

# Examining Responses to Unconscious Fixed Habits to Build Positive Connections

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# Social Emotional Learning: Begins With You

**This workshop will connect you to emotions, automatic responses and triggers that influence conscious and unconscious reactions to rage, anger, guilt, fear and shame. We will briefly explore the origin of many of our automatic thoughts to determine whether or not they (those thoughts) are in alignment with your core beliefs.**

**I will do my best to encourage you to go DEEPER. I will hold this SACRED SPACE in honor of your journey and I guarantee you will be safe in this process. I can also guarantee you will be very UNCOMFORTABLE.**

**Transforming means growth and growth is painful**

**We are going to EXERCISE our transformational muscle by having courageous conversations and deep thoughtful reflections.**

**This workshop is not meant to answer all your questions, it is merely a door to the possibilities of developing and sustaining positive relationships; beginning with the relationship with yourself.**

**As we travel this road of critical self-assessment, remember to extend GRACE to yourself and to others. Because this is not an easy process.**

**QUESTIONS COMMENTS CONCERNS???**

# Workshop: Objectives/Goals

## Objectives/Goals:

- Critically examine more effective ways to communicate by identifying emotional, behavioral and physical hooks, rooted in implicit and explicit biases
- Explore the responsibility to examine internal working model that drives our unconscious
- How we justify and rationalize our social influences to create a comfortable bubble
- Begin to normalize uncomfortable conversations,
- Exploring unexamined beliefs that support our core values
- How interested are you in transforming systems (to function at a higher level)

**“Bringing about peaceful change begins with working on our own mindsets”-Marshall B. Rosenberg, Ph.D.**

# Expectations of This Space

- Be aware of your internal state, including body sensations, thoughts, feelings
- Acknowledge responsibility for personal decisions, emotions without deflecting responsibility to others
- Stay connected to your feelings, stay curious, while in the midst of a “hot” emotional field
- Willingness to examine one’s defensiveness, rationalizations, justifications
- Speak your truth using “I statements”
- Stay open, accessible and curious about what is being said and your reactions to what is being said
- Expect Non-Closure
- You may experience deep emotions- take care of yourself
- Be willing to make mistakes
- Expect to feel uncomfortable- **Transformation means growth and growth is painful**

**“Most people do not listen with the intent to understand; they listen with the intent to reply”-Stephen Covey**

# Outline

## Personal Awareness

- Deep personal reflections
- You and your interconnected systems
- Unexamined beliefs that support your core values

## Social Awareness

- Interconnected system supported by Social influences that shape your core values
- Conscious intentions, unconscious impact

## Systemic Awareness

- Invested in a system that serves you
- Are you interested in transforming that system

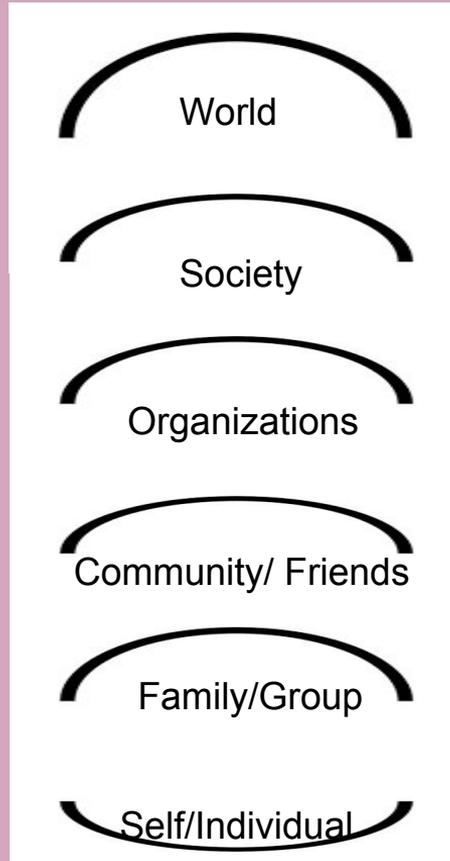
## Vocabulary List

- **Implicit Bias**-the attitudes or stereotypes that affect our understanding, actions, and decisions in an unconscious manner. (Invisible) Causes us to have feelings and attitudes about other people based on characteristics such as race
- **Explicit Bias**- attitudes and beliefs we have about people on a conscious level. (Visible)
- **Non-Judgemental Listening**- not judging on the bases of personal standards: beliefs, values and morals.
- **Cognitive Dissonance**- feelings of discomfort that result from holding two conflicting beliefs. There is inconsistency between beliefs and behaviors. An individual will change their beliefs to match their behavior when there is a mismatch. This reduces the tension created by the initial inconsistency.
- **Confirmation Bias**- (myside bias) searching for information that confirms preexisting beliefs. Selective information gathering of evidence that supports what you already believe while ignoring or rejecting evidence that supports a different conclusion.
- **Power**- power is the ability to define reality and to convince other people that it is their definition. Power is the capacity to act, the ability to enforce decisions, set standards.
- **Learned Helplessness**-when people come to believe that the events and outcomes in their lives are mostly uncontrollable.
- **Agreement Reality**-(consensus reality) if a group believes or agrees that this is the reality, it does not have to be true
- **White Supremacy Culture**-historically constructed culture which justifies white controlled institutions or systems
- **Cultural Racism**-uses cultural difference to overtly/covertly assign value and normalize whiteness to rationalize the unequal status and degrading treatment of people of color
- **Paradigm**-a conditioned way of looking at things
- **Microaggressions**-a comment or action that subtly and often unconsciously and unintentionally expresses a prejudice attitude toward a member of a marginalized group. Slight often unintended discriminatory comments or behavior.

# Influences

All of our programming is given to us by authority figures and the information becomes your belief system over time.

All of these influences come with a set of beliefs, ideas, biases and prejudgements that influence our core beliefs.



# Core Values- Assessing Your Story

- Identity- who you are
- Your values reflect what is important to you
- Your values motivate you and together with your beliefs, they are factors that drive your decision making
- Are you in alignment with your values
- How do you rationalize responsibility and/or accountability
- When you are aware of your values, you have a deeper understanding of how they influence you and you begin to consider areas for future development
- When you feel uncomfortable in situations, how do you respond?

# Activities

## 1. What Pushes Your Buttons?

- Think about what's at the core, what value is at the core

**When we are under stress, we tend to revert to old ways of acting.”- Fritjof Capra**

## 2. Thinking outside the box: 9-dots (Draw 4 lines without lifting your pen off the paper and connect every dot. Do not draw over an existing line)

- We are all socialized to think/act a certain way
- How do you show up as an advocate for transformation
- What are some ways that constrict you in doing your job? (policy, \$, tired etc)
- Possibly results of out of the box thinking?(compassion, common sense)

# Personal Awareness

Reflective/contemplative process

Influences- internalized expectations, biases, judgements and prejudices

FOO,COO, ROO, Media: TV, News, magazines-**Socialization**

(We gather information from individual experiences and link it to our perceptions, expectations, pain, anxiety.

Rigid patterns ingrained: all of which becomes our reactivity)

**Mental Habits-** lens through which we see and interpret our world

- Habitual state of mind
- Defines our basic view of the world and of others
- We are often unaware of our mental habits
- They are unconscious and go unexamined
- We are driven by them and most times limited by them
- Impacts our ability to understand and respond different from our programming

**Impact of Mental Habits-** status quo (agreement reality-the way we perceive a culture or group of people)

- Selective perception: seeing things only one way, while discounting all evidence of the contrary
- Overgeneralizing-taking a single event and using it to describe/predict patterns (always/never)
- Mind reading- attributing the worse motives/intentions to another to explain why they have done something
- Jumping to conclusions-concluding the worst beliefs are valid
- Exaggerations- trivial fact are blown out of proportion
- Idealization-believing things “should” be a certain way, everything short of that is wrong/bad
- Personalization- taking things personally

# Paradigm Shift

- We build our lives based on information we have been given
- From this information, we *create* our own reality
- Where did this information come from
- How do we know what we know?
- When something makes you uncomfortable, how do you respond?
- Flight, Fight, Freeze or Face

**“We know we cannot live in the past but the past lives in us.”-Charles Perkins, Aboriginal Activist**

# Social Awareness

## **Interpersonal Skills (relationships with people)**

**Emotions**-ability to recognize own/others

**Self-Regulation**-consistent with deepest values

**Motivation**-reasons you act in a particular way (what is the payoff for you)

**Empathy**- the feeling that you understand and share others experience/emotions  
(don't have to understand exact situation to be empathetic- sorrow, grief is universal)

**Social Skills**-skills you use to communicate: verbal/non-verbal

**How do you respond to crisis: fear, anger, frustration, rage, silence, aggression?**

**How much of the meaning you make of what happened is rooted in past assumptions and thoughts?**

**What does what happened say about you?**

**“There is no way to change the status quo without discomforting those who are comfortable with the status quo.”-Adam Kahane**

# Systemic Awareness

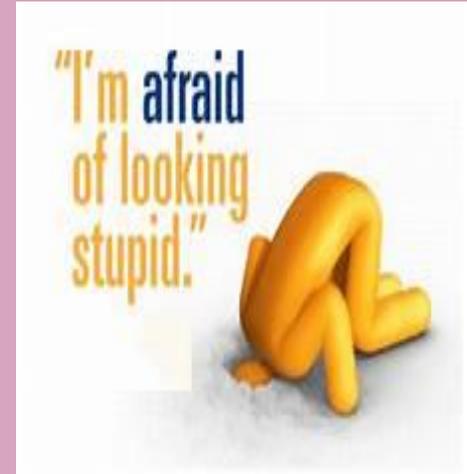
## **Ownership and willingness to transform-**(systems are setup to target individuals not institutions)

- How are your actions, language, biases, inactions, supporting the current system?
- Are your biases getting in the way of shifting the paradigm, transforming the system. How do your biases show up in the stories you tell?
- Everyone in the system has to consciously/unconsciously agree to support the system for it to continue.
- You will not be able to transform the current system with the same tools used to create it: apathy, silence, judgements, biases, etc.
- How much are you willing to invest in transformation. In other words, you will have to put some skin in the game.

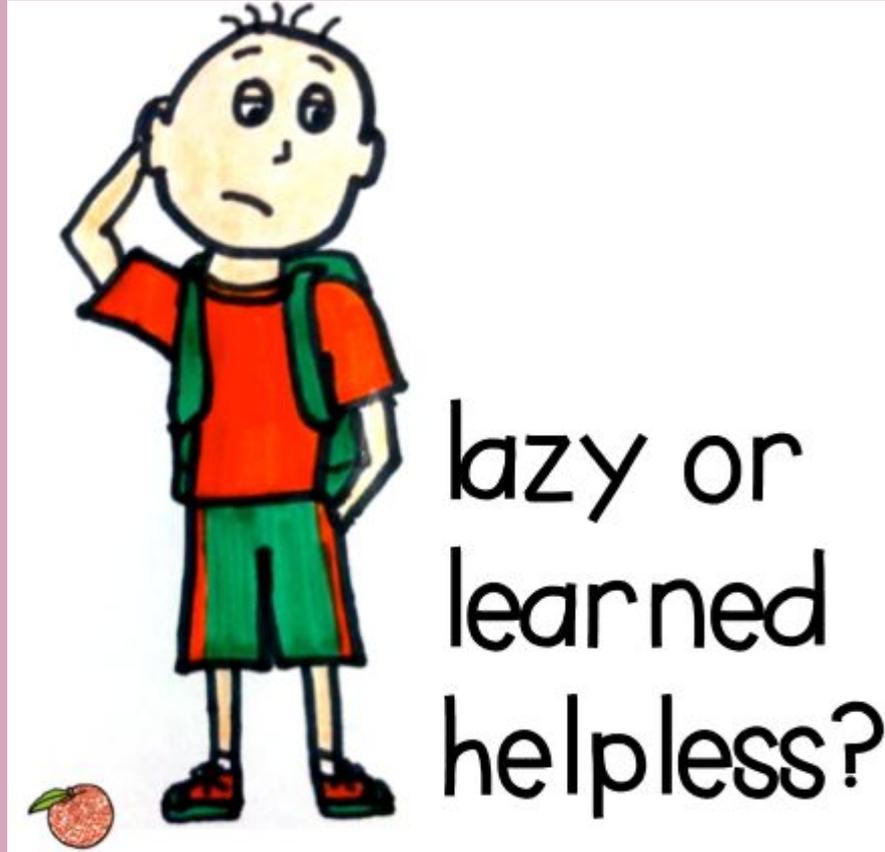
## **Examples:**

- Assessment Process
- Individual Education Program/Plan
- Special Education-who's there and the justification for them being there (behavior)
- Disproportionate Disciplinary actions,
- Language choices (you communication choices)(have you solicited feedback on your style)

**“Feeling threatened can easily lead to feelings of anger and hostility and from there to outright aggressive behavior, driven by deep instincts to protect your position and maintain your sense of things being under control.” Jon Kabat-Zinn, Ph.D**



# What Meaning Do You Make of What You See?



# Psychological Effects of Trauma

- Overwhelming sense of terror
- Helpless and isolated
- Erosion of community, peace and safety
- Preoccupied with survival
- Family- how do you define family

## Examples:

School to Prison Pipeline

Bullying (School & Workplace)

Immigration

Microaggressions

Gentrification

White Fear

LGBTQ Community

Policies & Procedures



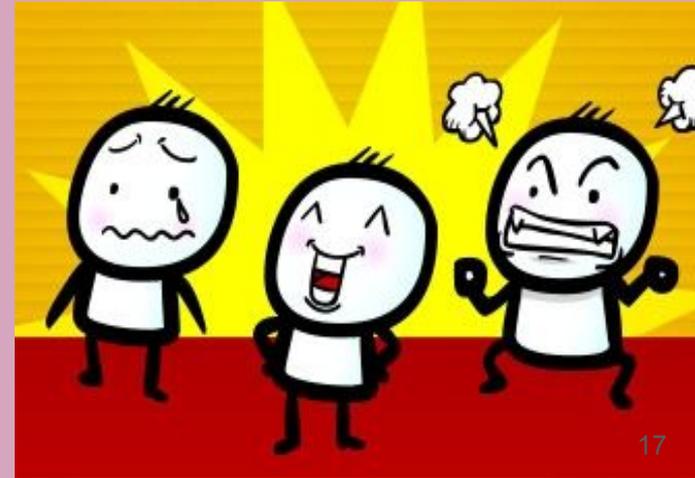
# Physiological Effects of Trauma

- Anxiety and hypervigilance make it difficult to concentrate
- Unresponsive and disconnected from themselves and others
- Live in a state of constant fear, ready to defend or protect themselves



# Cognitive Effect of Trauma on Youth

- May have difficulty understanding and following rules
- Youth of trauma often fail to develop a framework for learning
- Unable to explain the reasons behind emotional outbursts
- Threats and high stress inhibit learning
- Threats throw brain into survival mode



# Consequences of Unresolved Trauma

- Being misdiagnosed: ADHD, ADD, DD
- Demonized for aggressive behavior without the full picture
- IEP- follows you throughout your school life
- Special Education-segregated educational setting (lower standards/expectations)
- Lifelong negative effects of misdiagnoses: negative self image, despair
- Repressed rage with no appropriate outlet, without being demonized or criminalized
- Loss of hope
- Negative self image of self and others that look like you

# Creating Trauma-Sensitive Responses

- Understand the reality of their lives
- Acknowledge that such violence exists
- Children need to know that teachers, administrators, caregivers can keep them safe
- Surround children with teams of caring non-judgemental competent adults
- Create a non-punitive learning environment
- Be consistent
- Keep your word
- If you make a mistake, admit it
- Be a positive role model for the students
- Be aware of your inner self, the one you think no one sees.

# 5- Bold Steps/ Practical Tools

Activity- Create 5 Bold Steps In Relation to:

- How will you identify and address patterns rooted in explicit and implicit biases?  
Fixed, fastened, attached, firmly implanted and or rigid behavior?
- What are the steps you will take to get clear about your commitment to examining your internal working model?
- How will you address the cognitive dissonance in your classroom/organization/family?
- What steps are you willing to take to build more positive connections?
- What are some new possibilities of thinking outside the box?

# Stages of Grief and Loss

**Denial**-this first reaction is to deny the reality of the situation. It is a reaction to rationalize overwhelming emotions. It is a defense mechanism that buffers the immediate shock. We block out the words and hide from the facts.

**Anger**- the intense emotion is deflected from our vulnerable core, redirected and expressed instead of anger. Emotionally we may resent the person for causing us pain. We feel guilty for being angry, and this makes us angrier.

**Bargaining**- the reaction to feelings of helplessness and vulnerability is often a need to regain control. Redirecting the conversation is a form of bargaining and denial. Ex: yes that happens but what about this. (Global view, intellectualizing, sexism, etc.)

**Depression**- types of depression:

- The first might be sadness, regret, shame and/or guilt
- The second is our quiet preparation to separate ourselves from the person or thing causing grief/discomfort (facilitator)
- The third is to separate yourself from the group you perceive to be “racist/bad”, (family, friends, co-workers).

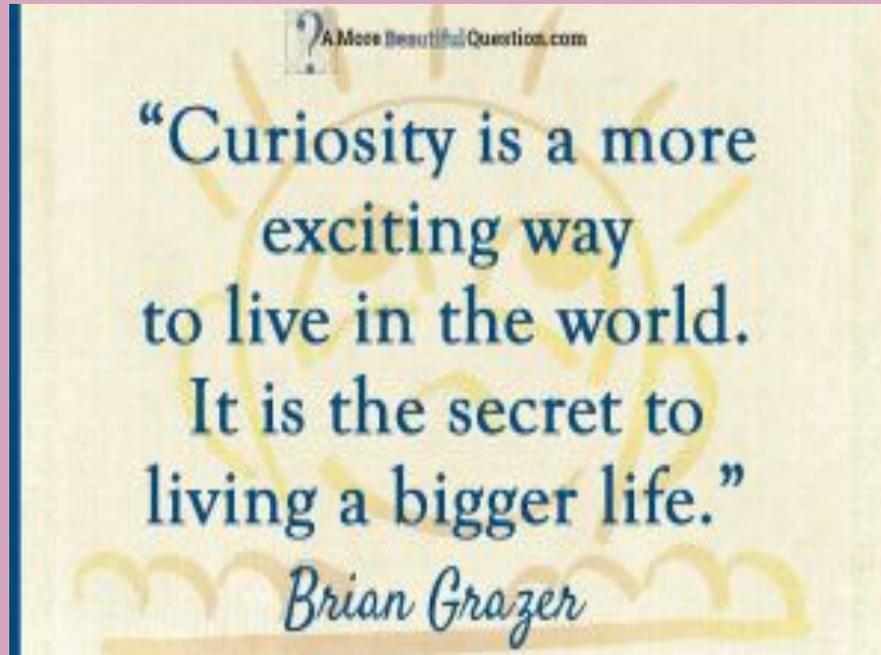
**Acceptance**-Now What/Action

# Homework

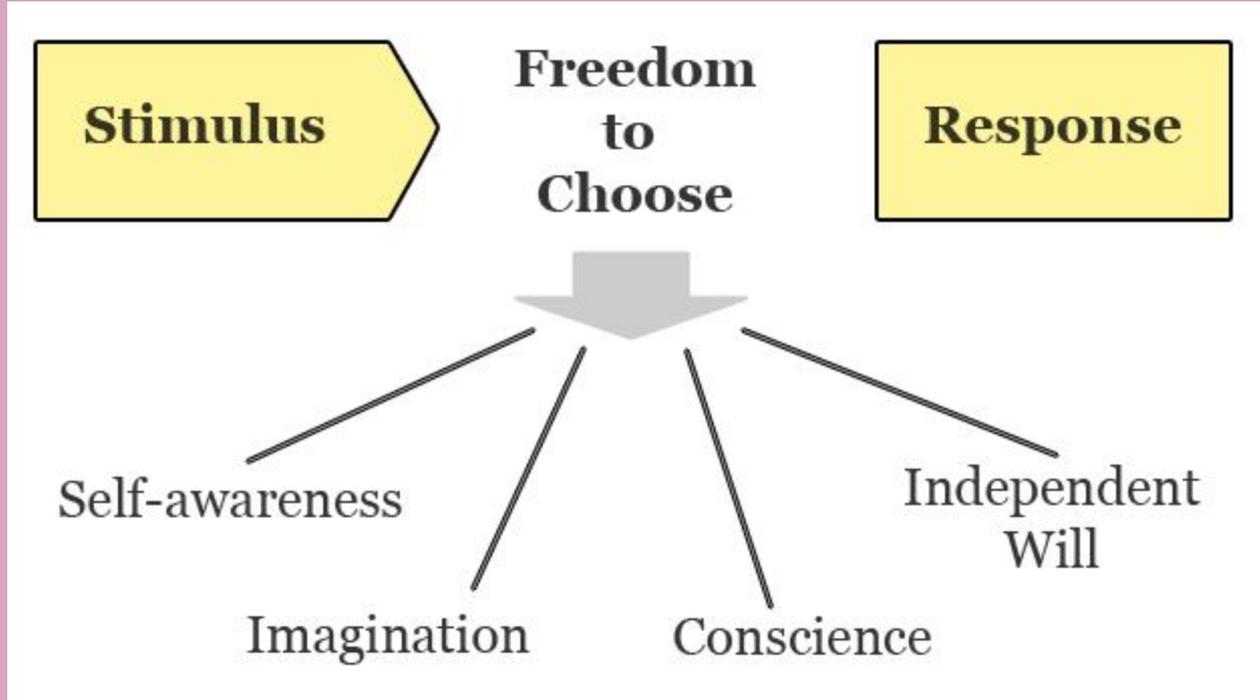
The House I Grew Up In vs. The House I Live In Now.

Now envision the house of the future.

# Building Positive, Meaningful Connections



# Freedom to Choose



# Freedom to Choose Diagram Explained

## Dr. Stephen Covey-7 Habits of Highly Successful People

- **Self-Awareness:** biases, preferences, judgements, knowing who you are, recognizing your feelings., be clear about your values and whether or not you are imposing them on others.
- **Imagination:** thought process, thinking outside the box
- **Conscience:** triggers, blind spots. Cognitive dissonance-feelings of discomfort (holding conflicting beliefs)
- **Independent Will:** choice. The courage to choose a different path

# Sample Letter

Hi,

Today, Ronnie (not real name) was at lunch and although he did not have cheese in his lunch he was witnessed by our adult lunch room supervisor playing with some cheese from another student's lunch. Then right after lunch a fifth grade boy--a very honest and credible student--reported that Ronnie and another boy were throwing the exact same color and kind of cheese that he was seen playing with in the lunchroom, into the toilet and plugging the toilet.

When I asked Ronnie about it he completely denied doing anything wrong in the bathroom.

I am so disappointed that Ronnie did not tell me the truth and I am worried that this is his attitude when caught committing an infraction. I need to have consequences for this and with field day coming up I am considering him missing part of the field trip.

Can you please talk to Ronnie tonight and let him know that lying about something is a far greater infraction than the original poor choice with the bathroom. He can come tomorrow and talk to me. Please let me know if you have questions.

Interim Principal

Elementary School