

Chapter 1

TOP 20 Teens

Discovering the Best-Kept
Thinking, Learning & Communicating
Secrets of Successful Teenagers



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**SECOND
EDITION**

Part I

CORNERSTONES

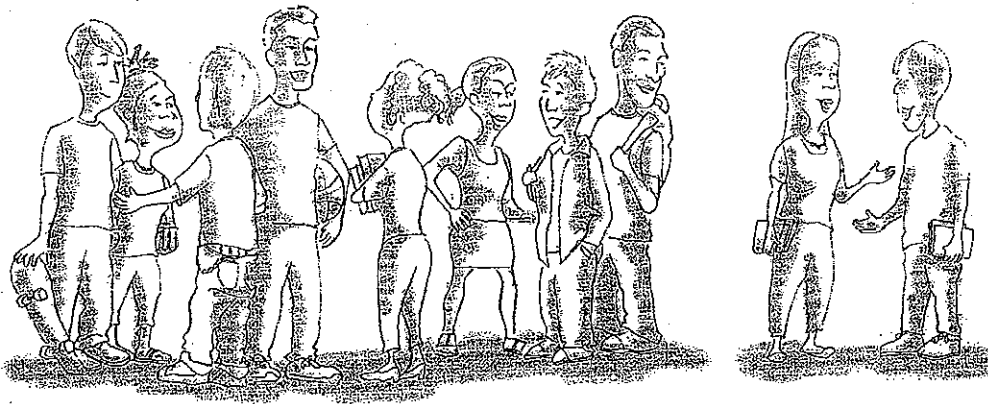
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**The 80/20 Rule, A New
Formula for Success,
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These cornerstone ideas,
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They are essential to
helping you discover
the best kept secrets
of successful teens.

TLC
est 2000

The 80/20 Rule



When Michael Cole was 25, a mentor introduced him to the 80/20 Rule, an idea that would eventually change Michael's life. The mentor told Michael that if he would just step back and observe people in life and what they are trying to do, he would find that **out of 100% of the people, 20% are making 80% of the difference.** The other 80% make 20% of the difference. That's not a bad thing. That's just the way it is.

What so powerfully impacted Michael was not that this was front page news, but that no one had ever said it to him that way. Michael immediately identified with the Bottom 80% who make only 20% of the difference. As a kid it seemed obvious to him that he was not lucky enough to be, nor destined to become, a Top 20. Michael saw himself as an average person.

This realization motivated Michael to ask his mentor the most important questions he had ever asked in his life:

"Who are the Top 20s and what do they know?"

"Can you teach me what they know and how to use it?"

"Is it possible that I could be a Top 20?"

His mentor's answer started Michael's quest. He said, "Not only is it possible, it is highly probable. I will teach you if you're interested and willing."

That got Michael going because he knew there would be many payoffs from becoming a Top 20.

Excited about this possibility, Michael wanted to get started immediately. His mentor's first lesson began this way: "We'll get specific but let me

*"Before I took
this class
I had always
thought that
80% of the
population did
80% of
the work."*

— Kurt

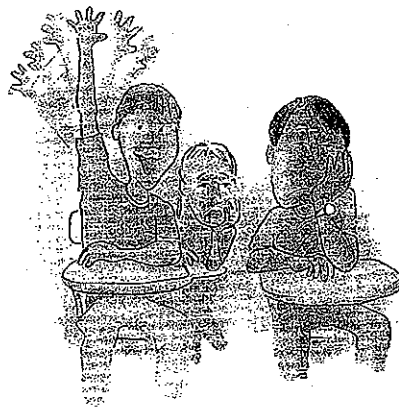
give you the big answer first. The single biggest difference between the Top 20 and the Bottom 80 can be found in a six-inch space between their ears. **Top 20s have a better way of thinking, learning and communicating.**"

To that Michael asked, "Thinking, learning and communicating about what?"

"Everything," answered his teacher.

The point Michael's teacher was making was that the fewest number of people make the largest difference or experience the largest reward from their efforts. The greatest number of people make the smallest amount of difference. If you want to have a great life you have got to be a difference maker. The Top 20 make 80% of the difference, have 80% of the impact.

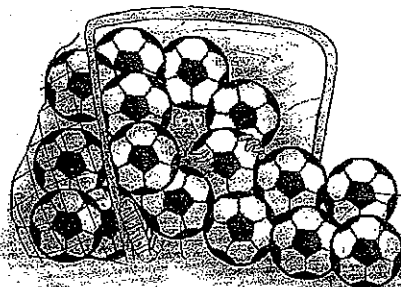
Generally speaking, it seems that:



20% of the Girl Scouts in any troop sell 80% of the cookies.



20% of the students in class answer 80% of the questions.



20% of the forwards on any soccer team score 80% of the goals each season.



Becoming a **Top 20** requires that we improve our
THINKING, LEARNING & COMMUNICATING.

STAGES OF POTENTIAL

What's really going on in people is that they're either developing their potential or they're not. This is true for individuals as well as groups: families, friends, teams, workers.

All people are in one of three stages of potential:

STAGE ONE

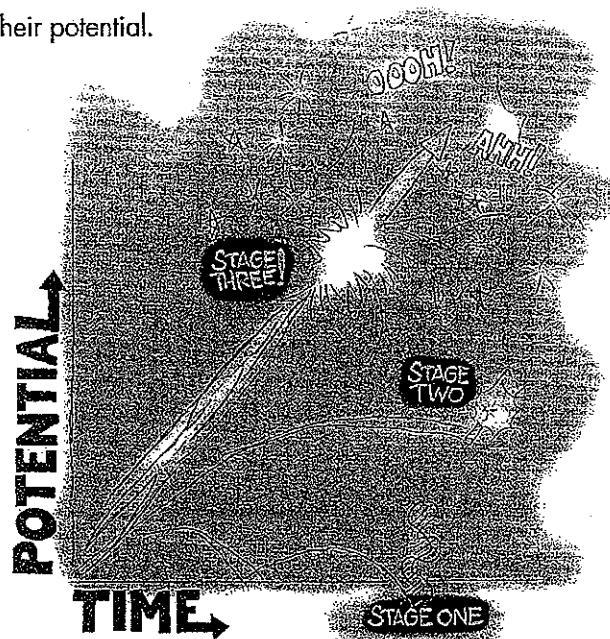
They're developing very little of their potential. Their negativity and false beliefs result in accomplishing far less than what they are capable of.

STAGE TWO

They're doing ok. They're pretty much meeting expectations.

STAGE THREE

Their potential is exploding. Because they've developed their potential, they're able to achieve far more in their relationships and experiences.



We call the first two stages the Bottom 80 and the third stage the Top 20. What makes the difference? It's simple. They **TLC** differently. Top 20s **Think, Learn** and **Communicate** differently than the Bottom 80s. That's what makes the biggest difference in what we get out of life.

Every person is capable of being a Top 20 or a Bottom 80. In every situation in our lives, we TLC in Top 20 ways or Bottom 80 ways. ~~In fact, we might be operating in a Top 20 way in one area of our life and a Bottom 80 way in another area.~~

WIRED FOR THE TOP 20

While all people have the potential of becoming a Top 20, not everybody believes they can or knows how to do it. One of the purposes of this book is to educate, empower and inspire you. **You have the potential of becoming a Top 20 and we are going to give you tools to help you realize that potential.**

We want to help you eliminate your roadblocks—self-doubt, false beliefs, lack of awareness—holding you back from becoming a Top 20. The great news is that human nature has wired you to be a Top 20. We want you to discover the power that you've been given and how to use it to make a positive difference in your life and the lives of others.

Joe was a young man who graduated from our school. As a senior, he was selected as the number one football player in the nation. Joe was also an All-State player on our basketball team. To cap it off, Joe was the number one pick in Major League Baseball's draft and signed a contract to play for the Minnesota Twins. Besides being an outstanding athlete, he was also an outstanding person and one of the finest role models to come through our school. Through all his athletic success, he still looked out for the well-being of others. Joe certainly would be considered a Top 20.

HEADS
UP!
↓

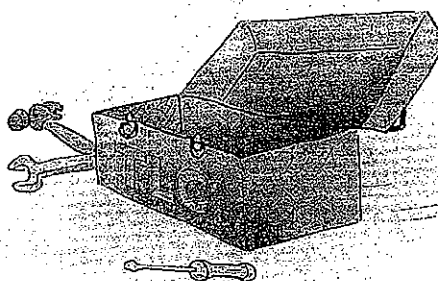
We suggest that you not concern yourself with where you are going to be a Top 20 in your life. Rather, as you read this book, concern yourself with developing better Thinking (T), better Learning (L) and better Communicating (C). If you learn and apply what is in this book you will become a Top 20. It's not about becoming better at a skill or profession, although that might happen as well. It's about becoming **better at being you**. It's about the satisfaction that you will experience in developing your own personal potential as a student, a son or daughter, a friend, a person. Once you've developed your potential as a person, you are more apt to be successful in school, extra curriculars, or at work.

Being in the Top 20 doesn't mean that you will be able to throw a football, shoot a basketball, or hit a baseball like Joe. The world is filled with Top 20 opportunities, some of which you may not even be aware of yet. **It may be in medicine, firefighting, teaching or being a mother, father or friend.** In discovering the strengths and talents in your own personality, you will discover the areas in which you can be a Top 20.

As we go through the book we will continue to remind you that a certain way of thinking is the number one secret of the Top 20. We will show you how the Top 20 think about things and how the Bottom 80 think about things. You will see that

the Top 20s' thinking is contrary to the Bottom 80s'. This doesn't make the Bottom 80 bad people. It just prevents them from getting out of life all that they are capable of getting. It prevents them from having a great experience.

STAR QUALITIES



Each of us is responsible for making his own life. We certainly have a lot of help along the way but we are the primary builders of our lives. As builders we all carry a tool box. Sometimes we may feel as though our tool box is empty and that we are not able to make anything meaningful in our lives. Sometimes it may seem that we have tools but we don't know how to use them. **The purpose of this book is to provide you with tools that will enable you to develop Star Qualities and create for yourself a place among the Top 20.**

What do you think makes the Top 20 different from the Bottom 80? When we first asked our students this question, they would say: "They're lucky" or "They're wealthy" or "They're born very smart or talented." In their minds there was some reason why others were in the Top 20 and they weren't. Students saw celebrities like Princess Diana, Julia Roberts, Tiger Woods and Bill Gates as Top 20 people. However, they didn't see themselves as being that lucky or that wealthy or that smart or talented. Well, let's get rid of that myth right off the bat. **There's more to becoming a Top 20 than just being lucky, wealthy, smart or talented.** When you reach the end of this book, you'll realize that you have all that it takes to learn the skills and develop the Star Qualities characteristic of the Top 20.

Star Qualities are at the heart of what this book is all about. Books and classes in school are usually about **information**, the giving or telling of ideas or knowledge. But this book is more concerned with **transformation**, the changing of your character for the better. The following are some of the most common Star Qualities.

- **Creative:** inventive, full of ideas
- **Self-Confident:** belief in oneself
- **Organized:** able to keep your life in order
- **Responsible:** willing to be accountable
- **Outgoing:** friendly, sociable
- **Self-Motivated:** self-starting
- **Persistent:** sticking with it
- **Enthusiastic:** having eager interest
- **Emotionally Aware:** in touch with feelings and thoughts
- **Self-Disciplined:** having self-control
- **Focused:** staying fixed on a goal or task
- **Optimistic:** hopeful, seeing the positive
- **Proactive:** doing what needs to be done before a problem develops
- **Courageous:** responding in spite of fear
- **Spiritual:** connected with your true self and your values

Although this is not a complete list, it is a list of qualities commonly found among the Top 20.

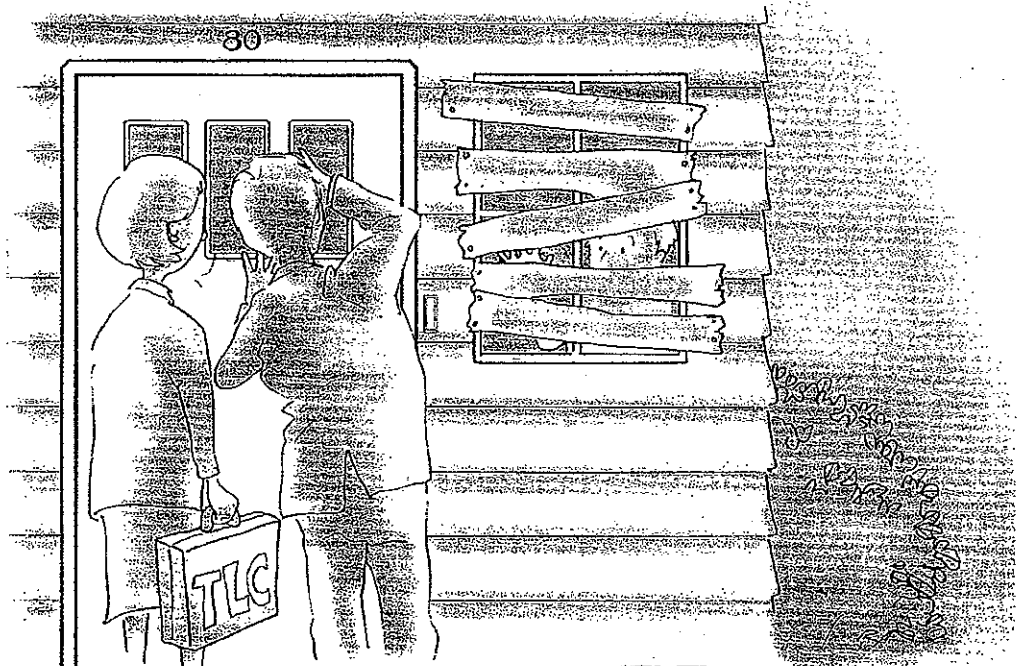
WILLINGNESS: GIVE IT A CHANCE

If you genuinely engage and participate in all aspects of TLC presented in this book, you will be absolutely delighted before you are half way through. You will be on the road to becoming a Top 20 and you will be getting more enjoyment out of your life.

What do we mean by **engagement**? We mean using the TLC tools that are offered to you in this book. So how willing are you to engage in this material? How willing are you to use these tools in the normal experiences of your life?

Take the example of Nick, a TLC student: "When I first started this class not only were my doors and windows shut, but they were reinforced with three-foot steel barriers. I didn't like the class and didn't think it applied to me. After a couple of weeks I decided to give it a chance. I definitely benefitted from taking the risk. There are so many things I learned from this material."

Nick's reference to his doors and windows comes from an analogy we use when presenting this material. Think of yourself as the owner of your own house (your thoughts, your beliefs, your value system, your decisions). Think of us as being in your front yard, at your front door, attempting to enter your home with these new ideas. It is completely up to you to decide whether or not to let us in. **Willingness is a major factor in this endeavor... and only you have the power to open the door to this process.**



"But," you might ask, "I'm already doing well in school. I'm doing all right in my life. Why bother with any of this?" We'll answer that question with one of the best kept secrets of the Top 20:



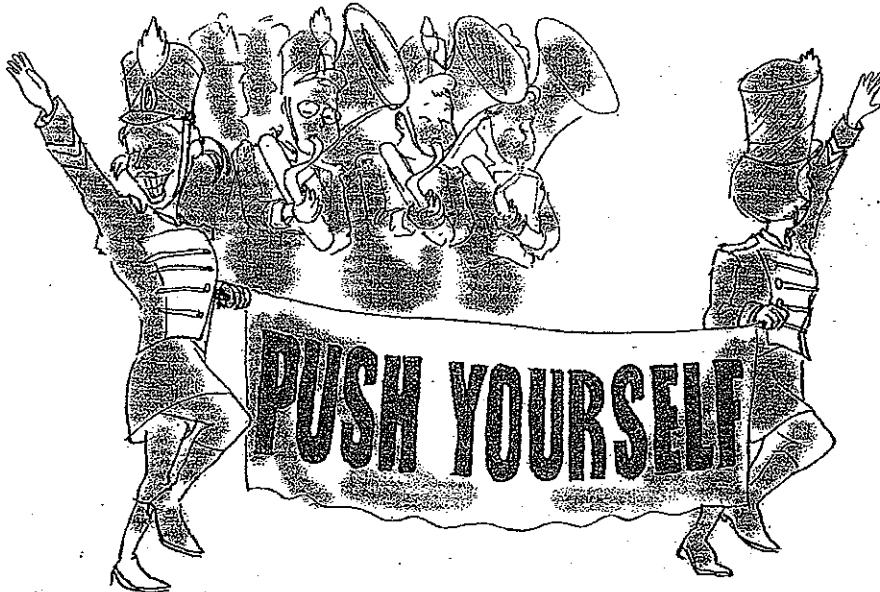
There is only one thing more important than being good and that is GETTING BETTER.

Bettering your best is important because, when you stop getting better, sooner or later you stop being good. And later always comes sooner than you think.

So you should probably stop reading this book if you don't want

- better relationships with your family and friends.
- more relevance and less boredom in your school day.
- a deeper self-understanding.
- as many happy days as possible.
- to become better at being you.

The University of Wisconsin has historically produced an outstanding marching band. This is a group that effectively balances excellent musical performance with healthy, fun-filled experiences. Their motto, one that we enthusiastically endorse, is quite simple:



You are now at a crossroads where a decision needs to be made. If you are willing to **push yourself** towards becoming a Top 20, then open your door and invite TLC into your life.

JUST IN CASE YOU MISSED IT

So here's the deal.

- The tools we are offering you in the following chapters are excellent tools for acquiring Star Qualities.
- If you are willing to use these tools consistently in your life, you will become a Top 20.

Is what we are promising too good to be true? Of course not!!! Many people are already on the journey.

How can we make these promises? First, we have observed Top 20 people and have discovered that they consistently use these tools. Second, we have observed many young people your age who have gone from the Bottom 80 to the Top 20 by using these tools.

READY...SET...GO

We want you to believe that **you** are capable of becoming a Top 20 by learning and applying these tools. Top 20s believe certain things; Bottom 80s believe certain things. The difference between these beliefs makes a huge difference in the lives of both groups, in their experience in school and relationships in life.

As you read each chapter, pay attention to what you believe about each topic. Is yours a Top 20 belief or a Bottom 80 belief? What's more important is having a Top 20 belief at the end of each chapter.

Are you ready? Let's get started.

"This is not just about accomplishing goals, but about changing yourself. Change yourself and everything else will change with it. All those who have been successful had to work on themselves first."
— Justine

TIME FOR ACTION

1. Identify five people who you think are Top 20s. What qualities or characteristics do they have that make them a Top 20?
2. Choose three or more Star Qualities that you would like to develop more fully in yourself.
3. How can you demonstrate the willingness to work on these Star Qualities?

Part 2

CORNERSTONES

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A New Formula For Success



Success is the feeling of satisfaction that comes from doing and being your best. We are not thinking of success in terms of money, grades, or popularity. Success means that you do not experience an unhappy teenage life, but rather have the most good days possible—a good ride. Success means that you accomplish your goals—get good results. In the process of your total experience you develop qualities and talents and become more fully who you are capable of being.

TLC focuses on three ways to attain success through

- better thinking which develops your "self-smarts,"
- better learning which develops your "school-smarts,"
- better communicating which develops your "people-smarts."

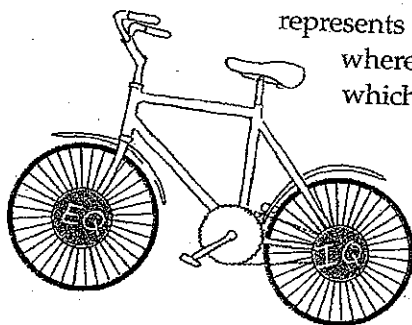
THE BIG MYTH

In school so much of what is focused on is related to your IQ, your Intelligence Quotient. IQ means book-smarts, your natural brain power, which most people think is the major reason for success in school. You are usually graded and evaluated on IQ performance. Consequently, some students in the class feel disadvantaged. They don't think they have the smarts that someone else in the class may have. Therefore, they believe they can't be as successful. This is the BIG MYTH. IQ is not what makes the difference between the Top 20 and the Bottom 80. Rather, the biggest thing that separates the Top 20 from the rest is that they have developed their EQ, their Emotional Quotient.

Fortunately EQ is another way of becoming smart. EQ is becoming self-smart, people-smart, and a new way of becoming school-smart. A person can be successful in spite of not having a high IQ if they develop their Emotional Intelligence. The good news is that Emotional Intelligence, unlike Intellectual Intelligence, can be easily developed and improved. There is a debate in education whether or not we can raise IQ. In this book we are not concerned about that debate because we know we can wake up your EQ!

"My first part of high school ripped me apart socially and academically and lowered my self-esteem. I needed my Star Qualities back. TLC did it. I found my true self."

— Jimmy



IQ and EQ can be compared to the wheels of a bicycle. The back wheel drives the bike and the front wheel steers the bike. The back wheel represents our IQ and the front wheel our EQ. Consequently, where we end up is the result of our EQ, our front wheel which is steering the bike. And it is this front wheel over which we have direct control when we grab the handle bars.

The concepts you will learn in this book are all intended to improve your EQ. Take control of the handle bars and steer your life in the direction you want to go.

THE ANATOMY OF YOUR EQ

Your EQ is made up of three important human characteristics.

$$EQ = \begin{matrix} \text{Thinking} \\ \text{SELF-SMART} \end{matrix} + \begin{matrix} \text{Learning} \\ \text{SCHOOL-SMART} \end{matrix} + \begin{matrix} \text{Communicating} \\ \text{PEOPLE-SMART} \end{matrix}$$

| SELF-SMART | SCHOOL-SMART | PEOPLE-SMART |
|---|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Living with a positive attitude • Monitoring your moods and behavior • Improving self confidence and motivation • Bouncing back from adversity | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finding relevancy • Eliminating boredom • Developing organizational skills • Making realizations • Getting into the Zone | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Getting along well with others • Listening and talking effectively • Resolving conflict • Becoming immune to negative influences |

THE IMPORTANCE OF EQ

Let's see if we can better understand the importance of EQ by using the TLC formula for success: **Success = IQ X EQ**

Imagine your IQ and EQ being on a scale of 1-10. If you have an average IQ of five and a low EQ of two, your total success score will then be ten.

Let's take a look at a few examples:

Example 1: Sally is bright (IQ = 8) and has her hand up all the time. She lacks friends because she is arrogant, boastful and irritates people. Sally doesn't have many people skills (EQ = 2). Her success total is only 16.

$$\begin{array}{cc} 8 & \times & 2 & = & 16 \\ \text{IQ} & & \text{EQ} & & \end{array}$$

Example 2: Meanwhile, behind Sally sits Andy who has average brainpower (IQ = 5). Andy never gets any A's and struggles to get B's and C's. He is dependable, trustworthy and brings out the best in others (EQ = 8). His success total is 40. Notice that Andy's success total is more than double that of Sally's.

$$\begin{array}{cc} 5 & \times & 8 & = & 40 \\ \text{IQ} & & \text{EQ} & & \end{array}$$

If Sally increases her EQ by developing some Top 20 skills and Star Qualities, she would improve the "ride" she is taking through high school and the rest of her life.

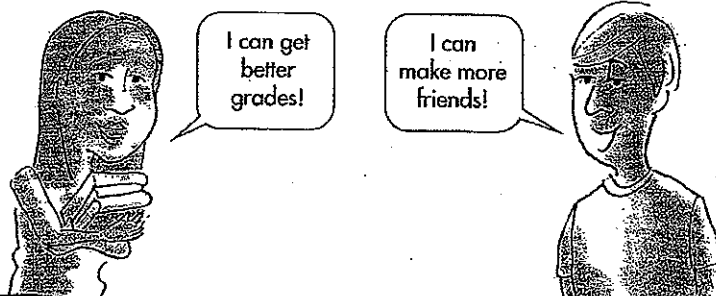
For many students there is a gap between their tested IQ and their GPA. In other words, many bright students are getting poor grades. Their IQ may be eight but they are performing as if their IQ is only four. By increasing their EQ, they begin to function intellectually at full capacity.



Michael is an example of this situation. As a student he did not have "school-smarts." He fell off the GPA/IQ Richter Scale. His naturally high IQ was stifled by his low EQ. When he took his college entrance exam he got to the fourth question and knew it was a lost cause. He finished the test by randomly guessing at the remaining questions. When his counselor talked to him about college, Michael was told that there weren't many options. He did qualify for two colleges: clown college and beauty college. Allergic to circus make-up, Michael chose beauty college. It wasn't until age 25 when Michael learned to apply the concepts in this book that he began to raise his EQ. His life then exploded into extraordinary personal and professional success.

When average IQ students become aware of this possibility they see potential for positive change in their own lives.

Yes, there is hope for you.
No, you don't have to feel
dumb or lonely anymore.



THINGS THEY NEVER TOLD YOU

An important part of life is problem-solving and most of life's problems are EQ related. We know that when adults fail in the real world it is not usually because they lack intelligence but because they are unable to work effectively with other people. This is even more true in our family life and friendships.

Clearly the front wheel is more important than the back. For people in leadership positions, EQ becomes even more crucial. Success is determined more by EQ than by IQ. But the paradox in our educational system is that the primary focus has been historically placed on IQ. In this book we are putting 100% of the focus on your EQ.



The secret we want to reveal in this book is that **YOU** have the power to raise your EQ. Therefore, **YOU** have the power to steer your bike towards greater success. **YOU** have the power to create a great ride with great results.

TIME FOR ACTION

1. How would you rate yourself on the IQ and EQ Scales (1-10)?
2. In which of the EQ areas do you most want to improve: Self-Smarts? People-Smarts? School-Smarts?
3. Turn the pages and you will find specific ways you can develop your EQ.

Part 3

CORNERSTONES

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The Frame:

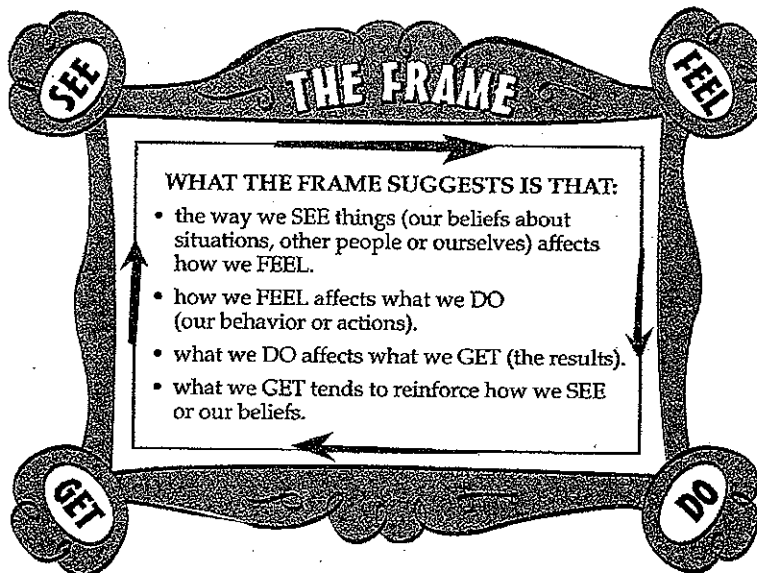
See-Feel-Do-Get



People have things in their lives that are important. What's important varies from person to person but for most teens the following are usually pretty important.

- Having a good relationship with family members and friends
- Having good health • Doing well in school
- Doing well in extracurricular activities • Having a job

Top 20s and Bottom 80s both want to get what's important to them. What is different, however, is that Top 20s know what to do when they are not getting what's important. They understand and use The Frame.



So if you are getting what you want to be getting, if you are getting what is important to you, then you should keep doing what you are doing and keep seeing it the way you are seeing it.

But sometimes you are not getting what you want to be getting. You may not be getting the grade you want in your Spanish class, you may not be the starting point guard on the basketball team, or you may not have the

relationship with your parents that you desire. If that's the case, what should you do that would make the biggest difference in increasing your chances of getting what is important to you?

BOTTOM 80 OPTIONS

If you're not getting what's important to you and you're operating as a Bottom 80 person, you have three options.

1. You could choose to **change nothing**. You would continue to see it the way you have been seeing it. You would continue to do what you have been doing and get the same results you have been getting. This pattern results in insanity. Isn't it insane to expect different results if you continue to see it the same way and do the same thing?
2. You could try to **change what you feel or do**. This might make a little difference in the results you're getting but it wouldn't bring about the big change you desire. Furthermore, the new actions would continue to present a challenge for you. It would always seem like hard work.
3. You could **blame** someone else or the conditions for the bad results you're getting. Bottom 80s almost always leave fingerprints of blame when they're not getting what's important to them. They blame a teacher for a poor grade or a coach for not getting enough playing time in a game. They blame the dog for messing up their homework or the weather for messing up their camping trip.

What happens when Bottom 80s blame? All people have power to make a positive difference in their lives. When Bottom 80s blame, they give away that power to another person or a condition. They then become a powerless victim unable to make a difference. They become **stuck in yuck**. They continue to experience the bad results they've been getting.

(Because it has such a negative impact on our lives, we'll be saying more about blame on pg. 72.)

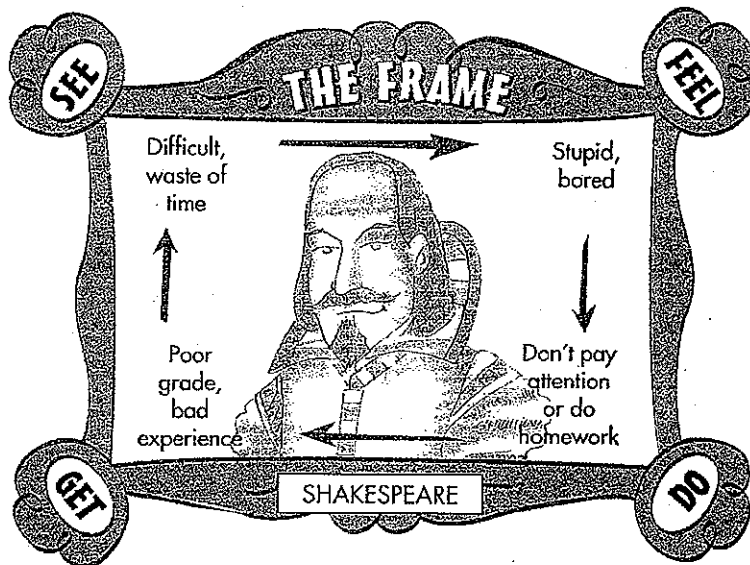
TOP 20 OPTIONS

If you're not getting what's important to you and you're operating as a Top 20 person, you have a powerful option. You could be **CURIOUS**. You could think, "Wonder how I could see this differently." You could ask, "How can I see this person...situation...myself differently?"

Top 20s never give up power to make a difference in their lives by blaming. Rather, they expand their power to make a difference by being curious and seeing it differently.

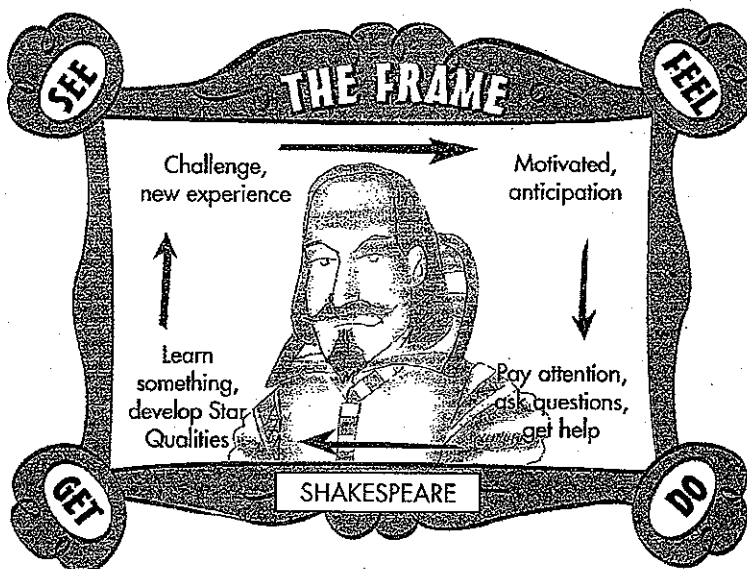
As a Top 20 who understands The Frame, you know that by changing how you see, you will quickly change what you are feeling, doing and getting. Change in seeing gives you the possibility for big changes in the results you desire. Furthermore, the new action will seem more natural because it will flow out of the new seeing.

Let's use an example to see how this works. Imagine that your English teacher has assigned you to read a play by Shakespeare. The way you see this assignment will likely make a difference in the results you get.



"TLC helped me in my least favorite classes. I've learned to stifle my boredom and limit my distractions. I challenge myself to pay attention by seeing these classes differently. I've been feeling different, doing better work, and getting better results."
- Sophie

But what if you saw the assignment differently?



"I have a 90-minute class that's a big challenge for me to stay focused. I have started to SEE it as three 30-minute classes instead and it really helps pass the time and keep my interest."
- Nikki

"The Frame class completely and instantly changed my life. Now I relate almost everything I do to The Frame. It's my homemade insurance policy. When I don't know what to do, I take out a pen and paper and draw The Frame."

— Fred

Throughout this book we will refer to this change model as The Frame or See-Feel-Do-Get. It's a powerful tool by which you can look at situations and relationships in order to create a better experience for yourself and get the results you most desire.

TIME FOR ACTION

1. Consider your most challenging class.
 - How do you see it?
 - How do you feel about it?
 - How do you act in this class?
 - What results are you getting in there?
2. Challenge yourself to "see" this situation differently.
 - If you are having difficulty seeing it differently, ask someone who sees it another way.
 - How would this new way of seeing affect your feelings and actions?
 - What different results might you now expect?

"After school every day I do work-study and I would always see it as such a horrible thing and how I didn't want to do it. By the end of the day I'd feel lazy and not do the work as well as I should. Then my supervisor would tell me that teachers complained. So the day we learned See-Feel-Do-Get I decided to look forward to work-study. When I did that I did my work better and got compliments instead of complaints." — Sara