# Rational

# Emotive

# Education

Dr. William J. Knaus

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# 1 Preface & Introduction

## 1.1 Preface

With the publication of this pioneer manual by Dr. William Knaus, rational emotive training (RET) indeed reaches a notable milestone. When I first started developing rational psychotherapy (as it was called in its early days) in the beginning of 1955, I had only a vague idea of where and how far it would eventually go. I viewed it largely as a psychotherapeutic method that was distinctly more efficient with individual, face-to-face clients than were the then existing other major therapies: especially psychoanalysis and nondirective or client-centered modes of treatment. As subsequent clinical experience and experimental studies have shown, I was probably right about this.

In the process of developing and expanding RET theory and practice, I had many second, third, and fourth thoughts about the whole field of psychotherapy and about rational-emotive therapy in particular. First of all, I applied it to group therapy (around 1958) and to marathon therapy around 1964 and discovered that using it in groups was in many ways more effective and beneficial than using it only in one-to-one encounters. Secondly, I began employing it (around I960) with large groups of individuals (in one instance, as many as three hundred and fifty) in the course of public demonstrations and workshops. Thirdly, I started to experiment with recorded and film presentations of RET (as early as 1956) and discovered, almost by accident, that vicarious therapy could be influential and potent. Fourthly, I found that RET-trained individuals, particularly parents and spouses, could creatively use it with other troubled people, such as their children and mates. Fifthly, I came up with the idea of teaching rational-emotive psychology to children in the course of their regular classroom activities; and, starting in 1967. I began to concretize plans for establishing what shortly thereafter became The Living School, one of the very first elementary schools in the world primarily devoted to emotional

education, in addition to teaching its pupils the fundamentals of academic education.

The more I employed and developed RET in these various ways, the more I began to conceive of it as a form of preventive and therapeutic treatment of emotional disturbances that truly follows the educational model. This kind of model may well have been the original one of psychotherapy: since what we now call psychological treatment was mostly given, originally by philosophers, clergymen, and educators, who largely used didactic means of getting over healthy or rational ideas to their "clients." But by the time the end of the nineteenth century had arrived, the educational model had officially been replaced by what has often been called the medical model of psychotherapy: as notably practiced and taught, for example, by such outstanding therapists as Bernheim and Janet. This model, in turn, has been largely superseded by the psycho-dynamic model--which was significantly developed by Freud, Jung, Adler and a host of other psychoanalytic and neo-psychoanalytic thinkers.

Only recently, especially since the 1950's, has a revised version of the educational or training model of psychotherapy become more popular. Where the psychodynamic paradigm, and its later offshoot, the relationship model, have clearly emphasized one-to-one encounters and small-group processes, the educational modes of behavior change have gone beyond this and have stressed the training of large-scale groups as well as the treatment of so-called "normal" or healthy" populations. Thus, behavior modifiers, especially the followers of B. F. Skinner and Joseph Wolpe, have frequently used "therapeutic" procedures with whole populations of school children, inmates of various kinds of institutions, and workers in industry; and have done their best, in various ways, to "shape" the motivations and behaviors of these individuals in presumably beneficial directions.

RET has, if possible, even more inclusive goals. If its theories and practices are health inducing—as an increasing number of experimental studies are now demonstrating that they are—its goal is, at least eventually, to make them available to

virtually all the citizens of the world, and to do so in the course of their regular schooling. Allowing and abetting a youngster to down himself or herself, and to become afflicted with needless anxiety, depression, guilt, hostility, and lack of discipline, and then taking that individual later in life and attempting to intensively "therapize" him or her in one-to-one encounters or small groups, is indeed a wasteful, tragically inefficient procedure. Far better, if it can truly be done, is to help this youngster to understand, at an early age, some of the general principles of emotional health and to each him or her to consistently apply these principles to and with self and others. This is now one of the main goals of RET and rational-emotive education (REE).

Dr. William Knaus has almost certainly done more work in REE than any other person in the world. He has been closely associated with The Living School, which was started by The Institute for Advanced Study in Rational Psychotherapy in 1968, since its inception. He has for most of this time been the chief consulting psychologist and psychotherapist to the School, and has done most of the training of its teaching staff in REE. In addition, he has taught educational psychology at Queens College in New York City and has introduced REE to scores of teachers in training, many of whom have used it in their own classroom procedures. In the course of this activity, he has supervised experiments in REE that have led and are still leading to the production of several master's degree theses in education.

Bill has been so busy with these activities—as well as with his major position as Co-Director of Training (along with Edward Garcia) of the Institute for Advanced Study in Rational Psychotherapy—that he has only recently found the time to put to paper some of his ideas and findings relating to rational-emotive education. This book, ex-positing some of his major ideas and findings is the result; and a most noteworthy result it is! For its author is exceptionally creative, concrete, and daring. He incisively sticks to one of the main purposes of REE—to have regular teachers and other school personnel (and not psychologists, counselors, psychiatrists, and social

workers) understand its principles and be sufficiently competent to teach them to their pupils.

In this manual, *Rational-Emotive Education*, he directly, forthrightly, and with no nonsense about it, shows almost any interested teacher how he or she may use REE in the course of regular classroom lessons and other activities. Naturally, he doesn't claim to have the last word here: since, under his own and others' continuing experimenting, REE will doubtlessly develop over the years (just as RET has developed) and will take on significant new aspects that are as yet perhaps undreamed of.

Some of the basic theories and practices of rational-emotive education, however, are already here; and they are clearly and carefully expounded in this manual. Virtually any teacher (or principal, guidance counselor, or other educator) who open-mindedly looks at the material in the book, and who tries to use some of it in his or her daily work is likely to find it helpful. Here, I almost guarantee each assiduous reader, is an adventurous, exciting path, well laid out. Try it and see!

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## 1.2 Introduction

According to a recent report by the Joint Commission on the Mental Health of Children, services are provided for approximately one-third of those children with emotional and learning disorders. The current emphasis on collaborative efforts between community mental health centers and the schools highlights the need for treatment programs as well as positive preventive programs which will provide children with opportunities to develop the essential psychological and academic skills for coping with the ever-increasing pressures of this highly complex culture. Any adult who cares about the quality of child life can envision the benefits of a large-scale mental health program for all children. Unfortunately, both the trained personnel and the techniques for reaching large groups, if not all school children, are either lacking or grossly inadequate and the current crisis remains a noble challenge for both the psychologist and the educator. Ideally, a program which could be effectively implemented by the average classroom teacher would clearly be a major step in the right direction. The following objectives would be the criteria for such a positive mental health program: 1) it fits the structure of the school and the teaching style of the practitioner, 2) it is practical and comprehensible, 3) it works. Rational Emotive Education (REE), an extension of Rational Emotive Therapy (RET), is a currently available approach which meets the above criteria.

Rational Emotive Education is a preventive-interventionist approach by which children can be taught sane mental health concepts and the skills to use these concepts. The program can be used with whole classes or special groups while it also can be adapted to serve any acceptable educational model. REE is based on a valid educational model which emphasizes positive self-acceptance, critical thinking, the application of the scientific method to self-understanding, and behavioral change. Experiments with the program have shown that children can be taught to guide their actions through positive directed thought. The program is specifically designed for fourth through eighth grade children. With modifications, it has been used with second and third grades and high school classes.

# 2 The Nature of Rational-Emotive Education (REE)

## 2.1 Background

Rational Emotive Education is an extension of Rational Emotive Therapy (RET), a cognitive-behavioral approach to psychotherapy pioneered and developed by Albert Ellis. In addition to being a comprehensive approach to the emotional and behavioral aspects of human disturbance, RET places a great deal of emphasis on the thinking component. One of the major tenets of Rational Emotive Therapy—that we feel the way we . think—is based on an observation made over two thousand years ago by the Stoic philosopher, Epictetus, who noted that much of man's misery results more from man's view of events than from the actual harshness of the events. Ellis has expanded the idea that our emotional reactions are caused by our conscious and unconscious interpretations, philosophies, and evaluations, e.g., that upsettedness comes from upsetting perceptions or happiness from happy perceptions, into a highly powerful and effective psychological technique.

Ellis' system has its foundations in the philosophy of science, particularly in the scientific method of understanding. The system is concerned with examining and understanding the way attitudes, beliefs and values influence feelings and perceptions. Thus, it is a thinking or rational system that emphasized looking hard-headedly at human problems, (Ellis 1957, 1962, 1969, 1971, 1972, 1973). As a philosophical system, it is interested in the nature of man and in the values and morality in human interaction (Ellis, 1973). Ultimately, one of the major advantages of the rational emotive system is that it is not merely a speculative system. Adults and children can be taught to guide their actions, that is, take more positive steps toward self-determination and self-acceptance with this experiential system.

The primary goal of Rational Emotive Therapy and Rational Emotive Education is to help people lead non-self-defeating, happier, self-actualizing lives so that they can truly get better, rather than simply feel better because emotions are understood and

expressed.

## 2.2 Content of REE Program

This manual provides both a rationale and procedural demonstrations for the use of rational mental health concepts in everyday life. The program is divided into three sections:

1. Rational Emotive Education background for the teacher and basic classroom techniques;

2. Lessons and activities which deal with target rational-emotive concepts; feelings (that feelings and thoughts are intertwined, that feelings of inferiority, anxiety, anger, blame, and other irrational emotions and assumptions can be challenged and reduced); mistake-making (that mistake-making is part of the human condition and the learning process, that mistake-making does not render one a worthless human being, that others can be tolerated and excused for their mistake-making tendencies); challenging (that by questioning irrational assumptions, one develops greater self-understanding, more positive self-concepts, problem-solving techniques, and critical thinking skills which can lead to a more responsible and self-enhancing existence);

3. Special activities aimed at reducing some of the common classroom behavioral problems such as prejudice, stereotyping, bullying, irresponsibility.

The series of lessons and related activities will help children minimize their reactions to disappointment and frustrations, to cope more effectively with problems stimulated by outside events, and to more fully accept themselves by learning a systematic approach that will allow them to challenge irrational assumptions. As teachers re-examine their own emotional responses and better understand those of their students, communications will improve between teacher and student and

among students.

## 2.3 Technique

Both Rational Emotive Therapy and Rational Emotive Education emphasize the directive role of thought in the guidance of behavior as well as the use of behavioral experiences in influencing thought. Thus, in many respeets, the rational emotive system is similar to Piaget's assimilation and accommodation theory in which cognitive schemata may be modified or changed to match the outer reality through concrete experiences. Indeed the system has much research to support its basic assumption that we feel the way we think (Lazarus, 1973; Arnold, 1973; Schachter and Singer, 1962) and far its application as a behavioral change technique. (See Ellis, 1971, for a summary of research studies.)

### 2.3.1 REE is Compatible with Current Educational Systems

Of the many mental health programs employed in various school systems, the rational emotive system is flexible enough to be adapted to a variety of effective educational systems. The basic rational concepts are not merely imposed on a vacuous student body that will unquestioningly receive, absorb, and recite what has been "preached." Rather, the program is parallel to the learning theories of some of the more humanistic and enlightened educators who are aware that knowing or learning as directed inquiry, learning as participation and as cognitive action, is clearly the most effective kind of education.

Once the basic rational concepts have been introduced by induction or deduction, it is important to reinforce these concepts by role-playing, group problem-solving, skits, and other experiential methods. Reinforcement may take the form of short homework assignments.and frequent follow-ups, or even using general classroom problems as practice sessions for developing problem-solving skills. Because didactically-presented concepts may or may not help children deal with some of their everyday problems, it is important for the teacher to be on the alert for live classroom

situations in which the concepts may be advantageously illustrated. This kind of experiential use of rational concepts will not only serve to improve problem-solving skills, but it will also emphasize that there are many ways to solve problems.

### 2.3.2 REE Is an Effective System

Successful demonstrations of the Rational-Emotive Education approach have been made in the following areas in reducing anxiety (Knaus and Bokor, 1975; Brody, 1974; Albert, 1970); in increasing children's tolerance for frustration (Brody, 1974); in reducing impulsivity (Meichenbaum, 197'); in stimulating speech in a selectively mute child (Knaus, 1970); and in improving children's self-concept and their ability to cope with general problem situations (Glicken, 1968; Lafferty, Denneril and Rettich, 1964; Ellis, 1972; Knaus and McKeever, 1976; Katz, 1974; DiGuiseppe, 1975; DeVoge, 1974). Studies of both small groups taken out of their classroom, and entire classes who have received Rational Emotive Education, have demonstrated that both methods are equally effective.

Two Practical Examples:

I. The author was conducting an REE session with a group of economically deprived sixth-graders. Cindy, one of the children in the group, was encouraged to examine her fear of speaking in front of groups.

DR. K.: Why are you afraid to get up in front of the class and speak?

CINDY: I would be afraid of saying something silly. Everyone would think I was a fool.

DR. K.: Let's suppose you are in front of the class and you did say a foolish thing, like saying your teacher's name wrong. Do you think everyone in the class would think you were a fool?

GEORGE: I don't think she would be. Nobody's perfect.

DR. K.: Do you think George is right, Cindy?

CINDY: Everybody would laugh at me,and that would make me a fool.

JOAN: When Linda couldn't say the word on the board, no one laughed at her.

DR. K.: If no one laughed at Linda, why do you think they would laugh at you?

CINDY: I don't know. They just would.

DR. K,: Have you ever gotten up in front of a group before and made a mistake?

CINDY: Yes.

DR. K.: What happened? Did everybody laugh?

CINDY: No.

DR. K.: You see, Cindy, you think people will laugh at you if you make a mistake, but there is no proof that it's going to happen. In fact, you have some proof that it probably won't. As George said a minute ago, nobody is perfect. What that means is that everyone makes mistakes. You can't avoid doing that at least some of the time. More important, though, is your belief that you would be a fool if you made a mistake. You think that everyone will laugh, call you a fool, and that you could never be anything else because you made a mistake as everyone else does. Let's suppose that you do make a mistake, and some people laugh and call you a fool. How does that make you a fool?

CINDY: I think it would; I would really feel bad.

DR. K.: ...because someone laughed and called you a fool, would that make you a fool?

CINDY: Yes.

DR. K.: But if I called you a green turtle and laughed, would that make you a green turtle? (Laughter)

CINDY: No.

DR. K.: Why?

CINDY: Because I know that's not so.

RALPH: Once I had a turtle and he got lost...

DR. K.: We can talk about that later. Right now we're trying to help Cindy with her problem... Cindy, you only feel like a fool if you think you're a total fool? Can anyone think of why Cindy can never be a total fool?

GEORGE: Because you do other things besides make mistakes. Once I didn't know the answer when the teacher called on me, and some kids laughed, and I didn't feel like a fool.

RALPH: If someone calls you a name, it doesn't make you one.

DR. K.: That's right. Not everyone feels like a fool, even if people laugh. Clowns do foolish things, and people laugh, but that doesn't make the clown a fool as a person. George didn't feel like a fool when people laughed at him. Ralph said that if someone calls you a name, it doesn't make you one... What does that mean to you, Cindy?

CINDY: I guess you can't be a fool unless you think you're one.

DR. K.: That's right, but it's one thing to say that, and another to believe it. You don't sound very convinced that you believe that. Well, we don't have much more time now. Suppose you and the group and I try to think up something for you to do to help you with being afraid to talk in front of class.

LINDA: Maybe Ms. B. will let her read the messages in front of the class.

DR. K.: Do you think that's something you could try to do between now and next Tuesday?

CINDY: I'll try.

DR. K.: Also, write down these two questions, and try to answer them. First, can I be really sure that everybody is going to laugh at me? Before answering the first question, make a list of all the things about yourself that you and others think are

your good points. Then ask the second question: If I make a mistake, does that mean that the other things about me are no good?

Cindy received help from her teacher and classmates in compiling the list of her good qualities and she was surprised at the lengthy 1 ist. The following week she reported that she had thought a great deal about the session, and had done her homework. She, in fact, had done more than she was asked. She went to all the sixth grade classes and read notices. She did make a mistake and no one seemed to notice. A short while later, she volunteered to act in a class play and gave an admirable performance. Clearly, Cindy's problems were not over, but she had taken a step in the right direction.

II. The second problem refers to a pair of common classroom problems — bullying and teasing. The following incident occurred in a classroom of seven-year-olds with learning disabilities. The teacher decided to use some of the REE concepts she had been teaching, thus testing out the student's ability to challenge.

Alan called Donald a "grasshopper" and was in turn hit on the head with a shoe. When both boys appeared calmer, the teacher spoke to Donald, who appeared to be the more upset of the two. When questioned about his upsettedness, Donald replied that no one liked him. The teacher helped Donald to realize that the whole class hadn't called him a name and questioned his irrational thinking: Do you think Billy doesn't like you because Alan called you a name? Donald replied that Billy was his friend and playmate.

After helping Donald question his beliefs, the teacher asked the class what they knew about Donald besides the fact that he hit Alan with a shoe. One child replied that Donald had helped him with homework. Other replies were that he stops people from teasing and he is fun to play with. At that point, the teacher noted that the tension seemed to drain out of Donald's body. Later in the day, she asked Donald if he still felt like a mean kid who was disliked by everyone. Donald replied that he did a lot of

things besides mean things, and he contentedly continued to play the game he was playing.

The teacher had set the stage for this challenging exercise when she had taught a lesson on feelings: that people have many feelings, do many things and can't be only one thing. This lesson was executed with concrete examples suitable to the children's age level and experience. Clearly, Donald appeared to be learning that his essence is not defined or determined by one act.

# 3 Orientation to the Principles of Rational-Emotive Therapy People's Irrational Assumptions

Albert Ellis has pointed out that many individuals live their lives according to some powerful, illogical, and irrational philosophical assumptions which cause considerable anxiety and which prevent them from leading relatively pleasureful lives. The goals of the rational-emotive educator or therapist are to help individuals identify the irrational assumptions that lead to emotional disturbances and to guide them in challenging, uprooting, and ultimately replacing their irrational assumptions.

The clinically observed irrational assumptions and their rational equivalents are as follow:

| | Irrational | Rational |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | It is a dire necessity to be loved by everyone for everything one does. | It would be more advisable and productive to concentrate on self-respect, on winning approval for practical purposes, and on loving instead of being loved. |
| 2 | Certain acts are awful and wicked and those who perform them should be severely punished. | Certain acts are inappropriate or anti-social, and those who perform them are behaving stupidly or neurotically and would be better helped to change. |
| 3 | It is horrible when things are not the way one would like them to be. | It is too bad that things are often not what one would like, and it would be advisable to change or control conditions so that they become more satisfactory. If the change is not possible, one had better temporarily accept their existence. |
| 4 | Human misery is externally caused and is forced on individuals by outside events and other people. | Emotional disturbance is caused by the view one takes of conditions. |
| 5 | If something is or may be dangerous and fearsome, one should be terribly upset about it. | One would better face the danger or fear and render it non-dangerous and when that is not possible, accept the inevitable. |

| | Irrational | Rational |
|---|---|---|
| 6 | It is easier to avoid than face life's difficulties and self-responsibilities. | The so-called easy way is invariably the harder way in the long run. |
| 7 | One needs to rely on something other, stronger, or greater than oneself. | It is better to take the risks of acting and thinking independently |
| 8 | One should be thoroughly competent, intelligent, and achieving in all possible respects. | It is more advisable to accept oneself as a quite imperfect creature with general human limitations and fallibilities. It is better to do than need to do well. |
| 9 | Because something once strongly affected one's life, it should indefinitely affect it. | One can learn from past experiences, while not being overly attached to or prejudiced by them |
| 10 | One must have certain and perfect control over things. | Our world is one of probability and chance, and life can be enjoyed despite this. |
| 11 | Human happiness can be achieved by inertia and inaction. | Humans tend to be happiest when they are vitally absorbed in creative pursuits, or when they are devoting themselves to people or projects outside themselves. |
| 12 | One has virtually no control over one's emotions and certain feelings cannot be avoided. | One has enormous control over one's destructive emotions if one chooses to work at changing the bigoted and unscientific hypotheses employed to create them. |

Although there are clearly twelve distinct irrational assumptions, once the rational-emotive system is employed it becomes quite evident that not every troubled individual clings to all of these assumptions to the same degree, that many of the irrational assumptions are interrelated, and that some of the assumptions result in more human misery than others.

For the moment, we will focus on two related irrational assumptions which appear to be at the root of much emotional disturbance. Both are tied in with the perfectionistic

notion that a person's worth is determined by his performance, and believers of both assumptions tend to take a very simplistic look at human nature. When individuals stubbornly cling to the irrational assumption (#1) that they need to be loved by everyone for everything they do, they necessarily give themselves a hard time when they fail to achieve some of the realistic and unrealistic goals they have set for themselves. Rather than viewing people as complex beings with multiple and varying characteristics, traits, skills, and talents, they measure themselves and others according to what appears to be a very simplistic formula: love = perfection, or perfection = love. The subsequent intolerance for human imperfection creates a series of emotional disturbances ranging from intense fear, anxiety, guilt, and restrictive behavior to anger, hatred, blame, depression, and perhaps more violent emotions. In effect, the person who needs to be loved by everyone is also saying that mistake-makers are not loveable and that he cannot tolerate mistakes.

The irrational assumption (#8) that one must be thoroughly competent in all of one's endeavors is also rooted in a similar perfectionistic, unrealistic and illogical attitude toward life. Individuals who cling to this assumption suffer the same range of emotional disturbances as the people who need to be loved by everyone. They view mankind as a race of perfectible creatures occupying a land on which al1 mistakes are blameworthy and punishable. Challenges of any kind, even small chores, are often treated as if they were important and difficult school courses to be graded, marked, and entered on a visible, lifelong report card. (Of course, only the perfect need apply; therefore no one need apply, since no one is or can be perfect.) People who need to be loved and need to succeed in all they do are trapped in their circular reasoning and self-defeating behavior and, like the character in Alice in Wonderland, "must run twice as fast to stay in the same place."

Obviously, a society that seems to place more emphasis on getting ahead than on enlightened selfhood can reinforce irrational notions about approval and perfection, but what the majority believe and live by is not necessarily conducive to happier, less-

self-defeating, and more productive lives.

## 3.1 The task of the Rational-Emotive Therapist or Counselor

The amount of emotional and often physical energy expended in clinging to irrational assumptions can usually be put to more productive and happier use. Helping people to rid themselves of their self-defeating philosophies and irrational assumptions is a primary goal of the rational-emotive therapist or educator.

Unlike other therapeutic techniques, the rational-emotive system does not focus intensely on events of the past. Such a focus too often serves people a convenient excuse for continuing to blame others, especially parents, and thus to preserve self-defeating patterns. Rather, the rational-emotive therapist is concerned with showing individuals that they are maintaining the irrational assumptions they hold, that they still believe them, and they are currently disturbed by them. Because of its emphasis on deep philosophic change and scientific thinking, the rational-emotive system focuses on the steps toward philosophic change which can only take place if individuals are helped to observe exactly what they are telling themselves in the present and then encouraged to contradict, re-think, challenge, and take positive action.

Cindy, for example (the child in the dialogue in Section 2.3.2) was at the time an ardent believer in her "need" for success and love in all of her endeavors. Only after she was made aware of the irrational assumptions which adversely affected her behavior and feelings, was she capable of learning to test and substitute rational ideas for her irrational assumptions, while at the same time reducing her anxiety and her sense of worthlessness. As she came to believe that all humans are mistake-makers who often learn by trial and error, she was better able to tolerate her own feelings and behavior. With guidance, she took an important step toward developing a more adaptive philosophy, one in which she now tried to do the best she could instead of demanding that she be the best.

## 3.2 RET: An Educational System

Rational-emotive psychotherapy (RET) is a method of treating emotional disturbance that follows the educational model, instead of the commonly used medical, psychodynamic, or other models. Although it integratively employs emotive-evocative and behavioristic-activity methods, it somewhat uniquely teaches people, through many different kinds of educational modalities, that they basically cause their own emotional upsets and by forcefully changing their thinking and actions they can make themselves emote differently and thereby overcome their psychological hangups. (Ellis, 1972) Any adult or child who is actively engaged in the rational-emotive educational techniques of guided discovery, experimentation with problem-solving, structured experiences, role-playing, reinforcement, assignments, and simple exposition is gaining practical problem-solving experience that will help him cope more readily with everyday events. Of course, like anything one chooses to learn, RET can be self-taught without formal training or exposure; more often than not, however, most people will tend to benefit more from participation in a formal program designed to help them challenge and dispute their irrational beliefs. The valuable sharing of information, the observation of other people's thoughts and behavior, the challenges that more experienced people can provide, and the discipline that is more easily achieved in a one-to-one or group learning situation, are but a few of the advantages of RET as a participatory learning experience.

## 3.3 The ABC Theory of Emotions

The ABC theory proposes that thinking, feeling, and behaving are not separate functions. Rather, as Piaget has stated, they are interdependent, with cognition providing the structures of operation. These structures are highly evaluative in nature and are integrally involved in interpreting events. For example, if an individual is waiting for a bus at the bus stop, and the bus passes him by, it is not, according to Ellis, the sight of the passing bus (A) that stimulated an emotional reaction (C), but the meaning that one ascribes to the event through a cognitive function (B). Within Ellis's framework, the sight of the passing bus, the Activating event, could produce a

variety of emotional Consequences ranging from pleasure (if one recognized a creditor whom one had been avoiding on the bus) to acute distress or anger (if one missed the last bus and would thereby miss an important meeting). The reaction to the passing bus (C) is thus dependent on the way one views a situation, i.e. his Beliefs about it. This position has been summarized by Albert Ellis as follows:

> Cognitively, RET teaches clients and pupils the A-B-C's of personality formation and disturbance creation. Thus it shows people that their emotional Consequences (at point C) do not directly stem from the Activating events (at point A)...but from their Belief systems (at point B) about those Activating events. (Ellis,1962 )

The ABC theory is a very optimistic approach in that it demonstrates that as people create their inner distress by what they tell themselves, they can also learn to examine and challenge their anxiety-inducing ideas, especially those that result in emotional over-reaction. Adults or children who understand and apply the ABC theory are less likely to anxiously over-focus on a problem or situation they are not pleased with. If, for example, a desired goal is not achieved, they can learn to question and challenge any irrational assumptions they might have about perfectionism and self-worth.

### 3.3.1 The Two Faces of B

The B part of the ABC chain can be a sensible, rational interpretation or belief (rB) about an unpleasant event (A), or it can consist of an irrational belief (iB) about the same event. For example, a ball game cancelled due to rain can affect one child in the following manner. He can view the situation as a disappointment as he expresses the rational beliefs (rB's) to himself: "It's too bad the game has been cancelled. I'm disappointed because I really wanted to play." This child's reaction is rational in that he accepts the fact that his desire has been frustrated; he feels appropriately disappointed and perhaps frustrated. A second child, on the other hand, might react differently. He, too, may recognize the fact that rainstorms are natural and

frustrating occurrences (rB), but he also gets angry and has a temper tantrum. The reason for his escalated upsettedness is the way he proceeds to interpret the event. His rational statements are followed by irrational ones (iB's) such as "Why does this always happen to me?. It should be a sunny day. I can't stand this damned weather." Essentially, his irrational assumption that he should not be frustrated in any way has led him, like most demanding people, to his upsettedness.

For both children, the activating event at (A) was exactly the same: it rained, a game was cancelled, they couldn't play. The first child was more capable of coping with the situation in a rational manner. The second got side tracked by his irrational beliefs.

### 3.3.2 D - Disputing Irrational Beliefs

If the second child in the above example wishes to change his responses he must first become aware and admit to himself that the rainy day isn't causing him to be upset; he is upsetting himself. Irrational beliefs and assumptions can be disputed by trying to change ideas and thus behavior and feelings; or by trying to change behavior to bring about changes in thinking and feeling. Even if the child was unable to challenge or dispute the irrational belief that the rainy day upset him, he might be able to work at controlling his temper tantrums in frustrating situations so that he can ultimately challenge and change his thinking.

### 3.3.3 E - The Cognitive-Affective-Behavioral Effect

Challenging and questioning irrational beliefs doesn't necessarily imply a change in an unrealistic definition of oneself or a situation. Positive cognitive-affective-behavioral effects (E) are often blocked by insufficient understanding of the rational-emotive challenging process, or by skepticism about the effectiveness of the system.

Some individuals ask the "right" questions but they do not proceed to answer them. Others engage in endless self-questioning at the expense of participating in problem-solving activity. The skeptics look for more irrational evidence to support a low self-

concept or irrational belief, and the confused either asked the wrong questions or believe that the mere parroting of questions and rational slogans will effect change.

Knowledge, skill, practice, and patience improve challenging techniques: but positive action or psychological homework assignments afford an opportunity for insuring continuing constructive changes in behavior and perspective.

## 3.4 Perspective and Change

> *All this time the Guard was looking at her, first through a microscope and then through a telescope, and then through an opera glass. At last he said, 'You're travelling the wrong way.'*
>
> - Lewis Carrol , Through the Looking Glass

Many people cause themselves unhappiness not only because they stubbornly cling to irrational assumptions but also because they tend to over-focus on unpleasant events and circumstances, or overgeneralize, viewing people as all good or all bad. Clearly, this lack of perspective — which is sometimes curious and amusing in Wonderland or children's fantasies — is an impediment to personal progress in the real world.

As a system concerned with philosophic re-orientation and change, the rational-emotive system emphasizes the development of critical thinking skills which enable individuals to evaluate ideas, feelings, and behavior with greater perspective. When an individual is led to view himself and the world more realistically, he is more aware of the way ideas and feelings influence behavior and he is more capable of seeing situations from points of view other than his own. Subsequent feelings and behavior thus involve more risk-taking, greater empathy and understanding of human problems, less fearfulness, more flexibility, and ultimately, more effective functioning.

## 3.5 Biological and Environmental Influences on Behavior

No approach to human behavior can ignore the biological and environmental or societal influences, although there is disagreement among experts about the significance of each. Indeed, there is much evidence to support the view that biological factors produce tendencies to react to situations and events in patterned ways.

A child, for example, born of two schizophrenic parents, has a high risk of becoming schizophrenic even if he is reared apart from his parents. There is a larger proportion of males with XYY chromosomes among prison populations than among the population at large. Based on his experience as a therapist and on a series of controlled studies, Albert Ellis believes that personality problems are more biological-constitutional in origin than environmental. (Ellis, 1962, 1971, 1973). Comparative studies of equal numbers of traumatic experiences in the lives of depressed and non-depressed individuals indicate that the depressives may be more predisposed to viewing events in a helpless, pessimistic way, but the major difference between the two groups seemed to be the way the events were perceived.

If we assume that biological or hereditary factors are powerful influences, then logical questions arise. Are some individuals doomed to live out a neurotic existence, and if so, is environment or therapeutic assistance irrelevant? Clearly, if some individuals are born with a biological tendency to behave in neurotic ways, the tendency will not necessarily be actualized, and if it is, there is a great deal of evidence to prove that it can be corrected. Environment and outside influences are not to be discounted.

Individuals with biological tendencies to think in non-neurotic ways act in a neurotic or psychotic manner under prolonged stress in a psychologically severe environment. No matter what the biological propensity, an environment which engenders positive mental health concepts and encourages the development of psychological skills at problem-solving and critical thinking can prevent emotional disturbance. Of course,

some individuals need more guidance and encouragement than others; some are more resistant to change or self-actualization; and unfortunately, some may never do more than exist marginally. On the whole, most people are quite capable of learning how to live their lives in less self-defeating and emotionally disturbing ways, and certainly, the earlier the better. Ideally, the home would be a good starting place for a child to begin to think rationally, but that may not be possible. In any case, the responsibility and the challenge to help children rests with those who choose to be among them, namely parents and teachers.

# 4 Feelings: The Basics in Rational-Emotive Education

## 4.1 Background for the Teacher

Few would deny that pleasant positive feelings such as enthusiasm, warmth, serenity, and curiosity are preferable to the nagging negative feelings of depression, despair, and intense anxiety. If we accept the premise that one can choose to eliminate the latter, then the logical questions arise: To what degree? By what process? Is RET that process? Probably no emotional education system can eliminate all negative effects, but understanding and application of RET principles can clearly reduce them and, in addition, create the possibility for more positive emotional experiences.

Both pleasant and unpleasant feelings normally have one or more activating ideas or beliefs behind them. For example, feelings of happiness are normal appropriate responses of a child at his own birthday party. The child is telling himself statements like: "This is a very nice day. It's fun getting all these presents I wanted." Feelings of sadness, on the other hand, are also normal appropriate responses to unpleasant situations. A child who is saddened by the disappearance of his favorite pet can have a normal appropriate response when his feelings of sadness are activated by rational beliefs (rB) such as: "I really loved that dog. We were so close. It's sad that he's lost." What one tells oneself about a situation is rational insofar as the sadness does not turn to anguish or despair. If the child with the lost pet started to say to himself that he knew something awful happened to the dog or that he's never going to be able to have another dog, his irrational beliefs (iB) would clearly lead to despair, an inappropriate response to an unpleasant situation.

It should be kept in mind that negative responses such as not reaching a goal, mild irritation towards someone who is behaving in an annoying manner, or dissatisfaction with a task are all appropriate responses. It is only when the frustration, mild annoyance, and dissatisfaction are further considered to be awful, terrible, and unending that the normal negative responses become nagging negative

responses: depression and intense anxiety. Once the inappropriate activating beliefs (rB and iB) have been identified and understood, it is then possible to deal more effectively with feelings.

## 4.2 Student Activity 1: Feelings

Purpose: to help the children define and identify their common feelings; to demonstrate that people express their feelings in different ways; and that feelings are generated by thoughts and beliefs.

1. Show the class some magazine photos of people who are obviously expressing certain feelings: happiness, sorrow, anger, fear. (If you cannot find appropriate pictures, you might want to try demonstrating some silent movie gestures which illustrate the character's feelings and ask the children what they think you are feeling for the different gestures. )

2. Ask the class for examples of feelings they have experienced and list them on the board. Some children may interpret feelings as tactile sensations as evidenced by words like "hot" and "cold" or "itchy." Accept these words as responses, but list them separately.

3. If the class has contributed what amounts to two lists, one physical feelings and the other psychological feelings, ask them why they think you made two different lists. Elicit and emphasize the distinction between psychological and physical feel ings. Erase the list of physical feelings and ask the children how they feel when they are happy, sad, angry. To illustrate and emphasize that psychological feelings have certain "feelings" or physical manifestations and reactions, you may want to give an example: "When I'm excited about some good news, my head feels very light, I have so much energy that I feel like jumping or clapping. When I'm sad because I've received some very bad news, the inside of my chest feels very heavy, I feel like there are weights on my body; sometimes I cry and sometimes I don't have much

energy." Go through the psychological feelings list and have the children contribute some of the ways they feel when they are happy, sad, angry, etc., and let them list their responses next to the psychological feeling on the board.

4. You may want to add to the 1ist of psychological feelings. (It is advisable to limit the list to 8-10 because a large list can become unwieldy.) If the student list needs to be expanded, some additional possibilities are the irrational nagging feelings of anger, hate, depression, inferiority, worthlessness; the rational unpleasant feelings of frustration, annoyance, disappointment, sadness, unhappiness, perplexity; and the rational pleasant feelings of joy, enthusiasm, calmness, curiosity, contentment, and excitement. (At this point it is not necessary to distinguish the rational from irrational feelings.)

5. Ask the class to go over the psychological feelings list and think about which feelings they consider pleasant or nice and which they consider unpleasant. Label these + or -according to the appropriate responses.

6. Ask the children to briefly tell about a real or imagined circumstance in which each of these feelings was experienced. Erase the physical response list; make a happening or circumstances column next to the psychological feelings 1ists.

7. List the circumstances given by the children in a manner similar to the diagram on the following page.

8. Ask the class if they can think of a meaning for the word "feeling." Does a feeling just come automatically or is it a response or result of anything? At this point it is only necessary to establish the idea or a relationship between happenings and feelings.

## 4.3 Student Activity 2: The Expression Guessing Game

Purpose: to demonstrate that different people can experience the same feeling but express it differently.

| Psychological Feelings | Happening or Circumstance |
|---|---|
| Happy | Birthday party (Jimmy) High marks (Sue) Finding a quarter (Sam) |
| Sad | Puppy running away (Abby) Having no friends (George) Too much homework (Sally) |
| Angry | Having to do dishes (Ralph) Brother bothering me (Joan) Too much homework (Sally) |

Procedure:

1. Ask the class if they have ever seen a silent movie on television. Although there was no talking in the movie, could you tell what was going on even if you couldn't read the words or sub-titles? How did the characters in the film express what they felt? Elicit gestures, but point out that the silent film gestures were exaggerated gestures and that is why they appear amusing or strange to us.

2. In real life, do you think it is always easy to tell what someone else is feeling? Do you know somebody who has a loud contagious laugh or somebody who just gives a little smile at what you think is a hilarious joke? Does everybody laugh exactly the same way? Elicit other examples and emphasize that different people show their feelings in different ways.

3. Refer the class to the Feelings-Circumstances diagram on the board. Ask the class, "Do the things that make Mary, Sue, and Joe happy make you happy? Do you think everybody feels the same way about things?"

4. Tell the class that they are going to play an Expression Guessing Game.

    a. divide the class into groups of three and give each group a card with a feeling

written on it.

b. tell the groups not to discuss the feeling with anyone in any group, but to think about ways to express the feeling on the card without using words. Each child is to decide how he is going to express the feeling

c. call on one group at a time and have the three in the group express the feeling in unison as the rest of the class guesses the feeling.

5. After the game has been played, ask the class if they think there is a right or wrong way to express a feeling. Is Mary's happiness better than Sue's? Emphasize that some people's feelings may be expressed in a clearer or more intense way, but that that doesn't mean that one is right and the other wrong.

6. Ask the class if they can think of another way of letting someone know how they feel. Ask them, "Do you think telling someone is a better way to let someone know how you feel than expressing through gestures? Why or why not?" Emphasize the Expression Game they just played and the fact that although people don't always use words in exactly the same way, there is less confusion if people try to say what's on their mind.

Reinforcement:

1. Introduce the Emotional Experience Scales (See Section 5.3) here to demonstrate that people feel differently about the same events.

2. Have the students try to guess what another student is feeling at a given time and then check out his guesses.

## 4.4 Student Activity 3: Where Feelings Come from

Purpose: to demonstrate that feelings are generated by thoughts and beliefs.

Procedure:

1. Have the children take out paper and pencils. Explain that you are going to give them certain situations and that you want them to write down their reactions — how they would feel if the situations happened to them. (Teacher may use one or all of these examples.):

   a) suppose you were walking down the hall in school one day and you overheard me telling another teacher: "I hear that is going to be kept back. He (she) failed the reading test." Write down the feeling you would have if this happened to you. Now suppose that as you walked further down the hall you heard the other teacher say: "It's too bad. I tried by hardest to help him read when he was in my class." Write how you now feel.

   b) suppose your mother bought you a new coat and told you to be careful not to get the coat dirty. As you are walking down the street, a car swerves near the curb and mud is splashed all over your coat. Write down how you would feel. Suppose you saw that the driver was your mother's friend and that she had swerved to avoid hitting a child. She stopped and offered you a ride home and said that she would explain what happened to your mother. Write down how you would now feel.

   c) suppose you are carrying a cardboard model of a toy you made for a class project through the park. You see a dime near one of the park benches so you put the toy down and another child sits on it. How would you feel? Now suppose you found out that the other child was blind and he couldn't see your cardboard model; how would you feel in this situation?

2. Have some of the responses read aloud or written on the board.

3. Ask the class, "Why did your reaction or feeling change with the additional

information? Is the coat still dirty regardless of the driver's motive? Isn't the cardboard model broken even if the boy who sat on it is blind? Whether one teacher tried hard and was concerned about your learning to read, you'll still be left behind."

4. Using examples read or written on board, ask "Why doesn't everybody feel the same way about the situations? Where do you think feelings come from?" Accept all reasonable answers (head, brain), but emphasize that feelings come from thoughts.

5. Review key points from previous student activity: that people have different feelings about things, different moods and experiences, that they express their feelings differently.

6. Tell the class that their homework assignment will help them see that feelings come from thoughts or that they "feel the way they think."

### 4.4.1 Homework Assignment

Have the class write down the thoughts they have when they are angry, sad, afraid, or frustrated. Ask them to describe the situation, their feeling, and what they did.

## 4.5 Student Activity 4: The Happening-Thought-Feeling Reaction Diagram (HTFR)

Purpose: to help the children visualize how they react to situations and to further demonstrate that feelings come from thoughts.

Procedure:

1. Begin the lesson by drawing an HTFR diagram on the board, using an example from your own experience or the one below:

| Happening | + Thought | = Feeling | Reaction |
|---|---|---|---|
| Late for school because of heavy traffic. | Hope someone is covering the class. It bothers me that I have to be delayed this way | Frustration, Mild tension | Tried to hurry to class once I parked the car. |

2. Ask the class to take out the last homework assignment (writing down their thoughts when they were angry, frustrated, etc.) Ask if any of the children wrote about fear experiences and have them read aloud. (If none were fear experiences, ask about other emotions so that it is possible to get several points of view on one emotion.)

3. Discuss the examples read aloud by asking questions such as the following: Why do you think (child's name) and (another child's name) were afraid (angry, frustrated)? What was each of them thinking that made them feel that way? What did each of them do?

4. Have volunteers with the same emotion add their data to the charts. Following are more examples:

| Happening | + Thought | = Feeling | Reaction |
|---|---|---|---|
| Lost father's car keys. (George) | He's going to be angry and he will punish me. That would be awful. | Fear and anxiety | Didn't tell him. |

| Happening | + Thought | = Feeling | Reaction |
|---|---|---|---|
| Opportunity to talk in front of class (Mary) | I would make a mistake, be laughed at, be a fool. | Anxious Frightened | Avoided speaking in front of class. |
| Nearly hit by car. (Donald) | Danger! Later thought, "That was close. I nearly got hit by a car." | Fear, then relief | Thought I would try to be more careful. |

If children have difficulty sorting the data for the diagram, offer assistance or ask volunteers to help.

### 4.5.1 Homework Assignment

Have the students do an HTFR diagram on their feelings about getting up in front of the class and discussing an item reported in the news.

(Note to Teacher: See Glossary of emotions at end of Manual)

# 5 The Art of Challenging Irrational Beliefs through Self-questioning and Action

## 5.1 Background for the Teacher

Unlike the emotional education systems that mainly concern themselves with helping individuals identify and express their feelings, rational-emotive education teaches not only the identification and expression techniques, but also the way irrational ideas and feelings are generated. Thus it becomes possible with REE to challenge or dispute irrational beliefs once the source of these feelings and beliefs is known. As a problem-solving technique, this system can provide children and adults with the necessary skills for facing emotional difficulties as they arise.

One of the chief means of challenging irrational assumptions is self-questioning. For example, a child who believes he is not a good person because he has low grades in school can be led to understand, as Ellis has shown, that humans are not definable as good or evil--that people's worth is not determined by their performances. The child can also learn that all of his traits, characteristics, and performances cannot be judged by one characteristic, such as poor grades. Of course, philosophical self-questioning is only the first step; since behavioral change also requires that one take some kind of action. Thus the child who fears public speaking, for example, is encouraged first to question the irrational assumption, and then to take action directed at overcoming the fear—namely, speaking in front of groups. The practice and experience afford opportunities for acquiring new growth-promoting skills and increasing self-acceptance.

Purpose of chapter: to teach children to identify their irrational and rational beliefs, to help them examine the effects and the degree of their irrational and rational beliefs, and to help them begin to challenge their self-defeating assumptions so that they can begin to act on them.

## 5.2 Student Activity I: The First Step in Challenging

Purpose: to help students identify rational beliefs (rB) and irrational beliefs (IB) .

Procedure:

1. Begin the lesson by asking for volunteers to define the word "challenge." Write all reasonable definitions on the board. Explain to the class that they are going to question and challenge some of their thinking by using the HTFR diagram (their last REE homework assignment).

2. Have the students take out the assignment (a diagram on their feelings about speaking in front of the class) and ask a few students to read their diagrams so that you can gauge the extremes of their beliefs and find good examples of rB and iB. Here are two good examples:

3. Choose two students to write their extreme examples on the board.

| Happening | + Thought | = Feeling | Reaction |
|---|---|---|---|
| Talking in front of class and making a mistake. | I wouldn't like making a mistake and getting laughed at. If that happened it would make me a fool and that would be awful. | Unhappy<br>Frightened<br>Anxious<br>Feels inferior | Won't talk in front of class. |
| Talking in front of class. | I'll try to do my best, and if I make a mistake, it's too bad. It's no big deal. | Mild displeasure at the thought of making a mistake. | Get up in front of class and try to say what you want to. |

4. Ask the rest of the class to identify statements on the board which would result in

self-downing and anxiety and have them explain why. As the students are examining the statements you may want to ask how many of them agree or disagree with the individual statements on the board.

5. Explain that an unreasonable or absurd idea is called an irrational belief or an iB. Give as an example: "Nobody in the world will ever be my friend." Explain that a rational belief (or rB) is a sensible logical statement that seems to fit reality. For example: "Humans are capable of making mistakes" or "Mistake-making tendencies do not make us worthless human beings."

6. Ask the class to look at the examples on the board and decide which contain rational beliefs, irrational beliefs, or both, and label the diagrams accordingly.

7. Draw attention to the example which has two ideas: an rB and an iB. You can paraphrase or use the following explanation with appropriate names and examples:

   "____ has two different ideas: one is that he wouldn't I like to make a mistake in front of the class. If he only had that thought, he would feel sad or unhappy if he did make a mistake and others laughed. But ____ also believes something else: that he would be a fool if he made a mistake, and with that idea he would feel nervous and frightened and he would put himself down. The first idea, 'I wouldn't like to make a mistake,' is a rational belief, an rB. ____ and ____ also have these ideas. The statements: 'I would be a fool if I made a mistake1 and the 'situation is awful' are irrational beliefs (iB's)."

8. Have volunteers try to challenge or dispute the irrational belief that one is a fool for making a mistake. Try to show that no one is perfect and that all people make mistakes. Emphasize that many people accept irrational beliefs about themselves without stopping to question themselves: "Is it really true that I would be a total fool if I made a mistake in front of a group?" Point out that self-questioning is an

important part of getting rid of irrational beliefs.

Reinforcement:

1. Examine why the idea "I wouldn't like to make a mistake" is rational and the feeling of displeasure at making the mistake reasonable. Help bring out the idea that things can't always go as we would wish them in the world, and when they don't it is normal to feel badly. Have the students discuss why they would feel badly if a best friend moved away.

2. The challenging exercise described above, in paragraph 8, may be used here.

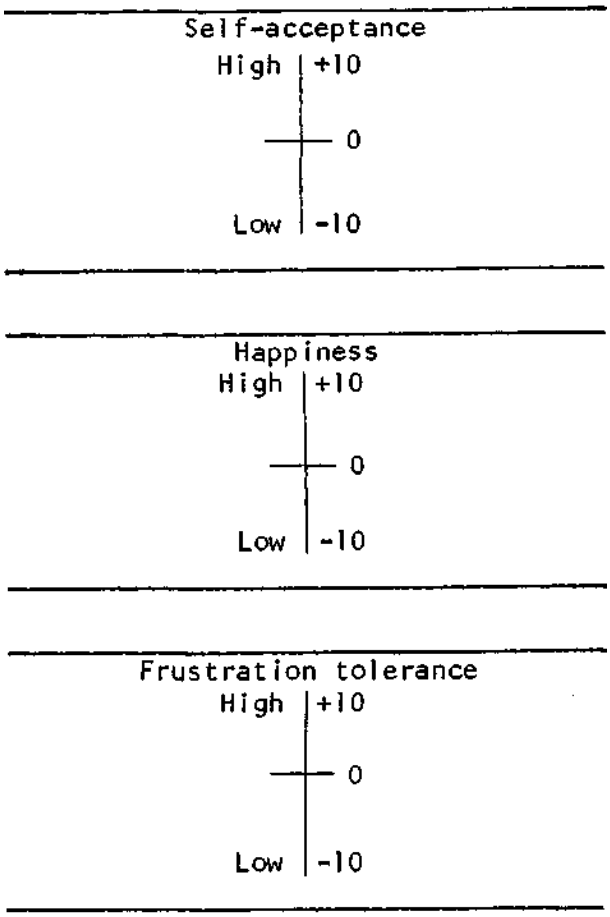
## 5.3 Student Activity 2: The Emotional Experience Scales

Purpose: to help the children to think about and visualize the degree of rational and irrational thoughts.

Procedure:

1. Ask the students if they know the meaning of these words: self-concept, frustration, and happiness. Explain that self-concept generally refers to the view one takes of oneself, ranging from self-acceptance to self-hate, frustration is the feeling one has when a goal is not achieved or is blocked. (Give as an example the working out of a jigsaw puzzle only to find that the last few pieces are missing.) Explain that happiness is a sense of joy and contentment.

2. Draw the following scales on the board so that the students can later copy them using oaktag, pen, paints or other available equipment.




3. Explain to the class that not everyone feels and thinks the same way about events in their lives. Remind them of how their HTFR diagrams differed.

4. Tell them that they are going to mark the charts based on their personal feelings. Zero point on the scale indicates indifference or no feeling about the idea. +10 means very strong or very positive feeling and -10 means very negative feelings like anger, depression, anxiety.

5. Ask the students to rate their feelings on the appropriate scales for the following thoughts:

   a) It would be awful if I didn't get all A's on my report card. (iB)

b) I can't stand it when that pest, Mary, asks me to copy my homework. (iB)

c) I'm glad that my parents and I get along so well. (rB)

d) I think I would be a good choice for the team's captain, but it would be a disappointment if the team didn't choose me. (rB)

e) it is unfair for me to have so much homework; I'm so angry I could scream. (iB)

6. If there is time, scales can be made for curiosity, anger, contentment, and other feelings the children may wish to chart in response to a list of thoughts.

## 5.4 Student Activity 3: "Mr. Head" (Brody, 1973)

Purpose: to enhance children's awareness of how their thoughts influence their feelings.

Procedure:

1. Draw a face on a paper bag or plastic bowl and place cards with thoughts written on them into the bag or bowl. Explain to the class that the Thought Cards represent some of the ideas that might be going on in anybody's head: some are irrational, some are rational and lead to either appropriate or inappropriate emotional reactions.

2. Have the children take turns picking cards from Mr. Head, identifying the thought as rational or irrational and explaining their answers. The following are sample card statements:

   I don't like to make mistakes (rB). All humans are mistake-makers (rB). Mary makes me angry (iB). It is awful to have to sit next to Sam (iB).

If my parents don't buy the games I asked for, they don't love me (iB).

Reinforcement:

1. Have students put Mr. Head thoughts on HTFR charts by asking them to describe the feelings and potential reactions they might have to the thought cards.

2. Have the students make up new thought cards with rational and irrational ideas that Mr. Head might have.

3. Have the students guess the effects of Mr. Head's thoughts in precipitating feelings and then place them on the Emotional Experience scale.

## 5.5 Student Activity 4: Using Challenging Techniques

Purpose: to give children practice in questioning irrational ideas through the presentation of hypothetical situations. Through the challenging, the children will also learn to reduce neurotic behavior.

Procedure:

1. Tell the class that the brief story they are about to hear is about a boy's fears. Ask them to think about helping him overcome his fear as it is told.

   "A boy named Sam enjoys boating, especially on lakes. He believes that the world is flat, that there are monsters at the edge where the world ends, so he's afraid of the ocean because he thinks he'll fall off the earth if he goes too far out into the ocean."

2. Encourage the class to help Sam question his thinking. One method of getting the questioning started is by having the teacher take Sam's role.

3. Have a volunteer put Sam's feelings on an HTFR diagram. What are his rational beliefs? Irrational beliefs? What feelings do his irrational beliefs cause? As a result, what is his behavior like?

| Happening + | Thought = | Feeling | Reaction |
|---|---|---|---|
| Being at the ocean and wanting to go boating. | The world is flat. I will fall off the earth if I go out too far. Monsters will devour me. | Fear | Avoid ocean and enjoyment |

4. Tell the following story to the class:

   "Once upon a time, there lived an ancient tribe of cave people. Their caves were at the edge of a very large river, but nobody ever went over to the other side. The people believed that if any one crossed the river and returned, that person would bring destruction to the tribe. One year, all the animals and food supplies disappeared from the cave region side of the river. The tribe faced starvation, yet none of the elders would allow anyone to cross to the other side of the river where food seemed to be plentiful. Anyone who defied the tradition faced the death penalty."

5. Have the class pretend they were members of the tribe and members of a group within the tribe who would rather fight tradition than starve. What can you do? Ask what one of man's basic rights is? (To survive). Why do you think it would be a good idea to go against the tradition? (It will benefit society at large). How can you challenge the belief that destruction will follow if someone ventures across the river? (The best way is by doing something, by taking a risk).

6. If one or both stories have been used, the conclusion to be emphasized is that risk-taking and positive action are ways to challenge irrational beliefs.

### 5.5.1 Homework Assignment

Have children think of specific examples of irrationalities in everyday living (movies, TV, music, comics, songs) and list several of them on paper.

# 6 Challenging Feelings of Inferiority

## 6.1 Background for the Teacher

Feelings of inadequacy and inferiority are among the most pervasive and destructive human emotions. Very often, children and adults fail to view themselves as complex creatures with thousands of traits and characteristics. Instead, they globally rate themselves as "good" or "bad." They consider themselves inadequate or worthless as they over-focus on one or several shortcomings, discounting their many good qualities. A child who occasionally gets into trouble, for example, may suffer needless anguish as he denigrates himself for one aspect of his behavior which only rears its unpleasant head on rare occasions.

Indeed, many people have clearly visible annoying traits, such as chronic complaining and angry outbursts, which can easily mask the more subtle good qualities. A child's disruptive behavior in the classroom usually becomes more noticeable to his teacher than his kindness or his sense of humor because of her desire to avoid a chaotic classroom. It must be kept in mind that shy as well as more verbal and perhaps disruptive, individuals suffer feelings of inadequacy. The overt behavior is merely a manifestation of the problems within.

Purpose of chapter: to help all children develop the skills to challenge and change thoughts and feelings of inferiority, As children learn that they are complex rather than simple creatures, they can then challenge the irrational assumption that a person is all good or all bad because of some of his actions. By better accepting themselves, the children can thus learn to behave in ways that are more conducive to self-development.

## 6.2 Student Activity 1: Simple and Complex

Purpose: to show that people are complex rather than simple, i.e., of the thousands of traits and characteristics a person is capable of expressing, people share some similar

basic traits but differ in others. No two people can be alike in all their talents and inner qualities. Also, to highlight individual differences and show that each person is capable of feeling and acting in many different ways so that children can then question the tendency to define themselves as worthless based on a few traits or act ions.

Procedure:

1. Ask volunteers to try to define the words complicated or complex as in the example sentence: "This machine is complex." Using the same technique, try to elicit the definition of simple. Then explain that simple things have few features and are not very involved, whereas complex and complicated things have many parts that make up intricate or involved systems.

2. Draw some basic geometric shapes on the board without explaining why you are doing so. Then show the class a series of pictures clipped from old magazines or books; buildings, farms, factories, machines, a group of people posing or working together. Ask the class which pictures are simple and which are complex and have them give their reasons.

3. Once the difference has been clearly established, point out a geometric shape in one of the complex pictures. (For example, in the photo of the building there might be an apparent square or circle.) Ask the class if it would be correct to call that picture a simple circle. The class will quickly point to the complexity of the picture.

4. Ask if the students think that people are simple or complex. Accept all answers about the physical complexity of the human "machine," but draw attention to and emphasize the non-physical qualities as well.

5. Ask the students to state some of the different traits people have and list the responses on the board.

6. Culminating question: If it is inaccurate to call a complex or complicated picture a circle, why is it inaccurate to call a complicated person a fool? Elicit and emphasize that humans feel and do many different things. One feeling or one trait does not change all of the other qualities.

### 6.2.1 Homework Assignment

Ask the students to write down as many things as they know about themselves. For convenience the following categories can be explained:

a) "Doing things," such as likes to paint sometimes, dislikes doing dishes most of the time, likes to visit the zoo.

b) "Personal things," such as being a loyal friend, is fair, is sometimes dishonest, is generous most of the time.

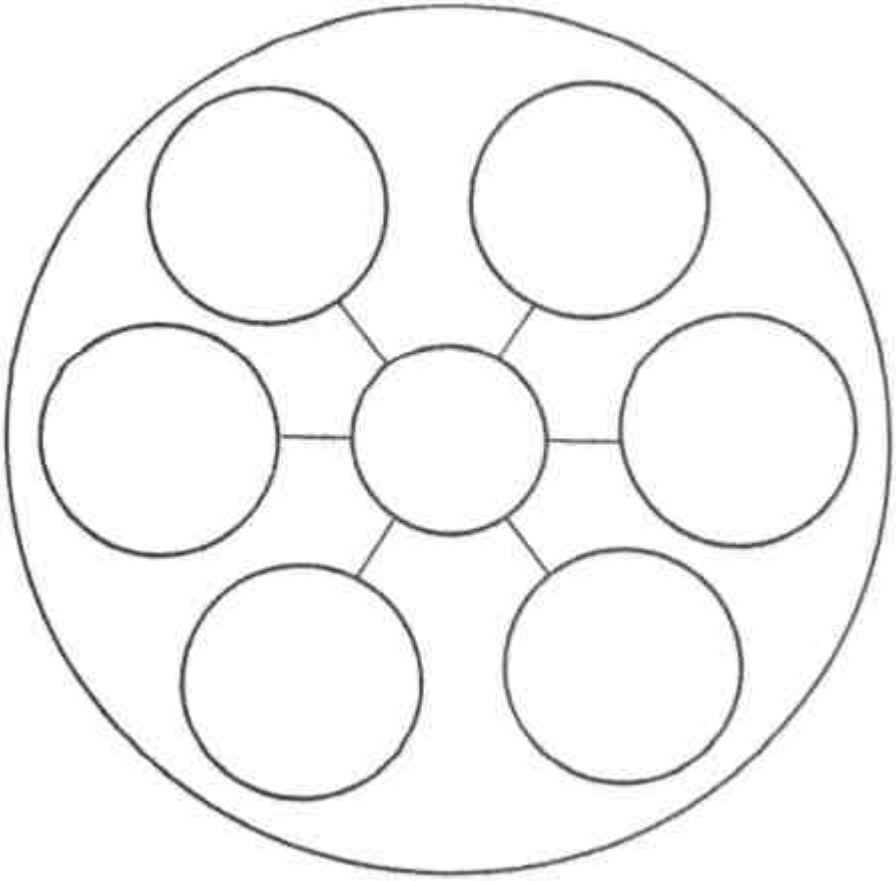
c) "Feeling things," such as sometimes feeling sad, happy, angry, lonely.

## 6.3 Student Activity 2: The Self-Concept Pin-Wheel (for children under 10)

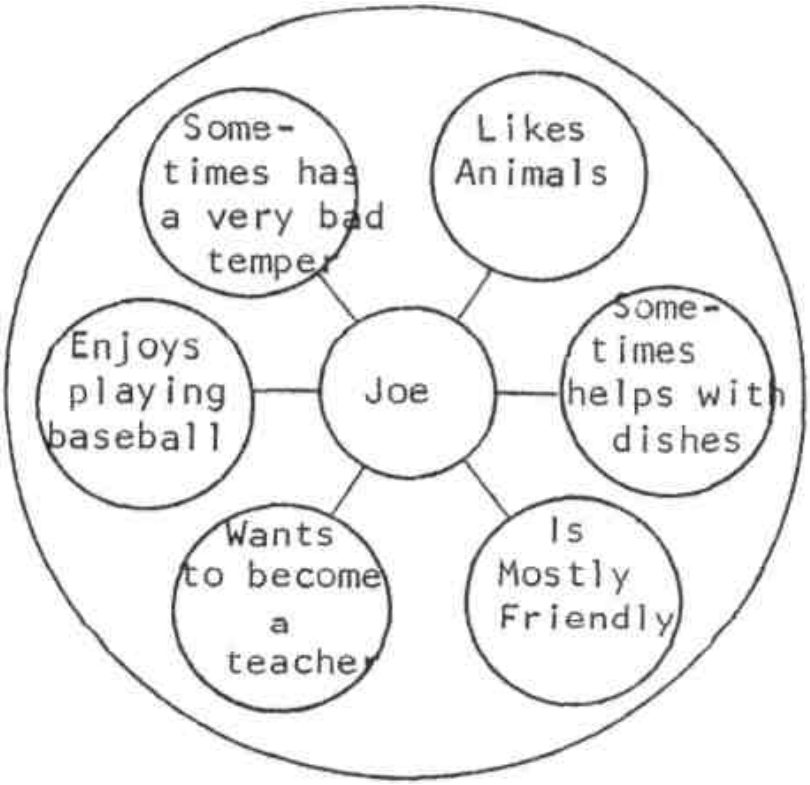
Purpose: to show that every person is more than one thing and to help students challenge feelings of inferiority.

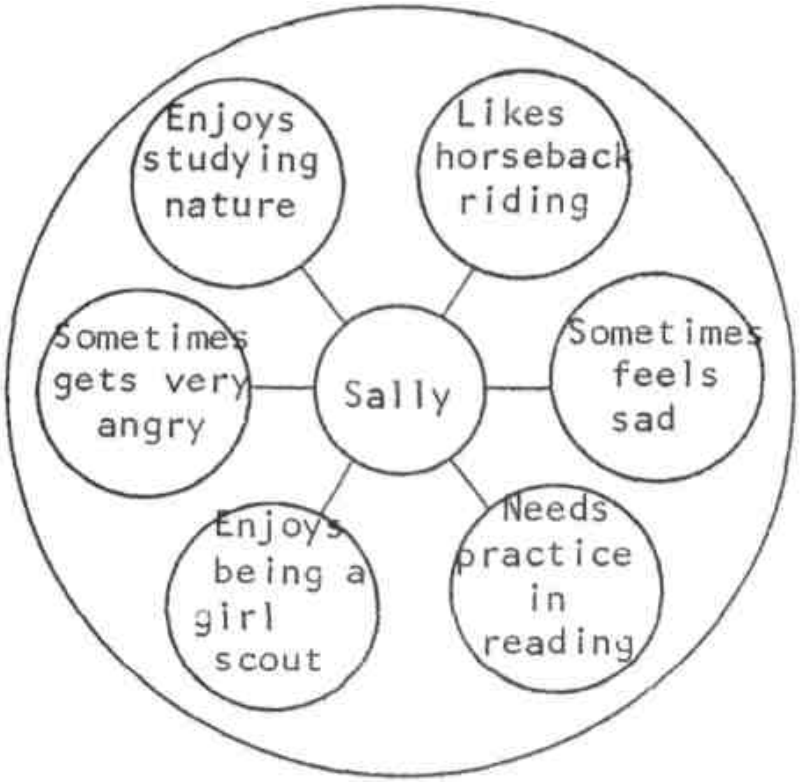
Procedure:

1. Distribute either mimeographed pin-wheels, oaktag circles, or drawing paper on which the pin-wheel diagram can be copied. The pin-wheels will look like the one below, although the number of outer circles may vary for each child.



2. Have the students write their names in the center of their circles, and take out the last homework assignment. Then have them fill in the outer circle with "doing, personal, and feeling" things. See examples below and make sure that each child has a reasonable number of positive qualities on his pin-wheel .


Some-
times has
a very bad
temper
Likes
Animals
Enjoys
playing
baseball
Joe
Some-
times
helps with
dishes
Wants
to become
a
teacher
Is
Mostly
Friendly


Enjoys
studying
nature
Likes
horseback
riding
Sometimes
gets very
angry
Sally
Sometimes
feels
sad
Enjoys
being a
girl
scout
Needs
practice
in
reading

3. Depending on the materials being used, have the children cut and mount pin-wheels on a large oaktag circle. Fasten the oaktag circle to a stick in such a manner that it can spin freely. Paint a red dot below the circle.

4. Let each child practice challenging the irrational idea that he is only one thing by using the pin-wheel. When one of the characteristics stops at the red dot, questions like the following can be asked: "What kind of person am I if I dislike doing the dishes?" "What kind of person am I if I am friendly some of the time?" "Am I only this one thing that I do?"

5. Have some volunteers write name-calling statements ("You are trash... stinky...a fool.") on separate pieces of paper and place the individual statements in a bowl or bag.

6. Have children take turns picking a name-calling paper and challenging the statement. Self-questions like "if someone calls me a name, does it make me one or does it mean that the rest of things about me don't count?" should be encouraged. The use of the words "sometimes," "rarely," "occasionally," and "most of the time" to describe some of their individual qualities is a very useful challenging instrument which can be emphasized. Key questions to be kept in mind as the children challenge the name-calling are:

   a) How can I be just a fool or a dumb-bell if I am all of these other things?

   b) Does one person's opinion of me mean that I am just what they think of me?

   c) Don't the other things on the pin-wheel count?

Draw attention to the negative qualities, such as "sometimes dishonest" or "sometimes unfair," and emphasize that acceptance of a "sometimes" trait doesn't necessarily lead to more dishonesty or unfairness. For example, admitting that one is dishonest sometimes rather than lying about whether one is dishonest is a sign of

truthfulness. By being aware of some of our unpleasant qualities, we are able to work on them and change them.

## 6.4 Student Activity 2: The Self-Concept Circle (for children over 10)

Purpose: to show that every person is more than one thing and to help students challenge feelings of inferiority.

Procedure:

1. Ask the children to write down as many things as they can think about themselves. Give examples of "personal," "doing" and "feeling" things as in the Pinwheel procedure and emphasize the use of the words "sometimes," "rarely," "occasionally" and "most of the time."

2. Have the children fill in a series of circles which form a circle of their many qualities.

3. Ask the children to look at one of their qualities in the self-concept circle. Ask: Are you just that thing? If someone calls you a name or draws attention to a quality which you don't especially like about yourself, are you only that one quality? Does someone's opinion of you make you just that one thing?

4. As in the Pinwheel activity, children can write name-calling statements on pieces of paper and play challenging games in pairs or in small groups.

5. Once the children have some experience with challenging the idea that they are just one thing, ask for definitions of simple and complex. Ask if they think people are simple or complex.

## 6.5 Student Activity 3: Upset—A Game to Demonstrate Irrationality

Purpose: to show the children how irrational thoughts such as "people are all good or all bad" can be self-defeating.

Materials:

a) A standard start-to-finish playing board where players move from Bad Person (start) to Good Person (finish)

b) Positive Quality cards (approximately ¾ of cards)

Examples:

1. Helps by washing the dishes
2. Does very well on reading test
3. Has intelligence
4. Tells the truth

c) Negative Quality Cards, or Upset cards (approximately 1/4 of cards)

Examples:

1. Tied can to cat's tail
2. Pouts when frustrated
3. Ignores friend
4. Lies to teacher about homework

d) Markers to identify players

Procedure:

1. Let three or four players at a time take turns playing the game.

2. Cards are shuffled and a player picks a top card.

3. The player moves ahead one space if he has a Positive Quality Card.

If at the first play, a Negative Quality Card is picked, the player remains at "Start." Forward movement is only possible with a Positive Quality Card. Any Negative Quality Cards indicate that the player must return to "Start" no matter how far he may have progressed.

4. Game is to be played as quickly as possible, since no time is allowed to discuss the moves. An average game will take about five to ten minutes at most.

5. After one or two games have been played, ask the children if they think it is a fair game. Remind them of the self-concept pinwheels or circles and have them explain why the game isn't rational or logical. (Some students will explain that they are punished for their bad qualities or that their bad qualities force them to return to Start-Bad Person; that no matter how many Good Quality Cards they picked, it's always possible that the next card might send them all the way back to Start.) In all probability, none of the students will have reached Finish (Good Person). Ask them if they think it is sensible to think of people as all good or all bad.

6. Point out that this was only a game, but ask the children if they sometimes think of themselves as a bad person when they are reminded of some of their unfavorable qualities. How can you upset yourself if you over-focus on your unpleasant qualities or react to names that people may call you? What do you tell yourself? (Elicit: "I am no good"; "I am that name"; "My good qualities don't count.") Are these thoughts sensible?

Draw attention to some of the Positive Quality Cards. Ask the children whether individual good qualities make them a good person. How do you feel or what do you say to yourself when you think about your good qualities or your achievements?

(Elicit: "I feel good," "O.K.," "I like myself," etc.) Do you still remember these good qualities and successes when things don't go as you would like? Point out that it is advisable to keep the following in mind:

a) No one is all good or all bad

b) Some good qualities don't make me a good person as negative qualities and failures don't make me a bad person.

c) The Self-concept pinwheel or circle shows that I am a complex person with many qualities.

## 6.6 Student Activity 4: Challenge—A Game to Demonstrate Rationality

Purpose: to show the children that one can become self-accepting by thinking and acting rationally and by challenging irrational beliefs. Materials:

a) A standard start-to-finish playing board on which players move from Self-Condemnation (Start) to Self-Acceptance (Finish).

b) rB Cards (1/2 of cards)

Examples:

1. If I don't pass the test, I'll be disappointed.
2. I enjoyed going to my best friend's birthday party.
3. It is a pain to have to do homework.
4. I feel good when my work is done well.

c) iB Cards (2/6 of cards)

Examples:

1. It is awful that I have to stay in.
2. I can't stand the way she acts.
3. Nobody will ever like me.
4. People who make mistakes should be shot.

d) Challenge Cards (1/6 of cards with the word "Challenge")

e) Markers to identify players

Procedure:

1. Let four or five players at a time take turns playing the game.

2. Shuffle cards and let players take one card each from top of pile.

3. When player reads his card he must decide if he has a rational or irrational belief. If he is unsure he can discuss it with other players or onlookers. Players with rB cards move ahead one space. Players with iB cards must stay at Start position or return to Start if they do not hold a Challenge card which enables them to verbally challenge the iB. Players with Challenge cards may take either of the following risks: hold the card for future use with an iB card or trade the card with another player for his position on the board at any point in the game. The valuable challenge cards enable the holder to move ahead five spaces if he successfully challenges an iB card.

4. Play continues until one player reaches Self-Acceptance.

5. At the completion of one or two .games, have volunteers discuss the advantages of challenging. Point out that in the game it was a matter of chance if they got a Challenge Card, but once it was held it gave that player several options. Tell the

children that in subsequent lessons of whenever they have an iB, they always have the opportunity to challenge as long as they remind themselves or are reminded to do so. Have the children summarize their ideas about the ways challenging can lead to self-acceptance and change.

### 6.6.1 Supplementary Activities

1. Ask the children to identify the traits and characteristics they would like to change in themselves. Have them make up charts which include plans for change in each area and progress reports which they are to review and revise at appropriate times.

2. Have children write "Advertisements for Myself" highlighting their desirable qualities and mentioning ways in which their undesirable qualities can be accepted, dealt with or changed.

3. Have children do HTFR diagrams related to those traits and characteristics that sometimes lead them to upset themselves.

# 7 Learning, Mistake-making, and Imperfection

## 7.1 Background for the Teacher

Children often consider themselves lesser human beings eagerly awaiting childhood's end as if childhood— especially school or any formalized learning— were a fixed time period to be gotten through as quickly as possible, rather than a time for growing self-awareness, a time for learning how to learn, and a time for getting a more realistic picture of our imperfect world peopled with imperfect creatures. Quite frequently, many of these children have been victimized by well-meaning but overanxious or domineering parents who want the child to achieve more than they did, and faster, or who treat the child as a kind of small savage to be domesticated and "perfected" as he grows (as if human perfection were an attainable goal).

Perfectionism is a sad treadmill which can only lead to intense anxiety, fear, catastrophizing, and predictably unpleasant experiences. People who pressure themselves or are pressured by outside sources to be perfect give themselves a hard time when reasonable or unreasonable goals are not achieved and mistakes are made. Failure to view learning and the human experience as ongoing processes which necessarily involve mistake-making and imperfection are at the root of the problem. Of course, a society which places greater value on success or getting ahead than on enlightened self-hood can exacerbate the problem.

In recent years, there has been a growing trend among humanistic educators and childhood experts who are concerned about the quality of child life to direct attention not only to the dehumanizing aspects of American education and the so-called American Dream, but also to the kinds of childrearing that engender these irrational and perfectionistic goals. It is to be kept in mind that achievement and self-understanding are not antithetical concepts. Rather, an understanding of human flexibility, fallibility, and the human learning process can serve to enhance achievement and the pleasure in the process of trying, while at the same time exploding the

myth that one's worth is determined by one's achievements.

Purpose of chapter: to make children aware that humans are mistake-makers who often learn by making mistakes; that language affords the opportunity to learn and challenge and change; that the world—like people—is complex, imperfect and viewed differently by different people; and that a person's worth is not determined by his actions.

## 7.2 Student Activity 1: How People Learn

Purpose: to help children explore some of the ways humans learn and the function of human language in communicating, learning, and self-questioning.

Procedure:

1. Have volunteers describe the way they would "paper-train" a puppy. The major points to emphasize are: a) letting the dog know what is wanted—"going" on the paper rather than the rug; b) rewarding the animal for good behavior and punishing him mildly for bad behavior; c) being patient. As students are discussing this, ask if they think the puppy automatically knows that going on the rug is annoying to adults before the training has begun. (If there is time, you may wish to emphasize the importance of the tone of voice rather than the words used.)

2. Explain that training is only one form of teaching and learning. It is used when the learner does not decide what he wants to learn and when he cannot understand why it would be advisable to learn what is being taught. Use a baby's toilet training as a human example of this kind of learning. Ask if a baby knows automatically that his parents want him to use the toilet.

3. Ask those children who have cats or dogs if the animal knew how to walk when it was born. Did ft have to be taught to bark or meow? How long did it take for the animal to be fully grown? Ask the class if they think humans or animals take longer

to develop. Emphasize that animals take a relatively short time to be fully grown and developed; humans, on the other hand, take a very long time to develop physically, mentally and emotionally.

4. Make sure that the children understand what appears to be a very obvious point: that humans have more potential for learning and developing physical, mental, and emotional skills. Ask if a newborn baby can stack blocks? Why not? What are some of the skills a baby has to learn? As his mind and body develop, how does he learn to walk, stack blocks, avoid hot stoves, etc.? (Elicit: How we learn by trial-and-error, making mistakes, practicing, imitation.)

5. Ask the students if they think that a little baby reaching for his rattle or trying to put his toe in his mouth is thinking with words: "If I could only get that rattle..." or "I wonder if that toe has a taste?" Explain that newborns and infants don't think using a language because they don't know a language. Ask how a young baby's learning is similar to or different from their own. (Both learn by trial and error, experimentation, mistake-making, imitation, practice, etc. Only older humans or children of a certain age can use language to work things out in their heads—talk to themselves—or talk to other people.)

6. If any of the children have younger siblings about three years old, ask them if they have ever heard the child talking out loud to himself while playing. You may wish to give as an example that children of that age often say aloud exactly what they are doing. While building a structure out of different size blocks, you may hear them say, "I put this here, and the big one on top. Aw, it fell down." Emphasize that they are practicing using language while they are improving a skill. If you chose to build a structure with this child and his blocks, and he asked you which block to use for the base, how is he using language? (To learn, to communicate.)

7. Ask the class some of the ways they learn in school through the use of language. (Elicit: The teacher tells them things, they read books which contain words, they

discuss, they write, they think, they look at films with spoken words.) Emphasize that once language has been mastered, people learn through the use of language by listening to what others say and by talking to themselves, or thinking.

8. Ask for a definition of frustration and examples of frustrating situations. Write some of them on the board. (Some examples might include: doing a puzzle and finding that some of the pieces are missing; not being able to figure out the meaning of a word when there is no dictionary or no person available to consult; not getting what you want; a kind of tension; not getting what you want.) Remind the class of the example of the newborn reaching for its rattle or its toe. Is the baby blaming anyone or saying to himself: "It's my fault, or his fault" and getting angry? Or is he just frustrated? Do you think anger and frustration are the same? Why not? Emphasize that anger comes from blaming or talking to oneself in sentences about how terrible things are and whose fault it is.

9. Explore helpful ways of dealing with frustration:

   a) accepting frustration as an "all-right" feeling to have

   b) trying to be patient and calm since learning and finding solutions takes time

   c) realizing that problems can't always be solved the way you want and when you want

   d) trying not to add sentences about "how terrible the situation is" so that you won't blame and get angry.

### 7.2.1 Homework Assignment

Have students decide by majority vote which situation comedy they would like to use as part of their assignment; or, you may wish to assign All in the Family. Once the show has been chosen, ask students to write down what they liked or disliked about the show, and describe briefly the events of that particular episode.

## 7.3 Student Activity 2: Facts and Opinions

Purpose: to establish the difference between facts and opinions.

Procedure:

1. Begin the lesson by asking students to take out their last homework assignment. Ask who liked or disliked the show and for what reasons. You may want to write some of their responses in a list on the board, but do not use the word "opinion" yet.

2. Ask the students some of the following questions and put the responses in another column on the board. What time was the show on? How long was it? What happened in that episode and what did some of the characters say or do?

3. Point out the two lists and ask which are facts and which are opinions. Establish the difference between the two. A fact is a statement which is verifiable and observable. An op in ion is someone's idea about something. It is neither true nor false.

4. Have the class add more facts and opinions about the show in the appropriate columns. What were some of the opinions of the various characters? What are some of the facts about the characters? (Were they short, tall, old, young? Did some of them have certain strong characteristics — loving, generous, grumpy, loud-mouthed, etc? Were any of them very opinionated?)

5. Tell the class that they will use this assignment in a subsequent lesson on facts and opinions. If there's anything they wish to add or change on their assignment sheets, they may do so.

6. Erase the list on the board and ask for volunteers to give some statements of fact about school and some opinions to further establish the difference between the

two. The lists might include the following: Facts; the school is located at x; it is open ten months a year; there are x number of classes and about x number of students and teachers; it is a grammar school, ate. Opinions: I like or dislike the school, this class, the scheduling of classes, the rules and regulations, etc.

### 7.3.1 Supplementary Activities

(Use any of the following according to the age and maturity of your students.)

1. "Fool You" is a game in which children sit together in a group. Six or seven children stand before the group and take turns making statements. If the statement is a fact, the other children stand up; if it is an opinion, they touch the floor. Players are eliminated as they are fooled. The last six or seven remaining students are the new "Fool You" team.

2. Display an art print near a tape recorder. When children have free time during the day, have them go to the tape recorder (one at a time) and record their description of the picture and whether or not they like it. At a convenient time, play the entire tape to illustrate the differences of opinion, (A somewhat abstract painting would be a good selection for this activity.)

3. Ask students the difference between news reporting and editorials. Have them write reports on an event you describe, and then try to write an editorial on the same. Or, have them bring in newspaper editorials and underline the opinions in one color, the facts in another.

### 7.3.2 Review and Preview

1. Remind the class of the lesson they had on how people learn. Since the lesson focused on animals, infants, and children, you might ask them if they think adults continue to learn in some of the same ways. (Experience, trial and error, communicating and thinking with language, etc.)

2. Once it has been established that learning is a lifelong, ongoing process you might wish to give the following examples of mistakes people make while learning:

   a) Your mother takes ballet lessons and has sprained her ankle because she hadn't had enough exercise and practice to try to stand on her toes. She made a mistake while learning. What was the cause of her mistake? (Lack of practice or skill, overestimating her talent or error in judgment, etc.)

   b) Your older brother, a recent high school graduate, decides to surprise your mother on her birthday by cooking dinner. He goofs up the recipe and the meal is not a very tasty one. He made a mistake. What are some possible reasons for his error? (He was in a rush, he read the recipe wrong, he didn't follow directions accurately, etc.)

   c) Your twenty-year old sister and her friends from the office have a discussion group at your house every week on women's liberation. They do this because they are trying to work out a way to get equal rights with men on the job. Your father forms the opinion that the girls are talking about female superiority when they are in fact discussing equality. He gets angry with your sister and tells her to have the discussion somewhere else. What mistake did your father make? (He got himself angry. He didn't understand the facts, etc.)

3. Ask the class if they think that these three mistake-makers are bad people because they made mistakes? Did the mistakes change their good traits and characteristics? When you make mistakes at school, home, or play, do the mistakes change your good qualities or do the mistakes make you a bad person? Why not?

4. Tell the class that in the next few sessions they will be focusing on the fact that all humans are mistake-makers. They will explore some of the reasons why people are mistake-makers.

### 7.3.3 Homework Assignment

(Note to teacher: Before giving the assignment, choose three children with very

diverse interests, tastes, skills, and behavioral qualities.) Divide the class into three groups and tell each group which of the three children they are to keep in mind when they are doing the assignment. Have them write a paragraph on the perfect gift for that child and their reasons for the choice.

## 7.4 Student Activity 3: Why People Have Different Opinions

Purpose: to demonstrate that people have different opinions because they have different frames of reference, different skills and tastes, and different personal standards and that failure to recognize these differences can lead to anxiety, anger, and behavioral rigidity.

Procedure:

1. Divide the class into three groups based on the homework assignment, the perfect gift for A, B, or C. Allow each group time to exchange papers among themselves and have them consider these questions as they do so. Did everyone suggest the same gift? Did you all have the same opinions?

2. Have volunteers from each of the three groups try to list some of the things their group members felt about students A, B, and C which led them to make their decisions. List some of their comments on the board as in example below and make sure that the lists include skills, tastes, and personal qualities.

Student A_____

is a good artist

likes arts and crafts

doesn't like group sports

is shy

is generous

Student B_____

is a good listener

likes sports activities and

movies

is friendly and cooperative

is a poor reader

gets very upset when he

makes mistakes

Student C_____

is a good comedian

likes to read enjoys word games

gets into trouble for fooling around too much

doesn't like to share things

3. Since none of the children may feel exactly the same way about the person for whom they chose the gift and no one can know everything about that person, draw attention to conflicting opinions, if any, about Student A, B, C. (For example, if one student felt that student A was shy and another felt that he was very friendly, ask these students to discuss their differences of opinion; draw attention to the fact that the opinion was based on the experience they may have had with that student.) Remind the class that their decision about the gift was based on their experience with and observation of that person. Would it be easier to choose something for yourself or your closest friend? Why?

4. Remind the class of the self-concept pinwheels or circles they did in an earlier lesson. Does everyone have the same skills, good and bad qualities? Are people

simple or complex? Draw attention to the three lists on the board. Ask the class if they think it is possible for them to know every single thing about each of these children or to have every talent, to like everything, to have all good qualities and no bad traits? Why not? Can anyone be perfect?

5. In the lists on the board draw attention to the differences in preference or taste among the three students. If one likes sports, and another likes art work but dislikes group sports, is either of them "right" or "wrong"? Review the definition of opinion: ideas about something that are neither right nor wrong.

   If one student dislikes sports because he has been seriously injured several times in sports activities and another likes sports because he finds it a challenging and exciting activity all the time, why do you think they have different opinions? (Elicit that they have had different experiences or different frames of reference which influence their opinions.) If the sports-lover doesn't know or understand why others might not like sports, how do you think he might act if these people refused to join him in a game? (He might get angry or be anxious.) If the person who has had a few injuries in sports is asked to engage in a very gentle sport which could be a lot of fun, how might he act? (He might still be frightened, refuse to play, and if he played he could have had a good time.) Emphasize that it is a good idea to try to understand other people's preferences and to reexamine the ones we have.

6. On another part of the board, write these three words as list heads: personal, social, achievement. Ask the children to tell you some of their opinions about qualities they value in each of these categories. (If necessary, give the meanings of personal, social, achievement and an example of each: personal—honesty; social—generosity or cooperation; achievement—to get good grades to be an actress, etc.) Once a reasonable number of entries has been made in each list, you may want to ask if every one agrees on each of the entries. (Clearly, many children will agree on various personal and social qualities but there will not be total agreement in all

categories.) Explain that each of us has a personal set of standards or rules by which we measure things as good or bad for us. These standards are based on opinions. Ask the children if they think students A, B, and C or anyone in the class has identical standards, or do they have some similar standards and some different standards? Point out that some standards or rules are based on shared opinions about what is good or bad for a group. For example, if no traffic rules had been set up and everyone followed their own opinions about good driving, there might be more accidents than there are; or if everyone had a different idea of what honesty was, more people would be treated unfairly than they might have been if there were no standards.

7. Have the children take out the assignment they did on a TV situation comedy. Ask the children if there were any disagreements in that episode and if so, what was the cause. (In most cases, it will be difference of opinion or misunderstanding.) Did anyone get angry, upset, or behave stubbornly because someone else didn't have the same frame of reference or the same tastes that he or she had or because they had different personal standards? What were they? What do you think they were telling themselves that made them get angry or upset? (That everyone should have the same taste or opinion. That someone who disagrees is bad or worthless, etc.) How could they have handled it differently? If there is time, ask children to do two HTFR diagrams illustrating how the disagreement was handled and how it could have been handled.

8. Questions for further discussion:

   a) Should everyone have the same opinions?

   b) Should everyone have the same preferences?

   c) Does everyone share the same values, the same personal standards?

   d) Why do some people get angry when others do not agree with them?

   e) Are some people's standards better than others'?

f) What are group standards and why are they set up? (For additional information on standards or rules agreed on because of shared values, see Special Topics lesson on roles, rules, and responsibility in Chapter VIII.)

## 7.5 Student Activity 4: Why People Make Unsound Assumptions

Purpose: to demonstrate that in order to live in the world it is necessary to make assumptions about things; to distinguish between sound and unsound assumptions; and to show how actions based on unsound assumptions usually lead to mistakes.

Procedure:

1. Begin the lesson by asking for a definition of a belief. Accept all reasonable answers and then give the following as a working definition: a belief is a conviction that something is true.

2. Ask the class why they believe some things like: Man can fly to the moon. (It's a fact that has been tested.) Going to college is good. (This is an opinion based on preference or taste, but is neither true nor false; it depends on one's goals.) Introduce the notion that we also believe some of our opinions are facts because we take them for granted or assume we're correct—even if our belief hasn't been tested.

3. In order to establish that we make assumptions all the time, and that some are sound or unsound, discuss or adapt the following: "Everyday when we come to school, we assume that there is school that day, we assume that the school hasn't burned down, we assume that the classroom ceiling will not fall down, and that the chair we sit in will not collapse." Why do you think we take these things for granted? Why do you think we didn't test out these guesses? Have any of you had a ceiling fall in on you lately or had the chairs you sat in collapse? Ask the children to think about what their world would be like if they didn't take some things for

granted or make sound assumptions about them. (You could call up the school, have the ceiling checked, and test every chair before you sit in it; but do you think that would be necessary or advisable?) Establish that we make certain sound assumptions based on our firsthand experience in the past.

Ask the children if they would be acting on a sound assumption by entering a room or a building which had a sign outside warning that the building or the ceilings could collapse at any moment.

Ask the class if they have acted on either sound or unsound assumptions by crossing at the red light (unsound); running across a highway which looks empty (unsound); thinking they were going to fail a subject because they had failed five out of the six weekly tests (sound); thinking they were going to fail a subject because they had failed one out of the six weekly tests (unsound); crossing the street at the green light (sound). Have the children give reasons for their answers.

4. Distribute the following to each student or write it out on the board. Tell the class to read it carefully. Three jockeys were talking to each other before the big race of the day. The youngest jockey said, "The track is very muddy today. That's good. My horse, Rachel, runs well in mud." "My horse, Bobby Boy, runs pretty well on a muddy track, too," said Roberts, the oldest jockey. "Well, I don't know if my horse runs better on a dry track or a muddy track," said Babbit, the third jockey. "All I know is that he's sure a good runner—never lost a race, except the last and that was my fault. I had a cold and didn't ride very well." "That's not why you lost," said Smith. "You lost because my horse ran faster than yours; and that's why you'll lose again today." "Babbit will lose again today," said Roberts, "but he will lose because my horse is fastest."

After the students have been given enough time to read and think about the excerpt, read the following statements aloud and have the students each write True or False for each statement. Tell them they may look at the excerpt before they answer.

a) Babbit was older than Roberts (False)

b) Babbit's horse lost only one race.(True)

c) Smith is a man. (Information not given)

d) Babbit lost the race because he had a cold. (True or False)

e) Rachel was Babbit's horse. (False)

Go over each statement by having volunteers give their answers and point to the evidence for their answer. Statements c and d will provide the most controversy. Ask the students why they assumed that Smith was a man. Is there any evidence in the story? Are there only male jockeys? Point out that by labeling this statement true, they have made an unsound assumption.

Ask the students to re-examine the evidence to support or deny statement d. What was Babbit's opinion? What was Smith's opinion about Babbit's losing the race? If you assumed or guessed that Babbit lost because he had a cold, why is this a sound assumption? (Because there was some evidence to support it—Babbit's opinion). If you assumed or guessed that Babbit didn't lose because of his cold, why is this still a sound assumption? (Because there is equal evidence to support that assumption—Smith's opinion.)

5. Emphasize that the above example was a lesson in discriminating between facts and assumptions. Ask the children if they can give some examples from their own experience which indicated that they believed that their assumptions were facts. Ask them what the results of the misinterpretations were. You may wish to give these examples and some from your experience as a teacher.

   a) Mary assumed that no one liked her. She had no friends.

   b) John wanted a glass of milk. He assumed the milk was sour, so he didn't drink any. The milk wasn't sour.

c) Jane assumed that the test was on Thursday, but the notice on the bulletin board said that the test would be given on Wednesday. Jane was unprepared on Wednesday and she failed the test.

Ask the students to think of what they can do to have fewer inaccurate assumptions. (Elicit: Practice in learning to discriminate between fact and assumption; practice challenging assumptions to see if they are really true or not; and use the words "I assume" before statements in which there is a reasonable doubt about correctness.)

6. Emphasize that we can make mistakes because of different opinions and values. Assumptions, however, can be verified and tested by examining the evidence. How can unsound assumptions lead to mistakes?

7. Point out that even a sound assumption can result in a mistake; (a chair can collapse and we can get hurt, or we can cross at the green light, but a car could go through the light.)

### 7.5.1 Reinforcement:

#### 7.5.1.1 The Huddle Game, a game of assumptive rejection

A group of eight children are organized to play a bean bag game and only these children are given game instructions:

a) You will be given an envelope filled with cards which say either yes or no.

b) While you play the game, I will send some classmates who will ask to join you. When someone asks you to join, go into a huddle but make sure no one other than the team can see what you are doing. Draw a card from the envelope and if it says yes, the child can join. If it says no, he can't join.

c) In the next huddle, if there is a new player, tell him the game plan.

After five or six children have been rejected, ask these children to state what they assume are the reasons for their denial. List these responses on the board. Have each student check out his or her assumptions. Then announce that the basis of the rejection was pure chance, and have the class help those students who had gotten upset by their irrational assumptions to challenge those beliefs.

#### 7.5.1.2 Rumor Circle

Have children sit in a large circle. Give one person a card with a reasonably long message written on it. This person is to whisper the rumor to the child next to him and so on around the circle. The last child writes down his interpretation of the message and his comments are compared with the original card held by the first student.

The following example illustrates what can happen in these games. John tells Tony that Mike did not play well in Thursday's baseball game. Tony tells Mike that John said Mike is a lousy baseball player. Mike gets angry with John or he gets depressed because he thinks that others think he's a lousy ballplayer.

The children may wish to send several messages via the rumor circle, some of which may be complex. From this exercise, the group will be able to see that it can't always be assumed that messages are being received or sent accurately. The class can also examine the reasons why people interpret messages differently.

For children over nine you may wish to send a drawing via the circle. Have the first child look at the drawing for five seconds, then copy it from memory. Have him show his drawing to the next child, for five seconds, who in turn is to try to reproduce it after it has been removed from sight. When the circle has been completed, compare the final drawing to the original. This drawing may serve as the original.

As with verbal communication, visual communication can be based on selectivity. Thus, visual perceptions or reporting of these perceptions can be biased by giving undue weight to one or two of the features, just as is the case with verbal communications.

### 7.5.2 Homework Assignment

Have the children write a paragraph each on these two subjects: my idea of the perfect person and my idea of the perfect world.

## 7.6 Student Activity 5: The Imperfect Person in the Imperfect World

Purpose: to demonstrate that people and the world are complex and that because of the varying opinions, it is unlikely that people or the world could be exactly what anyone would wish it to be.

Procedure:

1. Remind the class of the self-concept pinwheels they made in an earlier lesson and review what was learned about people from that activity. (That people are not just one thing; that individuals have many and diverse qualities; that people are complex.)

2. Tell the class that they are to think about some of the characteristics of the world for a world-pinwheel (Note to teacher: If there is time, the class may want to make the world pinwheel. If not, the discussion method can clarify the goal of the lesson.) What are some of the facts about the world? List some of the student responses and supplement the list if necessary. Responses may include:

   a) It supports various forms of animal and vegetable life.

b) It has different weather patterns and seasons in different areas.

c) It has a gravitational pull which prevents people from falling off.

d) It is round, rotates.

e) Man-related activities: there are various governments in different countries; ingenious means of transportation and communication; science; different living conditions in different places, etc. (Among some of the more negative man-related activities are war, crime, pollution, poverty, prejudice, etc.)

3. Based on their comments and the list of characteristics about the world, ask the class if they think the world is simple or complex? Why is it complex? Is everything about the world liked by everyone? Point out that many of the things that are liked or not liked are not agreed on by everyone. Some things are a matter of opinion.

4. To emphasize that opinions differ about the world or parts of the world, you may wish to list the following statements:

   a) America is a beautiful place with a wonderful president and government.

   b) America has a corrupt government, a terrible president, and is an ugly country.

   c) Americans are rude and pushy people.

   d) Americans are kind and even-tempered people.

Ask the class if these statements are facts or opinions. Explain.

5. Ask the class for some of their opinions about America (or the world in general) and some opinions they have heard. What do these opinions show us? (Note to teacher: If you have not dealt with the section 9.1 lesson on standards or rules based on shared values, it may be necessary to establish that there are in fact standards and rules about desirable and undesirable behavior, but they may differ in different regions.)

6. Have the children refer to their homework assignment about a perfect world. Ask for a few volunteers to read their ideas about the perfect world. When a variety of opinions are read, emphasize that each of them has different reasons for seeing the world as imperfect. Each has a different idea of what a perfect world would be. Do you think the world could ever be what everyone would like it to be?

7. Have other volunteers read the part of their homework assignment about the perfect person. To further demonstrate the student's differing opinions and assumptions about perfection, it might be a good idea to have the children exchange papers among themselves and read each other's opinions.

8. Questions for further discussion:

   a) Are people simple or complex? Do all people have the same characteristics, skills, and tastes?

   b) Is it likely that someone could have every skill, every talent, every nice characteristic?

   c) Can people do some things perfectly? (You can get 100 on a test, the perfect mark. A ballplayer can pitch a "perfect game".) If you do something perfectly, does that make you a "good person"? (No—simply skillful or not skillful at a particular activity.)

   d) If they work very hard, can people ever become perfect? (If we learn by making mistakes in some areas and if learning is a lifelong experience, how can we ever be perfect?)

9. To give the class a visual method of challenging upsettedness about imperfection, distribute or post the following chart. Ask the class to think about whether personal worth changes with adequate or inadequate performances at a particular activity, then to fill in the chart.

| Performance Perfect | Value of Performance | Value of Person | Performance Imperfect | Value of Performance | Value of Person |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 100% on quiz | A+ grade | ? | 98% on quiz<br>85% on quiz<br>35% on quiz | A+ grade<br>B grade<br>F grade | ?<br>?<br>? |
| Decides to help Mom with chores. | Mom likes; worth increase in allowance | ? | Refuses to help Mom. | Mom dislikes; worth no increase in allowance | ? |
| Hits ball over fence | Home run | ? | Misses ball three times | Strikes out | ? |

Ask if a person is the same as his grades. Does an F in spelling mean that you are an "F" person? Is a person the same as the words he uses? Is a person the same as his batting performance?

10. Once the children understand that it is not possible to be perfect in every undertaking, ask them some of the irrational things they think when they do things imperfectly. (It's awful, it's terrible, I'm awful, I'm not a good person, etc.) When you have these irrational opinions about yourself or someone else, how can you challenge them? (a. By reminding yourself that people are not perfect) (b. By reminding yourself that a person is not the same as his performance) (c. By thinking about the many reasons for making mistakes)

### 7.6.1 Homework Assignment

Ask the children to write down some mistakes they have made and seen other people make; the reason why they think the mistake was made; how the mistake-maker acted when he made the mistake; and what their thoughts were about the mistake.

## 7.7 Student Activity 6: Why People Make Mistakes

Purpose: to review and emphasize the fact that people are mistake-makers and that mistakes are usually part of the learning process; that because the world is a complex place, people react to the same things differently; and that people often make mistakes by acting on unsound assumptions.

Procedure:

1. Before going over the homework assignment, it is advisable to have a brief discussion on the relative importance of different kinds of mistakes. Write the following examples on the board or read them aloud:

   a) In learning how to walk, the baby reaches for stable objects to maintain his balance. He reaches for a wobbly table and as he falls, the table collapses on top of him, giving him a serious cut on his head.

   b) While trying to walk, the baby grabs onto an expensive standing lamp, and the lamp falls and breaks.

   c) Mr. Jones is driving up Main Street and doesn't see the stop sign. He goes through the street and is seen by a policeman. He gets a ticket.

   d) Mr. Smith is driving up the same street and he goes through a red light, crashes into a car making a turn. Both drivers are seriously injured.

   e) John gets a failing mark on his weekly English test.

   f) Jane, a high school senior, fails the college entrance exam.

   g) A young boy takes money from his Mother's wallet, gets caught, and is punished for a week.

   h) A teenager steals the same amount from a stranger, is caught, and taken to juvenile court.

   i) Mary thought John was an interesting boy. She went out on a date with him and spent a very boring evening, j) John assumed that Jan had a car. He

invited her to drive to the racetrack in the country. Jan didn't like horse racing, nor did she have a car.

2. Do all these incidents have something in common? What is it? (All involve mistakes.) In what ways are they different? (Causes and consequences, varying degrees of importance).

3. Have volunteers compare related examples a & b, c & d, e & f, etc. After examples have been discussed, emphasize the fact that some mistakes have worse consequences than others, the greatest being serious injury or death.

4. Ask what the causes of mistakes in the examples were? (Lack of skill, trial and error in the learning process as in a and b; carelessness or poor judgment as in c and d; not studying, not understanding information, tired, ill or poor students as in e and f; unacceptable social values, unsound assumptions, as in g and h;and opinions and assumptions as in i and j.)

5. Have the students take out their homework assignments on mistakes they have made or observed. Have a few students read examples and have volunteers write one each on board after first labeling the following columns:

| **Mistake** | **Cause** | **Result** | **Thoughts about mistake-maker** |
|---|---|---|---|

(If you have the time, you may wish to allow students several minutes to review their summaries of lessons or assignments from Section 7.6). After a few minutes, ask the students to look at examples on the board to see if they agree with the cause, in some cases, the students will find that there may be more causes than they were first aware of. Allow time for corrections on board and assignment sheets.

6. Before discussing the thoughts about mistake-makers, ask the class if they can

think of cartoon characters who are big mistake-makers (Wiley Coyote in the Road Runner strip is a good example, as is the weatherman!). Should these characters (and people) be punished for their mistakes? Why do some of them make mistakes?

7. Have the class examine the examples on the board. Do any of the examples show that the person who wrote them is blaming the mistake-maker? If so, draw attention to the language of blame. If none of the examples indicate self-blame or blaming others, ask the students what people say to themselves when they blame themselves or others. (Elicit: "I'm awful. He's awful. He's a bad person, I'm a fool, etc.")

8. Ask the students to put their examples on an HTFR diagram to further illustrate that we feel the way we think. Ask the students how they feel when they blame themselves or others, and how they can change the way they feel.

### 7.7.1 Supplementary Activity

Since it is important not only for children to realize that all humans are mistake-makers, but that we needn't just resign ourselves to things as they are, ask each child to write down four areas of their lives they would like to improve. The list can include school activities, personal qualities, or anything the children wish. Ask them how they can learn from their mistakes. (They provide information about areas for improvement.) Suggest that they record at regular intervals what they have done to improve, the results of the efforts, and the way they use their subsequent mistakes as information in the improvement process.

# 8 Demanding, Catastrophizing, and Challenging

## 8.1 Background for the Teacher

With the exception of the essentials for survival—food, shelter, clothing, and stimulation—people truly need little else. There are, however, many desirable and worthwhile goals in life such as achievement, approval, comfort, happiness, and being able to predict how certain things will turn out. Although an individual may not be happy if he does not achieve some of his desired goals, few people are capable of coping with severe setbacks, and still others are totally incapable of dealing with practically any setbacks. Anger, depression, anxiety, complaining, brooding, and blaming are but a few of the unhealthy responses of those who demand that they get exactly what they want in life. People who think in terms of "must have," "should have," "need," and "demand" are not simply saddened or disappointed in the face of unfulfilled goals (as are those emotionally healthy individuals who may have "aspired to," "wanted," or "desired" those same legitimate goals). Clearly, emotional troubles do not stem from thwarted desires, but rather from the irrational standards and demands one has for oneself.

Perfectionistic demanding is usually associated with a series of irrational assumptions and conclusions about situations. Since the perfectionist associates his worth with his performance, failure to achieve a goal is for him evidence of his worthlessness. His blame and anger may be turned inward in the form of self-pity and feelings of helplessness, or outward at the people who have not cooperated in the achievement of his goal. Inconveniences of varying degrees are inevitably converted into disasters and catastrophes. Ellis has described the human tendency to magnify things out of all proportion as catastrophizing or "awfulizing."

Mass destructions of civilian populations are truly catastrophes, but for the most part, life is not an ever-constant series of disasters unless one is irrationally assuming that he "cannot stand" situations which do not work out perfectly. If an individual

defines unpleasant occurrences in his life as awful and terrible, he will undoubtedly feel helpless and panicked in the face of difficult new situations, and depressed about old ones. By learning to identify and challenge irrational demands and assumptions, it is possible for adults and children to view their world with a more realistic eye and to face everyday problems as the things they are—difficult challenges perhaps, but clearly not catastrophes

Purpose of chapter: to teach children the nature of irrational demands and assumptions versus rational desires, and to help them apply this knowledge by challenging their catastrophizing tendencies and taking positive action against it.

## 8.2 Student Activity 1: Demands and Desires

Purpose: to help the children define and differentiate desires and irrational demands.

Procedure:

1. Begin the lesson by writing the following statements on the board:

    a) I want a new dress.

    b) I must have that bicycle I saw in the department store.

    c) I need to win this game of checkers.

    d) It would be nice if my parents took me to the movies.

    e) I would like to get an A in math.

    f) I hope our team wins.

    g) I should be everybody's friend.

    h) I wish I bad more friends.

    i) I demand that everyone be honest.

j) I prefer peace and quiet when I do my homework.

Explain to the class that some of these statements contain desire words and some have demand words. Before defining demand and desire, ask the children if they can identify which statements are desires (a,d,e,f,h,j) and which are demands (b,c,g,i,). If the children are clearly having difficulty distinguishing the two, you may want to define demands and desires at this point. (A demand is a belief that you must have what you want, whereas a desire expresses a preference or a wish for something.)

2. Once the demand and desire words have been labeled and identified, you may want to have a brief discussion of man's basic needs. Point out that people who are demanding think they need more things than they actually do. Give the following example:

   You and some others have gone to a desert island. What are the things you need in order to survive? (You will probably get a long list of non-necessities.)

3. Remind the class of the lesson they had on assumptions in the previous chapter. (If you have time, you may want to go through the activity again or have students summarize key points.) What is an assumption? What is an unsound assumption and what is a sound assumption? Point out that some people have different opinions about what is desirable. Ask the class again what man's basic needs are. (Food, clothing, shelter, and stimulation). What does the demanding person assume about his needs? (He assumes that he needs more things than he actually does. He mistakes assumptions for facts.)

4. Give the following examples to the class:

   a) If I don't get the gifts I want, I will be disappointed.

   b) I must get an A. If I do I'll feel great; if not, I'll be furious.

   c) Everybody should be honest; liars are worthless people.

d) I'd like to be a better tennis player, but if I play a lousy match, I'll try harder the next time.

e) I insist that Mary eats with me at lunch time. If she doesn't it will be awful because I'll know she doesn't like me.

Ask for volunteers to tell which examples are desire examples and which are demand examples. What are some of the reactions of people who make irrational demands? What are the reactions of those who desire certain things but don't get them?

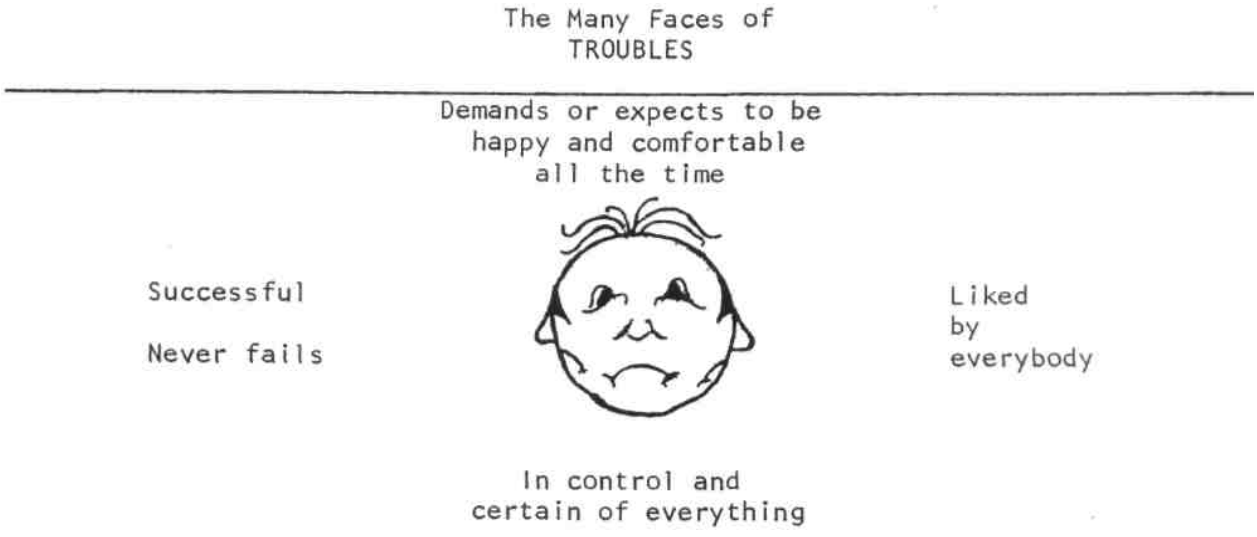
5. Tell the class that in the next activity they are going to discuss a character called "Troubles" who insists on getting everything he wants.

## 8.3 Student Activity 2: The Many Faces of "Troubles"

Purpose: to help the children recognize and challenge irrational demands and to help them deal with the emotional responses that often accompany irrational assumptions.

Procedure:

1. Draw the following on the board:



2. Ask the children to look at the statements surrounding "Troubles." Are his demands unsound or irrational assumptions? Go through each of the statements and ask volunteers to tell why they feel these demands are irrational. Point out that "Troubles" has opinions and values, too, but he also assumes that his opinions are the only right ones and everyone who disagrees with him is wrong. Do you think that "Troubles" is a happy person? What do you think some of his feelings and reactions are when he doesn't get his way? (Anger, blame, worry, depression, worthlessness). What gets "Troubles" into trouble; events, or his thoughts about them?

3. Have the class do HTFR diagrams for the following situation: Troubles expected to get 100% in his math test. He got five out of twenty answers wrong. Allow students time to do their diagrams and then if there is room on the board, you may have different students fill in various elements of the diagram. Ask other volunteers to read their diagrams aloud.

| **Happenings** | + **Thoughts** | = **Feelings** | **Reaction** |
|---|---|---|---|
| 15 out of 20 answered correctly in test | I expected to get all of them right. Oh how awful! I'm worthless and no good. I should have done better. I'm dumb. I can't stand this. | Anxiety<br>Anger<br>Inferiority | Sulks, throws things, fights, argues with father, calls teacher names, messes up homework, next day, etc. |

4. Ask the students to think of rB's (rational beliefs) for someone in the same situation who is not troubled by it. These can be written on the same piece of paper as Troubles HTFR diagram and the responses can be handled the same way (written on the board or read aloud).

| Happenings | + Thoughts | = Feelings | Reaction |
|---|---|---|---|
| 15 out of 20 answers right on math test. | Wow! What a disappointment. I was hoping I would do better than that. | Disappointment Frustration | Asks classmates or teacher for help when not sure how to do some problems. Practices doing assignments more carefully and more often. |

5. Ask the students to put Troubles' feelings on Emotional Experience Scales for happiness, frustration, and self-acceptance. (If there isn't time to draw the actual scales, you may want to discuss these in general terms.) The scales or discussions of the scales can help the children further contrast desiring and demanding in relation to each direction Troubles might look—up, down, left or right.

6. Discuss with the children ways to help Troubles:

   a) If Troubles wants to change what does he have to do first? (Be aware that he's a perfectionist and that's an impossible belief because people and the world are not perfect.)

   b) What does Troubles have to realize about the cause of his troubles? (He has to understand that he causes his problems, not other people or outside events.)

   c) In each of the four satisfaction areas where Troubles demands perfection, how does Troubles create his own troubles? (When he doesn't succeed, isn't in complete control of things, isn't happy or comfortable or isn't loved by everyone, he's going to be upset. If he doesn't get the approval he demands, he's going to think himself a failure or dislikeable. If he doesn't succeed in all endeavors, he thinks less of himself and may be afraid to take on new challenges. If he thinks he needs to predict the future or be sure of what is going to happen next, he's going to view himself as unsuccessful when he finds out that he can't predict perfectly).

   d) Once Troubles realizes that his assumptions are not only irrational but also

impossible, what can he do? (He can look for evidence to question his viewpoint and challenge his beliefs with action.)

e) What are some of the challenging statements he can make about his assumptions or things he can learn by the challenging?

*Having his way* He could try to accept that while it is desirable to have his way, it is not essential that it be that way.

*Success* He can appreciate what he does have and try to work at doing the best he can rather than being the best there is. He can learn that his worth is not determined by any one of his actions. He can learn that people and the world are complex and that you can't succeed in everything.

*Liked by all* He can learn that people have different opinions and values, that people are complex creatures with many different qualities. You can't please everyone and if people don't like you, it doesn't make you worthless.

*Demand for comfort* He can learn that he causes his own unhappiness by the view he takes of events. He can learn that if he doesn't get some of the reasonable things he works for, his lack of achievement isn't the cause of unhappiness or discomfort. Because no one can control all events and all people and the world and people are not perfect, no one can be perfectly happy, all the time.

7. Draw attention to Troubles' attitudes toward others. It has been clearly established that Troubles demands perfection of himself. Ask the children, what do you think is his attitude toward other people? Do you think he demands the same perfection of them? When people are not perfect, what do you think are some of his thoughts about their worth? Do you think he blames them for their mistakes? Why?

8. If there is time, allow children a few minutes to review their notes on the preceding chapter (*Learning, Mistake-making, and Imperfection*). Then have a volunteer

tell the class what he would tell Troubles about the reasons why people make mistakes.

## 8.4 Student Activity 3: Touchy Joe

(Note: The following is an example of a discussion approach used by Ms, Selma Bokor in a sixth-grade class in a school located in an economically deprived area. The school is considered a special school with the average reading level at the 20th percentile, i.e., 80% of the nation's children read better than this group. You may wish to adapt or modify this discussion-type activity to suit the age, maturity, and vocabulary level of your class.)

Purpose: to have the children recognize and challenge irrational demandingness and its emotional and behavioral consequences.

Procedure: Discussion

Ms. B: Do you know someone who gets angry very easily?

Class: Yes.

Ms. B: What do we know about people who get angry very easily?

Child: They're touchy.

Class: They steal, cheat, start trouble, bother people, think people bother them, argue a lot, start fights.

Ms. B: What do you think of a person — let's call him Touchy Joe — who fights a lot, starts trouble, argues, blames others. What happens to him?

Child: He has no friends.

Ms. B: Do you think he's a happy person?

Class: No.

Ms. B: How do you think he sees it? Do you think he says to himself, 'Oh, I always

start trouble, I always act unfairly'? Or do you think he says, 'Everybody is picking on me...she put the chair in my way on purpose. I'm nice; it's everybody's fault that I'm in trouble'?

Class: He thinks everybody is picking on him.

Ms. B: Can Joe do anything about this problem and be a happier person?

Child: Stop being touchy.

Ms. B: How can he do that? For example, what does he have to realize first?

Child: I'm touchy.

Ms. B: That's right. That's a good first step.

The teacher continued the discussion and pointed out that everybody, including herself, was a Touchy Joe at times and she suggested that whenever anyone in class was being touchy, he was to be questioned: "Are you being a Touchy Joe ?—because sometimes it is helpful to be reminded.

### 8.4.1 Homework Assignment

Ask students to question Touchy Joe's in class and write down whenever they are being Touchy Joe's themselves. Whenever someone gets angry, have them question, "Is there another side to the story?" and write an answer to this question whenever they are angry themselves.

## 8.5 Student Activity 4: Catastrophizing or "Awfulizing"

Purpose: to have children explore the nature of catastrophizing or "awfulizing" and to help them challenge the irrational ideas and assumptions.

Procedure:

1. Ask the children to describe briefly situations which they consider unpleasant. Have each child draw up a list of ten unpleasant things and list them in order from

most unpleasant to least unpleasant. (The lists might include statements such as; going to the dentist, not being able to own a dog, not passing the fifth grade, sleeping in the dark, being punished by Dad, being allowed to ride my bike, having to stay in on Saturdays, not having enough food packed in my lunch, having to stay in class while everyone is in the schoolyard, taking a test.)

2. To emphasize the fact that people have different opinions about what is unpleasant and how differently some people rate the same situations, you may want to have students exchange papers a few times to read each other's lists, or you may call on a few students and have lists read aloud. After a reasonable sample has been read, ask the children if any of them had identical lists in the same order. Why do you think your lists were not the same?

3. Choose a few items which may appear on several students' lists and have the students expand on their statements about these items. For example:

    1. I don't like going to the dentist. Sometimes I have to have fillings and it hurts. I wish I didn't have to go at all.
    2. I can't stand going to the dentist. It might hurt. I'd rather let my teeth rot and fall out.
    3. Going to the dentist is awful. I'd rather be dead than have a dental check-up.
    4. Not being able to have a puppy is a disappointment. Mom says that the apartment building doesn't permit them. I wish we could move.
    5. Not having a puppy is terrible. I can't stand the idea that some children can have them and I can't.
    6. Not having a puppy is worse than having no friends. It's terrible to be without a dog.

Draw attention to the similar unpleasant situations. In the above examples, point out that a, b, and c have the same unpleasant situation as do d, e, and f. What is different

about the related unpleasant situations? (The way they are viewed, the statements made about them.) Which of the statements show that the unpleasant situation has been accepted and that the individual has not upset himself about it? (In the above examples, a and d). If the students have written the statements on paper, have them underline words such as awful, can't stand, terrible. (If the statements are on the board, underline these words.) Remind the class that the unpleasant situations were a matter of opinion; some people agreed and some people disagreed; neither were right or wrong. Ask for a definition of an unsound or irrational assumption. Explain that words like awful, terrible, and can't stand are based on irrational assumptions; and that by telling yourself that something is terrible or awful, you are taking for granted that the situation is AWFUL. Tell the class that the tendency to think of things as terrible, awful, or something we can't stand is called "awfulizing" (or catastrophizing, depending on age and maturity level.)

4. In order to show the students that some situations may actually be disastrous, it is important to discuss major catastrophes. Ask the class what they had decided were man's basic needs in their discussion of needs and demands. (Food, clothing, shelter, some kind of stimulation.) Ask the children for examples of incidents they may have viewed on TV where people were victims of starvation, violent crimes and war, or natural catastrophes like floods and volcanoes. Establish the fact that in the examples given, people were deprived of their basic needs or their right to live; these are highly unfortunate incidents or catastrophes.

5. Ask the children to think about ways to challenge the irrational beliefs that some unpleasant situations are awful or terrible catastrophes. Have them draw HTFR diagrams on one of the examples used which clearly contained irrational assumptions about "awfulness." Ask them to do two versions: one as the person who actually had those ideas and one with a more realistic outlook. You may call on students to read the two diagrams aloud or have some written out on the board. As you go over the diagrams, emphasize that the challenging questions are: 'What

is really that awful about this situation." And "Who is making it awful?"

6. If the class has done the Many Faces of Troubles activity, ask them how Troubles typically reacted. (Demanding; perfectionistic; someone who wanted everything to go his way; someone who wanted to be liked by everyone and successful in all of his actions; a worrier; a blamer; someone with a low frustration tolerance, etc.) Ask the class if they think Troubles was an awfulizer and have them give their reasons. Do you think all people who have irrational assumptions about perfection are usually awfulizers? Why? How can they challenge these assumptions and tendencies? (By being aware that they have them, by questioning their thoughts, by trying to change their behavior.)

### 8.5.1 Supplementary Activity

Have children act out a scene where one child is awfulizing about not being able to go to the movies. Have the other children question him about his thoughts and feelings. At the end of the activity, have the "actor" tell which challenges were most helpful. If time allows, let other children play the awfulizer.

## 8.6 Student Activity 5: Can You be a Perfect Challenger?

Purpose: to show the children that challenging, like learning, is an ongoing process which involves practice and even mistake-making.

Procedure:

1. Ask the class how they learn any skill (Experimenting, practice, patience, working at it, etc.). Do you usually become an instant expert at everything you try or do you make mistakes? How do you learn from your mistakes?

2. Ask the class if they have ever have seen an expert in sports or any other area (artist, scientist, actress, comedian, etc.) discuss his skill. Do these people keep

working at their skill and continue learning or do they stop once they have done one good job?

3. Ask the class how they can improve their skill at challenging irrational assumptions. How is challenging like other skills that you learn? (The practice and the learning are continual.)

4. Remind the class of their lesson on the Imperfect Person and the Imperfect World. Allow time for children to review any notes they may have on the lesson. Ask the class if they can be perfect people. Why not? Do you think an expert in any area is perfect at it all the time? Do you know of any ballplayer, artist, actress or other famous person who has never made a mistake in his or her career? Do you think you can be a perfect challenger all of the time?

### 8.6.1 Homework Assignment

Have the children write a few paragraphs on the importance of challenging as a lifetime skill.

# 9 Special Topics

## 9.1 Responsibility, Roles and Rules

### 9.1.1 Student Activity 1: Responsibility, Roles and Rules

Purpose: to have the children explore the nature of responsible and irresponsible behavior; to explore the idea that people have many roles at a time and that roles imply rules.

Procedure:

1. Give children the following examples and ask them if the person in the example behaved responsibly or irresponsibly. Have them explain answers:

   a) Sally, a ten-year-old girl, was asked to watch her year-old brother while their parents went shopping. The baby brother fell asleep on the floor in the living room, and Sally decided to go outside to play.

   b) John is having an English test today in school but he has had a bad case of the flu for several days and he still has a high fever and chills. He decides to stay in bed.

   c) (Same situation as b). He decides to go to school.

   d) A two-year-old is alone in the kitchen. He touches a hot stove and burns his hand.

   e) The children are late for school, so Mom drives through a red light at a busy intersection in order to make the trip shorter.

(The students will probably agree that examples a and e are irresponsible. Examples b and d will likely produce much discussion and disagreement, with some students concluding that a test is more important than one's health, and others realizing that it

may be possible to make up the test. Some children may consider example d as irresponsible behavior, not realizing that two-year-olds are not always fully aware of what could hurt them.)

2. You may wish to have the children give further examples of responsible and irresponsible behavior from situations they have witnessed or experienced. If additional examples are discussed, ask if any children disagree with the labeling of the example and if so, have them explain their differences of opinion. Ask if any child can explain what a responsible person is. Help the children develop a working definition such as: "A responsible person is one who tries to think and act rationally." Or "A responsible person is one who sees himself as accountable for his own behavior."

3. Ask the children to name some of the different groups they belong to. (Elicit: family, human race, school, play groups, teams, clubs, etc.) When you are playing third base in a ball game or working on a science exhibit for your club, are you still the son or daughter of Mrs. Smith, a student in the Adams School, or the member of the basketball team or club? Emphasize that we have many roles at a time.

As this point, the teacher can use herself (or himself) as an example. If the teacher is a wife and mother, she is still a teacher. Although she is a teacher, she is still a student or learner, since learning for most people is a life-time process and she is a member of the human race. She is a citizen, she may be a licensed driver, a member of the Automobile Association of America, or she may belong to a club or union. She has all of these roles and different responsibilities in different roles.

4. Ask the children to think about some of the rules they follow in different roles. What would it be like if everyone did exactly as they pleased in a game? What would it be like if there were no traffic rules, no school rules? Establish the fact that some rules are important to maintain some kind of order, some rules are highly important to protect people's lives, property, and rights.

5. Remind the class of the lesson they had in Chapter 6 on opinions. If there is time for review, let the children examine any notes or activities they may have on the subject. Ask the class why people have different opinions and different values. Have them think of some behavioral qualities that many people agree on. (The list might include: honesty in words or the use of language, not stealing, consideration for others, and respect for other people's lives and property.) Explain that these are called shared values.

Ask the class to think of some of the different groups they belong to. Who made up the rules and what are some of them? (In some of these groups, it may be discovered that certain rules seem arbitrary and unimportant and that some groups have dictatorial leaders.) If the children were not around when the rules were made, have them speculate and hypothesize about the origin of some of these rules. For example, the children are citizens of the United States which has a Bill of Rights and a Constitution and rules or laws about violating the Constitution and the Bill of Rights. Ask the children to think about what our forefathers were concerned about when this democracy was set up. Did they have different opinions about what this country might be like, but also shared values about human rights and the country's goals? After the students have discussed this example (or any group they chose to focus on), establish the fact that rules or standards are usually established at least in a democracy—because some or most of a group's members agree on certain values. Where members of a group do not agree on major issues, the working of the group becomes difficult, indeed.

#### 9.1.1.1 Reinforcement

Tell the children that they are going to set up some rules for their class. What are some of the things that must be considered? (The main purpose of the class — learning; protection of individual rights, and protection of the individual, protection of property.) Have them discuss, vote on, and use various rules and standards.

Once rules have been set up, have one child assume the role of class monitor for a

week or longer. The monitor's task is to be a rational model who intervenes when rules are violated, acts reasonably and firmly, and accepts the fact that all humans make mistakes.

After several monitors have been given a chance, the students can be given an opportunity to re-evaluate the rules and decide if some would best be revised or discarded or if some new rules are necessary.

#### 9.1.1.2 Supplementary Activities

1. Discussion topics: set time aside for children to debate the following questions: "What are one's responsibilities for other's feelings?" and "Is an irresponsible person a bad person?"

2. (For younger children) Have children take turns doing the necessary chores for maintaining classroom pets. Keep in mind that children under eight may have to be reminded of their assigned responsibility.

## 9.2 Perspective

### 9.2.1 Background for the Teacher

As children get older, they begin to demonstrate their ability to become less egocentric. Whereas a five-year-old usually cannot understand their parents' reasonable arguments against going to the zoo or some other pleasurable event, children between the ages of eight and eleven may be better able to understand someone else's point of view. Eight to eleven-year-olds demonstrate a varying range of ability to identify with another's viewpoint when it is one they are familiar with and when it is in accord with their own beliefs. With age and experience, through social interaction and constant confrontation with opposing views, children's sense of perspective and ability to integrate other viewpoints gradually develops.

Systematic studies by Kohlberg (1966) and Whitman (1967) demonstrate a trend toward growing perspective between the ages of six and twelve. In examining the moral development of children in that age range, Kohlberg identified six stages of growth, whereas younger children operated on principles of reward and punishment or reciprocity. Whitman noted an increasing ability to identify defensive reasons behind certain behaviors but he also noted many inaccurate perceptions among the older groups.

The purpose in describing these developmental issues is to emphasize the fact that teachers must use their judgment in evaluating students' abilities to deal with the following perspective-generating activities. It is advisable to employ as concrete an approach as possible with children under eleven or with those older children who can't grasp the concepts quickly.

### 9.2.2 Student Activity 1: Defining and Examining Perspective

Purpose; to point out that preschoolers and slightly older children are severely limited in their ability to view things through other people's eyes.

Procedure:

1. Begin by asking volunteers with pre-school siblings to relate some brief incidents about the young child's behavior when he didn't get what he wanted: a toy, playing a particular game, going places, etc. The students will probably provide elaborate descriptions of angry tantrums, crying, and whining.

2. In the examples given, ask the volunteers if they recall their parents' reasons for saying no. (Toy was too expensive or dangerous; it was a bad day or a bad time of day for doing what the young child wanted; parents didn't have time to go where child wanted or parents may have been having a bad day.)

3. Ask the class if they think that very young children are able to understand the

reasons for the "no." Why do they sometimes continue crying or whining, "I want it, I want it," long after their parents have told them why they can't have what they want just then? Do you think that very young children are able to put themselves in somebody else's shoes, so to speak, and look at the situation from somebody else's point of view, namely, their parents?

4. Give these examples: Suppose you are looking at a ball through a very powerful magnifying glass. Do you clearly see the people or the objects that might be near the ball? Suppose you looked at yourself in a handheld magnifying mirror; are you also able to clearly see your friend or your father who might be standing next to you? In real life, do you always see things magnified out of proportion as with the magnifying glass or mirror? Explain that very young children view themselves as if they were looking through a magnifying mirror. They consider themselves and their demands all-important; and are usually so self-centered that they can't understand other people's viewpoints. When a young child wants something, he over focuses on it as if he looked through a magnifying glass at what he wants. Point out that as the child gets older, as he matures and has more experience, he will be better able to view things with perspective—in other words to see more sides to an issue or other people's viewpoints as well as his own.

5. Ask students for examples from their own experience which indicated that they did not understand or accept someone else's point of view. What was the incident? What were your reactions? What were your [ thoughts and feelings? (You may want to have them illustrate these incidents with HTFR diagrams.)

6. Tell the class that they are going to do some activities which will help them further develop their sense of perspective.

### 9.2.3 Student Activity 2: Examining a Story from Different Perspectives

Purpose: to generate the ability to see things from a different perspective or viewpoint.

Procedure:

1. Tell or read a version of *Jack and the Beanstalk* to the class. (N.B. Make sure that the version you choose doesn't describe the giant as having stolen his treasures from Jack's father).

2. Ask the children if there is a "good guy" and a "bad guy" in this story. Is anyone all good or all bad? Do you like one character better than another? Why? Is anyone's opinion right or wrong? (Most of the class will probably agree that they dislike the giant or think he is sometimes a "bad guy.")

3. Have the children try to look at the situation from the giant's point of view.- (He has been comfortably relaxing in his castle in the sky and along comes this intruder, Jack, who steals some things.) What do you think the giant's thoughts and feelings were? If you were the giant, would you ignore the whole incident and say to yourself, "I don't mind; let anybody take what they want?" Ask the class if they still think that Jack is the "good guy." Have them examine Jack's behavior.

4. Draw attention to the fact that unpleasant situations happen frequently. Sometimes individuals don't treat you fairly; they may bully or tease, call you names, or blame you for things you didn't do. When you have to deal with these problems, what happens if you let yourself become angry or very upset? Do you see the issues clearly? Are you able to understand that the other person—the bully, the teaser, the name-caller—may have a problem? What happens to your sense of perspective? In what ways do you become like the little children we discussed earlier?

5. Discuss the scene where Jack quickly retreats down the beanstalk. Was the giant condemning Jack or his deed? (Point out that the giant was very angry at Jack during the chase.) If the giant hadn't been so over-focused on his anger, how could he have saved himself?

#### 9.2.3.1 Reinforcement

1. Role-playing: Have the children set up a mock trial in which Jack appears before a judge to account for the robbery and the giant's death. Have children who saw merit in the giant's position defend Jack. Have those who sided with Jack serve as prosecutors. Let other children be the jury and select a few students to play the roles of witnesses.

2. Debate: Have the children look for other fairy tales which will allow them the possibility of discussing two (or more) sides of an issue. When the debates are held, plan enough time so that children get a chance to debate more than one viewpoint.

#### 9.2.3.2 Supplementary Activity

Role playing and role reversal: Before class, help two children plan a mock argument which they will stage at some point during the next session so that the class is unaware that it is planned. During the argument, ask different members of the class to play the roles of teacher, principal, and parents and to try to settle the dispute. Without re-staging the argument, let children exchange roles. If the children appear to give rigid performances based on stereotypes, help them identify their tactics.

## 9.3 Stereotyping

### 9.3.1 Student Activity 1: Defining and Examining Stereotyping

Purpose: to have the children explore the nature of stereotyping and challenge the irrational opinions that lead to stereotyping.

Procedure:

1. Write the following statements on the board:

   All teachers know all the answers.

All immigrants are dumb.

All politicians are crooked.

All Jews are intelligent.

All mothers are weak and passive wives.

All Italians are mobsters.

All policemen are pigs.

2. Ask the students what they think of the above statements. Are they facts, opinions, sound assumptions? What kind of evaluations or opinions are they? Accept all reasonable answers (Irrational opinions, unsound assumptions, biased opinions, etc.)

3. Draw attention to the words: immigrant, teacher, politician, Jew, mother, etc. Is the immigrant or the politician only that one thing? Is the mother or the teacher or the policeman only that one thing? (Elicit that immigrant, teacher, politician, mother are just one aspect of a person, or a role that person plays).

4. Draw attention to the use of the word all in the above statements. Could anyone possibly have met all teachers, all politicians, all immigrants, all Jews? What word might be a more realistic and acceptable word to show that you have come across crooked politicians, dumb immigrants, smart teachers? (Elicit: some). Emphasize that the word all indicates an overgeneralization, and that in these cases the generalizations were made because some people may have met some smart Jews, intelligent teachers, weak mothers, etc.

5. Define the word stereotyping as an evaluation, judgment or opinion made before the facts are known. Point out that people have tendencies to categorize people, things, and events, and that at times they jump to conclusions when doing so.

6. Ask if all the statements on the board are unfavorable generalizations. Which are favorable (positive) and which are unfavorable (negative)? Emphasize that there are positive and negative stereotypes and ask the students if they can think of another word that is related to stereotyping. (Prejudice)

7. Use the following examples to illustrate positive stereotyping or prejudice: John's favorite color is yellow. He likes yellow flowers, yellow toys, even yellow food. He likes corn and butter, but he has never tried margarine. Do you think he will like it? Why? Mary's closest friend, who has now moved to Europe, was a blue-eyed, blond Swedish girl. A new family has moved into Mary's neighborhood. The family is Swedish and they have a blue-eyed blond daughter about Mary's age. Do you think Mary will try to be her friend?

8. Ask the class to think about reasons for stereotyping and prejudice. (Elicit: limited knowledge and experience, misinformation, sloppy or lazy thinking in making judgments before the facts are known.)

9. Ask the class for additional examples of stereotyping and prejudice that they have seen or personally experienced. If they cannot think of any at the moment, ask them to think about age or sex stereotyping, and racial prejudice. Tell the class that they are going to explore these topics further by doing some activities.

### 9.3.2 Student Activity 2: Sex Stereotyping

Purpose: to have the children explore sex stereotyping and practice role reversal to eliminate some of the male-female biases.

Procedure:

1. List the following on the board:

   tool kit

   broom, mop, and pail

dolls

electronics kit

baseball glove

don't show how they feel

flowers

crying

nurse's kit

doctor's kit

2. Ask the students to look at the list on the board and ask them which items make them think of boys and which make them think of girls. Label the items on the list B or G according to the responses. Hopefully, there will not be total agreement on some items and you can leave these unlabeled..

3. Treat the items labeled G first. (Usually, these are dolls, flowers, crying, broom, mop and pail, nurse's kit.) Ask some of the boys in the class if they think they will be fathers some day. When a baby is born, do you think that the mother likes the baby more than the father? If you like someone, don't you want to do things for that person, even if the tasks might not be enjoyable? If you saw a father hugging his baby son or daughter, changing its clothes, or talking baby-talk to it, would you think that man is a sissy? Why or why not? What do girls do when they play with dolls? Have volunteers describe what a boy could experience while playing with a doll.

Ask the class if they think anyone really enjoys household chores. If all agree that housework is no great fun, ask them why they think most people consider them women's tasks. (Answers will reveal facts about men working and women being home all day.) Point out that in more and more households, both parents have jobs; and

that when the students are older, more women might have jobs than they do today. Why do you think people associate housework with women and girls? (Because usually they do it, sex stereotyping, etc.) If a man had his own apartment and couldn't afford a male or female maid, who would do the housework? If a couple living together both work, what's a fair way to deal with housework?

Ask some of the boys how they feel about themselves when someone sees them cry. (Embarrassed, ashamed, like sissies, or babies.) What are some of the things people cry about? (Sad events in life, movies, or stories, being in pain, being disappointed, etc.) Establish that crying is an acceptable emotional response to some situations. Why should women be the only ones who can cry without being criticized or called a name? If you are called a sissy or baby for crying, are you what you are called? Explain.

4. Treat the items labeled B by questioning the girls. Ask them why they think some of the items were labeled for boys. (Most people think of girls and women in terms of being future wives, mothers, housekeepers, or liking pretty things and being weak; sex stereotyping.) Can you think of any reasons why it would be a good idea for girls to have tool kits? If a girl does become a wife and mother, does that mean that she couldn't also be a scientist, engineer, electrician or doctor? Explain.

5. Ask the class if they think that sex-stereotyping is changing. Why is this change a good idea? (It frees people to do and enjoy more things.)

6. Choose a story that the children are familiar with which is clearly a sex-stereotyped story or allow them time to create a skit. In assigning parts to be played, have the boys and girls reverse roles. After the role reversal skit has been acted out, have some of the players describe how they felt when they were forced to behave according to a stereotyped role.

#### 9.3.2.1 Reinforcement

1. Ask the students to be on the lookout for stories they read and events they witness in which sex-stereotyping is obvious.

2. If you (the teacher) can suggest purchases for the school audiovisual library, the record *Free to Be You and Me* is recommended for some of its selections aimed at liberating children from sex-stereotyping. It happens to be the only one of its kind at the moment.

### 9.3.3 Student Activity 3: Prejudice and Discrimination

Purpose: to have the students participate in an arbitrary-discrimination experiment so that they can examine, experience, and challenge the nature of prejudice and discrimination.

Procedure:

1. Begin the class by asking for examples of prejudice they may have witnessed, experienced, or read about. (For this discussion, it is advisable to focus on racial or religious issues.) If the students cannot think of any experiences or examples, you may want to mention news items such as firebombings of churches and synagogues or some former examples of segregation and prejudice in the South.

2. Tell the class that they are going to participate in a discrimination experiment. For as many students as you have in class, mark pieces of paper with plus (+) or minus (-) signs. Place the papers in a bowl or bag and have each student draw one out.

3. The students with the plus papers will be the favored group; those with minus signs will be discriminated against. For the remainder of the session (or longer) the favored group may choose its own seats, have any questions answered, do all the pleasant chores, have first choice of cookies or available treats. The minus group does unpleasant chores, and will generally receive unfavorable treatment. Be sure

that the students understand that the decision was purely by chance.

4. At the end of the time period, have volunteers from each group describe how they felt. During the next session, you may want to have the groups reverse the procedure and discuss their feelings again.

5. Remind the class that it is not easy to change people's prejudices. If you are a victim of prejudice and you have no way of challenging the other person's feelings, thoughts, or behavior, what can you do to help yourself? (Challenge irrational upsetting thoughts you might have about what is said or done to you, avoid getting upset or being a blamer.)

#### 9.3.3.1 Reinforcement

Have the students write short essays about what it might feel like to be a member of a minority group to which they do not belong. When the essays are written, they can be discussed within an REE framework.

### 9.3.4 Student Activity 4: The Special Child in the Regular Classroom

(*Note to teacher*: Since there is a growing trend toward reintegrating children who are classified as "special," [i.e., slow learners and emotionally disturbed children who do not require custodial care] into the regular classroom, the following lesson may be adapted to suit your present school structure. Of course, it is highly unlikely that any of your regular students have avoided coming in contact with an adult or child who suffered a mental impairment which perhaps had physical manifestations; but, in any case, the lesson will help children to examine prejudices they might have.)

Purpose: to help children understand that not all people have the same mental skills and that those who are "different" or "special" in any way are sometimes victims of prejudice or stereotyping; to help children challenge the prejudices they may have.

Procedure:

1. Begin the lesson by reminding the children of the self-concept pinwheels or circles they did in an earlier lesson. Ask them if they think any of them had identical pinwheels. Do all people have the same traits, characteristics, skills, preferences? Do all people look and act alike?

2. Review the definition of stereotyping with the class or have a volunteer give the definition. Ask the children what is wrong with each of the following statements:

   I don't like all brown-eyed people.

   I don't like anyone with straight hair.

   All tall people are strange.

   Children with the best grades make the best friends.

   Children who are not good readers are not nice people.

   Ask the children if these statements are fair or accurate. Why not?

2. Remind the class of the activity from Section 7.2 on how people learn. (They had discussed some of the things a baby has to learn; walking, talking, physical coordination through various play activities.) Ask them if they think that all babies can walk, talk, or stack blocks at exactly the same age. Children with several younger siblings may recall examples of the differences among these children. Point out that people learn things at different rates. If a baby learns to talk at ten months and his brother learned to talk at eighteen months, do you think that one baby just learned earlier or faster or is he a better baby because of his skill? Do you think a rational parent would like the early talker better than the slower talker? Why not?

3. If you have no slow learners in your class and the children are not too self-conscious about their grades, you may ask them to volunteer their most recent reading, science, or math scores. If John has a 90 or an A in science and Mary has an 80 or B, what does this tell you about John and Mary ? Is John a more

worthwhile person because of his A? Ask the children to think of reasons why John might have gotten the A and Mary the B. (Elicit: John may be more skilled at science activities; he may enjoy the work; Mary may not like science; may not be skilled at science or may have been unprepared for the test.) If all you knew about Mary or John was that science grade, would you have any basis for liking one and not the other?

4. Have the children examine the terms slow learner or retarded as they are used in their school to classify "special" children. Ask them to consider how some of their schoolmates or classmates were labeled. (Answers will include: they did not do well on standard tests, they have learning problems, they take longer to learn some things, they have "fewer" skills.) Draw attention to any answers which indicate a general bias or prejudice or simple inaccuracies such as references to "fewer skills" or "smaller brains" and clarify the misconceptions.

5. Mention again that the self-concept pinwheels illustrated that people aren't exactly alike or don't have the same traits, skills, and characteristics. Ask the children to explain why all slow learners are not alike.

6. If any of the children have seen TV programs, read stories, or met severely retarded people who may have had physical manifestations of their problems, they may want to discuss them briefly. This may be helpful when children tend to make generalizations about the word "retarded" which seems to have more negative implications than "slow." Briefly explain that some people unfortunately are born with certain disorders which cannot be changed no matter how hard they try. Emphasize that even they are not all exactly alike.

7. Have children refer to their notebooks and take out some HTFR diagrams with irrational beliefs and irrational reactions in them. Ask the children what these show us about ourselves. (That we have irrational beliefs and assumptions, and that we sometimes react irrationally, that we have problems.) Are we in "perfect"

shape emotionally all the time or do we have emotional problems sometimes? Ask the children what is wrong with the following statements:

I will avoid all people who have any perfectionistic ideas,

I don't want to talk to anyone who gets upset about a problem.

People with no problems are the only people to be friendly with.

Ask the children if they think they would have many friends if they followed these biased statements. Point out that people who are called "emotionally disturbed" don't have different problems than we do; they have the same irrational assumptions, but they may overreact more frequently or have a harder time challenging their irrational beliefs. Ask: Are all emotionally disturbed people exactly alike?

8. Refer to Special Topic 7 (*Friends: Does the Rational Person Like Everyone?*)

## 9.4 Teasing and Name-Calling

### 9.4.1 Student Activity 1: Defining and Examining Teasing and Name-calling

Purpose: to explore the nature of teasing, the various motives of the teasers, and the different reactions to teasing; and to help children gain greater perspective on the issue so that both the victim and the teaser can challenge their thinking and change their behavior.

Procedure:

1. You may wish to begin this lesson by listing a recent series of teasing incidents which may have led you to deal with the topic. You may also wish to have children briefly describe teasing incidents they have experienced or witnessed. The following examples may serve:

   a) Paul is a very tall boy who is so self-conscious about his height that he walks at a funny angle. He holds his head down so that his neck and head seem to be

more than a few inches ahead of his body as he walks, instead of in a straight line from head to toe. People sometimes refer to him as "the giraffe," "gawky," or "tall Paul."

b) Mary is an absent-minded girl who misplaces things and then has temper tantrums when she can't find what she's looking for. Elizabeth sometimes hides Mary's books or assignments and watches Mary react.

c) John's baby brother is obviously shorter than he is. The baby cries when his toys are out of reach and John has a habit of intentionally putting the toys on high shelves or tables so that the baby can see them, but not reach them.

2. Using the children's examples, the classroom incidents, or the examples above, ask the students to tell what the reactions to the teasing were or, as in the examples above, might be. Do you think the name-caller or the teaser would continue to behave in the same way if he didn't get the reactions he wanted? (Clearly, in example *c* above, the baby isn't capable of changing his behavior by challenging his thinking. If you use the example, draw attention to that point.)

3. What are some of the thoughts of a person who is upset about being teased? What kind of irrational things does he tell himself? (Elicit: "It's awful, it's unfair." "I can't stand it." "Maybe what I'm being called is true, maybe I am that name," or "Nobody likes me").

4. You may want to choose one of the teasing examples and have the students do an HTFR diagram based upon the thoughts and feelings of the upset victim. Have a different student do each part of the diagram. After the diagram is complete, draw attention again to the rational beliefs, if any, and the irrational beliefs, and ask the students to think of questions which would help the person challenge his upsettedness. Elicit:

a) Am I the name someone calls me?

b) If one person teases me or calls me a name, does that one statement or act

change all my other qualities?

c) Am I unlikable if one or a few people tease me or call me names?

d) Does the teaser have a problem? If so, why am I making it my problem?

5. Ask the class if they think the teaser takes pleasure in watching the reaction to his teasing. Do you think he would continue to tease or name-call if the victim handled it differently? What kinds of reactions would the victim have if he didn't upset himself about the teasing? (He would calmly ignore the teaser; or perhaps the teaser is genuinely amusing, the victim could laugh if he thinks it's funny; he could inform the teaser that his "games" aren't very pleasant). Point out that some teasing can be dangerous when physical fighting is part of the teasing, or when the teaser uses objects as part of his teasing. How can that kind of teasing be handled? (By calmly fighting back if the teaser can physically handle the situation and by working on his irrational beliefs.)

6. Draw attention to the fact that some people like being teased. Ask children if they can think of examples or experiences where the person being teased seemed to enjoy it. You may want to give these examples:

   a) Nick has a group of friends tease him. Why might he enjoy being teased? (He gets some attention.)

   b) Two brothers who don't get along too well are each trying to prove to their parents who's responsible for the fighting. How would the one being teased use the teasing to his advantage? (He could tell his parents or he could have an excuse for fighting or teasing back.)

   c) Mary has a crush on a certain boy in her class but the boy always seems to be busy with ball games or playing with his male friends. Mary assumes that the boy just isn't interested in her. Why would she enjoy being teased by that boy? (She would feel that he's at least interested enough to take the time to tease her.)

7. Up to this point the class has been considering the thoughts and feelings of the person who is teased or called names. Now ask them to think about the person who does the teasing or name-calling. Why do you think some people are teasers?

(Elicit: "He thinks he's a better person if he can put someone else down or make them look bad." "He takes out his anger on someone else.") Ask the class if they think that the teaser has emotional problems and if so, how can he change his behavior? (By accepting the fact that he has a problem, by challenging his irrational thoughts and behavior.)

#### 9.4.1.1 Reinforcement

*Role playing*: Have the children role-play various teasing or name-calling incidents in which the victim discourages the teaser. Before beginning the activity, point out that rational behavior doesn't demand that one never reacts. Encourage them to work on realistic problem solving.

After the exercise has taken place, have the children identify what they considered to be the most effective approaches. Be sure that you (the teacher) are aware of unrealistic or cliché-ridden approaches which have little to do with what a particular child could or would do. Ask the students to keep notes on their behavior in the area of teasing and name-calling so that they can be reviewed in the next few weeks.

## 9.5 Bullies, Vicitms, & Bystanders

### 9.5.1 Student Activity 1: Defining and Examining Bullying

Purpose: to have the children explore the behavior of bullies and victims, the motives of the bully, the irrational reactions of the victim; and to have the children challenge the thinking and change the behavior of both.

Procedure:

1. Begin the lesson by asking for brief examples of situations where students watched a bully take advantage of someone or were actually involved in the incident. If no one can think of examples, you might recall school incidents which led you to undertake this activity. The following examples may serve as introductions to the discussion:

    a) Kate is a physically strong girl who can't stand it when she doesn't get her own way. She also has a chip on her shoulder because she thinks she should have more friends and possessions than she does have. Arlene, on the other hand, is a frail shy girl from a rich family. She is easily upset when someone touches her or her things.

Ask the students if they think these two girls would get along. What do you think would happen if they got together? (Kate would bully and take advantage and maybe she would steal. Arlene would get upset, etc.)

    b) Tim and John are the same age. Both are short for their age; neither one is a good athlete. Tim needs to be the center of attention and he thinks he ought to be a sports star. He is also afraid of looking like a weakling and he's self-conscious about his size. John, on the other hand, knows he can't do anything about his size, but when faced with a challenge—even a non-sports activity—or a difficult situation, he has a tendency to show that he's frightened.

Ask the students what they think would happen if these two tried to be friends. (Tim would take advantage of John's fears. Tim might bully John to make himself appear stronger.)

    c) There is a teenage gang on 30th Street which is headed by a boy named Larry. They have vandalized certain buildings and stores and have been known to steal handbags from women and girls, beat up teenagers, and frighten younger children from other blocks.

Ask the children what they think would happen if a group of their friends came across this gang or if their own mothers walked down 30th Street at night after a meeting of

some kind.

2. Once it has been established that the examples used are bully-victim situations, ask the students if they think all bullies are the same types of bullies with the same motives. If you used the above examples, ask if Kate, Tim, and the 30th Street gang are the same kind of bullies.

3. Ask the children to think of some motives the bully might have. (Elicit: a) He wants to seem important b) He may want to attract attention c) He's afraid inside, so he acts tough or associates with a group that uses bully tactics d) He wants certain possessions, so he takes them by bullying e) He's mad at the world so he takes it out on people who are easy victims.)

4. From whatever list of motives the students supply, it is usually possible to categorize and identify four major motives: fear, approval-seeking, anger, and the need to feel powerful or get prizes. Based on the list the students have given, draw attention to these four major categories of motives. Emphasi2e that not all bullies have identical motives, although many of them share similar motives and combinations of motives.

5. In order to improve the children's challenging skills, ask them questions about the four basic motives:

    a) *Fear*: What do you think a bully might be afraid of? (Afraid of showing that he thinks he's no good or afraid someone might hurt him if he didn't act tough.) If a bully is aware that his thoughts and behavior are irrational and unsound, how could he challenge his irrational fears? What could he ask himself and what could he do? (Elicit: Is there any proof that someone will jump on me if I don't act tough? Would I be a chicken if someone called me one? He could try to avoid being a bully and find out if it really does make him a coward. He could try being friendly, and if people don't react totally favorably, he could examine his demand that things go 100% his way.)

b) *Approval-seeking*: Why are some bullies approval-seekers? (They think the attention they attract makes them more worthwhile; or they want friends, but think no one likes them so they force people and push them around; they think possessions and friends make them worthwhile so they take what they want.) How could an approval-seeking bully challenge his irrational beliefs once he was aware of his behavior and thoughts? What could he ask himself and try to do? (Elicit: Why do I need other people's approval to accept myself? Can I really have friends by force? Doesn't friendship require other behavior? If I take people's possessions, do the possessions make me more worthwhile? He could try asking people to join him in games or other activities. He could try telling people positive things about themselves rather than teasing or bullying statements. He could try to work for things he may want, but realize that he doesn't need them.)

c) *Anger*: Why are some bullies angry bullies? What are they thinking? (They think things should be their way, therefore get angry when it's usually not; or they want to get at people because they think people are out to get them; or they may have a chip on their shoulders about somebody stronger that they couldn't take on and they victimize a "little guy".) How could an angry bully challenge his irrational beliefs and what could he try to do? (Elicit: Why should everything be as I want it? If people don't give me what I want, does my anger help? Are people no good or deserving of anger for not pleasing me? He could try not to pick on "the little guy" for no reason. He could try to deal with the person involved in the situation in a calm way rather than an angry, bullying way.)

d) *Power-seeking*: Why are some bullies power-seeking bullies, and why do some bullies take things? (They can only feel good about themselves if they think they're tougher than anyone, they feel that the things they steal are things that are "owed" to them, they are demanding, etc.) Once a power-seeking bully is aware of his irrational behavior, how can he challenge his irrational beliefs and how could he try to change his behavior? (Elicit: How does it make me a

"big" person if I take things from weaker people? Do things or possessions make me more worthwhile? If I don't get what I want right away, is it really terrible if I have to wait or am I just telling myself that? He could try to get along with people who are obviously weaker than he is without being a bully. He could try not to take people's property even if he wants the things.)

6. Now that all types of bullies have been discussed, ask the children to think of what all bullies may have in common. Do you think bullies like themselves? Do you think they are aware that there are other ways to behave in order to get what they want? Do you think they are able to deal with frustration?

### 9.5.2 Student Activity 2: Defining and Examining Victims

1. In the bullying incidents and examples discussed, have the students identify the victims and give a definition of a victim.

2. Based on the examples, ask the children to think of reasons why certain people are victims. Accept all reasonable answers including the following major ones:

   a) low self-acceptance: doesn't think he can help himself or may be afraid

   b) chance: may be in the wrong place at the wrong time

   c) physical size and behavior: may look and act like a victim. If none of the incidents discussed included a victim who was an attention seeker, include this in the list by first asking children if they think some people like being victimized and if so, why?

   d) attention-seeker: enjoys being a victim

3. Draw attention to the fact that not all victims are victims for the same reasons, but that many may have a combination of reasons for being easily victimized.

4. Ask the students what do you do when you cannot solve a math problem? Do you ask for help or do you think that's a weak way to behave? Do you think that a

victim who is being bullied or robbed is a weakling and a squealer if he asks for help in a difficult situation? Why not? (Draw attention to the fact that a bully often counts a victim's fear of being thought a weakling or squealer.)

5. Ask for examples of dangerous bullying situations as opposed to merely irritating ones. (Dangerous: possible physical harm, a gang against one person, serious theft, etc. Irritating: teasing, being ignored, etc.) Ask the students to think about which situations would better be dealt with by asking for help, and which could be handled by oneself.

6. Have the students explore new behaviors the "victim" might try to engage in, once he has become aware of his thinking and has challenged any irrational beliefs.

   a) *Low self-acceptance*: Try to meet new friends and become involved in stimulating and challenging activities.

   b) *Taking too many chances*: Avoid very dangerous places, request assistance when in danger of serious physical harm, decide when it's better not to fight back.

   c) *Small physical size*: Since physical size can't very well be chanced, it is only possible to work on the fear which can be a "come on" to bullies. Be aware of the way you speak and walk which are clues to the fear.

   d) *Attention-seeking*: Engage in activities where everyone has a fair chance to do well; also, avoid situations in which a bully will obviously take advantage.

7. In order to challenge female-victim or male-bully stereotypes, ask the children if they think girls and boys can use the same challenging techniques if they are bullied? Why or why not?

### 9.5.3 Student Activity 3: Bystanders

1. Ask the class what they think a *bystander* is. Point out that there are two types:

those who watch when something is going on and don't get involved; and those who do choose to get involved.

2. Ask the class to think of reasons why a bystander might not get involved. (Afraid he might get hurt himself or be bullied, thinks he really can't help the victim because the victim would be better off if he worked out his problem by himself.)

3. Present the following example to the class:

   You see another student being robbed by other children in school or the neighborhood and, as a bystander, you decide to help or to get help. Ask the following questions and have the children discuss each: Are you a squealer if you decided to get help? Are you making the victim look worse than he is?

4. Have the students consider whether they would want bystanders to help them if they were being victimized, and ask for specific examples.

#### 9.5.3.1 Reinforcement

Have the children role-play situations in which parts of bully, victim, and bystander are played by children who often are not in that role. Try to keep the situations as realistic as possible.

## 9.6 Guided Protest: The Child as Consumer

### 9.6.1 Student Activity 1: The Child's Right to Protest

Purpose: to help children realize that positive assertive action is an appropriate and desirable response to unfairnesses perpetrated by manufacturers and retailers; and that children as well as adults have rights as consumers.

Procedure:

1. Give the following examples to the children:

a) Your mother buys a hairdryer in a New York department store. The dryer was made by a company in New Jersey. When your mother used the dryer according to directions, she found that after one week the case began to melt from the hot air and the dryer stopped working. She does not have the sales slip or the manufacturer's guarantee.

b) Your father buys a container of milk at the supermarket. The container has today's date on it as the law requires to guarantee freshness, but when he tastes the milk he discovers that it is sour.

c) You saw what looked like a terrific toy advertised on TV and your parents gave you the money to send for it. When you received it, you discovered that it was not as large as it looked in the ad. (The ad was a close-up and there were no people in the ad so you weren't able to judge its size fairly.) It also didn't do all the things the ad claimed, and parts of the toy broke shortly after you began to play with it.

2. If the class has already done the lessons on bullying, teasing, stereotyping and name-calling, they are familiar with examples of ways people are treated unfairly by those around them and they have guidelines for the most appropriate course of action for the victims. You can tell the children that people are sometimes mistreated not only by those who live near them or go to the same school, but by those who live farther away—sometimes in other cities or states—as well. In each of the above examples, ask the children to think of what the victims can do. Is your mother stuck with the broken dryer, or can she get a new one? How? (She can write a letter to the manufacturer and mail the broken dryer back.) Can your father do anything about the sour milk? (He can go back to the store and speak to the manager and get a new container of milk.) Write all positive assertive responses on the board.

3. Draw attention to the toy examples since children might not be aware that they have any rights as consumers. Remind the class of the unfairness in the incident: a

TV channel showed the dishonest ad; an ad agency was paid by the toy company to do the ad; the toy company not only promoted a dishonest ad, but also made bad toys. What three places or its workers were unfair to you? (Elicit: the TV station, the ad agency, the toy company.) Suppose you are concerned about the money wasted on the useless toy you now own. What can you do? (Write a letter to the toy company explaining the whole situation, or call if the company isn't too far away.)

4. Ask the class for experiences they may have recently had with defective toys and playthings or ones that didn't hold up for very long. Be sure that children understand that certain playthings have certain functions. For example, if you jump on the cardboard box that holds a board game, you have abused the product; if you use a music box as a hammering board, you have misused the music box. In such cases, it is not the manufacturer who has been irresponsible; you have.

5. If the children seem to have enough realistic experiences with poorly made toys, ask each child to write a letter to the manufacturer asking for fair treatment; i.e., replacement of parts, a new toy or a refund. If very few children have had recent bad experiences with faulty products, have the children with no experiences write an imaginary letter to a company which was unfair as in example c (#1).

## 9.7 Friendships

### 9.7.1 Student Activity 1: Does the Rational Person Like Everyone?

Purpose: to have children realize that a rational person may not like everyone or want to be everyone's friend, nor will everyone want them as a friend; friends are chosen for a variety of reasons, sensible or irrational.

Procedure:

1. Begin the lesson by asking the children to write down some of the good and bad qualities of one or two of their closest friends. Have some lists read aloud and draw

attention to the negative qualities while reminding the children that even "best friends" aren't perfect; no one is perfect.

2. Tell the class that no one forced them to be close friends with any individuals. In addition to some of the desirable qualities your friend may have and the undesirable qualities you put up with, why else are you friends? (Elicit: such traits as they live nearby; we like the same things; we can talk easily; the friend is willing to go out of the way for me, etc.)

3. If children have had the lessons on Touchy Joe and Troubles (see Section 8.3), ask them if they think they could be or would want to be Troubles' or Touchy Joe's close friend. (Point out that no one is worthless; no one is all good or all bad.) Why wouldn't you want to be a close friend to either Touchy Joe or Troubles? (Their behavior is unpleasant; there would be many problems if they were around too much; much time would be wasted dealing with all the problems.) Emphasize that there are rational, sensible reasons for not wanting to be a close friend to certain individuals. (Note to teacher: if children have not done Touchy Joe and Troubles lessons, give them a list of unpleasant qualities certain demanding people might have, and ask the same friendship questions as with Troubles and Touchy Joe.)

4. Give the following examples:

   a) Mary loves sports activities; Sue dislikes all sports and games;

   b) John and Paul have similar tastes, but they live in different parts of the city;

   c) Jane and June enjoy the same activities, but June thinks that all Jews are pushy people and Jane is Jewish.

In each of these examples, ask the children whether or not a friendship is not possible and have them explain which of the reasons is irrational. Key questions: Is it possible to be everyone's close friend? Does the rational person like everyone?

5. Give the children the following example: Stephen is a very oversensitive boy. Sometimes he reads things into what you say, when they are not the things you meant. When you talk to him you have to be as careful as you would be walking on eggs. If Stephen is so worried that people are trying to hurt him or exclude him when, in fact, that is not the case, whose problem is it? Are you responsible for his over-reaction?

# 10 Epilogue

## 10.1 This Is Not The End...

"*There is always more to start with than we can take into account. There is always more to say than we can possibly say. There is always more to end with than we can imagine. You are now invited to enter the world of etc.*"

Don Fabun,

Communications,

The Transfer of Meaning

Since Rational-Emotive Education is a process concerned with life skills, the additional themes to be pursued and the opportunities for improving challenging skills are as boundless as the experiences one might have in a lifetime. Themes such as a rational understanding of birth, death, sickness, intimacy, divorce, sex education, and drug education can be treated as REE lessons depending on the age and maturity level of the group. Older groups may wish to use rational-emotive principles to understand compulsive habits, the neurotic processes, society's values, and means for self-actualization. Clearly, many important decisions that one makes, such as the choice of a vocation, a partner, or an alternate lifestyle can be examined according to rational-emotive guidelines.

Hopefully, the program has been a liberating experience for those who have been actively engaged in it. Of course, a book, manual or guide can only be liberating insofar as it makes people aware and incites them to take positive action. Freedom and the improvement of the quality of life, like education, cannot be imposed; the tools are accessible, but they are only as effective as the individual chooses to make them.

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# 12 Glossary

ASSUMPTIONS: Ideas taken for granted; suppositions; a system of guesses which can be tested.

SOUND ASSUMPTIONS: Ideas taken for granted based either on reasonable evidence or firsthand experience in the past; guesses which have some basis in reality.

UNSOUND ASSUMPTIONS: Irrational guesses which do not fit reality; ideas taken for granted but which are contrary to experience or evidence one refuses to test.

AWFULIZING: A tendency to think about occurrences and events as catastrophes, when they are in fact only unfortunate happenings.

BELIEF: A conviction that something is true.

RATIONAL BELIEF: A sensible and logical idea that seems to fit reality.

IRRATIONAL BELIEF: An illogical or absurd idea that does not fit reality.

BULLY: One who intimidates or is cruel to those who are weaker than himself.

CHALLENGE: To dispute or question

COMPLEX: Intricate; complicated.

DEMAND: To claim as due; to insist that one must have what one wants (v); that which is claimed as due (n).

DESIRE: To prefer, wish for, or want (v); a preference or wish (n).

FACT: A statement that is verifiably and observably true; that which has actual existence in reality.

NEED: A pressing lack of something essential; implies urgency (n).

OPINION: A sentiment; a belief or idea about something which is neither true nor false; an estimation.

PERSPECTIVE: The aspect of an object of thought from a particular standpoint; to

see more sides to an issue or other people's viewpoints as well as one's own.

RESPONSIBLE: Able to respond or answer for one's conduct and obligations.

ROLE: A part assumed by anyone.

RULE: A guide for conduct or action; standard.

STANDARDS: Criteria by which we measure things or decide if they are good for us; rules based on shared values.

STEREOTYPE: To evaluate, judge or form an opinion before the facts are known (v); a frozen evaluation (n).

VICTIM: One who is taken advantage of.

# 13 Glossary Of Affects

ANGER: An intense unpleasant emotion stimulated by a frustrated demand that one's self, other people, or circumstances operate according to personal standards and values. This perfectionistic insistence that others or oneself not make mistakes or act badly leads to thoughts and feelings of condemnation and intolerance. Common beliefs include: That shouldn't have happened; he (she, it) is no good for making it happen; and I can't stand it. Related affects include hostility, resentment, bitterness, hate and impatience. A common synonym is "mad". Behavioral and physical manifestations include: general body stiffness, highly controlled speech, yelling, attacking, sarcasm, sulking, and defensiveness.

ANNOYANCE: A negative emotion stimulated by an unpleasant event. Underlying thoughts reflect the belief that the situation is a real "pain" or unpalatable, but nonetheless, tolerable. A related affect is irritation. Synonyms for being annoyed include: vexed, irked, and bothered. Behavioral manifestations include avoidance and mild tension.

ANXIETY: A painful sense of uneasiness stimulated by anticipatory thoughts of impending psychological disaster and concomitant lack of self-confidence in meeting the situation. Common underlying thoughts include the belief that certainty of outcome is the prerequisite of action and/or the belief that unpleasantness is horrible or catastrophic. The anxious person tends to overfocus on certain aspects of a problem, while maintaining a fuzzy sense of the overall picture. Related affects include: fear, and worry. Common synonyms for anxious are: nervous, tense, up-tight, upset. Behavioral manifestations include: rapid heartbeat, stumbling over words, nail biting, repeating self in conversation, vacillating between alternatives, shyness, boisterousness, defensiveness.

CONCERN: A positive cognitive-affective state stimulated by thoughts directed towards taking action to secure one's own interests or those of another for

whom one cares.

CONFIDENCE: A positive cognitive-affective state. Self-confidence refers to the person's belief in his/her ability to accomplish and to cope; usually accompanied by a sense of self-acceptance. General absence of self-doubt, anxiety, inferiority feelings. Related affects: trust, sense of self-reliance. Behavioral manifestations: going after one's desires and goals, responsiveness toward others, trustworthiness.

CURIOSITY: An activating cognitive-affective state stimulated by the belief that it would be interesting or pleasant to find something out, or learn new information. Related to inquisitiveness, interest. Manifestations: behavior directed toward seeking the desired information or experience.

DEPRESSION: An unpleasant cognitive-affect stimulated by beliefs that life is empty, hopeless, will never improve; or that one doesn't have the capability of improving his lot (weakness, helplessness); and its awful for "poor me" to be in such a position (self pity). Depression includes the component of sadness or loss but, in addition, consists of a plethora of disparaging thoughts. Related affects include melancholy, despondency. Manifestations include lethargy, withdrawal, self-preoccupation, sluggishness, procrastination, dysphoria, and defensiveness.

DESIRE: A mixed cognitive-affective state stimulated by a wish to have something. The person experiences a motivating frustration in quest of the goal with accompanying pleasant anticipations. Related affects: want, wish. Manifestations: generally motivated goal-activity.

DISAPPOINTMENT: A negative emotion resulting from the perception that one has not attained what was desired. There is an absence of self-disparaging and despairing thoughts. Related affect: sadness, frustration. Behavioral manifestations are varied and often include second attempts or seeking of alternatives.

ENTHUSIASM: A sense of looking forward to some desired outcome or event, or a

high intensity of positive involvement. General absence of shoulds (should-free moment). Related affects: excitement, eagerness, fervor. Manifestations: positive heightened activity, spontaneity, constructive risk-taking, willingness to learn, smiling, etc.

EXCITEMENT: An energized state of being. An actualization of hope such as seeing a favored person after a long absence and thinking how great it is to be together again. Can be dysfunctional if person becomes too self absorbed or overly wrought or agitated. Related affects: enthusiasm, delight, stimulation. Behavioral manifestations: jumping, hand-clapping, free verbal expression, smiling, laughing, etc,

FEAR: A state of cognitive-emotional agitation stimulated by anticipation of a real danger or a danger that is imagined. Imagined fears such as anticipated loss of a friend are generated by the belief that such a loss would be terrible or horrible. This reaction overlaps with anxiety; the problem, however, usually appears more in focus. Related affects include panic, terror, fright, and horror. Behavioral manifestations: similar to those involved with anxiety although often more acute. In "real" danger situation, system mobilizes for flight or fight.

FRUSTRATION: Refers to the negative cognitive-emotion resulting from inability to obtain a desired goal despite effort to do so. The state is reflected by such statements as "It's really too bad I can't get what I want." Related affects: dissatisfaction, disappointment, common synonym for frustrated: thwarted, foiled. Behavioral manifestations: range from giving up or circumventing the problem, to trying to solve it. There may be some signs of intensity and concentration. Persons with high tolerance for frustration tend to be more persistent in goal attainment. Persons with low tolerance for frustration tend to give up easily and more readily blame themselves and the world for their dissatisfactions.

GUILT: An unpleasant cognitive-emotion stimulated by the belief that one has transgressed against one's own, or against normative codes of conduct, and

has acted wrongly against another, and therefore deserving of blame. This awareness is followed by self-condemning thoughts, and frequently the belief that one is obligated to act justly and fairly under any and all circumstances. Related affects: anger, self-blame. Behavioral manifestations include attempting to undo the damage, contrite-ness, withdrawal, high-pitched agitated voice, subdued voice, apologetic language. Sometimes this reaction is followed by resentment.

HOPE: A positive-cognitive emotional state based on the belief that one's future is optimistic. There is a sense of trust in the present, and absense of negative self-evaluations. Related affects: trust, cheerfulness. Manifestations: openness, non-defensiveness, positive plans, enthusiasm.

INFERIORITY: An unpleasant, self-disparaging point of view. An affective reaction related to anxiety, depression, guilt. Person believes he or she is inadequate and focuses on his or her lacks, rather than on assets. Often linked to the perfectionistic belief that unless one compares more than favorably to practically everybody, one is simply no good as a person and can do nothing right. Related reactions: inadequacy, worthlessness, hatefulness. Behavioral manifestations are varied and range from trying to prove oneself by doing glorious deeds to resignation.

LIKE: A pleasant "me-centered" cognitive affective reaction to certain activities which one believes to be desirable or pleasant (i.e. music, tennis playing, good food.)

MANIFESTATION: Person likely to seek out the desired activities; relaxed, interested, motivated.

LONELINESS: An unpleasant affect generated by conceiving that being alone is awful, and by defining oneself as worthless because of being alone. Manifestations: depression, withdrawal, phony enthusiasm, pacing, agitation, obsessing, compulsive activity, etc.

LOVE: A pleasant cognitive-affective state which is mainly "we-centered". Non-defensive, open, confident, liking, harmonious, caring; energized involvement

with another human being. A concomitant belief that one need not be in control. Related to liking, concern, caring. Manifestations are varied; light, hopeful, trusting, exciting moments; caring, smiling, risk-taking, adventurousness.

MISTRUST: A negative cognitive-affect related to the view that a person or a circumstance is not reliable. There is a belief that others are out to harm one (suspiciousness), and a general lack of confidence. Manifestations: secretiveness, avoidance, isolation, accusation.

NEEDFULNESS: A negative cognitive-affective reaction based on the belief that one has to have certain comforts beyond one's survival needs. Generally the needful person demands and expects that certain things are so important that without them, life is miserable. Related cognitive-affects: anxiety, fear, desperation. Manifestations include: demandingness, whining and complaining, nagging, self absorption.

REGRET: Refers to a negative cognitive emotion stimulated by the belief that one may have acted poorly toward another and is sorry for this. There is no self-condemning as with guilt but often an attempt to "right the wrong". Related affects: sorrow, sadness. Behavioral manifestations are varied but not likely to interfere with absorption in other tasks.

RELAXATION: A tranquil cognitive-affective state characterized by a suspension of negative evaluative cognitions and an increase of pleasure-producing thoughts which normally do not involve problem-solving. Related to calmness, tranquility. Manifestations include absence of bodily tensions.

SADNESS: An unpleasant non self-disparaging cognitive-affect stimulated by perception of loss. Related affects: grief, disappointment. Behavioral manifestations include lowered tone of voice; decreased energy; absense of self-lamenting, catastrophizing, or self indulgence.

SHAME: An unpleasant cognitive-emotion generated by the belief that one has exposed a weakness or shortcoming and that this exposure is awful. One has a

sense of disgrace and down-grading of self. Related affects: embarrassment, humiliation. Manifestations: lowered tone of voice, attempts to cover up, depression.

TRUST: A positive emotion stimulated by the belief that one can depend upon or rely upon something or someone, or oneself. A sense of confidence, an absence of fear. Synonyms: hope, confidence, assurance. Behavioral manifestations: openness, self-assertiveness, modulated speech, spontaneity, non-defensiveness.

# 14 Children's Survey Of Rational Beliefs

## 14.1 Form B (Ages 7-10)

Directions: Next to each question there are three possible answers. Pick out the answer you think is best for you. Write the letter on the answer sheet beside the number of the question.

1. When somebody calls your best friend or mother a bad name:
   a. you have to fight
   b. you have to tell him off
   c. you can think before you act

2. If you can't answer the teacher's question:
   a. you'll get a bad report card
   b. you may be able to answer the next one
   c. it shows you that you can't learn

3. When you get mad at somebody:
   a. it is because of what that person did
   b. you think yourself into getting angry
   c. it is because the person is no good

4. A child who throws a temper tantrum:
   a. is a spoiled kid
   b. always gets his own way
   c. is acting immaturely

5. You feel upset because you believe the world should be perfect. You can handle this problem by:
   a. trying to figure out why the world should be any different than it is
   b. trying to force the world to be your way
   c. telling yourself it doesn't matter how the world is

6. When you feel anxious (nervous) it is because:
   a. somebody is going to punish you
   b. you are thinking thoughts like "some awful thing is going to happen"
   c. you are a bad person

7. If you can't learn your school lessons right away:
   a. you'd better give up because you'll never learn right
   b. the work is too hard to do
   c. you'll need more time to practice

8. When somebody teases you, you:
   a. can wonder what his problem is
   b. think that people don't like you
   c. think that he is stupid and no good

9. If a person is not acting his age, the first thing to do is try to:
   a. show him he is acting silly
   b. understand that not everybody acts their age at all times
   c. pretend he doesn't exist

10. When you feel worried (anxious) you:
   a. can't stand feeling that way
   b. think there is nothing you can do about feeling that way
   c. can ask what you are getting yourself anxious over

11. If you have trouble learning to read that means:
   a. you must be pretty stupid
   b. you won't learn anything well
   c. you have to spend more time practicing

12. The best way to get over your worries and troubles is:
   a. try to forget them

b. complain to your friends
c. question your troubling thoughts

13. When you do well in school
a. you are a good person
b. you knew the subject
c. you were lucky

14. Some people who easily become angry
a. have a hard time liking themselves
b. have many bad things happen to them
c. can never stop being touchy people

15. A person who doesn't like himself
a. doesn't think much of his positive qualities
b. is not a very smart person
c. is never liked by other people

16. If a person thought "it's too bad I didn't get what I wanted" he would likely feel:
a. angry (mad)
b. disappointed
c. nervous (anxious)

17. Your feelings come from:
a. how people behave towards you
b. how you think about things which happen
c. your heart and your stomach

18. A person who is angry or "mad"
a. has been treated unfairly
b. sees only one side of the story
c. is a bad person

## 14.2 Form C (Ages 10-13)

Directions: Next to each question there are four possible answers. You are to pick out the answer that you believe is best for you. Write the letter on the answer sheet beside the number of the question.

1. A person who feels angry towards another person thinks:
   a. he can't stand the other person's behavior.
   b. the other person has no right to act the way he does
   c. nobody is perfect and this person is no different
   d. all the above answers are correct

2. If a person says it is human to make a mistake and then feels awful when he makes a mistake, he:
   a. can't help feeling that way
   b. generally is a liar
   c. doesn't really believe it is right for him to make a mistake
   d. will always correct his mistakes

3. A person who is angry because the world is not perfect can help get rid of this feeling by:
   a. trying to force the world to be the way he wants it
   b. telling himself that it doesn't matter how the world is
   c. questioning why the world must be the way he wants it to be
   d. giving up and pretending not to care

4. If you see a person who is not acting his age, the first thing
   a. try to change him by teasing him out of his behavior
   b. ignore him completely
   c. tell him to grow up and act his age
   d. try to understand that not everybody can act their age

5. When a person hates herself when someone laughs at her:
   a. she thinks she needs the other person to like her so that she can like herself
   b. she has to believe the other person is unfair

c. her grades will start to drop at school
d. she will never get over feeling that way

6. A person who has trouble learning to read:
   a. will probably have trouble learning everything
   b. is stupid
   c. will have to work harder at it than some of his other classmates
   d. should give up because he is not going to do well

7. A person who feels annoyed when somebody teases him:
   a. believes he doesn't like to be teased
   b. believes it is unbearable when he is teased
   c. believes the other person should be punished
   d. always should go to the teacher for help

8. Any person who gets poorer grades in school than her friends:
   a. is going to be ashamed
   b. is not as good a person as they are
   c. can still accept herself
   d. will find that her friends will stop playing with her

9. What makes a person complex?
   a. a person can have many different qualities like fairness and truthfulness
   b. a person is capable of behaving in many different ways
   c. a person is capable of thinking in different ways
   d. all the above answers are correct

10. Which of the following is an example of a sensible (rational) belief?
    a. I don't like it when somebody is treated unfairly
    b. I can't stand it when I see somebody treated unfairly
    c. people who treat others unfairly should always be punished
    d. all the above answers are correct

11. How would a person feel who had the thought "It really is too bad that I failed the test"?
    a. afraid
    b. ashamed
    c. disappointed
    d. depressed

12. If asked what they think the world is like, different people wou ld:
    a. have the same opinion about the world
    b. agree that the world is a great planet to live on
    c. will all state that the world is a complicated place
    d. will have different opinions

13. Which situation can be frustrating?
    a. you put a puzzle together and find some parts are missing
    b. you are not able to do what you want
    c. you can't find the meaning of an important word
    d. all the above situations can be frustrating

14. A person who demands (insists) that things go his way, is most likely to feel:
    a. angry when he doesn't get his way
    b. good, because he is doing something to get his way
    c. great annoyance when he doesn't get his way
    d. both a and c are correct

15. A person's opinions are:
    a. always based upon facts
    b. ideas about something that could either be true or false
    c. always incorrect
    d. based upon unsound assumptions

16. People who spend most of their time thinking how awful everything is:
    a. usually have bad things happen to them

b. are usually treated unfairly
c. are hopeful that their life will change if they complain enough
d. usually solve their problems by facing them

17. Standards or values are most helpful in:
a. determining what personal goals to work for
b. knowing what to blame or praise yourself for
c. knowing who is a good person and who is a bad person
d. none of the above answers is correct

18. The better method of changing unsound (irrational) upsetting thinking is:
a. say you are going to stop thinking unsoundly
b. question unsound (irrational ideas
c. insist to yourself that you start thinking only sound rational thoughts
d. try to forget your upsetting thoughts

19. One thing we know about how people express feelings is:
a. people who have had the same experiences express their feelings in the same way
b. different people can express the same feeling in different ways
c. all ways of expressing feelings are appropriate
d. none of the above answers is correct

20. An example of an unsound assumption is:
a. day and night follow each other
b. the milk tasted sour
c. Ann doesn't like me because her grades are higher than mine
d. all the above answers are correct

21. You believe something because:
a. it is a fact
b. it is your opinion
c. answers a and b are both correct

d. answers a and b are both wrong

22. Most bullies have in common:
    a. they really don't like themselves
    b. they always have a lot of money
    c. they never act fairly
    d. both a and c are correct

23. A person who is angry:
    a. has been treated unfairly
    b. sees only one side to the story
    c. is a bad person
    d. all of the above answers are correct

24. Someone who thinks life is awful and will never get better, probably feels:
    a. angry
    b. annoyed
    c. depressed
    d. uncaring

25. Human emotions are most likely to result from:
    a. the way your parents taught you how to feel
    b. how you think about things which happen
    c. how other people think about you
    d. none of the above answers is correct

26. Everybody is likely to feel the same way:
    a. at a birthday party
    b. when they do poorly in school
    c. when they forget their best friend's birthday
    d. none of the above answers is correct

27. Which of the following is not a feeling?
    a. sad
    b. itchy
    c. glad
    d. all are feelings

28. Which of the following is an example of unsound (irrational thinking?
    a. I really don't like it when I can't play a game well
    b. it makes me sick to see her acting so silly
    c. It is too bad if I am not loved by everybody
    d. None of the above are unsound (irrational)thoughts

29. If a person treats you unfairly, it would be appropriate for you to feel:
    a. angry
    b. good, because you think you are better than they are
    c. annoyed or sad
    d. anxious or nervous

30. A person who tries to think rationally (sensibly):
    a. never is emotionally upset
    b. is friendly only with people who think sensibly
    c. easily solves all his problems
    d. is better able to accept his mistakes

31. If you can accept that a bully has problems:
    a. you have to put up with his behavior
    b. you can try to change the behavior you don't like
    c. you shouldn't be upset if he or she bothers you
    d. you must stay out of his or her way

32. A person can get into emotional troubles by expecting to be:
    a. happy and comfortable

b. successful
c. liked by everybody
d. all the above answers are correct

33. Some people create extra worries and troubles by:
a. having two problems that are difficult to solve
b. blaming themselves for having emotional troubles
c. trying very hard and not succeeding
d. none of the above answers is correct

34. What is a person who thinks sensibly (rationally) likely to recognize?
a. if he is nervous he is making himself nervous
b. if he is nervous, it is because of something that has just happened
c. if he becomes nervous, he can't help it because he is a nervous person
d. none of the above answers is correct

35. The best way to deal with worries and troubles is:
a. forget them
b. complain about them to your friends and get sympathy
c. always solve them on your own
d. none of the above solutions is very good

36. When you get a high score on a test, you:
a. are a smart person
b. know the subject well
c. you will do well in the future
d. were very lucky

37. A person who thinks rationally (sensibly):
a. will sometimes feel ashamed
b. will always be happy
c. will be liked by everyone

d. will always be successful in solving his problems

38. If you think you can't stand being frustrated, that means you:
    a. won't have any friends
    b. really don't like yourself
    c. will never get to do things your way
    d. will probably get less work none

Note: The inventory is a sample way to measure student content acquisition. It can be scaled up or down depending upon the ages and developmental levels of the respondents.

## 14.3 Answer Key: Children's Survey Of Rational Beliefs

**Form B**

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. c | 4. c | 7. c | 10. c | 13. b | 16. b |
| 2. b | 5. a | 8. a | 11. c | 14. a | 17. b |
| 3. b | 6. b | 9. b | 12. c | 15. a | 18. b |

**Form C**

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. b | 8. c | 15. b | 22. a | 29. c | 36. b |
| 2. c | 9. d | 16. c | 23. b | 30. d | 37. a |
| 3. c | 10. a | 17. a | 24. c | 31. b | 38. d |
| 4. d | 11. c | 18. b | 25. b | 32. d | |
| 5. a | 12. d | 19. b | 26. d | 33. b | |
| 6. c | 13. d | 20. c | 27. d | 34. a | |
| 7. a | 14. d | 21. c | 28. b | 35. d | |