**Chapter 4**

**Intervention**

So far we have described how the unique encounters children experience with their environment shapes their character. These adaptations are how their genetic 'nature' is altered by the impact of their experiences, their 'nurture'. This is expressed as a pattern of responses to contemporary circumstances. This 'pattern of responses' is their behaviour and this book is focusing on those children whose pattern of responses is considered severely dysfunctional by their contemporaries.

What to do about this raises a couple of questions that should be addressed before we launch into a discussion about how to change their character.

The first is the integrity of the child. The easy conclusion that teachers quite understandably presume is that these kids must be 'fixed'. They are sent to the counsellor so their problems can be sorted out or we introduce commercial behaviour management programs that will 'modify' their behaviour.

The purpose of this approach is to get the child to fit-in, to conform to the group. However, these children have evolved behaviours that have allowed them to fit-in with their 'home' environment, during their formative years and teachers and schools should be wary about making these changes. Taking away their existing behaviours might be good for the classroom but might be very risky for them 'at home' where they are getting the best they can with the behaviours they have. Teaching them to act differently in different contexts is a type of 'code switching' successful people use to fit their behaviour to suit the environment they find themselves in. The kids can behave one way at school and another at home and take this ability on through their life.

The goal of intervention should never be to change the child but to empower them and then let the child understand they have the power to change if they want to. To teach them additional behaviours that will let them meet their needs in this new environment gives them choice. This is a difference between this approach and what has been the conventional method of dealing with students who have severe behaviours.

In a relative sense it has only been a recent concession that students with severe behaviours have been recognised as having a disability. In my early years working with children in this field my colleagues and I were separated from special educators working with other disabilities in areas such as sight, hearing, physical or psychology. There was an inference that these children in 'special education' were 'innocent' and should be comforted and supported while those with severe behaviours were 'guilty' and needed to be taught how to behave; they attracted little comfort or support. It was as if the children with 'verifiable' disabilities proved they needed help and certainly attracted compassion. These 'bad' kids really didn't have something wrong with them and so they needed to be 'whipped into line'.

It was not like they couldn't help it they were wrong and so they were treated with little compassion. This lack of care confirmed their sense of toxic shame.

We have moved on from the attitudes of those days and now these children are accepted into special education. Ironically there is a small sense of truth in the awareness that unlike those kids who would always require support and comfort these kids could learn to behave in a different way and eventually function without support.

Of course the support and comfort is necessary in the short-term but the objective of the approach taken in this book is to develop a new set of classroom conditions that will allow the student to develop behaviours that will eventually have them function in what we could call normal conditions. We are preparing these kids for life after school where the world is unwilling to modify its expectations for any individual kid regardless of the cause of their problem.

The approach taken is to create an environment that is designed in such a way as to patiently support the child while the environment moulds the behaviour so that new responses can be acquired. The description of such an environment is at the heart of this approach.

**Changing the Child's Behaviour – To What?**

Like all good teachers I establish what I want the student to know at the end of their educational time with me and then backward map so I can plan that journey. So I have to confront the hard question 'what do I want for children who have suffered considerable abuse and/or neglect'? Well I have already given you the short answer and that is to be empowered to take personal control and responsibility for their lives. However, for a system wide approach this generalisation is not enough they require more specified statements about the goals of their work, their aspirational statements. An example of this is the second principle of the Declaration of the Rights of the Child:

> *The child shall enjoy special protection, and shall be given opportunities and facilities, by law and by other means, to enable him to develop physically, mentally, morally, spiritually and socially in a healthy and normal manner and in conditions of freedom and dignity. In the enactment of laws for this purpose, the best interests of the child shall be the paramount consideration.*

This is a 'motherhood' statement, like those that the core of all declarations from bureaucratic organizations. But, for the teacher the bigger question is how do we achieve this ideal and what are the tools we need to provide the kids with to deal with the 'how'.

No one should argue with this sentiment but in the most developed societies the kids I refer to in this work are not enjoying 'special protection' etc. So the hard work is not the statement its how do we achieve the goals of that statement; how do we teach the kids so as adults they can demand these rights?

In our day-to-day teaching of modern curriculum this process is relatively quite easy.  If I want the children to learn about solving simultaneous equations I look at the skills required to achieve this, gather the resources supplied by the Department and teach them the skills.  Then to confirm I have succeeded I test the students and move on.  It would be terrific if this process were available for teachers dealing with serious behaviours.  Morally it should be the Departments responsibility to provide the same support for this educational goal as they do for simultaneous equations.  But I'm talking about teachers being covertly asked to change the very sense of self of another individual and this raises lots of complex issues.

In the first instance I have to ask myself what rights do I have to 'modify' any child's behaviour?  I'm a teacher not the child's parent and I'm not a professional health care worker.  My preferred answer to this is that I'm more than happy to step aside and let the parents deal with the behaviours and even more willing to defer to the child psychiatrist or psychologist.  However, the reality for so many teachers and students is that the parents are so often the creators of the disability and/or are no longer available and the access to a professional health care worker such as a psychiatrist is a dream.  So teachers are left in their class to either wipe their hands of their dysfunctional student or do something to help them and protect the classroom.

So now, if I choose to act to help my dilemma is what 'educational outcomes' do I want my altering activities, my 'self-development lessons to achieve?  This question has entertained me for a long time and is at the heart of my philosophy on all education.  I want my students to be the best they can be and support other while they are doing the same.  So how do I define a person's best?  So I turned to the philosophers who have long asked the same question.

In a western tradition any philosophical question will invariably lead us back to the big three, Socrates, Plato and the holy-ghost, Aristotle.  When it came to the question what is it to be an optimal human Aristotle integrated their work into the study of eudaimonia - a life of excellence, living with ethical wisdom and virtue.  He made the case to achieve a happy life by studying philosophy and having an involvement in the community through political activity.  This approach is unlike that of his contemporaries, the Stoics who believe in the denial of an eudaimonic life denying themselves of pleasure.

In current times the leaders in this field of philosophy include Carl Rogers, who describes the characteristics of a fully functional person, Abraham Maslow whose famous pyramid of needs culminates in the self-actualized person and Erich Fromm's work on personal growth through being instead of doing; all these plus many others have address the question I ask of myself.  The various answers will overwhelm any investigation but there have been a few successful attempts to distil these descriptions into manageable forms.  These are discussed below.

The first is Positive Psychology which rose from attempts to aggregate and rationalise the factors all these studies identified as leading to a life of satisfaction. Using empirical data Positive Psychology studied how our activities impacted on our lives at all levels, physical, psycho/social or intellectual. The common conclusion in the field is that to experience the 'good life' you must be engaged in meaningful activities. I took this aggregation of human characteristics as an opportunity to get some clarification about what characteristic would be suitable to develop in these students.

Two sub-groups based within Positive Psychology developed inventories of characteristics that affected a positive outlook on life that I could examine. The first was a handbook called the Character Strengths and Virtues (CSV) that identified and classified positive psychological traits of humans. The CSV provided a framework to assist in developing practical applications of these virtues. Within this catalogue there are six classes of virtues under which sits 24 characteristics of strength. These are:

1. Wisdom and Knowledge – This includes creativity, curiosity, open-mindedness, love of learning, perceptivity and innovation

2. Courage – Including bravery, persistence, integrity, vitality and zest

3. Humanity – With love, kindness and social intelligence

4. Justice – With citizenship, fairness, and leadership

5. Temperance – The characteristics of humility, forgiveness, mercy, prudence and self-control

6. Transcendence – The appreciation of beauty and excellence, gratitude, hope and spirituality

This provides a list of potential characteristics that students should strive for.

Another well-known effort to rationalise the factors that contribute to a positive life comes from work by the American Psychologist Ken Sheldon. He carried out analysis on what makes an 'optimal' human by examining our evolutionary journey, our personalities and traits, The construction of our identity, social relations and cultural membership.

Sheldon's categorisation, like all works in Positive Psychology has a heavy focus on the future and is particularly focused on goal setting. They are as follows:

1. Strive to Balance Basic Needs – This includes autonomy, competence, relatedness, security and self-esteem

2.  Set and Make Efficient Progress Towards Self-Concordant Goals – These goals are those that have an intrinsic quality and support the person's self-concept reflecting Winnicott's idea of 'true self'

3.  Choose Your Goals and Social Roles Wisely - Goals that are driven by or rely on external factors such a fame, popularity or wealth do nothing to contribute to a person's positive identity.  The goals must advance personal growth and positive relationships at both the intimate and community level

4.  Strive Towards Personal Integration – The goals must be compatible with each other and support our basic needs.  They must also combine with our fundamental personality

5.  Work Towards Modifying Problematic Aspects of Yourself and the World – Have the ability to identify your weaknesses and problems within the world and include these in your goals.  Build on your character strengths and learn to self-evaluate your strategies for change.

6.  Take Responsibility for Goals and Choices – Take an intentional attitude towards life.  Align your desired sense of self with your goals and refer to this affiliation when making important decisions about your future.

7.  Listen to Your Organismic Valuing Process (OVP) and be Prepared to Change if Necessary – The OVP comes from the work of Carl Rogers where the goals are selected based on our sense of self.  We are to take an internalized attitude towards life.  If we do this we increase our trust in our ability to know what is good for us and abandon those that work against our true self.

8.  Transcend Yourself – The more we forget about our selves and give our energy to a valued cause or another person the more human, self actualized we become.

From the work briefly described above it is obvious that there is no simple or universally accepted model of what makes a good person but some common factors were persistently present through the models.

Another field in psychology that has been studying the traits of people came up with another way of looking at human characteristics, personality traits.  As with the models above there was accumulating an unmanageable number of personality types being identified.  This diversity hampered academic dialogue and more importantly confused diagnosis.  To rationalise and develop a common taxonomy to 'standardize' discussions the Big Five Personality Traits where proclaimed.  The traits described how people react to situations in a way that signalled personality and so the explanation is not about what's best

but includes responses that really reflect their approach.  In basic terms it could be said it describes a continuum from introversion to extraversion.  The traits are:

1. Openness to Experience – This is a persons appreciation for life.  At one end you have someone who is in to adventure, willing to try something new.  They desire experience, novelty and seek to question existing norms.  At the other end is the trait of seeking the comfort of the social norms.  These prefer straightforward, conventional approaches to life.  This difference is reflected in politics with the persistent clash between liberal, progressive parties and the conservatives.

2. Conscientious – This is the degree of organisation a person has.  It would seem that the continuum is heavily skewed in the direction of dependable, disciplined approach to life.  This approach is seem as important for the success of society ad they do not upset the established doctrine.  But it is often the impulsive, snap decision that brings change.  These people are often the spark in society that makes life fun.

3. Extraversion – This is really the level of assertiveness and sociability.  At one end we have the 'lets go' positivity that takes people on a journey with them.  The contrast is the introvert who seems to lack exuberance but their quiet, low-key approach is at the heart of a lot of deliberate advancements.  This trait is really a reflection of their emotional reactivity.

4. Agreeableness – Again it would seem that there is an advantage in getting on with people.  It's hard to argue against being a compassionate, cooperative and sympathetic person.  This is certainly a benefit in getting social needs met.  But as a society we need people who can detach themselves from others.  There are situations where tough, deliberate decisions are requires.  Obvious cases are in surgery where we want the doctor to make hard calls or in times of crisis where someone is needed to take control.

5. Neuroticism – This refers to the emotional stability and impulse control of the individual.  At one end we have those who seem to be at the mercy of their feelings.  They are generally negative about life and are happy to avoid challenging situations.  There is some benefit in worry as long as it is not damaging.  It focuses attention of what could go wrong and favours the safe option. On the other hand there are those who are not easily upset.  They present as calm and free from the persistent worry and are confident when they take on new challenges.

Where individuals stand within these traits is a function of their development.  Their traits are the adaptions they have made in the environment where they grew up.  So we can see

that where they sit, say on neuroticism is not a choice but a reflection of the abuse they have suffered.

For a functional adult, our goal for our students we need them to develop a type of 'code switching' or a 'trait switching' so in given circumstances they can access the position on the continuum of any trait to ensure their best outcome.

 So what I have presented is a critique of what is generally considered the 'ideal' self, the best a person can be.  Within all the factors described are abundant variations within each category and each reader will have their own interpretations.  This doesn't matter the goal of this activity is not to determine what a child should become but how we can develop their sense of self so they feel empowered to make their choice.

The point is children in functional families have developed a proper sense of self, albeit imperfect.  Children who have suffered abuse and/or neglect have not.  To get through the experience of their childhood they have missed out on the support healthy attachment provides for their journey to an adult self or they have had to submerge any sense of self to survive the terror childhood abuse visits on a child.

The children we are dealing with have no access to the values of an ideal self.  It is our task to teach them they have a real sense of self and the traits that will allow them to participate in life as outlined in the UN Declaration.

I have distilled the descriptions given above into four categories or stages that I believe provide a broad scaffold that can develop the characteristics will prepare these children for acceptable access to their communities.  These are:

**Sense of Self**

We have said before these children have a toxic sense of shame and that best describes their existing sense of their self.  In a nutshell they don't make mistakes; they are mistakes.  They are incapable of achieving anything; they are bad - worthless and not fit to have a meaningful relationship with any person.  The worst advice you could give these kids is to be yourself!

You have to remember that as a small child these kids have been abuse by the very people they should have been able to rely on to teach them how to become an independent adult.

The most obvious dysfunctional conduct we witness is they have no control over their behaviour, they are erratic and not only act in a 'bad' way they perceive themselves to be bad.  This is the outcome for kids whose parents have not been consistent.  But remember from the previous chapters some kids have been abused in a consistent manner and they have developed behaviours that protect their self.  These kids will appear to be good or perfect and they work hard to maintain that image but like their out of control abused colleagues their sense of self will be just as negative, just as toxic.

The task for the teacher is to be 'a good parent' for these kids. You can't change them but you can provide the support a small child would receive while they re-learn or re-develop an authentic sense of their self.

Take for example their inability to regulate emotions, a hallmark of traumatized kids. When a little child gets upset, say skinned their knee mum or dad would hold them, make soothing noises and reassure them that would be okay. When a 14-year-old PTSD kid gets hurt the teacher needs to treat them like a baby, not on a sarcastic way but to sooth them validate their pain and reassure them they will be alright. After a period of time, a significant period of time they will have learned the strategies we all use to regulate our emotions and consequently our behaviour.

We also have to deal with their view of being 'faulty'. As mentions above these kids believe they don't make a mistake they are a mistake and so we have to deal with this faulty belief. Teach them that nobody is perfect. In fact an adage I used with students I worked with was they are perfectly imperfect. That is all humans make mistakes. I make mistakes therefore I am a perfect human – perfectly imperfect.

How you interact with the student will make a big difference. Understand that when a student is faced with a new, challenging task their self-talk will be something like:

- 'I can't do this ……..'?
- 'Everyone else will laugh at my …..'?
- 'I hate ………..'?

The destructive teacher, who may well be trying to challenge the student, will make comments that reinforce their opinion of themselves. Terms like:

- 'What do you think you're doing'?
- 'Is this your best work'?
- 'Why did you do that'?

A better way for the teacher to encourage a child is with comments like:

- 'How can we make this ……'?
- 'What can we do to …… '?
- 'What will it look like if …..'?

You will inevitably be faced with resistance. Remember you are asking the children to make what they see as a very threatening change. They know their current environment and have learned to live in it. You are asking them to let go of those behaviours and that threatens them. Don't fight their obstruction. If you correct them straight away you have conflict so in the first instance go with them. The best way these kids know how to cope is to be provocative so start with where they are at the time. Use statements like:

- 'You hate being pushed around, don't you?'
- 'You'd rather talk to your friends than listen to me'
- 'You'd like to be playing with your computer'

These statements transform a determination to be uncooperative into a feeling of being understood and so you have the chance to change the resistance into productive engagement.

Their negativity, their practise of saying no to any suggestion can be replaced with an unavoidable yes if you anticipate what they will say.  For example if you place the child in a seating plan you know they will complain and refuse but if you say something like 'I suppose you'd rather be sitting with Sam' they will agree.  Then, if you're lucky you can explain why you are moving them.

Another goal of your work is to reconnect these kids with their 'community' be that their neighbourhood, their class and their school.  They have a strong need to belong.  If appropriate, engaging the parents could also be beneficial but you need to be careful.

Taking care is especially important when dealing with the parents of older adolescent kids.  It is a nature progression for all teenagers to grow away from their parents.  For these kids the separation might be their key to the freedom of being their real-self.  This can be done with smartly planned group work that as its outcome real cooperative learning.  It is also valuable for the children to do charity work in a group.  These kids, like all kids get a great sense of self-worth when they help those less fortunate.

Hopefully after a significant period of time the seeds of positivity will emerge and the teacher should do as much as they can to cultivate this positivity through the lessons they give.

**Relatedness**

The successful integration into a community at any level is crucial for mental health for everyone.  For the kids with PTSD relationships are matters that are fraught with difficulties.  The development of techniques to establish significant connections with others, at all levels takes place in early childhood.  The different types of relationships are established in a sequential order.  That is from the exclusive attachment to mum up to the affiliation with peers.

The most powerful adult relationship is that to an intimate other.  Part of fulfilling the evolutionary demand to reproduce in our society is most often with a significant partner.  The power of this type of relationship is made obvious by the initial intensity of the establishment of a loving relationship and the emotional pain when that loved ends.  This is the last type of connection developed in our species and it is a strong echo of the first intimate relationship with the significant care-giver at birth.

The structure of this intimate connection is the first established at birth when the child attaches to the parent.  At this time the child is totally reliant on their carer(s) for all their needs, their very survival depends on an adult taking care of them.  Attachment theory is a major field of psychology and beyond the scope of this book but it gives a great illustration of this process.  Secure attachment occurs when the care-givers meet the needs of the infant.  Not only are the physical needs met so are the social and emotional ones satisfied.

Within the description of the course of development there is a consistent correlation between early childhood abuse and neglect and disordered attachment.  And the children with severe behaviours are invariably those with insecure attachment.

It is obvious that if you leave a child alone, to fend for their selves they will die.  So the dysfunctional children who have made it to your classroom have had some support in these early years but not enough.  The example of the an extreme form of neglect is illustrated with children who were in the found in the orphanages of the Eastern European countries at the end of the Cold War, particularly one in Romania.  At one level they were fed and clothed but had little, or no emotional/social bonding or mental stimulation.  They just lay in their cots all day.  The outcomes are horrific.

The kids causing trouble in our schools may not be so damaged however there are plenty of examples where individual kids have been equally abused.  These kids do not have a secure attachment to their primary parent and as this early failure is the template for future relationships.  The difficulty continues throughout development.

When they get to school they should be on the way to developing the next level of relationships and that is the ability to affiliate with other children.  In an ideal situation this occurs in preschools or supervised play where the carer givers teach skills like sharing and cooperation.

As said, kids who are unable to form primary attachments are already at a disadvantage when it comes to establishing these affiliations and they are very likely to have parents who do not teach them how to appropriately responses to the inevitable conflict between kids or they don't even provide the opportunity to learn.

To address this relational deficit in a classroom is an enormous challenge for the teacher but one that must be faced.  The outcome we want for these kids is to be a valued part of their community so the task is to make them a valued part of your class.

The first skill is for them to recognise the social norms of mainstream society that should be reflected in the classroom.  Initially this is achieved by teaching social skills through classroom discussions on topics about sharing and relationships that have struggled.  Stories about fictional kids who are experiencing difficulties in their life, say the break-up of their parent's marriage are a great class discussion.

Providing negative consequences to the students when they break the social expectations is an appropriate response but only if there is an accompanying explanation about why the actions were inappropriate. Early on this might seem to be a waste of time. As pointed out before these kids will have little empathy in the first instance but by teaching them not only what is not appropriate but also why it is inappropriate you are front-loading the brain with connections that may bear fruit in the future.

As with the development of the child's sense of self is enhanced through smart cooperative learning and volunteering class activities these programs work well in developing the ability to form healthy attachments.

**Autonomy**

Autonomy differs from sense of self in that healthy adults conduct themselves in their community in a manner that respects the needs of others while defending their own authentic self. The journey for an individual is to develop from a situation where they are completely dependent, as they are as infants up to a level where they are independent when it comes to controlling their behaviour and influencing their future.

It must be recognized that healthy independence is not that you have no need for others, of course everyone needs others and relationships are crucial for satisfying your personal needs. The autonomy is in the process of establishing these relationships and the lessons learned in relatedness apply.

Autonomy is a fundamental trait that allows you to be the author of your own life. You can take an internal attitude towards where you want to go and what you want to do. This might seem inconsequential for those who have always been self-contained but we are discussing children whose history makes such a self-interested attitude unthinkable.

In the first instance the world has always done things to them, be that abuse, failure, isolation and rejection and this has happened because of what they think of themselves.

The path to recovery depends heavily on the work to address the previous shortfalls but on top of this the teacher needs to slowly introduce choice in the work they expect the child to undertake. This is not easy and takes some work and imagination but the more you allow these children to choose the way they want to satisfy the needs of the lesson gradually they will change their attitude to their own worth and increasingly trust in their ability to know what works for them, know they can meet their own needs.

Another practical approach to helping these kids is to teach them about gratification. A lot of research into how we satisfy our needs and the long-term impact that has on children has been undertaken and it is clear that there is a real advantage to delaying gratification when meeting our needs. The modern world for our children is awash with advertisements that promise instant gratification for our needs. These ads are so sophisticated that kids know to

be popular, attractive and extremely happy all they have to do is eat a particular hamburger, drink a particular soft drink (to go better), read a certain magazine, etc.  We live in a world of instant gratification.

Our social world is also 'instant'.  When travelling on public transport I never cease to be amazed at the number of people on their smart phones reading Face Book or whatever.  They have even put the 'instant' into Instagram.  This is the new world of relationships and the question must be asked how satisfying are these?  There is a battle that must be waged against this instant gratification.  Already we see the results of hamburgers, soft drinks and the like with obesity being a huge public health issue.

I believe it is appropriate to actually teach the students about delayed gratification.  Let them know about the satisfaction of achieving something that takes a lot of effort.  Encourage the resilience that comes from failing the first time, getting up and trying again.

A technique that will help is the use of a 'pencil' register.  How this works is at the end of an assignment or test you record the marks in 'pencil'.  I know I am giving my age away so let them know the mark you recorded electronically is not permanent.  Let the child resubmit the assignment or retake the test as many times as they like.  At the end of the semester assign their best mark.  Not only does this allow the kids to enjoy the satisfaction of mastery they also learn to keep on at problems even if they are difficult.  They will develop the belief they can do things and this translates into their belief that they have mastery over their lives, they have autonomy.

**Aspirations**

In the previous attributes the focus was on strengthening the personal qualities of the child.  In this last section the emphasis is on taking that new sense into the community in a way that develops their ability to act in a way that maximises their ability to get their needs met in a healthy and responsible manner.  It also encourages the development of resilience in that they understand that life is not easy but with patience and effort they can achieve.

A healthy life is one that has a purpose, a direction.  If you examine people who you would consider successful and content you would see individuals involved in a range of endeavours.  These activities extend from working in large corporations, making million dollar deals to those who have dedicated their life to a political ideal.  Others have devoted their life to a particular sport or recreation and others who work with charities helping those less fortunate than their self.  The list is endless but there is a commonality and that is they have an intrinsic motivation that drives their behaviour.

These successful people have aligned their life's purpose with their distinct sense of who they are.  In the best of situations we can work in jobs that are directly related to our intrinsic goals.  For the children coming from such a disadvantaged base it is unlikely that

they will have in the first instance the ability to work in an area that captures their imagination.

We have established that autonomy is a significant aspiration we have for these kids and so we need to prepare them for work. It is through the rewards of their work they can accumulate the resources they will need for life. To be independent we need to provide food and shelter for our self and perhaps later for our family. To explore further opportunities we will need a surplus of resources.

One problem that must be addressed is that in the early stages of change there is a significant amount of negativity that is part of their sense of shame. These children have a default position of failure and we are asking them to attempt something that they may well find very threatening.

A technique I learned from a colleague and friend Randall Clinch provides a useful description of our approach to our active pursuits. His approach divides the motives for undertaking effort into four categories. In the first instance Randall spoke of a negative cycle that could be initiated when undertaking a challenge. These are the negative traps we can fall into if we do not approach work with the best of motives:

- **Excitement** – This is the feeling of excitement when we choose not to attend to our work. Instead of attending school we may decide to truant and that can be accompanied with a sense of excitement. There is a sense of danger the first time we take such a risk. But excitement is a short term feeling feedback that you are doing 'the wrong thing' and can help motivate you not to truant. However, the more you truant the less excitement is experienced and the easier it is to 'do the wrong thing'.

- **Hardness** – This is a feeling we experience when we have to do something we are made to do, something we don't want to do or something we think we can't do. This is prevalent in all classrooms where teachers insist on the students doing their work. It can also be a problem when we start a new job. Everyone experiences some apprehension when they are placed in an unfamiliar setting.

- **Guilt** – Guilt is closely associated with shame so there is no surprise that these children can be victims of this emotion. We feel guilt when we know the work we have done is not our best effort. If the task we have been set is not engaging then it is tempting to just put in a minimal effort. What our students need to know is that most jobs are boring especially at the start. Some jobs, such as production line work will be boring and it is hard to remain enthusiastic about it.

- **Frustration** – This is the final trap we can fall into if we fail to take a positive attitude into our work. Frustration comes after we complete a task and as we look back we recognize that our actions have not met our expectations. The task is finished and we have to submit something that will produce a sense of shame. The redeeming factor, if there is such a thing is this is healthy shame.

The alternate to these negative outcomes from not putting in our best effort are given below.

- **Excitement** – This is the feeling that comes from the expectation of an activity that holds an element of fear. For a pleasing life we need a bit of excitement. It is important on a personal level and explains the popularity of 'dangerous' carnival rides such as the roller coaster. And it's no surprise teenagers are particularly attracted to 'excitement' but of all the motivators the satisfaction excitement provides is very short lived. The 'excitement' of an activity soon abates and we require either other activities or we need to take even more risks.

  Excitement is no motivator for long term success in work.

- **Enjoyment** – This is the ideal motivator for any vocation. Going to work to do something you enjoy makes life easy. It is the ideal way to earn your income. But as I have pointed out the number of people who have the privilege of working at what they love is small and usually for those who have had an equally privileged developmental childhood.

- **Reward** – This is working 'for the money'. There is nothing wrong for doing this as long as it is in a way that doesn't clash with your deep sense of worth. It may be possible to make a great deal of money selling scam products, the market place is full of such schemes. Unless your intrinsic sense of ethics and personal qualities gives you to believe that taking advantage of other's gullibility is part of life's competition, working is such occupations will clash with your intrinsic drives.

  However honest work will provide support for your sense of self and the resources to support your real goals.

- **Satisfaction** – This is the best type of work. This is when you work in such a way as to improve your own talents and experiences in a way that will increase the professional skills you possess. Along with improvement of your-self there is a great deal of fulfilment in undertaking work that improves the lives of others. This can be providing things like new roads, fixing cars, working in the service industry and making someone's experience special because you treated them well.

The fact remains that work can be very boring and unless we make a concerted effort the easy path is into those outlined in the negative outcomes. It takes a special quality to naturally have enthusiasm for the mundane. However, this doesn't mean you have to be downhearted about the work you have to do. The four positive approaches can help anyone to remain actively engaged in any task.

The key is to ask yourself the right questions before you undertake a task and the clue is in the description of each feature described above. As pointed out excitement is rarely a motivator for work, if it is you are extremely lucky but for those facing tasks that are challenging on any level but one of them will correctly address what should be your motivator to work hard. The questions are:

1. What will be enjoyable about this work?
   It's not hard to work at something you like but sometimes you need to be reminded that you really do like that activity. It's easy to take the pleasure of working with your interest for granted.

2. What will be rewarding about this work?
   This is the most powerful question when you work in a day to day mundane job. The bottom line may just be I will get paid at the end of the week. If still at school it may just be to complete the requirements to pass a subject. You have to find something in the work that rewards you.

3. What will be satisfying about this work?
   This is the strongest motivator. Whenever you can see the work benefitting you or others it's easy to stay on task because you see the benefit now but more strongly in the future.

The answer to one, or if your lucky more will give you the clue to why your efforts are worthwhile.

Whether or not our personal goals are met in work or work provides the resources to pursue our own path in the world is not important; what is important is that we have a purpose in life that's ours, not set by others. For the students we are dealing with being able to select a life purpose; that is theirs and is intrinsic – not for money, fame or status – will help them in their personal growth. These goals are not necessarily for life and will most likely change as they become more confident about the sense of worth.