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Practice Using Self-Empowering Language

TRANSITION OBJECTIVE

Students will learn and practice techniques for making clear, positive statements about what they intend to do.

RELEVANCE TO SUCCESSFUL TRANSITION

Personal power is evidenced through words and actions. The words, "can't," "try," and "have to," diminish personal power by putting circumstances or other people in control. To be in control it is necessary to replace powerless words with assertive and powerful communication.

INSTRUCTIONAL SEQUENCE

❑ STEP 1: Update Journal

Make a list of words that keep you in control.

❑ STEP 2: Convene Roundtable

"I use the word, 'can't' when I ____."

❑ STEP 3: Advance Organizer

"Today you will learn to pay attention to negative comments that keep you from succeeding and you will practice using more powerful language."

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CAREER MANAGEMENT: Unit 1 LESSON 6

Powerful or Powerless

Change these powerless statements to powerful statements.

CAN'T

I can't get my homework done.
I can't learn to drive.
I can't do anything right.
I can't get to class on time.
I can't lose weight.

TRY

I'll try to get to the game on Friday.
I'll try to call you tonight.
I'll try to exercise.
I'll try to do my laundry.
I'll try to fix my car.

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❑ STEP 4: Activity - 30 Minutes

Discuss the following with students: "We have learned about the power of positive self-talk

and positive thinking. Another way to take control of your feelings and communication is to eliminate words that take your power away. The first word is 'can't.' When you use the word 'can't,' you feel powerless."

Tell students that instead of using the word, "can't," they should use the words, "can," "will," or "do not want to." Write these words on the board and demonstrate using them by changing this statement: "I can't snow ski" to "I can learn to snow ski," "I will snow ski," or "I don't want to snow ski." In pairs, have students practice changing the "can't" statements on the first set of examples on the handout **Powerful or Powerless**. Disclose one statement at a time on the screen image and give pairs one minute to change the statement using the new words. Have the class repeat the new statement in unison.

Now explain to students: "The word 'try' is also powerless. It is a word that makes us feel wimpy. When we say we will 'try,' we are telling ourselves and others that we might not be able to do something. We are acting weak when we use the word, 'try'. Have students work in pairs again to change the second set of statements on the handout by replacing "try" with "will" or "won't." As you go over each statement, go around the room to have pairs recite their changed statements in unison. Be sure to have all pairs participate in reciting at least three times. Conclude this activity by telling students that

there is no such thing as “I’ll try!” Either we “will” do something or we “won’t.”

□ STEP 5: Activity - 15 Minutes

Explain to students that another powerless phrase is “I have to.” Have the class name all of the things they “have” to do. Write student responses on the board. Now tell them that there is really nothing we “have to do.” Instead, we “choose to do” things because we want to avoid a consequence. Go through several of the examples on the board and talk about why someone “chooses” to do this and what the consequence would be if they didn’t. Have students repeat each statement replacing “have to” with “choose to.” Conclude by telling students: “Using the words ‘I have to’ takes away personal

power. Using ‘I choose to’ makes you feel and appear more powerful. We need to feel powerful to have success in achieving our goals.”

Have a short discussion to remind students that using “powerless” communication is attractive to bullies. Bullies pick on people who seem powerless or weak.

□ STEP 6: Evaluate Outcomes

It is important to use powerful statements because “_____.”

□ STEP 7: Connecting Activity

Have students keep a tally, for one day, of the number of times they use the words, “can’t,” “try” or “have to.” Tell them to be ready to report their results to the class.

KEY WORDS

powerful

powerless

interpret

understand

MATERIALS AND PREPARATION

- Student Handout: **Powerful or Powerless**, page 26.
- Prepare examples and discussion for “can’t” and “try.”
- Prepare a screen image of handout.
- Prepare to discuss the difference between “I have to” and “I choose to.”

SCANS FOUNDATION SKILLS

- Basic Academic Skills: Listening, Speaking
- Thinking Skills: Creative Thinking, Reasoning
- Personal Qualities: Sociability, Self-Management