

Lesson 9

I'm Not the Problem at School!

Goal: To assist students who blame all of their problems in school on teachers, to accept responsibility for their actions.

Materials: Marker board, markers, pens, two copies for each student of "Who is the Problem Here?"

1. ▲ **Distribute** a pen and one copy of the "Who is the Problem Here?" handout to each class member. **Note** to the participants that some class members may believe that teachers are solely or primarily responsible for students' school problems. **Ask** the students to consider if this is an accurate assumption by completing the handout, checking off "True" or "False" for each item as it applies to their teacher(s). **Inform** the students that they can each elect to complete the handout by focusing on one particular teacher that they have difficulty with, or they may focus on all their teachers, in general. **Caution** students to be fair and honest in making judgements, and **note** that the class will review and discuss each sheet. (Students should mark "False" on all/most items.) **Assist** the class to discuss the completed forms, focusing on one student's paper at a time. **Aid** the class members to fairly evaluate their teachers, revising unfair appraisals with the help of the class. **Assist** the class to conclude that teachers are usually not the sole/primary cause of students' problems in school.

2. ▲ **Identify** to the class that the results of their work on the "Who is the Problem Here?" handout indicate that teachers may not be the sole or primary cause of students' school problems. **Ask** the participants to determine who could be the cause by completing the survey again, with the students now focusing on their own behavior. **Distribute** a second copy of the handout to each participant. **Caution** the students to answer honestly and to be prepared to discuss their responses with the rest of the class. **Discuss** the completed forms **assisting** the class to revise forms that are not accurate. **Assist** the class to conclude that students who have school problems usually present behaviors that cause and/or worsen those problems.

3. ▲ **Ask** the class members who have school

problems that they had blamed on teachers, to identify any jobs or businesses they could do and successfully blame any work difficulties on the authority figures. **Assist** the class to note that all jobs involve at least some contact with a boss, and even business owners must interact with authorities such as the IRS, licensing boards, highway patrol officers, regulating bodies, inspectors, and bank loan officers. **Assist** the students to recognize that there are no/few jobs or businesses where on-going serious problems with authorities can be successfully managed by blaming the authority. **Ask** the students to determine what will happen to employees who use with their bosses, behaviors similar to those listed on the handout. Also **ask** the class to identify what will happen to business owners who use the behaviors listed on the handout, with their bankers, customers, regulators, the IRS, and other authorities.

▲ **Assist** the students who have school problems, to acknowledge they may "have a little bit to do with the results they get in school." **Assist** these students (privately, or with the class, as appropriate), to review their second copy of the handout and identify which behaviors they are willing to modify to improve the results they get in school.

4. ▲ **Review** the major points of this lesson:

- **Most teachers don't whine about their work load, wander in late to class, or disrupt class discussions. Teachers are usually not the sole or primary cause of your school problems.**

- **If you are whining about your work load, wandering into class late, and disrupting class discussions, your school problems may largely stem from these behaviors.**

- **Just about all businesses and jobs include contact with authorities. There are no/few jobs or businesses where on-going problems with authorities can be successfully managed by blaming the authority.**

- **To get better results in school, you may wish to modify some of the behaviors that you do that create and maintain the problems in school.**

Who is the Problem Here?

One Dozen Definite Ways to Detect School Problems

1. Is frequently late to class. True False
2. Sometimes writes on desks or intentionally damages school property. True False
3. Often whines and complains about doing work s/he doesn't like. True False
4. Wears clothes that are torn up, very revealing, or totally inappropriate for school. True False
5. Makes a lot of excuses so s/he can leave class early, or miss class time. True False
6. Disrupts the class with frequent interruptions, or offers inappropriate input and comments that are off the subject. True False
7. Misses a lot of classes, especially on Mondays and Fridays. True False
8. Regularly forgets to bring basic school supplies like books, pencils and paper. True False
9. Often misses deadlines for work completion. True False
10. Sometimes acts silly, nasty, distracted, indifferent or bored during class discussions. True False
11. Sometimes intentionally breaks important school rules and policies. True False
12. Sometimes doesn't know exactly what the class is studying; may miss or be unprepared for discussions, quizzes and tests True False

SCORING:

If "True" is checked 0-2 times, this person IS NOT THE PROBLEM HERE.

If "True" is checked 3-5 times, this person IS AT LEAST PART OF THE PROBLEM HERE.

If "True" is checked 6-12 times, this person IS THE PROBLEM HERE.