The Journey of Lifelong Learning

Major Concepts, Discussions, and Activities For Facilitating Wisdom in Our Youth

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## Concepts

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DEDICATION

For Donni, who is a lifelong learner. She follows her dreams and passions to the fullest extent. She has taught me the beauty of believing in yourself, the joy of learning on your own, and the excitement of living each day in a loving and giving way . . .

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Selected works from Seasons of Love ©1987 by Donni Betts & George Betts and Visions of You © 1987 by George Betts
To Our Children

At last,
We are beginning to understand you.
We realize your beauty,
your ability,
your potential . . .
A lifetime of excitement,
Joy,
Involvement,
Creativity and passion
awaits you . . .
But first we must nurture you . . .
We must give you the opportunity
to accept and value your strengths
and your differences . . .
to accept and value the strengths
and differences of others . . .
The opportunity
to actively pursue your passions,
your areas of adventure
and your dreams . . .
to help make our world
a better place in which to live,
where, as you choose,
you may become
the explorers, the inventors,
the artists, the poets,
the leaders of tomorrow . . .

But, most importantly,
we must help you to become
your true “selves,”
to withstand the pressure from outside,
and to listen closely to your hearts,
so that you may develop your potential,
and become what you truly can be,
what you truly are . . .

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Introduction

The concepts for this book have been within me for many years. I love to ponder, to think, to dream, to see what life can be like. I not only seek knowledge, but wisdom. I know many people who are smart and know a lot of things, but who are not wise. My passion is people. I want to understand people, their needs, and motivation, and most importantly, what we may become. I include myself in this passion because I want to be the best I possibly can be. I accept and appreciate myself today, but I know I can always change and grow. Within all of us there is the real self and the ideal self. The real self is who we are today, and the ideal self is who we can become. Life is our opportunity to become the ideal self, which is a journey of becoming and being.

I want to be smart, but more importantly, I want to be wise. My wisdom will help me to make this world a better place. It may give me the insight on how to treat others, myself, and how to live fully. As a reader and a participant, you may also learn wisdom, through your pondering and experiences.

This book is part of my journey. I began a journal and have kept it for many years. I write in it, not daily or as an assignment, but when I have something to say, about you, about me, about the world in which we live.

Lifelong learners are not those who are developed only intellectually, but who are also developed emotionally, socially, and physically. These people have been able to integrate development in all four domains. They realize that a fully functioning person learns, feels, shares, and acts. This is integration of the cognitive, emotional, social, and physical domains of an individual. If one or more of these domains are left out, the person will be not become as well developed as possible.

The writings in this book are from my journals and the books of poetry I have written over the years. They represent the concepts I have incorporated into my life. A concept is an idea or thought, an abstract notion. The concepts I have learned from my experiences now guide my life, facilitate me, and give me a direction for my journey, a direction for growth, love and sharing . . .

The writings may help you think, ponder, and seek wisdom, for it is through wisdom that we can become what we truly can be. How we treat others, ourselves, our world, determines what we will become.

Enjoy this journey, and learn about yourself, your friends, and the life that you are living. Remember, every new day gives us the opportunity to go beyond what we were yesterday.

May you seek a meaningful and worthwhile journey in this unique opportunity called “life.”
The Journey

My teaching and learning experiences have helped me to better understand the future of our children and youth. To successfully prepare our children and youth for their own journeys, we as educators and parents must facilitate them and ourselves in the following ways:

- Realize and develop a nurturing, positive environment
- Respect and nurture the self-concept and self-esteem of our children and youth
- Seek to deliver unconditional positive regard for others
- Discover our children’s strengths, gifts, and talents, and encourage them to explore these areas
- Realize that their cognitive, emotional, and social development may be incongruent
- Provide them with time to be with people like themselves, including peers and adults
- Provide enrichment experiences in the school
- Include them in planning activities for your family
- Learn to communicate effectively by learning how to listen
- Value autonomy and give them opportunities to develop it fully
- Be the people we want to be and facilitate that drive in our children and youth
Steps for Using The Journey of Lifelong Learning

• Read the book to develop a basic understanding of its purpose, the writings/quotes, the discussion questions and the activities. This book is not a textbook but a book of possibilities, of questions, of seeking the journey of a lifelong learner. The CD Journal pages can be completed and placed in any order in the Personal Journal.

• After developing your understanding, review the major concepts necessary for lifelong learning.

• The book is appropriate for learners, educators, and/or parents. It is your decision if you want to work with just one group, and then, possibly expand to other groups. First and foremost, the book is written for learners, grades 6 – 12, but is an outstanding source for groups of educators and parents.

• Have the group discuss the Major Concepts and discuss why the author included these Concepts in the book.

• Select one of the writings/quotes preceding the Concept that you want to explore with your group. Read it to your members; print it in color from the CD; give each learner a copy from the book/CD for their journals; display one of the Poster Prints.

• Use the Group Discussion questions to discuss the particular writing/quote.

• After a thorough discussion, give the group members the opportunity to individually (or in small groups) complete one or more of the activities for that writing/quote. Allow time for all group members to share the results of their activities.

• Select a second writing/quote and repeat steps 5, 6, & 7.

• Continue to select writings/quotes or have the group members select the writings/quotes (in small groups) and have them repeat steps 5, 6, & 7.

• Complete as many writings/quotes as you wish for your group. At the end of this unit, ask the group members to complete all Group Discussions and Activities.

• Share with them that the author would like to hear from them and would like to receive their writings, concepts, discussion questions and statements, and activities.

• State once again that we do not seek knowledge alone, but that we seek wisdom because wisdom will enhance our lives and the lives of our friends.

• From time to time, remind your learners, educators, and/or parents about what they learned, what they experienced, and how they are using this knowledge and wisdom in their daily lives.

Note: The above list of steps is for the organized teacher to follow. Those who do not like the structure of others, will modify, minify, recreate, re-order and re-design the steps. Both methods work!!! It depends on your style and the styles of your learners.
It is essential to give your learners choices when they are completing Group Activities. In each of these activities I have placed a product as part of the activity. In some cases, these products are ideal for the learners. In other cases, they may want to substitute a different product for the one I have chosen. Share the grid of products with them and let them choose!

For example, in the activity, “Have a panel discussion concerning conflict, why it exists and how it can be resolved,” the learner may want to do a speech or a dance rather than a panel discussion. Let the learners substitute products to better meet their needs.
List of Concepts

Webster’s definition of concept: an idea or thought, especially a generalized idea of a thing or class of things; abstract notions. When we understand concepts, we are able to modify our lives and the lives of those we touch in a positive manner.

Acceptance of Others
Acceptance of Self
Attitude
Communication
Conflict Resolution
Creativity
Flow
In-depth Studies
Lifelong Learner
Living in the Now
Motivation
Openness
Passion Learning
Personal Growth
Pondering
Potential
Priceless Friendships
Similarities & Differences
Student as Learner
Teacher as Facilitator
Description of Major Concepts

Acceptance of Others (Unconditional Positive Regard)
Acceptance is the ability to understand yourself and others and to decide that you and others are okay just as you are. Acceptance opens the door for deeper friendships and more meaningful experiences. The lack of acceptance may lead to conflict in the relationship. The highest level of acceptance is when you are able to accept people as they are; not as you want them to be. This stage of development is called unconditional positive regard.

Acceptance of Self (Positive Self-Esteem)
This concept is essential for personal growth. My belief in myself will help determine how I feel about me, about you, and about the events which are about to take place. Will I be successful? Do I have the strength to endure and to succeed? Can I withstand pressure and possible criticism from others? Do I see myself as capable of being successful? This basic concept impacts everything we do, everything we will attempt.

Attitude
My attitude determines the day I will have and the life I will live. Am I positive or negative? Do I look for the good or respond only to the bad? Attitude determines your perceptions, which in turn determine your feelings and behavior. A positive attitude is necessary for the development of a positive self-concept and self-esteem.

Communication
There are three major components of effective communication. These include the sender, the receiver, and the message. There are skills which help us to send clear messages and skills that help us to receive the same messages. Many times we are not clear about what we are sending, and the message we send is not the message that is received.

Other times we are hesitant to send important messages and so the messages are undelivered. The secret of communication is to be an effective sender, an emphatic receiver, and capable of hearing the sent message.

Conflict Resolution
Conflict is part of life. We cannot avoid it, but we can learn to live effectively with it. Growth may come from conflict. Conflict is disagreement. It calls for communication, understanding, resolution, and consensus in making decisions that impact all parties in a positive manner.

Creativity
Can you see something not as it is but as it can be? Creativity is the ability to modify, add, change, and create. It is divergent thinking that takes you to a new
understanding. Creativity opens doors by thinking of the future, of the new idea, the new product. It is essential for becoming a lifelong learner.

**Flow**

Flow is a state of being where everything comes together and nothing else is needed for the moment. There is acceptance of yourself, others, and the world in which you live. Flow is not a constant. We are all in the process of becoming, but flow is a state of being.

**In-depth Studies**

The in-depth study is the highest level of learning. When a person has the skills, concepts, and attitudes necessary for independent learning and when the person has developed a deep passion for an area of learning, the in-depth study is the natural step. It goes beyond an assignment or something that someone else wants you to learn or to do. The in-depth study is related to the self and it must be pursued. It takes a person to a higher level of learning... One that is only pursued by those who seek to understand fully.

**Lifelong Learner (Autonomous Learner)**

A major goal for most people is to become an independent, self-directed, lifelong learner. A lifelong learner never stops learning but realizes there is always another mountain, a new challenge, a new dawn. This person develops knowledge and wisdom.

**Living in the “Now”**

Probably one of the most difficult things to do is to live in the “now.” We learned this from Fritz Perls, the father of Gestalt Psychology. Living in the “now” means to concentrate, feel, touch, and think in the moment. Don’t worry about yesterday or plan for tomorrow, but live “now.” This cannot be done all the time, but when it is, we can become enriched and enhanced.

**Motivation**

There are two types of motivation: *extrinsic* motivation and *intrinsic* motivation. As children most of our motivation is intrinsic. It comes from within and is what we want to do. We discover what is important in life and begin to develop in those areas. Many parents reinforce this type of motivation.

Then, slowly, we begin to be motivated by others. This is called extrinsic motivation. It comes from others and what others think we need to do. They want us to do what they believe is important.

Life is a combination of both types of motivation, but the most important type is intrinsic. It comes from within and is related to our hearts and our passions. It becomes the essence of what we may become. It is the foundation of living a life of meaning.
Openness
Within a few seconds, the people you have just greeted, whether for the first time or for many times, will comprehend your level of openness by your non-verbal and verbal behavior. They will sense if you are willing to engage in meaningful conversation and behavior. Your level of openness shows and helps determine the type of experiences you will have.

Passion Learning
Passion learning is the highest level of learning and is integrated into in-depth studies. It is internalized learning. There are no assignments, no due dates, and no pressure from others. The motivation for your learning comes from within. Passion learning is not something you have to do, but something you must do. You fall in love with your topic, subject, idea, and you become totally committed to it. It becomes a major ingredient in your life. The thought of your passion is always on your mind, and you are happiest when you are pursuing this passion.

Personal Growth
In the past 40 years, many psychologists have developed a new theory of personal growth. This theory is based on the fact that we are in a state of change, of growth, of being, and becoming. Personal growth is our opportunity to become what we are capable of becoming. It is a lifelong quest and is part of the journey of a lifelong learner. Meeting our needs, reaching out to others, facilitating their growth, and wanting to make this place a better world in which to live, is the essence of our personal growth.

Pondering
Do you ponder? Do you allow your mind to wander, to dance in images, and to think new ideas? Pondering allows a person not to see the world as it is, but as it can be. To ponder is to see future possibilities and solutions, to think about more than the trials and tribulations of today, to take action through what is discovered through pondering.

Potential
It is not enough to look at ourselves as we are today, but as we may become tomorrow. I seek the unknown. I cannot describe my potential but I know it is there and that I will discover as I risk and grow. My potential becomes apparent when I go beyond what I am today.

Priceless Friendships
We have acquaintances and friendships. When we define friends, we have several levels of friendships. Level One is the type of friendship that is convenient. We meet at work, at school, at a social gathering, or in a unique environment. We form a relationship, but one that is based on the place where we met and the ties that were developed because of this meeting.
Level Two is the required friendship. Because of family ties, social groups, hobby groups, or after work groups, we come together with these people. There is a commitment to be there, and we care for these people. Sometimes we care for some of these people more than others.

Level Three is the type of friendship where we meet after work, after class, or after a social event. Something draws us together, and we want to spend more time exploring and enjoying the relationship. The times together are not constant but convenient. These friendships give us a chance to belong with others who have become friends.

Level Four are those friendships which are on-going and meaningful. We seek to be together and find each time together as enriching. We trust and share. We give and receive, we listen, and we are heard. Part of our world is now based on these friendships.

Level Five is ultimate friendship, the priceless friendship. These are our kindred friends, our lifetime friendships, those that don’t need to be defined because they are forever changing and growing. The friendship is not based on what we give or receive but on a deeper level that is based on acceptance and understanding. These people have been our friends forever, although we may have just met. We just know. Nothing else has to be said. Level Five friendships are rare, but these people are the ones who facilitate our growth, our confidence, and our connecting to the world. We are healthier, happier, and more giving to the world because of these friendships.

Similarities and Differences

We are attracted to those who are like us; those who have the same background, the same beliefs, the same values. These people help us to feel secure.

Student as Learner

When we are in school, we learn to be students. We wait for directions, take notes from the teacher, complete worksheets and projects assigned by the teacher, and answer questions on tests that are developed by teachers.

Besides learning to be students, we need to learn to be learners. Learners are not dependent on teachers but define what they want to learn, how they want to learn, where they are going to find the information, and how to develop the learning into a meaningful project. In other words, students learn to be independent, lifelong learners.

In school it is okay to be a student, but in this journey called life, we need to be lifelong learners.
Lifelong Learning

Teacher as Facilitator

There are basically two different approaches to teaching. One is to be a “dispenser of knowledge,” which means that the teacher knows the content and his/her job is to “teach” the prescribed material to the students. The job of the students is to memorize and learn what the teacher wants them to know.

The second approach to teaching is to have a teacher who is a “facilitator of the learning process.” This teacher has a great deal of knowledge but does not want to simply dispense it. He wants his learners (not students) to become lifelong learners. She wants them to seek their own topics or ideas, learn how to discover knowledge, complete the task of synthesizing, and find and develop the appropriate methods for presenting their new, individualized knowledge. A student who experiences a teacher as a facilitator has a greater opportunity of becoming a lifelong learner.
A lifelong learner is one who loves the moment, seeks truth, friendship, knowledge, and wisdom. This person accepts self and others, and realizes the chance to make this a better world. A lifelong learner discovers new paths for growth, joy, knowledge, and friendship.

The journey begins today . . .

© george betts
True motivation
Is as mysterious
as life itself.
It must begin within . . .

© george betts
Concept: Motivation

Group Discussions

· What is motivation?

· Are you motivated by others or by yourself?

· Describe people you know who have their own motivation.

· Give an example when you were totally motivated to complete something meaningful to you.
Activities

Have your parents tell you of your internal motivation about certain events.

Watch five friends.
Determine if they have internal motivation.
What do you see or hear that indicates they have intrinsic motivation?

Develop a dance that shows your true motivation toward something that you love or something you love to do.
Be aware of your actions for two days. Write down your observations, and determine if your motivation comes from within.
Don’t listen to others when they tell you what you cannot do, for they will give you boundaries and limitations. Listen to yourself, for only you know what you can do. Your attitude towards your potential is more powerful than any criticism or limitation that others may put on you.

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Concept: Potential

Group Discussions

• Describe what the word “potential” means to you.

• How are you influenced by your peers, your siblings, and your parents? Think about your answers (and write down notes) for five minutes before you answer to the other members of the group.

• How do you listen to yourself? Give examples of your self-awareness.

• As a group, define the word “potential” and apply your definition to the areas each of you have as “potential” areas of growth.

• How do you believe others limit you as a person?
Activities

Ask your parents or other significant adults to describe what they see as your “potential.” Have them write you a letter with their observations.

Dear _____________________
Interview four learners who are at least four years older than you and write their responses to . . .

What do you see as your “potential” as a person?

What do you see as your “potential” as a person?

What do you see as your “potential” as a person?

What do you see as your “potential” as a person?
Ask two or more adults to make a drawing that shows their “potential” when they were your age.
Make a poster that describes a life without “potential.”
When I wake up and walk out the door, 
My attitude determines the day I will live. 
Will I greet you in a friendly manner? 
Will I feel good about myself?

Will I seek solutions to problems? 
Or resist and become part of the problem?

Will I be thankful for the people I interact with 
or will I be judgmental?

Will I thank you for being you?

Will I take time to appreciate this day, these moments?

My attitude makes the difference . . .

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Concept: Attitude

Group Discussions

- Give examples of your attitude toward a) your self, b) your friends, c) your parents, d) school, and e) learning.

- Do you see your attitude toward life as basically positive or basically negative?

- Are you an actor or a reactor in life?

- Are you a problem finder or a problem solver? Or both?

- What does it mean to live for the “moment?” How does one live for the “moment?”
Activities

Design a poster about the concept of “attitude.” Display it in your classroom or in the hallway of your school.
Ask five people who know you well to describe your attitude. Have them write this information down for your journal.

Create a dance that depicts the different attitudes a person can develop towards life.

Design a group (or class) web site about the benefits of a positive attitude.
Being alike has brought us together. Being different will help us to grow . . .

© George Betts
Concept: Similarities & Differences

Group Discussions

• In what ways are you like the other people in your group?

• In what ways are you different from the other people in your group?

• In terms of working together, what differences will help your group to be successful?

• What are some major goals that all of you in the group want to work on? How will you accomplish these goals?

• If others in your group were to describe you, what positive traits would they list for you? What positive traits would you list for the others in your group?
Activities

Develop a poster that shows all of the positive differences you and members of your group share.
Produce and present a mime showing what happens when people accept each other and when they don’t accept each other.

Write the lyrics for a song that celebrates the differences in people in your group.

Write a rap that celebrates the similarities in people in your group.
Every time there is a conflict
I see a new opportunity for understanding.

© george betts
Concept: Conflict Resolution

Group Discussions

• What is conflict?

• Describe conflicts you have had in your life.

• Describe conflicts you have had in a) school, b) community, c) nation, d) world

• What is conflict resolution?

• What role does understanding of others play in conflict resolution?

• What are different approaches for dealing with conflict? Which ones do you use most of the time?

• How do you want to deal with conflict in your class and in your family?

• Describe the approach of someone you know who deals well with conflict.
Activities

Develop an approach to deal with conflict in your family, with your best friends, and/or your classroom.

Have a panel discussion concerning conflict, why it exists, and how it can be resolved.

Make a chart defining the major world conflicts of the past 100 years, and explain how they were solved.
Develop a collage with photographs of the people who have solved major conflicts in our world.
Becoming a lifelong learner
Is a process that takes ability,
time,
energy,
goals,
patience,
and support.

© George Betts
Concept: Lifelong Learner

Group Discussions

• What is an autonomous learner?

• Is an autonomous learner a lifelong learner?

• In what ways are you a lifelong learner?

• Give examples of people in your life who are lifelong learners.

• Give examples of historical figures who were lifelong learners. How did they change the world? What approaches did they take?

• Can you be an autonomous learner and still do well in school?

• Can autonomous learning take place in and out of school?
Activities

Write a story about an autonomous learner you know.
Interview an autonomous learner and make a videotape of the interview showing that this person is an autonomous learner.

Questions
Create a board game based on the theory of becoming a lifelong, autonomous learner.
Work with your teacher and change five assignments that will help you to become more of an autonomous learner.

1. 

2. 

3. 

4. 

5.
Besides being a dispenser of knowledge, A teacher must become a facilitator of the learning process.

A teacher facilitates, guides, questions, and supports but does not direct, specify, or limit.

© George Betts
Concept: Teacher as Facilitator

Group Discussions

• Who are the best teachers you have ever had? Why? Describe the characteristics of these teachers. Do not use names as you describe these teachers.

• Who are the worst teachers you have ever had? Why? Describe the characteristics of these teachers. Do not use names as you describe these teachers.

• Compare and contrast the teachers in the two above categories.

• When is it appropriate for a teacher to dispense knowledge, and when is it appropriate for a teacher to be the facilitator of the learning process?

• Describe what you would be like if you became a teacher.
Activities

Interview your teacher about why he/she became a teacher, what goals he/she has for you as a learner, and what challenges face parents and teachers today. Write your results as a newspaper article.
What are the differences between *facilitates, guides, questions, supports, and directs, specifies, or limits*?
Design a graph that shows your analysis.
Lifelong Learning

Write and perform a monologue as a successful teacher who is ready to retire and is giving a speech about successful teaching to a group of new teachers.
Survey a group of teachers to see if they perceive themselves as dispensers of knowledge, facilitators of the learning process, or both.
Share your results through a PowerPoint® presentation.
You are able to continue into the unknown, for your security is carried within . . .

© george betts
Concept: Personal Growth

Group Discussions

• In what ways do you feel secure?

• Where does that security come from?

• How do you see security and confidence in others?

• What does it mean “to continue into the unknown?”

• What role does confidence play in your life?

• How can you become more secure and confident?
Activities

Write a story about a person who lacks security and confidence.
Draw a symbol depicting your security and confidence.
Give a speech explaining the role of security and confidence in five eminent people.
Make a painting that shows security, confidence, and the unknown.
Nothing is fully learned until it is experienced by the learner.

© George Betts
Concept: Student as Learner

Group Discussions

• What does this writing mean to you?

• Describe one or more events where you fully learned something.

• How do you learn best?

• How can you enhance your learning style?

• What is the difference between a student and a learner?

• Give examples of yourself as a student and as a learner. In which roles do you learn most?
Activities

Create a skit showing positive and negative relationships between learners and their teacher.

Ideas:

Have a panel discussion of four or five learners who attended your school who are now lifelong learners.

Topics:

Share a passion area of your learning that you have fully learned.
Write from the point of view of a famous, eminent person who became a producer of knowledge.

Debate the pros and cons of being your “own” person - should we be dependent, independent, or interdependent?
Lifelong Learning

Give a speech about being an active or passive learner.

Design a plan describing how you and your friends can be more responsible for your own education.
Create a collage that shows areas of your life with which you are satisfied and areas that you want to change.
In-depth studies provide you an opportunity to go beyond the usual time and space restrictions of most school activities. You are able to learn, create, and produce because the motivation comes from within . . .

© george betts
Concept: In-depth Studies

Group Discussions

• There are three levels of learning: explorations, investigations, and in-depth studies. Define these three levels of learning.

• On what level of learning do you spend most of your time - At home? At school?

• Give examples of in-depth studies in which you have participated.

• Describe a person you know who is involved with in-depth studies.

• If you could start an in-depth study today, what would you do?

• Do you believe passion learning is part of an in-depth study? Why or why not?
Activities

Complete an exploration about a subject you know nothing about.

Questions
Complete an investigation about a subject you have a knowledge base about but want to build on your knowledge.

Questions
Lifelong Learning

Develop and participate in your own in-depth study. Be sure to select an area of learning that is based on one or more of your passion areas.

Questions

Present your in-depth study to a group of your peers and adults.
Make a presentation to your peers about
“How to Develop and Complete an In-depth Study.”

Outline
We all have dreams. Some come true while others become plays never to be performed.

© george betts
Concept: Potential

Group Discussions

• What do you see as your potential for your life at this time?

• What do you need to do to make your possibilities become “plays that are performed?”

• What do your peers and teachers see as your possibilities? Do you think they are right?

• If money and time were not problems, what would you do as the most important possibility in your life?
Activities

Put together a collage that shows the directions you may take in your life.
Make a presentation about the possibilities you believe you have for your life for the next 5 or 10 years.

Design and build a sculpture that represents what “possibilities” means to you.

Have a panel discussion with three of your friends concerning the possibilities of their futures. You be the panel moderator.
I am alive for I live with feeling, with meaning, giving of myself, receiving the joy of others in return . . .

© george betts
Concept: Personal Growth

Group Discussions

• What does this writing mean to you?

• We live on three levels of functioning: Survival, Maintenance, and Enhancement. How do you seek Enhancement in your life?

• Talk about people you know who love life, who live with enthusiasm, and who seek the Enhancement level.

• How do others help to enhance your life? How do you enhance their lives?

• Describe your closest friends and what you do to show them that you care.
Activities

Design a collage depicting yourself when you are happiest, when you live with real meaning.
Make a painting or drawing of the positive addictions you have in your life.
Hold a news conference in your classroom with four experts who know about nutrition, physical health, emotional health, and friendship.

Questions
Compare and contrast five web sites and determine five major aspects of a healthy personality.

1. 

2. 

3. 

4. 

5.
The world is open to those who give . . .

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Concept: Openness

Group Discussions

• What does this writing mean to you?

• Give examples of how you are open to your world.

• Name several people you know who are open to their world. Why do you believe they are open?

• Brainstorm five strategies you believe would help you and your friends to be more open.
Activities

Write a story about the world you would like to live in.
Survey your friends to find out what they believe happens when they are open to their world.
Ideas

Design a sculpture that shows openness to the world.
Ideas

Give a speech to your class that would help all of you to become more accepting of other people.
Ideas
Before I can love you,  
I must love myself.  

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Concept: Acceptance of Self

Group Discussions

• Do you accept yourself? Why or why not?

• What things do you accept about yourself and what things do you not accept about yourself?

• What does it mean to be able to “accept yourself?”

• Our acceptance of self is a key ingredient for success in life. Do you agree or disagree with this statement? Why?
Activities

Write a one-act play about the struggle of learning to accept one’s self.
Complete a presentation about the benefits of being able to accept yourself.

With three partners, develop and present a mime that displays the positive acceptance of self.

Interview 5 people and ask them your series of questions (that you develop) to find out if they do accept themselves. Present the information in a graph or a paper.

Questions
The greatest gift you can give me is the opportunity for me to be me and for me to let you be you.

© george betts
Concept: Acceptance of Others (Unconditional Positive Regard)

Group Discussions

• When a psychologist states that we should seek to have “unconditional positive regard” for other people, what does he mean?

• Describe a relationship you have where both of you have “unconditional positive regard” for each other.

• Describe how it feels when another person is not accepting of you.

• How important is it to be accepted by your peers? Parents? Teachers?
Activities

Develop a questionnaire to ask your peers and/or teachers if they are accepting of all the people in their class or if they are only accepting of some of the people in their class. Include questions that tell about what they do not accept in others.

Questions
Make a list of ten of the most important people in your life. How accepting are you of each of them? Rank the acceptance from 1 (low) to 5 (high). What did you learn from this experience?

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

9.

10.
Lifelong Learning

Write a letter to someone in your life that you did not accept in the past. (You do not need to send it.)

Dear ________________
Your best friend is going to be telling another person about you. What characteristics of you would that friend include? Actually ask your friend to make a list of your characteristics for you.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.
Because we are not afraid of tomorrow, nor restricted by yesterday, we are able to live fully today . . .

© george betts
Concept: Living in the “Now”

Group Discussions

• What does it mean to “live fully today?”

• Why do we spend time thinking about the past and planning for the future? What happens to the “now” when we do this?

• How do I restrict my growth today?

• Describe when you are happiest.

• Give an example of when you were totally living in the “now.”

• When a person is living fully for today, what behaviors do you see?
Activities

Develop a PowerPoint® presentation that covers times in your life when you were totally yourself.

Sit down with at least three of your family members and/or friends and talk about the most meaningful times you have shared together. Draw these times together as a collage.

Write a “quote” that demonstrates your commitment to living your life to the fullest.
Complete an abstract watercolor of your feelings concerning your life at this time.
Do you ponder?
Do you seek truth,
knowledge,
wisdom . . .
Do you think of ideas and notions
that others are not concerned with?
Do you want to know
about friendship,
love,
and what you may become?
Do you seek solutions
for your friends
and your family,
for your community,
nation or
for the world?
Do you seek to go
beyond yourself
and understand
life
on a higher level?
Do you seek to understand?
Do you ponder?

© george betts
Concept: Pondering

Group Discussions

• What does it mean to “ponder?”

• In what ways do you ponder?

• Share with the group a story about a person you know who ponders in your presence.

• Is it possible to ponder about ideas and concepts and never share them with other people?

• Take an idea that you have pondered deeply, and share it with your group.
Activities

Develop a web of ideas and concepts you would like to ponder during the next year.
Develop a “pondering” journal that you keep with you most of the time during the next month. Write down all of your topics, ideas, and concepts.

Present a mime that you developed as a result of your pondering.

Find a partner and develop a format for “pondering” for two people. Complete a “pondering” session.
Most problems develop because of communication undelivered . . .

© george betts
Concept: Communication

Group Discussions

• How do you define the concept of communication? Include both verbal and non-verbal communication.

• Give examples of effective and ineffective communication.

• What happens when you feel something deeply and do not communicate it to the others involved?

• What is the difference between one-way and two-way communication?

• What makes effective communication?

• Are you an effective communicator?
Activities

Observe two family members or friends for three days and keep a journal of their styles of communication. Share your results in a matrix or graph.

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With three classmates, develop a skit or dance that demonstrates your understanding of communication.

Ideas
Develop and give an Individual presentation on techniques to improve communication.

Outline
Have a debate about whether parents or children are better communicators.

Parents – Pro

Children – Pro

Children – Con

Parents - Con
When I am able to live
in the now,
in the moment,
I flow,
I become,
I am . . .

I hear you,
I understand,
I am connected
with you
and our world . . .
These moments
are rare,
but they make it
all worthwhile . . .

© george betts
Concept: Flow

Group Discussions

• In psychology there is a new concept called “flow.” What do you think psychologists mean by this new term?

• Can you remember times in your life when life was not just common, but something magical happened? You entered the state of flow. Describe it.

• Is “flow” something that just happens or that you can will to happen?

• What happens to people who never enter the psychological state of flow?

• Tonight you are going to share the concept of flow with others. How would you present this?
Activities

Make a scrapbook of the times you have experienced flow in your life.

Descriptions

1. 

2. 

3. 

4. 
Videotape an adult who experiences flow on an on-going basis. Write at least seven questions to ask this person.

Questions

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.
Complete a survey with your school friends about the concept of flow. Be sure to explain the concept first, and then ask them several questions on your survey. Present your findings as an individual presentation.

Questions

1.

2.

3.

4.
Identify five eminent, famous people you admire and analyze them to see if they experienced flow in their lives. Present your results through a mural.

1. 

2. 

3. 

4. 

5.
Pursue your passions . . .

© george betts
Concept: Passion Learning

Group Discussions

• Discuss the statement, “Passion learning is the highest level of learning.”

• Do you know someone who is a passion learner? Describe that person for the group.

• Share the passions that you have had in the past. How did you pursue them?

• What is a current passion you have? How do you want to pursue it?

• Do you have any passions now that you would like to spend your lifetime pursuing? Share them.
Activities

Interview 3 people about their passions.
Make a chart that shows their common characteristics.
Complete an in-depth study about a passion of your choice. Include a creative product and a presentation to an appropriate audience.

Interview a person who actively pursues a passion, and develop a feature story about this person.

Develop a collage or a poster that contains all of the passions of the students and teacher in your class.
Creativity is the expression of my soul.

© george betts
Concept: Creativity

Discussion Questions

• Describe the characteristics of a person you know who is extremely creative.

• How is creativity part of who you are as a person?

• How is creativity valued in school?

• Describe your creative qualities.

• Give an example of a time when you were extremely creative.
Activities

Develop a mime that demonstrates the major characteristics of creativity.

Make a sculpture that represents creativity in society.
Activities

Design a poster of you and your creativity.
Activities

Make a collage of the major characteristics of creativity.
Activities

Design the ideal class for you that contains a content area and creativity.
Our friendship will not be erased by the passage of time.

© George Betts
Concept: Priceless Friendship

Discussion Questions

• What does the concept of “priceless friendship” mean to you?

• How do you continue to nurture your friendships?

• Describe the best ways you can be a friend.

• Describe what you want in a friend.

• Will you still have some of the friendships you have today in 10 years?

• How do you resolve conflict with your best friends?
Activities

Choose an appropriate song and with one or two friends develop a dance about friendship.

Draw a symbol that represents the importance of friendship in your life.

Make a time capsule that includes events and memories of you and your close friends.

Select 5 songs that represent friendship for you. Place them on a CD.
Activities

Write a letter to your best friend.

Dear ______________________
Summary Statements and Questions Concerning The Journey of a Lifelong Learner

By this time, the learners have experienced several writings, many discussions, and have now completed some of the activities. To complete this chapter of the journey of becoming a lifelong learner, it is time for closure. This will happen for the individuals and for the group. Take time to discuss the following to facilitate their understanding of themselves and the world in which they live. Select the questions and statements you believe are most meaningful.

- If you were going to tell another person about the journey of your lifetime, what would you say?
- What has your journey been like as you have experienced the writings, discussion questions, statements, and the activities in this book?
- Why was this book written?
- Do you now have your own journal? If so, remember to please keep it, and read it a few years from now!
- What impact will your experiences from this book have on your life?

Today is the beginning of your journey as a lifelong learner. Enjoy!

A lifelong learner is one who loves the moment, seeks truth, knowledge, and wisdom. This is a person who has learned to accept self and others, who realizes the chance to make this a better world. A lifelong learner discovers new paths for growth, joy and love. The journey begins today . . .

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