



White Paper:

*What is a Responsibility-Based
Home and School Model?*

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What is a Responsibility-Based Home and School Model?

A dramatic shift has been occurring in the nature of our institutions; in our families, schools, workplaces and communities. People used to think of these in terms of the activities (behaviors) that people needed to engage in to perform well. Administrators, adults and parents used close supervision and rules to make sure children and other adults performed those activities properly and the job of the child was mostly to comply with this sort of command-and-control management. However, this system no longer nets us the results we once witnessed. Greater numbers of children are apathetic and choose to disengage either partially or fully. Teachers are leaving the profession in staggering numbers; 33% within the first 5 years of their teaching profession. Parents and caregivers are reporting greater stress, frustration and unhappiness. Due to rapid changes in our culture, technology and our ability to connect to the entire global community, fundamental changes are underway. Children are better informed than ever before and sense the shift in the general focus towards greater collaboration, mutual respect and democratic equality and they want in on these changes too.

As a result, the old ways of functioning in homes and schools are no longer effective. A new way is required in which children and adults have to take greater responsibility for handling uncertainty and changes surrounding them. Today's schools and homes are not simply about performing activities alone; children (even very young ones!) must learn to direct their own activities towards their educational and social intentions or *purposes*. The child's role, then, must shift from passive compliance to proactive self-management. The adult's role must change to accommodate a greater transfer of responsibility to children.

Motivational requirements have changed. Self-management necessitates a deeper level of personal commitment than when operating by the old standard of compliance. Children must now be committed to *purposes* they choose. The new model needed is also more psychologically demanding, with everyone exercising greater social interest, judgment and decision-making. Although grades, pleasing adults and other extrinsic rewards remain important to children, it is clear that the new home and school model requires much more. Effective self-management depends heavily on intrinsic motivators – psychological rewards children get from self-management itself.

In order to open to intrinsic motivation, it's important for many people to first recognize the limitations of the current models in place that have dominated thinking for centuries. Consequently, the first sessions of our program include significant information about the limitations and counter-productivity of using punishment, rewards, competition and other autocratic, control-based approaches in an attempt to effect positive change in children or adults. Additionally, we assert that at its heart, intrinsic motivation is not so much about what's rational or what "works" in the moment of stress – it's about passion and positive feelings people get from engagement in their work; it's about sustained change. Passionate feelings reinforce or energize the self-management efforts of children and adults and provide crucial fulfillment needed to keep them engaged. Building intrinsic motivation then, is about finding ways to enable and amplify meaningful *feelings*.

Recognizing the need for greater intrinsic motivation, home and school leaders have begun trying different approaches, often in a hit-or-miss way. Likewise, current parenting and classroom management books are ever-more focused on various strategies to help. What has been missing is a model on intrinsic motivation for homes and schools that spells out the key pieces of the intrinsic motivation puzzle and how they fit together. Our model provides a framework and tools to lead adults and children from motivational problems to effective solutions.

Self-management depends on **four key intrinsic motivators**; a sense of *meaningfulness*, a sense of *choice*, a sense of *competence* and a sense of *progress*. Self-management also depends on the fulfillment of **four core social needs** to feel *powerful*, *lovable*, *connected* and *contributing*, part of an Adlerian psychology model we use to describe human nature and what is required for healthy development of the whole person. The senses of *meaningfulness* and *progress* both come from the *purpose* for tasks – the opportunity to pursue what is worthwhile and the perception that one is actually accomplishing this purpose. The senses of

choice and *competence* come from day-to-day activities and tasks – including opportunities to choose activities that best achieve the purpose and performing the tasks well. These four intrinsic motivators can be thought of as vital signs and the four core needs as crucial vitamins or nutrition needed to keep people healthy and fully functioning. A drop in any of these is a sign of trouble. Therefore, it is important that adults become able to measure the levels of the key intrinsic motivators and core needs and teach children to monitor them as well so they recognize specific deficiencies in play and find opportunities to make improvements.

All must be able to express regularly the “reasons” or meaningfulness and significance of tasks, *passion*, ideas about *how* to accomplish purposes, *ability to perform tasks* and *celebrate* successes along the way. For example, if you talk with a teacher about her purpose and she says, “I want all my children to achieve a B or above in my class using teamwork and support”, you want to ask her to describe the meaningfulness of her goal, how she will accomplish it, how well she is able to implement her tasks and if teamwork and support is occurring in the manner imagined. These conversations allow leaders to take a rough, immediate measure of the levels of the intrinsic “vital signs”.

Effective diagnosis and action depend on knowing which motivator is in the priority position, the health of it and what building block is needed next to create a new condition in which the motivator is fulfilled at a high level. In this program, we will be focusing on how you will work with adults and children to impact intrinsic motivational factors in them and yourself so that everyone is moving to a state of feeling fulfilled and energized.

Implications for Leaders

Meeting core social needs, developing intrinsic motivation and developing self management as top priorities are key to nurturing skilled adults, engaged children and creating collaboration and learning. The real power is that everyone becomes mobilized in service of the overall purposes – they apply their passion, intelligence and initiative. In this period of educational and family challenge and dysfunction, intrinsically motivated, self-managed adults and children are a crucial requirement and an important way to differentiate in your results.

Leaders have the premier role in building a responsibility-based home or school as it is the context for strong intrinsic motivation. What would it mean for school leaders and parents to commit to achieving high levels of intrinsic motivation and self-directedness in their homes and schools? It would *not* mean saying and doing what one could and then hoping that intrinsic motivation would increase. Change would be addressed, and adults would commit to systematically measuring intrinsic motivation and doing what was necessary to build and maintain it, just as they would honor other important commitments. The four vital signs of intrinsic motivation – feelings of *meaningfulness*, *choice*, *competence*, and *progress* and fulfillment of the four core needs – need to be tracked regularly at home and school-wide to make sure efforts are working.

Groups and individuals run on emotions. It is important that you talk directly and regularly with other adults and with children regarding feelings. Talking with adults and children about emotions allows you to influence those emotions in ways that energize people. Feelings are what drive people to take action and to become engaged in their life, work and relationships. Intrinsic motivation is about strong feelings that keep adults and children going – that keep them energized. Being able to speak to these feelings is a key skill for all leaders. Your role is to manage the “emotional energy” of people much more than their behavior.

Adults play a more central role in a responsibility-based model than they would in a traditional system. Most adults don't know how to put together an intrinsic motivation program for children. Because leadership is so important to **intrinsic motivation**, parents and school leaders must make sure that a child's intrinsic motivation and self-management is a measure that is part of tracking performance. This means incorporating intrinsic motivation into the home and school environments and assessing and actively acknowledging and appreciating it at all levels. Intrinsic motivation and self-management must be treated as two of the primary goals of the leadership role.

Leading for intrinsic motivation would be challenging if there were not a model and context to help with this task. It is up to the adults in the home and school to convincingly understand and talk about the values,

philosophy and EHP model that support intrinsic motivation. Each must incorporate it into their vision for the home and school and keep emphasizing that message. Be clear about it. Building intrinsic motivation and self-management is not just a nice thing to do for children or adults. It is key to each person's commitment and innovation and it contributes directly to the achievements of organizations and individuals. Each adult must fully understand this and distributes these values to children as well.

It is important that you allow adults and children choices about how they will achieve many of their goals once purposes are understood and set. This allows each to use their ingenuity to make things happen and believe in what they are doing. This allows each to experience their core needs for power, influence and contribution. Therefore, you will be asked to encourage experiments and celebrate intelligent mistakes. If you provide a basic set of guidelines, ultimately children should be allowed to adapt them to their own circumstances so that they make sense for their situation.

It is vital to receive necessary training and ongoing support in the model so that every adult and child understands the basics of intrinsic motivation and a responsibility-based system. It will also pay to encourage the sharing of new solutions and ideas across a school and among multiple families to recognize improvement and continued excellence in leading for intrinsic motivation and self-management. We will be teaching you a model that can be used at all levels of the school and home and addressing all levels of tasks, age and circumstances.

As a school leader, it is crucial you make sure that everyone receives feedback on the intrinsic motivation in classrooms and the school as a whole. As a parent, it's equally important that you share successes within the entire family. Ask questions, collect child-led solutions, review notes from classroom and family meetings and more. These serve as a visible gauge of success that can be recorded monthly or weekly. Feedback on intrinsic motivation and self-management is critical. One of the things this does is to reinforce the new model and new practices as well as communicate your total unwillingness to support the old command-and-control approaches. There are too many adults (well-meaning) who still use aggressive, autocratic tactics that result in short-term improvements only, and leave untold wreckage and set-ups for next week's challenges. Therefore, it is imperative that questions be asked and announcements be made regarding the ability to reflect the new priorities and results when each "success" occurs. Targeted questions and announcements reinforce your purposes to create and sustain the new model.

Adults must monitor your own intrinsic motivation and core needs satisfaction. You will be asked to consider your own energy level, the vitality you bring to school or your home, how engaged and fulfilled you feel, the essence of your quality of life (personal and professional) and how much you are enjoying yourself. You will be asked to consider, "Am I feeling encouraged or discouraged? What are my purposes?" You too must remember how incomplete and unproductive the old model may be for your own intrinsic motivation and self-management. A new commitment to intrinsic motivation requires diligence. You will need to take action to increase your own enjoyment and meaningfulness. Set high expectations for your own intrinsic motivation. Make sure you check out your own and that of children, making time to reflect on this as part of your daily routine. We will help you figure out what's going on and help you make a plan to improve things. Your home and school will benefit from your modeling.

You must be willing to respectfully and firmly confront adults or children who will not conform to a responsibility-based, intrinsic motivation model. Too often this type of adult or child is the most difficult for many people to deal with. Too often leaders have looked the other way, tolerated them because in other important ways they contribute or we settle for less-than-ideal outcomes. And perhaps this type of person has been tolerated for years before greater awareness of the costs. In this model, a primary goal is to draw forth every good idea from every child and adult in each home and school. We cannot afford to accept styles that suppress and intimidate. Likewise, you must walk the talk, or all the plans, promises and dreams for the future are just that – talk.

Finally, this model is a guideline for you. We expect that this model will take on a life of it's own that extends beyond our ideas. In other words, you want to infuse your own ideas into it and expand the possibilities with what you imagine will further the goals of your own responsibility-based home and school. Your own willingness to experiment, stretch yourself and create innovations is highly important. You will be asked to

take action and track a variety of results. Raising your own intrinsic motivation and self-management is a task. Commit to it and keep taking action to implement those activities that help you see progress is occurring. Keep your own role exciting and innovative.

Imagine adults meeting devoted to a discussion of what it takes to gain energy and commitment from each child. Meetings like this and adults who commit to following up have a greater chance to succeed in the important goals of raising and educating successful, happy children.

Readiness for a Responsibility-Based Culture

A Personal Inventory for Adults

Please take time to reflect on and write your responses to the following questions:

1) Am I committed to *partnering* with children?

2) Is a *responsibility-based culture in the home, school or classroom* a high enough priority to ensure the time and resources necessary (personally and for the group) will be made available?

3) Will I make sure the schedule allows adults and children time to think, meet and discuss ideas for improving performance or devising solutions? (i.e. democratic class and family meetings)

4) Competency (mine and others) in tasks: How will I measure? How will I support improvements?

5) Am I prepared to share power and control, promote shared power and control with children and abide by this decision?

6) Am I prepared to respond appropriately with people not willing to operate by the values of the model? Am I willing to make it a top priority to turn this around whenever possible?

7) Am I committed to learning and operating by the values and practices (i.e. use of appreciative inquiry, redirect of misbehavior, democratic meetings) of the model?

8) Am I committed to the ongoing personal growth and development needed to become more effective in the new model and in demonstrating it within my home, school or classroom?
