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# 1

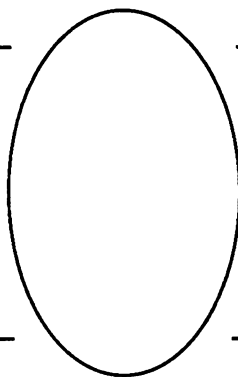
## INTRODUCTION

*If you treat an individual as he is, that's all that he will be.  
Only if you treat him as he ought to be, will he have a chance  
to become what he ought to be or could.*

—400-year-old quote

When I teach classes for teachers, two of my favorite activities to begin are “My Board of Directors” and “The Ten Most Important Lessons in Life.” I learned the “Board of Directors” activity from Constance H. Dembrowsky at the First National Conference on Self-Esteem in Los Angeles a couple of years ago. Connie has developed curriculum materials for junior and senior high school students. This information is listed in the Resources chapter of this book. “Chairman of the Board” is also a strategy given in *Meeting Yourself Halfway*, by Dr. Sidney Simon, also listed in the Resources chapter. I learned “The Ten Most Important Lessons

### My Board of Directors



in Life” from my training in Magic Circle.\*

While I play “Wind Beneath My Wings”\*\* I have my students list people who sit on their

“Board of

Directors.”

These are their heroes—

people who have made significant

contributions to their lives. Then the class talks

about these people and

what they have contributed. Responses go like this: unconditional love, a belief in myself, a work ethic, a value system, etc. And these things came from their parents, husbands, wives, children, friends, and many times from teachers. I read to them the passage from Dr. William Glasser’s

\* Palomares and Associates, P. O. Box 1517, Spring Valley, California 92077.

\*\* Bette Midler, Atlantic Recording Corporation, 75 Rockefeller Plaza, New York, New York 10019.

# 2

## BOOK TALK

Much of my knowledge in self-esteem has come from reading and studying books on my own. My reading is very eclectic. I read EVERYTHING. Then I pick and choose according to how a particular book or author fits into my personal value system or philosophy of living. Some books and authors have added more to my growth and knowledge than others, but I have found value in all of the books. Sometimes I am asked to prioritize the books for one just beginning a study of self-esteem. For this reason I have added a “book talk” at the beginning of my self-esteem classes. I also do a book talk for another reason. It is hard to give away something you don’t have. Teachers may need to work on their own self-esteem first in order to be good models for their students. Here are some good books for starters. All of these are listed in the Adult Bibliography at the end of this book.

First, I would point you to Dorothy Briggs’ *Celebrate the Self*. You may already be familiar with her book *Your Child’s Self-Esteem*, which has been so helpful to parents and teachers. *Celebrate*

*the Self* will help you get some insight into your own self-esteem.

Any books or tapes by Nathaniel Branden will give you much information on the psychology of self-esteem.

*The Antecedents of Self-Esteem*, by Stanley Coopersmith, is probably the most definitive study of self-esteem. If you are looking for research in self-esteem and its implications for working with students, this is the book.

*The Third Force*, by Frank G. Goble, is a digest of the psychology of Abraham Maslow.

*Love*, by Leo Buscaglia, is a favorite of mine. I encourage every teacher to read it. As an educator himself, Dr. Buscaglia appeals to us to recognize the feeling world of the student.

*Self-Esteem*, by Matthew McKay and Patrick Fanning, is a very complete study on the subject.

I particularly like a book entitled *Women and Self-Esteem*, by Linda Tschirhart Sanford and Mary Ellen Donovan. I also recommend this book for men. A particular point that I find most helpful is this: None of us had all our needs met as we grew up, nor did our

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## SOME OF MY FAVORITE THINGS



*If I can say that I am shy  
It seems you always pass me by.  
Funny how it seems to be  
Self-fulfilling prophecy.*

*If I can say you're a bad person,  
I can almost see you worsen,  
Funny how my words for you  
Have a way of coming true.*

*If you say that I am selfish  
I feel hard as any shellfish.  
I can almost guarantee  
You won't get a thing from me.*

*Strange how your words for me  
Make me into what you see.  
Label, label there's no way  
To win this game today.*

—L. Eugene Arnold



## THE SPECIAL STORY OF MISS THOMPSON

I know of a schoolteacher named Miss Thompson. Every year when she met her new students she would say, "Boys and girls, I love you all the same. I have no favorites." Of course, she wasn't being completely truthful. Teachers do have favorites and, what is worse, most teachers have students that they just don't like.

Teddy Stallard was a boy that Miss Thompson just didn't like, and for good reason. He just didn't seem interested in school. There was a deadpan, blank expression on his face and his eyes had a glassy, unfocused appearance. When she spoke to Teddy, he always answered in monosyllables. His clothes were musty and his hair was unkempt. He wasn't an attractive boy and he certainly wasn't likable.

Whenever she marked Teddy's papers, she got a certain perverse pleasure out of putting X's next to the wrong answers, and when she put the F's at the top of the papers, she always did it with a flair. She should have known better; she had Teddy's records and she knew more about him than she wanted to admit. The records read:

1st Grade: Teddy shows promise with his work and attitude, but poor home situation.

2nd Grade: Teddy could do better. Mother is seriously ill. He receives little help at home.

3rd Grade: Teddy is a good boy, but too serious. He is a slow learner. His mother died this year.

4th Grade: Teddy is very slow, but well-behaved. His father shows no interest.

Christmas came and the boys and girls in Miss Thompson's class brought her Christmas presents. They piled their presents on her desk and crowded around to watch her open them. Among the presents, there was one from Teddy Stallard. She was surprised that he had brought her a gift, but he had. Teddy's gift was wrapped in brown paper and was held together with Scotch tape. On the paper were written the simple words, "For Miss Thompson from Teddy." When she opened Teddy's present, out fell a gaudy rhinestone bracelet with half the stones missing, and a bottle of cheap perfume.

The other boys and girls began to giggle and smirk over Teddy's gifts, but Miss Thompson at least had enough sense to silence them by immediately putting on the bracelet and putting some of the perfume on her wrist. Holding her wrist up for the other children to smell, she said,

