

# Lift the Weight

## Introduction

### Key Concept:

Living by laws and rules and developing self-discipline will make you stronger, opening the doors of opportunity for the future.

**Lift The Weight**  
**What Makes You Strong?**

**1.** Why do you need resistance to become stronger?

**2.** What is expected of you from:  
Parents? (rules)  
School? (rules)  
Society? (laws)  
Yourself? (self discipline)

**3.** What have you given up on?  
What things get you into the most trouble?  
How does giving up make you weak?

**4.** What are three things that you put most of your time and effort into?  
1.  
2.  
3.

**5.** What are three new things that you could do with your time that will make you stronger?  
1.  
2.  
3.

**6.** Why does this need to be your strongest muscle?

**Challenge** → **Choice** → **Character** → **Easy** No Resistance

“Hard” Resistance

Do any of these things give you opportunity, freedom, and self-respect? →

If “yes,” keep lifting. If “no,” create a new workout.

## Vocabulary

- Expectation
- Society
- Character
- Resistance
- Self-discipline
- Commitment
- Self-talk

### Secondary Concepts:

- Rules and laws, like all challenges, can make us stronger.
- Giving up makes us weak and limits our opportunities.
- Of all our muscles, the brain should be the one we exercise the most.
- When we put our time and effort into positive activities, we will become stronger and more capable of reaching our goals.

### Personalize your Lesson:

- When you were your students' age, how did you perceive laws and rules? What made this perception change over time?
- How has following laws and rules made you stronger?
- What laws or rules are especially difficult for your students to follow? What elements of this lesson will help them change the way they view these rules?

### Activity:

To introduce this lesson, complete the attention activity “The Paper and the Book.” (See the “Learning Activities” section under “Lift the Weight.”)

## Lift the Weight

### Lesson Plan: Introducing Lift the Weight

*This picture shows a weight lifter whose right side is strong from lifting a heavy weight (rules, laws, self-discipline). The left side of the weight lifter's body is weak because this side is lifting only a balloon full of air, which gives no resistance. The balloon represents the things that get a person into trouble, or the rules and laws that one breaks. It*

*also represents lack of self-discipline and giving up.*

*This visual analogy of the weight lifter teaches that to become stronger, we must have some resistance. A weight lifter's muscles build up and become stronger because the weight (resistance) is pushing against the muscle.*

*The reality of life is that failure to follow rules and laws and to use self-discipline often leads to more challenges. The goal of the visual analogy is to help youth see that what feels like a burden or a restriction, if lifted, helps produce a better life. Although lifting the weight is hard, the positive results are worth the effort.*

## Lift the Weight

### Lesson Plan: Visual Analogy Walkthrough

#### Discussion Point 1

##### Question

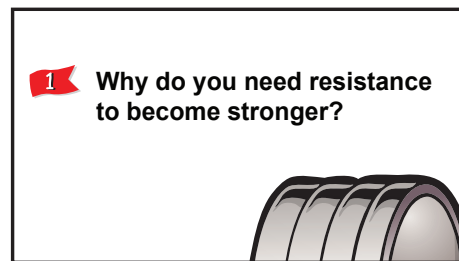
Ask the youth to look carefully at this picture of the weight lifter. Then ask, "What is wrong with this picture?" Answers may include, "One arm is bigger and stronger; the other arm looks smaller and weaker. One side of his chest is bigger than the other side. One leg is bigger than the other leg. One side of the bar has a balloon on the end."

Next ask, "Why does lifting weights make us stronger?"

Then ask, "Why do we need resistance to become stronger?"

##### Discussion

Discuss the youth's answers



to the first question---why lifting weights makes us stronger. Explain that the weight pushes down on the muscle and the muscle grows stronger as it works to push the weight up. It takes effort and energy to work muscles and make them stronger. If muscles don't have resistance pushing on them, they become weaker. For example, when astronauts go into space, their muscles can become weaker because there is no gravity or resistance for the muscles to push against.

Some people look at resistance (rules and laws) as being bad or difficult. Help the youth see that resistance only seems repressive; in reality, resistance is one of the best tools to becoming stronger. If needed, go into greater detail defining resistance.

Stress to the youth the importance of identifying positive resistance in their lives. Remind them that your definition of resistance is not something that limits you or holds you down, but it is something that opens doors and gives you more control and opportunity in the long run! For example, going to school can seem like a ton of resistance pushing down on you, but if lifted, it will give you a lot of opportunities in life.

You can also use the following analogy of “the kite and string principle.” On a really windy day, the resistance on the kite from the string keeps the kite in the air. If the string were not giving the kite some resis-

tance, the kite would quickly blow out of control and crash into the ground. With just the right amount of resistance, the kite can fly safely in the wind for hours.

(Help the youth identify the resistance they need in life to become stronger.)

## Point 2

### Question

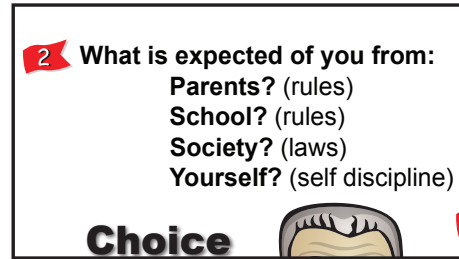
What are some of the rules your parents or caregiver want you to follow? (Some possible answers include, be home by midnight, do homework, do chores, let them know where I am, etc.)

What are some of the laws that society expects you to follow? (Some possible answers are attend school, drive at 16, don't steal, don't use drugs, etc.) Why is self-discipline needed to follow the above rules and laws? Do you ever give yourself laws or rules to live by? (Note: Doing this is “self-discipline.”)

### Discussion

Rules, laws, and self-discipline are the weight (resistance) we must lift to stop the crash and become stronger. (If needed, review Chapter 1, “Reality Ride.”) There are two ways to look at rules and laws: the limited view and the broad view.

When seen from the limited view, laws and rules take away our freedom. We may feel that rules were created to punish us personally. We may have little motivation to lift (follow) the rules or laws if we



notice that they take effort and time to lift. We may feel anger and frustration because failure to follow rules often evokes a consequence we don't like. We may feel that laws and rules take away some of our control and creativity, and that we can stay in control and do fine without the restrictions.

### Questions

Caution the youth about having this limited view but not realizing it. Ask them the following questions so they can determine if they have a limited view or a view that prevents them from lifting the weight.

- Can you identify two or three reasons why you should follow a rule or law you don't like?
- Why would you have more freedom if you lifted the weight?
- If you give up and do not attempt to lift the weight (rules), what will you have

in six months?

- If you lift the weight (resistance), how will it help others and yourself?
- What are two reasons you should try when you want to give up?

If the youth can't answer any of these questions, they may have a limited view.

### Discussion

When we possess a broad view, we can see that lifting the weight is tough, but that it will give us lasting freedom and options. With a broad view, we don't look at rules as punishment, but as the shoes that help us jump our hurdles. We ask ourselves why following the rule or law will help, and then we apply self-discipline and follow it. Once we decide that we are going to follow a rule, we use our creativity to do it. When we see from the broad view, we realize that an “I can do it” attitude is the key ingredient to lifting the weight.

Emphasize that the way the youth look at rules and laws will determine whether they use them to help or as a reason to rebel. It is normal to rebel some, but when rebelling really hurts themselves or others,

they will usually experience the consequences of the law or rule!

Give the youth the following benefits that come from self-discipline and from deciding to follow rules and laws:

- You're in control because you're selecting rules and applying them to yourself.
- Often when you have self-discipline, others will back off and give you more freedom.
- As you choose the resistance (rules and laws), you gain self-respect and respect from others.
- Self-discipline can help you see your potential and how strong you really are.
- When you have self-discipline, you may see options and solutions you couldn't

see before.

- You experience the great feeling of accomplishment more often, which gives you more motivation to keep lifting!

Self-discipline is important in every aspect of life, especially in home life, school life, and with peers. Self-discipline is needed even when you are playing sports; it takes self-discipline to pass the ball instead of shooting. Learning to do a new hobby effectively requires self-discipline. Self-discipline is also necessary to improve your relationships, to support a friend or family member who is having a difficult time, to turn outward in relationships, and to graduate from school. Point out to the youth that by putting effort into understanding the principle of lifting rules and laws,

they are using self-discipline right now!

### Challenge

Ask the youth to reframe, or get a broad view, by identifying one rule or law that's heavy---that they don't like---then figure out why lifting that rule could make them stronger.

Then remind the youth that to get this weight over their head, they must apply self-discipline. Self-discipline is a necessary part of applying desire, time, and effort to follow a frustrating rule or law. (If needed, review Chapter 6: "Desire, Time, and Effort.")

Challenge the youth not to procrastinate lifting their weight. The sooner they lift the weight, the sooner they will see the positive results.

### Point 3

#### Question

What have you given up on? What rules are you not lifting? Why does giving up make you weaker?

#### Discussion

Discuss some of the consequences the youth have experienced because of giving up and not following a rule or law. Warn the youth that giving up and lifting the balloon may seem appealing because they don't have the sweat and work that comes from lifting the resistance, but although



they can get by for a while with breaking rules, in the long run they won't have the strength to lift the weight when they need it the most. For example, a long distance runner may go on hundreds of long runs while in training, thus building up his or her endurance. In the last few miles of a marathon, the runner can tap into that endurance because he or she paid the price by working out consistently over a long period

of time. Giving up and not consistently following rules makes it much more difficult to follow them when they need them to help overcome a problem. For example, if they don't attend school or drop out, they may need to support a family a few years later but will be unable to do so.

Stress the importance of not fearing; some rules may be difficult to follow. Tell them that if they make a mistake, it's not the end of the world as long as they keep attempting to lift the weight. A weight lifter doesn't lift 500 pounds the first time he

or she lifts. As the weight lifter works out and does reps with lower weights, his or her muscles begin to build strength. Over time, the weight can be increased as muscle strength improves. It is a gradual process. The important thing to remember is every time we give up and don't try to follow laws and rules, we miss opportuni-

ties that come from doing positive things.

Discuss with the youth the reality: that if they don't lift the weight (rules, laws), the weight will eventually hold them down, but if they lift it, it will make them stronger! Share with the youth examples of laws and rules you follow every

day that help you. For example, you must show up for work or you are fired.

### *Challenge*

Challenge the youth to think of two reasons not to give up every time they come up with an excuse not to lift their weight.

## **Point 4**

### *Question*

What are three things that you put most of your time and effort into? (Note: You may want the youth to answer this question to themselves).

### *Discussion*

Time and effort are usually used in one of two ways: towards breaking rules, or towards gaining self-discipline by following rules. In reality, their energy, time, and effort are going somewhere, so they may as well put them into things that help them and others. The fastest way to get out of the loop (see Reality Ride) is to do something new or different.

Encourage the youth to identify the things they do with their time that make them feel good about themselves. Have them

**4** What are three things that you put most of your time and effort into?

1.

2.

break down their day and figure out what they put their time and effort into. You may want to ask them to write down all the things they did yesterday or what they plan on doing today. You could have them keep track of their time and effort in a journal for one week. Once the youth have a basic understanding of what they are doing with their time and effort, give them the following challenge:

### *Challenge*

Do any of these things that you are putting your time and effort into give you opportunity, freedom, and self-respect?

If the answer is "yes," challenge the youth to keep doing (lifting) these positive things. Then encourage the youth to ask themselves daily how they can continue to do more of this in the future.

If the answer is "no," help them create a new workout. Challenge them to determine what they could do differently with their time. Encourage them not to get frustrated. They control their time more than anyone else does, so they must take responsibility for how they spend it. For example, they may not always have control over where they are, such as being at school, but they do control how they spend their time wherever they are. Do they try or do they give up? Challenge them to understand that how their time is spent affects them more than anyone else.

## Point 5

### Question

What are three new things you could do with your time that will make you stronger?

### Discussion

Outline with the youth ways that they can improve the time they spend in their three main environments: home, school, and peers.

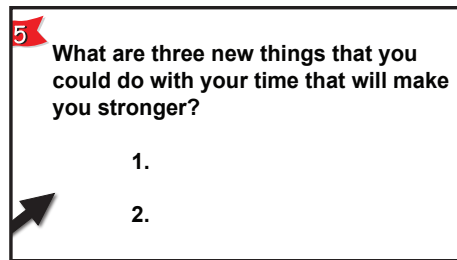
### Possible options:

- At Home:

Identify one rule that your parents or caregiver would really love to see you obey. Then go show them you understand now why you should obey it. Identify one relationship at home that you would like to improve, and then put effort into improving it.

- At School:

Identify what gets you into the most trouble at school or what holds you back from reaching your full potential. Then do the opposite, or at least something different with your time to reach your po-



tential. Identify a subject that you enjoy and put more of your time and effort into it.

- With Peers (Friends):  
Make sure you don't let your peers pull you into the pot! Be a real friend and spend some time making sure you and a friend don't crash or get pulled down! Make a new friend. Put some time into turning outward. Put effort into meeting the needs of someone else, not just yourself. (This is the secret of making good friends.)

Encourage the youth to come up with better creative ways to use their time. Have them evaluate themselves at the end of each day by asking, "Am I at least trying to lift the challenges in these three areas of my life?" At least once a week,

come up with a game plan for how they will spend their time to stay in control of these three areas of their life. Emphasize the importance of preparing today for the challenges of tomorrow.

Remind them that they usually cannot control others in these three areas; they can only control how they respond to others. While they have no control over whether others lift their weight, they do control whether they lift their own weight!

### Challenge

Once they decide on a new workout, it is important that they commit to it. Help define for the youth what the word commitment means, and find out what the word means to them. Ask the youth to identify family members, leaders, athletes, teachers, musicians, etc. who have committed to something.

Challenge the youth to commit to do something important to them, something that doesn't hurt themselves or others.

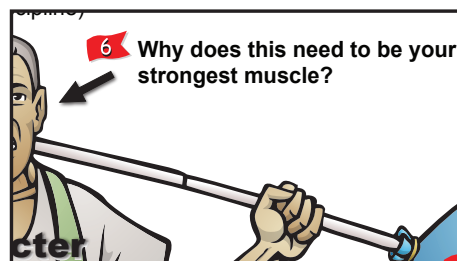
## Point 6

### Question

Why does your brain need to be your strongest muscle?

### Discussion

The brain is where we decide to lift the weight or not to lift it. The brain is also extremely important because this is where our self-talk is processed. Here are some examples of self-talk:



"These rules and laws are stupid; I'm not going to follow them," or "I am going to use these rules and laws to help me accomplish my goals." Self-talk

can provide the needed motivation to lift the weight. Review with the youth what self-talk is and the importance of selecting positive self-talk.

Then give the youth the following scenario and three steps that show how the brain works and how it gets positive motivation:

### 3 Steps to Motivation:

#### 1. You are given the challenge or a rule.

For example, you are told, "You can't hang out with your friends until your homework is done," or "You can't drive unless you have "As" and "Bs" in all your classes," or "If you fail your drug test, you will go to detention for one month." Once you have a challenge, motivation starts. You either have motivation to give up or motivation to try.

#### 2. Next you have a choice.

As you're deciding whether to meet the challenge or give up, motivation starts to work. Be careful, because depending on your self-talk, motivation can help you try or can lead you to give up.

For example, the weight of doing your homework and doing well in school may be too heavy, so your motivation may be to give up. But, depending on the consequences and how much you want to reach a goal, your motivation and self-

talk can help you be successful. You can decide that you will pay the price and keep attempting to lift the weight until you do it. You may decide that you want the freedom to hang with your friends, to drive, and to stay out of detention.

It is important to identify which way your motivation is going as soon as possible. If you don't put effort into controlling your motivation, it will naturally and most often take the road of least resistance. In order to get stronger, you must lift the resistance. Motivation increases with each small success at lifting the resistance (rules and laws).

#### 3. Finally, when your brain (self-talk) is tired of lifting, you must tap into your heart, which also needs to be strong.

In the WhyTry Program, the heart represents your **character**, or what you like about yourself, and what you do to help yourself and others. Character represents your positive values and your motivation to do good out of respect for peo-

ple who care about you. Your character also represents who you are and what you want to do with your life.

When the weight is heavy and your motivation is low or declining, you need to let your self-talk and character work together to give you the positive motivation to lift your weight. For example, "I am sick of school and all of its rules and work, but I am not going to give up. I will tear off my labels and show myself and others that I care about my potential." The combination of a challenge, a choice to use positive self-talk, and character (heart) can give you the positive motivation to lift the weight!

#### *Challenge*

Encourage the youth to understand, memorize, and apply the following formula for motivation:

Challenge + Choice to use positive self-talk + Character (heart) = Positive Motivation and a strong brain.