

VIDEO DISCUSSION GUIDE

for use with
Program 3

ENHANCING SELF-ESTEEM

In the Youth Guidance Video Series



EDUCATIONAL GOALS

YOUNG ADOLESCENTS WILL:

- Become aware of how their level of self-esteem affects their lives.
- See the relationship between their self-esteem and the kinds of choices they make.
- Become aware of many of the things that they and other people do that either enhance or undermine their self-esteem.
- Learn some ways to enhance their self-esteem.
- Become sensitized to the ways they affect the self-esteem of others.

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- ▶ **Trigger group discussion**
- ▶ **Stimulate critical thinking**
- ▶ **Boost self-esteem**

Big Changes, Big Choices helps young teens work their way through the turmoil of early adolescence while making positive, healthful life choices. In each program TV cameras follow comedian / youth counselor Michael Pritchard to middle schools around the country, as he thrills young audiences with warm humor about growing up and engages them in problem solving sessions about serious issues that affect their lives.



The purpose of this video program is to shape young people's attitudes by appealing to their minds and their hearts. By watching and discussing these videos, kids will come to a deeper understanding of the issues presented in the tapes, think more critically about their own choices and behaviors, and gain confidence in their own better instincts.

HOW TO USE THIS VIDEO

Use in classrooms, libraries, youth groups, or show it to your kids at home. Ideal for parents, too.

You can greatly enhance the effectiveness of this video by following it up with group discussions, writing assignments, and learning activities. This guide is intended to help you in your efforts.

We recommend that, before showing the tape, you ask a few questions to start the kids thinking about the issues treated in the program. You'll find some useful questions on page 6. Also, you can expect your students to have a lot to talk about after viewing the tape, so it's a good idea to allow ample time.

While this discussion guide may appear to be written for classroom teachers, any group leader or parent will find it a useful tool for getting the most out of this video program.

ABOUT THIS PROGRAM

This program tells young people that every one of them is important and worthy, that what they do matters, and that they owe it to themselves to do and be their very best. We consider where high and low self-esteem come from, how our actions and choices either diminish or enhance our self-esteem, how to deal with external factors that affect our self-esteem, and how we affect the self-esteem of others.

PROGRAM CONTENT

Mike Pritchard on stage before a middle school audience gives a humorous look at how fragile self-esteem can be. He says that a lot of us pretend nothing can hurt us, but insults have a way of getting through and making us feel bad about ourselves.

PART I

Teentalk: Pritchard leads a group of middle school kids in a discussion about the nature of self-esteem. They begin by considering what self-esteem is, how it affects our lives, and where it comes from.

HOW WE HURT OUR SELF-ESTEEM

The discussion gets into the issue of not liking yourself. They talk about harsh self-criticism, feeling fat, feeling ugly, and about negative self-talk. A boy says he sometimes ruins his tennis game by being overly judgmental about his performance. A girl talks about being excessively self-critical of her performance at a piano recital. Another girl says we expect too much of ourselves sometimes.

Pritchard on stage says the way we talk to ourselves is important. We have opposing internal voices that either encourage us or sabotage us. The voice we chose to listen to has a big affect on our self-esteem.

PART II

HOW OTHERS HURT OUR SELF-ESTEEM

Teentalk: Discussion about how their self-esteem is affected by insults and ridicule. A girl with a slight facial deformity talks about how it feels when people pick on her because of her looks. A boy complains that if he gets a bad grade, even though he tried hard, his parents treat him like he's a disappointment. Other complaints include being categorized as a nerd and as a slut. One girl says people sometimes say things they don't really mean, but you don't know that, so you take it personally and feel bad. A girl reveals that a boy in her math class makes nasty remarks

about her family. This triggers a discussion about not listening to people who say hurtful things when they don't know what they're talking about.

Pritchard asks why people in middle school often give others such a hard time. One boy says it's because they feel bad about themselves so they want to make others feel bad, too. Another tells the story of friend whose father came home from prison and forbade the friend from playing with him any more because he's a "nigger." He says that M.L. King's famous speech about judging people by the content of their character really affected him - made him feel very special because he knows he has a good heart.

Pritchard on stage quotes Eleanor Roosevelt, "nobody can make you feel inferior without your consent." Focusing on who you are helps you ignore negativity.

PART III

PROTECTING OUR SELF-ESTEEM

Teentalk: Pritchard and the kids talk about turning to others for encouragement. They mention turning to their pets or their friends. One boy talks about being his own best friend and knowing he can always pop back up.

The group concludes that everybody is entitled to good self-esteem. A girl says having good self-esteem gives people more choices. A boy says that if everybody had high self-esteem it would make the atmosphere better for everyone. Another says when you have confidence in yourself you're a good example for others who have low self-esteem. He ends by singing a gospel song about not letting problems get you down.

Pritchard on stage quotes poet Nellie Lincoln, "on the road of life you have only one constant companion, so its important to be good company for yourself." Learning to be your own best friend is a great choice to make.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Questions to ask **before** showing the tape.

1. We hear a lot of talk these days about self-esteem. Who can tell me what self-esteem is?
2. Is there a difference between self-esteem and smugness or conceit?
3. When we say someone has high self-esteem, what does that mean?

Questions to ask **after** showing the tape.

4. What was most meaningful to you in this video? Why?
5. The kids in this video said they think everybody is entitled to have high self-esteem. Do you agree? Why (or why not)?
6. Do you think you have to "prove yourself" in some way in order to deserve high self-esteem?
 - Do you have to be great at something?
 - Do you have to be super-popular or part of the "in-crowd"?
 - Do you have to be terrifically good-looking?
 - Is there any reason why someone should not be entitled to have good self-esteem?
7. Where does high self-esteem come from?
 - Why do you think some people have high self-esteem and others have low self-esteem?
8. What causes low self-esteem?
9. When you make really good choices for yourself, how does that make you feel? (ask for examples)
 - Does that raise your self-esteem?
 - Do you think that making good choices for yourself could be one way to help raise your self-esteem?

10. When you make really bad choices for yourself, how does that make you feel? (ask for examples)

- Does that lower your self-esteem?

11. Have you ever made yourself feel bad by comparing yourself with others?

- Is it good to compare yourself with others? Why not?

- What can happen when you compare yourself with others?

12. Can we sometimes be too critical of ourselves?

- What happens when we do that? (ask for examples)

- Can self criticism sometimes be good for us? How? (ask for examples)

- How do we know when we've crossed the line and are being too hard on ourselves?

13. One girl in the video said that if people put you down enough you can start to believe it. Has that ever happened to you? How does it affect your self-esteem when people say insulting or unkind things to you? (ask for examples) What can you do about it when that happens?

14. Is our self-esteem permanent, or does it change?

- Is it ever too late to change the way we feel about ourselves?

15. What was most meaningful to you in this video?

HOW TO ENHANCE YOUR SELF-ESTEEM

The way we feel about ourselves has a huge affect on the way we treat ourselves and others, and on the kinds of choices we make. Here are some things you can do to protect, raise, or reinforce your self-esteem.

- 🍏 Spend time with people who like you and care about you.
- 🍏 Ignore (and stay away from) people who put you down or treat you badly.
- 🍏 Do things that you enjoy or that make you feel good.
- 🍏 Do things you are good at.
- 🍏 Reward yourself for your successes.
- 🍏 Develop your talents.
- 🍏 Be your own best friend - treat yourself well and do things that are good for you.
- 🍏 Make good choices for yourself, and don't let others make your choices for you.
- 🍏 Take responsibility for yourself, your choices, and your actions.
- 🍏 Always do what you believe is right.
- 🍏 Be true to yourself and your values.
- 🍏 Respect other people and treat them right.
- 🍏 Set goals and work to achieve them.

WRITING ASSIGNMENTS

1. Imagine that some day you will have a child. Write a letter for that child to open when he or she reaches the age you are right now. Tell the child how you felt about yourself at this age and how those feelings changed from elementary school through middle school. Tell this child about the kinds of things you experienced that hurt your self-esteem and about the things that raised your self-esteem. Finally, offer some advice that will help your child have good self-esteem at this age and throughout life.
2. Watch a television program and write about one of the characters. Did this character exhibit high or low self-esteem? How can you tell? Give some examples of how this character's self-esteem showed up in his/her personal choices and behavior.
3. Having high self-esteem means that you value yourself. What are the things you value most about yourself? What are some of the things you do that show that you value yourself? Are there things you do that indicate you don't value yourself?
4. Is there something about yourself (or perhaps something you have done) that you feel very good about? Why do you feel good about it? How has it (or how does it) affected your self-esteem? What does it tell you about yourself?
5. What we believe about ourselves is usually reflected in our self-esteem. Positive beliefs make us feel good about ourselves and raise our self-esteem. Negative beliefs make us feel bad about ourselves and lower our self-esteem. Make a list of positive beliefs you have about yourself and a list of negative beliefs you have about yourself. Would your friends agree with your lists? Where do your negative beliefs come from? How accurate are they? How important are they? What can you do to get rid of them?

GROUP ACTIVITIES

1. Self-esteem has been compared to a bucket of water. It starts out full when we're born, but whenever we develop negative beliefs about ourselves, it's like poking little holes in that bucket and our self-esteem drips out.* Have the group brainstorm a list of things we do or say to ourselves or to others that pokes holes in the self-esteem bucket. Put this list on the wall to serve as a constant reminder.

2. Page 8 lists a number of things we can do to protect, raise, or reinforce our self-esteem. Go through this list with the group and discuss each point. How might each of these things contribute to a higher self-esteem? Can they think of any additional suggestions of their own?

3. Eleanor Roosevelt said "Nobody can make you feel inferior without your permission." Have a group discussion about this quote. What does it mean? How true is it? Can you think of cases where it might not be true? In what kinds of situations would this quote be most useful to remember?

4. Have everybody in the class bring in one or two advertisements aimed at teenagers. These can be cut out of magazines or taped off of TV. Have a class discussion to evaluate the ads by asking the following questions: How is this ad attempting to appeal to me? What assumptions does this ad make about me? How is this ad intended to make me feel about myself? Is there anything about this ad that's intended to make me feel is ad intended to make me feel better about myself, or bad about myself? In what way is this ad attempting to appeal to me? Would I be most vulnerable to this ad if I had high self-esteem, or low self-esteem?

*Water bucket metaphor borrowed from Beverly Boz.

ABOUT MICHAEL PRITCHARD

Michael Pritchard is a juvenile probation officer turned comedian / youth counselor / public speaker. After his college graduation in 1973, Mike went to work for the St. Louis Police Department and then moved to San Francisco's juvenile hall. In his years of working with young offenders, Mike discovered that his penchant for humor served as a powerful counseling tool, enabling him to break down communication barriers and help a lot of troubled kids turn their lives around. As Mike is fond of saying, "the shortest distance between any two people is a good laugh." Mike's unusual combination of talents gained him recognition as California's "Probation Officer of the Year" the same year that he won the San Francisco International Comedy Competition.

Whether he's being funny or serious, Mike's big love is talking with kids about the choices they make in their lives. He teaches young people that they have the power of choice, that they are responsible for the choices they make, and that they owe it to themselves to choose the best.



"The shortest distance between two people is
a good laugh."

Big Changes, Big Choices®
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