

How to Deal When Your Middle Name Is Stress

Real Teens Real Advice

“This book is truly an inspirational – never leave your house without it – treasure.”

Senior

“This book is great for teens especially those making big changes and big decision in their lives. It’s also great for younger and older people. No matter what your age, it is never too early or too late to begin applying these strategies to your own life.”

Senior

“I just devoured your book from cover to cover! I was so thrilled to get your booklet this morning. I just finished reading all of it---just wonder-filled! Thank you so much.”

Teacher, Middle School

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Strategies for Success II Classes

Mt. Hope High School

Bristol, Rhode Island

Forward

The stories in this book were written by the students of *Strategies for Success I and II* at Mt. Hope High School. A shorter version was written last semester for an eighth grade team at the middle school in order to help them while there and when they would come to the high school. The students of the *Strategies for Success* classes learned some of the strategies and techniques used by some of the world's most successful people. They wrote these short stories to share how they used their knowledge in dealing with the many situations that teens find themselves in.

The students in the *Strategies for Success II* classes recently completed "The 45 Day Challenge for Young Leaders". They compiled the stories in this book as a fundraiser to pay for the over 40 students who took "The Challenge". Their goal was to raise money in a way that would give back to the community and help fellow teens.

We hope you enjoy our book!

Introduction

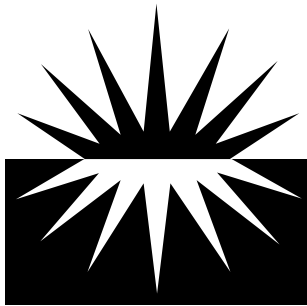
In the world today, there will be times where our abilities, potential, and our character will be tested. Each day we face small moments, when the schedule is too hectic or the coffee is all over our lap. Over the years, our most human strength is tested by death, tragedy, grief, betrayal, and illness. The key to handling what life sends our way lies within learning the tools to tackle both ends of this scale.

Stresses of each day, and those that change our lives can pose an overwhelming threat if left unmanaged. However, most of us who are brought down by the events in our lives are unaware of the simple honest tools we have within ourselves to cope. Although the world may rush by us, where we focus is where we find ourselves in time. Often times simply changing our language changes our greatest negative perceptions. What we 'want' and what we 'will achieve' can be the difference between failure and supreme achievement.

We tend to make our negative language and habits acceptable until they become our worst anxieties. Eliminating the unconstructive aspects in our lives and strengthening the optimistic ones is the greatest boundary we can break through. Taking away the

negative habits and attitudes leaves a fresh foundation to build a life in which self control and happiness are common occurrences.

This book which is dedicated to sharing and educating, strives to inspire us all to move in a more positive direction. In time we may discover that our most harmful inner walls can often best be broken down by our own minds. How to Deal When Your Middle Name Is Stress is a collection of stories that encompass growth and dedication to bring alive the desire to move toward a better life.



The power of **BREATHING**

The Strategy

Deep breathing can be a very useful tool. Of all the strategies offered in *Strategies for Success*, this is the one most used and therefore by far the most popular. Because of that, you will find more stories on this topic than any other.

Deep breathing techniques are used in many situations. Often the first suggestion to a distressed person is to breathe. Singers and musicians breathe deeply from the diaphragm to sustain and support the notes. Athletes often take a deep breath at a critical moment – a pitcher before throwing the baseball, a golfer before swinging the club, a basketball player about to make a shot from the foul line.

There are many benefits from this type of breathing. Here are three of them:

- 1) It brings oxygen to the brain which is useful in decision making, everyday learning and test taking.
- 2) It helps get the lymph system moving which is part of the way our body removes toxins. Deep breathing on a regular basis can help to improve the immune system and keep us healthier.

3) It helps in reducing stress. Deep breathing turns our focus to counting our breaths and away from the cause of the stress.

The Procedure

Breathe in a ratio of 1:4:2. We usually start off breathing in through the nose for a count of 5, hold our breath for a count of 20 and breathe out through the mouth for a count of 10.

Since many of us tend to breathe in a shallow manner from the upper chest, this method of breathing might make us yawn or feel a bit light headed. If you're uncomfortable when you try it, just go back to your normal breathing.

Give our breathing ratio a try, especially the next time a stressful situation presents itself. You may notice that your attention is temporarily directed away from anger and stress for a few moments. It allows you the time to think before saying something you might regret later.

The following stories tell how Mt. Hope students have been using the breathing technique.

“Many receive advice. Only the wise profit by it.”

Stolen Car

I needed to use some strategies not too long ago. I used the breathing ratio to keep myself under control when my car was stolen from the student parking lot. I was very worried about my car but thanks to the breathing strategy, I got through the day.



Luckily, the police found my car later the same day and there was no damage done to it. It was very important that I didn't flip out because that would have made the day much worse.

Senior, Strategies for Success

The Race

I've learned a lot of strategies but the one that's been the most useful by far is the breathing ratio. It was a less than nice morning the Saturday that I had my one mile race. I was racing a new distance against a freshman who was new to the team. He was being hyped up and we all looked forward to a close race.



It started drizzling before the race started and it was a little windy too. I used the breathing strategy before the race began to clear my mind and to help me focus on the race ahead since I knew I had good competition. I ended up running a 5:05 mile, beat the new freshman and became the first from our school to win the one mile race in a meet which means I now hold the record.

Freshman, Strategies for Success I

“With positive thoughts you fly with wings as light as a feather.”
Student on Strategies I final exam

The Road Test

I have used the breathing ratio right from the beginning. I find it helps me focus on how I want things to turn out rather than on everything that could go wrong. On the day of my road test, I was really nervous. It was a week that it had snowed nonstop and I wasn't sure if my appointment would be cancelled. In my Mom's Jeep Grand Cherokee, we drove to the place where the test was held anyway

Earlier that week because of the snow and ice, my mother had skidded into a pole and had broken the tail light. Between the weather and the broken tail light, I wasn't sure I was even going to be able to take the test. When I got there a man came to my window and said he would be right back. I had the chance to breathe. Although I had been nervous, I calmed right down.

The driving examiner made me very comfortable during the test and I passed! I'm very excited that I got my license and it was thanks to the breathing ratio!

Senior, Strategies for Success II

“It’s a funny thing about life. If you refuse to accept anything but the best, you very often get it.” Somerset Maugham

You Almost Hit My Car!

I was driving when a car from a dead end street pulled out in front of me. The driver didn’t look both ways and didn’t stop at his stop sign. The car stopped in the middle of the road and I almost hit it. I could have gotten badly hurt because not only was the car there but also there was a telephone pole right next to me.



I was so stressed after the incident that I drove to the park near the water and breathed. I did this several times before I got back on the road again. I find that I use this strategy the most because with it I have less stress which makes my life easier.

Junior, Strategies for Success

“Everyone is a winner. Some are disguised as losers. Don’t let their appearances fool you.”
Ken Blanchard

My First Day of High School

My first day of freshman year...wow! My heart pounded. I was sweating and my hair was a mess because of the rain. My day was already horrible. All the freshmen were instructed to go to the auditorium. As if we weren’t stressed enough, one of the staff members came in and started talking to us about high school. She made it seem like the next four years were going to be the worst experience of my life. It felt as if she had taken two tons of bricks and dropped them on my shoulder. I really wish I had known some strategies then.



The strategy I would have used was to breathe. Whenever you are in a situation that is unsettling or really stressful, all you have to do is breathe. It calms you down and

clears your head. You are bringing much needed oxygen to the brain. I am constantly using this method. It is a life saver!

Junior, Strategies for Success I and II

“The best things in life aren’t things.”

The Driving Test

It was March 19, 2004. I couldn’t have been more excited or nervous. That was the day I was going to take my driver’s test. As we pulled up to the spot, my dad got out of the car and the woman who was giving me my test got in.

“All right” she said, “I need to see your permit, insurance, and car registration.” Okay,” I thought, “It must be in the glove compartment.” I opened the glove compartment and pulled out some papers. I shuffled through them nervously until I found what I needed.



“This has expired,” she said in her Rhode Island accent. I began to panic, but then I remembered, “Breathe”. I began to use the breathing ratio. I immediately began to calm down.

Eventually we got the papers and I got my license!

Sophomore, Strategies for Success I

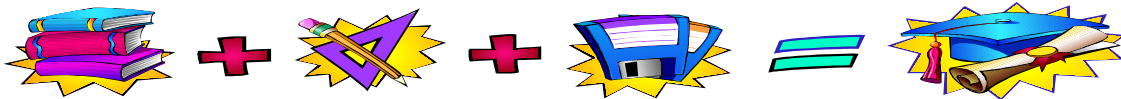
“If you can’t see the bright side, polish the dull side.”

A Classroom Experience

I walked into A139 with a bubble of excitement in my stomach. I could hardly imagine putting myself in a classroom to learn to be successful. Yet my schedule led me right to that room, front row, staring into a big fear.

Throughout that semester I learned more than I saw coming. Different people absorb things so very differently. It's the beauty of variety. The in's and out's of class left me with two deep marks in my life.

One of the best things I learned was the breathing ratio. It wasn't that I didn't understand how to breathe. It was the fact that it was used in the class. A few days after learning the ratio, I had a day filled with stress. My mind ran fast. I stopped to breathe. Breathing made me calm down enough where I could give myself some time. It became a part of my life.



The second thing I learned was my personal learning style (see description of learning styles in the story "Learning Styles and Relationships" in the *Relationship Strategies* chapter). Over time, it became part of me becoming better in many aspects of my life. Knowing myself as being auditory and kinesthetic, I knew how to manage my frustration, my schoolwork, friendships and romance. It helped calm me and helped me know how to deal with a frustrating mother. I knew more how to help myself in school.

Above all else, I learned about "connection". My biggest joy came from having a class to go to where I knew I was safe. It introduced me to a class filled with energy and passion. And let me find some of those things in myself.

Junior, Strategies for Success I

"If I could give you one gift, I would give you the ability to see yourself as I see you so that you could see how truly special you are."

Dealing with Parents

One night my parents made me really upset. I really hate being mad. It doesn't feel good at all. You know the feeling. It isn't fun. While I was in my room, I did the breathing I learned. I did about five or six deep breaths because I needed a lot of calming down. Slow breaths in deeply while counting to five. Hold for a quiet twenty counts and let it out for ten. It really worked.



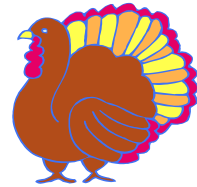
My anger wasn't completely gone but it went down to a really low level. I could actually think straight and focus on other things. It feels good when you have control over the way you feel. Breathing is really good...and smiling helps!

Senior, Strategies for Success I

Thanksgiving

This past Thanksgiving, I ran late as usual and my father who must always be on time got very annoyed. While I tried to finish getting ready in the car on the way to dinner, I got make up all over my blouse. Instead of getting upset, I just sat, closed my eyes and did my breathing.

Afterwards I felt much better and even discovered how great baby wipes are for taking out stains!



Senior, Strategies for Success I

***“Be more concerned with your character than your reputation
because your character is what you really are while your
reputation is merely what others think of you.”***

The Dance Teacher

A year ago this March, one of the women closest to me, my dance teacher, passed away. I didn't know how to handle it. I thought I would never get over it. But then I remembered the breathing exercise. It helps in more ways than you might think. I took a breath and as I did, I thought of all the good things my dance teacher taught me. I started to calm down and see that things were really going to be ok.



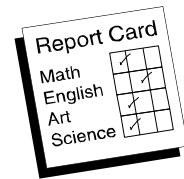
Now, whenever I look back over the years when she was still with us, I no longer get teary. I breathe and feel better. All in all, I've learned that something that seems so simple as breathing could help me through my dark moments. Don't let the simplicity of the breathing exercise escape you. The proof is when you try it because you'll see that it works.

Senior, Strategies for Success II

Test Taking Strategies

I used to hate taking tests. I would study so much the night before but when I went to take the test, I would blank out. I didn't know why but every time I had a test this would happen. Then I learned how to breathe. It's the 1:4:2 ratio. You can use this method when you are stressed out when taking a test.

There is also another thing that can help you when you're taking a test. When you blank out, tell yourself that you will remember the answer in a minute. (Telling yourself that will help you remember what it is your had forgotten). If you tell yourself you can't, then you won't. It really works. I am doing very well on tests now.



Also, if you can't remember, find out where your eyes look when someone asks you a memory question. If you normally look up to the right when you remember, try looking up there when you're stuck.. It worked for me!

Junior, Strategies for Success

THE POWER OF WORDS

*“Watch your thoughts because
they become your words*

*Watch your words because
they become your actions*

*Watch your actions because
become your habits*

*Watch your habits because
they become your character*

*Watch your character because
That becomes your destiny.*

Black Belt

The biggest challenge in my life was the test for my black belt. I had four months to train physically. We also had to train mentally by studying the history of my karate school and writing twenty-two essays.



I did the physical training but held off the mental work. I convinced myself that I couldn't do it, that I didn't have time to write all the essays. I did not tell anyone that I was training. I intended to wait until the next testing. When I did tell them, it was two weeks before the test. My instructors and my friends convinced me I could write all the essays in that short time span, all while doing school, track, jazz band and the physical training of karate.

I changed from saying, "I can't" to saying, "I can". Once I changed that simple word, it changed my attitude and belief. I spent all my time in those two weeks to write more than 120 pages of essay work. I believed and I achieved. I decided I would go on to the three days of my black belt test.

I passed and earned my black belt after eight years of training. All it takes is a decision with a positive attitude. I'm proof that changing one word can change your whole life.

Junior, Strategies for Success II



"The best way to have the last word is to apologize."

How I Quit Smoking

A little over a year ago I randomly began to share a cigarette with my best friend here and there. After a while I was no longer sharing a cigarette, I was asking them for one. I still wasn't smoking half a pack but it wasn't long till I began to buy my own packs. That was when I no longer only smoked socially but by myself, on my own. For a year I smoked until I began to feel awful. I had a terrible cough over a long period of time and most of the time felt just horrible. If you think about the ingredients a cigarette contains, it is truly disgusting,



I decided to quit. I grabbed a pack of gum and told myself, "I quit!!" It's been over a month that I have been smoke-free. I believe it was the power of words that convinced me to not smoke again. When most people try to stop smoking they say, "I'm quitting" which means they're still smoking. Quitting – "ing" means "still". If you say, "I quit", you're done. It means you don't smoke. Also when you say "I quit" you don't confuse your mind; you tell it the truth. I also envisioned myself not smoking and being healthier.

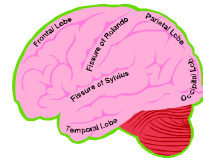
The power of words is what helped me to succeed and can help you. If you want to be smoke-free, remember to say, "I quit"!

Senior, Strategies for Success I and II

"If not now, when? Is today the day? Well is it?"

Test Taking Strategies

I always choked on my history tests and I had one coming up. I studied and studied. When it was time for a test, I usually felt like I forgot everything. But instead of panicking, I remembered a strategy that I had learned. It was one specifically for test taking. The technique was to tell yourself you'll remember the answer to the question in a minute rather than telling yourself that you're going blank or that you don't know.



I used this and the strategy of looking where my memory is stored. When I used these strategies, they worked. I remembered everything I needed. Two days later when I got the test back, I had gotten a 95! I was so happy and now I use those strategies every time I take a test or can't remember something.

Freshman, Strategies for Success I

THE POWER OF QUESTIONS

The Baseball Supper

During baseball season our team came up with the idea to have a macaroni supper for a fundraiser to raise money to help our team. I had a game earlier that day and I got into an argument with the coach. He made me sit on the bench for the rest of the game. I was pretty upset about this and did not want to go to the supper because I didn't want to see the coach.



I decided not to go but then I came to my senses and asked myself the four **Power Questions** (from Tony Robbins - They're called that because they give you power in a situation rather than letting the situation have power over you)

"What's good about this?" I get to eat for free.

"What could be good about this?" I could make up with my coach.

"What can I do to make this good?" I could hang out with my friends and laugh and joke.

"What can I do to make it fun?" I could play a game like hacky sack.

I said to myself, "All right, I will go". I went and didn't see my coach and had a really fun time. I would have missed a fun event if I hadn't thought to ask myself those questions.

Junior, Strategies for Success II

"Learning how to learn is one of life's most important skills."
Tony Buzan

Winter Strategies

This year I have learned how to help myself through things I wouldn't have been able to a year ago. One of the things I've used are the 4 Power Questions.

When we had a snowstorm, my jacket wouldn't zip up so I asked myself, "What's good about this?" I came up with that it's good that at least I have a jacket!"



I used the visualization technique when my mom's car was stuck in the snow in the driveway. Rather than thinking we'd be stuck all day, I visualized her car making it to the top of the driveway in a little while..and it did!

Freshman, Strategies for Success

"We are what we repeatedly do." Aristotle

Getting Through Senior Year

I am now a senior in high school and it just feels like I'm never going to get out of school. Except there's one thing that's different this year. I got to learn some strategies for life. They help me get through the rest of the day knowing something good will come out of this hard work—graduation.

Here's a strategy that might make high school a lot easier. It's called The 4 Power Questions.

- 1) *What's good about this?*
- 2) *What could be good about this?*
- 3) *What can I do to make it better*
- 4) *What can I do to make it fun?*

These are the questions you might ask yourself when you're doing something you're not really interested in. You may not believe it when I say it but asking yourself these questions makes you focus on all the positive things in the activity which makes you more motivated. This feels much better than just complaining about everything. And it makes you stay focused.



These questions have worked for me in many different situations and it's what I keep doing to get through the last couple of months of high school.

Senior, Strategies for Success I and II

“Don't find fault, find a remedy.” Henry Ford

Moving Day

One situation I was in when I would have loved to use a strategy was when I moved here my sophomore year. The strategy I would have used was the four Power Questions. In a sense I did use them. The ones I used were “What's good about this?” and “What could be good about this?” I had to make the decision of where I wanted to go to school and if I wanted to live with my mom here or with my grandfather in my previous town of Portsmouth.



When I finally moved, after the first semester it was getting pretty good. I had finally made some good friends and I started to get comfortable being here. Using these questions helped me through this very tough situation. I am glad I went through it because it will help me get through college.

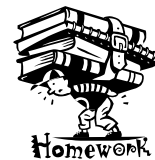
Senior, Strategies for Success I

“If we did all the things we are capable of doing, we would literally astonish ourselves.” Thomas Edison

Hard to Go to School?

Is it hard for you to wake up early in the morning and get to school? We start at 7:15. Just having to be here everyday is hard enough, right?

Nobody knows better than I how hard it is to go to school everyday. I'm in my 5th year of high school, a second time senior. It was just so hard for me to wake up early everyday and get to school. But I've learned strategies that have helped me with my problem. The one I use for this situation is to ask myself the question, “What's good about this?”



Everyday I think what's good about that particular school day. I find something I like about that day and that motivates me to go to school. Rather than being miserable because it's “C” day or “G” day of the schedule, I now have something I like about each day in the cycle. And if I have a day that's not as good as the others, that's the day I plan to meet some friends after school. No matter what day it is, there's already something good about it.

I also have a list of my goals hanging on my wall. One of my goals is to graduate. Every morning when I see that, it motivates me to accomplish that goal.

Senior, Strategies for Success II

“Don't frown. You never know who might be falling in love with your smile.”

The Power Questions and Me

When I find myself in a situation I'm not happy with or about to be in a situation that I'm dreading, I use the power questions. I stop and ask myself the four Power Questions:

- “What’s good about this?”
- “What could be good about this?”
- “What can I do to make it good?”
- “What can I do to make it fun?”

These four questions really help me to dig deep and find the good in people and situations which otherwise would be very difficult to see at first impression.

Senior, Strategies for Success II

“If you want your children to improve, let them overhear the nice things you say about them.” Dr. Haim Ginott

Senior Year

As a senior in high school, this should be the best year of my life. If you ask any senior, most of them will probably say it isn't. We have to make very important decisions as to what we want to be when we get older and where we would like to go to pursue our goals which can be very stressful.

By learning some strategies, I have turned this stressful time in my life into something less stressful. I've learned not to be as much of a procrastinator and also not to stress out over every little thing. I have learned that even though this is a tough part of my life, I can ask myself better questions than most people ask themselves as in, “What’s good about me applying to these colleges?” and “How will it make me a better person?”



I can also ask, “What’s good about this or what could be good?” This is a good question because I will be going somewhere new and meeting lots of new people. I will also be learning more about what I’m going to do when I graduate. I have learned that I can make something negative into something positive.”

Senior, Strategies for Success II

*“Fear less, hope more
Eat less, chew more
Whine less, breathe more
Talk less, say more
Hate less, love more
And all good things will be yours.”
Swedish Proverb*

What Else Could It Mean?

One strategy that is easy to understand is “What else could it mean?” This is the most important thing to think about in my opinion. Throughout your life, you’re going to get people who ignore your instant messages on the computer, don’t call you back, reject your invite to the dance or ignore you in the halls. Automatically what comes to mind? “Oh, he/she is mad at me. What did I do?”

Often we jump to conclusions and make judgments without enough information. With this strategy, you learn to think, “What else could it mean?”

That person who didn’t answer you in the hall? Maybe he or she was late to class and that’s why they seemed to ignore you in the hall. Maybe they were deep in thought and didn’t even see you.



How about that instant message that never got answered? Maybe the person you had IM’ed had walked away from the computer when you instant messaged them. Or maybe their computer froze or someone else was using their screen name.

The point is, whether they reject you for a date or simply forget to return a call, you should open your mind to ALL the possible reasons, not just the negative ones.

“What you say can mean anything, but what you do means everything. Ashleigh Brilliant



RELATIONSHIP Strategies



Significant Other Advice

The question “What else could it mean?” is a question worth keeping in the back of one’s mind, especially in relationships. Being a teenage girl, I know the questions and conflicts that occur in a girl’s mind when she is going through the dating stage. Keeping the question “What else could it mean?” helped me immensely.

Girls, there will be times when you are expecting a call from that certain boy and he may not call that day. Of course one of the first things that comes into your head is “He doesn’t like me” or “He is mad at me.” Before all thoughts run through your head, stop and ask yourself “What else could it mean?” You need to think and really realize it could have nothing to do with you. He could have gotten home late; he could have gotten caught up at work. The possibilities could go on.



Many situations may arise in your relationship but always keep “What else could it mean?” with you before you jump to conclusions. Just think of this question the next time he doesn’t call, when he doesn’t show up to your soccer game, when he seems to not be feeling well and seems to be mad at you. When he decides to go out with the guys instead of you, or even if he doesn’t say or show appreciation for something you have done for him, ask yourself, “What else it could mean?” before you get upset and jump to conclusions. The best idea is to ask him and, of course, if it happens way too much...it’s time to talk it out and perhaps make some changes.

The same advice goes for you guys!

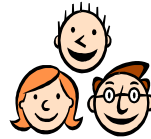
Senior, Strategies for Success II

“Keep company with those who make you better.” English saying

Getting Along With My Parents

The Strategies for Success classes have taught me so much about life. I have learned how to manage money, to be a better person, and most importantly, to control my anger.

Before I took this class, I got so mad and yelled and screamed at my parents for no reason. While taking the class I have learned strategies that are supposed to help me with my behavior, like breathing and thinking before speaking. The strategies worked. I have had fewer arguments with my parents. Now I have a wonderful relationship with them. I have never felt better.



Sophomore, Strategies for Success II

“Remember – every minute spent angry is sixty seconds of wasted happiness.”

I Believe I Deserve Better

At the beginning of this year, I had just broken up with my boyfriend who used to do drugs. I thought I was nothing because that's how he made me feel. I thought I would never find anyone to love me or treat me better than he did.

Then I began to use some of the strategies I learned in class. I learned how to believe in myself and how to set goals for what I wanted for my life. Most people focus on what they don't want in life and that's what they get more of. I began to think about what I wanted for my life and some good changes are beginning to happen for me.

I used to think, “Yeah right, I’m nothing. No one will ever love me or treat me right. No one wants to be with me. I’m ugly.” With my new beliefs and visions, someone new came into my life – the best guy I’ve ever met. He treats me great, tells me he loves me and means it. He thinks I’m so beautiful. I’ve always wanted someone to love me and care about me and now I’ve found him.

Junior, Strategies for Success I

***“Keep away from people who belittle your ambitions.
Small people always do that but the truly great make you feel
that you too can become great.”
Mark Twain***

Learning Styles and Relationships

One of the things we were taught in our class was that humans have many learning styles. It’s how we learn each other’s cell phone numbers. It’s how we learn to use our laptop computers and it’s how we learn the subjects in school. And what’s even more amazing is that it’s how we relate to each other in relationships.

There are many learning styles. The three most talked about are visual, auditory, and kinesthetic. Visual learners learn by seeing, so that means pictures, reading and writing. Auditory learners need to hear to learn best so they like to talk and listen. Lastly, kinesthetics need to “do” things to learn. For example, if you need to learn about animals and are kinesthetic your best bet is to actually go the zoo and interact with the animals as much as possible.



This knowledge applies not only to the classroom but in life situations as well. Let me give you an example. Your boyfriend keeps giving you notes that say “I love you.” You think, “Aw, that’s sweet but, I know because he shows me all the time.” You tell him that you love him, too, but he doesn’t seem to get it because he never gets a note back from you. Most likely, he’s visual. He wants to see evidence that you love him. You need to show him with a card or maybe doing something for him that he can see. If you’re happy with just hearing someone loves you, then you’re probably auditory and hearing him say “I love you” is enough.

In the beginning of relationships, we do all three learning styles. We tell the person we care, we show them and we touch them. But after a while, we tend to use more of what we are and often the other person feels that you don’t care as much. To

make them feel loved, we would probably be better to try to use more of the other person's learning style.

. Now, you're probably thinking, "How am I supposed to know if I am visual, auditory, or kinesthetic?" Well, there are many books out there with tests in them. We used a book called "*Connections*". There are online tests as well. If you do not have access to any of these, just observe yourself the next time you need to remember a phone number. If someone just tells you the number, do you remember it? Do you write it down and re-read it? Or do you have to actually punch the numbers into the phone?

Once you know your learning style, it is easier to learn, remember things and even pick up on other people's learning styles. And it definitely makes for better relationships!

Senior, Strategies for Success II

A Valentine's Day Surprise

It was the day before Valentine's Day and I was planning to go to my boyfriend's house after school. When I got there no one was home. I started to think negative thoughts about where he was when "What else could it mean?" popped into my head. By thinking about that question, I really didn't get upset.



I went on with my day and acted as if everything was ok. When my boyfriend got home, he called me. I asked him where he was earlier in the day and it turns out he was out getting me something for Valentine's Day. I was happy to know that I had a strategy that helped me not to be upset. And I was even happier to know that he had gotten me something for Valentine's Day!

Sophomore, Strategies for Success I

"No one can make you feel inferior without your consent."
Eleanor Roosevelt



How to Get Along With My Boyfriend

I used to fight with my boyfriend all the time and now that I have some knowledge of strategies for life I don't. I am so happy now. We haven't fought in 3 months. It has changed my life because now I'm so confident about myself

I'm really glad I had the opportunity to learn these strategies because if I hadn't I would have lost my first love.



Sophomore, Strategies for Success I

“Love yourself first and everything else falls into place.”

Lucille Ball

My Boyfriend's Late!

During vacation my boyfriend worked a lot. He would come over before he had to go to work and then come back over when he got out of work. On Saturday, he was supposed to come over again. I had planned that he and I go out to dinner with my parents. He thought I had gone out with my sister and because of that, he didn't show up at the time I expected him. He also had lost his cell phone.



My parent's were waiting for us to arrive at a restaurant about 30 minutes away. I waited for my boyfriend for about 40 minutes but it felt like forever. I kept saying, "What's good about this?" By asking myself this question, I got some reasons that I was glad he was late. It would give him less time to get the third degree when he would meet my dad, I had a little more time to cool off and a little more time to search for his cell phone.

Luckily, I found the phone, cooled off and my dad didn't bust on my boyfriend because he didn't have as much time. I guess now that I look at it, it was my fault because my boyfriend didn't even know that he was meeting my parents. The good news for me is that I had a simple but awesome strategy to get me through the waiting process.

Sophomore, Strategies for Success I

“I’m grateful for all my problems. As each of them was overcome, I became stronger and more able to meet those yet to come. I grew on my difficulties.”

J. C. Penney

Getting Along With My Boyfriend

What I’ve learned has helped me when I was arguing with my boyfriend. I wanted to stop fighting over the littlest things. The fights were mostly my fault, flipping out over the dumbest things and making them seem bigger than they really were.

I’ve learned now to relieve my stress and frustration. When I’m about to argue, I think before I act, breathe and say something positive instead of negative. By switching things around I avoid conflict and headaches. Now my boyfriend and I hardly fight and are having a much better relationship.

At first I thought these techniques were crazy and wouldn’t work. They sounded too simple. Then I figured it was worth a shot and it wouldn’t hurt me to try. Now that I found out that these methods work, I use them all the time and I’m much happier now.

Sophomore, Strategies for Success II

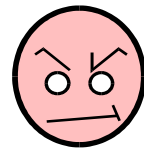
Getting Along with your Parents

I think that it is better to have a positive attitude than a bad one. I was not getting along with my parents for a while and I was a big brat to them, but only to them. I was nice to everyone else I talked to or spent time with.

The strategies I learned in class made me realize I was not being fair to my parents. They do everything and anything possible for me and they deserve to be treated with love and respect.

I now get along with them and our relationship with each other is great.

Sophomore, Strategies for Success II



Losing a Loved One

Has anyone lost a loved one? I know I have more than once. At first I didn't know what to do. Then I remembered some of the things I had learned.

I had lost my great-grandmother when I was in fifth grade. I didn't know how to get over it. It took me actually three years to get back to my normal self. It hit me hard. I slacked off in school and I pretty much kept to myself.

As a junior I took *Strategies for Success*. It really made a difference. During the year, I lost my great-aunt whom I was also very close to. I thought it was going to be the same situation again, but then I remembered what I had learned. The four Power Questions really helped. (I thought to myself, "What is good about this, what can be good, what can I do to make it good.")

They really helped. I thought quietly to myself about the situation and finally found some good in it. Thinking positively can honestly make a positive situation out of a negative one.

Junior, Strategies for Success II

"When it's dark enough you can see the stars."

Dealing with my Girlfriend

The other day I planned to have my girlfriend, her friend and my other friend come over for dinner. I told her a couple of nights in advance but when the night came, she gave me the classic, "Um, um, I don't know if I can."

I said, "If you can't come, just say it, I don't care." But I really did. I was so PO'ed I wanted to put my fist through a wall but instead I went downstairs, started breathing, then turned on the radio and chilled.



I called up my girlfriend and went to see her. I was still a little upset so I did a lot of breathing that night.

Senior, Strategies for Success I

The Break Up

My boyfriend had just broken up with me because he had to go home to New York. It was due to financial issues, which meant that the other people living with him (who are my friends) would have to go back to their homes as well. I was crushed emotionally. To make things worse, I had found out my now ex-boyfriend had lied to me numerous times. That hurt me even more.

I moped around the house for about a week or more, thinking of all the negative things about the situation. I realized at one point that I didn't want to feel how I was feeling. I didn't want to be sad anymore. So I used the four Power Questions.

What's good about this? Well, I won't have to see or come in contact with my ex-boyfriend.

What could be good about this? My friends may be able to come back to Rhode Island after saving some money.

What can I do to make it good? I can go visit them by taking a bus or having my other friends or parents bring me.

What can I do to make it fun? I can write letters, talk to them on the phone or over the computers.

After answering those questions, I felt better. On top of that I pictured myself being happy and doing well in school, because my school work had suffered from partying at my friend's house. Here I am now, doing much better emotionally and I'm passing all of my classes.

Senior, Strategies for Success II

My Little Sister

When you feel yourself getting aggravated at someone, just stop, think and breathe. For example, there was one time that I was fighting with my younger sister. She got me so upset that I wanted to blow up. But all I did was stop, think about what I was doing, and breathed. I felt better as soon as I was done breathing. It really works!

Sophomore, Strategies for Success I

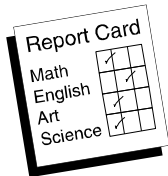
Creating a Positive Vision for your Life — Goal Setting

Senior Grades

Since that this is my senior year I wanted to do exceptionally well on my report card. I finished first quarter with grades in the high 80's and low 90's. When the second quarter was finished I was once again proud especially since I raised all my grades by two points. It may not be much but I didn't drop as some others did.



Senioritis is a disease that hits many seniors. Some students are known to stop trying and stop working in the third quarter which results in low grades. Since I was aware of this and wanted to keep my averages I continued to work hard. I also used the power of vision to help. To do this I envisioned myself doing exceptionally well and being proud of myself. I continued to work hard so that what I envisioned would come true.



When the third quarter grades arrived, I heard many complaints from my senior peers. When I received my grades, I was ecstatic to see that my grades had lowered just 2 points leaving me where I was first quarter. I was also in shock because this was the first year I did well in the third quarter.

All students should be aware that your high school transcripts may be used years from now when applying for a job. Sounds weird but I think what they really want to see is if you held out and finished well. The person who completed senior year without dropping a lot in their grades may be offered the job before the slacker. It's showing your character. I am now using the power of vision and continuing to work hard to receive the same results for fourth quarter so I can end my senior year successfully.

Senior, Strategies for Success II

“Act as if what you do makes a difference. It does.”

William James

Pulled Over for Speeding

It was April 2004 and I was driving home when I saw flashing lights. As I moved to the right lane, I was thinking about what I was going to do that night with my friends. When I came to a stop, I realized I was getting pulled over. The cop was not trying to pass me.

As he approached my car, I knew it was because I was speeding but I also knew I was only going to get a warning because I wasn't going that fast. I was going with the flow of traffic but I was the weak one of the herd. I was the one that got picked out.

While the police officer was in his car, I visualized myself getting a warning and going on my way. Normally I would have panicked and cried but not with my new strategies. Whether I got a ticket or not, at least I was calm while I sat there and waited.



Oh by the way....I didn't get that ticket!

Senior, Strategies for Success I

Improving My Grades

I wasn't doing too well in school so I thought I'd try a new strategy of picturing myself doing well instead of thinking I would fail. A major thing I pictured was doing well in my history exam. I wasn't doing all that well and wanted to show myself that I could do it if I tried. I put all my effort into it and studied hours the night before the test. As well as studying, I pictured myself doing well.



I was so scared when my teacher began to hand out the tests. Once I received mine, I looked at it and realized that I knew most of the answers off the top of my head. I got it back and received an 88! I was so excited and now I do well on all my tests in that class. I haven't gotten lower than a "B" on any test. Thanks to the new strategies and believing that I could pass if I really wanted to, I have achieved one of my goals!

Sophomore, Strategies for Success II

"Pure and simple, any person who is enjoying life is a success."
William Feather

The Soccer Game

The score was 3-0 and we were losing. It was now the second half of my team's first game in the Jefferson Cup Soccer Tournament. Everyone on the team was filled with doubt. As I was sitting on the sidelines waiting to go in, I told myself, "When you go in you have to score a goal." I pictured the ball going into the back of the net. Repeatedly I kept telling myself, "You have to score" and the thought of me kicking the ball into the back of the net kept going through my head.



The coach called my name to go. "It's time!" I told myself. Just three minutes into playing I got a beautiful ball played to me. I was on a breakaway! It was just me and the goalie. "You have to score", I heard in my head. I took another touch and I watched as the ball was released from my foot and went steadily into the back of the net. It was the only goal scored for our team that game.

Freshman, Strategies for Success II



"You have to think anyway so why not think big?"

Donald Trump

Winning the DECA Competition

My best friend and I were planning to compete in the state competition for DECA. I remembered learning that the first step to getting what you want is to picture it in your mind so that's exactly what I did. I pictured a seamless presentation followed by us walking onstage to receive our awards. The night of the ceremony I continued to picture this and we won – First Place in the state!!

Senior, Strategies for Success II

How I Created My Band

I have always wanted a band with dedicated members. I used to think that that no one was as dedicated as I was. I want to have a good band. Well I started to picture myself playing with other band members and literally before I knew it, I had gotten a band. I didn't even know that it was happening and then it hit me. As soon as I started picturing it, it happened. Picturing it made me clear about what I wanted.



I think this will be a strategy I use for the rest of my life. I got the band I wanted. Now it's time to go bigger.

Senior, Strategies for Success



A Few More Stories

Overcoming Procrastination

I always used to wait until the last minute to do a paper or project and then would rush to get it done. I knew it would not be the best of my work because it was so rushed.



Then I started to use the procrastination strategy and when an assignment is given, you start it that day or night. The strategy is to basically set a timer for yourself for whatever time you want. It could be 15 minutes or it could be an hour. You promise yourself that you'll quit when the timer goes off. But the funny thing is that you don't quit. Once you've already started, you usually finish it.

Now I start to do my assignments the night they are assigned. I do not rush at the end and I know that I did my best and I did it the way I was supposed to. Now I'm doing much better!

“To know even one life has breathed easier bcause you have lived; that is to have succeeded.”

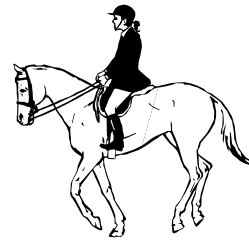
Emerson

My Horse and Me

The other day I was riding my horse. Horseback riding is my favorite sport although it's harder than it looks. In my opinion, it is one of the most challenging sports because not only do you have to control and worry about your body, but you also have to do the same with a huge animal with a mind of its own. You have to try to have your bodies work together.

My horse is willing to please and tries so hard, but I have so much to do: heels down, leg on, inside leg to outside rein, half halt, inside flexion...heels down again and keep that leg on! Use your outside leg as a wall! Push!

That was when I needed some serious breathing to clear my head and without even knowing it, I used the Ultimate Success Formula (from Tony Robbins). I asked myself what I wanted, why, how I could get it, what to do when something went wrong and so on. Before I knew it, I had created my own version of the Ultimate Success Formula-Horse Riding 101.



Here are the steps to my version which could be used in many areas of life:

- What do I want?
- What do I need to do to get it?
- How will I know when I have it?
- How will I know if I am on the right track?
- How can I fix it?
-

Are there places you can use this in your life?

Senior, Strategies for Success I

Don't Quit School

I was about 14 when it happened. I dropped out of school and I thought school was for losers so I never wanted to go back. Then it happened. I had to go to truancy court and they said if I didn't go to school that I would have to live at DCYF.

I thought it was all fun and games until I realized that they weren't playing around. When it happened, I was so mad I flipped out because I had to live in a group home. Believe me, living in a group home is not fun.



When I finally went home, I still didn't go to school so it happened all over again. Then they let me go home for a second time. I still didn't go to school so then I had to go to court in Providence which was certainly not fun and games. When they say something, they mean it.

Things are different now. I go to school and I changed my act around. You need to realize that life isn't all about hanging out with your friends. When you grow up you need to get a job, a place to live and food to eat. You cannot do all that stuff when you drop out of school. You will end up living with your parents for the rest of your life and working at a fast food restaurant. So my tip for success is for you to stay in school and do what you need to do for yourself.

Freshman, Strategies for Success I

***“What is right is not always popular.
What is popular is not always right.”***

The Ultimate Formula for Success

Trembling, you approach the dark cave known as “High School”. Their eyes stare down at you. Eyes belonging to those creatures you've heard of called upperclassmen. Some of whom seem ten times your size. You've heard the stories either from older friends or even siblings. These scary stories will become reality but only if you choose to believe them.



Entering high school as a freshman can be stressful. However, knowing some helpful strategies will make your first year at high school more enjoyable. One strategy that can be helpful is called “The Ultimate Success Formula”. There are 5 steps to the formula:

Know what you want—For example, you know that you want to complete your freshman year successfully.

Know why you want it—You want to get through your freshman year so that you are successful in the future

Take massive action—Don't let anything get in your way of having a fun and successful year

Check how you're doing—Report cards will come to inform you of your academic status

Make Changes – If you're not satisfied with your grades, then change them. Study with your friends and get extra help from teachers. If you're not happy with your social life, then make new friends. Joining extra-curricular activities allows you to meet new people from different grades.

I wish I had known this helpful strategy when I entered high school. Instead I listened to what others said which affected my self-confidence as well as my grades.

Keep this strategy in mind when entering high school or in anything else you're planning to accomplish. By knowing what you want and how to achieve it, you will have a great freshman year. Before you know it, you will be entering high school again...this time as a sophomore.

Senior, Strategies for Success I



How to Get Through a Boring Job

I've used many of the strategies I've learned while I'm at work. I absolutely hate work and everything about it. While at work, I answer the phone so I have plenty of time to think and do nothing. I constantly breathe because it helps keep me awake and alert.



I also use the power of questions and think about what else is good about the day like maybe what I'm doing later that night. I also think about what I'll do with the money I'm making and how I can spend it!

Junior, Strategies for Success I

“When you look for the good in others, you discover the good in yourself.” Martin Walsh

My Battle With an Illness

There have been many times in my life when stumbling stones stood in my path. Often times getting through the day with a smile rather than simple survival depends on knowing some strategies

One of my most important triumphs is overcoming my depression. I was always in a rush to be better and finally wanted to be on stable ground. The work involved in counseling, keeping school together and getting on to a new medication seemed a constant battle.

But in the back of my mind, surviving depression was all about the Ultimate Success Formula. I knew that I wanted to be better and get to a healthier place. When I hit the point that I knew wanted to get better, I began a slow but steady track to a good place. I had to realize that what I wanted in life was all there ahead of me. Knowing this was most important of all.



One of the steps of the Ultimate Success Formula is to take massive action. My massive action was to take the medication I had been prescribed to take. Also to push myself to stay true to honesty and my new good habits. It was and still is a daily journey – one of taking actions and making corrections if needed. It was about letting people help me and finally helping myself.

Simple strategies not only make the days easier but also clearer. Understanding why we do and need the things we do is more than half the battle. I fight the good fight for life and for love.

Junior, Strategies for Success I and II

How to ACE the SAT's

It was about two months into my senior year. I had already taken the SAT's once but was not fully satisfied with my score. I knew that if I used the strategies I had learned

I could achieve a better score. I signed myself up for the next SAT test and began to prepare myself. I continued to focus on the SAT's and I also pictured myself full of energy the morning of the test.

I also used the Ultimate Success Formula

- 1) **Know what you want** – I knew that I wanted to get a better score
- 2) **Know why you want it** – I knew I wanted a better score so I could go into a good college
- 3) **Take massive action**- I began to study more and more and remained focused on doing better
- 4) **Check how you're doing** – I took pretests to see how ready I was for the real test
- 5) **Make changes** – If I didn't do well on one particular section of the pretest, I studied that subject more

Finally on the day of the test, I was so focused and prepared that I attained my goal and scored higher than the previous time.

Senior, Strategies for Success I and II

“Press on. Nothing can take the place of persistence. Talent will not. Nothing is more common than unsuccessful men with talent. Genius will not. The world is full of educated derelicts. Perseverance and determination alone are omnipotent.”
Calvin Coolidge

Overcoming Shyness

Since I began my *Strategies* class I have worked on changing my focus. One of the biggest things I have always said to myself is “I can't do this”. Now instead of that I try to tell myself that I can do it, and so far I have noticed some changes.

I have also used some strategies for presentations I have done. I have never enjoyed oral presentations because I'm usually nervous, but lately I haven't been worrying about speaking in front of others much. The

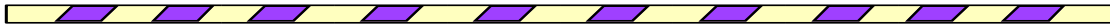


thing that really changed this was the DECA competition. During our presentation, I remember being very focused on presenting well and it turned out great.

This was even true for the board break seminar that came to our school. At first I wasn't concentrating on breaking the board. But once I changed my focus, I broke right through it.

I have learned that focus is everything and it is a strategy that I think will help me a lot.

Senior, Strategies for Success II



Karate Girl Me

Karate isn't the sport everyone talks it up to be. In fact, it isn't a sport at all but a way of life. It taught me the ins and outs of myself I never knew could be accomplished. But karate doesn't teach you this by itself. It's your beliefs that get you where you are today. My beliefs were taught to me through the wisdom of karate and my parents but my strategies I used to get there were taught to me by taking *Strategies for Success*.



I had this horrible feeling in my stomach before I had a demo to perform. People say I don't get nervous but inside I'm exploding! I had never performed this routine in front of anybody and I was so afraid I was going to mess up. I was so negative toward myself. I started shaking. The parents started pouring in by the dozens and I could feel every pore of my body sweating.

I found the little kids I teach and started talking to them about random things to get my mindset better. I said to them, "Guys, I'm very nervous." And they said back, "There is no need to be nervous." That reminded me of *Strategies* class—positive inspiration that made me say to myself that these kids are counting on me. "I can do it". I took deep breaths to relax myself and put on a wonderful show for everyone to see and hear. By getting my mind set on the positive things rather than the negative things, I pulled it off.

Sophomore, Strategies for Success I

“This is a team. We’re trying to go to the moon. If you can’t put someone up, please don’t put them down.”

NASA Motto

Tennis Anyone?

I haven’t used a strategy yet but I plan on using one when I get back to playing tennis. I will use the visualization strategy before a match or tournament as most professional athletes do. I will visualize myself doing well and ultimately winning.



While playing, I will use the breathing strategy when I get aggravated which usually happens a lot. Instead of showing my opponent that I’m angry, I will take a few breaths, calm myself down and play better than I could play angry.

Senior, Strategies for Success I

The End of Mr. Negative

The story I have is a good one. It has romance, suspense, action, humor and a bit of the boring. Ok, ok, it doesn’t have any of that but it does have a good ending.

At the beginning of taking the *Strategies* class, I was such a negative person. If anything could go wrong, it would and it would happen to me. But as I went through the class, I realized I could change that. I could make the bad into good and the good into great.

I was asked to write about a strategy that helped me in life so that my story might help someone else. But it wasn’t just one strategy; it was a whole class full of strategies. Everything I’ve learned has made me better. If it wasn’t for the strategies I learned, I’d still be Mr. Negative thinking I couldn’t graduate. Instead, I’m always positive and hyper all the time.

Junior, Strategies for Success

“The secret of success is being grateful for what you have, however little, and not resenting life for what it hasn’t given you.”

A New Me

This is my fourth year in high school and I’m a junior. Let me tell you a little of my history. When I first came to this school in my freshman year, it wasn’t a good experience. I pretty much slacked off and failed.

The next year was not so good either. I ended up moving to Florida and did not like the school system. I moved back North to Massachusetts and started in a very large school. They had block scheduling and I did extremely well. I was getting grades that I had never gotten before.

At the end of the year, we moved back into this school district. I was placed in a *Strategies* class. I am currently passing my classes continuously using strategies from this class. I am also working on getting on the honor roll by the time I graduate.

Junior, Strategies for Success II



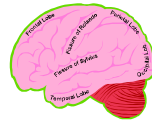
“The secret of success is working with things as they are, not with them the way you wish they were or think they ought to be.”

My boyfriend’s brain surgery

So you want me to write a story telling you how and when I use my strategies. That’s hard because I use them everyday and for everything I do. I’ve used strategies in everything from getting my teeth cleaned (uh, I hate that) to dealing with a friend’s battle

with a brain tumor. You see, what many adults fail to realize is how challenging life can be for us teens. Between school, friends, a job, after school activities, boyfriends, girlfriends, college, and so on, life can get overwhelming!

The strategies I've learned have helped me better understand others as well as myself. In my freshman year, (I am now about to graduate) my boyfriend at the time was diagnosed with a non-cancerous cyst on his brain. He had two options: go for surgery that he may not make it through or have a shunt put in his back. (A shunt is a tube that would allow for his spinal fluid to flow the way it needed to). He opted for the high risk surgery. I was devastated. All I thought was "What if he dies?" "What could go wrong?", "What if he ends up with brain damage?"



I went to my *Strategies for Success* teacher for help. She encouraged me to use every possible technique I knew to stay strong because my boyfriend needed me to be. I thought "strategies?! Strategies?! My boyfriend might die and all you can say is use my "strategies"?? Luckily, after calming down using my breathing skills I began to think about the strategies I knew. I wrote out a plan that I would use the day of surgery.

The day of surgery I kissed my boyfriend Scott "good-bye" and told him that I knew he'd be fine. During the six hours I waited in the waiting room, I used my visualization strategy. I pictured Scott being fine after surgery. It was better than picturing everything that could go wrong. I kept breathing using the methods my *Strategies* teacher had taught me.

I tried another technique that I had once heard about. It wasn't from *Strategies* class. I wasn't sure where I had heard of it but I was willing to try anything that might help. I "sent" Scott all the good, strong, and positive, energy I could and was assured he would be fine. Thankfully, Scott made it without any complications.

Some of you may think that me sending energy and visualizing his recovery wouldn't do a thing. That may be so. However, he had a 75% chance of memory loss or other types of brain damage and he was perfectly fine. Even if my strategies didn't help him get through it, they helped me. I don't know how I could have made it through all that without them. Please, learn and use strategies. They help you in more ways that you know.

Senior, Strategies for Success II



Thinking out of the Box

At this point in my life I can confidently say that I'm heading in the right direction. For a while I was very confused and unsure about what the future had in store for me. But after stumbling across an essential approach to living, I now realize how endless life's possibilities truly are. Many have heard about the power of a positive mindset, but few realize that extent of its truth. For too often we create walls and boundaries in our own minds that hold us back from ever reaching our fullest potential.



Why don't I go to a great college? Why don't I make it BIG out in the real world? Why can't I be truly happy in life? We can't see or touch these walls but indeed they are there impacting every aspect of our life. What's important to realize is that they only exist if we let them exist. It's all about your mindset!

The day I realized this was truly a turning point for me. I had just come back from a RI Student Council leadership conference, and was inspired by all the amazing things I learned. Then I started thinking about our own student council and how much it was lacking. I thought about my plans of running for parliamentarian, with the only reason being that I would surely run unopposed. It wouldn't be the greatest job but I wanted to get involved as much as I could.



That's when it hit me! Why not run for president? Sure I would probably have to run against someone else but I could definitely do it if I worked hard enough! It was at that moment when I finally broke down all the walls in my mind and found a sense of clarity. If it's what I really want, then why not go for it? Nothing can stop you from achieving greatness but yourself. Step outside the box and start seeing things from your own perspective. As the saying goes, "Don't go with the flow.....You are the flow!"

Junior, Strategies for Success I and II

"Your past is your history, not your identity."

Surviving Tryouts

It was Saturday October 25th. I'd waited and practiced for two months for this day -the day of my cheerleading competition. We were at our coach's house all getting our hair done and routine practiced. For some reason it wasn't going right but before I

panicked, I thought, *what else can it mean?* Am I stressing? Am I trying too hard? I'm not sure.

As the time faded quickly, we were already on the bus with the Junior Midgets on our way to the competition. Many thoughts were going through all of our heads. Am I going to fall? Am I going to jump too soon? Am I going to choke up?

We didn't know the answers to these questions so we were going to try to ignore them. We sang and cheered loudly with our coaches in excitement. As we approached the college for the competition, you could hear everyone start to get quieter and quieter until the bus was silent as all the negative thoughts went through our heads. Still, we tried to ignore them and thought positive thoughts. We knew we had all worked too hard for negative thoughts to creep in.



As we inched up to our parking spot, our coaches gave us strict rules. We were to go check in and stay together. As I got off the bus standing proud in my maroon, white, and gold uniform, girls from many different squads were staring me down. I just ignored them and thought, "Hey! I'm here and I've worked hard for this. I'm going to get through this."

My squad sat in total silence on the grass after signing in. We got up and practiced our jumps and stretched as much as possible. After an hour went by we are all stretched and soon enough it was time to go in for our silent run through. Everything was sharp and to the point. I was happy and not nervous after the practice

Soon enough it was time for the doors to open. People began piling in, overflowing the stands. This was when it hit me and I knew this was it. This is the real deal and this is what I've practiced for. I became a little nervous but continued cheering, and dancing along with everyone else.



Soon enough it was almost our turn. We all stood up in the stands and began walking single file down the stairs. I saw my little cousin from a different squad a few rows below me. She also spotted me. I smiled and waved. She did it in return along with a "good luck" and "I love you" sign.

As we waited to go on, we all took advantage of the time. We fixed our hair, cried and before you know it, it was time to go on. We all lined up two by two smiles on our faces and our chins held high. I stepped onto the blue mat looking at the "standing room only" stands and judges right in front of me. I felt like I was about to choke.

But once I hear Kayla call the first word "Ready!" it all came back. I went cheering as loud as I could with the biggest smile on my face. Not one thought going through my head, this is my time to shine. I did great, got off that mat so proud, jumping up and down yelling and screaming.

About eight more squads went and I became nervous again. It was coming towards the end, and those squads had incredible routines. It was time for intermission. I found my little cousin Amanda and we found out parents. They congratulated us as well as other cheerleaders. I felt so many different feelings- happy, excited, nervous, confused.

It was time for the awards. We were sitting quietly in our seats. For some reason it felt like this was the slowest part. They did Junior Midgets first. It felt like it took forever. Finally it was time for the Midgets. They announced 3rd place...nope, not my squad, 2nd place...nope not that one either, but it was my cousin Amanda's. I was so scared; my squad was holding hands. As I closed my eyes I visualized us winning. As they said, "1st place goes to..." we all sat, still hoping..."Warren/Swansea Redskins!" I jumped up as if I had springs on my feet. We did it, we really did it!

I couldn't believe how far I have come. I was so proud of myself. I could see my mom and dad on the other side jumping up and down, smiling and throwing their hands in the air. It was the greatest feeling. Now you know if you give something your all and really apply yourself you can do it! Believe me, because I did!

Sophomore, Strategies for Success II

"You can easily judge the character of a man by how he treats those who can't do anything for him."

No More Arguments for Me

I have used the skills to stop myself from arguing as much as I used to. After I quit my job a few months ago, I would get into arguments almost every day at home.

Strategies I have learned have helped me to be more positive and to get into fewer arguments.

Senior, Strategies for Success I

The “four cards”

Strategy



There are many secrets of success. Some work better for some people than others. The 4 Cards are a tool that helps while you make them and help ever more when you use them. Make yourself a set of these cards and enjoy the results!

Directions: Get four 3” x 5” index cards. If you’re someone who likes bright colors, make each one a different color.

Card #1 – Write on the top of the card “**Top Ten Things that Make Me Laugh Out Loud**”. Then number one to ten and write the key words that remind you of very funny situations. All I have to think about is “Dunkin Donuts” and I begin to laugh because of a series of events that happened there. Be as specific as you can. You should just be able to read the words and begin laughing or at least smiling.

Card #2 – **Top Ten Things I’m Grateful For.** List all the things big and small that you’re grateful for.

Card #3 – **Top Ten Things that Change How I Feel for the Better.** List things that make you feel better that are also good for you. Things on this list might include talking to a specific friend, a certain song, taking a drive, or for me going to the water.

There are other things that change how you feel instantly – a drag on a cigarette, an alcoholic drink, drugs, overeating – but these things do not provide a positive change in your state that lasts and for the most part are not healthy or beneficial to your body. When the effect of these wears off, the problem that you were looking to seek relief from is often still there.

Card #4 – **Top Ten Things I Could Do to Help Someone Else.** List who you could do something for and what you could do. According to author Wayne Dyer, when you do an act of kindness for someone else, your level of serotonin rises and you feel much better. The same applies for the person you did the kindness for. Research shows that it also applies to anyone who witnessed the act of kindness. So if you’re feeling sorry for

yourself or are not in a great mood, do an act of kindness for someone and you'll begin to feel better whether the person responds the way you expected them to or not. Who could you help today?

Put these cards in a place where you can get to them on a regular basis – your wallet, a pocketbook, in your car, in your book bag, or near your computer. In stressful times, take a card out and read what you wrote. Allow yourself a minute to go back to why you wrote the words you did and you'll begin to feel much better.



Change

A poem by a former teen Julie Hairston, Vice-President of Envision-u

So you say that love is for the lucky
And wealth is for the same
The 'great bodies' for the movie stars
And success for those with fame.

You say it's just too hard
And yes, maybe even worse
You've decided others are to blame
And you've been born under a curse

Your great grandfather was poor
And married 6 or 7 times
Your auntie Eve was fat
And Uncle Arthur liked his wines

You're connected in a chain
And there is no broken link
You're hauled along obediently
Because you'd never raise a stink

This is your lot in life
And sad as it may be
You decide that being miserable
Might be the best place to be

It's scary in that greener pasture

There might be ants and snakes
There certainly couldn't be real folks
They're all hypocrites and fakes.

What if I fail? What if I fall?
I'll never live that down
It's safer in this hell-hole
Where people like me, frown.

We gripe and frown all day
And drown in misery
Gathering all around us
A faithful company.

"Oh! I'd never take those chances,
Only fools would charge ahead"
We say these things to justify
The pitiful lives we've led.

And growing every day
is the envy in our heart
It pounds the ever louder
Because emotion plays a part.

Not only are our thoughts
Melded in our minds
Creation of the misery is the result
Of thought plus emotion combined.

Your thoughts are never ceasing
Your emotion flies in the face
Of all that could be transferred
To dignity and grace.

All the time spent lamenting
And believing you have no nerve
To create the kind of beauty
That others believe they deserve

The time was surely wasted- Why,
Who do you think you are?
To waste this precious life
When you were born a brilliant star

You fought your way to be here
Don't you remember what it took?

Swimming upstream in heavy currents
And then 9 whole months to cook!

It is no accident you're here
We needed you from day one
So get off your lazy donkey
There is work to be done!

Change your thinking-Change your world
It is belief and thought that make it bloom
It was in the instruction manual
That you received inside the womb.

Take care that you abide
By the good book with the laws
That give you permission to fully live
And be abundant... just because.

Positive change comes only to those
Who believe the difference they will make
Comes from being grateful
For every second that they take.

You see, we all have a "story"
Dysfunction is the norm
It could not be otherwise
If you were human-born.

There was no chance of perfection
It was all in the design
How else could we create
And make our own star shine

So, Break the Chain
Step out of the hole
Create something from nothing
Be the star in your brilliant role

You were born beautiful
Make every positive change
With all of your imperfections
You are perfectly arranged!

The power of giving back

*“Let no one ever come to you without leaving better and happier.
Be the living expression of kindness – kindness in your face,
kindness in your eyes, kindness in your smile.”*

Mother Teresa

One of the most successful strategies we know for getting rid of stress and gaining a sense of self esteem is to help others. From performing random acts of kindness on a daily basis to major charitable projects, the students of this program have given back to others in many ways. Here is a list of some of our charitable projects:

Fed 20 families in Bristol and Warren complete Thanksgiving dinners in the fall of 2001

Fed 20 families complete Christmas dinners in December of 2002

Fed 40 families complete Thanksgiving dinners in the fall of 2003

Donated over \$400 to the Rhode Island Community Food Bank

Presented a free evening seminar to the community entitled “Priceless Strategies”
January 2003

Mentored students at Mt. Hope Bay Academy
Spring 2003

Presented success seminar to Middle School Eighth grade team – May 2003 and
January 2004

Created video for the troops in Afghanistan Christmas 2001

Visited Veteran’s Home

Made Christmas ornaments for the Hasbro Toys annual *Giving Tree*.
For each handmade ornament, Hasbro Toys donated a new toy to a needy child

Wrote letters to Firemen and Police Officers in NYC
September 2001

Wrote letters to soldiers overseas

Sources

Books from Tony Robbins
[*“Notes from a Friend”*](#)

Seminars from Tony Robbins
Youth Leadership 2000
Discovery Camp 2001 and 2003
Unleash the Power Within
Results 2000
Wealth Mastery

Tape Series from Tony Robbins
[*Personal Power II*](#)
[*Get the Edge*](#)

Envision-U
The 45 Day Challenge
The 45 Day Challenge for Young Leaders

The Oprah Winfrey Show
O-Magazine

Coach University

[“Connections- Study Skills for College and Career Success”](#) by Sharon K. Ferrett,
PH.D.

Works of [Dr. Wayne Dyer](#)

Collection of random quotes gathered through years of teaching

Strategies for Success I and II are courses written and taught by Marianne Douglas who may be reached at
<mailto:StrategiesforSuccessProgram@gmail.com>

To learn how to bring this award winning program to your school, go to
StrategiesforSuccessProgam.com