

*PROS Service:*

**WSM:PSST**

**Course Title: What Gets in the Way?**

**Course Description:**

In this class participants will identify the barriers and obstacles to skill use in their chosen environment, i.e. living, learning, working, social or mental health. Participants will learn about common types of barriers to successful skill use. Participants will identify common self-defeating behaviors and develop skills to positively address them.

**Expected Course Outcomes:**

- Identification of barriers and obstacles to skill use
- Exploration of problems people might have on the job
- Consideration of actions to address critical deficits
- Creation of positive statements for self-criticism
- Examination of the excuses used to avoid personal responsibility
- Awareness about how self-sabotaging behavior can inhibit recovery
- Knowledge of how to set effective goals

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# **Class 1**

# EXPLANATION OF COMMON TYPES OF BARRIERS

## Lack of Confidence

The client does not feel able to use the skill. Cues are the client has never tried to use the skill in the specified circumstances, gives many reasons for not trying, forgets to use the skill, and/or cannot explain problems in using the skill (e.g., expressing feelings of defeat, fear, or being overwhelmed).

## Lack of Knowledge

The client does not have information that is required to use the skill as needed. A cue is the client saying "I don't know \_\_\_\_\_."

## Lack of Forethought

The client does not think beforehand about arrangements that are required to use the skill as needed. The barrier is lack of mental preparation. A cue is the client identifying as the problem lack of time or unresolved issues.

## Lack of Resources

The client does not have people, places, or things that are required to use the skill as needed. A cue is the client attributing the reason for the problem to "not having something."

Problems	Types of Barriers	Barriers
1. Forgets to brush teeth.	1. Lack of confidence.	1. Doesn't feel able to brush teeth that often.
2. Thinks only needs to brush teeth in the morning.	2. Lack of knowledge.	2. Doesn't know the benefits of brushing after each meal.
3. No time to brush teeth before leaving for work.	3. Lack of forethought.	3. Doesn't schedule extra time required to brush teeth during morning routine for getting ready for work.
4. Runs out of toothpaste.	4. Lack of a resource.	4. Doesn't have an adequate supply of toothpaste.

## BARRIERS TO SUCCESSFUL SKILL USE

Lack of Knowledge

Lack of Forethought

Lack of Confidence

Lack of Resources

# Class 2



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# Overcoming 5 Common Barriers to Achieving Success

By *TJ Philpott*  
On *November 03, 2009*

Achieving success is a very fulfilling moment for anybody willing to endure the effort and sacrifice it took to accomplish goals they had set for themselves. The sad fact is however that many fail to ever meet their goals and objectives leaving them feeling empty and discontent. Whether it is success in life or success in business just about everybody has the desire to achieve one or the other or both. What is it that keeps people from gaining the inner happiness and content that is a natural by-product of this personal achievement?

Let's have a look at 5 common barriers that either inhibit or stop people in their pursuit of any goals and objectives that they may have.

## **Lack of Direction**

To set goals you first need to determine what it is that you want to accomplish. As strange as it may seem to goal oriented people there are those who are content to just 'float' along without any attempt to better themselves or their situation.

On the other hand there are those who do have goals but are unfamiliar with how to establish the proper plan or necessary steps needed to reach their objectives. This is quite often the case for people who fail to achieve the success in business that they are looking for.

## **Negative Feedback**

Receiving negative feedback from your peers is the quickest way to undermine your own self-confidence and thereby give up your goals or beliefs. The key here is to identify this 'pitfall' in advance and avoid these types of people. There is no better or quicker way to lose your enthusiasm, motivation, or positive energy than to have people like this drain you with their constant 'negative' reinforcement.

## **Fear of Failure**

As crazy as it seems it is 'normal' psychology for people to fear failure and as a result decide to not even try. The 'reasoning' is that if you do not try you can not fail. As 'twisted' as this may seem to some it is a 'workable' defense psychology for people afraid to fail.

### **Don't Know How to Set Goals**

Goal planning involves not only determining 'exactly' what it is you want but also evaluating whether your goals are realistic. Do you possess or have access to the needed skills and resources that are required to attain these goals.

Ambition is great but 'blind' ambition will only set you up for failure and frustration. Repeated failure and frustration will discourage any future goal setting by these same people therefore it is important to keep goals realistic. Anything other than that is a dream.

### **Lack of Motivation**

Some people possess the mentality of 'it was a good idea at the time' and therefore quickly retreat when they are confronted with challenges in pursuit of their goals.

A strong inner desire is needed to achieve any goals worthy of note. A lack of motivation is probably the most common reason people 'give up' when chasing after any objectives they set for themselves.

Achieving success is something that anybody would welcome in their lives. The joy and fulfillment that comes when you accomplish goals you have set for yourself is a reward worth having all by itself. Unfortunately however there are certain common barriers that can block people from the success in life they so deeply want. As we have identified above some barriers can even completely block any attempts at putting forth any effort whatsoever. By having a clearer understanding of what causes these barriers however we can place ourselves in a better position to avoid or break through them. The end result should be that many people will now experience the joy of personal achievement that at one time eluded them. This in turn will lead to a richer and more rewarding life.

### **Author's Bio:**

TJ Philpott is an author and Internet entrepreneur based out of North Carolina. Learn more about [Achieving Success](#) and also get a free guide that teaches valuable niche research techniques by visiting: <http://blogbrawn.com/>

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# Class 3

## Eight Barriers to Change and Growth

- 1.....Believing you do not deserve better
- 2.....Not seeing your alternatives
- 3.....Not knowing what you really want and value
- 4.....Yeah buts and excuses that defend the way things are
- 5.....Cold, raw fear
- 6.....Lack of cooperation, going it alone
- 7.....Perfectionism, all or nothing thinking, wanting guarantees
- 8.....Shortage of energy

Which barriers are present in your life right now?

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Which barriers might prevent your success once you get started?

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Which barrier must you work on dismantling first? Why?

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What other obstacles are present in your life right now?

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How might these barriers and obstacles get in your way

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# Class 4



Problems I might have related to my mental illness

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Problems I might have related to physical problems

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6

Problems I might have related to emotional factors

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Problems I might have related to economic factors

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2

3

4

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6

7

Problems related to communication

1

2

3

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Problems related to learning

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Problems related to relationships

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Problems related to medication and self care

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# **Class 5**

Problems I might have related to my mental illness

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Problems I might have related to physical problems

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Problems I might have related to emotional factors

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Problems I might have related to economic factors

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Problems related to communication

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Problems related to learning

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3

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Problems related to relationships

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Problems related to medication and self care

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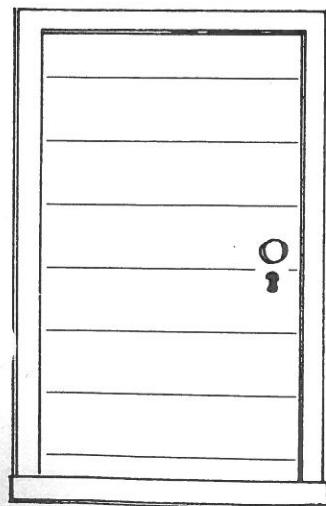
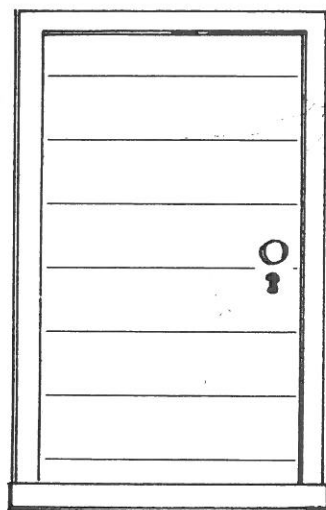
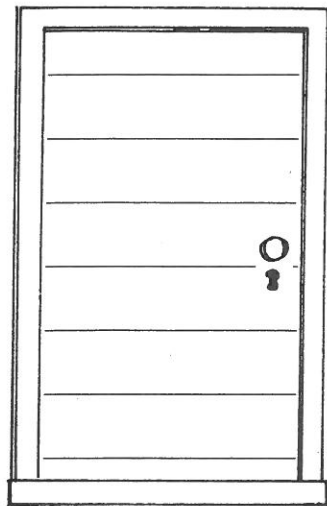
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# **Class 6**

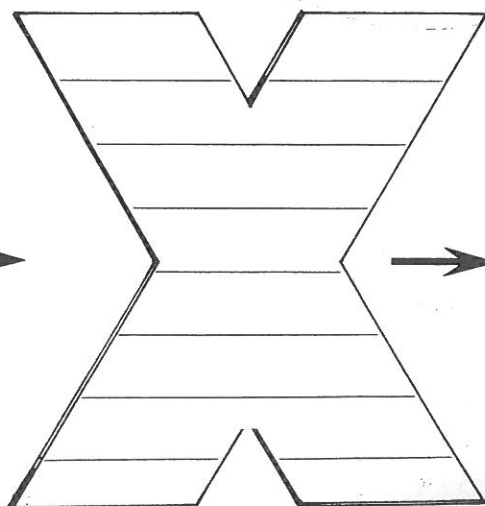
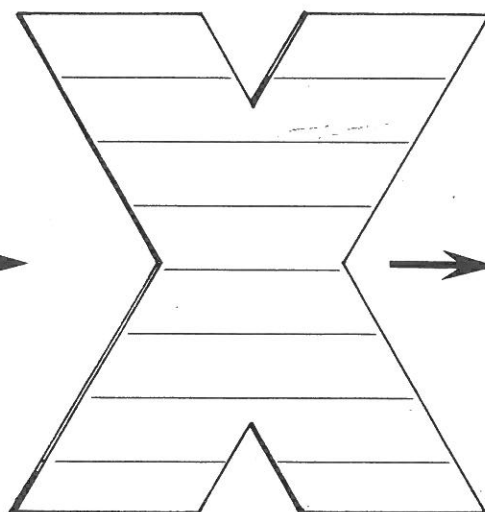
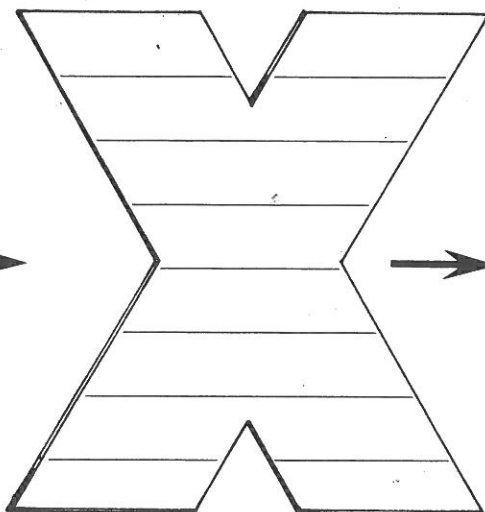
# OPENING DOORS TO ACHIEVEMENT

Don't allow obstacles to prevent achievements.  
Confront these obstacles by doing the following:

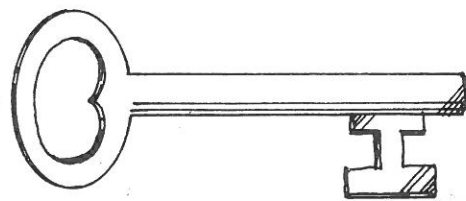
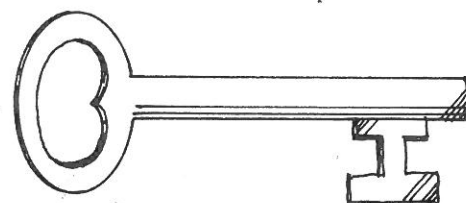
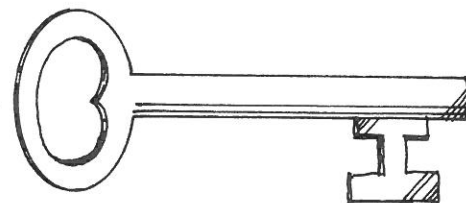
FILL IN  
POSSIBLE ACHIEVEMENTS



FILL IN  
POSSIBLE OBSTACLES



KEYS TO "UNLOCKING"  
THESE OBSTACLES



## OPENING DOORS TO ACHIEVEMENT

### I. PURPOSE:

To increase problem-solving skills by gathering knowledge and experience in confronting obstacles.

### II. GENERAL COMMENTS:

"Achieving" increases self-esteem. When one experiences difficulty in achieving, it is vital to recognize what may be preventing the achievement (obstacles) and the ways to remove/alter them (keys).

### III. POSSIBLE ACTIVITIES:

#### A. 1. Use the following examples to explain the handout.

- |                 |                                   |  |
|-----------------|-----------------------------------|--|
| * getting a job | * I'm too old/young.              | * positive self-talk, e.g., "Other people my age have jobs!" |
|                 | * I don't have a resume           |  |
|                 | * I get nervous when I interview. | * I'll go to a typewriter.                                   |
|                 |                                   | * I will practice interviews with my ...                     |

2. Encourage each group member to complete handout.

3. Process impact that problem solving has on self-esteem and goal attainment.

#### B. 1. Write hypothetical "possible achievements" on separate strips of paper and place in "hat."

2. Divide group into subgroups of 2-3 members.

3. Instruct each subgroup to take one "possible achievement" from "hat" and as a group, problem solve with suggested technique from handout.

4. Facilitate discussion with entire group and encourage subgroups to share their examples.

# **Class 7**

What, exactly, is a self-defeating behavior? On the surface, it would seem that we could categorize as self-defeating any attitude or gesture that thwarts a person's healthy desire for love, acceptance, fulfillment, or tranquillity. And while it is true that self-defeating behaviors effectively distort the individual's best and healthiest response to a new moment of life, they have another key characteristic that distinguishes them from other behaviors:

A true self-defeating behavior is an action or attitude that *once worked to help an individual cope with a hurtful experience* but that now works against the individual to keep him or her from responding to new moments of life in a healthy way.

When attempting to identify and eliminate your own self-defeating behaviors, it's extremely important to keep this definition in mind: to be truly self-defeating, a behavior must have worked for you at one point or another in your life—or, at least, you believed it worked for you. Why is this so? Because, we believe, human beings are profoundly rational creatures. Uncontaminated by false conclusions (which, as you'll see, are the toxic by-products of our culture), they will respond in a healthy and rational way to any situation or circumstance. This innate coping mechanism will work until, one day, an unfamiliar and threatening situation arises. At this point, people will instinctively do whatever is required to eliminate the threat and maintain equilibrium.

When an individual manages to cope successfully with a threat, the behavior that he or she has used to deal with it will become imprinted within that person's memory. Because the behavior has worked to eliminate a threat, it is stored within the individual's memory as an effective means of dealing with other threatening situations. Each time the individual encounters a situation that is unfamiliar or ominous, he or she will react with the behavior that tamed the original threat. But because the new situations often bear only faint or superficial resemblances to the original hurtful experience, the behavior that the individual chooses will almost always

be inappropriate. The individual's logic is still working flawlessly—which, paradoxically, leads him or her to repeat time and again a behavior that simply doesn't work.

### *Some Common Self-Defeating Behaviors*

The negative and counterproductive thoughts and actions that we refer to as self-defeating behaviors appear in many forms. Some of these forms do not seem to define a particular type of behavior at all but seem instead to point to character traits, moods, or attitudes. Do not be misled, however: all self-defeating behaviors, including those listed below, are chosen and practiced responses to new moments of life. Below we've listed some of the more common behaviors that fall into this category:

- Procrastination
- Defensiveness
- Abuse of alcohol and other substances
- Depression
- Worrying
- Compulsive/ritualistic actions
- Alienating
- Shyness
- Overeating
- Smoking
- Hostility
- Suspiciousness
- Impotence/frigidity
- Perfectionism

Although this list is far from comprehensive, we'd venture to guess that the great majority of people practice at least one of the behaviors we've mentioned. If you see on the list any behavior that you use to defeat yourself, you need to look into how you acquired the behavior and what you can do to replace it or, at the very least, to reduce its control over your life.

# Class 8

## Obstacles

Anger

Resistance

Fear

Blocking

Workaholism

Doubt

Fame

Competition

Virtue

Being Sick

Self sacrifice

Self Loathing

Self Abuse

Self Pity

Toxic People

Denial

Number Power

Expectations

Negative Beliefs

What problems related to your illness have been obstacles for you in the past?

What problems related to addiction have been obstacles for you in the past?

What problems related to dysfunction have been obstacles for you in the past?

# SELF-SABOTAGE

## I. PURPOSE:

- To develop awareness about how self-sabotaging behavior can inhibit recovery.
- To develop a plan to stop self-sabotaging.

## II. GENERAL COMMENTS:

Mental health practitioners will sometimes observe clients in the recovery process, acting in a manner which is counter-productive to themselves, despite all the new, helpful skills that have been taught. It can be extremely useful to facilitate a discussion with these individuals about how self-sabotage behaviors are a barrier to recovery. Since this can be a difficult issue for some clients to look at, it needs to be dealt with sensitively.

## III. POSSIBLE ACTIVITIES:

- A.
  1. Introduce topic by asking participants to share the first word or phrase that comes to mind when they hear the term 'self-sabotage.' List responses on flipchart. See if the group can formulate a definition for the term, using their own words.
  2. Distribute handouts and pens. Compare the groups' definition with the ones on the handout.
  3. Invite participants to review the next section headed "Ways of Sabotaging" and to check off any items they recognize in themselves. Allow them to keep this information private if it feels sensitive, embarrassing or shaming to them.
  4. Facilitate a discussion about possible reasons people may self-sabotage. Ask them what insight they have into this phenomenon. Gently, and with sensitivity, review some or all of the following reasons for self-sabotage:
    - a. fear of failure
    - b. fear of the unknown
    - c. comfort with what is familiar, despite the pain
    - d. passive anger
    - e. secondary gain(s)
  5. Have participants complete the remainder of the handout.
  6. Allow participants, if they wish, to share with the group their plan for stopping self-sabotage.
- B.
  1. Introduce / define the concept of self-sabotage. Normalize the concept to make it easier for participants to talk about by reminding them that, at times, we all engage in self-sabotage in different degrees and ways. Ask the group what impact self-sabotage has on recovery and healing.
  2. Distribute handouts and pens.
  3. Invite participants to complete the check-off portion of the handout, headed "Ways of Self-Sabotaging".
  4. Discuss possible reasons for sabotaging oneself. Refer to A.4. above.
  5. Divide group into sub-groups of three or four members.
  6. Encourage participants in sub-groups to discuss the last section of the handout. Focus on the statement "I will make the following change..." in order to help each other think of some ways to stop self-sabotage.
  7. Reconvene as a larger group and process by asking each participant to share one important insight they learned in the session.

Activity handout and facilitator's information submitted by Nancy Day, BScO.T. Reg (Ont), Markham, Ontario, Canada. Nancy has had 20 of her handouts published in the Life Management Skills series. She provides hospital-based occupational therapy services to clients experiencing mental health problems within a team-oriented program emphasizing group therapies. Nancy's leisure interests are quilting, reading, antiques and hiking.

# SELF-SABOTAGE



## SABOTAGE:

- conscious or unconscious damage done to self by self
- self-defeating behaviors
- hampering one's own progress or recovery
- refusing to grow and change

## WAYS OF SELF-SABOTAGING:

### “Yes, but...”

Using one excuse after another about why others' suggestions won't work for you.

### “I'm different”

Seeing yourself as different, worse, or more complicated than others and because of that, strategies that work for others just won't work for you.

### Making the rounds

Going from one person, helper or treatment to another, discounting what each says, looking for the answer you want to hear.

### Stacking the evidence

Only looking for evidence of how a treatment or suggestion may not work, while ignoring any evidence of how it does help.

### Negative Comparisons

Comparing yourself to others in a negative way.

### “No way!”

Refusing to consider new evidence, try new ideas or take any risks.

## MY SABOTAGING

In which ways do I sabotage? \_\_\_\_\_

Why do I sabotage? \_\_\_\_\_

I will make the following changes: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

# Class 9

[Print Article](#)

Home » Fitness » General Exercises » Start Working Out » How to Recognize Self-Defeating Behavior

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# How to Recognize Self-Defeating Behavior

By Merriment, eHow Member

## Instructions

Difficulty: Moderately Easy

### 1. CHARACTERISTICS OF SELF-DEFEAT:

#### Don't Finish Tasks that You Start.

The over all efforts of self sabotage is to talk yourself out of completing, ore even starting a task; complete with excuses for why you feel you CAN'T do the task (negative thinking and self defeating) over the reality of how you CAN do the task (positive thinking and problem solving).

### 2. Feel Helpless and Overwhelmed by Tasks, Activities & Interactions.

Set yourself up for self defeat by becoming overly excited about a project, an interaction, or an idea and then quickly find yourself feeling overwhelmed by it all, which then leads to feelings of helplessness. These feelings of helplessness then tend to lead to you quitting the task.

### 3. Deny any other Possible Solutions.

Set yourself up for self sabotage by stubbornly denying routes, advice, and help that would benefit you in achieving your desired outcome. You may tend to feel that it must done within your current abilities and knowledge only. When your abilities fall short from your desired outcome, you may end up feeling defeated; when all along learning a new approach could provide you with what you need to overcome obstacles and succeed at the task.

### 4. Talk negatively to self.

Set yourself up for self defeat through a negative behavior of talking yourself down and holding yourself back from even trying. You may use self-defeating terms like: "I'm not good enough to do that," "people like me can't have things like that," "it would be too much work and I don't want to work that hard," and so forth.

### 5. Be a procrastinator.

Start a project or task only to procrastinate it's completion to the point of self sabotage and defeat. Some people have masses of unfinished projects, as they leave one project unfinished then start another, only to leave that one unfinished as well.

Self defeat through procrastination may be a cognitive behavior developed from fear that achieving this would lead to an overwhelming workload for you; or because you may set to high of expectations on yourself; or maybe, because it takes to much time away from other interests. However, rather than find ways to complete the task at hand in a proficient manner, you create self-sabotage by putting off the possibility to succeed.

### 6. Have stagnate, bad habits.

Create self defeat by having poor attendance, performance, and punctuality. These can be self-defeating for career success and create self sabotage gaining a poor reputation, relationship problems and even job loss.

You suffer from such negative behavior because you may find comfort settling for average expectations of yourself and you do not press to find the limits of your true potential or strive higher to achieve what you truly desire. The thought of taking such a risk is to scary to you as you fear that you will only fail. However, failure is truly only achieved by not trying at all.

### 7. Delve into addictions.

Develop a negative behavior that leads to self sabotage by getting trapped into addictions and substance abuse. Substance addictions may include caffeine, tobacco, alcohol, marijuana, narcotics, depressants, stimulants, hallucinogens, and designer drugs. Uncontrolled habits, such as sex addiction, compulsive spending/gambling, anger, eating disorders, and internet addiction can also become addictions that can lead to self defeat and create interference with making positive progress.

## Tips & Warnings

Come to recognize your self-defeating processes. Recognizing them is the first step to changing them. You can not change what you do not admit exists as a problem.

## Resources

- [Defining Self Defeating Behavior:](#)
- [You Can Stop The Cycle of Self-Defeating Behaviors](#)
- [How to Overcome Self-Defeating Behavior](#)


[Print Article](#)

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# How to Overcome Self-Defeating Behavior

By Merriment, eHow Member

## Instructions

Difficulty: Moderately Challenging

1. First thing we need to do to overcome self defeat is to take responsibility for our own lives and our outcomes. Let go of blaming other people, circumstances, fate, or even luck for your problems and your choices; to do so is self-defeating because it releases you from taking responsibility for your own thoughts and behaviors. No matter what goes on in our lives, or what others do around us or even advise us to do, whatever actions and choices we make are ultimately our own.

To not take responsibility for your choices keeps you in a frame of mind that you're a victim in life and that your hardships are to be blamed on the world and everyone around you. For good or bad, the world doesn't work around any one of us; we have to work with what the world provides to us and pave our own way. It's up to us to develop the necessary skills and make the proper actions to improve ourselves and our lives.

2. Learn to view constructive criticism as a way to move forward, rather than viewing it defensively, in anger, or in defeat. If someone makes you aware of a negative action you have done or repeatedly do, ask for further information about it, rather than denying it and shutting them out. You may come across some cases where others are mistaking your intent. Develop problem solving skills and a positive attitude by seeking suggestions in overcoming this self defeating behavior and how you may communicate yourself better in similar situations. Use this as a point of learning and self betterment.
3. Don't be afraid to try new things. By being afraid to expand your knowledge, skills and abilities beyond the familiar and comfortable, you keep yourself from finding out what you're truly capable of; what could make you happier; and achieving what you truly want out of life. There is no guarantee that things will turn out perfect or just the way you wanted, but you can develop skills and a positive attitude when you spread your wings and see just how far you can fly. Strengthen your problem solving skills by checking out your options and deciding where you want to land. Sure you'll be grounded every now and then by bad circumstances; but a positive attitude reminds you that obstacles and bad times aren't forever... unless you make a choice for it to be that way.
4. Ask for feedback from other people who you know can provide you with good insight of your setbacks and how you can overcome them. Interact with a wide range of people, such as peers, superiors, friends and family. Let them know that you are trying to develop skills to overcome self defeating habits and ask if they can think of things you may do or say that creates setbacks or bad impressions that lead to your self defeat.

Once you recognize what your setbacks are, there are lots of books, online information, and even therapists that can help you develop skills to overcome them.

5. Finish what you start. Leaving tasks, projects and goals unfinished tends to wreck the way you feel about yourself which leads to self defeating habits. It's difficult to feel good about your abilities when you haven't experienced the positive affects of accomplishment and success. It doesn't have to be perfect and it doesn't have to lead to something more difficult for you or for your life. But nothing beats the feeling of being able to step back and say "Wow, I did that!" Accomplishment, no matter how small it may seem, is the greatest way to develop a positive attitude, strong self esteem and to overcome self defeat.
6. Many people sabotage themselves by denying the existence of a problem and therefore do not take appropriate action to move beyond it. Denial is usually a defensive maneuver against a painful reality they don't want to face. Many people will not move forward in their personal or professional lives because they don't want to admit that their current abilities are not what they need to acquire what they truly desire, and they may not be willing to expand and learn to gain the progress they seek. As previously mentioned, develop skills by listening to advice and criticism with an open mind to seek solutions to the problem.

## Tips & Warnings

Learn to let go of fear, blame and denial of your set backs.

- Set small goals that help you move forward bit by bit.
- Do not set goals that will only lead to overwhelming you. If your goal is to big, break it down into smaller, more manageable steps.

## Resources

- [Self Defeating Behavior](#)
- [Get Out of Your Own Way](#)
- [How to Recognize Self-Defeating Behavior](#)
- [How to Be a Great Solver of Life's Problems](#)

Self-defeating behaviors are those activities and habits that keep us from accomplishing our desired goals.

We may not recognize that we have self-defeating behaviors. Consequently, we must take some time to objectively assess how we behave, think, and act.

We initially became entangled in self-defeating behaviors because we found the behavior a way to cope with an unpleasant situation. For example, a young child lies when caught in an uncompromising position. If the parent doesn't catch and lets the child get away with it, the behavior becomes imprinted in the child's behavior pattern.

As the child approaches adulthood, and there has been no attempt to get rid of the behavior, it becomes ingrained in the person's behavior pattern. Obviously, the tendency to lie out of tough situations will sooner or later be recognized by others, including spouse or employer. Thus, it becomes a self-defeating behavior.

We, and others, may look at some of our habits and thought patterns as merely quirky behavior. But some habits will be so pronounced as to block any success we hope to have.

Here are some tips for overcoming these self-defeating behaviors:

1. Recognize that we have certain self-defeating behaviors.

This may not be easy to do, since we look through a glass darkly when it comes to ourselves. We have had certain habits for many years, and they've become part of our behavioral lives.

Suggestion: Ask someone you trust--maybe a spouse, parent, friend, or coworker--to tell you what he or she see in your behavior that will be a hindrance in accomplishing your goals. This is tough to do. And you need to make sure that the person is someone who you can trust. Plus, you need to make sure that you will not become offended by what they say. And be prepared to do something about it. Otherwise, it's a dangerous activity.

2. Once you recognize that you have a self-defeating behavior, think of another behavior to replace it with--a positive behavior.

An example: Say that whenever you are criticized at work for something you did, did wrong, or didn't do, you instinctively blame others for what happened. Definitely a self-defeating behavior! What can you replace it with? The next time you are criticized, you decide to listen carefully, and if the criticism is valid, you ask the person what you can do to improve your performance.

Now that's not easy to do. But if you visualize yourself substituting the more positive behavior, you have a good chance of actually making the behavioral change.

3. Set a goal for conquering the self-defeating behavior. Write down you goal. Review it frequently.

4. Monitor how you are doing in achieving the goal of eliminating your self-defeating behaviors.

For example, you set a goal to exhibit a more positive reaction to someone's criticism. You then monitor how well you do the next someone gives you constructive criticism. If you don't react positively, begin the process over of reinforcing the desire to substitute a more positive behavior, set a new goal (such as "The next time I'm criticized, I will listen and ask for ideas on how I can do better."), and monitor how I do.

Since we all come into adulthood with self-defeating behaviors that will hinder our progress, determining to recognize and overcome these behaviors will lead to a more fulfilling life.

# Class 10

THE NEW YORK HOSPITAL - CORNELL MEDICAL CENTER  
WESTCHESTER DIVISION

RAA CRITICAL SKILL DEFICITS

IPRT MAY 1993

1. Manage Anxiety
2. Compartmentalizing anxiety
3. Reading/Studying
4. Household Chores
5. Planning
6. Job Searching
7. Choosing career
8. Resolving interpersonal conflict
9. Asking for help
10. Responding to impulse
11. Attending to early warning signs
12. Regulating expression of feelings
13. Structuring time
14. Identifying Personal criteria
15. Setting limits
16. Managing anxiety
17. Securing a new living environment
18. Initiating conversations
19. Participating in leisure activities
20. Interviewing
21. Gathering financial aid information
22. Assessing work skills, values, interests
23. Identify training programs
24. Gathering career information
25. Looking for work
26. Explaining work groups
27. Making Applications
28. Dealing with Supervisors
29. Attending as scheduled
30. Presenting self in an interview
31. Exploring training options
32. Studying for exams
33. Writing Research Papers
34. Interviewing
35. Following study Schedule
36. Keeping conversation going
37. Responding
38. Stating personal Criteria
39. Attending as scheduled
40. Following thru with tasks
41. Gathering career information
42. Pacing decisions and desires
43. Processing information accurately
44. Locating an internship
45. Confirming preference for teaching career
46. Paying attention
47. Getting job leads
48. Selecting jobs matching interests & abilities
49. Performing chores
50. Conversing with roommate
51. Asking for help
52. Setting limits with peers
53. Identifying work interests & values
54. Identifying preferred occupations
55. Asserting myself
56. Meeting deadlines
57. Reading
58. Updating resume
59. Resolving conflicts directly
60. Increasing typing speed
61. Managing change
62. Focusing
63. Setting Manageable expectations
64. Asking questions in class
65. Making relevant comments
66. Increasing stamina
67. Interacting with patients
68. Arranging an internship
69. Clarifying information
70. Following through
71. Coping with stress
72. Maintaining social contacts
73. Studying for tests
74. Taking notes
75. Increasing reading time
76. Practicing writing
77. Studying
78. Taking notes
79. Choosing low cost activities
80. Setting limits with friends
81. Managing negative feelings
82. Asking for help
83. Making friends
84. Arranging social plans
85. Managing Stress
86. Applying (new) learned skills
87. Following through with plans or tasks
88. Coping with idle time or personal quiet time
89. Finding a place to live
90. Responding to symptoms and negative thoughts

# Class 11

## Behavior Scale

The behavior scale can help you see how well you get along with others. Score each trait. When you finish the scale, total your scores for all the traits. The total behavior scale score will give you an idea of how well you will be able to get along on your job. You will also see which of the traits you need to work on.

Read each statement. If it is: true MOST OF THE TIME circle 2; true SOME OF THE TIME circle 1; NEVER true circle 0.

Understanding and Following Directions	Most of the time 2	Some of the time 1	Never 0
I understand the crew leader's or my worker's directions	2	1	0
I think it is easy to listen when I am given directions	2	1	0
I ask questions when I do not understand directions	2	1	0
I understand written directions	2	1	0
In school or on the job, I read written directions before asking questions	2	1	0
Total Score			

Initiative	Most of the time 2	Some of the time 1	Never 0
When I was in school, I finished my school work before it was due	2	1	0
At home, I do more work than I am asked to do	2	1	0
When I see something that needs to be done, I do it if I can	2	1	0
I ask if I can do extra work at home or at _____	2	1	0
Among my friends, I decide what we should do	2	1	0
Total Score			

Eagerness to Learn	Most of the time 2	Some of the time 1	Never 0
Learning something new makes me feel good	2	1	0
At my job, I like to learn new things	2	1	0
I want to learn more about some hobby	2	1	0
Learning how to work on a job is exciting	2	1	0
After absences, I check in with my _____	2	1	0
Total Score			

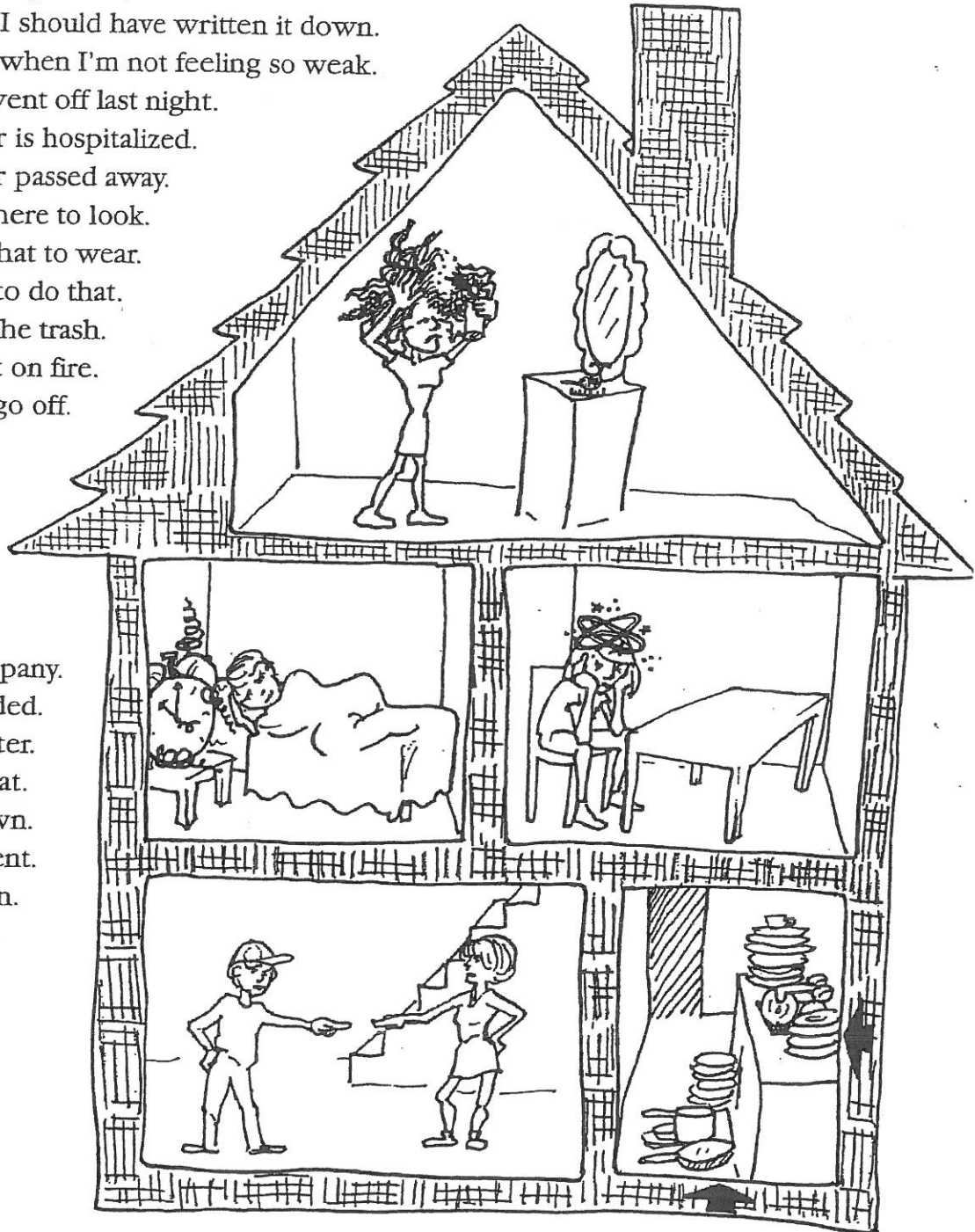
Ability to Accept Criticism	Most of the time 2	Some of the time 1	Never 0
When my friends say I should wear different clothes, I think about whether they are right	2	1	0
When someone criticizes how I do something, I think about how I can improve	2	1	0
When someone criticizes the way I do a task, I listen politely	2	1	0
I learn from those who criticize my work	2	1	0
I do not get upset when other criticize my work	2	1	0
Total Score			

# **Class 12**

# WHAT'S YOUR EXCUSE?

**Bills overdue? Missed the deadline on the project? Sending belated birthday cards this year? Stood up your date Saturday night? Showed up late for the meeting? So what's your excuse...?**

- ☐ Something came up that had to be taken care of.
- ☐ I forgot to do it. I should have written it down.
- ☐ Do it tomorrow when I'm not feeling so weak.
- ☐ The electricity went off last night.
- ☐ A family member is hospitalized.
- ☐ A family member passed away.
- ☐ I didn't know where to look.
- ☐ Did not know what to wear.
- ☐ You were going to do that.
- ☐ Had to take out the trash.
- ☐ My house caught on fire.
- ☐ My alarm didn't go off.
- ☐ Bad hair day.
- ☐ No initiative.
- ☐ Car trouble.
- ☐ I am sick.
- ☐ Too tired.
- ☐ Forgot.
- ☐ Unexpected company.
- ☐ Basement is flooded.
- ☐ I have no babysitter.
- ☐ Had to feed the cat.
- ☐ My car broke down.
- ☐ I was in an accident.
- ☐ Going out of town.
- ☐ Have a headache.
- ☐ I have no money.
- ☐ Tied up in traffic.
- ☐ Nothing to wear.
- ☐ Procrastination.
- ☐ That's your job.
- ☐ No motivation.
- ☐ The dog ate it.



**How do you put excuses to work for you...? To explain why something happened? To justify your behaviors or attitudes? To place blame? To avoid unpleasant things? Recognizing that you are using excuses can be the first step toward making a change.**

## Feeble Excuses

February 10th, 2006 by Steve Pavlina  
[friend](#)

 [Email this article to a](#)

Excuses are lies we tell ourselves to avoid dealing with unpleasant truths. But as long as we buy into those excuses, we can never move past them. Instead of addressing the underlying problem, we merely hide the symptoms. One of the most important steps in personal growth is to uproot excuse-making and confront the real issues behind the excuses with consciousness and courage.

Here are some of the most common excuses and their underlying truths:

### **I don't have enough time.**

Whenever you hear yourself making this statement, you know deep down it isn't the truth. The real truth is that you haven't made that which you supposedly lack time for important enough. You're really saying, "That just isn't important enough to me." I don't have time to exercise. I don't have time for a relationship. I don't have time to start my own business. Of course you have time. You have as much time as anyone else does, and other people are already doing these same things. The difference is that they make it more of a priority in their lives than you do. You aren't a victim of circumstances. If you don't like your circumstances, change them.

It's amazing that people who say they don't have time somehow find plenty of time for marginal activities like watching TV. If you don't have time to exercise, then surely you don't have time to watch any TV at all. Such people are really saying that exercise simply isn't important enough to them. It's easier to blame the problem on a lack of time, but the real problem is a lack of will.

**I don't know how.**

This is one of the feeblest excuses of all. I don't know how to make a web site. I don't know how to write well. I don't know how to get a better job. Are you capable of learning? Did you stop after learning to crawl, complaining, "I don't know how to walk?" The truth behind "I don't know how" is "I'm unwilling to learn." In other words, you have to admit that you're lazy.

**I don't have the money.**

If there's something you want, "I don't have the money" is no excuse for not getting it. You can always earn the money or find a way to get the item at reduced cost. The truth behind "I don't have the money" is "I don't want it badly enough." Earning the money you need is only a matter of time, and we already know that not having enough time is no valid reason for giving up, nor is not knowing how to earn the money. If you want to buy something out of your price range, you're fully capable of setting it as a top priority and then putting in the time to learn how to earn enough to acquire the item.

Don't let excuses run your life. If you catch yourself using one of these lines, immediately replace it with a statement of the real truth. At first that truth may seem uncomfortable. It's easier to say, "I don't know how" than it is to say, "I'm unwilling to learn." But when you admit your unwillingness, laziness, or lack of motivation, then you're finally facing the truth, and from that point you'll have the opportunity to grow. For example, if you face your unwillingness to learn, you may decide that even though it would be a lot of work to learn a new skill, you could do it if you wanted it badly enough and really applied yourself.

It's easier on our egos to blame failure on external, uncontrollable factors such

as lack of time, information, or resources. But as long as we use such excuses, we can never solve the underlying problems because those factors aren't under our direct control. We need to invert our excuses and look beneath them to find the internal causes that we can control. What we can control, we can improve.

We can't control time, but we can control how we prioritize the actions that fill that time. We can't control information, but we can control what we choose to learn as well as how much effort we devote to learning. We can't control money, but we can choose to undertake more effective income-producing activities. So by controlling the factors that are within our control, we can create as much time, information, and resources as we desire.

Don't let your ego get in the way of your growth. Muster the courage to face the truth instead of making excuses. Only when you admit the truth do you gain the power to do something about it. If you admit your laziness, you can work on that. If you admit your lack of motivation or skill, you can work on those too. But you're powerless to work on time, information, or money directly. Don't give away this power and doom yourself to perpetual mediocrity. Shoot down your excuses, face the bitter truth, and start taking the steps necessary to change in the direction you want to go.

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# Class 13

# Excuses, excuses, excuses...

## I. PURPOSE:

To increase personal responsibility by acknowledging the excuses that we sometimes use to avoid doing the things that need to be done.

## II. GENERAL COMMENTS:

All of us have used excuses. Some of us are better at making up excuses than others. It is important to identify what kinds of things we are avoiding and how we utilize excuses to do so. It is equally important to identify a concrete plan of action to combat our procrastination or avoidance.

## III. POSSIBLE ACTIVITIES:

- A.
  1. Distribute handouts and pens to each group member.
  2. Ask different members to read aloud one of the excuses.
  3. Encourage group members to talk about their own excuses and when they use them. This may require prompting of additional excuses. It is sometimes useful to inject humor as well, so that this is not perceived as threatening in any way!
  4. Discuss procrastination and avoidance. Ask group members to generate a list of the types of activities people typically delay or avoid, e.g., doing their taxes, going to a social event where they don't know anyone, telling someone how they really feel.
  5. Ask each group member to write on the handout what s/he typically avoids and the typical excuse.
  6. Discuss with group members the importance of having a plan to actively combat procrastination and avoidance. Ask group members to write their responses and to make a personal commitment to change things.
  7. If possible, check in with group members after an agreed-upon time period to see how they have progressed. If individuals have not followed their plan, review the excuses used in the intervening time period and develop more specific goals to address this in the future. Then, reevaluate.
- B.
  1. Begin group by introducing concept of looking at excuses as a way to address personal responsibility. Assign two group members to the following brief script or develop one of your own:

*Jonathan: I'd love to see your place sometime, can I come over?*  
*Maria: Uh... No... not this week, I'm kind of busy.*  
*Jonathan: I didn't mean this week. How about next week or the week after?*  
*Maria: Well, my apartment is so hot in the summer... I don't have air-conditioning.*  
*Jonathan: I work during the day, evenings are nice and cool.*  
*Maria: Hmmm, Well...*
  2. Discuss the following points: What could Maria be avoiding? What were her excuses? How can excuses pay a toll on relationships? How can excuses pay a toll on personal integrity? How can we tell when others are making excuses? How can we tell when we're making excuses?
  3. Distribute handouts and pens, instructing participants to complete handouts except for the bottom plan of action section.
  4. Discuss the drawbacks and consequences to making excuses in: activities of daily living, exercising, social outings / obligations, developing hobbies and leisure interests, writing letters, making phone calls, paying bills, going to see the doctor / dentist, etc.
  5. Focus on plan of action by emphasizing that once awareness takes place, change is possible. Give group members ten minutes to complete.
  6. Divide group into pairs and allow three to four minutes to share.
  7. Keep group in pairs and have each partner report on their partner's plan of action.
  8. Process by asking group members how insight gained in this group will assist them after they

Activity handout and facilitator's information submitted by Betty A. Welch, Ph.D., Manchester, NH.  
Betty provides clinical and administrative supervision of partial hospitalization unit and inpatient unit for geropsychiatric patients.  
She provides direct clinical interventions with older adults, families and education to the community at large.  
Betty loves spending time with her golden retriever, Casey, exercising, card making with rubber stamps and stenciling, hiking, enjoying precious time with family and friends, and creatively thinking about new ways to work with older adults.

# Excuses, excuses, excuses

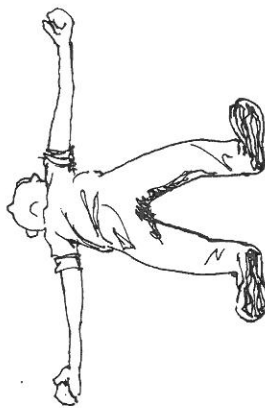
What kinds of things get in your way?  
What do you tell yourself?

I've got nothing to wear.



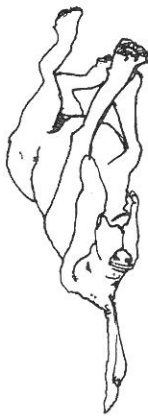
My pajamas feel  
too good to take off.

I can't handle it!



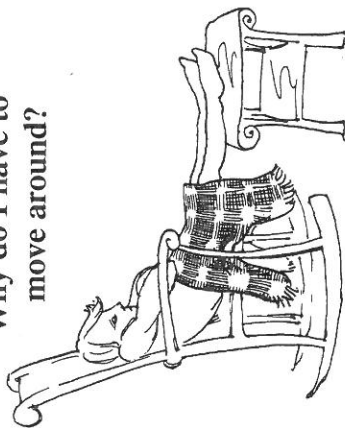
What will people say  
if they see me like this?

I'm just too dog-tired  
to do anything.



I'm just not interested.

Why do I have to  
move around?



I'm just fine sitting here - it's not  
that important to be with people.

The excuses I tell myself most often are: \_\_\_\_\_

What I've been avoiding: \_\_\_\_\_

What can I do to change things? \_\_\_\_\_

I need to get 'unstuck' from that terrible position I find myself in. (I'm not 'lion'!)

My plan of action: \_\_\_\_\_



# Class 14



Focus on the enjoyable and positive.

Post written by [Leo Babauta](#). Follow me on [Twitter](#).

We all make excuses.

But the successful ones are those who can kill the excuses like the miserable maggots they are.

I'm too tired. I don't have the time. I don't feel motivated. I'd rather do nothing. I don't have the money, equipment, space. I can't because ...

We've all made the excuses. Here's how to kill them.

1. **See the positive.** Excuses are usually made because we don't feel like doing something — we're accentuating the negative. Instead, see the fun in something, the joy in it. And maintain a positive attitude, or you'll never beat the excuses.
2. **Take responsibility.** Excuses are ways to get out of owning up to something. If we don't have the time, money, equipment, etc., then it's not our fault, right? Wrong. Take responsibility, and own the solution.
3. **Find a solution.** Just about every problem has a solution. Don't have time? Start with just 5-10 minutes. Make the time. Wake earlier. Do it during lunch. Don't have a gym membership? Workout at home or in the office. Don't have the energy? Do it when you have higher levels of energy. You're smart. Figure out the solution.
4. **See your goal.** This is your motivation — your reason for doing it. Sure, you could just lay on the couch, but if you think about why you really want to pursue a goal, you'll be motivated. Visualize that goal and just get started.
5. **Be accountable.** Have a workout partner, a project partner, a team, someone to report to. If you have to meet a coach or partner, you're more likely to do something.
6. **Go ahead and make your excuses.** Then do it anyway.

---

*If you liked this article, please **share it on [del.icio.us](#), [StumbleUpon](#) or [Twitter](#)**. I'd appreciate it. :)*

My goal is .....

The reasons I have not achieved this goal are:

What positive consequence can be in doing this?

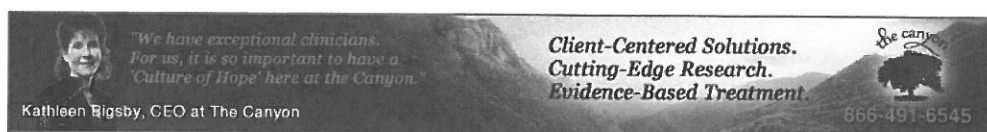
What am I responsible for? What can I actually do now?

Name three possible solutions

Visualize the goal

Who will support me, challenge me when I offer excuses?

# Class 15



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## The Power of Prime

The cluttered mind uncluttered

by Jim Taylor, Ph.D.

### Personal Growth: Four Obstacles to Positive Life Change

What obstacles are preventing you from making positive life changes?

Published on January 17, 2012 by Jim Taylor, Ph.D. in The Power of Prime

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Change is essential for your growth and development as a person. Without change, you are assured of staying just the way you are and doing things just the way you have always done them. For some people, that's a good thing; they're happy and fulfilled in their lives. But for many people, the current path they are on lacks meaning and satisfaction and they feel stuck. They want to change, but can't seem to figure out how to change.

The reality is that change is difficult. How difficult? Well, given the robustness of the self-help industry and the fact that no one has yet come up with a definitive path to change, the answer is "extremely difficult." Add in the low success rates on everything from New Year's resolutions, stopping smoking, and losing weight to improving self-esteem, feeling less anxious, and having better relationships, and the picture is not at all pretty.

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Part of the problem is that the self-help industry has distorted our perceptions of change, leading many to believe that change should be easy and should happen quickly and with little effort. Of course, the caveat to this claim is that change will only occur, supposedly, if you buy the books or DVDs, attend the lectures or workshops, or invest time, energy, and, of course, money in whatever "snake oil" that promises to help you change quickly and easily when nothing has worked before. (BTW, any time you see the words "miracle," "magic," "easy," or "fast" when it comes to change, make sure you still have your wallet!)

But this post isn't about bashing the self-help industry (I've done that before), it's about gaining an understanding of what it really takes to produce meaningful and long-lasting change in your life.

On the face of it, change doesn't seem like it should be that difficult. If there is something that you don't like about yourself, just change it. But the reality is that profound change can be slow, frustrating, and painful, filled with struggles, setbacks, and disappointment. Whether you want a more positive view of yourself, be a better spouse, strive for professional goals, or deal with stress more effectively, change is the most difficult-yet rewarding-thing you will ever do.

So why is change so difficult? This post will offer one explanation. It is also the first of three posts that will examine the why, what, and how of positive life change. The goal of which is to shift life change from a seemingly impossible task to one that, if not a certainty, feels at least within your grasp (sorry, no outlandish promises here!).

#### Four Obstacles to Change

An unfortunate aspect of life is that we often create obstacles, usually unconsciously, that may serve some sort of immediate purpose, but end



Jim Taylor, Ph.D., is an adjunct professor at the University of San Francisco.  
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up being long-term liabilities. These barriers are often driven by some of our most basic needs, for example, to feel competent, to be accepted, to feel in control. Regrettably, these obstacles become intractable and end up preventing people from changing (or even attempting to change) when they shift from being beneficial to being burdensome.

**Baggage.** Like all of us, you bring good things into adulthood from your childhood. And, as a human being, you probably also bring some not-so-good things, what is commonly called your "baggage." The most frequent types of baggage include low self-esteem, perfectionism, fear, need for control, anger, and need to please. This baggage causes you to think, feel, and behave based on who you were as a child rather than the very different person you are now as an adult. Most of this baggage causes you to react to the world in an unproductive way that can sabotage your efforts to achieve positive life change.

**Habits.** When you experience thoughts, emotions, and behavior that are driven by your baggage with enough frequency, they become deeply ingrained *habits* that dictate how you act on and react to the world. These habits are much like athletes who practice bad technique. This poor technique becomes wired into their "muscle memory" and comes out in competition. Similarly, when your baggage becomes ingrained as habits, they produce seemingly reflexive response even when they are neither healthy or adaptive. The challenge is that, again like athletes, once habits are ingrained, it is difficult to retrain them.

**Emotions.** Negative *emotions*, such as fear, anger, sadness, frustration, and hopelessness, can act as a powerful deterrent to life change. For example, many people don't change out of the fear of failure. They might think, "What if I can't change, then I'll prove myself to be even more of a failure than I am now." They then say, "I've been this way for a long time and I'm getting by, so it's not worth the risk." These negative emotions become substantial barriers to change by being triggered whenever you feel uncomfortable, incompetence, or unsupported. And the only relief is to retreat back to the way you have been.

**Environment.** You create an *environment* that helps you best manage your baggage, habits, and emotions. You surround yourself with people who are supportive of the way you are and make you feel comfortable and safe. You engage in activities that play to your strengths and help you either mask or mitigate those obstacles. Unfortunately, this environment reinforces who you are, even when you don't want to be who you are, and can cause you to continue down a path that interferes with your happiness and achievement of your goals. This environment may, at a minimum, not support change and, at worst, discourage change.

In all four cases, when you allow these obstacles to control your life, they have the effect of sabotaging your efforts at changing your life in a positive way. Even worse, you feel stuck, frustrated, and helpless to change your lot in life.


In my next post in this series on how you can create meaningful change in your life, I will explore the Five Building Blocks of Positive Life Change.

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## *Types of Problems People with Mental Disabilities May Have on the Job*

The following is a list of areas where some people may experience problems. This is not meant to be a clinical or diagnostic tool; it is simply a guide to help identify the types of problems you may have on the job and help discover what you may need as accommodations. You may wish to underline or highlight any of the statements you feel apply to you.

### **Psychosocial skills:**

- It is difficult for me to ask for help.
- I tend to stay away from other people at work.
- Sometimes I feel withdrawn even when I'm around people.
- I'm frequently rejected by others at work.
- I usually reject most people I work with.
- It's easy to misinterpret what others say or do.
- Sometimes I don't understand what people mean or why they act the way they do.

### **Communication:**

- I talk so much sometimes people have to interrupt me.
- Sometimes I speak so softly no one hears me.
- Others have said they don't understand what I'm trying to say.
- I would much rather read directions than listen to them.
- Sometimes I don't answer others or respond with only one or two words.
- I interrupt others quite a bit.
- It can be difficult to listen to and understand others.

### **Behavior:**

- I sometimes act without thinking.
- I can talk too much or too loud.
- Sometimes strange things just happen so it's hard to meet deadlines.
- Sometimes I threaten to quit when I'm angry.
- I blame others for my mistakes or find some excuse.
- Sometimes my behaviors seem strange or different to others.

### **4. Perception:**

- It can be hard to understand others' words.
- Sometimes I hear voices or sounds others don't.
- I get suspicious of others at work.
- Sometimes I believe things others don't.
- If I explain what I see or think, people usually don't agree with me.

### **5. Thinking or Learning:**

- Sometimes it's difficult for me to concentrate for very long.
- It can be hard to learn new information at times.
- I am easily distracted.
- It can be difficult to shift my focus from one task to another.
- Sometimes it's hard to think things through.
- I can only do one thing at a time.
- If I have a task I usually don't do, I get confused.
- I have problems making decisions.
- I often reach the wrong conclusion.

### **6. Relationships:**

- General conversations are difficult.
- I usually don't have anything to discuss with others at work or on break.
- I don't know how to act when people make statements I don't like.
- It really bothers me to hear negative comments about people with mental illnesses.
- Sometimes certain people make me feel like not going to work.
- It's difficult to disagree with someone.

### **7. Medication:**

- I get drowsy at work from my meds.
- I'm thirsty a lot.
- My vision gets blurred.
- I'm embarrassed to take medications at work.
- It's hard to remember sometimes.
- Sometimes my hands shake.

### **8. Self Care:**

- At times I don't eat very well.
- I don't sleep as much as I would like.
- I need to sleep a great deal.
- At times it's easy to skip some of my daily hygiene tasks.
- I don't take my medication as my doctor prescribes.

# **Class 16**

Internal Barriers

External Barriers

One barrier I want to work on is:

What are the steps I can take to deal with this barrier?

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

Internal Barriers

External Barriers

One barrier I want to work on is:

What are the steps I can take to deal with this barrier?

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

# Class 17

# Breaking Down Barriers

## I. PURPOSE:

To identify and explore barriers to wellness or recovery.

## II. GENERAL COMMENTS:

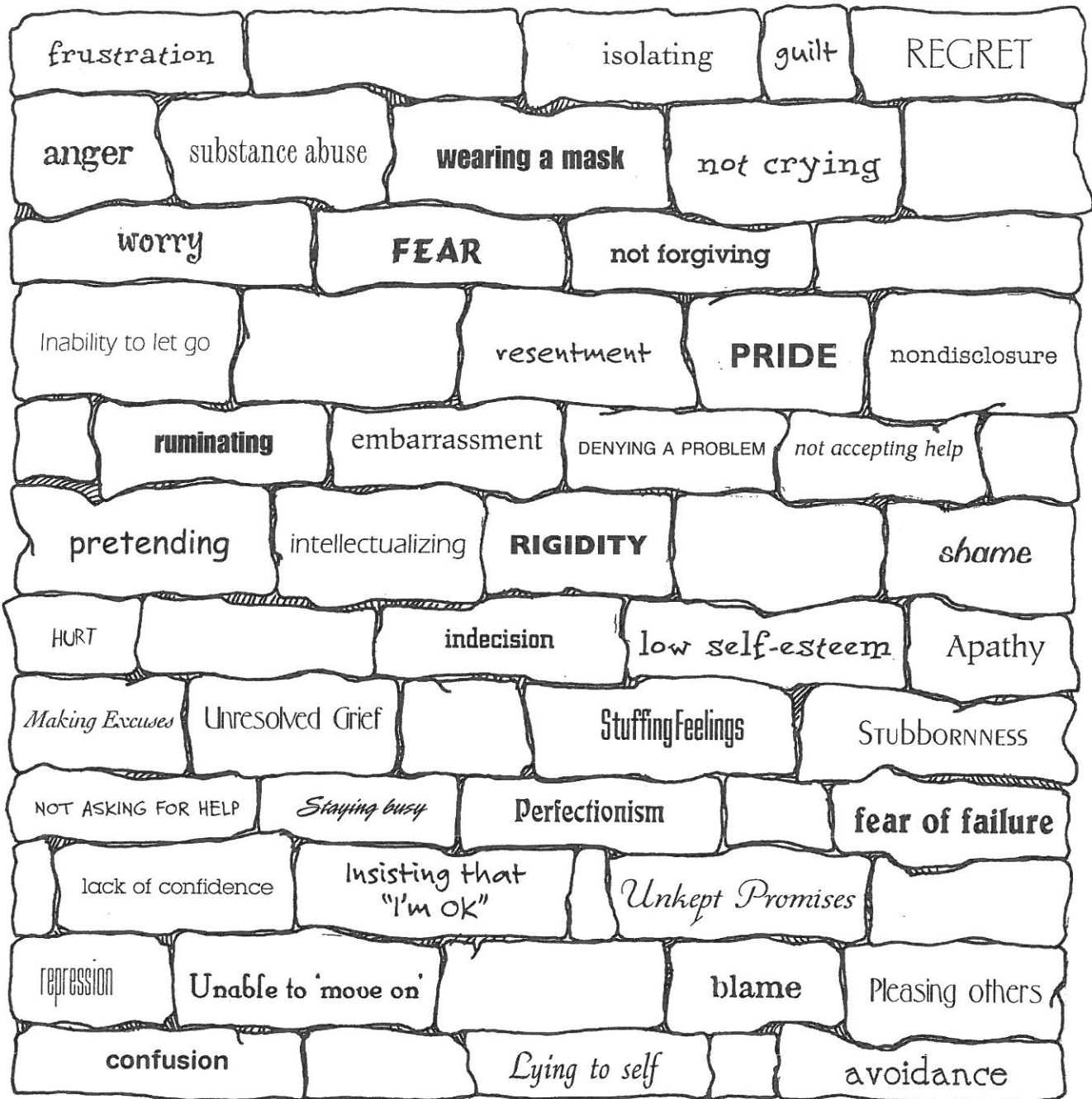
Barriers can be visually represented as bricks in a wall. Individuals working on a specific problem often-times speak of 'getting over' the problem versus 'getting through it.' We can dig under, climb over or go around the problem (the wall), but true resolution comes about by breaking the barrier, first by identifying and then by confronting it! This activity provides an opportunity to give this barrier(s) a name and work on assuming personal responsibility.

## III. POSSIBLE ACTIVITIES:

- A. 1. Ask each group member where s/he would like to 'be' (emotionally, geographically, spiritually, professionally, etc.). List these on flipchart. Answers may look like this:
  - a. Not feeling so depressed
  - b. Able to visit my family in another state
  - c. Not feeling so angry
  - d. Get a job
2. Then ask what each person's focus is, his/her goals towards wellness or recovery and what motivates him/her. Using a wipe-off board or flipchart, write responses, small enough for the facilitator to see.
3. Create a physical barrier of some sort (a large sheet of paper or other covering, as long as it is large enough to hide the written responses.)
4. Remind group members that although a barrier exists between them and their identified 'focus,' their 'focus' remains on the board. (Group leader can partially remove barrier to show participants, then return it to hide their responses).
5. Distribute handouts, markers/highlighters and pens.
6. Ask group members to identify and color a possible barrier(s) that they think (or believe) is obstructing their view, preventing progress or getting them to where they want to 'be.' Encourage group members to write unidentified personal barriers in the empty bricks.
7. Discuss how these barriers prevent progress.
8. Discuss ways on how to remove their barriers. As each participant considers and talks about a possible resolution, group leader can remove the physical barrier little by little until each group member's 'focus' is restored on the original board or flipchart.
9. Remind participants that although barriers to wellness/recovery present themselves from time to time, this does not mean a person's original focus is lost.
10. Give group five minutes to complete bottom section. Share.
- B. 1. Explain concept of group by reviewing GENERAL COMMENTS.
2. Ask each group member where s/he would like to 'be' (emotionally, geographically, spiritually, professionally, etc.). List these on flipchart. Answers may look like this:
  - a. Not feeling so depressed
  - b. Able to visit my family in another state
  - c. Not feeling so angry
  - d. Get a job
3. Then ask what each person's 'focus' is and his/her goals towards wellness or recovery. List these also.
4. Distribute handouts and pens.
5. Choose volunteers to portray how this works. Participate as needed to demonstrate the concept. Volunteer #1 identifies a 'focus' from the flipchart that is also a direction of his/hers, e.g., go to a support group on a weekly basis. Then s/he stands about six feet from the flipchart and faces it.
6. Other group members review their handouts and volunteer to help by saying aloud, one at a time, what MIGHT BE a barrier. Avoidance? Not accepting help? Anger? Low self-esteem? Then the first volunteer should sit down and allow another volunteer to stand and let group members assist them until they agree with the barrier/obstacle.
7. Repeat this for the integrative experience as many times as group wants/needs.
8. Generate group discussion, encouraging group members to explore reasons for, and consequences of, each participant's barrier, along with how it is preventing them from reaching their 'focus' or goal.
9. Discuss ways on how to remove the barrier(s).
10. Give group five minutes to complete bottom section.
11. Divide group into pairs and allow a few minutes to share insights.

Activity handout and facilitator's information submitted by Mark S. Macko, MEd Psychology in Education, BS Psychology, AAS Graphic Art & Design, Sarasota, FL. Mark is a rehabilitation counselor who counsels and case manages disabled veterans in vocational rehabilitation. His leisure interests are creative writing, 12-string guitar, CD's and music videos.

# Breaking Down Barriers



## INSIGHTS:

\_\_\_\_\_ is my biggest barrier(s)

It prevents me from \_\_\_\_\_

I can confront this barrier by \_\_\_\_\_

# Class 18

# Building on Our Strengths

**Goal:**

*Group members will identify at least one way they can improve upon a strength or skill.*

**Leader's Guide:**

1. **Review** the previous session and assignment. Praise all efforts.
2. **Announce** the topic of today's session.
3. **Establish the rationale** for today's session, saying something like, "Today we're going to talk about how we can build on our strengths. Why is it a good idea to build up our strengths? Why not just keep things as they are? Possible answers include:
  - It gives you something to work for.
  - It keeps you fresh.
  - It gives you something positive to focus on.
  - It improves your self esteem.
4. **Distribute the handout** and ask group members to take turns reading aloud.
5. **Ask group members to write** down their answers to the questions.
6. **Ask group members to share** one or more of their answers. If someone has a hard time identifying what he or she could do to build on a strength, encourage the rest of the group to offer suggestions.
7. This session focuses on building motivation; no direct skill teaching is required.
8. **Briefly summarize** what happened in the group session.
9. **Ask group members to do an assignment.** Involve group members in establishing the specific assignment. Possibilities include:
  - Plan how to take the first step towards building on your skill. Be specific about what you will do, when you will do it, and supplies that may be needed.
  - Find out information related to building on your skill. For example, find out about basketball teams you could join, or the cost of buying a basketball.
  - Take the first step towards building on your skill.
  - Help someone else in the group plan how he or she might take the first step towards building on his or her strength.
  - Help someone else in the group take a step toward building on his or her strength.
10. **Thank group members** for their participation.

# Building on Our Strengths



**Building on our strengths can give us something positive to focus on. It can also give us something to strive for. For example:**

- If you're good at basketball or another sport, you could try joining a team.
- If you're interested in politics, you could start reading a newspaper or magazine about current events, or reading another one if you already read one.
- If you play a musical instrument, you could take lessons again. Or find some other musicians to play with.
- If you are good at cooking, you could try learning to prepare something new, like baking bread or cooking a dish you never tried.
- If you are good at appreciating nature, you could visit a new park or go bird-watching.
- If you are good with animals, you could try volunteering at a zoo, veterinarian's office, or local animal shelter.

## Questions

1. What strength would you like to build on?

---

2. What could you do to build on this strength? Be as specific as possible.

---

3. What would be the first one or two steps you could take to build on this skill?

---

---





# Risking to Learn a New Skill

*A Journey of a Thousand Miles Must Begin with a Single Step.*

How does the above Chinese proverb relate to skill development? \_\_\_\_\_

Is it time for you to learn something new? A hobby? A sport? A job skill? What is it? \_\_\_\_\_

**EVERYDAY WE FACE CHALLENGES IN OUR LIVES.** Some challenges may be dialing a phone, cooking dinner, or even getting out of bed in the morning. When it comes to learning something new, it may be a difficult challenge. The important thing is to be patient and forgiving with yourself.

Types of challenges you have experienced in your life: \_\_\_\_\_

How you overcame these challenges: \_\_\_\_\_

When learning anything new, there may be stress. What are some ways you relieve stress? \_\_\_\_\_

How can your ability to use humor help you when trying to learn this new skill? \_\_\_\_\_

**DON'T PUT YOURSELF DOWN! PLEASE!** Without even realizing it, many of us put ourselves down, call ourselves names, and say things like: "I'm so stupid"; "I can't do anything right"; "Everyone thinks I'm an idiot!" That kind of self-talk really hurts and gets in the way of learning!

When you put yourself down, what do you say? \_\_\_\_\_

Examples of positive self-talk: \_\_\_\_\_

**POSITIVELY ACCEPTING OURSELVES:** An optimistic outlook about learning new things is the key to success! All of us would like to change something about ourselves. If we have a positive outlook on learning new things, we can better accept ourselves. When learning something new, we must first look at our self-acceptance and how it can impact our ability to learn.

Things I would like to change about myself: \_\_\_\_\_

Things I can't change about myself: \_\_\_\_\_

How to improve my positive outlook: \_\_\_\_\_

How can learning new things influence my ability to accept myself? \_\_\_\_\_

**LAUGHTER CAN LIFT OUR SPIRITS AND IMPROVE OUR MENTAL HEALTH.** Sometimes it is hard to laugh at ourselves, especially when we make a silly mistake. When we learn something, there is a good chance that we may make a mistake. We need to remember that we can laugh about those things and then move on!

Times I made a mistake: \_\_\_\_\_

Times when I was able to laugh at myself: \_\_\_\_\_

Ways I can laugh at myself when I mess up: \_\_\_\_\_

*You're on the way to learning a new skill!*



### **I. PURPOSE:**

To examine fears of learning a new skill and to identify the positive and negative ways of dealing with our feelings.

### **II. GENERAL COMMENTS:**

It's easy to give up on new things that we find challenging simply because we are afraid of failing. Thinking about what it takes to learn something new and then dealing with all the thoughts and feelings, is a good way to tackle and succeed!

### **III. POSSIBLE ACTIVITIES:**

- A.
  1. Distribute handouts and pens.
  2. Give group members 10-15 minutes to complete.
  3. Discuss.
  4. Ask group members to share their challenges and discuss how they overcame them.
  5. Question group about stress associated with challenges: "How did you deal with the stress?" "What did you use as stress relievers?" List input from group members on dry-erase board for all to see.
  6. Have group members share times when they put themselves down. "What are the triggers?" "What is said?"
  7. Discuss examples of self-talk.
  8. Ask the group to focus on humor: How can humor affect the way that you approach challenges? Share personal examples, if able, of when you have successfully used humor when confronted with challenges.
  9. Encourage members to examine how they deal with challenges of learning a new skill and their thoughts, emotions and feelings surrounding that situation. Process.
- B.
  1. Distribute handouts and pens.
  2. Discuss challenges and obstacles of 'risking to learn a new skill.'
  3. Pair group members according to commonalities of challenges or the type of skill to be learned.
  4. Ask pairs to come up with their own proverb or saying, to help themselves/others relate to that specific challenge.
  5. Take the proverbs or sayings and make a 'Words to Risk By' calendar, to remind each group member that throughout the year, risks can be taken with some encouragement.  
For example: "Go forth & be risky!"

Activity handout and facilitator's information submitted by Jodi Wilson Overstreet, M.Ed., LPC, NCC, Harrisburg, IL.  
Jodi manages a three County PSR program for adults with chronic mental illness, providing individual and group therapy, developing educational curriculum and organizing community education. She says "Leisure – what's that? With a son learning to create havoc – I do enjoy cooking, crafts, reading, singing, and remodeling great-grandma's house."

# Class 19

## Goal Setting

Goal setting is a very powerful technique that can yield strong returns in all areas of your life.

At its simplest level the process of setting goals and targets allows you to choose where you want to go in life. By knowing precisely what you want to achieve, you know what you have to concentrate on and improve, and what is merely a distraction. Goal setting gives you long-term vision and short-term motivation. It focusses your acquisition of knowledge and helps you to organise your resources.

By setting sharp, clearly defined goals, you can measure and take pride in the achievement of those goals. You can see forward progress in what might previously have seemed a long pointless grind.

By setting goals you can:

- Achieve more
- Improve performance
- Increase your motivation to achieve
- Increase your pride and satisfaction in your achievements
- Improve your self-confidence
- Plan to eliminate attitudes that hold you back and cause unhappiness

Research (Damon Burton, 1983) has shown that people who use goal-setting effectively:

- suffer less from stress and anxiety
- concentrate better
- show more self-confidence
- perform better
- are happier and more satisfied.

### Goal Setting Helps Self-Confidence

By setting goals, and measuring their achievement, you are able to see what you have done and what you are capable of. The process of achieving goals and seeing their achievement gives you the confidence and self-belief that you need that you will be able to achieve higher and more difficult goals.

Providing that you have the self-discipline to carry it through, goal setting is also relatively easy. The following section on goal setting will give you effective guidelines to help you to use this technique effectively.

## Where Goal Setting Can Go Wrong

Goal setting can go wrong for a number of reasons:

- Outcome goals can be set instead of performance goals. Where you are using outcome goals, and you fail to achieve the goal for reasons outside your control, this can be very dispiriting and can lead to loss of enthusiasm and feelings of failure. Always set performance goals.
- Goals can be set unrealistically high. When a goal is perceived to be unreachable, no effort will be made to achieve it. Set realistic goals.
- Conversely goals can be set so low that you feel no challenge or benefit in achieving the goal. Setting goals has been a waste of time. Always set goals that are challenging.
- Goals can be so vague that they are useless: it is difficult to know whether vague goals have been achieved. If achievement cannot be measured, then your self-confidence will not benefit from goal setting, nor can you observe progress towards a greater goal. Set precise, quantitative goals.
- Goal setting can be unsystematic, sporadic and disorganised. Here goals will be forgotten, achievement of goals will not be measured and feedback will not occur into new goals. The major benefits of goal setting have been lost. Be organised and regular in the way that you use goal setting.
- Too many unprioritised goals may be set, leading to a feeling of overload. Remember that you deserve time to relax and enjoy being human.

Where goal setting does go wrong, not only are the benefits of goal setting lost, but the whole process of goal setting can fall into disrepute.

By avoiding these problems, and setting goals effectively as described in the previous article, you can achieve and maintain strong forward momentum.

### The 'Quantum Leap' Approach

One approach to goal setting for yourself and other people is the 'Quantum Leap' approach. This tries to force intense activity by setting a goal that will need a 'quantum leap' in activity to achieve it. This is a dangerous technique that should be used with care - it is very easy for the whole process of goal-setting to fall into disrepute where quantum leap goals are not met. Similarly if you are really not convinced that a goal is attainable, you will not put effort into achieving it. Managers using this approach should take care that they are not 'shot down' by someone firmly requesting information on how a quantum leap goal should be achieved.

# To Risk or Not to Risk ???.....



..... Risk taking allows the opportunity for growth, change, and experience.....

..... Remember that to risk nothing in life is to risk everything.....



..... Self-esteem enhancement relies on challenging oneself to grow.....  
therefore, to risk.....

..... Life is full of risks ready to be taken..... choices ready to be noticed.....  
and skills ready to be strengthened.....



..... Which path will you follow?.....

I have the opportunity to ...	If I Risk		If I Don't Risk	
	I may gain	I may lose	I may gain	I may lose

# "GOPHER" IT!

## I. PURPOSE:

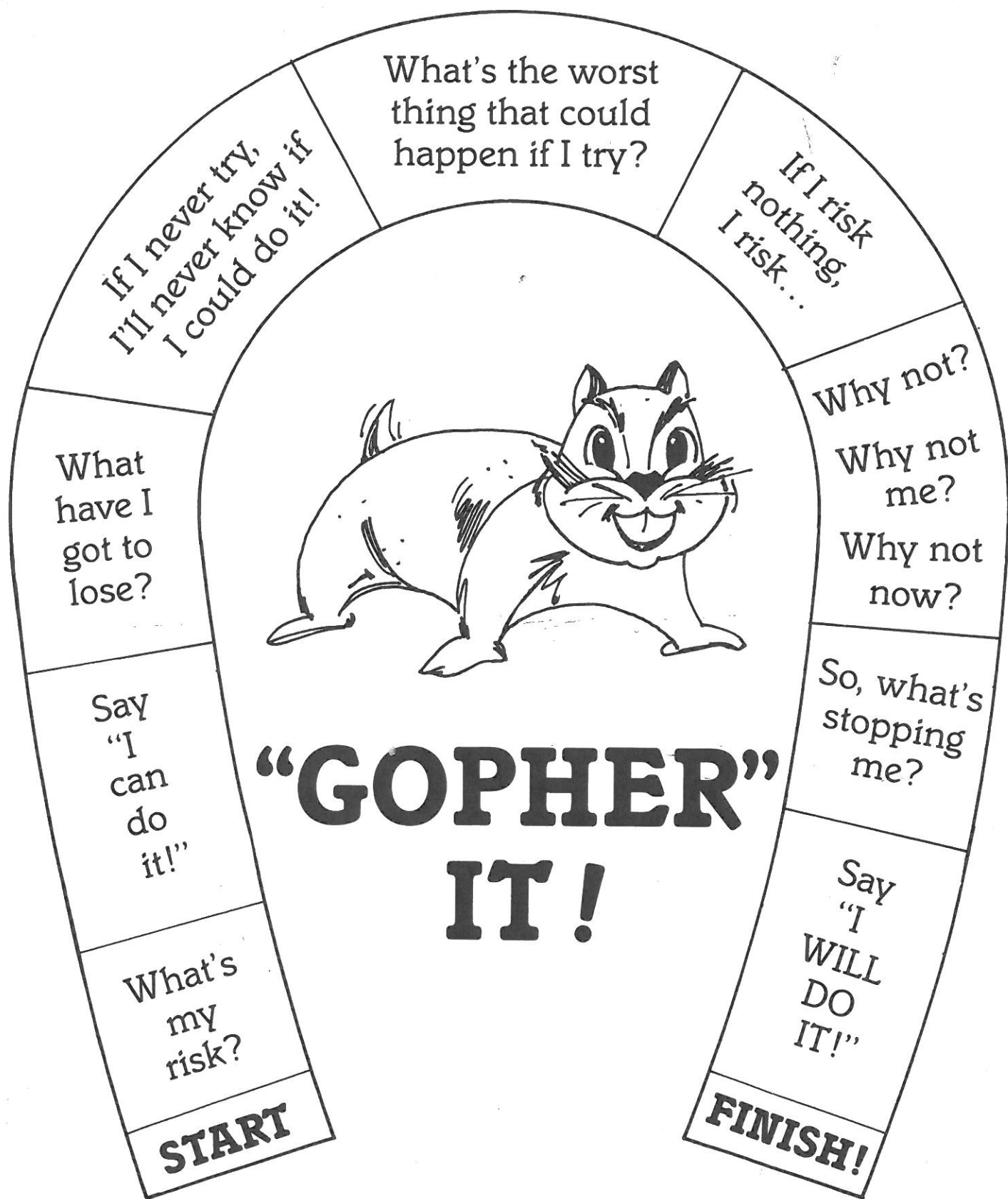
To promote risk taking.

## II. GENERAL COMMENTS:

The "go-for-it" pathway offers helpful questions and reminders inspiring a risk-taking attitude.

## III. POSSIBLE ACTIVITIES:

- A. 1. Read the handout aloud to the group, beginning at "start" and completing at "finish."
- 2. Facilitate brainstorming of hypothetical risks and discuss each step from start to finish.
- 3. Process values of risk taking.
- B. 1. Instruct group members to choose one risk they face and write it under the gopher.
- 2. Encourage members to write possible responses along the horseshoe and then include a plan or goal on the bottom of the page.
- 3. Facilitate discussion as individuals share their plan or goal.
- 4. Process values of risk taking.



can be confident and comfortable in its achievement. If you consistently fail to meet a measurable goal, then you can adjust it or analyse the reason for failure and take appropriate action to improve skills.

### **Set Realistic Goals**

Goals may be set unrealistically high for the following reasons:

- **Other people:** Other people (parents, media, society) can set unrealistic goals for you, based on what they want. Often this will be done in ignorance of your goals, desires and ambitions.
- **Insufficient information:** If you do not have a clear, realistic understanding of what you are trying to achieve and of the skills and knowledge to be mastered, it is difficult to set effective and realistic goals.
- **Always expecting your best performance:** Many people base their goals on their best performance, however long ago that was. This ignores the inevitable backsliding that can occur for good reasons, and ignores the factors that led to that best performance. It is better to set goals that raise your average performance and make it more consistent.
- **Lack of respect for self:** If you do not respect your right to rest, relaxation and pleasure in life then you risk burnout.

### **Setting Goals Too Low**

Alternatively goals can be set too low because of:

- **Fear of failure:** If you are frightened of failure you will not take the risks needed for optimum performance. As you apply goal setting and see the achievement of goals, your self-confidence should increase, helping you to take bigger risks. Know that failure is a positive thing: it shows you areas where you can improve your skills and performance.
- **Taking it too easy:** It is easy to take the reasons for not setting goals unrealistically high as an excuse to set them too low. If you're not prepared to stretch yourself and work hard, then you are extremely unlikely to achieve anything of any real worth.

### **Setting Goals at the Right Level**

Setting goals at the correct level is a skill that is acquired by practice.

You should set goals so that they are slightly out of your immediate grasp, but not so far that there is no hope of achieving them: no-one will put serious effort into achieving a goal that they believe is unrealistic. However, remember that the belief that a goal is unrealistic may be incorrect. Such a belief can be changed by effective use of imagery.

Personal factors such as tiredness, other commitments and the need for rest, etc. should be taken into account when goals are set.

Now review the goals you have set, and then measure them against the points above. Adjust them to meet the recommendations and then review them. You should now be able

# Class 20

## Goal Setting Activity

### STEAM: Writing goal Statements

**Learning Objective:** To illustrate the need for writing and taking action towards achieving set goals.

**Procedure:**

STEAM represents five basic procedures.

1. **S= Specific.** It is important that all goal statements are concise and specific.
2. **T= Time Determined.** It is also important that goals have an appropriately timed duration. The goal should not drag on without any challenge of its completion. However, it should also not be frustratingly short on time either.
3. **E= Ensure Success.** While it is valuable to set goals that challenge your abilities. It is also valuable to ensure success. Goals must be realistic and achievable so that your time and energy are well spent.
4. **A= Action-Oriented.** You must be willing to take action when you write a goal statement. It is impossible to accomplish a goal without taking action.
5. **M= Measurable.** A goal statement must be measurable. If a goal can not be evaluated, then it is impossible to know you have reached success.

The results of this method can best be illustrated with an example.

**S=** I will raise my grade in math from a C to a B+.

**T=** I will follow this plan through the remainder of the grading period.

**E=** I have the energy and I am willing to put forth the effort necessary to accomplish this goal. It is within my ability to achieve this goal. My success is ensured with determination.

**A=** I will reach this goal by studying for two hours a day on new material and a half hour a day on problems in recent units that I struggled through. Any problems that I can not work out on my own, I will ask someone for assistance.

**M=** I will know that I accomplished my goal when I receive my report card with a B+ on it.

The components of achieving goals are as follows.

practice this method  
on board!

# STEAM

S...Specific

---

---

---

T...Time Determined

---

---

---

E...Ensure Success

---

---

---

A...Action Oriented

---

---

---

M...Measurable

---

---

---

My goal is .....

.....

The reasons I have not achieved this goal are:

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

What positive consequence can be in doing this?

.....

.....

.....

What am I responsible for? What can I actually do now?

.....

.....

.....

Name three possible solutions

.....

.....

.....

Visualize the goal

.....

.....

Who will support me, challenge me when I offer excuses?

.....

.....

# Class 21

# To Risk or Not to Risk ???.....

## I. PURPOSE:

To promote decision making by evaluating risks to take and risks to decline.

## II. GENERAL COMMENTS:

In every risk, there is something to gain and to lose. If no risk is taken, there is also something to gain and to lose.

## III. POSSIBLE ACTIVITIES:

A. 1. Explain with the following examples:

I have the opportunity to	If I risk		If I don't risk	
	I may gain	I may lose	I may gain	I may lose
Start a business	1. money 2. prestige 3. self-confidence 4. autonomy 5. experience	1. money 2. time	1. sense of stability 2. time	1. sense of adventure 2. opportunity for greater job satisfaction 3. respect for myself 4. creativity

2. Encourage group members to contribute hypothetical or possible risks and write them on separate strips of paper. Put in "hat."

3. Instruct group members to choose one from the "hat." Each member takes a turn and reads his/hers, offering input for each column of the handout.

4. Process benefits of handout by eliciting feedback from group members.

B. 1. Instruct each group member to complete handout with personal situations.

2. Collect and read each one aloud.

3. Instruct group members to guess the author of each and offer feedback.

4. Process benefits of handout by eliciting feedback from group members.

# Class 22

# Tools For Change

can be used to . . .

## I. PURPOSE:

To identify and learn the language needed to take responsibility for changes in our lives.

## II. GENERAL COMMENTS:

People often resist taking responsibility for making choices that might cause change. This might be due to poor self-esteem, lack of personal resources, fear, etc. Taking responsibility for making changes includes looking at inner tools we have and the tools we need to make significant changes.

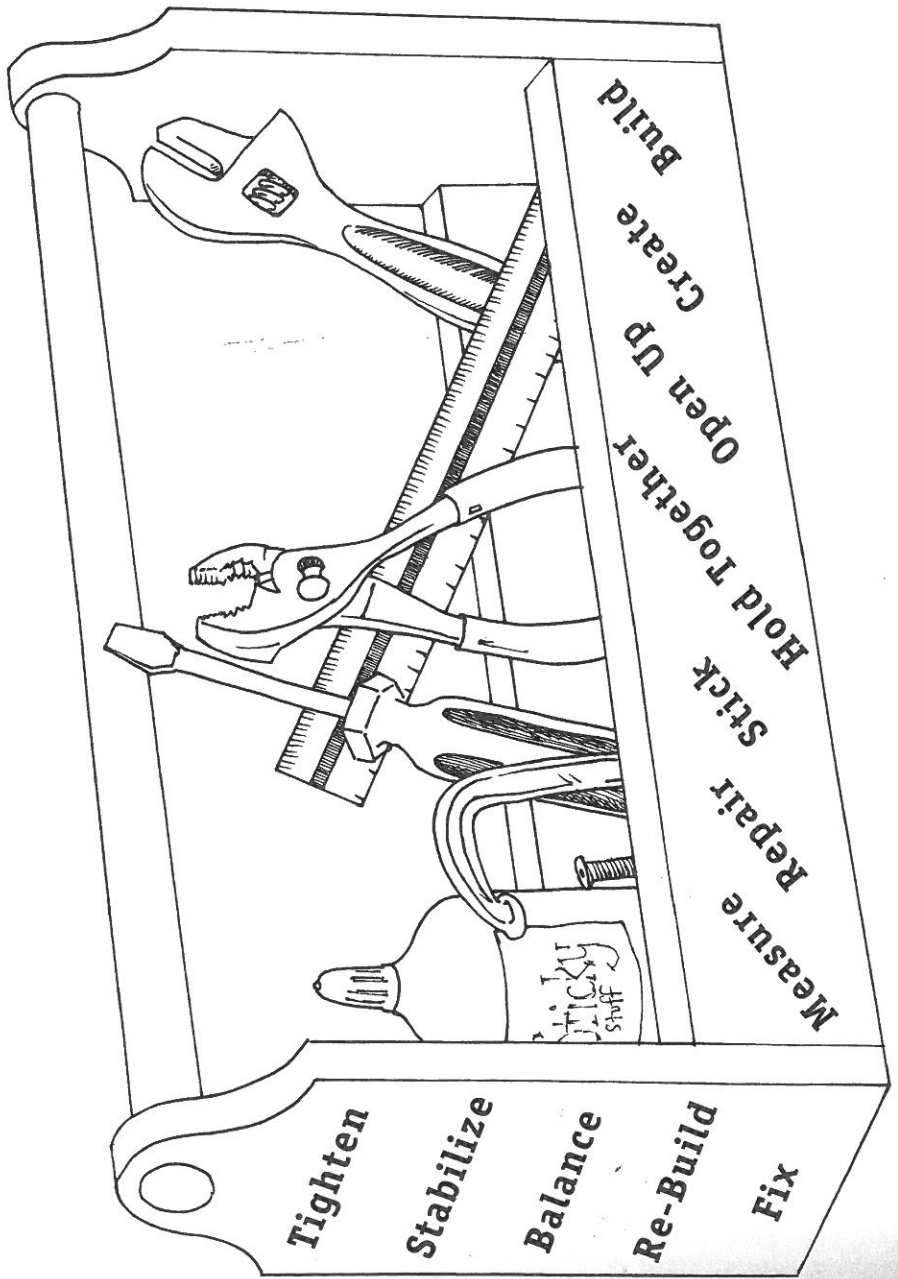
## III. POSSIBLE ACTIVITIES:

- A.
  1. Facilitate discussion on purpose of 'tools.' Identify several things tools are used for, e.g., screwdrivers tighten things up, levels provide balance. Use actual tools for props if safe environment.
  2. Distribute handouts and pens.
  3. Encourage each member to choose three tools from the toolbox (or draw one/some of their own) and identify ways they may use these tools in their own life. Offer group members example if needed: "To make a significant change in my life, I need a \_\_\_\_\_ (hammer) to \_\_\_\_\_ (pound into myself that I need to be accepting and not judgmental.)" "To make a significant change in my life, I need a \_\_\_\_\_ (bottle of glue) to \_\_\_\_\_ (stick to my commitments)." Ask group members to write own responses on the right side of the handout.
  4. Have members share their answers when completed.
  5. Facilitate supportive problem solving focusing on ways to obtain or use these tools to make significant changes.
- B.
  1. Facilitate discussion on taking responsibility to create changes in our own lives. Discuss changes people desire and obstacles to taking responsibility to make these changes.
  2. Use an example suggested from the group to illustrate concept or use the following: "A significant change someone wants to make is being more honest with a family member. Every time I'm honest I get in trouble."
  3. Discuss the 'tools' we need to begin to make changes. Ask someone in the group to find a tool that might assist with this and to explain. "The jar opener will help you open your mouth when you need to." "The level might keep you balanced and not going overboard in sharing everything you're thinking and not being hurtful."
  4. Distribute handouts and pens. Instruct group members to complete individually.
  5. Divide group into pairs and give a few minutes for sharing.
  6. Process with group members ways of finding or using these necessary tools for change.

Activity handout and facilitator's information submitted by Mary K. Tilden-Walker, B.S.W., L.S.W., Silver Lake, OH. Mary is a school-based consultant, working with children and adolescents – assessments, short-term counseling, referrals for follow-up services, group work and classroom presentations keep her busy! Most of Mary's leisure time is spent with her children and involvement in their activities.

# Tools for Change

can be used to ...



To make a significant  
change in my life,  
I need a \_\_\_\_\_  
to \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.

To make a significant  
change in my life,  
I need a \_\_\_\_\_  
to \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.

To make a significant  
change in my life,  
I need a \_\_\_\_\_  
to \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.

# Class 23

# Achieving Your Goals –Moving Past Barriers and Resistance

by Karen Maleck-Whiteley

**I'll be honest. I had the hardest time getting to this article.** And then when I did, I tried writing it at least four different ways before this version. When I stopped to consider what was going on, I realized I was experiencing some real resistance. Fittingly, I was resistant to writing about resistance. Do any of you have examples like this in your lives? Take a moment and consider your current goals and action plans. Notice where you seem to be stuck, and how resistance presents itself in your life. To get you started, here are some "resistance indicators" you might notice both inside and outside of yourself:

Forms of resistance you may recognize:

- Questioning the goal
- Indecisiveness
- Procrastination
- Having many other things that keep getting in the way
- Unconscious stress coping habits intensify (nail biting, smoking, eating)
- Emotions flare up (you are angry at inappropriate times, depressed, anxious)
- You want to sleep
- You simply forget to do things on your action plan
- You forget you even had a goal
- You get sick
- Things happen to you in the outer world (your car breaks down, a relative unexpectedly comes to visit, you lose your organizer)

## Resistance as a gift

The good news is that barrier moments can be a true gift. Whenever I notice that I am stuck, even if it is in a relatively small arena of action, I stop to think about what else is going on in my life. I ask myself the question "What is it I am avoiding that needs to be done?" Nearly always, there is something larger or more important involved. In my case this time, I am working with my husband on another business. We are very close to incorporating, signing a lease for a space, and taking on a large business loan. It is very exciting, but at the same time it feels really risky and scary. Barriers to my time are presenting themselves everywhere. I have had to devote more hours to consulting than planned, I have experienced a car accident, and some big challenges with my child's school came up. Ironically, I have also been asked to speak about the topic of resistance and breaking through barriers three times in the past month. There are no accidents in life. Clearly this is a topic I am supposed to confront and move through soon.

**Every life sometimes echoes the classic archetype of the Hero's Journey.** Whenever we are getting closer to key points on our path to a significant goal, the barriers or "tests" we are given seem to become more numerous and difficult. The good news is that once you recognize what is going on, you gain power in these situations. You can actually learn to take resistance as a good sign. It signals that you are close to working through something important. You can and should use it to motivate yourself to keep going.

**So what do you do, when faced with harsh resistance or a tough barrier?** As Yoda said in Star Wars, "Do or do not. There is no try." This is really the bottom line when you are stuck. You can either stop or go. At every point it is a choice, no matter what is going on around you. If a goal is truly important to you, you can figure out some way to move forward no matter what. It doesn't matter how small the step you take is, the point is to somehow move.

## Ways to move when you are stuck:

- Back up and regroup or to revise your plan; move sideways if need be
- Change your tactics or approach, look for another path
- Get support

- Take smaller steps
- Do it anyway

In the Hero's Journey, the darkest moment occurs just before the biggest breakthrough, which leads to the ultimate reward. In looking back after going through the hard parts, the Hero notices that the situations always seem impossible before, and then appear much easier on the other side. She is glad she took the step forward, even though it was scary, and she is ultimately changed for the better having done it.

In my case, I decided to take my own advice and stop avoiding the work I needed to do on the business. I pushed through much of it in one day, and actually enjoyed a lot of it. After that, I found that I had much less fear about moving forward on the next steps, even though there are many. I am getting help on some, and actively scheduling others. What I had so dreaded was not nearly so bad once I got into it. Magically, this article has now flowed much more easily, I have booked several new Hypnotherapy clients, and I am feeling much more hopeful.

So, in this time of new growth, increasing sunlight, and spring-cleaning, I encourage you to be brave. Choose one of the places where you are feeling thwarted or stuck, and be a Hero. Use any of the steps listed above to move forward. Don't be surprised to find that even the smallest step can un-jam what appeared to be the largest of barriers.

# REINFORCERS

## I. PURPOSE:

To increase knowledge of external and internal reinforcers.

To commit to completing a desired task by creating external reinforcers and recognizing internal ones.

## II. GENERAL COMMENTS:

It is important to recognize external reinforcers as "outside influences" that one can implement to achieve a desired task, and internal reinforcers as "natural influences" that result as the desired task is achieved.

## III. POSSIBLE ACTIVITIES:

- A. 1. Explain concept of external/internal reinforcers using example provided.
2. Encourage group members to fill in 5 desired tasks and their external and internal reinforcers.
3. Facilitate discussion using members' examples.
4. Process meaning of external and internal reinforcers and their importance.
- B. 1. Explain concept of external/internal reinforcers using example provided.
2. Encourage group members to fill in 5 desired tasks and their external and internal reinforcers.
3. Collect handouts from all group members.
4. Read one example from each handout encouraging members to guess the author and to elicit feedback.
5. Process meaning of external and internal reinforcers and their importance.

# REINFORCERS

(rē·in·fōrs'ers) Things or ways to strengthen yourself to accomplish a desired task.

LIST 5 DESIRED TASKS, EXTERNAL REINFORCERS AND INTERNAL REINFORCERS.

DESIRED TASK	EXTERNAL REINFORCERS	INTERNAL REINFORCERS
<i>I will stop smoking.</i>	<i>I will buy myself a "treat" after one day.</i>	<i>I will feel and be healthier.</i>
	<i>I will reward myself by going to a</i>	<i>I won't worry about future diseases.</i>
	<i>movie after one week.</i>	<i>I'll be less offensive to others.</i>
		<i>I'll get attention from others.</i>
		<i>I'll save money.</i>
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		

# Class 24

# Motivational Messages

## I. PURPOSE:

To provide written support and motivation between group members and provide a positive memory of the group experience.

## II. GENERAL COMMENTS:

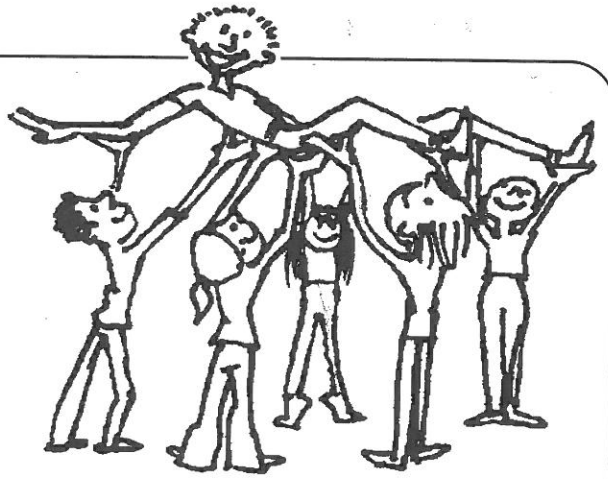
The power of positive feedback is energizing and touching, especially when it is given by people who have spent some meaningful time together, addressing an important issue. This exercise is suitable for use at the end of various types of groups such as self-esteem, weight loss, stress management and assertiveness. It is designed for the final session of a closed group series.

## III. POSSIBLE ACTIVITIES:

- A. 1. Distribute handouts and pens. (Clipboards if not seated at a table.)
2. Instruct everyone to write their name in the space "Motivational Message for \_\_\_\_\_."
- (Groups often appreciate when the group leader participates – so you might fill one out yourself.)
3. Instruct individuals to write a message to each group member, and that the only rules are that the message must be:
- a. positive
  - b. true
- Otherwise the message can say anything. Examples include one word describing a strength you see in that person, a message thanking him/her for something s/he said that touched or helped you, or some change you have seen that person make.
4. Ask the group to pass their papers to the person beside them. Provide time for everyone to write his or her messages. (It usually takes people longer for the first one or two.)
5. Then, instruct group members to pass the handout to the next person, and allow time to write.
6. Continue until the page is returned to its owner. Continue on the back if necessary.
7. Before they read their own, ask participants to write a message to themselves in the space at the bottom of the page.
8. Allow people to read their own.
9. Invite people to respond to the group, if they want.
10. Encourage participants to keep and review the messages. Explain it is a way of 'taking their group with them.'
- B. 1. Discuss how motivational messages can serve to 'keep us on track'. Offer examples of messages of hope and discuss how this might feel to the recipient.
2. Distribute handouts and pens.
3. Divide group into pairs.
4. Instruct individuals to write a message to his or her partner, and that the only rules are that the message must be:
- a. positive
  - b. true
- Otherwise the message can say anything. Examples include one word describing a strength you see in that person, a message thanking him/her for something s/he said that touched or helped you, or some change you have seen that person make.
5. Instruct partners to return handout and give time for each to read either silently or aloud.
6. Allow a few minutes for the original owners to write the two strengths that they acknowledge that will help them 'stay on track.'
7. Problem solve how to use this handout for future motivational support.

Group name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_



# Motivational Messages for \_\_\_\_\_

My group members gave this list of strengths, words of thanks, and messages of hope to me... with a guarantee of truth and honesty.

I will review this when I need support and motivation to stay on track:


Two strengths that I have, and must use, to help me stay on track:
