

Developing Skills for Youthful Leaders

Module 3 Being Your Best

BEING YOUR BEST TABLE OF CONTENTS

TEACHING INSTRUCTIONS

Preparing to Teach	4
Objectives	6
Lesson Outline	7

TEACHING GUIDE

Section 1 - Being Your Best Self.....	9
Section 2 - Self-Inventory	10
Section 3 - Don't Be Afraid to Fail	11
Section 4 - Receiving Compliments.....	12
Section 5 - Reflective Criticism	13
Section 6 - Bledsoe Self-Concept Scale.....	14
Section 7 - Working Towards a Plan	15
Section 8 - Praising Ourselves and Praising Others.....	16
Section 9 - Want Ads	17
Section 10 - Celebrating a Success Story	18
Section 11 - Homework	19

LECTURE MATERIALS

Being Your Best Self - Short Lectures.....	21
Introduction	
Take A Good Look	
Don't Be Afraid to Fall	
Change Involves Risk Taking	
Self-Evaluation	
Working Toward a Plan	
Praising Ourselves	
Praising Those Around Us	

OVERHEAD TRANSPARENCY MASTERS

Overhead A - Objectives.....	26
Overhead B - Plan of Action.....	27

STUDENT HANDOUTS

Handout #1 - Receiving Compliments.....	29
Handout #2 - Bledsoe Self-Concept Scale.....	30
Handout #3 - Celebrating a Success Story	32
Handout #4 - What Makes You So Appreciated.....	33
Handout #5 - Building Self-Reliance Activity.....	34
Handout #6 - My Declarations of Self-Esteem.....	35

HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENTS

Homework Instructions.....	37
----------------------------	----

LETTER TO PARENTS

Being Your Best.....	39
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References.....	40
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Developed by: Elizabeth B. Bolton, Professor, Community Development, University of Florida, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, Gainesville FL, with assistance from John R. Rutledge, Former Associate Professor, 4-H Youth Specialist, University of Florida, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, Gainesville FL; and Linda Bowman, Home Economics Agent and Linda Barber, Former 4-H Agent for the Santa Rosa County Cooperative Extension Service, Milton FL.

TEACHING INSTRUCTIONS

PREPARING TO TEACH

1. Prepare for teaching this lesson by reading and familiarizing yourself with the objectives, materials, handouts and exercises.
2. Begin your preparation several days in advance so that you will be able to secure whatever additional resources you need to make the lesson a "local" learning experience.
3. Plan your learning environment with care so that the surroundings contribute to the achievement of the objectives.
4. Begin on time and end on time. Schedule a break at about midpoint of the lesson.
5. With all lessons after the first, ask participants what they did as a result of last week's lesson. Record these!
6. Introduce each lesson with an overview of how it fits with leadership development program for youth.
7. End each lesson with a summary and restatement of objectives. Tell participants what you expect them to do with the lesson after they leave.
8. Heighten their anticipation for the next lesson without sharing too much.
9. Each lesson is designed for approximately two hours. Use your judgment on shortening or expanding various parts according to the needs of your participants.
10. The two hour lesson is divided into sections that are described in the "Teaching Guide." Each section starts with a title, description of the activity, purpose, time needed to complete it, materials needed, and directions for students or teacher. Use the notes portion of each section to record suggestions for the next time the lesson is used.
11. Each lesson contains a combination of brief lectures and student activities designed for the objectives of each lesson. The lectures are short and the student activities are designed for students to experience the point or topic of

Preparing to Teach (Continued)

the lecture. Both the lectures and the student activities may be modified as appropriate for a specific student group or topic.

12. Student handouts are included for selected sections of each lesson. When these are included, duplications for each student should be prepared prior to the class. Masters for overhead transparencies or power points are also included for selected sections.
13. After each lesson, students are asked to share the experiences they have had with their parents. A letter to the parents or a parent teen exercise is included with each lesson. Prepare the appropriate number of copies in advance and tell students this is part of the leadership experience. Solicit feedback from parents and record this in the notes for each lesson.
14. "Homework" as an after class assignment to enable students to use the topics in a situation outside the classroom is included in each lesson. Assign this at the end of the class and ask for reports, verbal or written, of the "homework" assignment prior to beginning a new lesson.
15. These materials, lectures, activities, and handouts come from many sources and care is taken to document the original source when it is known. If the original source or author is not known, a secondary source is given.

OBJECTIVES

1. To identify your own unique personality traits.
2. To accept both compliments and criticism from others in a positive way.
3. To choose one trait to work toward improving and develop a specific plan for improvement.
4. To recognize that you must take risks in order to grow and develop.
5. To learn to value yourself.

LESSON OUTLINE

Section and Topic	Page	Time
1. Being Your Best Self Lecture Objectives	8	5 mins.
2. Self Inventory Student Activity Take a Good Look	9	10 mins.
3. Don't Be Afraid to Fail Reading Class Discussion	10	15 mins.
4. Receiving Compliments Student Activity Small Group Discussion	11	15 mins.
5. Reflective Criticism Student Activity Class Discussion	12	10 mins.
BREAK		5 mins.
6. Self Concept Questionnaire	13	15 mins.
7. Working Towards a Plan Lecture and Discussion	14	15 mins.
8. Praising Ourselves, Praising Others Lecture	15	5 mins.
9. Want Ads Student Activity	16	10 mins.
10. Celebrating a Success Story Student Activity	17	10 mins.
11. Student Handouts Homework Letter to Parents	18	5 mins.

TEACHING GUIDE

Section 3.

Title: Don't Be Afraid To Fail

Description: Lecture, Reading and discussion

Purpose: To enable students to see failure as a stepping stone to achievement

Time: About 15 minutes

Materials needed: "Don't Be Afraid to Fail" in lecture section

Directions: (a) Read "Don't Be Afraid to Fail" to students. Initiate a discussion with the following questions:

- Do you see that failure can be a stepping stone to achievement at a later date?
- Is it necessary to take a risk in order to achieve?
- Is it ever possible to do anything without the risk of failure?

Complete lecture with material on "Self Evaluation" and "Change Involves Risk Taking."

Notes:

Section 5.

Title:	Reflective Criticism
Description:	Student Activity
Purpose:	To be able to see criticism as information that can be helpful
Time:	About 10 minutes
Materials Needed:	None

Directions:

Introduce this exercise by asking the students to recall situations when they were being justly criticized. Encourage students to reflect on how they often secretly agreed with the criticism but could not admit it. Then ask them to write down one critical comment about themselves. Divide the group into pairs and ask partners to trade their critical comments. Provide the following instructions:

Read each other's item. Then assume roles as "speakers" and "receivers." The receiver gives the speaker his written self-criticism in two ways: face the receiver as if you were actually criticizing him or her; for example, if your partner mentioned poor handwriting as a weakness, the speaker says, "You have terrible handwriting."

After hearing the first critical statements, the receiver responds by saying how he or she feels, paying attention to how the statement was spoken and what emotions it evoked. Then the speaker repeats the same comment, but this time the receiver responds only to the contents of the statement. Then switch roles and try the same sequence again.

After ten minutes, call the group together for a discussion. Emphasize how painful it is to be criticized and how difficult it is to hear the actual message and evaluate its meaning. Describe how the focus often shifts to the emotional tone instead of the actual message.

Notes:

Section 9.

Title:	Want Ads
Description:	Student Activity and discussion
Purpose:	To see oneself in a positive way; group members try to "sell" themselves to others by emphasizing positive characteristics of themselves in a make-believe want ad.
Time:	About 15 minutes
Materials needed:	One 3x5 card for each member of the group

Directions:

1. Ask each group member to write a want ad for themselves on their card. The object they are trying to sell will be themselves, so their task will be to emphasize their positive characteristics.
2. Collect all the cards as they are completed. When everyone is finished, read each card aloud to the group. Have group members try to guess who wrote the card.

Discussion: Ask the group the following questions:

1. How did it feel to talk about only the positive side of yourself?
2. Would it have been easier to talk about the negative aspects? Why?

Notes:

LECTURE MATERIALS

BEING YOUR BEST SELF

Introduction

"Being Yourself, Your Best Self" has a lot to do with attitude. Having a positive attitude and expecting to do your best is essential to a person's success. Aptitude and a little hard work may also play an important role in one's success; however, attitude will be a determining factor, especially in the long road of life.

Take a Good Look

The first step in developing a positive attitude in order to be "your best self" is a realistic evaluation. Without constant evaluation and re-evaluation, a person will stagnate or get in a rut; no change or positive improvement can occur. Recognize even the smallest of successes and also the largest of failures. Failures or weaknesses are not something of which to be afraid or ashamed. They are something to be learned from and can serve as points from which to progress.

"Don't be Afraid to Fail"

You've failed many times although you may not remember.

You fell down the first time you tried to walk.

You almost drowned the first time you tried to swim, didn't you?

Did you hit the ball the first time you swung a bat?

Heavy hitters, the ones who hit the most home runs, also strike out a lot.

English novelist John Creasy got 753 rejection slips before he published 564 books.

Babe Ruth struck out 1,330 times, but he also hit 714 home runs.

Don't worry about failure. Worry about the chances you miss when you don't even try.

Change Involves Risk-Taking

It is always a risk to leave behind a familiar environment for something new. It should be taught that risk-taking is positive and necessary to growth and development. As Zig Ziglar says, "people in life who don't succeed don't actually plan to fail; their problem is that they don't plan anything." To succeed, one must make plans to change and be willing to take risks.

Self-evaluation

In self-evaluation, feedback from other people can provide a perspective of which the individual may not be aware. As it is not always possible to "poll" others for their input, the compliments or criticism they give should be viewed as a tool for gaining outside perspectives for self-evaluation. Although it is good to "feel good" about receiving a compliment, one should not let the "emotional tone" of a compliment or criticism overrule, but should focus on the "current" of the message.

Working Towards a Plan

Strengths and weaknesses are characteristics which make a person unique. Every person has his/her own set of characteristics. Although some of these characteristics may be considered to be weaknesses or negative, each person is still special and of value to our world. You are loved and cherished regardless of competence or accomplishments. Weaknesses or negative characteristics are not what determines a person's value. A negative message to youth is "You are bad because you do bad things."

The positive message is, "You sometimes do things I don't like, but you are still a worthwhile person." Behaviors people exhibit may be negative; however, behaviors can be changed if an individual so desires. Each person is in control of his/her own behavior.

In order to be "your best self," one must constantly change (i.e., grow and develop). Change (growth) is possible when realistic goals are set and a specific plan for improvement, or "plan of action," is developed. To set goals, it must be determined what the individual wants to do or be (i.e., more outgoing). Also, what weakness (e.g., timidity) is desired to be changed, or possibly even what strength (e.g., outgoing, but only in certain groups) is desired to be improved upon or

capitalized on? Next, the "Plan of Action" must be developed as follows:

1. Identification and selection of weakness, or area for improvement (e.g., timidity)
2. Formulation of goal (e.g., to be more outgoing)
3. Description of specific steps or actions (e.g., to talk to one new classmate a day; to attend the school mixer and meet 3 new people; offer to help tutor classmates in best subject).
4. Determine a time frame (e.g., one semester).
5. Evaluation of progress--decide if it is necessary to continue focusing on this area and/or if it is time to move on to a new area.

Through identification of strengths and weaknesses and by working on things in "bite-size chunks," you can continually strive to be the best person

Praising Ourselves

This is nothing to be afraid of! It is not conceit. It is simply taking credit for who you are and what you have done and not just attributing a good effort to luck. Human nature has us to dwell on our failures and mistakes. "Own" your successes, not only your failures. By recognizing our strengths and focusing on them, we are able to develop a positive attitude. When one frets over weaknesses, negative attitudes emerge. As commonly known in computer jargon, "Garbage In, Garbage Out." In other words, whatever one inputs is what they get out. Self-praise means to explore and build upon one's achievements and successes. This will develop self-confidence and a positive attitude.

Praising Those Around Us

It is impossible for a person "to be their best self" when he or she is ego-centered. Self-centeredness or self-consciousness often indicates insecurity or lack of self-confidence. If people do their "homework" by developing a "Plan of Action" and by applying "self-praise" principles, they will be able to take their minds away from self and focus on others. Focusing on others by offering honest praise and feedback and displaying common courtesy and appreciation should be practiced in all relationships. Demonstrating an unconditional acceptance of others (i.e., "I like you for who you are") will in turn cause others to be more open and accepting of you. Good relationships are the key to working with others cooperatively. This leads to everyone being successful at "being their best self."

Remember: In praising others, it is important to be specific and sincere. Being open with your feelings will make you feel good.

OVERHEAD TRANSPARENCY MASTERS

OBJECTIVES

- **To identify your own unique personality traits.**
- **To accept both compliments and criticism from others in a positive way.**
- **To choose one trait to work toward improving and develop a specific plan for improvement.**
- **To recognize that you must take risks in order to grow and develop.**
- **To learn to value yourself.**

Overhead A

PLAN OF ACTION

- 1** Identification and selection of area or improvement
- 2** Formulation of a goal
- 3** Description of steps
- 4** Determination of time frame
- 5** Evaluation of progress

STUDENT HANDOUTS

HANDOUT #1

RECEIVING COMPLIMENTS

Activity

Conditional Compliments I Was
Given in Childhood

Conditional Compliments I Received
Currently

"If you're good, I will love you so-o-o much."

"If you'd cut your hair, you'd really be pretty."

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Unconditional Compliments I Was
Given in Childhood

Unconditional Compliments I Received
Currently

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

TARGETS

Words or phrases that hurt me the most are _____

Things people do that really hurt me are _____

Words or phrases that make me feel really good are _____

Things people do that really make me feel good are _____

The target I most fear is _____

The target I most want is _____

I want to get a _____ from _____
describe name

I don't ask for it because I'm afraid of _____

The worst thing that could happen if my fears are realized is _____

What I need to do to get the compliments and support I want is to _____
_____ instead of _____

HANDOUT #2

A SURVEY OF SPECIFIC INSTRUMENTS BLEDSOE SELF-CONCEPT SCALE

There is a need for each of us to know more about what we are like. This is to help you describe yourself and to describe how you would like to be. There are no right or wrong answers; each person may have different ideas. Answer these according to your feelings. It is important for you to give your own honest answers.

Think carefully and check the answer that tells if the word is describing you. In the left hand column, check the answer "This is the Way I am"--Nearly Always, About ½ the time or Just Now and Then.

<u>This is The Way I Am</u>				<u>This Is The Way I'd Like To Be</u>		
Nearly Always	About ½ the Time	Just Now and Then		Nearly Always	About ½ the Time	Just Now and Then
_____	_____	_____	friendly	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	cold	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	brave	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	small	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	helpful	_____	_____	_____
<hr/>						
_____	_____	_____	honest	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	cheerful	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	active	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	jealous	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	quiet	_____	_____	_____
<hr/>						

Handout #2 (Continued)

<u>This is The Way I Am</u>				<u>This Is The Way I'd Like To Be</u>		
Nearly Always	About ½ the Time	Just Now and Then		Nearly Always	About ½ the Time	Just Now and Then
_____	_____	_____	strong	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	a good sport	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	mean	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	lazy	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	poor	_____	_____	_____
<hr/>						
_____	_____	_____	smart	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	popular	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	useful	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	clean	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	kind	_____	_____	_____
<hr/>						
_____	_____	_____	selfish	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	dull	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	healthy	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	timid	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	slow	_____	_____	_____
<hr/>						
_____	_____	_____	faithful	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	lonely	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	polite	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	talkative	_____	_____	_____

HANDOUT #3

CELEBRATING A SUCCESS STORY

Recall a time when you helped someone else learn something, develop a new skill, accomplish a goal, or solve a problem. This experience should be one that is easy to recall and bring back positive feelings. Be prepared to share this "helping relationship" in a two minute story. You will learn that when you help someone else you build your own self-concept.

1. As you listened to the stories of your classmates, what emotions or feelings were generally associated with the success stories related to helping others (e.g., excitement, appreciation, joy, etc.)?

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

2. What factors were usually associated with these successful helping relationships (e.g., encouragement, hard work, wise decision, etc.)?

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

3. How have these stories helped you? _____

**"MANY PEOPLE HAVE GONE FURTHER THAN THEY THOUGHT THEY
COULD BECAUSE SOMEONE ELSE THOUGHT THEY COULD"**

HANDOUT #4

WHAT MAKES YOU SO APPRECIATED -- IS THE WAY YOU APPRECIATE OTHERS!

Everyone knows that adage, "Honey catches more flies than vinegar." It is often used to remind one to take the positive approach in relating to others.

If you want to see a person "blossom," use sincere praise liberally and criticism rarely: Doing so will change you, too!

Below are a dozen ways to give a lift to those around you -- whether it be family, friends, co-workers or even strangers. See if you can add enough ideas to this list to double the number within the next month.

1. "That's really nice of you, _____ 1/ _____."
2. "Thank you very much. You've helped to make my day, _____."
3. "Wow! you really know how to _____ 2/ _____ well, _____."
4. "I like the times when you _____, _____."
5. "That is a neat project you are working on, _____. I'm anxious to see how it works!"
6. " _____, that is quite an improvement in the way you _____ . You are consistently making improvement."
7. "I'll bet your grandmother, Aunt _____ or Uncle _____ would be proud of you if they could see this."
8. "I like the way you said that, _____. You have made me realize _____."
9. "You make me feel good, _____, when you _____"
10. "It is obvious to me that you take a lot of pride in _____."
11. "Thank you for the help, _____."
12. "Thank you, _____, for your help. Working with you makes a task so much more enjoyable."

- 1/ Use name when possible. It increases the impact of what you have to say.
- 2/ Be specific. Say what it was you like that he/she did in order to reinforce a particular behavior and "maximize the voltage" of your compliment.

Adapted from New Mexico Family Life Newsletter, Leo Yates, Editor. July-August, 1984.

HANDOUT #5

PARENT-CHILD ACTIVITY FOR BUILDING SELF-RELIANCE/BEST SELF

Purpose: To help family members recognize their own strengths and weaknesses and to gain experiences which lead to accomplishments or personal goals and self-reliance.

Supplies: A listing of responsibilities that are necessary to keep the family household operating (meal planning, grocery shopping, meal preparation, housecleaning, laundry, etc.). These should also be tasks the individual would need to do if they were living "on their own."

A weekly work chart.

Directions: Discuss as a family the things that are necessary to keep the family operating smoothly or that individuals would need to know if they were living on their own.

Ask each person to name those things:

- they are capable of doing;
- they like to do;
- they do not feel capable of doing;
- they would like to learn to do.

Go through the listing of responsibilities as a family, giving each individual something they are capable of doing, something they like to do and something they would like to learn to do. Decide what kind of help is needed in learning to do a task one does not know how to do and what resources could be helpful.

In this activity each family member needs to feel:

- they had choices;
- they had support;
- they had encouragement;
- they received recognition for what they accomplished.

Avoid overloading on family tasks and use the activity as a learning experience rather than a list of duties.

Reference: Anthony, R. The Ultimate Secrets of Total Self-Confidence. New York: Bradley Books. 1979.

HANDOUT #6

MY DECLARATIONS OF SELF-ESTEEM (Use as Responsive Reading)

Leader: I am me.

Group: In all the world, there is no one else exactly like me. There are persons who have some parts like me. Therefore, everything that comes out of me is authentically mine because I alone chose it.

Leader: I own everything about me--my body, including everything it does; my mind, including all its thoughts and ideas; my eyes, including the images of all they behold; my feelings, whatever they may be--anger, joy, frustration, love, disappointment, excitement; my mouth, and all the words that come out of it-- polite, sweet or rough, correct or incorrect; my voice, loud or soft; and all my actions whether they be to others or to myself.

Group: I own my fantasies, my dreams, my hopes, my fears.

Leader: I own all my triumphs and successes, all my failures and mistakes.

Group: Because I own all of me, I can become intimately acquainted with me. By doing so I can love me and be friendly with me in all my parts. I can then make it possible for all of me to work in my best interests.

Leader: I know there are aspects about myself that puzzle me, and other aspects that I do not know. But as long as I am friendly and loving to myself, I can courageously and hopefully look for the solutions to the puzzles and for ways to find out more about me.

Group: However I look and sound, whatever I say and do, and whatever I think and feel at a given moment in time is me. This is authentic and represents where I am at that moment in time.

Leader: When I review later how I looked and sounded, what I said and did, and how I thought and felt, some parts may turn out to be unfitting. I can discard that which is unfitting, and keep that which proved fitting, and invent something new for that which I discarded.

Group: I can see, hear, feel, think, say, and do. I have the tools to survive, to be close to others, to be productive, and to make sense and order out of the world of people and things outside me.

Leader: I own me, and therefore I can engineer me.

All: I am me and I am okay.

(Adapted for group teaching from Peoplemaking by Virginia Satir)

**HOMEWORK
ASSIGNMENTS**

HOMEWORK INSTRUCTIONS

I. TWO IDEAL DAYS

1. Project yourself into the future, any time from tomorrow to several years from now, and imagine two days that would be ideal for you. Imagine 48 hours of what for you would be the best possible use of that period of time. You can fantasize whatever you want; the only limit is the time limit of 48 hours.
2. Describe your perfect, ideal two days. Go into as much detail as you can picture in your fantasy.
3. You will be asked to share your story with the class.

II. WHAT MAKES YOU SO APPRECIATED IS THE WAY YOU APPRECIATE OTHERS! (Handout #4)

1. Make one copy of this handout for each student. Ask students to complete this activity for the next class.

III. PARENT CHILD ACTIVITY FOR BUILDING SELF-RELIANCE (Handout #5)

1. Make one copy of this handout for each child. Ask them to complete it with a parent.

LETTER TO PARENTS

BEING YOUR BEST

Dear Parent:

Self-improvement is something each individual is capable of. There are many degrees of self-improvement. Some people see self-improvement as "getting a haircut" while for others it may be learning to play a guitar. Your youngster has been involved in a series of activities which have helped to identify their own personality traits; learn to accept and use compliments and criticism positively and develop a realistic plan for their own personal growth and development. Basically, they are learning to value themselves and gain the confidence to aim for their potential.

When children arrive in the world they are totally dependent upon others for their care and nurturing. When they reach toddlerhood, they discover themselves as separate individuals with their own minds and actions. At adolescence, the need for independence and separation from the family reaches a peak period. This is why parents sometimes feel it is difficult to live with toddlers and adolescents. It is helpful for parents to realize that these developmental stages are what being human is all about and that these youngsters are in their own struggle for "self." Helping family members through these stages as well as through all the stages is helping them become their "best selves."

Self-reliance is closely related to self-improvement. It is the belief that one can handle things and be successful in desired efforts. It involves looking within to determine one's talents and limitations and looking outside of self to sources for help in self-improvement efforts.

One of the greatest gifts any parent can give their children is the gift of helping them become self-reliant. Children will move toward self-reliance as they become self-confident. Children gain self-confidence by successes with responsibilities that they can handle at their age level. Only through the development of a "responsible self" do they learn the joy and privilege and human dignity of being their own person and their best self.

It is the basic responsibility of parents to help youngsters make the transition from dependency to self-reliance. It involves letting youngsters learn from their mistakes; however, this does not mean "setting a child up for failure." Let the child handle those things which are within his capabilities. Give them love, encouragement, and recognition for their accomplishments. Help them gain the awareness they need for clarifying their goals and identifying their resources. Try to evaluate parental actions in terms of helping the child reach a mature, responsible, productive and rewarding adulthood.

Sincerely,

University of Florida County Extension Faculty

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Developing Skills for Youthful Leaders

Developing Skills for Youthful Leaders is a six part curriculum designed for volunteers who work with young people. It is designed to enable teachers to apply a systematic approach to training youth for leadership roles in schools and neighborhoods. Each module includes training materials and activities that can be used for leadership education for students and youth groups. Partial funding for the development of these modules was provided by The Junior Woman's Club of Milton, Florida.

Modules:

Module I - You Can Be A Leader

Module II - Knowing and Accepting Yourself

Module III - Being Your Best

Module IV - Communicating With Others

Module V - Listening Skills to Improve Communication

Module VI - Making a Decision

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