

Social and Emotional Learning in the Time of Distance Learning: An Online Resource for Educators Concerned About Children's Coping Skills

Lesson # 10

Rejection and Limiting Thoughts

(Narration appears in italics throughout this lesson.)

Always begin your class meeting with a Check-In.

A check in is a very important part of each session/lesson/meeting. "Checking in" with each other involves naming and acknowledging feelings, and is a great way to connect members of the group with each other, creating a sense of community. Checking In allows students to pause at the beginning of a session and, by naming their feelings, free up cognitive processing power for engagement in the session. Research has suggested that the check-in activity builds empathy among group members and strengthens group connections. Students are permitted to pass. If time is a problem, hand signals can be used by students to participate in the check in (thumb up, thumb horizontal, or thumb down).

Have the class watch the following video as a check-in activity. Ask students to think about the phrase: "Give yourself credit for trying" means.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p1HFymHtGho>

Mini-Lesson: Dealing With Rejection and Limiting Thoughts

Explain to the students that one of the reasons that rejection is SO difficult is because of the limiting thoughts we often have as a result of things not going well or when we experience rejection. Limiting thoughts make us feel unsuccessful, unwanted, or alone. As we have learned, sometimes our brains repeat patterns we have learned without our attention or awareness. This can lead to limiting thoughts being repeated over and over again (to ourselves or to others).

We are using limiting thoughts when we use the words "Always" or "Never." For example, we talk to ourselves in a limiting way when we say things like: "I always mess up!!" "I'll never do this right."

Sometimes we compare ourselves to others who we see doing things very well and feel unsuccessful; we might tell ourselves a limiting thought like: "I can't do this as well as they can." "No one will ever like me." "I will never have friends." "I am stupid."

Explain to students that limiting thoughts are not true, but they can prevent us from connecting with others, joining new activities, or making new friends. We all have different skills. Some of us are musical; some of us are athletic; some of us are good at math; some of us are excellent artists; some of us enjoy learning about history; some of us have excellent computer skills; and some of us enjoy reading or writing. Scientists tell us that, because of the ability of our brains to grow and change through our activities, we can learn to be better at many things with a little mentoring and practice. But....limiting thoughts can prevent us from taking the steps to improve our skills in areas that are more difficult for us.

Limiting Thoughts Activity: *Explain to students that the good news is that our brains are able to change, particularly if we work to change our thoughts. Have students draw a chart like this in their journals. Then ask students to volunteer limiting thoughts like the example in line 1. Have them write and then share their growth thoughts.*

Limiting Thought (This is a habit!!)	Growth Thought (This will change our limiting thoughts and make us feel better)	Strategy to Improve
<i>"I will never be able to do this as well as _____.</i>	<i>I can work to improve. I can't do it yet, but with practice, I will get better. I may never be as good as _____. I am, however, very good at _____.</i>	<i>I will practice _____ every day and ask _____ for some tips on how to improve my skills.</i>

Debrief Activity:

Ask students to describe the "tool" they have added to their EQ Tool Box today. Hint: This tool is called Growth Mindset. Often limiting thoughts can be challenged by adding the word, "yet." Ask students to write in their journals 2 limiting thoughts that they will commit to working on challenging and changing this week.

Next Lesson: The Power of Friendship