

## VIDEO DISCUSSION GUIDE

for use with  
Program 4

# SETTING and ACHIEVING GOALS

In the Youth Guidance Video Series



### EDUCATIONAL GOALS

#### YOUNG ADOLESCENTS WILL:

- Realize the benefits of setting goals and committing to them.
- Develop a willingness to risk failure in order to pursue higher goals.
- Adopt an attitude of learning from failures and disappointments.
- Learn some techniques for goal setting.

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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 shows kids the benefits of learning to set and achieve goals, and teaches them how to distinguish between actual goals and mere wishes. They also see how they can benefit from failure as well as success, and how setting and achieving goals of their own choice boosts their self-confidence, their self-esteem, and the control they have over their lives.

## PROGRAM CONTENT

**Mike Pritchard on stage** before a middle school audience delivers a comic monologue about all the options we have in life these days and how much more complex life has become as a result. He concludes that learning to set and achieve goals helps us focus on what we want to do and make the choices we need to make.

### PART I

#### GOALS IN OUR LIVES

**Teentalk:** Pritchard leads a group of middle school kids in a discussion about their goals and ambitions and career plans. They talk about some of their personal goals, both long and short term, and what they are doing now to reach those goals. They also reflect about people they admire for having set and achieved goals.

#### GOALS VS. WISHES

To help them identify the characteristics of a goal, Pritchard reads the kids a wish-list and asks which things could be goals and which could only be wishes. They determine that in order for a wish to be a goal, there has to be a plan and a reasonable chance of success, and the outcome has to depend mostly on your own actions. They go on to talk about how to achieve goals. Suggestions include: set the goal, have determination, work hard, set intermediate steps, make a plan of action.

**Pritchard on stage** does a comic monologue about somebody sitting around waiting for good things to happen. He concludes that, while it's great to have dreams, you have to work to make them come true.

### PART II

**Teentalk:** The discussion begins with personal experiences with achieving goals.

#### TAKING RISKS & HANDLING FAILURE

Pritchard asks the kids if they've ever flopped at something and how they dealt with it. We

hear three stories of kids turning initial failures into eventual successes through perseverance.

Pritchard then asks if it's okay to take risks. The kids all agree that risk-taking is important. It leads to bigger accomplishments, exposes us to new and different things, and keeps life from getting boring. One girl tells about a time she avoided taking a risk because she feared failing. Other kids respond that there's nothing wrong with failing, that everyone has to fail occasionally, that unless you challenge yourself with increasingly higher goals you go nowhere. They agree that there's a big difference between failing & being a failure.

When Pritchard asks for good ways to deal with disappointment, the kids suggest that you should learn from what you did wrong and improve, talk with others about it and learn from them, come back at it again with more confidence.

**Pritchard on stage** gives a humorous account of all the failures Abraham Lincoln endured prior to winning the Presidency.

### PART III

#### GOAL SETTING & SELF-ESTEEM.

**Teentalk:** The discussion here centers on the importance of setting goals. The kids remark that it gives them motivation and direction, boosts self-esteem when they succeed, encourages them, makes life more meaningful, gives them focus, makes them better people. They recognize that we set goals every day, even if we don't realize it.

**Pritchard on stage** encourages the kids to do their best, to pursue their dreams, and to find ways to turn those dreams into reality. That's the right choice to make, and in this life it's always up to you to make the right choices.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

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

1. Do you ever set goals for yourself? What are some goals you have right now (short term and long-term)?
2. Agree or disagree: It's better to set lower goals than to risk failure by setting higher ones.

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

3. Did anybody in this video say anything you disagree with? How would you answer that person?
4. In the video, Mike Pritchard told a story about a guy sitting in a Hollywood coffee shop waiting to be discovered. What was the point of that story?
5. What's the difference between a wish and a goal?
6. How do you decide what your goals are?
7. Have you ever set a goal that was unrealistic? What happened? What did you learn from that?
8. Is it ever okay to take risks? What kinds of risks are okay? What kinds of risks are not okay?
9. Have you ever gone out on a limb and risked failure in order to achieve a bigger goal? (describe) Are you glad you took that risk?

10. Has there been a time when you turned a failure into a success? (describe) What did you learn from that?

11. What's the difference between failing and being a failure?

12. If you don't accomplish all your goals does that make you a failure?

13. What are some good ways to deal with disappointments?

14. What is your personal definition of success?

15. Is it a good idea to set goals? Why, what do goals do for you?

16. What was most meaningful to you in this video? Why?

## HOW TO SET GOALS

1. Define the goal.\*
2. Outline the steps needed to achieve it.
3. Consider possible blocks and ways of dealing with them.
4. Set deadlines.

\*Not every wish can be a goal. For instance, you may wish you could live and stay young forever, but since there's nothing you can do to make that happen, it could never be considered a goal. In order for something to be a goal:

- ◆ It has to be important to you, personally.
- ◆ It has to be within your power to make it happen through your own actions.
- ◆ It has to be something you have a reasonable chance of achieving.
- ◆ It must be clearly defined and have a specific plan of action.



## WRITING ASSIGNMENTS

1. If you could become anything you wanted, or accomplish anything you wanted in life, what would it be? What can you do to make that happen? Are you doing it? (If not, why not?)
2. Think of three things you'd like to accomplish in the next several months. These must be things that are truly important to you and within your power to accomplish. For each one, describe in detail what you will need to do in order to succeed and lay out a plan for doing it (including deadlines). Now that you have set three goals, try carrying out your plans.
3. Write about a time when you succeeded at something because you made it a goal and committed to it.
  - Describe what happened.
  - How did that make you feel?
  - What did you learn from that experience?
4. Sometimes, despite our best plans and efforts, we fail anyway. Write about a time when you tried to accomplish something but came up short.
  - Describe what happened.
  - How did you deal with it?
  - What did you learn from it?
  - Did anything positive come out of it?
5. Imagine that some day you will have children. Write a letter of advice for them to read when they reach the age you are right now. Tell them about the goals you had at this age, and what those goals did for you. Tell them about taking risks - what kinds of risks are good to take and what kind aren't. And tell them how to deal with failure and disappointment so they won't be discouraged when things don't work out the way they want.

## GROUP ACTIVITIES

1. Practice some goal setting exercises. In each hypothetical case have the class go through the four step goal-setting process given on page 8.

Goal #1: Help a new kid in school feel included.

Goal #2: Get a good summer job.

Goal #3: Stop violence on the school grounds.

Goal #4: Earn enough money to buy a new bicycle.

Goal #5: Raise money to buy a new computer for the school library.

2. Have the class set some group goals. For instance, they could decide they want to achieve a certain average score on an exam. To accomplish this they might set up study groups so they can create structured study time and help each other. Or, perhaps, they will set goals for personal interaction that include standards of respectful behavior and rules for dealing with conflicts. Decide on a reward for achieving these goals, such as a picnic or some other fun payoff.

3. Have everybody in the class declare two short term goals that can be accomplished during the semester. Have them present their goals to the class, including their plans, their deadlines, and why these goals are important to them. Then, have them track their progress giving periodic progress reports to the whole class. Set up some kind of a reward for people who achieve their goals.

## 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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