



SB Activity 4 - Overcoming Setbacks – Courage and Discouragement

When you think about setbacks from a feelings perspective, so often, discouragement can be an essential factor to consider in the mental process behind going backward, giving up, or giving in. We as humans have all felt discouraged at one point or another in our lives so it is a feeling that we can all identify with.

Discourage

- to deprive of the will to persist in something
- to inhibit; prevent
- to oppose by expressing disapproval

Notice that the opposite of discouragement is *encouragement* which is the act of encouraging:

Encourage

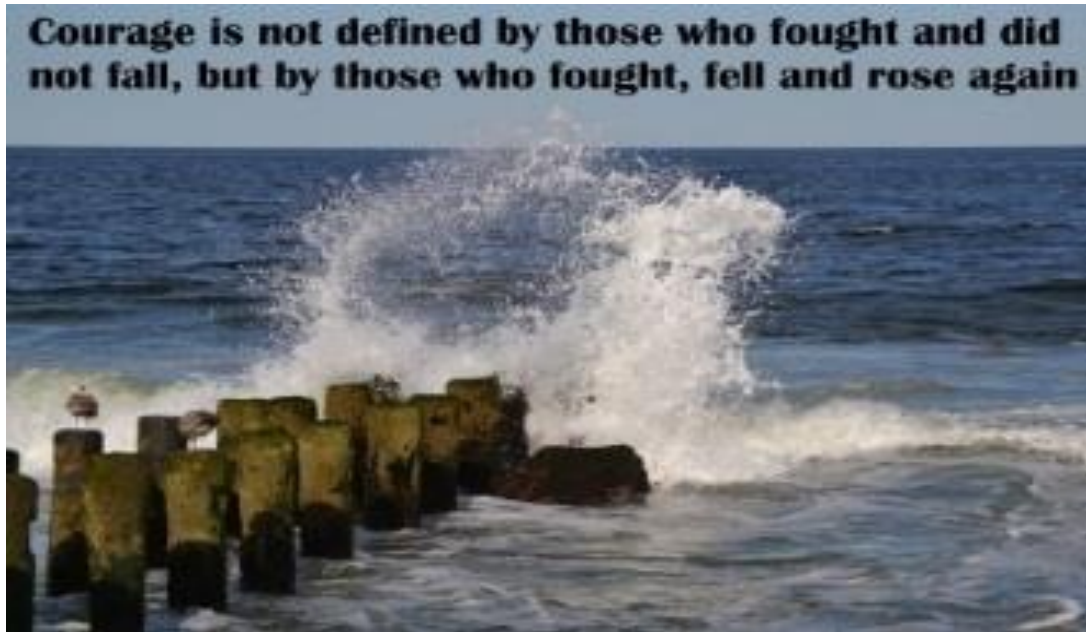
- to inspire someone with the courage or confidence to do something
- to stimulate something or someone to do something by approval or help; support

Both words have directly to do with either decreasing (discouraging) or increasing (encouraging) one's personal sense of *courage*. Let's look at one more definition to gain full understanding of these concepts:

Courage:

- the quality of mind or spirit that enables a person to face difficulty, danger, pain, etc., without fear; bravery

Discouragement is the arch enemy of motivation, progress, and success. Think about the last time you gave up on a goal. It is very probable that at some point either you became discouraged or even worse; you allowed someone else to discourage you from moving forward. Courage on the other hand is at the very core of overcoming adversity, obstacles, challenges, and for successfully dealing with setbacks. Others who care about us build courage in us through *encouragement*.



Preventing Discouragement and Building Courage

The specific process for eliminating discouragement is as follows:

1. **Recognition** – To prevent discouragement it is important to be able to see it coming before it overtakes us. It is critical to be able to see the signs that we may be getting discouraged and we should have an advanced knowledge of our own personal areas where we may be susceptible to discouragement based on some of our anxieties, fears or insecurities
2. **“Out-Think” Discouragement** – Often discouragement may be based on irrational fears. So often when it comes to feeling discouraged negative thoughts can start to seep into our minds and eventually spread like a virus and overwhelm our strength and motivation. Therefore, to eliminate discouragement we can “out-think” discouraging thoughts by developing a plan for positive thinking that in a way cancels out our negative discouraging thoughts.
3. **Seek Out Encouragement** – The logic behind this step is simple. When we are feeling discouraged one of the best antidotes is to go out and surround ourselves with people who will encourage us.
4. **Keep Working to Build Courage and Inner Strength** – If you are able to overcome a period of discouragement successfully and move forward the process does not stop there. It is important to continue to look for ways to continuously build our sense of confidence, courage and strength in order to keep discouragement out of the way for good.



Part I - RECOGNIZING DISCOURAGEMENT –

Honestly review and answer the following insight-building questions below:

1. Describe either the last time you felt discouraged, or describe a common situation that you can think of that may trigger feelings of discouragement in you:

2. There are certain people in my life that can be discouraging at times: (Explain why)

3. There are specific words that other people can say to me that I find to be discouraging (For example, think about areas you do not like to be criticized about)

4. There are certain mistakes I can make that can get me feeling discouraged (Like failing a test or doing something wrong at work, for example)

5. I can be self-critical or put myself down about certain things in my life such as:

6. I have certain fears, insecurities or worries that can cause me to feel overwhelmed and discouraged

AS A GROUP: DISCUSS YOUR ANSWERS TO PART I



Part II – OUT-THINK DISCOURAGEMENT –

THINK – After looking over and discussing your answers for 1-6 in part I, try to identify some of the THOUGHTS that come into your mind when you are feeling discouraged. As a group, brainstorm as many ideas of specific discouraging thoughts as you can

Some EXAMPLES -

“What’s the use, I am going to fail anyway”,

“This is way too hard”,

“I am not good enough”

‘I don’t have what it takes to make it’

“Things will never change”

As a group come up with some more examples. Keep the list on the board. When the group is done brainstorming, each person should then write down 1 or 2 discouraging thoughts that stood out the most to you –

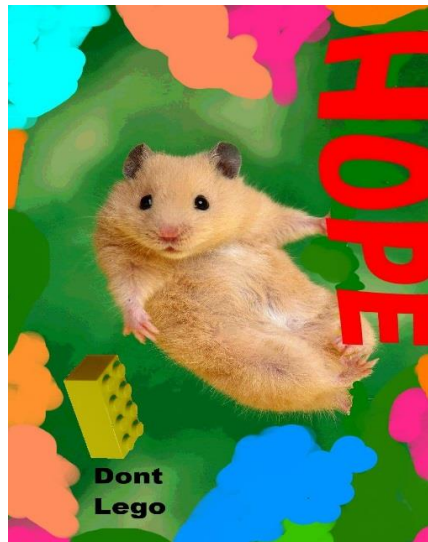
➤ *Discouraging Thought 1 –*

➤ *Discouraging Thought 2-*

OUT-THINK DISCOURAGEMENT –Start the process of learning to change discouraging thoughts

Learn to re-state your discouraging thoughts from a more positive perspective. This can seem challenging at first however the process is actually simple: Be *realistic* but still try to view the same thought in a more *hopeful* light:

➤ **Hope** - *a feeling of desire for something and confidence in the possibility of its fulfillment:*





Consider a few examples to help understand the process:

Discouraging Thought: “I can’t do this”

- **Hopeful restatement of the discouraging thought:** “I am having a really hard time doing this, *but I can do it as I know that others like me already have*” (*Realistic but more Hopeful*)

Discouraging Thought: “I don’t have the strength or ability to continue struggling”

- **Hopeful restatement** “I am having a hard time now but if I get the right help and support I can overcome these struggles with time”

Discouraging Thought: “It’s not worth it to go on”

- **Hopeful restatement** - “Sometimes at the moment it does not feel worth the effort right now, but I know that if I don’t quit it will be totally worth the effort as eventually things will improve”

AS A GROUP - Now try this with some people sharing their own discouraging thoughts and then as a group come up with a better way to realistically restate the same thought with more HOPE.

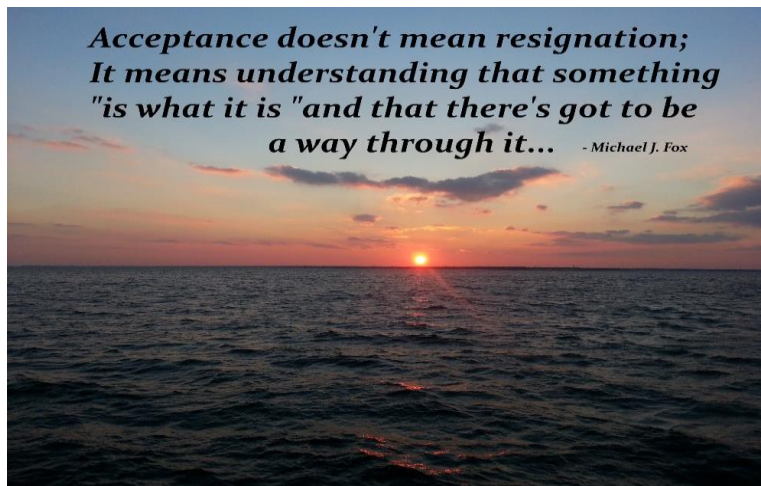
Discouraging Thought 1:

- **Hopeful restatement -**

Discouraging Thought 2:

- **Hopeful Restatement -**

(Going forward in life, try to remember this more hopeful way to think whenever discouraging thoughts enter your mind)





Part III – Seek Out Encouragement

GROUP ACTIVITY – The Chair of Encouragement

Directions – This activity is easy but can be extremely helpful. Everyone sit in a circle. Put one chair in the middle. Take turns sitting in the “chair of courage” in the middle of the group. Everyone should make an encouraging statement to the person in the middle. Try to avoid focusing on giving advice but rather everyone should try to say something encouraging, positive or hopeful (but sincere and genuine) to encourage and empower the person in the middle.

When everyone who wants to has had a turn, process the following –

1. How did it feel to receive encouragement from your group members?
2. What stood out to you the most?
3. How did it feel to give encouragement to others?
4. In your own life, where can you try to find more encouragement for yourself?
5. How can you try to be more encouraging to others on a daily basis?

"Success is not final,
failure is not fatal: it is
the courage to continue
that counts."

~Winston Churchill



Part IV - Keep Working to Build Courage and Inner Strength

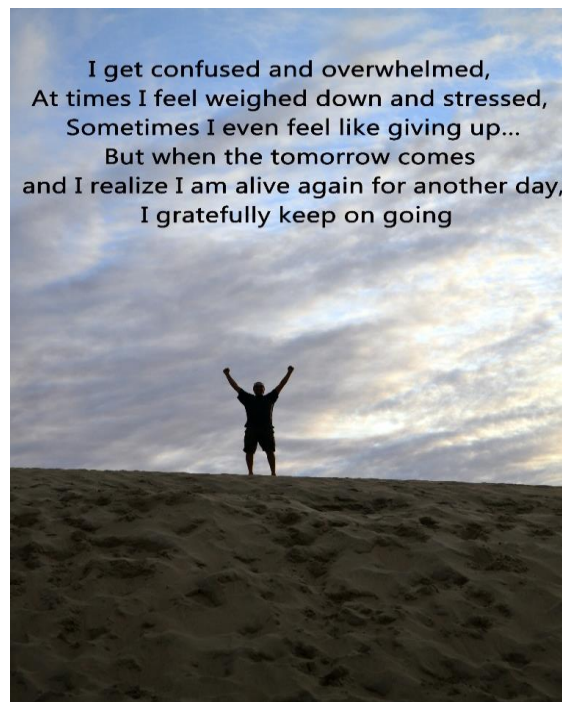
My Courage Building Plan – Complete and Discuss:

- I will recite the following encouraging statement(s) to myself daily...

- Whenever I feel like I am getting discouraged I will instead build hope by...

- When I am feeling down and I need encouragement I will reach out to...

- Other ideas I will use regularly for overcoming fear and discouragement and instead increase hope and courage...



I get confused and overwhelmed,
At times I feel weighed down and stressed,
Sometimes I even feel like giving up...
But when the tomorrow comes
and I realize I am alive again for another day,
I gratefully keep on going