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# SESSION 10

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## Objectives:

- To understand the distinction between responsibility and guilt.
- To recognize that perfectionism is a trap just as negative thinking is a trap.
- To recognize the importance of taking risks and to develop some skills for more effectively choosing a course of action.
- To understand and more effectively manage cognitive dissonance.
- To recognize and value personal power.
- To acknowledge themselves for participating and getting value from participation in the program.

## Session Outline:

- Personal Responsibility
- Perfectionism
- Taking Risks
- Cognitive dissonance
- Power
- Graduation

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## **Updating**

Since our last session, how many of you noticed the effect other people had on you by what they said or how they behaved? Did you feel you were in control of your reactions to them?

Today we're going to put together some of the things we've been talking about in our sessions and see how to take greater responsibility for ourselves.

## **Personal Responsibility**

What is responsibility?

Is it the same as guilt or blame?

There is a lot of confusion about responsibility. Grownups mix it up with guilt and blame. They mistakenly think that saying, "I am responsible for what I do and say," means the same thing as, "I am to blame if something goes wrong." or "I will feel guilty if things don't go the way I planned."

To be responsible doesn't mean to be guilty or to blame. No one has total control, but you are responsible for what you do and say.

You can also be responsible for how things affect you on the inside and what you will do as a result.

If you can understand that and make it true for yourself, it will be much harder for other people to take away your sense of power and control.

We've talked about many techniques and ideas, but only you can decide which ones you want to use in your own life. No one else can do that for you. And remember, whatever you choose, there will be consequences.

## **Perfectionism**

Who can tell me what it means to be a perfectionist?

Do any of you think you do that to yourselves?

It's okay to want to do things well and to be the best you can be.

But that involves being aware of your limitations. If you expect yourself to be perfect, you trap yourself. You become afraid to try new things because you want to be able to do them well.

No one is perfect, so this is a trap that really limits us in life, keeping us from trying new things.

Let's do this exercise to discover how much of a perfectionist you are?

### **Exercise:**

Hand out a piece of paper to each participant.

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Using the chart, as I read a statement, you decide what number value to give the statement. There are no right or wrong answers. Just whatever seems true for you.

Read the following statements:

1. If I don't expect the very most from myself, I won't be good enough.
2. People won't think much of me if I make mistakes.
3. If I can't do something really well, I won't do it at all.
4. I get really upset with myself when I make mistakes.
5. If I try hard enough, I can do anything.
6. I try to hide my weaknesses and childish thoughts.
7. I don't make the same mistake twice.
8. Being as good as everybody else isn't good enough for me.
9. Failing at something makes me think less of myself as a person.
10. If I am hard on myself for my failures, I'll do better in the future.

Total the scores so pluses and minuses cancel each other out.

**Flip chart 28**

- ✓ Perfectionism:
- ✓ +2 = very true about me
- ✓ +1 = sort of true about me
- ✓ 0 = don't know
- ✓ -1 = not very true about me
- ✓ -2 = absolutely not true about me

An above zero score indicates a tendency toward perfectionism.

This isn't good or bad but can signal an opportunity to look at how you think about yourself and what you do. If your tendency toward perfectionism costs you too much, if you feel dissatisfied with yourself a lot of the time, there are a few things you can do to bring yourself more into balance.

Remember that balance is important to maximize self-esteem and accomplishment.

## **TAKING RISKS**

Each day we have opportunities to either take risks, or to choose to stick with what we know and feel most comfortable with.

Most people are a little bit afraid to take risks, to try something new. I'm not talking about wrestling

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**alligators or skydiving. I'm talking about going to a party, meeting new people, trying new foods. All people feel nervous about new things.**

**For example, how many would rather go home and watch television than go over to a new friends house?**

**How many would rather play with old friends at recess than get to know a new kid.**

**It is natural to want to stick with what we know. But a lot of the real excitement in life is in trying something new — in taking a risk.**

**There are some skills that we can learn to make it easier for us to take risks — to be open to new experiences.**

**Flip chart 29****Risk-taking or Being Alive!!!**

- 1. Chunk-down.**
- 2. Make mistakes.**
- 3. Observe and rethink.**
- 4. Keep moving.**
- 5. Engage others.**
- 6. Acknowledge yourself.**
- 7. Know when to let go.**

Can any of you think of an area that you feel is risky in your own life?

Some examples might include:

talking with someone new  
going back to school  
breaking up with someone  
asking for help  
quitting a bad habit

Would you be willing for us to work with it as a group using the steps we've just talked about?

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Choose an example and talk through the following steps:

**First ask yourself, "Is this something I am committed to doing?"**

**If the answer is "Not really," what do you think your chances of success are?**

**And how will you feel about yourself when you fail to do something you weren't really committed to in the first place?**

**If your answer is "Yes," go ahead and work through the steps.**

- *Chunk-down:* break your goals into small steps so you can succeed lots of times on the way to where you want to go.
- *Make mistakes:* If you're not making mistakes, you're not learning. Making mistakes is positive if you look and learn and congratulate yourself for taking the risk.
- *Observe and rethink:* Learn from the mistakes you make. Look at whether you want to keep moving toward your goal or change that goal slightly.
- *Keep moving:* Don't get stuck because one thing didn't work. Experiment, find another way to get where you want to go. Let go of what happened yesterday and look at what you want to have happen today.
- *Engage others:* Working toward a goal alone is not much fun. Share with other people what you are trying to do.



- *Acknowledge yourself:* Every day that you learn something or try something new or have a new thought, you grow.
- *Know when to let go:* If you see that the goal is impossible or that you simply don't want it enough to keep going, let go of it. Remember break-downs!

## Cognitive dissonance

Cognitive dissonance is when you have feelings on both sides of a subject, you have thoughts pulling you more than one way.

How does it feel when you do try something new?

We talked about anxiety and how feeling confused or frightened about changes or new experiences can fill you with anxiety.

This is important to understand because many people feel frightened by the uncomfortableness. They worry that they are going in the wrong direction or doing something wrong.

A good way to help resolve anxiety and dissonant thoughts about taking a risk is to quickly ask yourself a few questions:

1. What do I really want? (You need to be as specific as possible in answering this question.)
2. Is there anything else? Do I have a hidden agenda? If there is a hidden agenda, admit it and

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then choose whether or not to make that call or take the action.

3. What's the worst thing that could happen?
4. What is the best thing that could happen? Is it worth the risk for that possibility?
5. Is what you are about to do going to hurt the other person? If so, you may want to reconsider.
6. Do you have a right to do it?

**Think of a time when you did take a risk.**

Ask for an example from group.

**Consider what happened looking at the things on the following list.**

1. Acknowledge yourself for having taken the risk.
2. Look at whether the worst thing you could imagine happened.
3. Look at whether the best thing you could imagine happened.
4. Look at whether you got what you wanted.
5. Look at whether or not you learned anything.
6. Look at how you got over your fear and uncomfortableness to move ahead. Remember that so you can use it in the future.

**Next time you want to take a risk, think about what worked the last time and use that to give yourself courage for the next time.**

## POWER

Taking risks and recognizing personal responsibility, making choices in your life and dealing with the consequences are all part of being a powerful human being.

Who can tell me what you think personal power is?

Do you have power? How is a person powerful?

### Flip chart 30

**Power means:**

**the ability or capacity to act effectively, the ability to exercise control, forcefulness, effectiveness,**

**To be powerful means:**

**having the ability to exert power, effective, potent.**

When we speak of learning to be powerful, we are speaking of learning to exercise control, responsibility, decision-making, communication, to achieve results.

When we speak of a powerful human being, we mean a person who understands and is able to use all the skills they possess to make their lives, and the lives of those around them, more satisfying and effective.

In situations where you don't have real control, you can still control how you *deal* with the situation.

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For example, you cannot be responsible for whether or not it rains at your picnic, but you can be responsible for whether you continue to have fun or let the rain spoil your day.

You cannot be responsible for something like your mom or dad losing their job, but you can be responsible for how you act in response to it. You can choose to be upset and complain and make life harder or you can choose to be sympathetic and help out by making life easier for them, by not asking for things you don't really need.

You cannot be responsible for your grandparents getting more grouchy when they are sick, but you can be responsible for being nicer to them, perhaps quieter when they are resting.

**You are the only person who can be responsible for what you say and do.**

**The choices you make determine how much power you have in your own life, what you achieve and how you relate to other people.**

**If you don't know you are making choices that affect the way things turn out, you won't feel like you have any power. You will feel like a victim, unable to control what happens to you and how you feel.**

**How many of you now feel you have more control in your life than you did a few weeks ago?**

**How many of you feel you have more power to shape what happens in your life than you did a few weeks ago?**

## **Graduation**

**We're ready for our graduation ceremony.**

**Hand out sticker sheets.**

**First I'd like you to look at each person in the room in turn. Write their name and then write something that you like or admire or think is special about that person.**

**Instructors do this too. You should be included on the participants list as well. Everyone will have a sticker for each person in the group.**

**Now write your name and something that you like, admire or think is special about yourself.**

**Now everyone stand and move about the room putting the stickers on the back of each person.**

**This will take a few minutes.**

**One at a time now I will hand out the graduation certificates. I will read the first person's stickers as we paste them on their graduation certificate or on another piece of paper whichever you prefer. Then that person will do the same thing for the next person until we get all the way around.**

**Each of you is now a graduate of The CHALLENGE Program.**

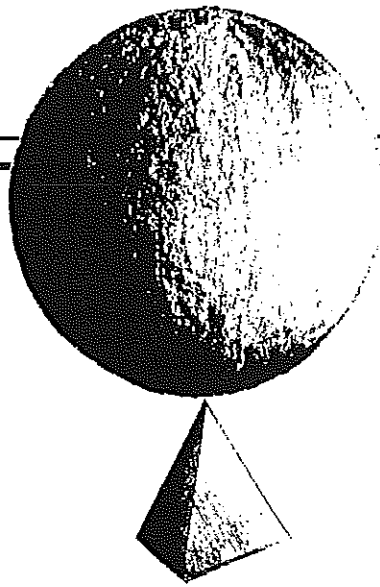
**Anytime you are feeling badly about yourself or unsure of yourself or depressed, I want you to get your certificate out and read all the special things that have been said about you and be reminded that you are loved,**

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that you are special and that you can be and do whatever you work for.

As you get your things together, be sure you take time to communicate any last things you want to communicate to other members of the group so you will feel like the class is completely finished for you.

Any personal comments you wish to make as group leader.



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*is a graduate of*

# **CHALLENGE**

**For adolescents and young adults**

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\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Trainer

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Dear Parents,

Welcome to Session 10 of the CHALLENGE Program.

While taking risks is a natural part of life and something we do every day, it is something we can learn to do more effectively. Talk with your children about the risks you take, how you feel as you are trying to accomplish the goals you've set in your life and how you can support their goals. Acknowledge how scary risk-taking can be and how rewarding it can also be.

There is a lot of confusion about responsibility. Many people mix it up with guilt and blame. To be responsible means to be accountable. Children can learn to take personal responsibility for their lives by understanding that they choose the things they do, what they say and how things that happen will affect them.

Power is essential to every human being and this program has very much been about giving your children power. When we speak of being powerful, we are speaking of learning to exercise control, responsibility, decision-making and communication to achieve the results we sought.

This is especially important to the children in this Program. If they don't know they are making choices that effect the way things turn out, they won't feel they have any power. They will feel unable to control what happens to them or how they feel.

Finally, each of the children has a graduation certificate and a series of positive acknowledgments. You may want to add your own acknowledgment of your children's accomplishments to the certificate.

Sincerely,



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## Perfectionism:

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## **Risk-taking or Being Alive!!!**

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# APPENDIX

## Annotated Bibliography Prepared by the Coalition for Children

### Books For Parents

**Auerbach, Steveanne.** *The Whole Child Sourcebook.* New York: Perigee Books, 1981. Paperback, \$8.95.

*Step-by-step sourcebook for parenting from pregnancy to age twelve. Includes information on resources, organizations and books.*

**Bartz, Wayne R.** *Surviving with Kids: A Lifeline for Overwhelmed Parents.* San Luis Obispo, CA: Impact Publishers, 1978. Paperback, \$4.95.

*Practical aid for parents of preteens; ideas are applicable to all ages.*

**Dinkmeyer, Don and McKay, Gary D.** *STEP: Systematic Training for Effective Parenting.* Circle Pines, MN: American Guidance Service, 1976, Paperback, \$9.95.

*Exceptional guidance on basic principles and methods of effective parenting. This is connected to parenting seminars available in most cities. They take the art of parenting and add real skills which make a positive difference in people's lives.*

**Dinkmeyer, Don and McKay, Gary D.** *STEP/Teen: Systematic Training for Effective Parenting of Teens.* Circle Pines, MN: American Guidance Service, 1983, Paperback, \$9.95.

**Faber, Adele, and Mazlish, Elaine.** *How To Talk So Kids Will Listen and Listen So Kids Will Talk.* New York: Avon Books, 1982. Paperback, \$4.95

*Well organized and readable book about communicating. Techniques are clearly presented from the child's and parents' point of view.*

**Gordon, Thomas.** *P.E.T. Parent Effectiveness Training: the Tested New Way To Raise Responsible Children.* New York: Plume, New American Library, Times Mirror, 1970, paperback, \$9.95.

*Virtually none of us were taught to be parents. This book gives real skills and teaches effective patterns of family interaction. This and the STEP program are both connected with parent training seminars available in most cities.*

**Kraizer, Sherryll.** *The Safe Child Book: A Commonsense Approach to Protecting Your Children From Abduction and Sexual Abuse.* New York: Dell Publishing Co., 1985. Paperback, \$5.95

*Written by the creator of the The Safe Child Program, this book reinforces and provides additional concepts and activities to assist parents in teaching their children to protect themselves.*

**Pogrebin, Letty Cottin.** *Growing Up Free: Raising Your Child in the 80's.* New York: Bantam Books, 1980. Paperback, \$8.95

*The original blueprint for helping children to reach their full potential, free of sex-role stereotypes.*

**Satir, Virginia.** *Self-Esteem.* Berkeley, CA: Celestial Arts, 1970, paperback, \$4.95

*Virginia Satir's declaration of self-worth in the form of poetry. Beautiful and worth reading again and again to yourself and your children.*

**Satir, Virginia. People-making. Palo Alto, CA: Science and Behavior Books, Inc., 1972, paperback,**

*A wonderful book about being a parent. A clear and useful guide for family living which builds self-esteem, satisfaction and communication. Filled with concrete suggestions. Written with humor and compassion.*

**Saunders, Antoinette and Remsberg, Bonnie. The Stressproof Guide. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1984. Hard Cover**

*Some good ideas on understanding children's perceptions of adult actions and ways to make life easier for children while building self-esteem and positive life skills*

### **Books For Young People**

**Alda, Arlene. Sonya's Mommy Works. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1982, Hard Cover, \$7.95**

*Real life look at the realities of having a working mom. For ages 4-7.*

**Bell, Ruth. Changing Bodies, Changing Lives: A Book for Teens on Sex and Relationships. New York: Random House, 1980, paperback, \$8.95**

*Speaks directly to teens about their bodies, sexuality, emotional and physical health.*

**Bingham, Mindy and Edmondson, Judy and Stryker, Sandy. Choices: A Teen Woman's Journal for Self-Awareness and Personal Planning Santa Barbara, CA: Advocacy Press, 1983, Paperback, \$12.95**

*A must for teenage girls. A personal opportunity to look at basic choices.*

**Bingham, Mindy and Edmondson, Judy and Stryker, Sandy. Challenges: A Young Man's Journal**

**for Self-Awareness and Personal Planning Santa Barbara, CA: Advocacy Press, 1984, Paperback, \$12.95**

*A must for teenage boys. A personal opportunity to look at basic choices.*

**Boegehold, Betty. Daddy Doesn't Live Here Anymore: A Book About Divorce. New York: A Golden Book, 1985, Hard Cover \$4.95.**

**Burns, Marilyn. I Am Not a Short Adult: Getting Good At Being a Kid. Boston: Little Brown and Co., 1977. Paperback, \$5.95**

*Exceptional discussion of communication, rules, feelings, money, having fun, working hard, rights, responsibilities, and assertiveness. Ages 8 and up.*

**Chaback, Elaine, and Fortunato, Pat. The Official Kids Survival Kit: How To Do Things On Your Own. Boston: Little Brown and Co., 1981. Paperback, \$9.95**

*Invaluable resource. Encyclopedia style reference for handling such varied situations as boredom, loneliness, jealousy, baby-sitting, going to camp, fixing breakfast, working parents and various aspects of staying alone. Ages 8 and up.*

**Girard, Linda Walvoord. Who Is A Stranger and What Should I Do?. Niles, IL: Albert Whitman and Company, 1985, Hard Cover, \$9.25.**

*The only book for children about strangers that we recommend. Clear, non-frightening.*

**Hipp, Earl. Fighting Invisible Tigers: A Student Guide to Life in the "Jungle". Minneapolis, MN: Free Spirit Publishing, 1985, Paperback, \$7.95.**

*An absolutely indispensable guide for ages 10 and up on understanding yourself, surviving and making life easier.*

**Le Shan, Eda.** *What Makes Me Feel This Way?: Growing Up With Human Emotions.* New York: Macmillan Books, 1972. Paperback, \$9.95.

*Straightforward, honest and understanding discussion of the range of feelings children have and how confusing they can be. Very supportive of individual differences. Ages 6 and up.*

**Palmer, Pat.** *Liking Myself.* San Luis Obispo, CA: Impact Publishers, 1983. Paperback, \$4.50.

*Introduction to feelings, self-esteem and assertiveness. Reinforces listening to your feelings, your inner voice and speaking up for yourself. Ages 4 to 7.*

**Palmer, Pat.** *The Mouse, the Monster and Me.* San Luis Obispo, CA: Impact Publishers, 1982. Paperback, \$4.50.

*Strong reinforcement of saying no, dealing with hurtful and confusing situations, rights and responsibilities, and communicationskills. Especially beneficial for children who tend to be shy or aggressive. Ages 7 to 12.*

**Seuling, Barbara.** *What Kind Of Family Is This? A Book About Stepfamilies.* New York: A Golden Book, 1985, Hard Cover, \$4.95

**Stein, Sara Bonnett.** *About Phobias: An Open Family Book For Parents and Children Together.* New York: Walker and Company, 1984, paperback, \$4.95.

*Excellent treatment of how one child's phobia feels and how her parents support her through it.*

**Wachter, Oralea,** *No More Secrets For Me.* Boston: Little Brown and Co., 1983. Paperback, \$4.95.

*Positive and discreet stories about preventing sexual abuse. Reinforces teaching children to speak up, to say no and to tell when someone*

*violates their trust. Especially good for children previously abused. Ages 9 — 12.*

### **Books For Professionals**

**Hendricks, Gay and Wills, Russel.** *The Centering Book: Awareness Activities for Children, Parents and Teachers.* Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1975, paperback

*A valuable guide to body awareness, imagery, relaxation and centering techniques, particularly for elementary age.*

**Lange, Arthur J, and Jakubowski, Patricia.** *Responsible Assertive Behavior: Cognitive/Behavioral Procedures for Trainers.* Champaign, IL: Research Press, 1976. Paperback

**Laborde, Genie Z.** *Influencing With Integrity: Management Skills for Communication and Negotiation.* Palo Alto, CA: Syntony Publishing, 1984, Hard Cover, \$19.95

*An exceptional look at the applications of neuro-linguistic programming and other technologies of communication. Merges the information presently available about human interactions with accountability. Invaluable!*

**Stevens, John O.** *Awareness: Exploring, Experimenting and Experiencing.* New York: Bantam Books, 1971, paperback.

*For teens and adults, a vast array of awareness activities for relaxation, body awareness, centering, meditation, etc.*

**Kraizer, Sherryll and Larson, Lyn.** *Dating Violence: Prevention and Intervention Domestic Violence Intervention Services,* Tulsa, Oklahoma (1991).

*Curriculum for adolescents.*





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