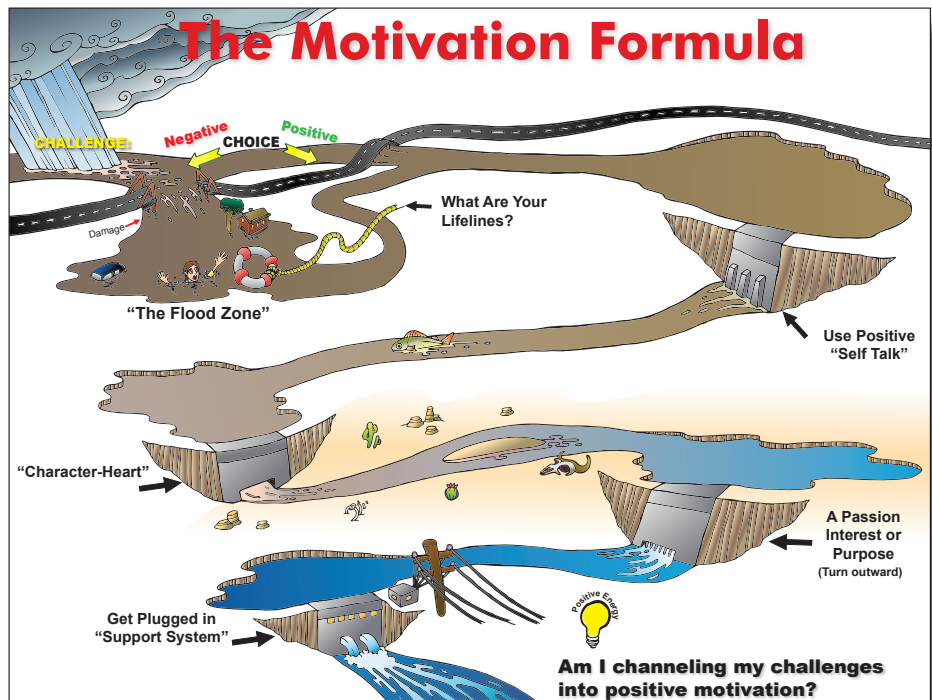


The Motivation Formula

Introduction

Key Concept:

You can take your challenges and channel them into positive motivation: first to better yourself, and then to turn outward and help others.



Vocabulary

- Motivation
- Reframe
- Positive choices
- Negative choices
- Self-talk
- Character and heart
- Passion
- Purpose
- Interest

Secondary Concepts:

- We can channel the challenges we face at home, at school, and with peers in a positive direction.
- When we channel our energy in a negative direction, we end up in the flood zone.
- Positive self-talk, character and heart, a passion, purpose, or interest, and positive support systems can help us remain motivated.

Personalize your Lesson:

- In what ways is this formula the key to the rest of the program?
- What is your role as a teacher or counselor in motivating your students to do better in school?
- What is an example of “positive self-talk” that you use to motivate yourself when you have a challenge?
- What is a passion that you have (outside of your work) that you can share with your students?

Activity:

To introduce this lesson, complete the attention activity “Mind Over Matter.” (See the “Learning Activities” section under “The Motivation Formula.”)

The Motivation Formula

Lesson Plan: Introducing Motivation Formula

Everybody has problems. Some people take their problems and use them as motivation to increase their power and success. Other people are swept away by their problems into a flood of failure and destruction. You get to choose how

you will respond. The Motivation Formula gives you some simple steps to follow to turn your challenges into a source of power.

From time to time, you may get stuck when your challenges

seem to be more than you can handle. When that happens, just come back to this section and review the Motivation Formula. Most people have to go through it a few times before they get the hang of it.

The Motivation Formula

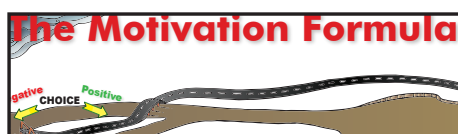
Lesson Plan: Visual Analogy Walkthrough

1. The Motivation Formula

When we are faced with a challenge we have two choices. We can use our energy in a negative direction (the flood zone), or we can use it in a positive direction (the dams).

Building Experiential Background:

To help students better understand the catastrophic damage a flood can create, find photos or video footage of rivers, floods, etc. to show to students. You can also simulate a flood using a sand/water table or make one using large plastic buckets or containers with sand, and small plastic ani-



mals, trees houses, etc. Simulate a flood by building a valley with the sand and plastic toys. (If you have time you may have students do this.) Create a small river in the bottom of the valley, then gradually add more water until the river overflows. Talk about the destruction that is caused and ask the students to look at the river water. Is there much energy being used, or does the water eventually come to a standstill?

Ask if any students can tell how a river can create elec-

tricity. You may also want to try to find a video, filmstrip, etc. on how dams can channel the power of a river to create energy. Try to find one that is as short as five minutes or only show parts of one.

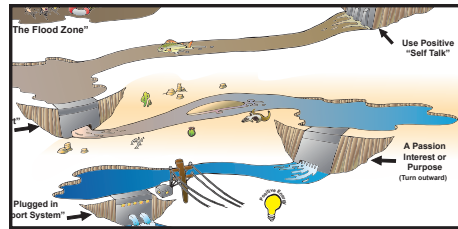
Discussion:

Remind students of the Balloon activity. Ask, "When the balloon was faced with challenges that made it angry, upset, or frustrated, did it have only one choice of what to do? Explain that a powerful river like the balloon has more than one choice. Instead of causing damage in the flood zone, a river can channel its force into something positive, like electricity.

2. The Dams

Display the Motivation Formula or the Dams.

Point to the top of the page and explain that just like the balloon and just like the river, sometimes we have challenges that may make us angry, upset, or frustrated. You may want to go over some of the things listed in the introductory lesson or make another list. Just like the balloon and the river, we have a choice about how we react to those challenges. We can choose to use our energy, time, and resources towards a negative direction: the flood zone. When we are in the flood zone, what happens? Just like the water, our energy dies and we give up. That means we lose opportunity, freedom, and self-



respect.

Write:

Write, "Less opportunity, freedom, and self-respect" next to the flood zone, then take a minute to question the class about what these words mean and why they want them.

Discussion:

Explain to the class that they can always tell if they are in the flood zone by asking themselves one simple question: "Am I hurting myself or others?" If the answer is yes, then they are in the flood zone and need to get out.

Question:

How do we get out of the flood zone? We channel our time, resources, and energy in a positive direction. The river channels its power through the dams and creates something positive: electricity. When we channel our power through the four dams in this analogy, we create something positive as well: opportunity, freedom, and self-respect.

Story:

Read, tell, or have one of the students tell the story of the "Little Engine That Could." What did the little engine keep telling himself over and over? How did that help him get over his challenge? Did it make the mountain smaller or less steep? Did it make the cargo he was carrying less heavy?

NOTE:

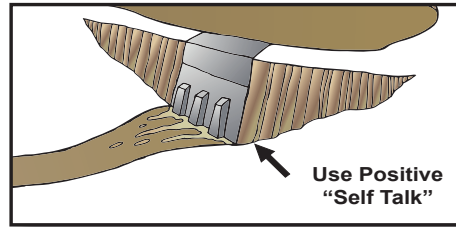
Teaching Tip: One of the best ways to pull students out of the flood zone is to surrender the one-up relationship or believe in them, even when they make mistakes. (See the chapter on **Surrendering the one-up relationship.**) To do so, we must point out to students that they have value and worth because of who they are as human beings, not because of accomplishments or failures. We live in a society that stresses accomplishments, but many students don't see themselves accomplishing much and therefore have low self-esteem. Sending a message to students that they have value in your eyes, whether they succeed or fail, is very powerful. Another way to surrender the one-up relationship is to let students know they are the experts on themselves, because they have been living their lives for the past 8-12 years.

Having a positive adult who lets students know they have great worth and value, even when dealing with challenges, is a great motivator.

3. Positive Self-Talk (Dam #1)

Discussion

Show the class the first dam. Have someone read, "Choose positive self-talk."



Ask the class what they think "self-talk" might be. Explain to the class that when we have a challenge, the things we tell ourselves about the problem have a big impact on how we handle that challenge. Give the students the following example (or a similar one) and have them tell which is an example of positive self-talk.

"Your teacher tells you that tomorrow you will be having a big math test and it will be worth 90 percent of your grade for the grading period. You feel upset and frustrated, maybe even a little angry, that you didn't get more time to prepare. Which is an example of positive self-talk?"

You tell yourself: "I'm no good at math. I can't do it. No matter what I'm going to fail. There is no reason to even try." How do you think this self-talk would impact how you do on your test?

You tell yourself: "It's okay. I can do this. I'll just have to study. I'll just have to work hard. I can be really careful when I read the problems and double check my answers. I know I can do it."

Write:

Next to the first dam write, "I WILL TRY."

NOTE:

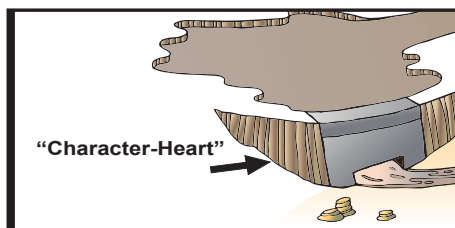
It is important to emphasize to students to focus self-talk on things they have control over. The little engine had no control over how big the mountain was or how soon the train needed to be there (by morning) but he had control over how he responded to those situations. His positive self-talk was, "I think I can." In the same way, students may not control whether parents get divorced, how much money their family has, or how their friends act. They only have control over how they respond to those situations.

4. Character and Heart (Dam #2)

Discussion

Point to Dam #2 and ask the class if what they think "Character and Heart" means.

If time allows, tell the story in the box below to help illustrate what Character and Heart means, or use another applicable story.



Character and heart can be defined as "the things we do when no one else is watching," and "doing something because we know it's the right thing to do, not to impress others or because others tell us to."

Explain to the students that when things get tough, you feel like giving up, and you can't answer the question, "Why try?" if you have character and heart, you keep trying anyway. Out of respect for yourself and people who care about you, you don't give up.

Write:

Under Dam #2 write, "Out of respect for yourself and for people who care about you, DON'T GIVE UP."

STORY: BOBBY'S HONEST RECORD

Bobby Polacio was a 14-year-old boy in the 9th grade. For three years, Bobby had had a dream. He wanted to break the record for the rope climb. Every year in P.E. the boys had to climb a rope from a standing start and touch a board that was 15 feet high. The school record for the event was 2.1 seconds. The record had stood for many years, but Bobby was determined that he was going to break it. He had trained and worked, consumed by the dream of breaking this record for three years.

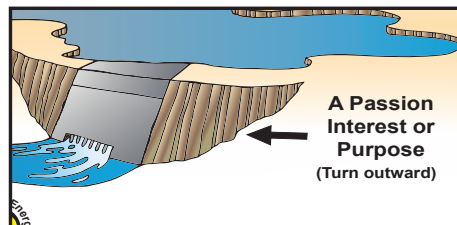
Bobby had three chances to break the record. On his first attempt, he climbed the rope in 2.1 seconds, tying the record. On his second attempt, the watch stopped at 2.0 seconds: a new record! As Bobby climbed down the rope, the class gathered around him, cheering his performance. But Bobby knew something his classmates didn't. His fingers had come within a fraction of an inch of the board, but they had not touched it. He had a choice. He could never tell anyone that his fingers had not actually touched the board. He could take credit for breaking a record he hadn't actually broken, and he could quit. Or he could admit that he hadn't touched the board and try one more time to break the record, taking the chance that he might not make it and that would be his last chance. When the coach asked Bobby if he had touched the board, he shook his head no.

After all the boys had taken their turn, Bobby attempted one last time to break the record. A strange stillness came over the gym. Fifty boys and one coach watched breathlessly as Bobby Polacio climbed the rope in 1.9 seconds! A school record, a city record, and perhaps even a national record for a junior high school boy.

5. Passion, Interest, Purpose (Dam #3)

Discussion

Explain to the class that one of the reasons Bobby wasn't willing to give up on his dream was that it had become his passion. When we have a dream, a goal, something we really want or really care about, we are not willing to give up



easily when we have challenges.

Explain the meaning of the following words to your students:

- Passion: something that you especially love to do
- Purpose: something you are especially good at or have talent for
- Interest: something that you would really like to learn, to do, or become.

Write:

Under Dam #3, write:
"Share it with others."

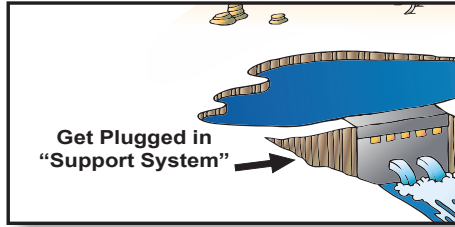
NOTE:

It is important to emphasize that whatever the passion, purpose, or interest is, youth must turn outward and serve someone else with their passion or interest. As students read about their passion, purpose, or interest or discuss things listed, help them think of ways they can turn them outward to serve other people. For example: If a student states that they love to play the piano and they have a great talent for that, have them list some ways they could share that to help others, like visiting a nursing home and playing for some residents there.

6. Support System (Dam #4)

Discussion:

One more thing we can do to get through our challenges without giving up is to get help. Remember the example of the math test your teacher is giving you tomorrow? Can you think of any people who may be able to help you get ready for that test? (These could include a teacher, good friend, older sibling, or parent.)



These people make up what is called a support system. A support system includes all the people who care about you and who can help you through challenges.

Make a list of all the people who could be part of the students' support system.

Explain that our purpose, passion, and interest can help us get plugged in to an even larger support system.

Have students think of people who help them with their passion, purpose or interests and add them to the list.

7. Conclusion

Discussion

Briefly review the motivation formula with the class. Use the example of Bobby Polacio to illustrate each step, or use your own example.

Questions

- Top: What do you think Bobby's challenge was? (Maybe the first time he climbed the rope in 7th grade, it was really hard. Maybe he felt frustrated or angry because it was difficult.) Did Bobby go into the flood zone or channel his

frustration into the dams?

- Dam 1: Bobby had to work very hard to get good at climbing the rope. What kind of self-talk do you think he used to keep himself from giving up?
- Dam 2: Do you think Bobby would have had respect for himself if he had not been honest about touching the board?
- Dam 3: What was Bobby's passion, purpose, or interest? Is there a way that Bobby could use that to help other people?
- Dam 4: Who do you think was part of Bobby's support system?

Write:

At the bottom of the page write, "Why try?" Explain to students that the series of dams helps us to keep trying and not give up. Ask the students if they know what we gain when we keep trying and don't give up.

Write "Opportunity, freedom, and self-respect" at the bottom of the page in response to the question, "Why try?"

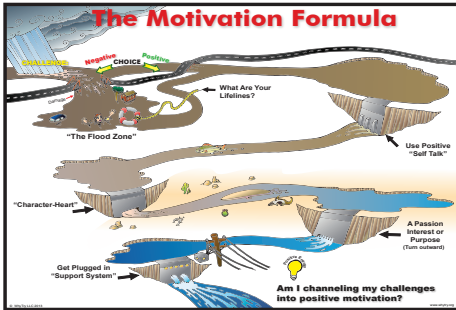
Question:

Do you think Bobby gained opportunity? Freedom? Self-respect? How?

NOTE:

One reality of life is that challenges happen. Another reality is that if challenges don't break us then the resistance, frustration, and pain can make us stronger and better human beings as we overcome them. Once challenges are channeled through these four dams, the challenges can be a great motivator and resource to help youth tap into more opportunity, freedom, and self-respect.

8. Review Lesson



Vocabulary

For the review lesson, have students define the vocabulary words listed in the introductory page of this chapter in their WhyTry Journals. This will help increase understanding of the analogy and give you an opportunity to assess comprehension and retention from the overview lesson.

Visual analogy

In their WhyTry Journals, students have a copy of the visual analogy. Have students use this to do a review/walk-through of the analogy. Have them make notes, answer questions, or use a personal example to explain the concept.

9. Reflection Question

Until the next WhyTry class, ask students to consider the Motivation Formula reflection question:

Am I channeling my challenges into positive motivation?

