

Desire, Time, Effort

8. Stepping Stones or Stumbling Blocks

Spatial Requirements: Gym/outdoor space required

Activity Type: Movement/group

Grades: 5-12

Group Size: 7-13

Time: 30-60 minutes

Introduction: Instant gratification is popular in our quick-fix, fast-food society. Because of this, we are often unwilling to put forth the desire, time, and effort necessary to overcome obstacles and reach our goals. This activity teaches that positive change requires time, commitment, and focus.

Materials:

- Masking tape or rope for starting and ending lines
- Pieces of cardstock paper, cut in half, or paper plates (You may also use square or rectangular wood blocks, 3/4 inches thick. These may vary in size, from 4 to 6 inches wide and 4 to 8 inches long.) Use 2 pieces of paper less than the number of people in the group.

Activity:

To prepare for this activity, make a starting line with the masking tape or rope. Pace off one step for every person in the group and add three to five more steps before making an ending line with the tape or rope. (See the setup at the end of this activity.)

Explain that your group has been in a prisoner of war camp for the past two years. Tonight is the night you have determined you are going to make an escape attempt. Most of the guards are at a big party and are not on duty. Your group has developed some stepping stones light enough to evade the pressure sensitive alarm. Nothing can touch the playing field except the stepping stones (pieces of paper or wood blocks).

The goal of the activity is for every member of the group to step on the stepping stones and get from the starting line to the finish line with no more than three casualties. A casualty occurs if a person steps off the paper, if any part of the body touches the playing field, or if talking occurs. Only the stepping stones can be stepped on or touched. If a person suffers a casualty, he/she must return to the starting line. After three casualties, the whole group must start over. No verbal communication is allowed when the group members are on the minefield. After explaining these rules, allow the group four or five minutes to plan.

Before the first person crosses the end line, the whole group has to be on the playing field (between the start and finish line). If a person accidentally steps off, the group or members of the group must go back to the start, using the stepping stones to get to the person.

Explain that the group can lose or gain blocks throughout the activity, depending on the group's behavior. Do not tell them how the blocks are awarded beforehand, but when they do earn a block, explain why. Give them a block if they successfully get all the people on the blocks and pass one block to the front. You may also award a block when the team exhibits teamwork. If the group does not exhibit teamwork, take a block away until they do. When everyone successfully crosses the finish line, the activity is over.

Processing the Experience:

- What worked during this activity? What didn't work? (List ideas on the board)
- Why was the activity called, "Stepping Stones or Stumbling Blocks"?
- What are the stumbling blocks in your life?

- What are the stepping stones in your life?
- Did you give up in this activity? Why or why not?
- What would have happened if one person said they did not want to do the activity?
- Who were the individuals in the group that really put in some extra effort and sacrificed for the group?
- Who sacrifices for you?
- What were some of the challenges in this activity?
- What are some challenges in life that require desire, time, and effort? Why might you value these more than things that are easy to achieve?