

Handouts & Refrigerator Notes

How to Communicate Effectively With Adults and Children

“Active Listening”



Home Activities for the Week



To Do:

- **PRACTICE “ACTIVE LISTENING”** One time during the next week, practice “active listening” for five minutes, either with your partner, your child, a friend, or a colleague. Remember to allow the speaker to finish, listen for the content and feelings of the speaker, and validate those feelings.

READ/REVIEW:



- Handouts and Chapter Thirteen, “*Effective Communication Skills*” in *The Incredible Years* book.

Caution: Remember to continue special time!

How to Communicate Effectively With Adults and Children

“Active Listening” and “Speaking Up”



Home Activities for the Week



To Do:

- **CONTINUE PRACTICING “ACTIVE LISTENING”** One time during the next week, practice “active listening” for five minutes, either with your partner, your child, a friend, or a colleague. Remember to allow the speaker to finish, listen for the content and feelings of the speaker, and validate those feelings.
- **PRACTICE “SPEAKING UP”** Once during the next week, practice speaking up about an issue or problem that has been worrying you. Remember to be positive, be clear and brief, be selective, communicate your feelings, and ask for feedback.

READ/REVIEW:



- Handouts and Chapter Thirteen, “*Effective Communication Skills*” in *The Incredible Years* book.

Caution: Remember to continue special time!



HANDOUT

PARENT RECORD SHEET: LISTENING AND SPEAKING UP

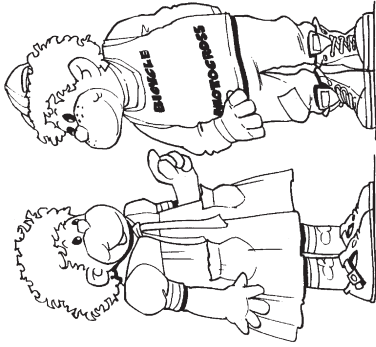
Describe your responses and your understanding of the speaker's response to the two exercises.

1. Active Listening

Example

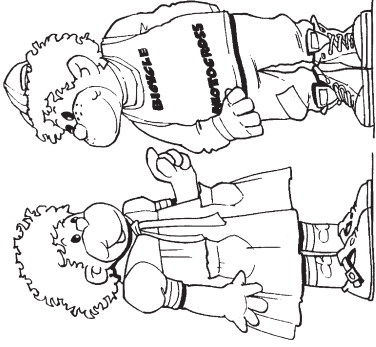
2. Speaking Up

Example



**REFRIGERATOR NOTES
ABOUT ACTIVE LISTENING**

- Try to put yourself in the other person's shoes and think about their point of view.
- Maintain eye contact.
- Allow the speaker to finish.
- Listen for the content and feelings of the speaker.
- Summarize and validate the speaker's feelings.
- Encourage the speaker to continue talking.
- Avoid "why" questions.



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ABOUT ACTIVE LISTENING**

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**REFRIGERATOR NOTES
ABOUT SPEAKING UP**

- Choose timing for speaking up—ask if listener has time.
- Be positive.
- Use “I” messages to explain feelings.
- Be clear and specific.
- Be “present” oriented (edit old complaints).
- Ask for feedback.
- Avoid too much negative speaking up—be brief and selective.
- Express positive feelings as well.



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Brainstorm/Buzz–Positive Statements



Practice turning the following negative gripes or blaming statements into positive suggestions & “I” statements:



<u>Negative Gripe</u>	<u>Positive Suggestions</u>
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. You rarely pay me a compliment.2. You spend money without figuring out the balance.3. You haven't cleaned the living room in 3 months.4. You haven't taken the children to daycare in a year.5. You don't ask for my opinion in parenting.6. You don't help me prepare any meals.7. At breakfast you bury your head in the newspaper.8. You never throw out your beer cans (newspaper).9. On Friday you didn't say anything about dinner, after I spent three hours preparing it.10. You don't help the children with homework.11. You make fun of Billy's opinions.12. You keep saying “that's dumb” if you disagree with the children.13. You don't do what I ask you to do.14. You throw your food on the floor.15. You eat with your fingers instead of your utensils.16. You keep yelling and criticizing me.	<p>I would like you to compliment me once a day.</p>

Handouts & Refrigerator Notes

Communicating More Positively to Oneself and Children



Home Activities for the Week



To Do:

- **THINK ABOUT** a problem that causes you to get emotionally upset. Listen to your upsetting thoughts and describe what you would say or do to change your negative self-talk. Use the “Self-Talk in Problem Situations” worksheet to change some of your negative thoughts into constructive thoughts. Bring worksheet to next session.
- **PRACTICE** turning negative gripes into positive suggestions. Describe what you would say to stop or change your negative self-talk. Record on the homework handout sheet.
- **NOTICE** when your child is getting upset and encourage him/her to use Tiny’s secrets.

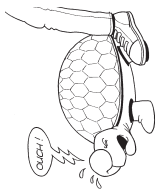
READ/REVIEW:



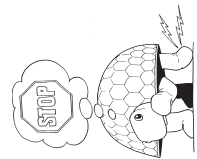
Handouts and Chapter Eleven, “Controlling Upsetting Thoughts” in *The Incredible Years* book (if not completed in prior sessions).

Caution: Remember to continue special time!

REFRIGERATOR NOTES ABOUT UPSETTING THOUGHTS



- Refute negative labels that may come to mind.
- Avoid speculating about intentions.
- Paint a positive future.
- Use thought-stopping when tempted to catastrophize and substitute coping thoughts.
- Normalize behavior and use flexible standards.
- Get control of your anger.
- Don't be self-critical; instead objectify and use self-praise.
- Support your partner or others involved in caring for your child and seek their support.



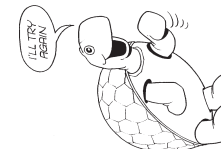
2 Think STOP



3 Take a slow breath

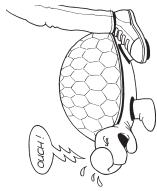


4 Withdrawing into shell

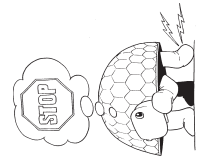


- Focus on coping.
- Be positive and use humor.
- Reschedule anger or worry times.
- Model positive, coping self-talk.

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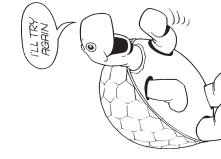
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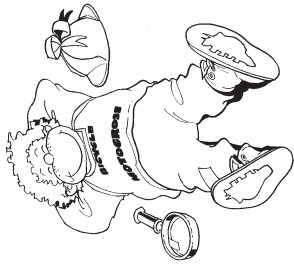


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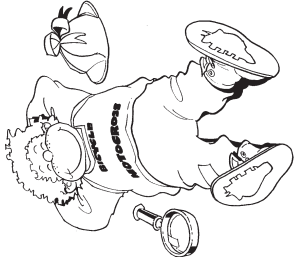
REFRIGERATOR NOTES ABOUT STRESS AND ANGER



Relax

- Scan your body for tension, and breathe and relax or do the exercises.
- Notice any negative self-statements and replace them with soothing self-encouragement.
- Ask yourself if what is making you feel tense is really that important? Will it make a difference a week from now? A year? When you are 70?
- Visualize some marvelous past event or dream of the future.
- In the middle of conflict, breathe, cool off, get playful, or get away for a few minutes.
- Take a break (go for a walk, take a bath, read a magazine).


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REFRIGERATOR NOTES
ABOUT SELF-TALK



PROMOTING PARENT SELF-EMPOWERMENT

- Avoid griping, criticisms and “put downs”.
- Use a “stop action” when personal anger seems to be escalating out of control or getting nowhere.
- Stop and dispute negative thoughts. Substitute coping or calming thoughts.
- Be polite with others by focusing on the positive, on what you can do rather than what you can't do.
- Think about the other person’s needs and point of view. Recognize that everyone’s problem is legitimate.
- Focus on fixing the problem, not the blame.

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Tips to Being Polite

1. **Say what you can do and what you want to do.** When possible, avoid statements referring to what you can't do.
2. **Focus on the positive.** Stop complaints. Imagine a situation where your child tries to clean up the dishes but gets water all over the floor. Or think about a father who makes dinner but leaves the kitchen in a mess. In these situations, the adult has a choice: to complain and criticize or to edit out the complaint and give an honest statement of appreciation for the effort made. "Gee, it's great to have the dishes all cleaned up. Thanks for taking the time to do that." (If a messy kitchen is an important issue for a parent, s/he can always decide to discuss it at a later time.)
3. **Edit self-criticisms.** An adult has a fight or loses his temper and then realizes that s/he was wrong. S/he might say, "I'm a rotten parent. Why do I always lose control and get angry?" Instead, s/he could edit these put-downs and say, "I was wrong for saying that. I'm sorry. What can I do to make things better?" "That wasn't a good idea. Let's think of a better idea," would also be constructive self-statements. The point is to focus on the mistaken ideas or actions, to accept responsibility for error but not to devalue oneself as a person. Everyone makes mistakes. It is important to model this attitude for children in an appropriate manner and provide positive alternatives for future behavior. For example, a parent might say, "Next time I'll try to stay calm" or "Another time I'll go outside for few minutes rather than get so angry."
4. **Focus on the present and edit out "old business."** Avoid digging up old events and unloading old conflicts. These tactics only complicate the problem and raise the anger level of everyone involved. Remember, "unloading" tends to occur most for people who don't communicate about problems as they arise.
5. **Think about the other person's needs and point of view.** If a person finds s/he is thinking only of him/herself those thoughts should be edited. It would be useful to decide, instead, to think about what one's spouse/partner or child needs. For example, "I wonder if he is feeling left out because the new baby is taking so much of my attention. Perhaps we should get a sitter for the baby and go out." One of the most powerful responses a parent can make to a complaining child or spouse/partner is, "Gee, I see your point. What can we do to make things better?"



Brainstorm/Buzz–Practice Coping Thoughts



Practice turning the following negative and irrational thoughts into coping thoughts:



Negative Thoughts	Examples of Coping Thoughts
<p>"My child is a monster. This is ridiculous. He'll never change." (negative labeling)</p> <p>"He just married me to have a maid. Things are going to change or else!" (threats)</p> <p>"He's just like his father. I can't handle it when he's angry." (blame spouse)</p> <p>"She does it on purpose." (mind-reading)</p> <p>"I know he'll say no so I won't ask." (mind-reading)</p> <p>"He'll never outgrow it." (prophesize gloom)</p> <p>"She's driving me crazy, I can't stand it." (catastrophizing)</p> <p>"They should respect me." (shoulds and musts)</p> <p>"He deserves to be spanked." (desire for revenge)</p> <p>"I can't, it's my fault." (self-criticism)</p> <p>"She doesn't love me, forget it!" (give up, walk away)</p> <p>"People belonging to that organization are dishonest." (over-generalizing)</p> <p>"Well, he yelled, so I can, too." (rationalizing a mistake or lie)</p> <p>"It was nothing, anyone could have done that." (discounting positive)</p> <p>"I should not have done that..." (unrealistic expectations)</p> <p>"No one will see my skills, I'll never get a job." (exaggerating)</p>	<p>"My child is testing the limits, he's had a bad day. I can help him calm down."</p>

Handout

Learning Self-Control

1. Identify your negative thoughts when they first occur. Pay attention to how your body feels (for example, tenseness, fidgeting, anger, headaches).
2. Use one of the following constructive thoughts to replace the negative thought.
 - STOP the negative thought—"think STOP."
 - Dispute the negative thought;
 - Substitute a positive thought or self-praise;
 - Substitute a coping or calming thought;
 - Use humor;
 - Think about a future time when this will not be a problem.

Non-constructive Thoughts

"Jack never helps. All I get is work, work, work. I fix the food, take care of the house, the kids, everything. Boy, would I like to throw this at him!"

"After working 10 hours, I'm tired and frustrated. When I get home, all I get are hassles. The kids interrupt and yell, and Joan criticizes me. This place is a mess. What does she do all day? I feel like screaming or walking out of here."

Constructive Thoughts

"I'd better watch it and calm down before I do something I'll regret. What I need is help. Maybe if I ask Jack in a nice way, he'll give me some help. That's the best way. Then maybe I can have a relaxing bath."

"Take it easy now. Take a few breaths. What I really need is a few minutes of peace to relax and read the paper. Maybe if I ask Joan nicely to play with the kids while I read, then I could give her a break and play with the kids later. She needs a rest too. That's the most helpful way. I can already feel myself relaxing."

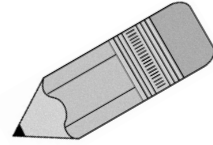
"I can handle this. I can stay in control. "She's just testing the limits. My job is to stay calm and help her learn better ways".

Handout

SELF-TALK IN PROBLEM SITUATIONS

Identify a problem situation and the upsetting thoughts you have at the time. Write down some alternative calming thoughts that you might use to redefine the situation. Next time you find yourself using negative self-talk, give yourself some time to think positively and consider the alternatives available to you for dealing with the situation.

Problem Situation: _____



**Upsetting
Thoughts**

**Calming
Thoughts**

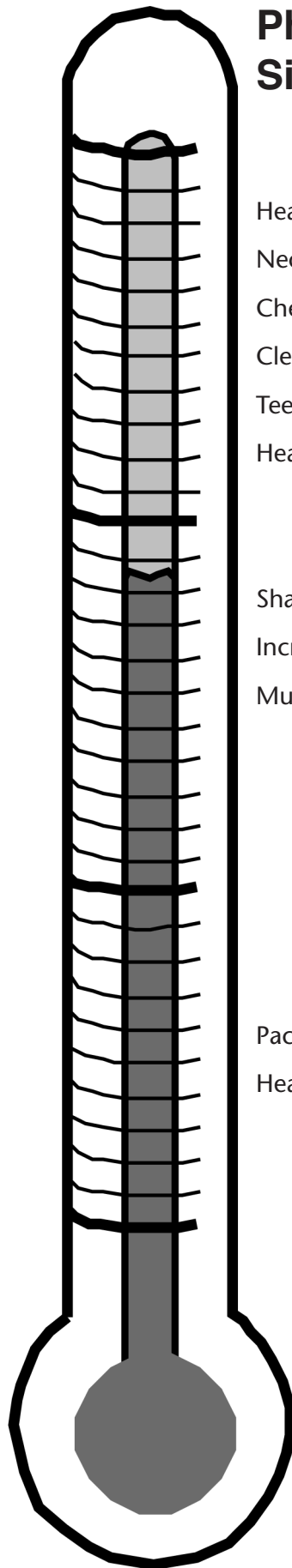
Feelings

Furious
Contemptuous
Angry

Defensive
Guilt
Withdrawn
Frustrated
Depression

Irritated
Anxious
Worried

Alert/Interested
Receptive/Open to
Influence/Flexible
Calm
Happy
Confident
Content
Loving/Affectionate



Physiological Signs

Heart racing
Neck muscles tight
Chest Tight
Clenched fists
Teeth clenched
Headache

Shallow rapid breathing
Increased perspiration
Muscles tense

Pacing
Headache developing

Behaviors

Yelling
Hitting

Threatening
Withdrawing
Stonewalling
Criticizing

Difficulty listening
Thinking narrow
Less open to new ideas

Calm
Pleasant
Able to problem solve
Able to listen

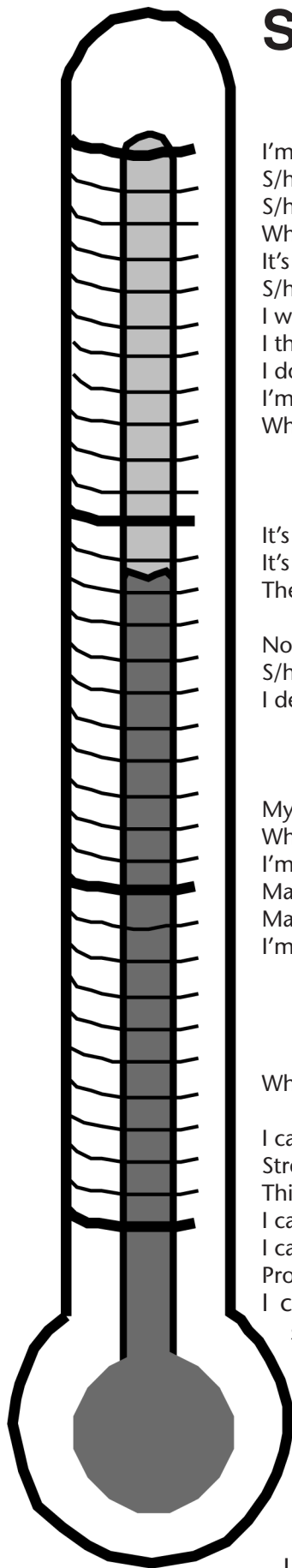
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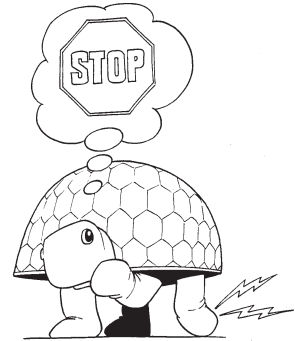
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Self-Talk

I'm so mad I could hurt...
 S/he deserves to be...
 S/he is no good/rotten.
 What did I do to deserve...
 It's not my fault; it's his/hers.
 S/he's just like...
 I was never like this.
 I think s/he'll end up in jail.
 I don't have time to deal with this.
 I'm a bad parent (partner). I'm hopeless
 Why me? This is too stressful.



It's not working to stay calm.
 It's useless...
 There's no point in doing anything for him/her.
 It never helps.
 No matter what I do, nothing changes.
 S/he just throws it back at me.
 I deserve this for what I did when...

My parents told me I was...(a criticism)
 What's going to happen when s/he's a teenager?
 I'm getting stressed; I need to take a personal time out.
 Maybe this is too much for me to handle.
 Maybe I'm not a good parent/spouse.
 I'm not sure I can do this.

When change occurs, it's supposed to get worse
 before it gets better.
 I can make a difference to our future.
 Stress is a normal part of any relationship.
 This stage won't last forever. Things will get better.
 I can handle this; I can control my anger.
 I can teach him to...
 Problems occur so we can all learn to manage conflict.
 I can talk to him about...and come up with some
 solutions.
 We'll manage; we all need learning trials.
 Everyone makes mistakes.
 I can help by...
 His/her positive qualities are...
 I'm a caring parent/partner because I'm trying by...
 I stay calm most of the time.
 I enjoy being with him/her, especially when we...
 I love (appreciate)...



TIME OUT FOR PARENTS WHO ARE ANGRY

All parents and couples when stressed find themselves losing control of their anger from time to time. Therefore, it is important to establish a Time Out procedure for yourself just as it was important to set one up for the children. The following are some steps to interrupt the anger cycle:

1. Be aware of cues that signal increasing anger.

Anger increases progressively rather than appearing full-blown, therefore it is important to be aware of signals you are getting that tells you your anger is increasing. For example, such signals can include physiological changes (rapid breathing, increased pulse rate); or cognitive thinking such as self-statements that involve blaming (“that jerk or bitch”; or catastrophizing, “I can’t stand it,” or mind-reading “she’s doing it on purpose”); or specific behaviors such as pacing, shouting, clenching fists.

2. Establish a Time Out signal.

Let your family know what your Time Out signal is that will alert them to your anger rising. This should be a neutral and nonblaming signal such as a T-signal with your hands or saying Time Out.

3. Decide where you will go.

Choose a location where you will go and that everyone else knows you will be. This should be agreed upon by both parents and children, otherwise it will be seen as abandonment and efforts will be made to restrain you.

4. Decide on duration of Time Out.

A time limit should be decided upon by the person who calls the Time Out. This person is responsible for signaling readiness to resume discussion. It should be understood that the discussion will always be resumed so Time Out does not become an avoidance tactic. (30 minutes or less)

5. Rules about Time Out

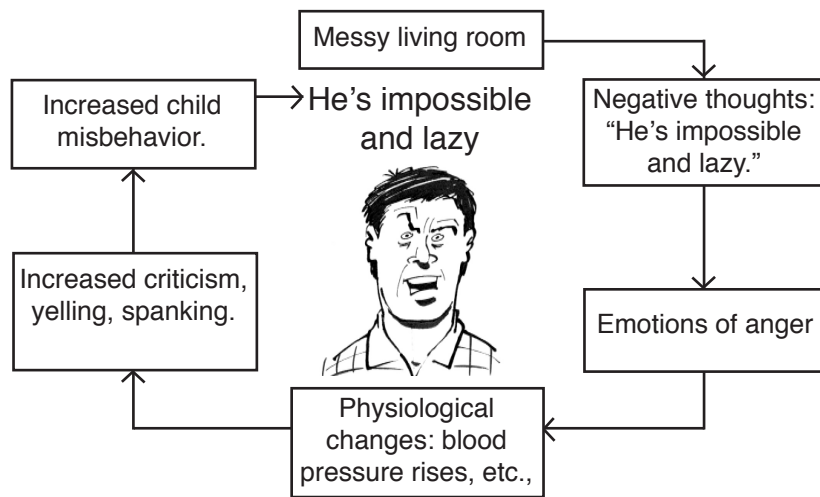
Rules about Time Out should be agreed upon such as whether the person can leave the house, go to a friend’s or call home. Drinking should not be allowed.

Problems with “Blowing off Steam” or “Getting it Out of Your System.”

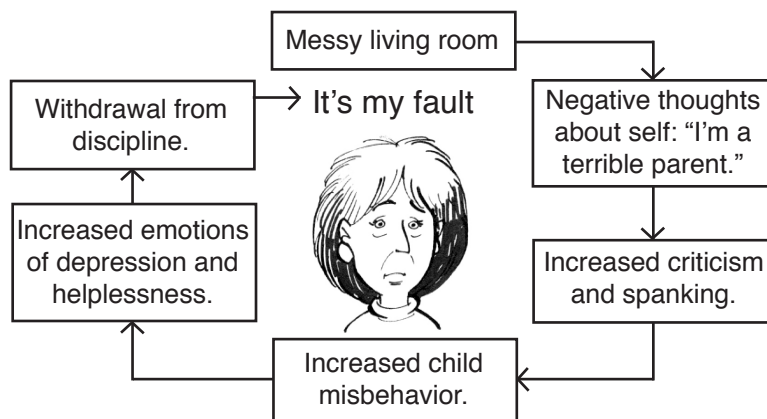
It was once felt that blowing off steam by shouting and swearing would tend to drain off violent energy and reduce aggression. People were thought of as tea kettles which could only contain a fixed amount of aggressive energy and therefore it was necessary to open the kettle pot every so often. It is now well understood that rather than having a cathartic or beneficial effect, blowing off steam actually “inflames” aggression and violence. Studies have shown that couples who yell at each other do not feel less angry afterwards but more angry. Actually expressing anger will make you angrier! Fuming and criticizing legitimizes rage and increases anger. The reason for this is that often the anger is reinforced by giving the person a false sense of power, control over others (vs. defeat), making others pay attention or take us seriously, getting others to reply, or obtaining revenge. However, these are short-term effects. It is important to look at the long-term effects of anger as well. In the long term, because anger is frequently reinforced it is likely you will develop a “habit” of dealing with frustration by lashing out. Moreover, in the long term, parents who model angry outbursts make other people in the family angrier, defensive and fearful.

Substitute Coping Thoughts for Angry or Depressive Thoughts

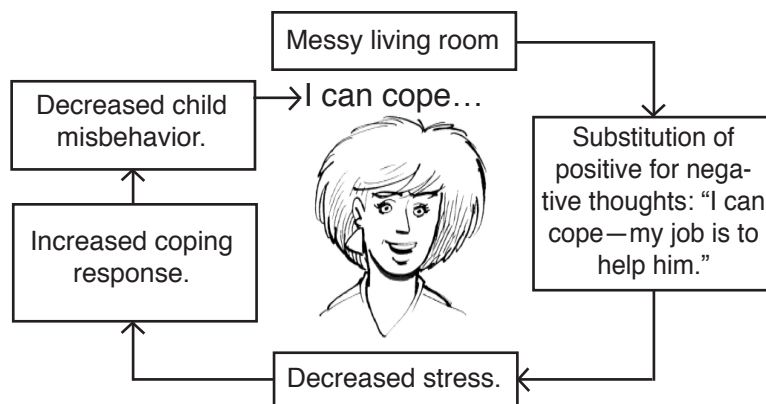
Anger Cycle



Depression Cycle



Positive Response



Brainstorm/Buzz – Self-Praise

Brainstorm possible self-praise you can use to encourage yourself as a parent.
Write these statements on your note pad.



Positive Self-Praise

I can stay calm...he's just frustrated

I did a good job helping him with his homework

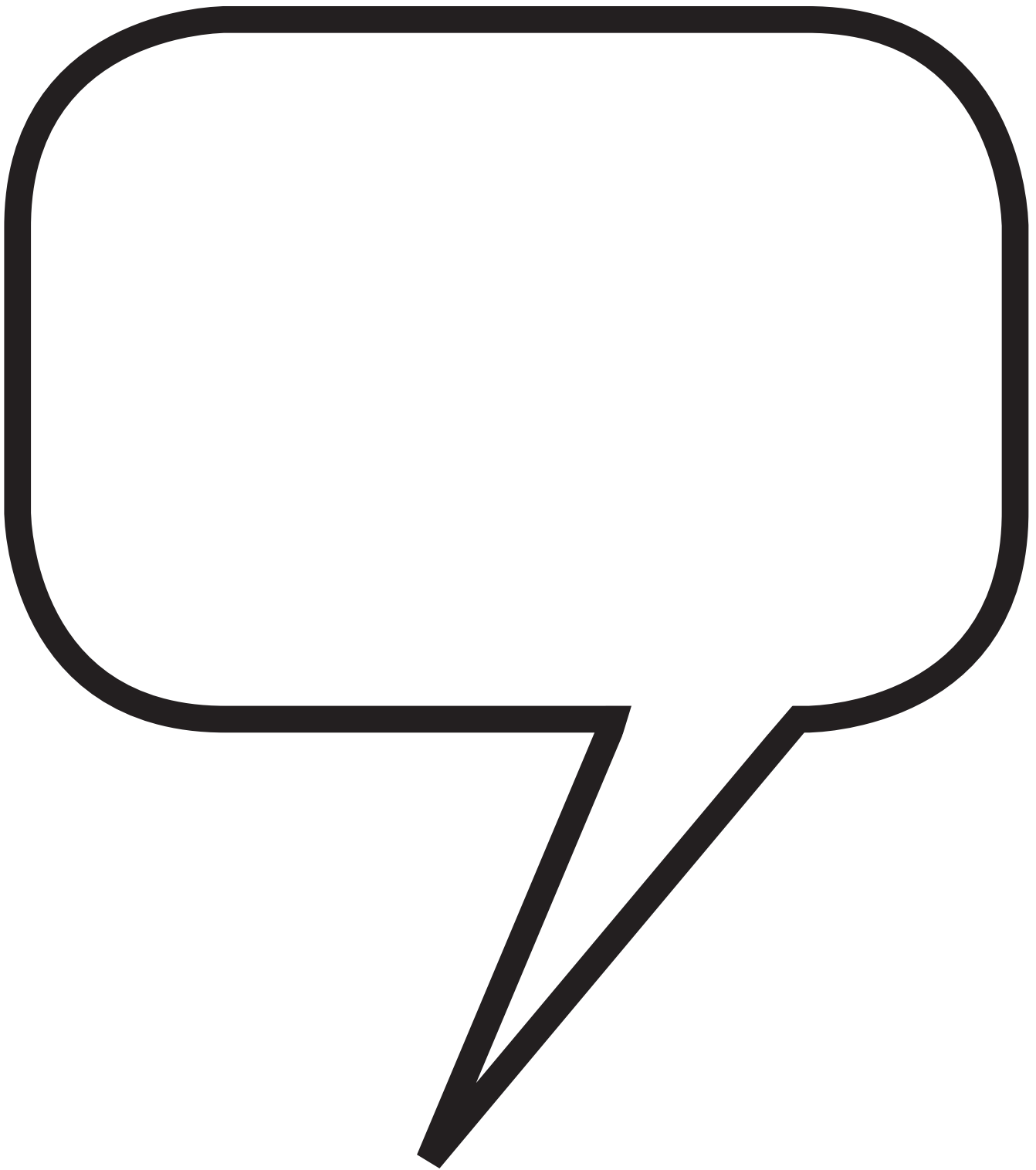
I was successful at paying my bills on time

I'm proud of how I helped...



Goal:

I will commit to stopping my self-criticism and looking at something I did well each day as a parent.



Write your own positive coping statements and practice them during the week.

Brainstorm/Buzz–Ways to Stay Calm



Remember, there is more than one way to think about something! A particular event can trigger some associated thoughts that lead to particular feelings and behavioral actions and resulting consequences. The same event could lead to different feelings in different people because of the thoughts associated with the event. While you can't control your feelings, you can control your thoughts and the behaviors you exhibit in response to those feelings. Think about ways you can stay calm in a stressful situation by controlling your thoughts, imagination and your pleasurable activities. Write down ways you can stay calm and cope with distressful situations.

Ways to Stay Calm

deep breaths

positive forecasting

relaxation techniques

doing one of my pleasurable activities _____

reading my positive journal

exercising

imagining my favorite person who is joyful

getting more sleep

think about a success rather than something unsuccessful

challenging my irrational thoughts

Goal: I will commit to practicing the following to stay calm _____



Brainstorm/Buzz Staying Calm & Managing Anger

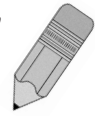


Rewrite the following negative self-talk with positive coping thoughts.



Negative Self-Talk	Positive Coping Thoughts
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• I can't stand this—it's too hard!• I don't know what to do.• Ignoring will never work.• I am losing control and will explode soon.• I am going to hit her just like my mom did to me.• It's awful to let him disrespect me. It's not good to look weak in front of my child.• I hate being disrespected.• She will never change.• I can't let him challenge my authority.• He hurt me so I should hurt him.• I don't like him when he's like this.	

Brainstorm/Buzz Staying Calm & Managing Anger



Continued, from previous page.



Negative Self-Talk	Positive Coping Thoughts
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The neighbors will complain if I don't get this stopped.• She will never stop whining.• A little more force on my part will stop her.• That brat knows how much this bugs me—he's doing it on purpose.• I'm an inept parent—should never have had children.• I can't let her get away with that.• It's all his dad's (or mom's) fault.	
<p><i>Goal: I will commit to stopping and challenging my negative self-talk and working on practicing using coping and positive self-talk as well as giving myself time to calm down.</i></p>	



Brainstorm/Buzz Staying Calm

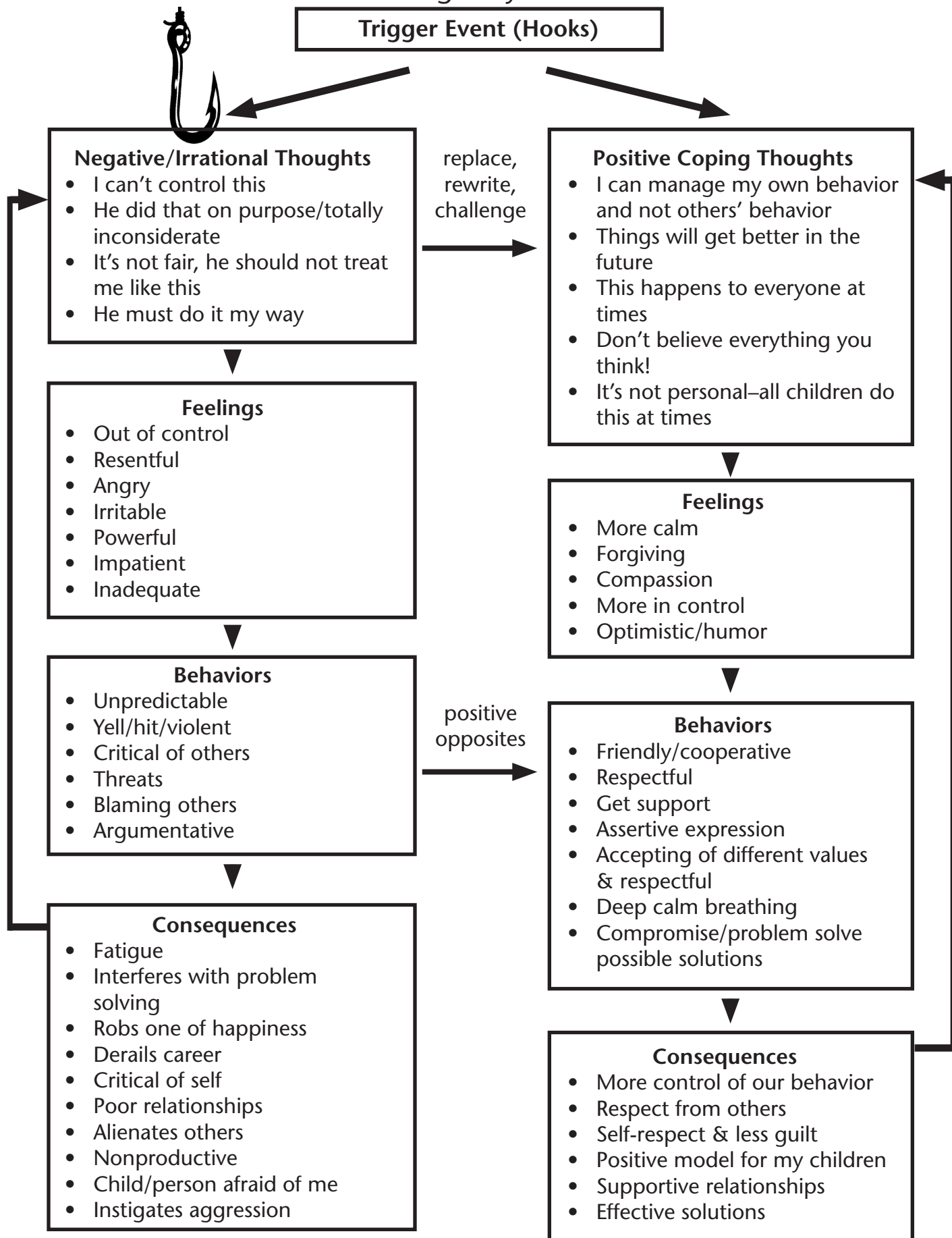
Write your irrational or negative thoughts down and rewrite them into coping thoughts.



Negative/Irrational Thoughts	Coping Thoughts



Anger Cycle



Depression Cycle

Trigger Event (Hooks)



Negative/Irrational Thoughts

- I'm a failure/unworthy
- I'm unlovable
- She doesn't care about me
- Life is scary
- I can't handle this
- I should be a better parent

replace,
rewrite,
challenge

Positive Coping Thoughts

- This is a learning opportunity
- I can cope with this
- Others care about me
- The world is exciting
- I was successful today at...
- No one is perfect

Feelings

- Helpless
- Sad
- Lonely
- Anxious

Feelings

- Confident
- Patient
- Peaceful
- Supported

Behaviors

- Withdrawal from others
- Critical of others/suspicious
- No activities
- Poor self-care
- Sleep a lot

positive
opposites

Behaviors

- Praise & support others
- Do pleasurable activity/
self-care
- Stay calm/optimistic
- Read happy thought journal
- Exercise

Consequences

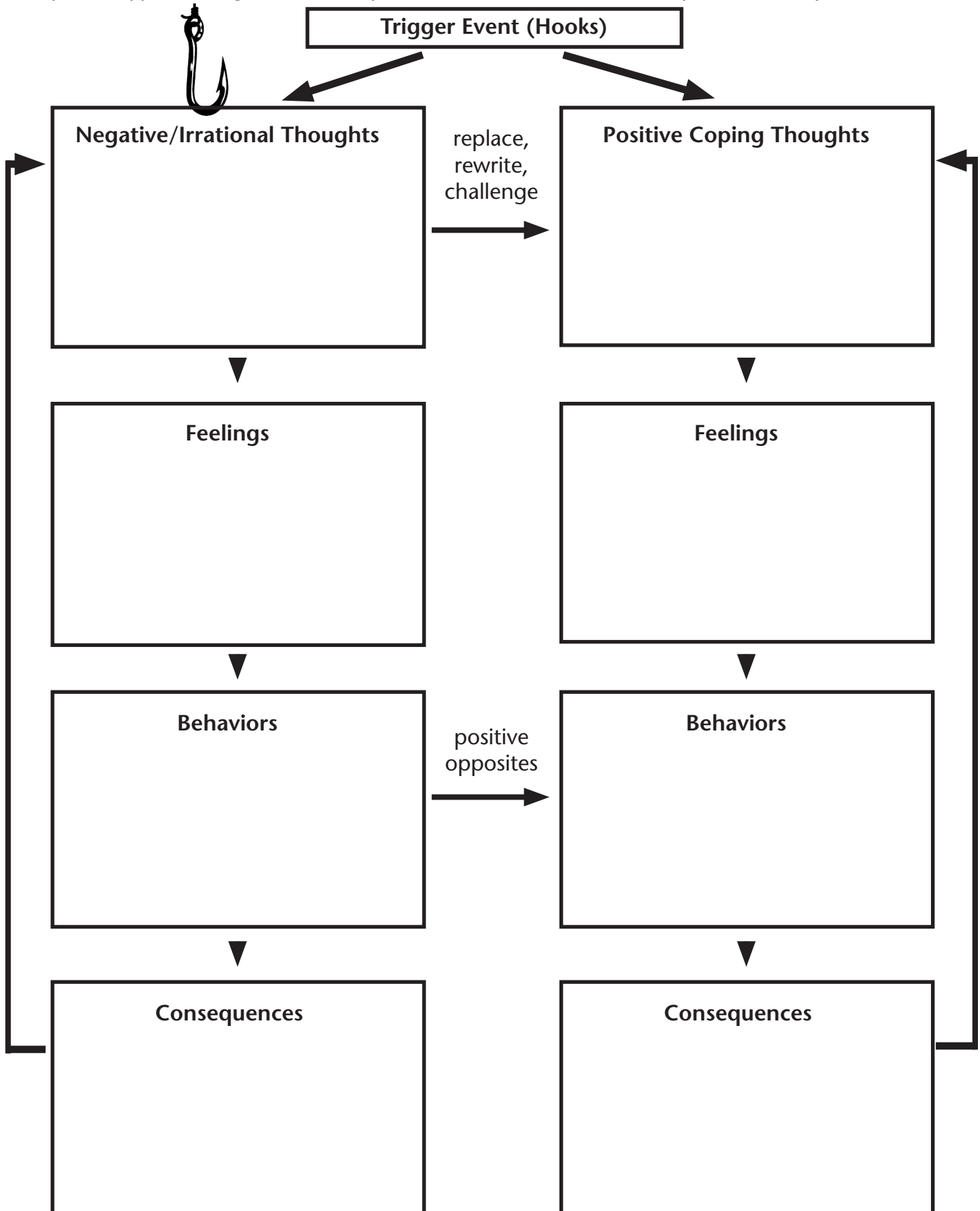
- Very few friends
- Isolated/rejected
- Problems with job
- Neglect children
- Lower self-esteem

Consequences

- Make friends
- More success at job
- Able to attend to children/
partner/friends
- Increased self-esteem

Thought & Feeling Diary for Coping with a Difficult Situation

Identify situations or triggers that make your angry or depressed. Work on replacing irrational or negative thoughts with positive opposite thoughts. Remember you can't control what others do, but you can control your own behavior.



*“There is more than one way to think about something—
feelings don't have to determine actions.”*

Handouts & Refrigerator Notes



Home Activities for the Week



To Do:

- PRACTICE expressing positive feedback or giving support to another adult during the next week.
OR
 - PRACTICE asking for feedback when you are feeling defensive or when unsure what the other person is saying or how they are reacting to what you have said or done.
 - PRACTICE making a request for help from another adult during the next week. Remember to be positive, specific, use "I" messages and to give clarification or feedback.
Keep track of the results of the first three exercises on Record Sheet Hand-out: Giving and Getting Support.
 - RECORD (on the Parent Record Sheet: Sources of Stress) your daily stressors and plan a strategy to give yourself more support for these stressful times. Then try out your strategy and record what happens.
- CALL your buddy this week. (You could do your practice with your buddy!)

READ



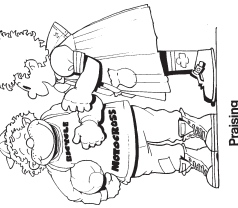
Handouts and Chapter Twelve, *Time Out From Stress and Anger in The Incredible Years*.

Caution: Remember to continue special time!

REFRIGERATOR NOTES

ABOUT EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

- Use “active” listening and encourage others to express their ideas and feelings.
- Speak up clearly with “I” messages (avoid “you” messages which tend to blame or criticize).
- Express your feelings about issues rather than storing up grievances, but remember to be considerate about when and where you speak up.
- Think about the other person’s needs and then validate their feelings and point of view (try to put yourself in their shoes).
- Avoid criticisms, gripes and put downs. Focus on being polite and positive.
- Stop discussion or take a short Time Out when confused, angry or when communication is breaking down.
- Focus on fixing the problem, not fixing the blame.
- Recognize that another person’s problem or feeling is always legitimate. Avoid denials and defensiveness.
- Ask for feedback in order to be sure you understand correctly. (Recognize your own as well as other “mood filters” and how they may distort communication.)

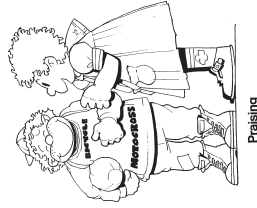


- Give clear and consistent verbal and nonverbal messages.
- Make positive requests and comply to other’s requests.
- Express positive feedback and feelings.

REFRIGERATOR NOTES

ABOUT EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

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- Make positive requests and comply to other’s requests.
- Express positive feedback and feelings.



PARENT RECORD SHEET: GIVING AND GETTING SUPPORT

Describe your responses and the listener's responses to the two exercises.

1. Making a Request

Example

2. Giving Support or Positive Feedback

Example

3. Getting Feedback or Clarification

Example



PARENT RECORD SHEET: SOURCES OF STRESS

Daily Stressors

Strategy

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

If you have a partner compare your lists to see if there is any way you can help each other with daily hassles.

WHAT HAPPENED?

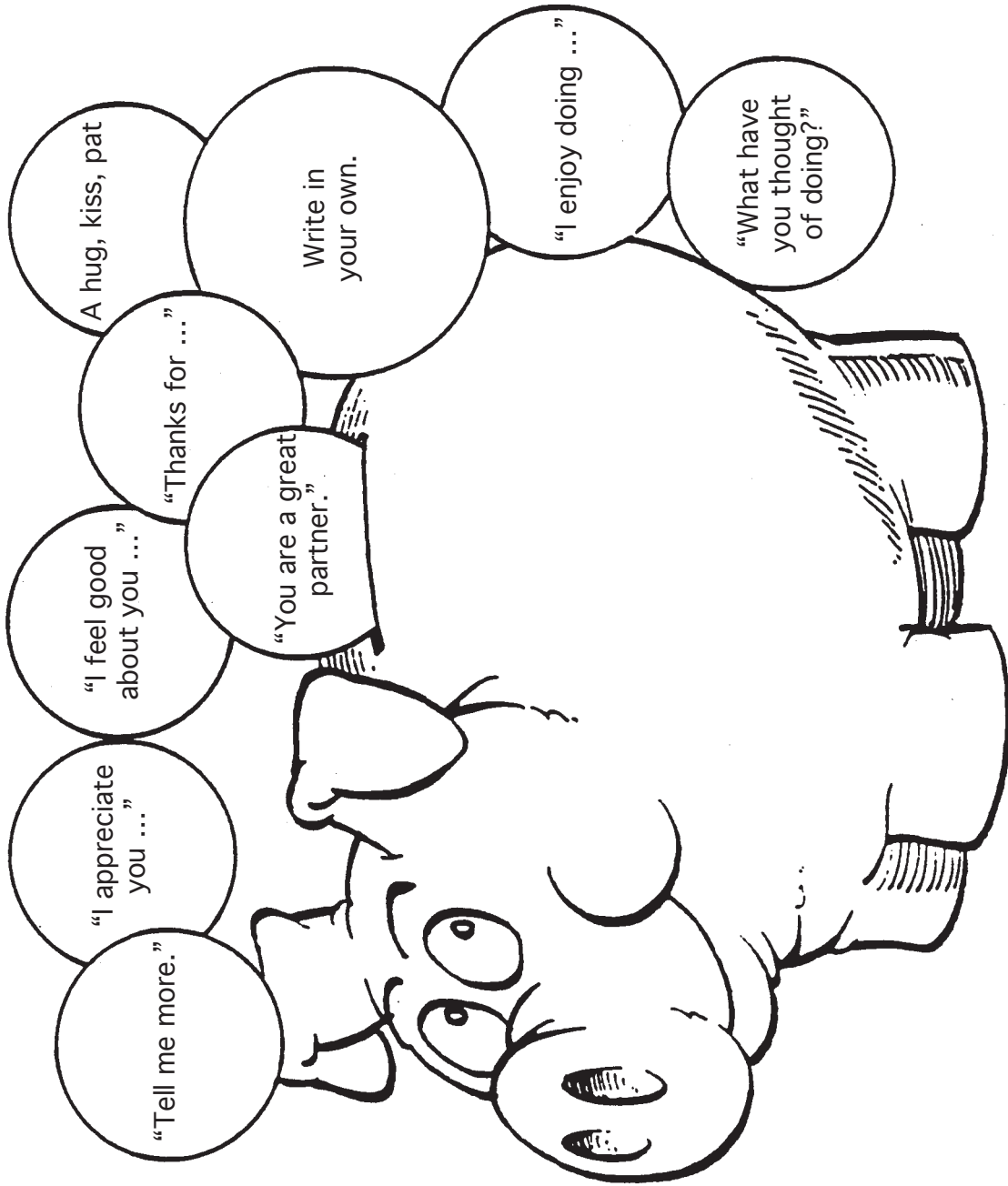
STRESSOR

STRATEGY

EFFECTIVENESS

OBSTACLES

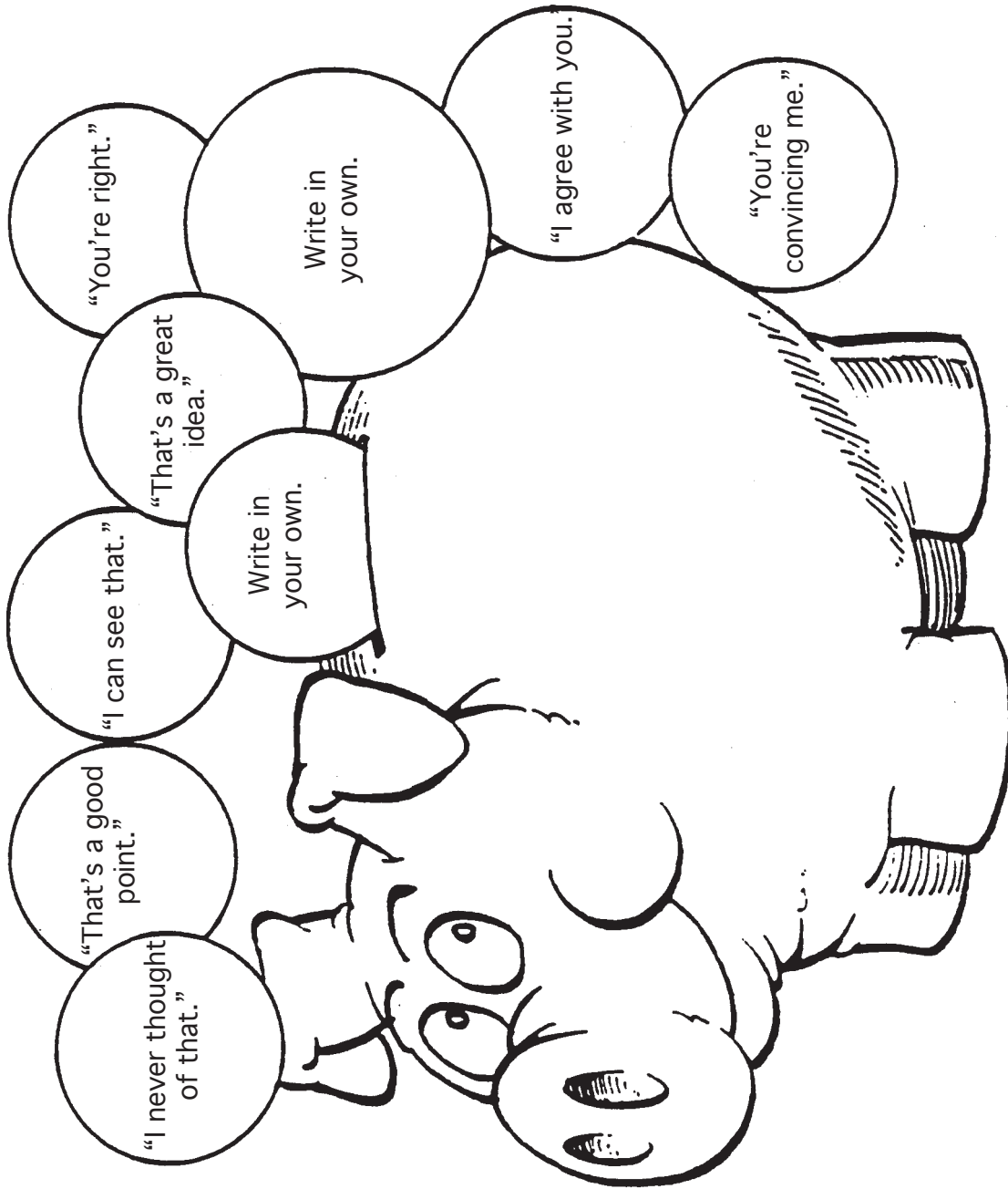
1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____



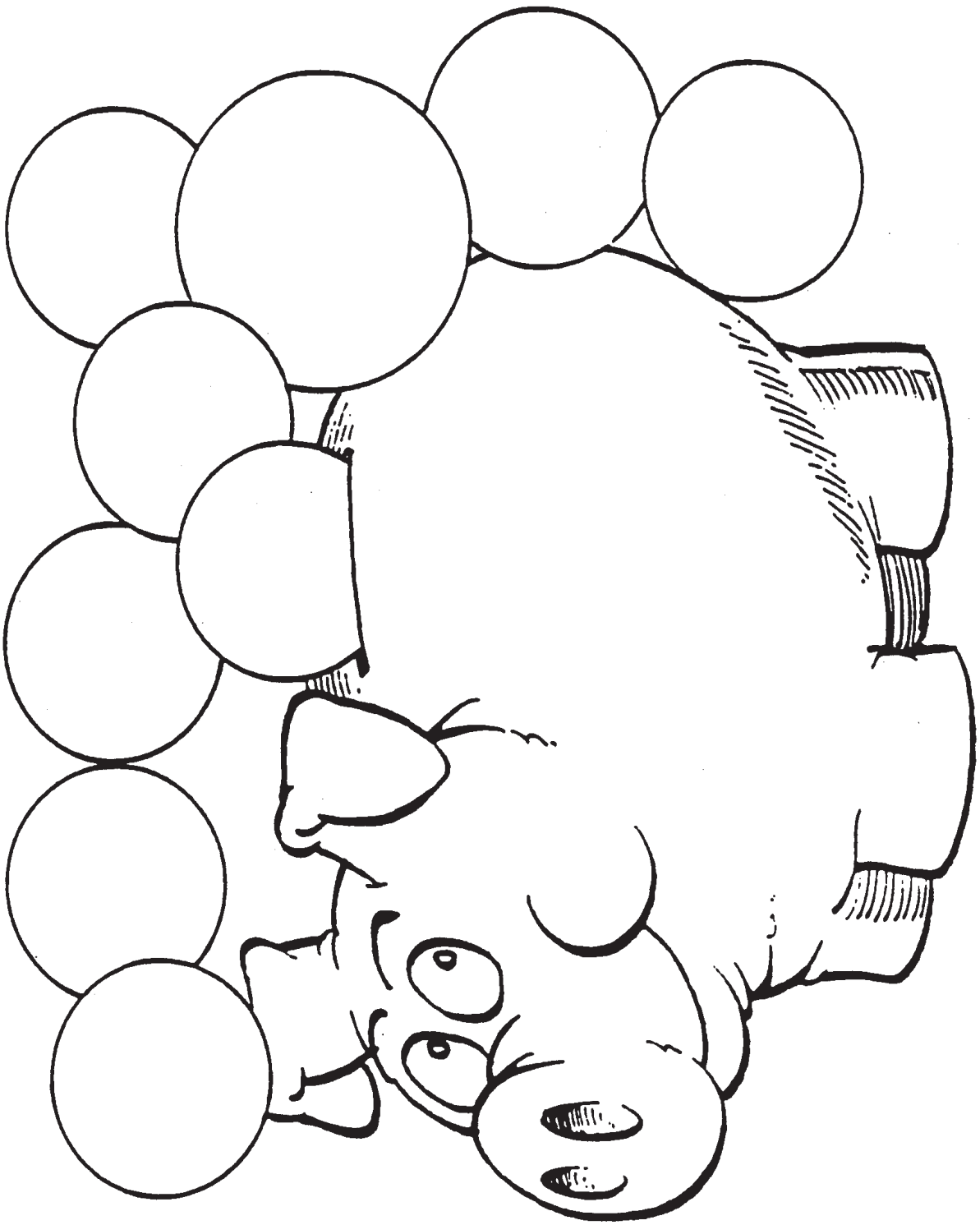
Remember to Build Up Your Bank Account
With Support and Encouragement



Remember to Build Up Your Bank Account
With Repair Statements

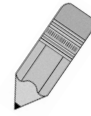


Remember to Build Up Your Bank Account
With Accepting and Respecting Statements



Brainstorm/Buzz

Reward yourself with some pleasurable times.



Think about 10 things you can do that bring you pleasure. These can include interactions with others that make you feel appreciated or understood, or activities that make you feel useful, strong, or valued. Write these activities down and give them one star*, two stars**, or three stars*** according to how much enjoyment they bring you. Make a plan to do at least one of these each day and write it down on your calendar.

My Pleasurable Activities – Add Your Own

Calling up someone I enjoy talking to

Being with optimistic people

Meeting a friend for lunch

Exercising

Writing a card or e-mail in my happy journal

Listening to relaxing music

Grooming myself (doing nails, haircut, showering)

Getting or giving a back rub

Reading

Yoga

Cooking

Watching a Movie

Goal:

I will commit to doing something pleasurable for myself this week. This will include:



Brainstorm/Buzz—Praising Family Members & Friends

Brainstorm statements you can use to praise, encourage and support other family members (partners, grandparents, friends) in their interactions with you or your children.



Interactions I will encourage in others

Helping put out garbage

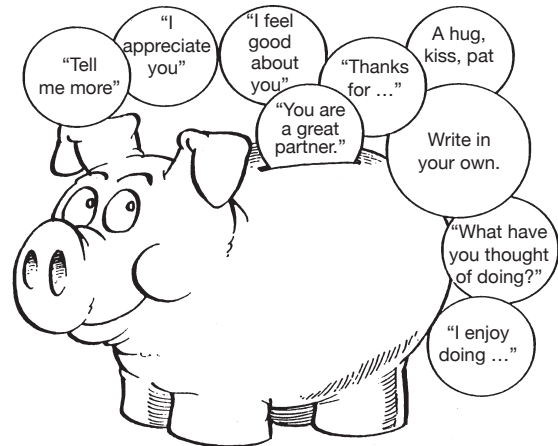
Making dinner

I will commit to increasing the number of encouraging statements I give others each day.

I like it when you...

Good for you! for...

Wow! What a wonderful job you've done cleaning the shower!



Remember to Build Up Your Bank Account With Support and Encouragement

Goal:

I will commit to increasing the number of praises I give my partner, friend, family member to _____. The behaviors I will praise include: (e.g., helping with household chores) _____
