from getting what they want, while asking that your desires be considered is not necessarily a bad thing.
2. **Use communication skills that enhance assertiveness.** A confident tone of voice, eye contact, firm gestures, and good posture create nonverbal messages that say, "I'm serious about this request." Using "I" messages are especially useful where you want to assert yourself in a peaceful manner. Remember to start all conversations on a positive note.
3. **Be soft on people and hard on the problem.** The goal of conflict resolution is to solve the problem but avoid doing harm to the friendship/relationship you have with others. Of course relationships tend to become entangled with the problem, so there is a tendency to treat people and the problem as one. Practice using tact, diplomacy, and patience as you keep the discussion focused on the problem.

CONFLICT/PROBLEM

1. Describe the win/win strategy. _____

2. List three of the steps used in conflict resolution. _____

3. List some of the causes of conflict. _____

4. How does communication affect the conflict resolution process? _____

5. What is conflict? _____

CONFLICT/PROBLEM REVIEW EXERCISE

1. What are some of the major causes of conflict between people? _____

2. What results might you expect when you use the lose/lose strategy? _____

3. What options should you consider when working with difficult people? _____

4. Describe the steps in the conflict resolution process. _____

5. Why is the win/win strategy successful in the resolution process? _____

CONFLICT/PROBLEM APPLICATION EXERCISE

1. Recall the last time you were angry at another person or were the victim of a situation that made you angry. _____

Answer the following questions.

1. Did you express your anger verbally, physically, or emotionally? Explain. _____

2. Did you suppress any of your anger? Explain. _____

3. What results did you experience from the way you handled this situation? Describe both positive and negative results. _____

4. If you had the situation to do it over again, would you do anything differently? Explain.

Most people take communication for granted. When they speak or listen to others they assume that the message given or received is being understood. In reality most messages are distorted, incomplete, or lost on their way from one person to another. It's estimated that 80% of messages end up this way. Therefore, it is very important to understand the process of communication.

Interpersonal communications are the verbal exchange of thoughts of information between two or more people. Words like share, discuss, argue, and interact refer to this form of two-way communication. Interpersonal communication takes place in meetings, over the phone, face to face discussions, job interviews, etc.

If interpersonal communications are to be effective, some kind of feedback or response from the recipient is necessary. When this verbal exchange happens the person sending the information can determine whether or not the message has been understood in the way intended. This form of communication is one of the most effective ways to build strong-trusting friendships/relationships among people. The best way to communicate with others is to be honest, informative, and straight forward.

Effective communication in its most basic form is composed of three elements: A sender, a receiver, and an understood message. To illustrate, suppose your friend is talking to you on the phone and asks for directions to come see you. You give your friend the appropriate address, street name, intersections, etc. When your friend repeats his understanding of your directions you clarify any misunderstanding and he drives directly to your location. As your messages travel from you to others they must pass through several filters. Each filter can and sometimes will alter the way your message is understood. Most communication processes are complex and because these filters are so important to these processes, we will examine them in detail.

COMMUNICATION FILTERS

Messages are filtered through semantics, emotions, attitudes, role expectations, gender bias, and nonverbal messages. When the sender is influenced by any of these filters the message relayed may be distorted. At the same time the receiver's filters may further distort the message. So you must learn these filters in order to communicate effectively.

SEMANTICS

People often assume that the words they use mean the same thing to others, but this assumption can create problems. Words are not things. They are labels that stand for something. Semantics is the study of the relationship between a word and its meaning(s). People can easily understand what words like typewriter, computer, or automobile mean, but more abstract terms like work performance, word processing, and downsizing have less precise meanings and will be interpreted by different people in different ways. The more abstract the term the less likely it is that people will agree on its meaning. People's attitudes, backgrounds, experiences, and cultures also affect how they interpret the words and phrases they hear. Remember you must be conscious of how you use and perceive words, if you want to be an effective communicator.

EMOTIONS

Emotions can be a powerful communication filter. Strong emotions can either prevent people from hearing what you have to say or make them too susceptible to your point of view. If they become angry or allow themselves to be carried away by your eloquence, they may “think” with their emotions and make decisions or take action they will regret later. They shift their attention from the content of your message to their feelings about it.

You may have had an experience of your spouse or a parent angrily demanding to know why you forgot to do something. If you allow another person’s anger to trigger your anger the conversation quickly jumps to a full blown argument. The issue, what happened or what is to be done about it, has been lost in the middle of the argument. Remember emotional actions are 99% stronger than logical actions. So you must learn how to control them if you want to communicate effectively.

ATTITUDES

Attitudes are beliefs backed up by emotions. They can become a huge barrier to communication in just about the same way as emotions can - by altering the way other people hear your message. They might not like your voice, accent, gestures, mannerisms, or your delivery style. They may also have preconceived ideas about your topic. If a person strongly opposes what you are speaking about, they will find it difficult to listen with objectivity. Negative attitudes create resistance to your message which will lead to a breakdown in communication. Overly positive attitudes can also become a barrier to communication because the person may hear only what he/she wants to hear.

ROLE EXPECTATIONS

Role expectations influence how people expect themselves and others to act on the basis of the roles they play. First, if people identify others too closely with their roles they may discount what the other person has to say. For example, “it’s just Tom again saying the same old thing.” A variation of this distortion occurs when you do not allow others to change their roles and take on new ones.

Second, role expectations effect good communication when people use their roles to alter the way they relate to others. This is often referred to as “position power”. For example, some correction officers expect offenders to accept what they say simply because of the authority invested in the position. Offenders are not allowed to question the officers’ decision or make suggestions of their own, thus communication becomes one-way information giving.

GENDER BIAS

Men and women color the message they receive from people of the opposite gender strictly because of the other person's gender. This is a form of gender bias. Men are more likely to talk about money, sports, and business. Women prefer talking about people, feelings, and relationships. {This is in no way stating that men or women are limited to just these topics}.

Even when discussing the same topic, men and women most likely are on different wavelengths because their gender-specific focus is different. Men and women assume that the other gender is trying to accomplish the same goal as their own, but most of the time they assume the other gender is going about it the wrong way. Both often become critical and angry at the other gender for not using the "correct" means to the desired end. This anger and frustration creates major filters that interfere with effective communication between the genders.

NONVERBAL MESSAGES

When you attempt to communicate with another person you use both verbal and nonverbal communication. Nonverbal messages are "messages without words" or "silent messages". These are the messages you communicate through facial expressions, voice tones, gestures, appearances, postures, and other nonverbal means. Research indicates that nonverbal messages have much more impact than verbal messages. Albert Mehrabian, author of silent messages, indicates that only 7% of the meaning attached to messages is conveyed through your choice of words, and 55% are conveyed by what is seen (facial expressions, posture, eye contact and gestures).

About 38% of the message meaning is conveyed by what others hear (tone of voice and verbal communications). You can communicate more clearly, accurately, and credibly if you become more conscious of your body language. You can strengthen your communication skills by making sure your words and your body language are consistent. When your verbal and nonverbal messages match, you give the impression that you can be trusted and that what you are saying you believe in.

Note: The "position power" example used above is not to suggest that all corrections officers relate in this manner.

EYE CONTACT

Your eyes transmit more information than any other part of your body. Because eye contact is so revealing, people generally observe unwritten rules about looking at others. People who hold direct eye contact for a few seconds or avoid eye contact altogether risk communicating indifference. However, a direct prolonged stare between strangers is considered disrespectful, even potentially aggressive or hostile.

Generally it's a good idea for you, when introduced to someone, to maintain eye contact for 10 to 20 seconds. Also it is not always fair to base your judgment about others, on their ability to make or not make eye contact. As a general rule, when you are in a conversation your eyes should meet the other person's about 60 to 70 percent of the time. This is an effective alternative to continuous eye contact.

FACIAL EXPRESSION

If you want to identify the inner feelings of another person watch their facial expressions closely. A frown or a smile will communicate a great deal. You have encountered a "look of surprise" or a "look that could kill". Most of your observations are very accurate. If you can assess the inner emotions of another person, you can be sure the other person is doing the same to you - drawing conclusions based on your facial expressions.

GESTURES

Did you know that you send nonverbal messages every time you place your hands over your mouth, or clench them together, or cross your legs, or grip your arms? These gestures send messages to people about how you are reacting to them and to the situation in which you find yourself. Experts agree that the words you say during a conversation with others, no matter how powerful, are often forgotten or disregarded unless your gestures command respect.

PERSONAL SPACE

Research conducted by Edward Hall provides evidence that people use the space around them to define relationships. It's possible to make others uncomfortable by standing too close or too far away from them. Hall identified four zones of comfortable distances that help people understand this nonverbal effect on others.

1. Intimate distance includes touching to approximately 18 inches from another person. Most people will respond defensively when strangers intrude into this territory.

2. Personal distances range from 18 inches to 4 feet. This distance is usually reserved for people we are close to; such as spouses or close friends.
3. Social distance is 4 to 12 feet and is used for business meetings and impersonal social gatherings. Business can be conducted with minimum emotional involvement.
4. Public distance, which usually involves one-way communications from a speaker to an audience, which is 12 to 15 feet. It is very important to keep in mind that these distances vary from one culture to another. For example, Asians are accustomed to close contact, but Americans want more space.

HOW TO IMPROVE PERSONAL COMMUNICATION

Now that you have been introduced to the basic communication process and the various filters that messages must pass through, you can begin to take the necessary steps to improve your personal communication skills.

1. **Send clear messages.** Become a responsible sender by always sending clear, concise messages with as little influence from filters as possible. As you formulate your message, keep in mind how filters distort all messages from both the sender's and receiver's vantage points. A general rule is to always give clear instructions, messages, etc. and ask clear questions so you won't misunderstand or be misunderstood.
2. **Use words carefully.** As noted previously, abstract words, whether spoken or written, often become barriers to effective communication. Use words that are simple, clear, and concise. Avoid buzzwords or complex-official language. Tailor the message to the receiver by using words they understand. This will ensure that your message is understood. Remember, everyone does not have the same degree of education. Using words that others don't understand results in them feeling as if you are talking down to them. This can be viewed as disrespectful.
3. **Develop listening skills.** In addition to sending clear messages, you need to practice your listening skills. Most people are born with the ability to hear, but you have to learn how to listen. Many of the misunderstandings in life are do to poor listening. All to frequent, most people hear the message but do not take the time to really listen and blend the message we hear with critical thinking and human understanding.

ACTIVE LISTENING

Active listening means concentrating on what you are hearing. That means you have to listen with your whole body and give feedback, to the sender, about what you think he/she meant. This will ensure that there is a clear understanding of the message that is being conveyed. By active listening you demonstrate sincere interest in what the other person is saying. When you truly want to create effective communications and enhance your relationships there are several steps you can follow.

1. **Develop a listening attitude.** Regard the other person as worthy of respect and attention. Drop your expectations of what you are going to hear or what you would like to hear. Don't rush the other person, instead be patient and hold your response until they are finished talking.
2. **Focus your full attention.** At times this is not easy because the delivery of the message you hear is often much slower than your capacity to listen. So you have plenty of time to let your mind roam, to think ahead, or to plan what you are going to say next. Your senses are constantly feeding you new information while someone is trying to tell you something. Staying focused is at times very difficult and requires maintaining eye contact with the other person and not letting distractions interfere.
3. **Listen critically.** The listening skills you use when you are trying to learn something new, giving your full attention, asking questions, repeating your understanding of the new idea, and those you use when you are in an argument with another person, should be the same. However, emotions tend to distort your listening skills during an argument. Critical listening is the active-purposeful-organized-cognitive thinking process we use to carefully examine the thinking of others, in order to clarify and improve your understanding.

When emotions are involved it is important to critically examine what the other person is saying. Attempt to see the topic from the other person's perception of the situation. How might it be different from your own perception? Critical listening is vitally important during interpersonal communication, but it is just as important during impersonal communication. When there is no opportunity for feedback, you must carefully analyze the source of the information and determine its validity and credibility. For example, what is the difference between the news you hear from a tabloid news show and a network television news show? That difference becomes the scale by which you must weigh the validity and credibility of the information given. This requires all of your critical listening skills.

4. **Corning questions.** Corning questions can become barriers in the communication process and at times can bring a conversation to a swift halt. Here are some examples of corning questions:
- a) Questions which force a yes or no answer. Wouldn't you like to help me out?
 - b) Questions which really are statements. I know you hate me, don't you?
 - c) Questions that require an all or nothing response or allows only two alternatives. Are you happy or sad?
 - d) Questions that take you off the hook by making the other person responsible. What do you want to do?

Note: Remember to focus on your questions. This awareness can prove valuable in improving your communication skills.



COMMUNICATION SKILLS

1. What is interpersonal communication? Give an example. _____

2. What communication filter(s) can you most relate to? _____

3. What steps can you take to adjust your personal communication skills? _____

4. What are nonverbal messages? Give an example. _____

5. What part do gestures play in communicating? _____

1. What are communication filters? List three of them. _____

2. What techniques can be used to send clear messages? _____

3. What happens when your nonverbal cues do not agree with your verbal messages?

4. Why is feedback essential to good communications? _____

5. What are the responsibilities of both the sender and receiver in the communication process? _____

COMMUNICATION SKILLS APPLICATION EXERCISE

Anyone can improve their listening efficiency. First you need to become aware of your listening habits. By completing this form you can become more aware of poor listening habits that might reduce your listening efficiency. The results will give you an idea of the listening habits that you will need to change in order to become an effective "sender" and "receiver" of messages in the communication process.

A - Almost Never B - Occasionally C - Frequently D - Most of the Time

1. _____ Do you fail to pay attention? Some listeners allow themselves to be distracted or think of other things.

2. _____ Do you give the appearance of listening when you are not? Some people think about something else and deliberately try to look as though they are listening.

3. _____ Do you tune out the person who says something you don't want to hear? Some people are thinking about what they will say next rather than listening to the other person's point of view.

4. _____ Do you listen only for facts? Some people listen only to facts or details and miss the meaning of what is being said.

5. _____ Do you rehearse what you are going to say before you say it? Some people listen until they want to say something at which point they stop listening and begin planning a response.

6. _____ Do you interrupt other people when they are speaking? Some people don't wait until the other person is finished expressing his/her views before they speak.

Are goals necessary? Can you arrive at a destination you can't see? Unless you have definite, precise, clearly set goals you will not realize your maximum potential in life.

Unfortunately not many offenders set goals. The results are tragic. If you pick a hundred people randomly and ask if they have specific life goals that they are working towards, very few will answer "Yes". If you follow these same hundred people throughout their lives, only a few will have achieved financial security, and one might be wealthy.

Do people plan to fail? I think not. The problem is they fail to plan. They do not set goals, and only a small percentage specifically commits their goals to paper.

THE IMPORTANCE OF GOAL SETTING

The importance of goal setting is illustrated through the development of "The Prison Experience Workshop Program" and "The Lifestyle Renovation Workbook". Both were goals which I talked and thought about. They started coming to life once I wrote them down. I first had to decide what kind of program I wanted to create. Then I had to decide what obstacles were in the way. I had to set a time schedule to overcome any obstacles. I had to make my plans realistic, short and long range, and then I had to be specific and detailed in the planning stages. This was just the beginning. In short, without setting my goals and mapping them out you would not be reading this workbook.

PRINCIPLES OF GOAL SETTING

The principles of goal setting have been employed by successful people throughout history. They have worked for them and they will work for you.

1. **Decide what kinds of goals to set.** The number of goals is limited only by your specific needs and your imagination. Successful people set goals in every area of their lives, and so should you.
2. **You must own your goals.** Your goals should be in your area of interest. They should not be set to please someone else.

THE BASICS OF GOAL SETTING

3. **You must know where you are.** The most complete map in the world will not take you where you want to go if you don't know where you're at. Keeping records and evaluating your achievements will help you determine where you are with respect to where you want to go.
4. **You need to make your goals "Big".** In order for goals to be effective they must be big. It takes a big goal to create the excitement and enthusiasm necessary to achieve it. It's the excitement that enables you to perform at your best and reach your goals. A wise man is quoted as saying, "Make no small plans, for they have no capacity to stir men's souls."
5. **Your goals should be Big, but they should also be realistic.** If your goal is not realistic, you will be setting yourself up for failure, and the impact of such failure could adversely affect you. You may even quit trying to set and achieve goals. For this reason please set Big but Realistic goals.
6. **Your goals should be long range.** Without long range goals you are likely to be overcome by short range frustrations. Circumstances beyond your control often pop up in life. Issues which you have no control over can become serious obstacles to achieving your goals unless your goals are long range enough to sustain you while you overcome the obstacles.
7. **Make your goals specific and detailed.** The art of goal setting is to focus on one specific detailed objective. For example, if on a hot July day you move a magnifying glass over a box of newspaper clippings you will never be able to start a fire, even though the glass magnifies the sun considerably. However, if you hold the glass still and focus it on one spot on the clippings you can start a roaring fire. Goals need to be specific and detailed if they are to be achieved.
8. **You must write your goals down.** Once you have established a specific detailed goal, it must be written down. Goals that are not formalized and committed to writing tend to not be achieved. For example, remember my goals didn't take off until I wrote them down (read the importance of goal setting).
9. **Having written your goals down - Prioritize them.** Not all goals are of equal value. Some are more important than others, thus needing to be achieved sooner than others - like lifestyle, attitude, and self-esteem changes. These should be given priority as you will concentrate on them more.

10. **List the obstacles to achieving each of your goals.** Try to identify those things that could keep you from achieving your goals. This list should not include excuses or reasons why you can't achieve your goals, only list obstacles.
11. **Formulate specific plans to overcome specific obstacles.** To overcome the obstacles listed, you need to write down exactly what steps you intend to take to reach your goals.
12. **Set a specific time schedule to overcome each obstacle and to achieve your goals.** For example, you might schedule yourself to overcome the first obstacle two weeks from now, and the second obstacle two weeks after the first two week period. The final achievement of your goal might be six months or a year later. Setting target dates is vital to your success.
13. **Work on your goal(s) every day.** Life does not move smoothly. Things happen and it may become necessary to revise your goal(s) and the things you must do to achieve them. They are your goal(s), and you need to make them fit your circumstances.
14. **Goal visualization I believe is the most important principle of goal setting.** The power to visualize is in a very real sense the power to create. If you really want to succeed at something, picture yourself doing it over and over again. Go through every step in your mind before you attempt to make your goal a reality. Visualize yourself overcoming any obstacles that might interfere with the achievement of your goal.
15. **Do not procrastinate! Never give up!** The goals you set are your goals. Never allow any one to talk you into believing you can't achieve the goals you set. Persistence is the key!
16. Short and medium range goals are based upon the same principles outlined for long range goal setting.

GOAL SETTING

1. What is goal setting? _____

2. Explain the importance of goal setting? _____

3. Have you ever set goals? _____

4. List four principles of goal setting. _____

5. Is visualization important in goal setting? Explain your answer. _____

1. Why is goal setting necessary? _____

2. What areas of goal setting should you write down? _____

3. How small should your goal be? _____

4. When should you give up on your goal? _____

5. How much help should others give you in setting your goals? _____

GOAL SETTING APPLICATION EXERCISES

1. List a goal that you can complete in 7 days. _____

2. Completely map out a medium range goal using the principles of goal setting.

3. Completely map out a long range goal using the principles of goal setting.

To be sure you achieve the positive results you have committed yourself too, you need to listen to your “Self-Talk”. Self-talk takes place silently in the privacy of your mind. It is the series of personal conversations you have with yourself almost continuously throughout the day. Just like statements from other people, your self-talk can dramatically affect your behavior and self-esteem.

Unfortunately, many people consistently tell themselves what they have done wrong or how incompetent they are. This negative self-talk often leads to a lack of self-confidence and unhappy relationships. Successful people talk to themselves with respect and encouragement which leads them toward positive behaviors even when faced with difficult situations. They focus on what they can do about the situation rather than what they cannot do. Self-talk is part of the cycle of self-esteem, whether that talk is negative or positive.

To constantly improve your behavior/life skills, you must monitor what you are saying to yourself. When negative thoughts attempt to take over, intentionally create self-talk statements that will replace your negative thoughts and counteract the damage those thoughts have had on your past behavior.

Create self-talk statements for your goals by using these guidelines:

1. **Be specific about the behavior you want to change.** What should you do to increase your effectiveness? You should firmly believe that what you want is truly possible.
2. **Begin each self talk statement with a first person pronoun, such as “I” or “My”.** Use a present tense verb, such as am, have, feel, create, approve, do, or choose. Don’t say my ability to remember the principles of positive image will improve. Instead, focus on the present - I have an excellent memory for the principles of positive image.
3. **Describe the results you want to achieve.** Be sure to phrase the statement as though you have already achieved what you want.
4. **This last one is critical, because your brain is a computer filled with various data from all your past experiences; you need to use the correct words.** When you think of the words: snake, rain, or yellow, your brain develops an automatic understanding of the word and a response or image based on years of conditioning and training. For example, if you are attempting to quit smoking, don’t mention the word “Smoke” in your self-talk. “I will not smoke today” conjures an image in your subconscious mind and your behavior follows accordingly. Say instead, “I am in control of my habits” or “My lungs are clean”.

SELF-TALK

Every time your self-talk statements use the word "NOT" you are sending the wrong message to your brain. Consider the following statement, instead. "I will not get into an argument about the rules today." Now remove the word "NOT" from the statement, and the remaining words represent the message being sent to your brain. Does the remaining statement represent your goal? Be careful to design your self-talk statements so that they take you in the direction you want to go; otherwise, they will take you straight toward what you don't want.

Write positive self-talk statements for different facets of your life, and keep them with you at all times and review them as often as possible. Read them each night when you are in a relaxed state, such as just before you go to bed. Your brain will accept the information without judgment. When these statements become a part of your "memory bank", over time your behavior will follow. Your brain computer will put out exactly what you put in. If you put positive self-talk in, then positive behavior will result. So please keep, all of your self-talk, positive.

Inspired To Redeem, by Teddy Serrato

I'm sitting on my bunk wondering what to write, it seems that I've lost sight and the urge to find the light. Now that I'm alone with these emotions that I fight, and it seems that it will be just me until I'm free, but there's no one else to blame for my actions are the same. Since I was a kid they have remained and will they ever change? Will I continue playing the game or maintain and build a frame? For when I'm free and hit the streets, this question goes unanswered and my heart remains to beat. Still I know this will not be forever, there's plenty of time to grow. So many more lessons to be learned so much more I need to know. To open up my eyes and help me understand, everything it will take for me to be a man. For now I'm just a kid whose stuck inside a place, where ignorance rules the day and there's seclusion to your race. But I will never stop trying to overcome my fear of turning my life around and achieving what I hold dear. And what I hold dearest in my heart may now just be a dream, but it's this imagination that has inspired me to redeem.

A True Man, by Mark Peveto

To be a real man
What does It take
Lets now define
A man who's not fake
He's one that's not scared
To do what is right
He has self control
His goals are in sight
He does not pretend
To be something he is not
Manhood's not determined
By things he's got
A mans not afraid
To be alone
He stands by himself
All on his own
His heart is not selfish
No hatred inside
Mind is not swayed
By thought of false pride
He'll humble himself
Without feeling he's weak
Does not have a need
To profess he's elite
A true man is composed
From what is within
Not where he's from
Or the color of his skin...

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2nd Edition 2009