



TRANSFORM COMMUNITIES
CHANGE KIDS' LIVES

RESILIENCE

HEALTHY CHOICES,
HEALTHY CHILDREN



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INTRODUCTION

ABOUT THE CAL RIPKEN, SR. FOUNDATION

During his 37-year career with the Baltimore Orioles organization, Cal Ripken, Sr. taught the basics of the game and life to players big and small. After he passed away, his sons and Major League Baseball players Cal and Bill recognized that not every child is lucky enough to have such a great mentor and role model. In this spirit, the Ripken family started the Cal Ripken, Sr. Foundation, a national 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, in 2001.

By teaching kids how to make positive choices no matter what life throws at them, the Cal Ripken, Sr. Foundation strives to help underserved youth fulfill their potential and become healthy, self-sufficient, successful adults.

ABOUT *HEALTHY CHOICES, HEALTHY CHILDREN*

With the support of community-based organizations, the Cal Ripken, Sr. Foundation provides programs, resources, training, and support across the country that directly impact the lives of at-risk youth. A primary component of this support is the *Healthy Choices, Healthy Children* (HCHC) program – a comprehensive life skills curriculum that provides youth development professionals and mentors with a vehicle to begin meaningful conversations with kids who need it the most.

Through discussions about the choices they make today and the consequences that follow tomorrow, combined with activities demonstrating these lessons, youth learn to make productive decisions for their futures.

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THE GUIDING PRINCIPLES OF THE FOUNDATION

Cal Ripken, Sr. was a player, coach, and manager in the Baltimore Orioles organization for nearly four decades. He developed great players and, more importantly, great people through his style of coaching. No matter what you are teaching, you can use these four key ideas as your guide.

Keep it simple

Lessons on the field and in life are best learned when presented in a simple manner. Teach the basics and keep standards high.

Explain why

By helping kids understand the connections between everyday decisions and real-life outcomes, we can help them make smarter choices which guide their futures.

Celebrate the individual

When kids are encouraged to be themselves, respected for their opinion, and asked to share it, they are more likely to have a higher self-esteem and a better feeling of self-worth.

Make it fun

If kids aren't paying attention or participating, how much are they learning? Whether it's using a game to teach a concept or motivating kids with a little friendly competition, keeping kids engaged is essential.

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KEEPING KIDS ENGAGED

Here are some tips to help you structure activities that keep kids engaged, excited, and coming back:

- Have a plan
- Keep activities structured
- Use visual tools (diagrams, cones, props, etc.)
- Provide feedback
- Encourage, encourage, encourage
- Set parameters and stick to them
- Assign groups/teams
- If you use captains, be sure to rotate them often
- Set achievable goals
- Use short time increments
- Rotate activities frequently
- Let kids have input in the activities they like best
- Stay consistent and create routine
- Affirm kids when they do well



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ABOUT HCHC: RESILIENCE EDITION

“We constantly have to adjust and readjust to the situation and the condition.” – Cal Ripken, Sr.

Healthy Choices, Healthy Children (HCHC) has, and always will be, a vehicle to help young people make smart decisions on their path toward a productive adulthood. No one’s path is smooth, and that’s why resilience is so crucial.

As much as we wish we could protect our kids from getting hurt, we can’t. The best thing we can do is to equip them with the skills to pick themselves back up—a.k.a. resilience.

Resilience goes beyond avoiding stinkin’ thinkin’ or merely having a positive attitude—although that is a part of it. The most successful people in life are those who keep getting back up, no matter how many times they stumble or get knocked down. So, how do they do it? How do they keep doing it?

Resilient people don’t view challenges as setbacks but as motivation or opportunities to learn and do better next time. They’re willing to try different approaches. They’re strong enough to ask for help when they need it, and resourceful enough to grow their team when it will help them go further. They have a purpose or a passion that keeps them going relentlessly over life’s hurdles.

The *HCHC: Resilience* is a learning module designed for kids to learn and practice strategies that can build their resilience. By teaching kids a resilient approach to life, we can equip them with tools to land on their feet when challenges arise throughout their lives.

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ABOUT WHYTRY

At the WhyTry Organization, we are former students, counselors, teachers, mental health professionals, and corrections staff. We are youth advocates. Over the last 15 years, we have combined our experiences with research to develop tools that enable everyone in an organization to thrive – the adults, the straight-A students on the college track, the most at-risk kid from a broken home. The secret is resilience education, and through it, we've seen individuals and groups from a wide variety of backgrounds develop the capacity to access resilience.

The WhyTry Program uses a series of ten visual metaphors to teach social, emotional, and leadership principles. The program is evidence based, and has been proven to lower dropout, reduce failure, increase GPA, decrease expulsion, increase graduation rates, and improve positive behaviors in youth of all learning types. WhyTry's distinctive multisensory learning approach has given educators in over 16,000 schools and organizations the tools and skills they need to create a climate and culture of respect, resilience, and academic success; helping students to thrive not only in school, but in life.

The program can be used as a small group intervention, class, after-school or break program, or one on one. WhyTry's solution-focused approach fits perfectly in the RTI and PBIS intervention models, helping even the most at-risk students get back on the path to graduation.

To request a live demo or learn more about the WhyTry Program, visit www.whytry.org.



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USING THIS WITH THE HCHC COACHES MANUAL

We recommend that you use HCHC: Resilience together with the HCHC Coaches Manual. If you are using HCHC: Resilience by itself, skip the Recommended Implementation steps below and go directly to the Game Plan section on the next page.

This edition is designed to help you guide youth in connecting the roots of resilience, as taught in the *HCHC Coaches Manual*, to bouncing back even stronger.

Once the kids have learned a little bit about resilience, it's time to put those lessons into some real life examples. *HCHC: Resilience* introduces kids to a variety of strategies for strengthening resiliency in all areas of their lives.

Recommended Implementation

1. Start by using the *HCHC Coaches Manual* to teach the lesson on "Resilience."
2. Use Lesson 1 in *HCHC: Resilience* as a bridge from resilience by avoiding stinkin' thinkin' to actively building their resilience.
3. Instead of using the activity from the Coaches Manual, have the kids complete the activity following Lesson 1 introducing how lifelines help us stay out of the flood zone.
4. Continue using the lessons and activities in this edition to teach youth how to flip the switch, channel their emotions positively, jump their hurdles, and stay motivated.

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This edition of HCHC is a guide to help you build resilience within the kids you serve.

What is resilience?

We define resilience as the ability to bounce back, even when you have every reason to shut down – but you keep getting back up! Resilience can be taught to youth when they understand that their challenges, problems, and setbacks can be used as fuel to get them on the path to a better life or on a path toward solving the problems they face.

Can it really be taught?

The short answer: Yes! Research has shown that every kid is capable of learning and applying the principles of resilience. This is great news, because in a world of increasing pressure and uncertainty, resilience is more necessary than ever. When resilience improves, so do a lot of other things – self-concept, attitudes, motivation, grades, emotional health, and the belief in a positive future.

The formula for teaching resilience consists of 3 R's: Relationship + Relevance = Resilience. Students are able to learn and develop resilience when we as coaches (or mentors or teachers – we refer to all adults in this role as coaches) create a relevant learning environment and foster positive relationships that help kids feel respected and welcomed.

The First R: Relationship

Lasting change and motivation don't lie in interventions alone, but in the relationship you establish with the kids. Ever heard of "one-upping"? It's something that happens when one person is in a position of power and the other person is not. In relationships with adults who have control in their lives, kids often feel "one down," unimportant, or that what they want or think doesn't matter.

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Of course, as a coach, you are responsible for the safety and progress of all the youth you serve. Surrendering the one-up is not a loss of control; it is a way to earn trust and respect. The more your kids trust and respect you as a person who genuinely cares about them—not just someone who has the official title or authority—the stronger that relationship is and the more effective you will be as a coach and mentor.

It is an uncommon coach who makes the extra effort to celebrate the individual and who is willing to surrender the one-up. And it is the uncommon coach whose support and belief in our abilities can motivate us to persevere through the toughest challenges.

Here are some other strategies you can start incorporating into your lessons to celebrate the individual and **surrender the one-up relationship**. These strategies will let the kids know that you value them for who they are, that you believe in them and their potential, and that you trust that they are the authorities on themselves.

1. **I know your name**

Greet each kid by name as they enter or leave your program. Shake their hand or give them a high-five. This sends a message to the kids that they are important to you and that you care about them.



2. **Show and tell**

Invite the kids into your world by sharing personal stories and information about yourself. This also makes you more approachable.

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3. **Hallmark moment**

Give each kid a positive personal note at some point during your time together. Mentioning something that they have improved upon is not only a way to celebrate the individual, but also a way to show you're paying attention.

4. **Celebrate success**

Take opportunities to draw special attention to successes that kids have, whether it be an individual or a group effort. If you find out that someone won a game, made a team, or performed at a concert, for example, recognize those achievements in front of the group. Even team wins can be an opportunity to call out the unique contributions of various team members.

5. **Dress it up**

For a special occasion or just for fun, dress up for the class. Wear a tuxedo, a costume, a suit, a dress, or some formal or different attire that shows that this class is important and worth the extra effort on your part. This will add variety to your lesson and keep kids' attention as well.

6. **You're my leader**

Allow kids the opportunity to lead in different situations, especially using a unique talent or something they enjoy doing. Many kids are used to being put down. This can be an effective way to build up an individual and put them in a positive light in front of the other kids. It also allows you as the coach to show confidence and trust in them.

7. **True or false**

Share two true stories about yourself and one false story and have the kids try and guess which one is false. Allow the group to get to know you a little better.

8. **Getting to know you**

If this is your first time meeting as a group, start your first lesson with some icebreakers. See some suggestions at [RipkenFoundation.org/](https://www.ripkenfoundation.org/)

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The Second R: Relevance

Each of the four lessons in this book is designed to cater to students of a variety of learning types. Each lesson incorporates a few multisensory tools, which include:

- Hands-on/kinesthetic activities
- Art and pictures
- Music
- Take-home journal prompts*
- Discussion questions

Do your best to incorporate as many of the recommended multisensory tools into your lessons as possible. Celebrate the individual and be flexible in catering to the needs of your specific group. You might watch engaging video clips that illustrate the concepts. Instead of the suggested songs, you might play appropriate music of your kids' choosing that reinforces the principles. Rewrite the journal prompts to address the issues the kids in your group are dealing with. Find as many ways as you can to speak their language and reach them in a way they will understand and remember.

*Each lesson contains suggested take-home journal prompts. These are not homework, only an optional way for the kids to process and record their thoughts throughout the week. You may print these prompts from RipkenFoundation.org/Resource-Portal and distribute to students, or encourage them to keep their own notebook.

Through the four sessions, you will help your kids work through WhyTry's Motivation Formula. We encourage you to hand out these worksheets at the beginning of each session. This allows kids to follow along visually and to make notes, using the worksheet to work through a challenge in their life and complete each step as they learn about it.

NOTE: Kids may hold onto their Motivation Formula worksheets, but it might be easier if coaches simply collected them at the end of each session and then redistributed them at the beginning of the next to make sure they don't get lost!

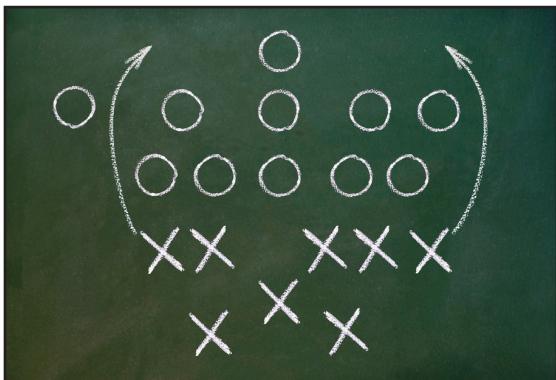
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In addition to introducing resilience and why it's important, we will cover these concepts and strategies:

- The power of motivation when it is channeled positively
- Why we should focus on what we can control
- That we are worthy and valuable regardless of any labels or circumstances
- Positive self-talk and how to use it
- How to flip the switch and view challenges as opportunities to grow stronger
- The steps to jumping life's hurdles
- Why it's important to grow our team and use our lifelines; that it's okay to ask for help
- The motivational power of self-respect, having people who count on us, and finding our purpose or passion

COACHING TIP: Familiarize yourself with all the lessons and activities before you begin using *HCHC: Resilience* with your kids. Visit [RipkenFoundation.org/Resource-Portal](https://www.ripkenfoundation.org/Resource-Portal) so that you can download and print materials for the activities.



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LESSON 1: CONNECTING THE DOTS

Key Points:

- We can practice resilience by avoiding stinkin' thinkin' and having a positive attitude towards ourselves. Being resilient helps us be strong enough to handle whatever life throws our way in a positive manner.
- When we face challenges or get down on ourselves, we might act in ways that are unhealthy or that can set us back from our goals. If we want a different outcome, we need to make different choices.
- The key to resilience is finding a way to flip the switch, channeling our emotions and energy in a productive way.

Discussion Questions:

NOTE: You will need 2 balloons and a pin. Blow up the first balloon halfway, but don't tie it. Hide the pin in one of your hands. Ask the first question below, then blow the balloon up a little more with each response. Encourage everyone to participate until the balloon pops. If it doesn't, you can secretly use the pin.

- **This balloon represents the challenges that we have. What are some challenges in your life that make you mad, upset, angry, or frustrated?**
 - *Possible answers: didn't make the basketball team, classmate said something mean to me, my family always takes my sister's side, didn't get the sneakers I wanted*
- **Why did the balloon pop? Are there similar situations in our lives that make us "pop" or lose control? Why?**
 - *Possible answers: making the basketball team was important to me, my classmate said something mean about something I didn't like about myself, I feel like I can't do anything when my family takes my sister's side*

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- **What are some of the things we do when we pop?**
 - *Possible answers: yell at people, throw things around, break things, slam doors, say things we don't mean*
- **What happens after we pop?**
 - *Possible answers: our friends and family are hurt and upset at us, things get damaged, things have gotten worse*

NOTE: Blow up the second balloon halfway. Ask the next question and let out a little bit of air with each response until the balloon is deflated.

- **How can we channel our emotions in positive ways?**
 - *Possible answers: practice even harder so I can make the basketball team next year, be so good at something that it won't matter what my classmate says, put energy into looking for a job so I can save up for those sneakers*
- **What happens when we channel our emotions in a positive way?**
 - *Possible answers: I can get better at basketball, I don't let other people's comments bother me as much, I found a job and was able to save money for sneakers and other things I wanted*

Stinkin' thinkin' is when we think or speak negatively about others, but it is also when we think or speak negatively about ourselves. How we think about ourselves affects the choices we make and how successful we are. Having a positive attitude (avoiding stinkin' thinkin') about ourselves is key to being resilient. **Resilience** helps us be strong enough to handle whatever life throws our way in a positive manner.

So what is **resilience**?

If you pull on a rubber band, it snaps back. If you fill a balloon with more air, it can stretch. However, there is still a breaking point. Beyond a certain point, that rubber band will break or that balloon will pop.

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LESSON 1: CONNECTING THE DOTS

We can't stretch endlessly to contain all of our frustration, anger, and sadness every time we face a new challenge. We need to learn how to gain control, like a muscle.

When we trip or fall, how do we get back up? We might use our hands to push ourselves back up—which requires using our hand and arm muscles. We use our leg muscles to stand back up.

Resilience is like a muscle that helps us jump back up when we stumble or fall. Being **resilient** means that when challenges come along in life, we have the ability to channel them in a positive direction instead of “popping” like a balloon and losing control.

Why is resilience important?

We just talked about our challenges. How many of those can we control? Life will throw us a lot of pitches, and some of them will be curveballs. What we can always control is how we handle them.

When something is important to us and things go the way we want, like winning a game, we're usually pretty happy about it. We're excited, and we have a surge of energy. When we lose a game, it's natural to get upset.

COACHING TIP: Make it fun! Ask everyone to imagine winning a game and act out their reaction. Then ask them to act out their reaction if they had lost a game instead. Ask the kids to describe the difference in their energy levels.

We're humans, not machines. Those feelings, or emotions, are going to come whether we want them to or not. And how we feel affects our energy.

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LESSON 1: **CONNECTING THE DOTS**

Imagine a river. Most days it flows along nicely. What's along the river? Usually there are a lot of plants growing because of all that water. Riverbanks are a good place for farms and growing food.

COACHING TIP: Keep it simple! Go online ahead of your session and find some pictures to show how powerful water can be, both in positive and negative ways. You can also find the pictures of water included in this lesson at [RipkenFoundation.org/Resource-Portal](https://www.ripkenfoundation.org/Resource-Portal).

Now, can we control how much water flows in the river? Can we control the weather?

If it never rained, the river would dry up. What happens when there's a really big storm with a lot of rain?

The water level keeps rising. If it rises higher than the riverbanks, and there's nowhere else for the water to go, then it floods. And flooding can be very destructive.



We can't always predict big storms, but we know that they're going to come our way sometimes. We can channel a river by building a dam.

A dam is a barrier that controls how much water flows from one part of the river to another part, so that each part doesn't get more water at a time than it can handle. A dam does not stop the flow of water; it simply redirects the flow in a more controlled way.

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LESSON 1: **CONNECTING THE DOTS**

Water is very powerful. If we don't channel water, it can flood and cause a lot of damage. Just as floods in nature cause widespread damage, flooding in our personal lives doesn't just cause damage to us but it also affects those around us.

When we channel water, such as with a dam, we prevent flooding. But we can do more than that. The water just keeps flowing. We can also put that energy to use for us. That's why, where there is a dam, there is usually also a power station that captures energy from water and turns it into electricity.



COACHING TIP: Explain why! Emphasize that dams do not stop water, just as we cannot stop our emotions, but that dams help to manage the water in a beneficial manner, just as we can manage even negative emotions in a productive way. We might be upset about losing a game, but we can use that frustration as fuel to work harder so we can do better in the next game. Regardless of the score, we will have improved our skills and become better athletes! If we had won the last game, we might not have been motivated to put in the extra effort.

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LESSON 1: CONNECTING THE DOTS

Like water, our emotions can be very powerful. When we don't channel our emotions, our life can become a **flood zone**.

How do we know when we're in the **flood zone**?

- We act in ways that hurt ourselves or others.
- We respect ourselves less.
- We have low energy.
- We choose the easier path instead of the harder path that will take us where we want to go.

What can we do when we find ourselves in the **flood zone**?



We are always making choices. When we make mistakes, it's the next choice we make that matters.

We can start by looking at the choices that got us into the flood zone. What are different choices we could make that will help us get out of the flood zone and flowing towards where we want to go?

Change is not easy, but if we keep making the same choices that got us into the flood zone in the first place, we're going to get stuck there.

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LESSON 1: CONNECTING THE DOTS

Instead of choosing the easier path, we can aim above the mark. We can put in the effort and make the choice—like building a dam and a power station—that allows us to do positive things.

In addition to making different decisions, we can also reach out to our lifelines: these are people who care about us and can help us get out of the flood zone.



Who can be our lifelines?

- Parents, grandparents, other family members
- Positive friends who respect us
- Teachers, counselors, school officials
- Coaches or other mentors

COACHING TIP: Make sure your kids know that you are one of their lifelines! Reinforce this by continuing to celebrate the individual and surrender the one-up. Not only will you build positive relationships with your group, but you will also be modeling healthy relationship-building skills for your kids.

Don't be afraid to reach out and grow your team! Building positive relationships with people who can act as our **lifelines** is another way that we can make our **resilience** muscle stronger.

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LESSON 1 ACTIVITY: **FLOOD ZONE**

What you will need for this activity:

- Enough space for all the kids to move around
- 1 Motivation Formula worksheet for each participant (download from [RipkenFoundation.org/Resource-Portal](https://www.ripkenfoundation.org/Resource-Portal).)
- A pen or pencil for each participant
- Stopwatch or clock
- Optional:
 - Upbeat songs and a way to play music
 - 1 balloon (uninflated) per participant

COACHING TIP: Make it fun! During this activity, you can play the song “The Light,” which can be found at [RipkenFoundation.org/Resource-Portal](https://www.ripkenfoundation.org/Resource-Portal). Or you can play any upbeat music! Just listen to all the lyrics ahead of time to ensure the songs are age-level appropriate.

Divide the participants into 2 groups. (You won't need the worksheets until after playing the game.)

Players in the first group will be the Water. Players in the second group will be the Land.

Have the Land players form a circle. They should be arm length apart. Once they are evenly spread out, they are locked into position. Land players cannot move their feet, but they can move their arms.

The Water players must get into the middle of the circle. Water has to dance around the circle for 60-90 seconds, starting when you say the “go” word. They must close their eyes and have to keep moving around the circle.

If a Water player stops moving or goes outside the circle—they are in the Flood Zone. Facilitators should call players by name to let them know they are in the Flood Zone. Players in the Flood Zone will open their eyes and sit down outside the circle.

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LESSON 1 ACTIVITY: **FLOOD ZONE**

In this round, every Land player earns a point for each Water player in the Flood Zone. Every Water player earns a point for each Water player still inside the circle.

Then have the players switch roles so that the Land players are now Water and vice versa. Play another round with the same rules.

Gather everyone to discuss the following:

- What were the challenges in this game?
- How did you feel when you ended up in the Flood Zone?

Then introduce some changes to the rules of the game:

- Points can now only be earned in rounds when you are playing Water. That means you only get a point if you can avoid the Flood Zone.
- If you are a Water player, you can find an ally who is a Land player and ask them to help keep you out of the Flood Zone by giving you verbal directions. In return, you will help them avoid the Flood Zone in the next round.
- All other rules still apply.

Give everyone a minute to find allies. Play one round, then have the players switch roles again.

Give everyone a Motivation Formula worksheet and a pen or pencil. Discuss the following:

- What choices did you make in the second half of the game and how did this help or hurt you?
- How did your ally act as your lifeline?
- Are there similar situations at home, at school, or with another group?

Ask kids to put their names on their worksheets and then write responses for the first 3 steps with their challenge, different choices they can make, and their lifelines.

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LESSON 1 ACTIVITY: **FLOOD ZONE**

Remind kids that if things in their lives begin to overwhelm them, they should talk to someone (you, a parent, a teacher, a friend) and ask for help before their balloon pops. As in the game, things are easier when someone is there to help you.

COACHING TIP: Keep it simple! Give each kid a balloon (not inflated) to take with them. When they're angry, frustrated, or upset, the balloon can remind them of the choices they can make.

Collect the Motivation Formula worksheets for use during the next session. Make sure kids have put their names on them first!

Take-home Journal Prompts (Optional):

(Kids can use their own notebooks or you can download journal pages at [RipkenFoundation.org/Resource-Portal](https://www.ripkenfoundation.org/Resource-Portal))

Encourage participants to keep a journal recording their thoughts, observations, and positive self-talk throughout the week. Give them these prompts as ideas to get them started. Emphasize that this is not homework and you're not forcing them to do it. It's just something that will help them improve and reflect before meeting again.

- This week, did you find yourself in or approaching a flood zone?
- What choices did you make?
- Did you reach out to any of your lifelines?
- Were you able to channel your emotions and energy in a positive way?
- What choices will you make next time?

Kids can also reflect on these questions based on observing someone else they know who is in the flood zone or who is channeling their emotions positively.

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LESSON 2:

USE POSITIVE SELF-TALK TO TEAR OFF YOUR LABELS

Key Points:

- We are more than what we have done, what has happened to us, how other people label or perceive us, and what we have or don't have. No matter what, each of us is worthy and valuable.
- We cannot control what other people think or say about us. However, we can control how we think about ourselves, the choices we make, and the actions we take.
- How we think about ourselves is powerful. One way to channel our emotions is through positive self-talk. No matter what anyone else says, we can let "the real me" shine.

Warm-Up: Mind Over Matter

NOTE: You will need to prepare ahead of time. For each participant, tie a 15-inch piece of string to a ring-shaped piece of candy as a weight.

Have each participant stand and hold their string in one hand so that the weight (candy) hangs down. They should keep their arm parallel to the ground. Their arms and hands must not be touching anything.

Now have them stop the weight from swinging by using their other hand to stop its motion. Tell them that they are going to make the weight start to swing by just using their mind power. They must stay still!

Have them focus carefully on the weight and think, "left, right," while imagining it moving from left to right.

While they are doing this, you will be saying slowly, "Left, right, left, right."

Repeat this phrase until the weights start to swing back and forth. Most of the kids will have their weights moving left and right. This is because the mind sends signals to the hand to move the

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LESSON 2: **USE POSITIVE SELF-TALK TO TEAR OFF YOUR LABELS**

weight in the same direction as the command you are giving. The success depends on the fine motor development of the students as well as how hard they are concentrating.

If you really want to amaze them, change the commands from "left to right" to "front, back," or (if you have older kids) "clockwise" or "counter-clockwise" and have them focus on the same movement.

COACHING TIP: Keep it simple! Hand out the Motivation Formula worksheets that the kids started last time so that they can visually follow along as you discuss the lesson.

Last time, we talked about how our emotions and anger can actually be channeled in a positive way, like water going through a dam. The first of these dams is called **positive self-talk**.

Think about the activity we just did. How many of you were able to make the weight at the end of the string follow my commands? What does this tell us about the power of the mind?

A lot of our success in achieving goals depends on our ability to put "mind over matter." We have more power in our minds than we ever use. When we have a challenge, the things we tell ourselves about the problem have a big impact on how we handle the challenge. Our thoughts and our **self-talk**, or basically how we talk to ourselves, can impact our goals.

That's why we want to use **positive self-talk**, using our inner voice to direct our motivation (energy) in a positive direction. It is a positive direction if we are not hurting ourselves or others.

It's important that we focus our self-talk on what we do have control over. Can we control what other people think or say about us? Are there challenges in life that are outside of our control?

RESILIENCE & THE MOTIVATION FORMULA

LESSON 2:

USE POSITIVE SELF-TALK TO TEAR OFF YOUR LABELS

COACHING TIP: Keep it simple and explain the why. If kids seem to have trouble grasping the difference, ask for some concrete examples and walk through them with the group. For example, we can't control our graduation requirements at school, but we can control how much effort we put into passing our classes.

If we define ourselves by things we cannot control, then what does that mean when something bad happens?

We are more than what we have done, what has happened to us, how other people label or perceive us, and what we have or don't have. Each of us is worthy, and each of us can control how we think about ourselves.

When you **flip the switch** to turn the lights on, the room doesn't change. But what you can see in that room changes. And that usually makes it easier to move around the room without tripping over something. That's why it's important to channel our motivation and energy in a positive direction, and **positive self-talk** is one way to do that.

We don't have to define ourselves by what happens outside of us. We don't have to let others define us (or **label** us) either. Instead, we can **flip the switch** to focus on the good qualities we have inside and let them shine. This is called focusing on "the real me."

The more we show others "the real me," the more opportunity, freedom, and self-respect will be available to us; and the more we'll be tearing off the labels others have given us. When we choose to focus on the things we *can* control instead of the things we *can't*, we are practicing resilience.

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LESSON 2: USE POSITIVE SELF-TALK TO TEAR OFF YOUR LABELS

Discussion Questions:

NOTE: Give each participant a pen or pencil and the “Labels” half of The Can worksheet (download from RipkenFoundation.org/Resource-Portal). Print as many copies as you have participants and cut them all in half. Participants should fill out the can marked “Labels” during the discussion. Save the halves marked “The Real Me” for the activity.

- **What do labels on a can of food tell us?**
 - *Possible answers: what’s inside, nutritional facts, ingredients*
- **What would happen if we walked into a grocery store and it was filled with cans that didn’t have labels?**
 - *Possible answers: it would be confusing, couldn’t tell beans from tomato sauce*
- **Sometimes we form a first impression of people in the same way we do with cans in the grocery store. But have you ever formed a first impression of a person and found out later that you were wrong about them?**
 - *Possible answers: yes, I thought police officers were scary but they are nice; I thought the new kid was boring but he is really funny*
- **What are some labels you’ve been given that you do not like, or that you think are the wrong impression of you? (Ask participants to write their labels on The Can worksheet.)**
 - *Possible answers: troublemaker, nerdy, lazy, stupid, loser, bully*

COACHING TIP: Surrender the one-up and share one of your own. It can be really powerful for your kids to know that you have also struggled with negative labels and to see how you have overcome them.

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USE POSITIVE SELF-TALK TO TEAR OFF YOUR LABELS

- **What would it look like if you woke up tomorrow and those labels were gone?**
 - *Possible answers: I'd feel better about myself, like I could do anything*
- **How can you start showing others “the real me,” or the good qualities inside of you, at home, at school, and with your friends?**
 - *Possible answers: do homework to the best of my ability, speak up when I have a good idea, show my family how responsible I can be, use my loud voice and positive spirit to cheer on my team*
- **Think of a time when you used positive self-talk to get through a challenge or when you used a song or music to get pumped up for something. How did it help?**
 - *Possible answers: helped me focus on my goal and push the worries out of my mind, got me in a good mood so I could do my best*
- **We're going to do a positive self-talk activity in just a moment, but to warm up, we're going to turn to the person next to us and take turns discussing the following questions. You all have permission to brag right now!**
 - *What's one thing you like about yourself?*
 - *What do others like about you?*
 - *What is one of your greatest accomplishments?*
 - *What is one of your goals or dreams?*
 - *What's one positive label you would give yourself?*

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LESSON 2 ACTIVITY: **THE CAN**

What you will need for this activity:

- “The Real Me” half of The Can worksheet for each participant (download from RipkenFoundation.org/Resource-Portal and cut in half)
- Pens, pencils, markers for all participants
- Optional: uplifting songs and a way to play music

COACHING TIP: Make it fun! During this activity, you can play the songs “The River” and “Labels 1,” which can be found at RipkenFoundation.org/Resource-Portal. Or you can play any music with an uplifting message! Just listen to all the lyrics ahead of time to ensure the songs are age-level appropriate.

Ask everyone if they are ready to flip the switch and tear off their labels. Then have each kid crumple or rip up their “Labels” pictures from the earlier discussion and throw them in the recycling bin.

Give the kids “The Real Me” half of The Can worksheet. Tell them that, on this can, they should write their name and then words and phrases describing “the real me.” These can include their strengths, goals, dreams, things they like about themselves, their passions and interests, a creed or motto for their life, something positive they want to be or achieve, something they will start telling themselves (positive self-talk), or things others like about them.

Allow kids time to decorate and personalize this can. At the end, ask for volunteers to share their “real me” labels with the group. Or have everyone walk around to check out everyone else’s “real me” labels.

Encourage the kids to put their “real me” labels someplace they will see every day, like their locker or their bedroom. This will remind them to use positive self-talk and let the “real me” shine.

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LESSON 2 ACTIVITY: **THE CAN**

Collect the Motivation Formula worksheets for use during the next session.



Take-home Journal Prompts (Optional):

(Kids can use their own notebooks or you can download journal pages at [RipkenFoundation.org/Resource-Portal](https://www.ripkenfoundation.org/Resource-Portal))

Encourage participants to keep a journal recording their thoughts, observations, and positive self-talk throughout the week. Give them these prompts as ideas to get them started. Emphasize that this is not homework and you're not forcing them to do it. It's just something that will help them improve and reflect before meeting again.

- Who do you know who has torn off negative labels in the past? What did they do to show others "the real me"?
- How can you start showing others "the real me," at home, at school, and with your friends?
- What is some positive self-talk you have used or that you can begin using?
- Write a song or poem or draw a picture that includes positive self-talk.
- Talk to a trusted friend or family member about the positive qualities they see in you. List their response on this page.

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WRAP UP

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LESSON 3: **JUMP HURDLES WITH CHARACTER AND HEART**

Key Points:

- Everyone fails or makes mistakes. Just because we fail doesn't make us failures. What matters is what we choose to do next.
- If we want to get out of the flood zone or achieve our dreams, we have to identify the problem and create options.
- Action is important to keep us moving forward, one step or choice at a time. Focusing on our own lane helps us stay on track.
- Grow your team. Surround yourself with supportive people and ask for help if needed. Knowing that others believe in or count on us can help us jump back up when we stumble or get tired. This is called having character and heart.

Warm-Up: Count Your Fingers

Ask the members of the group to pair off. Tell the group that they will put their hands behind their back and, on the count of three, show their fingers to their partner. Each partner in the group will hold up from 0 to 10 fingers. The first person who can count the total number of fingers on their partner's hands and their own hands is the winner. Call up a partner to demonstrate, then begin. Tell the group that there will be three chances to determine the overall winner. Once everyone is ready, count to three and ask all partners to show their hands. Repeat this process two more times to determine the overall winners.

Discussion Questions:

- **How many of you counted your partner's fingers and then counted your own?**
- **How many of you only did that in the first round and then played differently in the next two rounds?**

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- **Who were the people who usually won the activity?** (It should be the participants who decided ahead of time how many fingers they would show their partners.)
- **Why is it important to make up your mind and have a plan or strategy ahead of time?**
 - *Possible answers: so you're prepared, so it's one less thing to think about when you're playing the game (can be faster)*
- **Who can tell me what a hurdle is? Have any of you ever jumped a hurdle?**

COACHING TIP: Make it fun! Grab a couple props that can act as hurdles, like cones or boxes, and ask for a volunteer to demonstrate. After he or she is done, leave the hurdles out for later use. You may also want to have a bandana or scarf on hand to use as a blindfold.



- **How can a hurdle be like a challenge in life?**
 - *Possible answers: they can trip you up, you have to jump over it to get to your goal or the finish line*
- **What are some hurdles you have faced?**
 - *Possible answers: failed a test, got injured before a soccer game, moved to a new neighborhood and didn't know anyone*

We all face difficult situations or hurdles in life, but resilient people know a secret: the steps to take to jump back up and overcome them.

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LESSON 3: **JUMP HURDLES WITH CHARACTER AND HEART**

NOTE: We recommend you provide the kids with a copy of the “Jumping Your Hurdles” worksheet available at [RipkenFoundation.org/Resource-Portal](https://www.ripkenfoundation.org/Resource-Portal) so that they can follow along while you walk through the steps to jumping hurdles in life. You can also provide pens or pencils so that participants can fill out the sheet. If so, read the italicized prompts out loud.

COACHING TIP: Make it fun! If you used props as hurdles during the discussion, ask for another volunteer to demonstrate. Blindfold them and then move the hurdles around. Ask them if they feel like they can safely jump over the new hurdles. Don't let them actually jump, but leave the blindfold on.

Step 1: Identify the problem.

What's a problem or hurdle you're facing? How big is it? We can't jump over a hurdle if we can't see it or don't know anything about it.



Worksheet: Write that problem under Step 1 on your paper. Remember that you can't overcome someone else's problem for them.

Sometimes we have setbacks that are caused by things outside of our control. Sometimes these hurdles are the consequences of decisions we made and actions we took. Everyone fails or makes mistakes. Just because we fail doesn't make us failures. What matters is what we decide to do next. We can stay stuck in the flood zone, or we can figure out a way to jump our hurdles.

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COACHING TIP: Ask your blindfolded volunteer for a couple options for how he or she might get over the hurdles. For example, they may take small steps and feel their way to step over the hurdles. Or they might ask a friend to give them directions to walk around the hurdles. If they are stumped, they can ask the group for ideas. Then allow them to take the blindfold off. Ask them how they would navigate the hurdles now that they can see them. Then thank them for being brave enough to demonstrate!

Step 2: Create options.

Now that we can clearly see the hurdle, what are some options we can create? If a hurdle seems impossible to jump over, you probably don't know all the options. Those options might include asking someone else with a different point of view to help you see the hurdle more clearly.

Worksheet: Under Step 2, write three options you can take to jump your hurdle.

Not all of the options we come up with are going to work, so it's important to come up with more than one. If one doesn't work, avoid stinkin' thinkin' with positive self-talk or by finding the humor in the situation. Refuse to give up and try the next option.

Step 3: Get help.

Who can help us get over our hurdles? Who are our lifelines? Or, who can help us with the options we've created?

Worksheet: Under Step 3, write three positive people in your life who can help you jump your hurdle or overcome your problem.

Step 4: Take action.

Previously we discussed how, if we want different outcomes, we need to make different choices. But we also need to commit and follow through. What behaviors do we need to stop or start?

Worksheet: Under Step 4, make a list of behaviors

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you need to stop in order to jump your hurdle. Now make a list of behaviors you can add. Focus your energy and thoughts on these positive behaviors. Circle one of the behaviors you've decided to stop and one you've decided to start. Start making this change today!

Step 5: Believe in change.

Worksheet: Under Step 5, circle where you are in your belief that you can change. If you don't believe change can happen, it won't.

Change can be difficult, but it is always possible! Just think back to something in your life that used to be hard or scary and now comes naturally. It's difficult to learn how to do something new or different, like riding a bike or telling time on a clock. Or sometimes it's just hard to remember, like if you get a dog and now you have to remember to feed your dog every day. But if we keep trying, it becomes easier.

Think of your favorite athlete or musician. What might their self-talk sound like before a big game or concert?

Step 6: Jump back up.

If you trip, how will jumping back up make you stronger?

We aren't perfect. We all make mistakes. Life isn't always fair. The hurdles in our way can cause us to feel pain, to stumble, and to sometimes fall. What makes you resilient is your ability to jump back up every time you fall. There is no limit to how many times you can apply these six steps.

Worksheet: Write some positive self-talk under Step 6. For example, "You only lose if you give up, and you will always win if you jump back up."

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LESSON 3: JUMP HURDLES WITH CHARACTER AND HEART

Having a plan, including these six steps, will help us jump our hurdles. However, when we're really tired of jumping back up, motivation is really important.

How can we stay motivated?

Think about running a relay race. There are two ways you can try to win the race.

Strategy 1: Watch the other teams and run only as fast as you need to stay ahead of them.

This can work. But there are some downsides:

- It's easy to trip if you keep your eyes on the other lanes instead of where you're putting your feet.
- If you only run fast enough to beat the other runners, other teams still have a chance to catch up later on in the relay.

Comparing ourselves to others doesn't help us win the race; it just means we're taking our eyes off the prize!

Strategy 2: Run as fast as you can to your teammate who is waiting for you to tag them.

Why is the second strategy more effective?

- You focus on what you can control, which is how fast you run.
- You keep your eye on your finish line, not anybody else's.
- You don't want to let your teammates down.

Knowing that other people are counting on you to succeed can be a very strong motivator.

For example, police officers or firefighters might be scared or tired, but they don't give up because people are counting on them to keep them safe. Maybe it's a younger brother or sister who looks up to you and believes in you.

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LESSON 3: **JUMP HURDLES WITH CHARACTER AND HEART**

This is called **character and heart**. This means that even when the hurdles are huge and life is hard, you keep getting back up and moving forward:

- Because people are counting on you
- Out of respect for people who care about you
- Out of respect for yourself

*NOTE: If participants are following along on the Motivation Formula, **character and heart** is Dam #2.*

Just as the people around us can be our lifelines, they can motivate us to keep jumping back up.

However, we cannot control what other people are going to do or whether they believe in us or not. What we can control is how we think about ourselves.

When we have the self-respect not to give up on ourselves, nobody can take that away from us. Respecting ourselves also helps us jump our hurdles with **character and heart**.

We can use positive self-talk to remind ourselves that we are worthy and that, with enough effort in the right direction, and by learning each time we stumble, we can do better the next time we jump back up.



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LESSON 3 ACTIVITY: UNFAIR TOWER

What you will need for this activity:

- Per team of 3-4 participants
 - 1 paper bag containing between 16 and 48 plastic straws (number should vary)*
 - Roll of masking tape
- Extra plastic straws
- A ruler
- Dice
- Optional: upbeat songs and a way to play music

**NOTE: Each team should get a different number of straws, i.e. face different circumstances. Place the straws in the bags ahead of time so that participants will not know the bags are different until opening them.*

Create teams of 3-4. Give each team a paper bag and a roll of tape.

Explain that the goal is to use these materials to build the tallest freestanding tower in 10 minutes. When they begin to notice the inequality between the materials, tell them to do their best with what they have been given.

COACHING TIP: Make it fun! During this activity, you can play the song “Get Back Up,” which can be found at RipkenFoundation.org/Resource-Portal. Or you can play any upbeat music!

After the teams have been working on their towers for 5 minutes, interrupt them to have each team roll 1 die. The number they roll corresponds with one of the new conditions below:

1. During construction, strong winds blew away half of the straws that you have left. Take half of your remaining straws and turn them into your coach.
2. You have been given a grant by the city. You may go to your coach and receive 4 extra straws.
3. The worker’s union has declared a silence strike against your company. Your team members may no longer talk for the rest of the building time.

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LESSON 3 ACTIVITY: **UNFAIR TOWER**

4. All of your workers have been injured in an accident. From now on you may only use your non-dominant hands. (Keep your dominant hand behind your back!)
5. Your tower has experienced an earthquake and was completely destroyed. You must take apart your tower entirely and start over.
6. Your team is doing a good job. Keep it up!

The teams then continue the building process following these changes. At the end of the building time, have everyone stop and take all hands off for fifteen seconds before measuring the height. The tallest tower wins!

After declaring a winner, debrief with these questions:

- How was your building plan developed? How did your plan work out?
- How did you feel when you noticed some teams had more or less materials than you did?
- How did the surprise challenge help or hurt your team?
- Are there ways in which the surprise challenge motivated your team to be more creative or do better than you thought you could?
- Did any of you use character and heart to motivate you to keep going?
- Did any of you use the steps to jumping hurdles?
- How can the steps to jumping hurdles and character and heart help us when unfair hurdles come along in life?



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LESSON 3 ACTIVITY: UNFAIR TOWER

Take-home Journal Prompts (Optional):

(Kids can use their own notebooks or you can download journal pages at RipkenFoundation.org/Resource-Portal)

Encourage participants to keep a journal recording their thoughts, observations, and positive self-talk throughout the week. Give them these prompts as ideas to get them started. Emphasize that this is not homework and you're not forcing them to do it. It's just something that will help them improve and reflect before meeting again.

- Who are people you care about and who care about you?
 - Who do you call on when:
 - You want to watch a movie?
 - You feel lonely?
 - Your parents are upset with you and you need someone to talk to?
 - You do something awesome and want to celebrate?
 - You need advice?
 - You want to play a game?
 - You have some new music and you want someone to listen to it with you?
 - You have a secret you want to share?
 - Who calls on you when:
 - He/she has a problem?
 - He/she needs advice?
 - Who is a friend who:
 - Will be a friend forever?
 - Needs you the most?
 - You have a great deal of respect for?
 - Do any of these people motivate you to jump your hurdles?
- Based on your responses on the Jumping Hurdles paper we completed in class, write out a game plan for jumping one hurdle in your life.

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LESSON 4: **FIND YOUR PURPOSE**

Key Points:

- Challenges help us learn and grow stronger, like building a muscle. Strengthening our resilience allows us to do things we weren't able to do before or to do them better so we can get closer to achieving our dreams or goals.
- Another way to channel our emotions and energy is by finding a purpose, interest, or passion that motivates us. We can overcome anything if we truly want something.
- By focusing on what we can control, we can use positive self-talk, flip the switch, reach out to our lifelines, and persevere in fulfilling our purpose or passion in life.

Warm-Up: What's your limit?

Give the kids 30 seconds to line up silently in order of height. Starting with the kids in the middle and at the ends of the line, pair off kids so that there is a noticeable height difference between partners. (If there's an odd number, then coaches can play as well.)

Once everyone has a partner, the taller partner should raise one hand up as high as possible with both feet flat on the ground. They need to keep holding their hands up until their partner gives them a high five.

COACHING TIP: If the shorter participants are having hard time figuring out how to reach the same height, remind them that there are only two rules: the taller partner has to keep both feet flat on the ground and they must keep their hand raised until their partner gives them a high five. Encourage the kids to ask why (or why not) in order to come up with a creative solution. As long as no one will get hurt, the sky is the limit!

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Discussion Questions:

- **If you were the shorter partner, how did you give your partner a high five?**
 - *Possible answers: jumped, stood on a chair, asked my partner to bend their knees*
- **When athletes lose a competition, get injured, or face another obstacle, do they walk away from the sport? Why or why not?**
 - *Possible answers: no, because they love playing that sport; no, because they want to be the best; no, because they don't want to let their team down*
- **What might athletes do instead?**
 - *Possible answers: work twice as hard to come back after an injury, use positive self-talk, encourage their teammates from the sidelines, learn from what went wrong and try a different way*
- **What are your passions? What would you keep doing even if you failed, just because you loved doing it?**
 - *Possible answers: football, basketball, dance, singing, art, science*
- **What kind of hurdles have you jumped over to keep pursuing your passions?**
 - *Possible answers: sprained my ankle so I had to train even harder after it healed to make up for lost time, held a bake sale to raise money for dance lessons, convinced the teacher to let me try an experiment in class*
- **Does anyone here have a family member who is or was in the military?**
- **What are some of the challenges that make it tough to serve in the military?**
 - *Possible answers: boot camp is difficult, you have to live far from home and your family, your living conditions might be uncomfortable, you can face dangerous situations*
- **In the US, we have a voluntary military. This means these men and women did not have to join. So why do people choose to serve?**

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- *Possible answers: to keep our country safe, they value freedom, they want to help people, believe it's the right thing to do*
- **When things get really tough, how do you think their purpose (the reason they serve) helps members of the military persevere?**
 - *Possible answers: they know that many other people are counting on them, they know that their work will be important even when they're not around anymore, if they didn't follow through on their commitment it would mean they are not acting like the person they want to be*
- **What are some things that you feel are important to do, even if you have to jump a lot of hurdles to do them?**
 - *Possible answers: being a good teammate, taking care of my brothers and sisters, making my community safer, curing diseases, helping people in need, making art that helps people see the world differently*

We've been talking about how resilience is like a muscle. The bones in our body provide the structure, otherwise we'd be like jelly! But we also couldn't move without our muscles. Which is a good thing, because while we can't change our bone structure, we can always build stronger muscles. We can't make ourselves taller, but with stronger leg muscles, we can jump higher to reach something.

Looking at challenges as an opportunity to grow stronger is another way to flip the switch. Every time we use positive self-talk, jump over hurdles, or otherwise channel our energy in a positive way, we are building our resilience. These choices often require more effort, but just as training harder helps us run faster or jump higher or play sports better, the hard work pays off in that we are able to do more and perform better. We can take on bigger challenges, achieve bigger goals. And we can be confident because we know that if we stumble, we also know how to get back up again.

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LESSON 4: FIND YOUR PURPOSE

Growing our teams—reaching out to our lifelines and to others who have a common goal—means we have more support. When the going gets tough, we can ask our teammates for help. That can be working together or it can be encouragement.



Relationships and the people on our team are one type of resource. The stronger muscles, whether it be resilience or skills or actual muscles, that we have built as a result of overcoming challenges—these, too, are resources.

However, growing your team goes both ways. Part of being a teammate is understanding that the choices we make affect the others on our team. Our teams can be a basketball team, our family, our friends, our community, other people who share our passion or purpose, or the people here in this room. It could also include people who don't even exist yet!

Some examples include the following:

- Police officers, firefighters, and other first responders all choose to work in jobs that are sometimes dangerous. They are human and not fearless. They are good at their jobs, but their desire to keep people safe enables them to be courageous in scary situations.
- Jackie Robinson played baseball because he loved it. Even though it was not easy for him to remain professional with the way people treated him, he knew that people were watching him as the first African American to

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LESSON 4: **FIND YOUR PURPOSE**

play in the major leagues. By aiming above the mark to set a positive example, Robinson showed people that the color of his skin did not matter and that athletes of different races could play side by side. Robinson was not only a great baseball player, but he paved the way for many others who came long after him to be judged by their talents and efforts instead of their skin color.

- Anna Dickinson grew up during the US Civil War. At age 19, she began writing articles about the wrongs of slavery and began giving speeches. She was hired to give speeches to audiences who were less than supportive to the cause, which sometimes put her in harm's way as people tried to dissuade her from speaking. When Dickinson was 21, she was invited to speak at the US House of Representatives to Congress and President Abraham Lincoln. At the time, public speaking was not considered something that women were allowed to do, making this a remarkable honor. Dickinson was credited with converting many of these people to the abolitionist cause—those working together to abolish, or end, slavery.

Not only did these people turn outward with their purpose and passion, but they also made sure to plug into good support systems. For Jackie Robinson, it was teammates like Pee Wee Reese, who made sure everyone could see that Robinson was a full-fledge member of the team by talking to him and putting his arm around him during warm-ups. When police officers and firefighters go into a dangerous situation, they know they're not going alone—their team members have their backs.

Last time we talked about how sometimes other people can motivate us to **persevere**, or to keep going even when the going gets tough. But the strongest motivations are often internal motivations, when we are driven by a **passion**, something we love doing, or a **purpose**, which is our reason for doing something.

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LESSON 4: **FIND YOUR PURPOSE**

When we look beyond our own wants and needs to direct our energy towards a greater purpose, this is **turning outward**. Our actions have consequences, and that means we also have the ability to make things better for other people. By growing our team, this gives us more character and heart to keep us motivated when the going gets tough! So your team could be your soccer team, your family, stray animals that need homes, all the kids in your neighborhood, other people who speak your language, or even your country or the world.



When we **turn outward** to combine our **passion** with a **purpose** that includes other people, this can be the most powerful motivator of all.

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LESSON 4 ACTIVITY: **HERO OF MY OWN STORY**

What you will need for this activity:

- 1 blank Motivation Formula worksheet per participant (download from [RipkenFoundation.org/Resource-Portal](https://www.ripkenfoundation.org/Resource-Portal))
- Blank paper for each participant (have enough so kids can have more than one if needed)
- Art supplies (pencils, markers, crayons, etc.)
- Optional: upbeat songs and a way to play music

COACHING TIP: Make it fun! During this activity, you can play the song “Change Up,” which can be found at [RipkenFoundation.org/Resource-Portal](https://www.ripkenfoundation.org/Resource-Portal). Or you can play any upbeat music! Just listen to all the lyrics ahead of time to ensure the songs are age-level appropriate.

Start by passing out a blank piece of paper and a blank Motivation Formula worksheet to each kid and disperse the art supplies evenly.

Ask the kids to reflect on the lesson and identify one thing they are passionate about or a purpose that inspires them and what they ultimately want to do with that.

Once they have picked something, let them know that they will be creating their own superhero comic book—starring themselves as the superhero, of course—about their passion or purpose and how they are going to achieve their goal (e.g. training really hard, going to college, going to auditions, etc.).



RESILIENCE & THE MOTIVATION FORMULA

LESSON 4 ACTIVITY: **HERO OF MY OWN STORY**

Kids can use the blank Motivation Formula handout as a guide. They can fill in the blanks and then draw the pictures, or they can use it as a guide and just incorporate the steps (challenge, choice, lifelines, positive self-talk, etc.) into their comic book.

However, let them know that they have to include a hurdle (e.g. failing a required class, not making the team or getting the part the first time).

They can draw as many or as few pictures for their comics as they would like, but it must show the following:

- What their passion/purpose is
- How they plan to achieve their goal
- Challenge or hurdle
- Another character who is their lifeline
- Positive self-talk
- How they jump back up to reach their goal

Once all the kids understand what is expected of them, let them create their own comic books! (Instead of drawing a grid for the comic, you can also have them fold the paper in quarters and use the crease lines.)

Display the final comic books around your building to remind the kids what they are working towards and how they can get there.

Remember to give everyone the Motivation Formula worksheets that they have worked on during previous sessions!

RESILIENCE & THE MOTIVATION FORMULA

LESSON 4 ACTIVITY: HERO OF MY OWN STORY



CHALLENGE FOR THE FUTURE!

Challenge your kids to keep flipping the switch and practicing resilience in their lives:

- Write a thank you note to someone who is one of your lifelines.
- Ask yourself every day what you can do to flip the switch.
- Turn outward by acting as a lifeline to others when you see them in a flood zone.
- Find people who can help you develop your passion, purpose, or interest and connect with them regularly.
- Be creative! Come up with your own ideas!

NOTES

WRAP UP

REINFORCING THE LESSONS

“Perfect practice makes perfect.” – Cal Ripken, Sr.

Research has shown that when resilience education is incorporated into everyday learning, kids improve their social skills, enjoy learning more, and get higher grades. That’s why, as a coach, it’s important that you continue to reinforce these concepts.

Kids don’t care how much you know until they know how much you care! Refer often to the strategies for surrendering the one-up relationship found in the Game Plan section. Develop your own strategies for connecting with the kids on a personal level.

Relevance is an essential part of the “3 R’s” of the resilience formula. Look for ways to celebrate the individual by creating a relevant learning environment that caters to every learning style. Reinforce concepts you’re teaching with music, art, video, and activities.

This guide has helped you create a shared language that you can keep using with your group. Point out when someone has jumped a hurdle, is showing “the real me,” or when someone in the news is stuck in the flood zone. Repetition will help the concepts stick.

Encourage the kids to turn outward with their passions. Plan a day where each kid shares their passion – whether it’s a sport, music, art, or something else entirely.

We can’t control what a kid’s life looks like. We can’t get rid of their hurdles or negative labels. What we can do is prepare them for life’s inevitable adversities by helping them develop the key skills of resilience. We can teach kids how to jump back up each time they fall. Being resilient will allow your kids to thrive in school, in sports, and in life. It starts with you, so set the tone and make it fun!

WRAP UP

RESOURCES

In addition to **RipkenFoundation.org**, here are some resources that might be helpful in your work with youth.

whytry.org
whytry.org/video

Fun Games
playworks.org/games

gameskidsplay.net

kidshealth.org

letsplay.com

familyfun.go.com/playtime

WRAP UP

CONNECT WITH US

You are on the front lines, empowering kids in your community each and every day. You're there through life's challenges, just as Cal Ripken, Sr. was for his kids and his players: teaching them how to make the best of every situation, leading by example, and encouraging them to reach their full potential in life.

At the Cal Ripken, Sr. Foundation, we see our role as supporting you in this shared mission.

Visit our website RipkenFoundation.org to learn more.

Visit our Resource Portal Section for more free activity resources.

Join the conversation:



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**The Cal Ripken, Sr. Foundation helps
build character and teach critical life
lessons to at-risk young people living in
America's most distressed communities.**



**TRANSFORM COMMUNITIES
CHANGE KIDS' LIVES**

RipkenFoundation.org