

Peter Clutterbuck

Positive Reinforcement

Activities and Strategies for Creating Confident Learners

Foreword by Jackie Beere

INCLUDES A CD-ROM OF SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIALS



Peter Clutterbuck

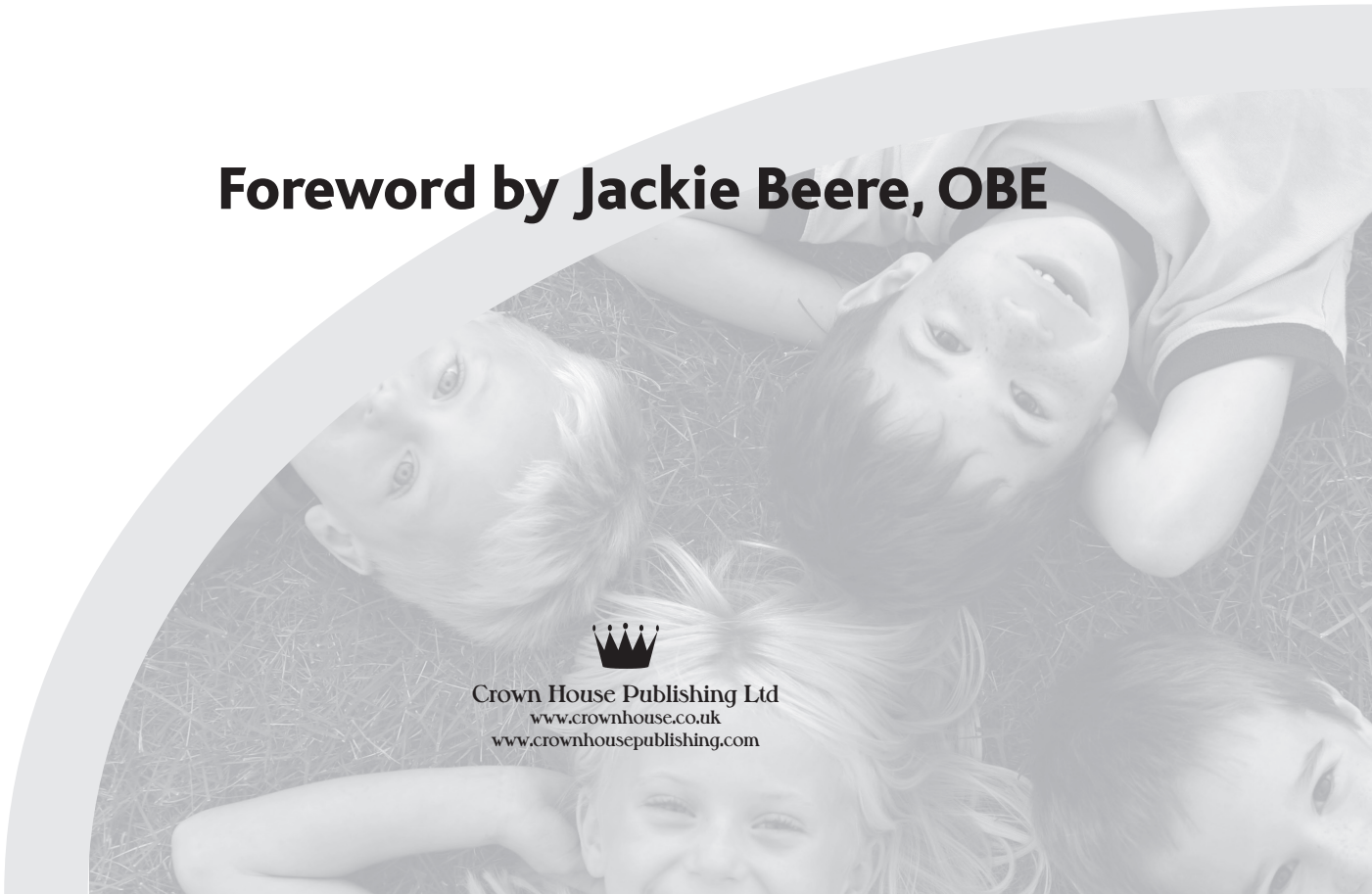
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Section I

Learning Who I Am

Me

I am strong I am weak
I am proud I am humble
I am skilful I am clumsy
I am bad I am good
I am sad I am happy
I am sick I am fine
I am smart I am a loser
I am successful I am a failure
No matter what you say about me

I am me



Section I

Learning Who I Am

A positive concept of oneself is not inherited but learnt. As children experience life the impressions they are exposed to shape and influence their self-concepts.

As they accumulate their beliefs and attitudes they interpret any new experiences, to which they are exposed, in the light of these. If any of these new experiences is not considered consistent with their present beliefs and attitudes it may be rejected outright depending on how well the child's self-concept has been developed, reinforced and supported by peers and adults.

Classroom teachers undoubtedly have an important, and often profound, influence on children's self-concept every day. It is the teacher who chooses the influence or effect it will have. If a teacher can help a child with learning difficulties to see him/her self as capable of learning, a naughty or mischievous child as kind, helpful and cooperative, or a doubting child as intelligent, popular or attractive, then that teacher has made a significant difference to the life of that child.

To develop a positive self-image students must experience many successes which then reinforce the beliefs they hold about themselves. These successful experiences will emanate from the safety and encouragement students sense within their classroom.

For this reason class teachers must first of all listen attentively to students and accept their contributions as valuable, and without negative judgement.

The following activities are based around the assumption that the ultimate right of all students is the right to be oneself. It is your right as the child's teacher to be, in all ways, a friend.

SPREADING THE WORD

To ensure students are aware of self-image they must first be made aware of how to accept the encouragement of others.

Once my grandfather and I were visiting a friend who owned a small factory in the suburbs. As my grandfather and his friend, the factory owner, were chatting, a delivery truck pulled up.

"Oh, this will be the boxes of spare parts I have been waiting for," said the owner.

An untidy youth jumped out of the truck and without saying a word began to stack the boxes roughly in a pile near the factory door. When he was finished my grandfather said, "Thank you for doing such a great job of delivering the goods, sir!" The man grunted and said, "You some kind of smart alec, mate?"

"No, I mean what I said," replied granddad. "You did a great job manoeuvring that truck through the narrow lanes to get the goods here safely." "Yeah", replied the man and drove off.

"What was that all about?" asked the factory owner. "People like him never put themselves out. They never do a good job. They don't try at all."

"They're not doing a good job because they feel no one cares if they do or not. Why shouldn't someone say a kind word to them? If we tell people we appreciate their efforts they will do better in the future and they will pass on this new positive attitude to others."

Then granddad winked at me: "Remember, no matter how small it is, no act of kindness ever goes unnoticed."

- Ask the students to discuss or comment on the grandfather's behaviour. Do you think this behaviour achieved anything? Have you ever offered a word of praise to someone who helped you?

Should we deliberately thank people who provide services for us (e.g. postal workers, taxi-drivers, hairdressers) or are their wages or payment all that is required?

- Have the students discuss how they feel if someone says something positive to them (e.g. your parents praise you for your progress at school). How might you react to this praise?

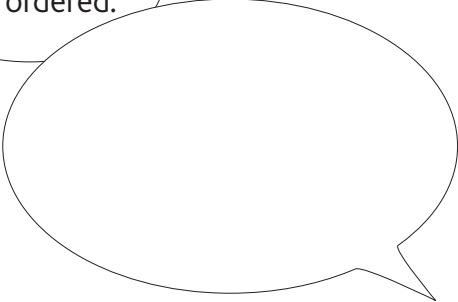
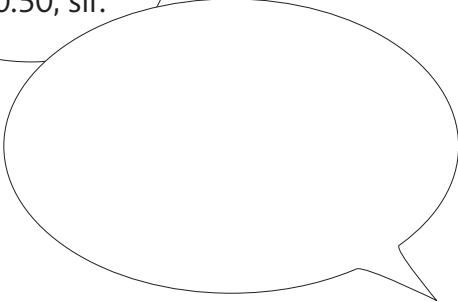
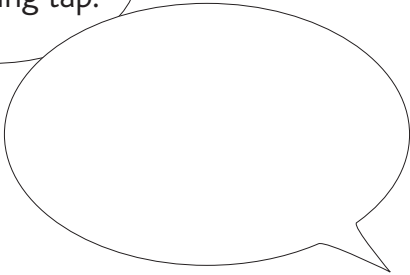
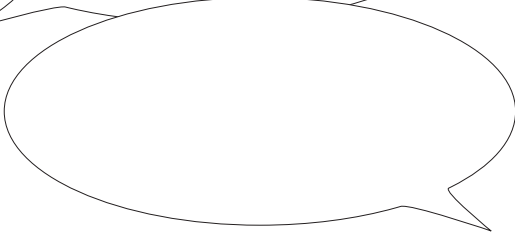
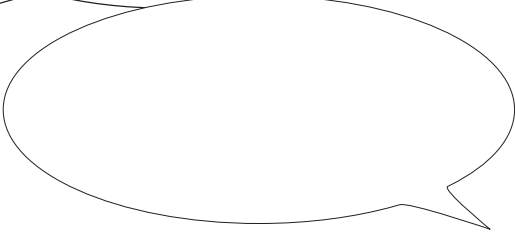
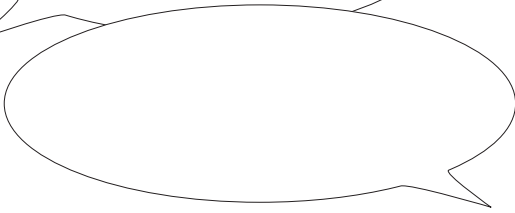
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Date

SPREADING THE WORD

It is important for us to reinforce a person's self-esteem by being positive when they have helped us.

In the empty balloons write what you think would be a positive reply to each person.

<p>Here is the meat you ordered.</p> 	<p>The taxi fare is £10.50, sir.</p> 
<p>I've finished fixing the leaking tap.</p> 	<p>I can see you are in a hurry. Get in the queue in front of me.</p> 
<p>I have collected your rubbish. The next collection is on Wednesday.</p> 	<p>I hope you enjoyed your journey with us. This train terminates in five minutes.</p> 

MY LEARNING DIARY

Students should be encouraged to keep a diary to provide them with a record of their self-worth.

- Discuss with students why some people keep an accurate diary of their experiences throughout the day.
Keeping a diary allows you to keep an ongoing record of how you are growing and what is happening to you. It provides a cumulative record of you as a person, who you are, how you see yourself and how others see you.
- Explain to students that the more you learn about yourself the more you will expand your self-concept and self-understanding.
- Encourage students to keep a diary or a journal that records their daily thoughts and feelings. In it they can list special things about themselves and the people in their lives.
- Ask individual students to briefly describe how their feelings and emotions affect their lives. What might they change if it was possible?
- Ask students to write about the special events of their lives – both good and bad. What effect have these events had on them?

Name

Date

MY LEARNING DIARY

An interesting activity is to record our personal thoughts and beliefs in a diary.

Date

I Have Learned

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

- In the box write down some things that you have learned about yourself. Record your feelings and desires rather than schoolwork.
- Now write one or more sentences explaining how you feel right at this moment. Choose words from the boxes below.

angry	happy
sad	tired

upset	worried
timid	glad

proud	kind
grumpy	confident

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

Name

Date

WINNING AND LOSING

When we win we must remember to act in ways which maintain our friendships. When we lose we can feel pretty bad, but showing you can accept defeat gracefully helps you to keep your friendships.

- Colour red the comment squares that show the person is a good winner. Colour black the comment squares that show the person is a poor loser.

- This is a stupid game to play.
- Gee, you played well and deserved your victory.
- I never want to play with you again.
- Here, you won well so I'll pack up all the gear.
- Congratulations, you are a better player than I am.
- I hate this game and I hate you.
- I'd love to play you again. Would you let me?
- Someone has to lose and it was me today.
- I never win and I bet I never win another match again.
- You had a lot of luck.
- I tried but I just wasn't good enough on the day.
- I give up, I'm no good.
- You think you're smart just because you beat me.

- Write the following saying on a poster and decorate it:

"Winning is important, but how you go about winning is the most important."

GETTING ON WITH OTHERS

Students must understand that to be included in games and be respected by others it is necessary to know how to get on well with other people.

- Discuss with students why it is important to show others you care about them.
- People enjoy being with others who appreciate the nice things about them and give them compliments that are sincere and deserved.
Have the students brainstorm the things that make other people like us (e.g. being fair in games, giving compliments, being accepting of others).
- Write the following statement on the board and have students comment on it:
“Good friends look for the good things in others.”
Discuss with students the importance of giving compliments to others. Emphasise that compliments should not just be about appearances or clothes but also given for things people do well, such as positive behaviour.
Make sure students understand that they should look for things they genuinely like or appreciate in others, then look them directly in the eye, smile and tell them what they like about them.
Doing this can make a big difference to someone’s life. However, also explain to students that they should never give too many compliments or give a compliment that isn’t true.
- Explain to students that there are times in our lives when we all need a few kindly words to build our self-esteem. It is important to feel good about yourself and compliments from others can help do this.

Name

Date

GETTING ON WITH OTHERS

To be capable of building lasting friendships it is essential that we try to understand to behaviour of others.

Here are some brief descriptions of how children act at school or during play.

Read them through and write the names of two children in your class who you feel best fit each description. Don't write more than two names but it is OK just to write one name, or even none if no students match the description.

<p>■ This student always helps other students</p>	<p>■ This student is very quiet</p>
<p>■ This student sticks up for us in the playground</p>	<p>■ This student often looks sad and needs cheering up</p>
<p>■ This student is really good at sport</p>	<p>■ This student is sometimes too shy to join in games</p>
<p>■ This student often says kind things to others</p>	<p>■ This student thinks no one else likes them</p>
<p>■ This student never complains</p>	<p>■ This student often plays alone</p>
<p>■ This person tries hard and does really good work</p>	<p>■ This student often gets teased by others</p>

OUR RESPONSIBILITIES

It is imperative for students to realise that we must all accept certain responsibilities.

- Discuss with students what is meant by the word *responsibilities*.
Have them describe and list the things that they must be responsible for each day, such as:
 - Keeping your room clean.
 - Organising yourself for school.
 - Catching the school bus.
 - Helping a younger brother or sister to walk to school safely.
 - Feeding your pet dog.
- Make a list of jobs to be done around the school. Ask the students to state who is responsible for each one – head teacher, parents, students, caretaker, classroom teacher:
 - Who rings the bell?
 - Who decides what games we play?
 - Who cleans up the classroom?
 - Who cuts the lawns?
 - Who decides what we have to learn?
 - Who decides what class each teacher will take?Add more of your own and then ask students to compile a graph of the results.
- Have students discuss and research how their responsibilities at school may differ from students in other countries.
- Ask students to describe and explain the responsibilities they enjoy and those they don't enjoy.
- Have them discuss the consequences of not fulfilling their responsibilities.
- Ask students to write and describe the different responsibilities these people have at school: parent, teacher, principal and student.

Name

Date

OUR RESPONSIBILITIES

We must all accept responsibilities at school and at home.

Put a tick in the box that best describes how you feel about doing each thing.

I really hate it	It's OK sometimes	I always enjoy it
------------------	-------------------	-------------------

AT HOME

- Cleaning up my bedroom
- Doing homework
- Helping with the dishes
- Mowing the lawn
- Minding a younger brother or sister
- Helping to get meals
- Running errands
- Cleaning out the shed
- Making my bed
- Getting ready for school

AT SCHOOL

- Picking up litter in the schoolyard
- Learning Maths, English, Science, etc
- Having library lessons
- Going to assemblies
- Playing sport
- Emptying bins
- Helping to clean the classroom
- Running errands for the teacher
- Tidying up my desk or table
- Wiping the board clean
- Helping other students

OUR COMMUNITY

It is important for teachers to help students to develop a sense of belonging and identity within their community.

- Discuss with children what is meant by the word *community*. Challenge them to write their own definition of the word.
- Have the children consider issues such as:
 - Are all communities the same?
 - Are all communities happy?
- Ask students to draw a map of what they consider to be their community.
- Now ask children questions to create comparisons between their community and a community in a foreign country, such as Africa:
 - Do all communities have supermarkets?
 - Do all communities have cars and buses?
 - Do all communities have the same rules?
- Ask students to investigate whether all communities in other countries have lots of schools for educating children. Apart from schools, how might the children learn about their culture?
- Apart from teachers, who teaches them about their community?
- Ask the students to describe five things they think are good about their community and five things they think are not so good.

Recommended Reading

Beere, J. (2010). *The Primary Learner's Toolkit*. Crown House Publishing, Carmarthen.

Bowkett, et al. (2010). *A Moon on Water*. Crown House Publishing, Carmarthen.

Clutterbuck, P. (2008). *Values*. Crown House Publishing, Carmarthen.

Duckworth, J. (2009). *The Little Book of Values*. Crown House Publishing, Carmarthen.

Greef, A. (2005). *Resilience: Personal skills for effective learning*. Crown House Publishing, Carmarthen.

Greef, A. (2005). *Resilience: Social skills for effective learning*. Crown House Publishing, Carmarthen.

Petersen, L. K. (2007). *Positively Me*. Brilliant Publications, Dunstable.

White, M. (2008). *Magic Circles*. Sage Publications, London.

Designed for schools that want to build on the SEAL programme for primary schools and really focus on positive reinforcement, this book supplements the Primary SEAL resources and covers a huge range of issues which affect self-esteem and self-worth. Each topic has an introduction, an activity page and full instructions for carrying out the activity.

The first part of this book deals with the child's self-image and contains activities to build self-worth and self-esteem. It explores feelings in the context of the child as an individual, developing self-awareness and helping the child to realise that it really is 'Good to be me'. The 50 activities help children understand how and why feelings lead them to behave the way they do—particularly the feelings of being excited, proud, surprised, hopeful, disappointed, worried and anxious.

Building effective relationships with others has a huge impact on self-confidence and the skills needed are developed in the second part in the same activity-based way. Many of the activities concentrate on building community within the school, concentrating on caring for others and teamwork.

All the supplementary materials are supplied on the included CD-ROM for ease of reproduction.

"Can there ever have been be a more important time than this to teach about tolerance, empathy, social skills, community values and personal responsibility? This book is easy to read and offers teachers a very accessible set of ideas for helping pupils to develop self-awareness."

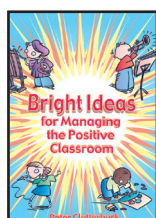
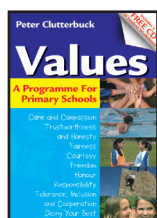
Sharon Ginnis, independent trainer and author of *Covering the Curriculum with Stories*

"In his book *Positive Reinforcement* Peter Clutterbuck has provided a wide range of material for educators to use which will not only help children understand themselves but also teach them how to forge positive relationships with people who they interact with in their everyday lives. The activities are stimulating and can be adapted in an open-ended way to suit the needs of the new primary curriculum. This book is an essential tool for any adult who is working within a 21st century primary school classroom."

**Julie Duckworth, author of *The Little Book of Values*,
Independent Thinking Associate and Headteacher**

"Every teacher's trusted companion. Full of useful activities and practical suggestions, it will be a truly helpful toolkit for busy teachers who appreciate the value of this kind of work and are willing to give children the support they need and deserve."

Dr Eva Hoffman, Inspired Learning Director Co-founder



Peter Clutterbuck best selling author of *Bright Ideas for Managing the Positive Classroom* ISBN 9781904424512 and *Values: A Programme for Primary Schools* ISBN 9781845900823 has been a prolific author in educational texts since 1980. Peter retired from full-time teaching in 1993 but continues to teach occasionally in both the Primary and Secondary sectors.



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