

WORKSHEET 1

Do you ever say any of the following?

- I'm never going to be able to do that
- I'm a real mess
- I'm useless
- People only care about themselves
- I don't trust anyone
- You're so wrapped up in yourself
- The world is a mess
- Life is just one struggle after another
- My life will never change
- How will I cope tomorrow
- My parents never loved me
- I hated school
- My past is to blame for the way I am

What do all these messages have in common?

NEGATIVE MESSAGES

Explain how, in each case, the person is dwelling on negative thoughts about:

- Him/herself
- Others
- The world in general
- The future
- The past

We all want to feel secure and well thought of. Therefore, by voicing these negative thoughts, we are protecting ourselves from our own expectations and the expectations of others.

Ask the group to imagine they have an important exam tomorrow. Flipchart the following expressions and ask them what is the most likely expression they will use?

1. I'm dreading the exam tomorrow.
2. I know I'll fail.
3. I wish I didn't have to do it.
4. Why didn't I study more when I had the chance?
5. I'll do my best tomorrow.
6. I am really looking forward to the exam.

Many of us may say numbers 1, 2, 3 or 4. Some of us may say number 5. Not many of us will say number 6. Numbers 1-4 are ways of protecting ourselves from the possibility of failure. If we expect to do badly we will not be disappointed. Whereas if we assume we will do well, we may be setting ourselves up for a disappointment. Number 5 is a positive and realistic attitude. What of number 6? If anyone feels this way about exams - congratulations! Now give out **WORKSHEET 2**.

WORKSHEET 2

Many of us feel the need to protect ourselves from what we view as an emotionally threatening situation. We can do this by expressing our dislike or dread of the situation to ourselves or others. In this way we are projecting our emotional insecurities onto the situation itself. We are thereby avoiding facing our own low self-esteem.

What could you say to protect yourself from the following?

- An important exam tomorrow
 - ⇒ I hope tomorrow never comes
 - ⇒ I know I'll fail
 - ⇒ I'm really dreading that exam

- An important job interview
 - ⇒ I probably won't get the job
 - ⇒ I don't care whether I get the job or not
 - ⇒ It may not be my sort of thing

- First day at a new job
 - ⇒ I wish I didn't have to go tomorrow
 - ⇒ I'll see how I like it - I don't have to stay
 - ⇒ I'm really dreading it

DEALING WITH FEAR

What is fear? Explain that fear stops us from trying new things. Give out **WORKSHEET 3**. Can they think of any words to describe fear? Can they think of words to fill in the blanks? Help them fill in the blanks and flipchart the answers as shown on **FLIPCHART 1**.

Now relate your own personal experience of overcoming fear. This should be related to 'fear by association'. For example, "I was afraid to do because of this/that experience". Explain exactly how you felt and what you were fearful of. Show how you managed to overcome this fear. When you have finished the story ask the following:

1. What was I fearful of?
2. Was my fear real or imagined?
3. Would you have felt the same way in those circumstances?
4. Could I have dealt with it more effectively?
5. How would you have dealt with it?

Explain how fear is a personal thing. What fills one person with dread can have no effect on another person.

FEAR AND ENTHUSIASM

Give out **WORKSHEET 4**. Look at the quotes at the top of the sheet. Ask the group what they think is meant by them. Lead a discussion on this. Do they think that fear holds them back from doing the things that they really want to do?

Read out the two definitions of fear. Now ask the group to fill in **WORKSHEET 4**. First they must write how they feel when they are afraid. Then they must fill in how they feel when they are enthusiastic about something. Ask the candidates if they notice anything. Why do they think this is? Explain how they can use fear in a positive way. We have the same feelings when we are afraid and when we are excited. We can therefore use our fears in a positive way to benefit ourselves.