

SECOND EDITION

# The Gem Journey

A Fable for Our Time



WORKBOOK

by Ron Phillips MA, MFT

# *The Gem Journey*

*A fable for our time*

## *Storyteller's Guide*

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*The Gem Journey Storyteller's Guide*

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# Contents

## Module

|       |   |     |
|-------|---|-----|
|       | Introduction                                      | a   |
|       | Thoughts on parenting: No investment, no return   | d   |
|       | Getting organised                                 | g   |
| 1     | Chapter 1 “Radino’s”                              | 3   |
| 2     | Chapter 2 “Stranger in the Meadow”                | 11  |
| 3     | Chapter 3 “The Spider’s Web”                      | 17  |
| 4     | Chapter 4 “Evening with Bartrum” and              | 25  |
| 5     | Chapter 5 “Quicksands of Denial”                  | 29  |
| 6     | Chapter 6 “Up the Rainbow Stairs”                 | 37  |
| 7     | Chapter 7 “Around the Campfire”                   | 43  |
| 8     | Chapter 8 “The Crevice of Anger and Lies”,        | 51  |
|       | Chapter 9 “The Gift of Sir Henry Glow” and        |     |
|       | Chapter 10 “Regal’s Rescue ”                      |     |
| 9     | Chapter 11 “Splendor ”,                           | 59  |
|       | Chapter 12 “Murk Mire: The Bowels of the Earth” & |     |
|       | Chapter 13 “Through the Waiting Hordes”           |     |
| 10/11 | Chapter 14 “The Pool of Right Decisions” and      | 65  |
|       | Chapter 15 “The Desert of Choice”                 |     |
| 12    | Chapter 16 “Worm’s Wolves”                        | 71  |
| 13    | Chapter 17 “Reaping and Healing”                  | 79  |
| 14    | Chapter 18 “The Wilderness”                       | 87  |
| 15    | Chapter 19 “Back to the Hole”                     | 95  |
| 16    | Chapter 20 “The Outskirts of Splendor”            | 103 |
| 17    | Chapter 21 “The Valley of the Shadow”             | 111 |
| 18    | Chapter 22 “Mott’s Portals, & an Odd Procession”, | 117 |
|       | Chapter 23 “The Trial, and The Answer”,           |     |
|       | Chapter 24 “Worth More Than Gold” and             |     |
|       | Chapter 25 “Home Again”                           |     |



# *The Journey Everyone Should Take*

## INTRODUCTION

This is the fifth revision of the Storyteller’s Guide. This version has been especially adapted to speak to readers who intend to present the stories to individuals or groups to build or improve their emotional wellbeing and resilience and help them achieve identity. It was formerly entitled the “Journey Guide for Gem of the First Water: The journey every family should take”. Its original focus was for use by parents within the context of family discussions. Over time a greater number of teachers and mental health professionals have also begun using our material. I am confident that, whatever your role, you will still find this guide relevant and that by using this guide you’ll get the necessary start-up information you need, and maybe even a bit more.

This is a Journey every family can take, regardless of its makeup – married, partnerships, sole parents, blended families, foster parents, adoptive parents, grandparents, any and every family composition will benefit from this recovery/ discovery process.

The role of parenting belongs to you. It is no longer your parents’ time, nor is it yet your children’s time – it is your time. This guide provides an opportunity for your family to take an epic adventure together and discover great truths about yourselves and important insight into the people you love the most. The journey is fun, and can be extremely exciting.

This Storyteller's Guide is the result of many years of trialling, testing and refining the process of Therapeutic Storytelling Intervention, which utilises the novel, "Gem of the First Water". This fable for our times introduces principles that help 'out-of-balance' children formulate a value system and acquire eight vital elements of their unique identity. This 'values and decision-making framework' is incredibly effective with all children, not just the ones who have tumbled 'off the rails'.

The book's purpose is to expose and address the real crisis within our society, resulting from a collective and personal habit of making poor decisions. Uncontrolled anger, emotional impulsivity, alcoholism, substance abuse, crime, corruption, even the willingness to knowingly pollute, are all, when taken to the source, results of poor personal decisions. "Gem of the First Water" teaches the need to stand alone, and make choices based on values rather than on what we feel like or what is easy or accepted - even in life's simple decisions.

Unfortunately, however, many families are too dysfunctional to cope with the co-operation necessary to get this process off the ground. It is difficult to make good decisions in the midst of turmoil and conflict. We can only give values if we have been given them ourselves.

To effectively get started, there needs to be agreement that this journey has meaning and would/could be important to everyone. The first step is to get everyone to acknowledge that there are problems, and that what is presently happening with the family system is not working. Next, there must be consensus about the need to do something to address the situation.

Personal honesty and a willingness to listen to the viewpoints of others within your family will allow the magic of this process to emerge. This journey allows adults and children to address issues of life and relationships without stress, nagging or preaching. Please take all the insights you can from this guide. If you choose to get actively involved in the journey, your understanding and family interaction will be greatly enhanced.

The journey is equally important to all families. Where things are working well, it provides confirmation that they are indeed on the right track, and if they continue, they will reach their fullest potential – which results in happy, productive children. They will pass on a lifestyle of healthy habits and emotional well-being to their children – the parents of the future.

Therapeutic Storytelling Intervention is a blueprint with all kinds of themes in the form of eidetic imagery (mental pictures) that give individuals something to reflect on as they look honestly at themselves, to master the elements and acquire their identity, to realise their true potential, and to re-direct their own behaviour to achieve their goals.

To live life well.

*Enjoy Your Trek*



THOUGHTS ON PARENTING  
NO INVESTMENT, NO RETURN

There is no substitute for your time. All the money in the world, or all of your good intentions cannot possibly replace your being with your children. If you want good results in parenting, then you must recognise that there has to be a significant investment of quality time with your children. No investment, no return. Before you start this high adventure, listen to Harry Chapin's song "Cat's in the Cradle" – with its repeated line "We'll get together soon, son." But "soon" never arrives. Other priorities can easily replace time spent with your children. You have to make the time.

If your method of correction is Not Working, then please consider the following story of two Billy's:

The first Billy's mother calls him in for lunch. "Billy" she calls. Billy immediately turns to Tom and says, "Keep playing, I'll be back soon," and off he races to lunch.

The second Billy's mother calls her Billy for lunch. After 14 unproductive calls, her adrenaline level sky-high, she screams at him at the top of her decibel range "BILLY!!!" Billy then turns to Sam and casually says, "Hey, I've gotta go. I'll be back later, see ya."

Both boys came at the moment when their mothers' call had importance. There must be meaning and importance to your words. Mean what you say, and say what you mean. The first Billy knew it would not be business as usual if he delayed. The second Billy could read his mother's calls like a book. He came at the instant there was meaning to her words. All four participants were in predictable scripts.

Your children are experts on you. From an excellent observation point, they are attentive to your moods, your success, the way you deal with frustration, the way you treat people, how you relate to your spouse. They see your good and bad points. They know if you are honest or dishonest. They know you!

When your kids emerge into adolescence, they start noticing the difference between what you say and what you do. If you see error in your children's lives, take a look at the changes you may need to make yourself before addressing their faults. For example if you "lose it" when frustrated, expect your kids to also "lose it." If you drink excessively, don't be at all surprised if they do. You simply cannot correct error in your children's lives if they perceive similar error in your life.

Sometimes as parents we feel we are being 'tolerant' of our children by giving them slack, when in fact we are constructing a habit of unresponsiveness. We have to train our children how to be obedient. Consistency and persistence are needed for successful parenting.

The best thing you can do for your children is to love your spouse. The husband/wife relationship is the most important, because it models adult behaviour for the next generation. The following is a collection of ideas about the good husband and the good wife that may be useful.

- Be a one woman man.
- Be a one man woman.
- Strive to make the other feel important and unique.
- Show appreciation for efforts and sympathy for setbacks, frustrations and times of sickness.
- Both of you have a degree of financial independence.

- All decisions of consequence are mutually discussed and decided upon.
- Have consistent fun together.
- Cheerfully share parenting responsibilities.
- Both strive to be totally honest.
- Work at being friendly towards in-laws.
- Both should be attentive towards the other in public. Flirting is out. The impression people have of your partner is determined by how he/she is publicly characterised.
- Avoid public criticism.
- Strive to stay fit and well presented.
- Your partner needs to feel you are the one person in the world he/she can always rely on.
- Keep each other's secrets.
- Rejoice in and celebrate each other's triumphs and successes.
- Do not focus on the shortcomings, rather encourage change. Nagging is a drag.
- Share common interests.
- Keep a clean and attractive home, sharing the domestic chores with a good attitude.
- Be cheerful in hard times.
- Make love often.
- Give each other unexpected gifts.
- Listen to each other.
- Have fun together. Yes, having fun together is worth repeating.

*Welcome To The Journey That Every Family Should Take*

## GETTING ORGANISED

It is a good idea to read entirely through the Storyteller's Guide, our Syllabus and our Workbook before you start your journey.

I strongly advocate one evening every week where screens are turned off and the time is spent in shared family activities. Perhaps taking this journey will be the first organised evening activity you have arranged, but don't let it be the last.

Parents should divide the presentation responsibilities. One family member should be the designated reader/teller and another, preferably Mum or Dad, should assume the role of discussion facilitator during the 'Around the Campfire' time.

There are now three presentation options: Read the novel, listen to the talking book , or view the video.

It would not be uncommon for a child to have already heard "Gem" at school or in another setting. I know many children who have enjoyed the Journey more than once. I would suggest that, if your child has been in a "Gem" group, they become a co-facilitator, and ask some questions around the campfire.

Prior to beginning, the facilitator should review the chapter and questions in this guide and complete the appropriate module.

Read "Gem" once or twice a week at a designated time. My family looks forward to our time together on Sunday nights. We have a talking and planning session to organise our week ahead. It is a natural time for us to do activities such as I'm

suggesting. The family journey will cause discussion and thinking that should continue throughout the week. Give time between sessions. Your children will want it all, right now. However, to gain the best effect, allowing time between readings will facilitate thinking, reflection and application.

The Storyteller's Guide is divided into Modules. Some modules relate to one chapter in the book, others to a number of chapters. Within this framework each training Module is structured as follows:

- Chapter / Module overview
- Chapter theme(s)
- Ron's Module Outcomes
- Around the Campfire discussion questions
- Parent / Storyteller goals
- One sentence to describe the chapter

The chapter themes make excellent family mottos. Write them out and place them in a prominent place, such as on your refrigerator. Reinforce the themes with family conversation. For instance, dad to son, "Son, did you think before you said that?" or vice-versa. An excellent question to stimulate discussion can be, "Why was this a theme?"

Brainstorm and include everyone's ideas. Try to re-word these into statements and make a poster of the list. As you go through the chapters week by week, see which are applicable and incorporate making these changes into your application for that week. You can keep adding to the list as new themes emerge. Remember, you won't be trying to

change everything at once, so don't worry about the length of the list. This list should be confidential and is not for public display.

Sometimes all that is needed is to ask one well-chosen question to stimulate discussion. Don't feel driven to cover all the questions. The Journey's goal is to stimulate honest discussion within your family. Go where the discussion takes you. Often the unasked questions can be brought up casually at a later time, which could lead to another excellent time together.

When asking questions, allow for a member to 'pass'. The one rule is, if you do respond to a question, it must be a perfectly honest response. When discussing the chapter, allow everyone to have an opinion. Most questions are designed to generate a variety of responses. Several questions are only for thinking purposes. Therefore, merely ask the question and encourage each family member to think on it during the next interval. Maybe at a later point it can be discussed.

This Guide is not exhaustive; there are many more questions that could be asked. Examples and illustrations from your own life are excellent to reinforce the principles presented. The story is packed with concepts and ideas that will resonate with you and your family. Any one can be emphasised and elevated for discussion to meet the particular needs of your situation.

I encourage you to share some of your successes and some of your failures, incidents that have significantly influenced you. Your children are looking for the way, a blueprint, and examples from your life will help them establish their own

values. It can happen naturally, without the sermon-for-the-crisis situation.

What accomplishments have you made that you would love your children to emulate? What mistakes have you made that you would hate for your children to have to repeat? All of these will find a place in the discussions that the story prompts you to explore.

I end all my story groups by requesting that each participant describes the chapter we have read in one sentence. What will you take home with you to think about this week? What's one word to describe the story?

It is actually quite interesting to watch the changes that take place with people who are initially very resistant to the process. Often they are the ones who become completely absorbed in the journey. Do not react negatively if a family member expresses how much the story sucked. Be patient and work on your own stuff, and allow them the time they need to get on board.

It may be helpful to keep a notebook for use during the family time to record individual comments, tasks to follow up before the next week's meeting, and to list the words used to describe each chapter. These notes will be useful for your review.

*Have Fun  
Be Honest With Yourself*

*The  
Gem  
Journey*

*Storyteller's Guide*





## *Radino's*

'Gem of the First Water' is the story of an unnamed Boy who goes on a metaphorical journey where he finds his true self. As he goes along he enacts the 'Eight Elements of Self' that each of us must learn to control on the way to establishing our identity.

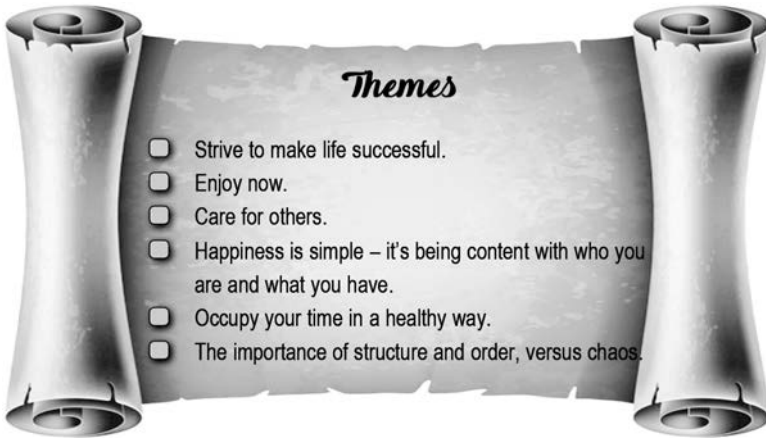
Each of these eight aspects or elements of self has a dilemma that must be understood and brought under personal control if healthy identity is to be achieved.

The story is a vehicle for delivering the Gem Journey lessons and the explanations on how to impart the many solutions to the dilemmas of self are provided in our interactive modules. But every story has to begin somewhere, and Chapter 1 outlines the way things are in the life of our hero and his family at the beginning of his journey through adolescence. It's not great.

The Boy displays all kinds of dysfunctional behaviour as he goes through the course of the day. He eventually finds himself at Radino's, a wise, old Italian gentleman who takes an interest in the Boy, despite his poor behaviour. It is from Radino's mysterious room that the Boy transitions into the Land of Confusion, a metaphor for adolescence, the journey between childhood and adulthood.

*"The greatest discovery of my generation is that a human being can alter his life by altering his attitudes of mind."*

**William James 1842 - 1910**



## RON'S MODULE OUTCOMES

The outcome from this introductory chapter is teaching children to 'think about what they think about'. Meta Messages (or self-talk) are the internal dialogue or mind conversation that we all have with ourselves.

The knowledge that this self-talk influences our feelings/mood and then our actions is central to what we wish to establish with this first story.

Yes, thoughts have the capacity to make you angry, depressed, sad, inferior, disappointed, resentful etc...and result in 'pay back' behaviours like: revenge, deception, meanness, ignoring, blaming, etc.

The breakfast table vignette is a perfect talking point for you to use in guiding your listeners toward the desired outcome for this Chapter. Each family member has 'meta thoughts' that affect their attitude and actions. Talk about what each member was thinking, how they were feeling, and then how they acted.

A thought creates feelings that reflect the thought. They show on our face, in our body language and in our behaviours. Encourage your listeners to think about what they think and then become keenly aware that what they think about leads to a feeling as a consequence. Thus begins the journey of knowing yourself.

The family enacts a script of dysfunctional thinking, feeling and doing behaviours. They show you how negative self-talk creates angry feelings and friction in our interactions.

This family is obviously on course for a life on the 'shady side' of the metaphorical street; a lifestyle full of anger, stress and confusion.

The Boy's breakfast table actions are an enactment that allows you to discuss the interrelationship of thinking, feeling and doing. It is your opportunity to bring new insight.

The first lesson is all about understanding how the components of your behaviour are integrated and influence each other.

As we progress on this Journey the Boy will enact all the lessons for your benefit. You will see the dilemma each element of self presents and you will be shown the solution.

## AROUND THE CAMPFIRE – DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1] In a word describe the Boy (go around several times).
- 2] Describe the Boy's attitude towards his parents.
- 3] Was the Boy happy?  
What are some reasons as to why or why not?
- 4] What does the Boy tell people with his words and actions?
- 5] How do you think the Boy does in school?  
Is the Boy stupid?
- 6] At the breakfast table Dad was telling the Boy what he wanted done that day. What do you think the Boy was saying to himself in his mind?
- 7] What was the Boy's attitude during breakfast?
- 8] Why do you think his mother stayed behind the paper?
- 9] Do you think the Boy was angry at his parents?  
Do you think he loved them?  
Do you think they loved him?  
Can you act the way the Boy acted towards his parents and still really love them?  
Are the parents worried about the Boy?
- 10] What is one way you are like the Boy?
- 11] One word to describe how our / your family is a little bit like the Boy's family?
- 12] If the Boy's family relationship continues in the direction it is heading, where is it going?

Erik Erickson's cycle stages were one of my inspirations and are worthy of study. We are always in one stage or another during our life cycle. The Boy is entering into his search for identity, the stage which Erickson calls, "*Identity vs. Role Confusion.*"

These stages are as follows:

|                                  |                 |
|----------------------------------|-----------------|
| Trust vs. Mistrust               | 1-18 months     |
| Autonomy vs. Doubt               | 18 months-3 yrs |
| Initiative vs. Guilt             | 3-5 yrs         |
| Industry vs. Inferiority         | 6-12 yrs        |
| Identity vs. Role Confusion      | 13-18 yrs       |
| Intimacy vs. Isolation           | 18-30 yrs       |
| Generativity vs. Self-absorption | 30-55 yrs       |
| Integrity vs. Despair            | 55 yrs onwards  |

Do they sound interesting? Erikson himself saw the acquisition of identity as vital. Now, during adolescence, is the perfect time to address issues that can make all the difference for a young person's future. While you're checking out Erickson, why not also look up Roger L. Gould who developed life cycle stages of adulthood.

## MODULE 1 – PARENT/STORYTELLER GOALS

- It's extremely important to realise that negative self-talk influences how a person feels and what they do.
- Every thought produces an associated feeling and influences a behavioural response.
- Thoughts, feelings, and actions are integrated.
- You need to take the journey yourself before you begin guiding others.
- The first lesson is about self-awareness. Take this time to start to know yourself by thinking about what you think about. Do an honest self-check.
- What am I thinking about?
- What are the feelings my self-talk produce?
- How do I then act?
- Do I have common thinking themes or habits? (List them)
- Am I often upset and stressed by these themes?
- How do I behave when I'm thinking this way?
- How must I look to others while I'm in negative self-talk mode, feeling angry and acting out in anger?
- How does what I think, feel and do work? Am I in stressful interactions much of the time?
- If yes, then take heart - this journey is for you. It will show you how to be in control of your life. It will show how to create a really healthy lifestyle by mastering the eight elements of being human.

- You will get to know yourself. The Gem Journey will give you purpose and structure to living a wonderful life full of achievement, fun and hope for the future.

### ONE SENTENCE TO DESCRIBE THE STORY

This is the way things are. Think about what you think about and how it affects how you feel and act.

### THOUGHT

*“Enjoy the only time you ever really have, your now”.*





## *Stranger in the Meadow*

The Boy ends up in Foulcia's dungeon where he is surrounded by a multitude of very confused and stuck people – a sampling of humanity – red and yellow, black and white, young and old, rich and poor. Each one has their own reason for being there. A fox burrows into the dungeon and offers the Boy a way of escape, a way to outgrow his poor behavioural habits and embrace life by taking the Gem Journey. He tries to encourage others to follow, but they refuse.

*"Far better it is to dare mighty things,  
to win glorious triumphs even though checkered by failure,  
than to take rank with those poor spirits  
who neither enjoy nor suffer much,  
because they live in the grey twilight  
that knows neither victory or defeat."*

**Theodore Roosevelt 1858 - 1919**



## RON'S MODULE OUTCOMES

If the first chapter described 'the way things are' for the Boy and his family, chapter two confronts him with 'the way things will be' if he doesn't address his behaviour. The outcome from this chapter is for us to establish an awareness and understanding that bad habits of behaviour can last a lifetime. The content of the chapter allows for discussion on the bad habits of behaviour (thinking, feeling, doing) that need to be recognised and addressed. If ignored, the consequence is a life destined to be characterised by frustration, stress and conflict.

Families become habituated with behaviour responses that are destructive, non-productive and simply do not work. In order to make change, these scripted behaviours need to be identified and replaced with productive responses. The Boy gets an opportunity to get out of the dungeon and he takes it. An important question is posed in the discussion period about going or staying. It is not necessary to have consensus on this question. If a family member decides it is safer to stay, (which is a common response), simply let them know their answer is OK and that if they decide to go one day, they won't have missed anything.

People generally resist change. It is natural to not want change even if the change is toward more productive behaviour, towards life. This material works at a subconscious level and when listeners perceive that the journey is indeed safe, they will generally move forward.

The dungeon is a metaphor – a microcosm of humanity. All races, cultures, genders, ages and socio-economic classes are represented. Dysfunction is no respecter of diversity.

Society is split into two categories – those who stay stuck in their habitual behaviours and those who outgrow them, embrace life and move on to maturity.

It is important that we communicate that all behavioural habits will become stronger and more established with time and repetition. Good habits or bad ones grow with use.

Habits develop quickly if they have meaning and importance. This is good news because good habits have the same nature. Childhood patterns of poor behaviour will predictably be with you all your life unless they are recognised and changed.

#### AROUND THE CAMPFIRE – DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1] What are some of the Boy's behaviours which are similar to the behaviour of the people in the dungeon?
- 2] What kind of behaviours cause people to get stuck? List.
- 3] What are some of the repetitive and dysfunctional behaviours of the people in the dungeon?
- 4] Were there alcoholics down there? Were there people down there so angry that every time they became frustrated, they exploded? People who ate too little? Remember, too much or too little of anything is a problem (bad habits).
- 5] When do you think some of the older people first got stuck?
- 6] Were there families down there? What behaviours keep whole families stuck?

- 7] What are some family behaviours that we do over and over again that are not working?
- 8] When will some of the young ones get out?
- 9] When the Boy screamed, *“Let’s get out of here!”* would you have gone or stayed?
- 10] Could they have? Why didn’t they?
- 11] Would fear have kept people down there? What did they fear?
- 12] Would some fear change?
- 13] Do you fear change? If you chose to go, would that mean you could cope with changes?
- 14] What did the Fox mean when he said, *“Life’s this way.”*
- 15] What did the tattoo on his palm represent? (The degree of the Boy’s confusion)
- 16] List the behaviours which, as a family or group, we would like changed.
- 17] What are my habits?

Explore the habits of the four types of behaviours: Thinking, feeling, doing and metabolic.

Notice that by asking your listeners *“Would you go or would you stay?”* you are unconsciously engaging them and inviting them to take the journey.

ONE SENTENCE TO DESCRIBE THE STORY

This is the way things will be, if nothing changes.

THOUGHT

*"I want change".*



## *The Spider's Web*

In this Module we introduce the first Element of Identity, the Mastery of Time.

Being able to Command our moments in time is the vital first step towards acquiring personal identity. While the listener remains impulsive and reactive when faced with stress or conflict, he/she will fail to progress and will repeatedly become stuck in life.

For a person to successfully acquire a healthy sense of identity, the mastery of the moment, impulsive emotions is crucial. Anger can't free you from the Spider's Web.

Mastery of the Moment is based on the ancient axiom...

*"Be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry."*

**James 1:19**

This story and the accompanying discussion lays out the image, issue and model for mastering our present moment in time. By commanding the moment the emotion of anger is managed.

We are also first introduced to the concept of the 'Stand Alone moment' in this signature chapter.





## RON'S MODULE OUTCOMES

The desired goal of Module 3 is teaching children how to be in charge of the choices and decisions of their lives.

This is done by teaching the easy steps to commanding the 'Stand Alone moment', an internal safe moment where no one else can influence them. Module 3 teaches the importance of this 'Stand Alone moment'; important because it is the instant in time where decisions and choices are made. We can teach our children to create this uniquely personal moment when we sanction its importance and encourage its practice until it becomes a behavioural habit.

So yes, we can equip our children to create/discover a place in their thinking that is conducive to the management of

impulsive anger and to good decision making. When this outcome is achieved and your child is personally practising their command of the 'Stand Alone moment', they will routinely make good decisions and will be equipped with an anger management routine that is 100% effective 100% of the time.

### **'Train up a child in the way they should go'...**

Commanding this 'Stand Alone moment' in time is the essential first step for achieving identity.

Being in command of your 'Stand Alone moment' is essential for mastering the other seven elements of self because it is within the context of this moment of focus and command that all the other, yet to be learned, masteries are managed.

### COMMENTARY

To set the tone we remember that the Boy has received a strong message from the Fox,

*"Boy, you won't make it to the Triple Peaks!"*

*"How come?"* demands the Boy.

*"You do things backwards. You'll get stuck! You talk before you think, and you act before you think. Backwards, Boy!"* says the Fox.

***"There is nothing worse than aggressive stupidity."***  
**Johann Wolfgang von Goethe 1749 - 1832**

In your post-story discussion, the 'Around the Campfire' time, you have the opportunity to step up and reveal the

importance of the first Element of Identity. Watch Ron in the video module to see how best to present this set of insights.

Make it clear that when the Boy got into the spider's web he immediately 'went off' and his sympathetic nervous system\* kicked into action. He enacts his initial and habitual reaction to frustration and problems, he gets angry. His tantrum behaviours, when faced with the trap the spider laid, were indicative of how he handled and managed his stress at home.

The story portrays how ineffective an angry response is. Just like the gargantuan spider our troubles laugh at our anger. Getting angry in a moment of stress is as useless as the Boy ranting at the spider. Uncontrolled anger forcefully expresses displeasure, it makes noise and it makes us look ridiculous. And that's all it does.

\*Our bodies work for us in amazing ways. The sympathetic nervous system, or the 'fight or flight response', prepares us instantly to fight a bear or sprint away at top speed from danger. It is totally necessary for our survival and protection.

At the instant we perceive a threat, many preparatory changes instantly go into effect. This is automatic and unconscious. Eye pupils dilate, digestion stops, the bladder constricts, any immediate need to express one's bowel temporarily ceases.

Blood moves from the surface into interior regions, adrenalin is pumped into the blood stream, various hormones, endorphins and neuro-transmitters flood into action. Miraculously we move to a 'war-like' state, ready to fight for our lives or evade danger as fast as possible.

Fortunately, in our day and age, this great and necessary bodily process is rarely needed. Unfortunately, I'm guessing, it's probably used more today than ever before.

A person with an anger problem utilises this aspect of their nervous system sometimes multiple times per day, over-reacting aggressively to small irritations as if they were serious threats.

Simple requests like, *"Please turn off the computer and come to dinner,"* *"It's time to take a shower,"* or *"Please take out the trash,"* are met with the hearer misperceiving the issue, perceiving the everyday request as a threatening assault and allowing the body to go into full sympathetic reaction. Lighting up like a Christmas tree!

This can become a habit, a very bad habit. Every time you let anger have its way you will waste the next hour of your life calming down after the explosion!

#### AROUND THE CAMPFIRE – DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1] How do people get stuck when they talk before they think?
- 2] Was there a time recently when you did something before you thought about it?
- 3] The Boy, when first trapped, had a temper tantrum. Could he ever have yelled or sworn loud enough to get out?
- 4] When the Boy *"lost it"* and went off, what did the spider do?

Describe the Boy's behaviour. Was he is the habit of behaving this way at home?

- 5] How did the Boy usually respond to frustration?
- 6] What do you first start “*doing*” when frustrated or you don’t get your way? Does it work?
- 7] Could the spider represent other things? What other things can trap you?
- 8] How did the Boy get out of the spider’s web?

### MODULE 3 – PARENT/STORYTELLER GOALS:

The desired outcome from this module is that your children practise taking command of their ‘Stand Alone moments’, You can accomplish this by teaching five simple steps.

- **Recognise** - the ‘Stand Alone moment’ It is the exact instant where decisions and behaviours are formed. Few people recognise their capacity for stopping, listening and creating this moment of clarity. But we can all create our own inner place of clarity.
- **Master** - this ‘Stand Alone moment’, (the time between the quick to listen and the slow to speak, between recognition and response). Help your children to see that if they don’t master the moment, impulse and anger will have their way. Mastery comes through cultivating the habit of deep purposeful breathing, as soon as they recognise the moment has come. This is an act of deliberate self-regulation, breathing for clarity and control.
- **Ask** - the question of the moment as you are breathing and maintaining emotional regulation and gaining a sense of clarity, ask “*What should I do, what’s the right thing to do?*”

- **Act** – do what you should do. Even if you don't feel like it, do it anyway! The resolve to act in line with your values is formed in the 'Stand Alone moment'
- **Reinforce** – continue teaching/training your children the importance of commanding their moments. Empower them with the knowledge that they, and only they, can actually exercise this control as needed throughout their day. It will help them to think about the issues, respond to the requests and solve the problems of the day.

### **What does this Mastery accomplish?**

By entering the 'Stand Alone moment', listening, breathing and acting from your own considered decision, rather than the pressures around you, becomes a behavioural construct that you can use every day.

It is your tool to maintain control, the moment by moment act of mastering your most precious commodity - time.

By standing alone and breathing for clarity you interrupt the habit of impulsive anger. You make better decisions, you gain control and, in that instant, anger becomes irrelevant.

### ONE SENTENCE TO DESCRIBE THE STORY THOUGHT

*"Think before you talk or act", be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to get angry.*



## *An Evening with Bartrum*

Bartrum, the Boy's respiteer/counsellor, defines the Journey. *"Boy, you are heading to the Triple Peaks, a hazardous journey with many potential pitfalls. Your success depends on the decisions you make."* Again the Boy hears that he will not make it because he has the basics wrong. He is not honest with himself.

*"Reputation is what others know about you,  
honour is what you know about yourself"*

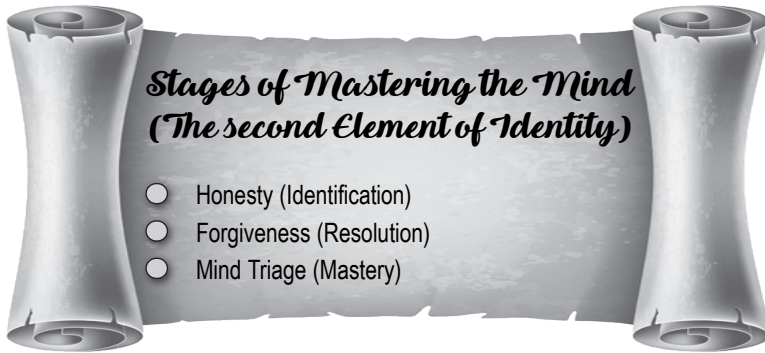
**Lois McMaster Bujold 1999**

Striving to control or help others only works through personal congruent behaviour on the concerned one's part. You have to build the right to speak into someone's life and you can't help a person against their will. At this early stage in our journey Bartrum demonstrates his understanding of this. The Boy was expecting a 'sermon' but he just got two statements of truth.

A person will choose to change; more often by example, not by manipulation or the pressure of power dynamics.

The next two chapters focus on the second great mastery, the Mastery of the Mind, the process of recognising the automatic thoughts and meta-messages that sit behind our unhealthy behaviours.





## RON'S MODULE OUTCOMES

Bartrum's advice is brief and direct. The wise Respiteer knew that the Boy wasn't ready to hear too much. At this point in his journey he was more ready to take offence than to take correction. Bartrum said what needed to be said and nothing more. The seed was planted and Bartrum was keeping his promise to be completely true to the Boy.

Using our 'stand-alone' moment we can use the ideas from the story to help us see the 'thought struggle' we share with the Boy. Perhaps we get angry and stuck – like the Boy did in the Spider's Web – perhaps we can follow Bartrum's advice and do the opposite of what we feel like in those intense moments?

Perhaps we too need to cultivate the habit of taking an internal step back and being honest with ourselves. This is the first key to mastering our mind.

As we follow the Boy deeper into his journey we discover some crippling thoughts that he repeats to himself time and time again. These thoughts surface as impulsive anger, aggression and disrespect.

As you will see in the Interactive module and in the discussion of the next chapter, honesty, forgiveness and ‘mind triage’ are the thought processes that help us guard ourselves from crippling thoughts and help us master our mind.

### AROUND THE CAMPFIRE - DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1] Make an honest statement about yourself, eg. *“I’m a hard worker”* or *“I like people”*.
- 2] Is the Boy honest with himself?  
Does he think he is?
- 3] How do people generally behave when angry or frustrated?
- 4] Why did Bartrum encourage the Boy to behave the opposite of how he felt when he was angry?
- 5] Ask yourself, *“How do I behave when irritated?”*  
*“How does what I think affect what I do?”*
- 6] Is taking time to think about yourself important? Why?
- 7] Are we honest with each other?

### ONE SENTENCE TO DESCRIBE THE STORY THOUGHT

*“Be honest with yourself – if it’s not working, change”.*



## *The Quicksands of Denial*

Building on the themes of Chapter 4, this 'paired chapter' vividly reinforces the idea that poor choices in our thinking get us stuck. The Boy finds himself sinking in quicksand. The Frogman tells him, "*Boy, your anger and behaviours have you stuck.*" In response the Boy lashes out with "*I'm not angry!*", a statement he maintains for a considerable time.

Finally the Boy is honest. Like looking in a mirror, he realises he is angry and indeed much of his behaviour has been shocking and unjustifiable. We can fall into the habit of excusing our own behaviour choices because we still harbour anger and resentment against someone else. Blame is often the habit of choice.

The Boy also learns that the solution to his attitude is forgiveness, the second vital stage of Mastery of the Mind.

*"Make every thought your captive."*

*"Let not your heart be troubled"*

### RON'S MODULE OUTCOMES

The desired goal of both Module 4 and Module 5 is teaching children to recognise the need for self-honesty and forgiveness. This is done by teaching the stages of Mastering the Mind and emphasising the steps of Mind Triage.

- **Honesty** with yourself and **Forgiveness** are essential first steps to healthy new behaviours. To be angry about something, or at someone, consumes so much internal energy and has a profound effect on your inner world; how you think, feel and behave.
- Unforgiven hurts and pain linger in the unconscious as crippling thoughts and 'bubble up' into daily life. They take ugly forms like anger out-bursts, impulsive actions, episodes of depression, or dangerous, negative self-talk, such as, *"I'm worthless, I'm ugly, I'm stupid, nobody cares about me"*.
- These endogenous (inner) thought behaviours affect life in the present, even though often the pain is an echo from long ago. Unresolved anger towards another person maintains the link to that person and to the behaviour they hurt you with.

In a way it keeps them controlling and hurting you again and again. They are often the last people in the world you want controlling your life now.

To truly forgive another person means you wipe the slate clean, and when it's clean, it's clean. You must not revisit that issue because it was resolved and finished.

The choice of not forgiving is to stay continually stuck. Unfortunately, as time passes, the issue gets buried with other unconscious stuff. The pain, frustration and lack of resolution stay and translate into lousy forms in your now – they leave you confused, locked in a dungeon of resentment, blame, anger, lies and regret (as we saw in Chapter 2).

Forgiveness takes courage, self-control and it takes determination to overcome the tendency to revisit old hurts. Forgiveness requires new thinking and behaviour. *“Wait a second, Ron, how can I possibly just forgive? How do I do that?”*

It is simple, so simple you might just miss it. When an angry thought, towards the person who offended you and you have already forgiven, first resurfaces, capture it! Overcome that negative thought with a forward thinking positive thought, such as *“I’ve dealt with that”* or *“I’m on a new flight”* or *“That’s no longer unfinished business, it’s been dealt with. I’m free!”*

Forgiveness is not denial; it is resolving thoughts that you know cripple and debilitate you. Actually I propose that not forgiving is denial. A wise lady once told me, *“Ron, plants don’t grow in the light, they grow when it’s dark”*. Even the most difficult issues can be reframed and benefit can be derived from them.

Forgiveness is the solution, especially in the on-going interpersonal relationships of the family. Keeping score and letting issues build is most destructive. Staying in a constant state of issues discussed, and forgiveness given and received, is the place to be.

Yesterday’s conflicts are past. What has happened has happened; therefore to continually hold on to yesterday’s anger only debilitates self and ruins your ‘now’.

Rather, attempt to clean the slate daily and free each other for a brighter tomorrow. This is **Mind Triage** recognising recurring, unforgiving thoughts as obsolete and self-destructive. Very similar to the way an experienced Triage Nurse in an

Emergency Room keeps guard over entry, so you too should guard your mind, only allowing the thoughts that you wish to process to gain entry into 'prime mind time'.

**Remember the Stages of Mastering the Mind:**



**The Steps of Mind Triage:  
At the first thought of a forgiven resolved issue!**

- Step One: Again enter into commanding your stand-alone moment (Mastery of Self-Awareness)
- Step Two: Capture it and delete, thus avoiding the extended period of poor mental health.
- Step Three: Immediately block ensuing predictable thoughts. It is not the first thought that makes you wild with anger or angst, it is the ensuing thoughts that take you down, down, down. When you block the chain you delete by omission all the "poor me" thinking and the feelings and behaviors that follow.
- Step Four: Immediately reflect - move your thinking focus to topics that make you smile. Have a number of themes

that you're very thankful for stored up, ready to enliven in negative moments. By immediately reflecting your thinking to these predetermined themes you are keeping your thinking healthy and soon it will become habit.

Your mental health status is determined by which side of the metaphorical street you live on. Good mental health is correlated to spending your 'mind time' on the sunny side of the street. Poor mental health is directly correlated to spending your mind time on the 'shady side of the street'. Your thoughts must be triaged.

- *Honest thinking produces awareness.*
- *Honesty and forgiveness are the 'house-cleaning' stages while Mind Triage is the ongoing management skill.*
- *Friends have time for friends: they will wait while you sort out your troubles.*
- *Forgiveness creates good feelings of being "freed up".*
- *Denial takes energy and hinders emotional and psychological growth.*

#### AROUND THE CAMPFIRE – DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1] How long could the Boy have stayed stuck?
- 2] Finally, the Boy said, "I am most angry at myself!" Up until that point in time and space, who was the Boy most angry at?
- 3] Who did he blame for his stress?
- 4] Was the Boy's anger and behaviour helping him:  
- to be successful on this adventure?

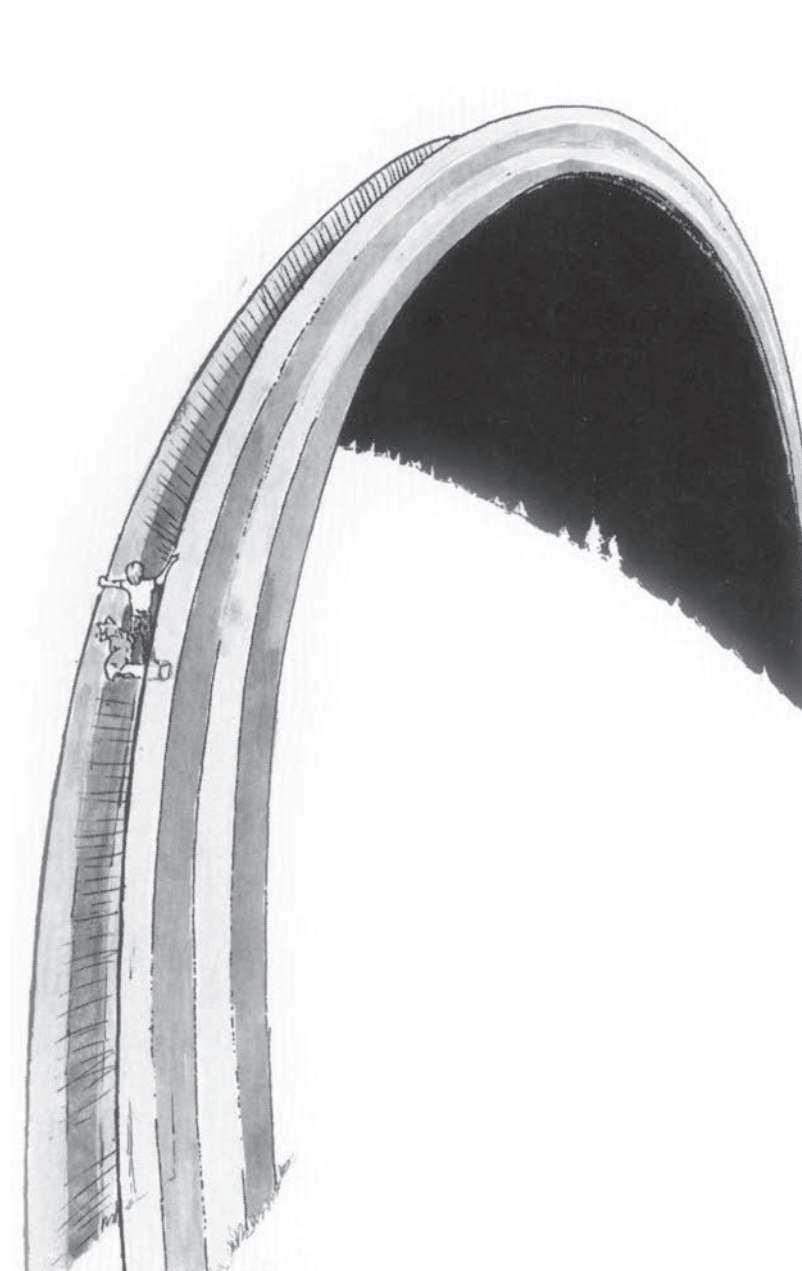


- at school?
  - at home?
- 5] What sort of angry behaviour causes a person to get stuck?
  
  - 6] Name one behaviour that has you stuck (go around the room or group circle).
  
  - 7] Why did the Frogman say *“Without forgiveness, Boy, you’ll stay in quicksand all your life?”*  
 How could unforgiveness keep a person stuck?  
 What is it that keeps the person who is unwilling to forgive stuck?  
 Does holding on to anger improve a person’s life?  
 Do you think he might have thought of the old people in Foulcia’s dungeon? Why?
  
  - 8] When the Frogman said calmly, *“Stay stuck, kid, I’ve got time, I’ve got heaps of time,”* what went through the Boy’s mind?
  
  - 9] Name one behaviour that has you stuck.
  
  - 10] Who was the only one who could get the Boy out of the quicksand?
  
  - 11] Why didn’t the Frogman simply pull the Boy out?
  
  - 12] Why did the Frogman say, *“Without forgiveness, you’ll stay in quicksand all your life”?*
  
  - 13] Why did the Boy feel so good when he forgave?
  
  - 14] What was the first step the Boy took to get himself out of the quicksand?
  
  - 15] Is a lousy attitude a behaviour?
  
  - 16] When you *“cop”* an attitude, what are you really saying?

- 17] Develop a way to daily acknowledge forgiveness (clean the slate) among family members.
- 18] Did the Frogman actually help the Boy?
- 19] How long could the Boy have stayed stuck?
- 20] How does the Boy's habit of being lazy keep him stuck?
- 21] Why was honesty essential to getting out?

ONE SENTENCE TO DESCRIBE THE STORY THOUGHT

*"Forgiveness is the solution."*



## *Up the Rainbow Stairs*

We have clearly seen the transformational power of honesty and forgiveness and the relief they can bring to a life stuck in denial.

Now the Boy is faced with a new challenge, one that resonates with every listener. In this chapter we explore the way gratitude can shift our thinking away from resentment, blame and self-pity.

In the light of gratitude many of those shadowy, self-absorbed pathways and habits in our thinking can be seen for what they are and are soon easily dismissed using mind triage.

The Boy came into this adventure very ungrateful, angry and spoiled. The Rainbow Staircase provides the Boy with “*mirror learning*”. Once he has passed the test of the Rainbow Bridge the Boy receives gifts that will help him throughout his Journey. The chalice is another real temptation; but he somehow understands the concept of “*Too much, too soon*”.

***“Gratitude is not only the greatest of virtues, but the parent of all others.”***  
**Cicero 106 BC - 43 BC**

### RON’S MODULE OUTCOMES

This chapter serves as further reinforcement of the ‘Mastery of the Heart and Mind’ elements of Self. Thankfulness is an invaluable tool in the application of mind triage. It is cognitively impossible to be genuinely grateful to a person

and at the same time hold resentment towards that person. The two thought processes are mutually exclusive.

Thankfulness gives value to people, places and things. It is a self-regulation habit that must be developed. Generally, we are not naturally thankful. Thankfulness grows in our stand-alone time.

Thankful acknowledgement to people confirms our appreciation and gratefulness. It is also extremely important to hear, because it confirms to the receiver of the gratitude that their effort had value. Thankfulness is a major encourager of continued kindness.

Focus on the positive. A thankful person finds that they can take comfort from realising how the sad time or heavy work load is producing a stronger, more productive individual in them. (More thoughts on this topic are in the chapter *“The Wilderness.”*)



### *Mastery of The Heart and Mind*

- Let not your Heart be troubled
- Thankfulness is valuable.
- Hard times produce either character or dysfunction.
- We often treat the people we love most, the worst.

## AROUND THE CAMPFIRE – DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1] What did the Boy have to be thankful for, before he began this journey?
- 2] Why did the Boy get stuck part way up?
- 3] Are you thankful?  
Is it possible others close to you might not know it?
- 4] How do people know you are thankful?
- 5] Do you like people to tell you “*Thanks*”? Why?
- 6] Can you be angry and thankful at the same time?  
Which is more powerful?
- 7] Is it possible to be thankful for or value terrible events? How can you benefit from ‘re-framing’ those events positively?
- 8] Talk about how much each other really means to you.  
What do you think the Boy will say to his parents after this experience?
- 9] What are some things (issues), which, if you did them too soon, could/would become contaminated?
- 10] Why did the Boy NOT take the chalice?  
What are things in your life you have to wait for? Can you name five things?
- 11] Is what the Boy said true?  
We treat the people we love the most the worst.  
Why?
- 12] Are there times you are really thankful, yet no one would have a clue?
- 13] Are you more like the Boy at the beginning of the rainbow or at the end of it?

## ONE SENTENCE TO DESCRIBE THE STORY

Step by step the Boy exchanges entitlement and resentment for gratitude in his thinking about all he has and those he loves.

## THOUGHT

*“Being thankful gives value to people, places and things: think it, express it”.*







## *Around the Campfire*

The Fox hurries to set up the campfire in order to hear the Boy's story. The Boy relates a recurring dream in which he receives gifts, which reveals much about the Boy's attitude and actions.

*"All human action has one or more of these seven causes: chance, nature, compulsion, habit, reason, passion and desire"*

**Aristotle 384BC - 322BC**

The Fourth Element of Self that we have identified is Our Behaviour. In this chapter many of the central themes of the Gem journey begin to coalesce as we focus on mastering the way we behave. In a moment of honest self-reflection, the Boy develops a level of personal insight into his actions and attitudes. Prior to his experience around the campfire, his awareness was blinded by selfishness and blame. There is also a vital shift in the dynamic between the Boy and the Fox, his guide. The Boy allows himself to be vulnerable and their connection deepens as a result.

Our emphasis in facilitating this chapter is to instill 'Golden Rule' thinking. When we treat others in the way we like to be treated and when we are honestly aware of how our behaviour impacts the lives of others, we are living with kindness and compassion. What a wonderful way to live!

Insight into a given situation is essential for change. This chapter gives you, the facilitator, the opportunity to help your listeners to see themselves as others see them. Interactive

role-play is a powerful way of teaching. It brings awareness of the situation into a child's frame of reference so when similar circumstances occur, your child will consider alternative choices. Much about decision-making and the installation of values is assumed. It is difficult to directly address many of these issues without sounding preachy.

Role-playing is fun and an excellent vehicle for indirectly communicating and discussing important life issues. Have different family members move in and out of different roles. Do both sides of the role, a positive respectful response and also a "bad scene" reaction. Practise these difficult situations. Then make up your own.

- You want to ask Mum a question, but she's on the phone;
- A kid cuts into the queue just ahead of you;
- You want to use your brother's fishing rod;
- Teacher accuses you of losing a class book (you didn't);
- A cashier gives you change for \$20 when you gave him \$10



### *Picture of out-of-control behaviour*

- Change is possible, we can master our behaviour.
- Importance of respect for others.
- Golden Rule living.
- Consequences of wrongs against others (ie. the heaviness of the brooch and getting stuck in the shale).
- Eidetic picture of stealing and its pain for the victims.
- Asking for and receiving forgiveness frees emotionally.
- Ugliness of selfish rude behaviour.

## RON'S MODULE OUTCOMES

The Element of Our Behaviour. Steps to making the Golden Rule your code of behaviour.

This mastery is based on the ancient wisdom, the Golden Rule, which says

***“Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.”***

*Our task is to guide our children/students in discussion, focussing on how we all like to be treated and using our likes and dislikes to formulate our own Golden Rules of behaviour.*

How wonderfully simple!

What a wonderful behavioural construct - timeless!

What a wonderfully cool way to be! Friendly and kind!

And such a wonderfully healthy way to relate to others!

## STEPS TO MASTERING THIS ELEMENT OF SELF

- 1] Once again call up a Stand-Alone moment to take the internal journey to true Self.

***Know yourself!***

- 2] List the behaviours you enjoy: if you like to be treated like that, then treat others the same.
- 3] List the behaviours you greatly dislike from others: if you don't like these behaviours, then don't do them!
- 4] When our children create their own Golden Rule(s), formed from their likes and dislikes, it serves as a code for how they then should live.

5] This is each person's own code of conduct: ***Practise!***

***Treat others like you like to be treated***

Once we have mastery of this Element of self we have a healthy code of behaving and interacting with others. As our children/students explore their own personal likes and dislikes on their quest to defining their 'Golden Rules' it offers yet another opportunity to self-audit; another big step on our journey to truly know ourselves.

We must pay special attention to the behaviours we don't like. We must capture their selfish hurtful nature and *not do them any more!*

Another awesome aspect regarding Mastery of Behaviour is that the Golden Rule is a code of conduct appropriate for all occasions. When we practise 'kindness conduct' it works everywhere and it soon becomes a behavioural habit integrated quickly because of the constant reinforcement we receive from the positive reactions we get back from others.

It's enjoyable when our behaviour is liked by others ... It's the fastest way to formulate a new habit. And because it's so easy to like someone who likes us, when we apply the Golden Rule to relationships, it makes those relationships easy and opens up all kinds of new relationships because we will be liked because we treat others so well.

When this is our code of conduct we establish a very important Element of Self in our journey to achieve Identity. There is NO stress in treating others kindly. Once the mastery has become a habit, it becomes the way we just are. Rather than striving for success, we are being successful.

Mastering this Element becomes a lifestyle. This is healthy living and a formula for easy relationships.

### AROUND THE CAMPFIRE – DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1] One word to describe how the Boy treated the woodcutter's wife.
- 2] One word to describe how the woodcutter's wife must have felt?
- 3] One word to describe how the Boy's behaviour made you feel?
- 4] When the Boy walked teasingly down to the creek all at once his facial expressions changed from cocky arrogance to a quite serious aspect. What do you think he suddenly started to think about?  
  
Was he at that point honest with himself?
- 5] Who did the Boy treat like the woodcutter's wife in real life.  
  
(note: WHY DO WE TREAT WORST, THE PEOPLE WE LOVE THE MOST?)
- 6] Have you ever treated anyone like the Boy treated the woodcutter's wife?
- 7] Name ten lousy things the Boy did while at the woodcutter's cabin?
- 8] Why couldn't the Boy simply throw away the "brooch"?  
  
Why did the brooch get warmer and heavier?  
  
What can you not throw away?
- 9] How can stealing entrap you?

- 10] Why did he feel so good once he asked the woodcutter and his wife for forgiveness?
- 11] When they were in the treasure room, why did Teik make the choice for the Boy?  
Is it sometimes hard to decide?  
Was it okay that Teik finally said, *“Take those things”*?
- 12] Do adults have to make choices for you sometimes?
- 13] What is the significance of the picture album?  
Why were the pictures different at the back of the album?
- 14] In his dream, why is the kid’s future different than his past?  
What was the Boy like before he changed?
- 15] What factor caused his future pictures to be different?  
Do all people have radical differences in their albums?
- 16] Have you ever been secretly happy that an adult told you *“No”*? (I have been!!)  
Can you remember when?
- 17] How does the Boy feel about the change in the picture album?
- 18] Would the Boy have changed without totally changing his thinking and behaviours?
- 19] If he continued to behave rudely and selfishly, would he have had new, happy pictures in his future?
- 20] If he continued to act out, lie and steal, would his future pictures have been different?  
What would your picture album look like?

ONE SENTENCE TO DESCRIBE THE STORY

The Boy sees himself as others see him and is determined to change.

THOUGHT

*“What does your picture album say?”*





*The Crevice of Anger and Lies,  
The Gift of Sir Henry Glow and  
Regal's Rescue*

Throughout "*Gem of the First Water*" we find a number of moments that appear incidental – even whole scenes that seem to meander from the main story. As a storyteller it is important to recognise the value and meaning of each one – reflect on them and have an answer ready if one of your audience asks.

The Boy and the Fox continue their journey and the trail leads into an area of huge rocks, so gigantic they block all forward view. Finally they come to an outlook, revealing a trail leading into a box canyon with monolithic walls.

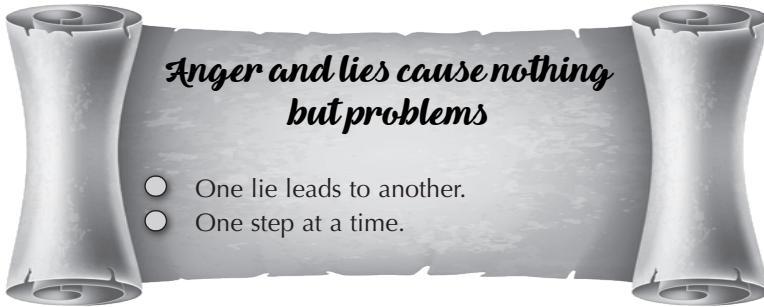
The Boy says, "*We won't be able to climb that cliff!*"

The Fox replies, "*There will be a way, once we get there.*"

And indeed there is; a crevice in which the two travelers are trapped by Anger and Lies.

This moment of realisation – that often we must commit to a direction that seems impossible before the way through is evident, is a small but vital insight. So many opportunities are missed if we assume instead of experiment.

***"When anger rises, think of the consequences."  
Confucius 551BC - 479BC***



***Anger and lies cause nothing  
but problems***

- One lie leads to another.
- One step at a time.

### RON'S MODULE OUTCOMES

The destructive nature of anger and lies is presented. Anger is pointless, brutal, crushing and uses up tremendous energy. Lies energise and stimulate anger, they erode trust, they confuse, accumulate and build on each other. Both anger and lies are ugly and keep a person in constant stress. In addition, they are constant barriers to communication and co-operation, and in even the most incredible squeeze, there are alternatives to anger and lies.

Achieving a goal requires behaving in line with that goal, keeping in mind that one does not always have answers initially. The Boy role-plays this for us as he reluctantly enters the box canyon. However, if we behave one step at a time towards the desired outcome (goal) the initial, or anticipated problems are usually overcome.

Not listening to others is one of the most common barriers to relationships. A very simple strategy for success in relationships is to be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to get angry. This is at the core mastering the first Element of Self, Our Time. The most important time of your life is between the quick and the slow. It is your stand-alone time, your thinking time, the show time of your decisions.

Listening is certainly one of the most important components of effective communication. People who do not listen are scripted. They say the same things to each other, the same things happen, the same feelings emerge, and the same results are achieved, regardless of the cause. There is talk; oh, there is talk (noise), but no effective listening.

Chapter 9 is all about expectations:

Sir Henry said to the Boy, *“Your gift is in the hole, pull it out.”* The Boy immediately reached in and felt around and around the tiny little object. Finally Sir Henry said, *“Pull it out,”* and the Boy did with an expression of disappointment.

An unfulfilled expectation leaves a vacuum, a *“This isn’t fair”, “This isn’t what I want”* void, that will not remain empty. It fills with anger, lies and blame, resulting from disappointment.

This vignette is a wonderful opportunity to highlight how to effectively manage disappointment. It gives opportunity to discuss how unfulfilled expectations can ruin our present moment if not properly managed.

We all need the reassurance that when one door closes another will open and we all need to take a really good look at what we already have. A closer look may reveal it’s actually a great treasure.

Developing an awareness and understanding of expectations helps to guard our vision of what is right in front of us. Often, like the Boy with his tiny Book, what we already have may prove to be a great treasure; therefore we can’t let our preconceived expectations blur our thinking.

The Boy was expecting something, bigger, better, different. A lot like the disappointments in life, this vignette shows that our failed expectations rob us of the joy to be gained from the thing we have.

I expect a red bicycle and when I get a green bicycle I'm disappointed. Shouldn't I just be happy that I have been given a bicycle?

How we handle disappointment is important. Learning to understand that life is full of failed expectations and that responding to them with anger is totally wrong. Dashed hopes can ruin wonderful personal relationships and waste wonderful times. Let us teach our children to understand this truism in life: 'Stuff happens!' Not everything in life works out.

Chapter 10 seeks to convey a simple mental health concept: Know when to shut-up. How many heartaches could have been avoided, how many arguments could have been de-escalated if only we had chosen to guard our words?

If the Boy had resisted his urge to boast about his escape, he and the Fox could have escaped the Anger and Lie creatures entirely and would have never needed Regal's rescue.

The encounter the Boy has in the crevice gives us our first close-up look at the nature of Anger and Lies.

These 'archetypes' are important because they allow a mental image to form for later reflection. Using the creatures' escalation of heat and pressure to describe the progression of our anger response and using the transparent and multi-headed creatures to show us the nature of our lies give us

reliable insights when combatting the destructive impact of these habitual responses in our lives.

The later revelation that the Anger and Lies the Boy meets on his journey are 'his' anger and lies – and that they are the food that sustains the Worm's power in his life and in the universe, will help to inform this discussion and are important to keep in mind.

### AROUND THE CAMPFIRE – DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1] When the Boy said, *“Look, we’ll never be able to climb that cliff!”* what did the Boy feel like doing?
- 2] Do you think the Boy would have continued without the encouragement of the Fox?
- 3] When do you give up? At what point does the message *“I can’t”* take control; at the beginning, middle or right at the end?
- 4] How did the Fox know there would be a passage through the rock wall? *“Relax, there will be a way once we get there.”*

Is this principle true of a lot of things in life? Such as?

- 5] Do anger and lies trap us?
- 6] Describe the Anger Creatures. Is your anger a little like them? How?
- 7] Describe the Lie Creatures. Are the lies you've told a little like them? How?
- 8] Do you believe something about yourself that isn't true? Does this cause you to have behaviours that are similar to the Anger and Lie Creatures?

- 9] The Boy was rescued. Have you ever been rescued?  
When? From what? (a good opportunity for the facilitator to give personal examples).
- 10] What is significant about the Lie Creatures being interwoven or clustered?

ONE SENTENCE TO DESCRIBE THE STORY

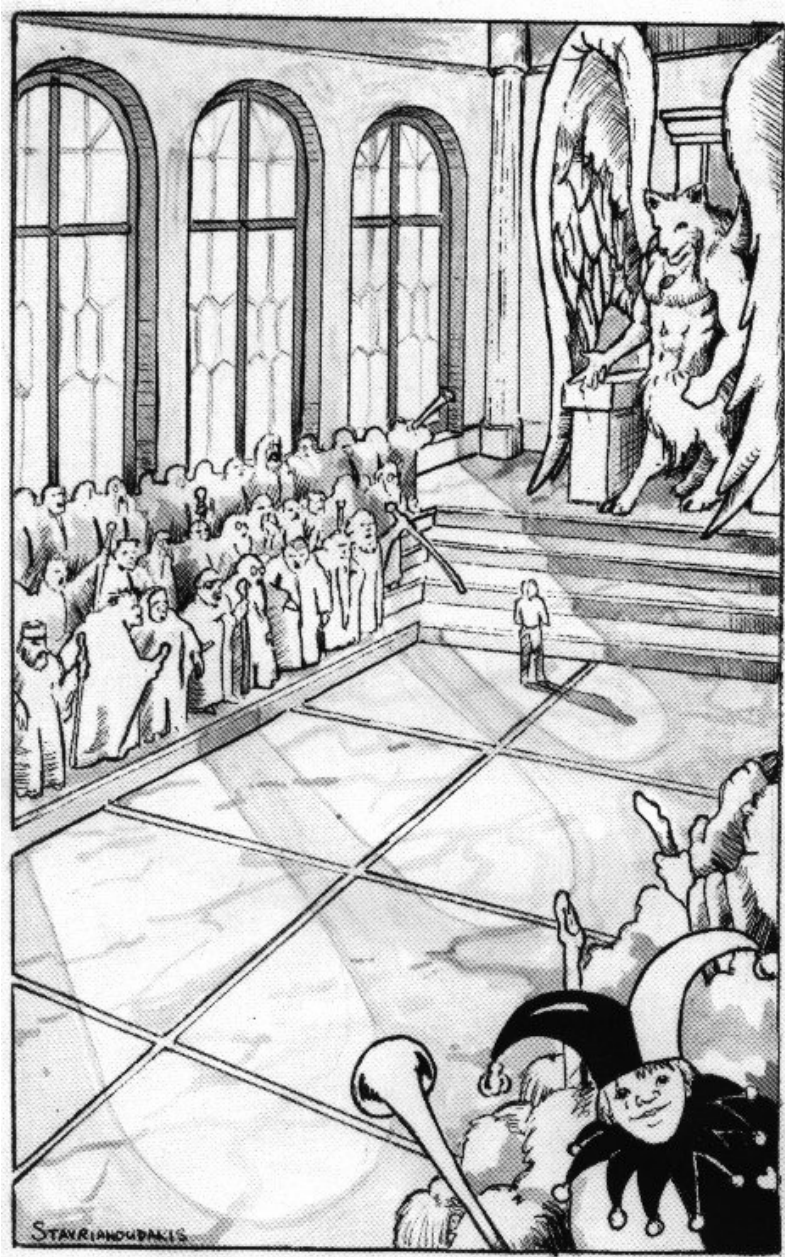
Anger and Lies leave us trapped.

THOUGHT

*"If you keep moving, there will be a way to your goal"*







*Splendora,  
Murk Mire: The Bowels of the Earth and  
Through the Waiting Hordes*

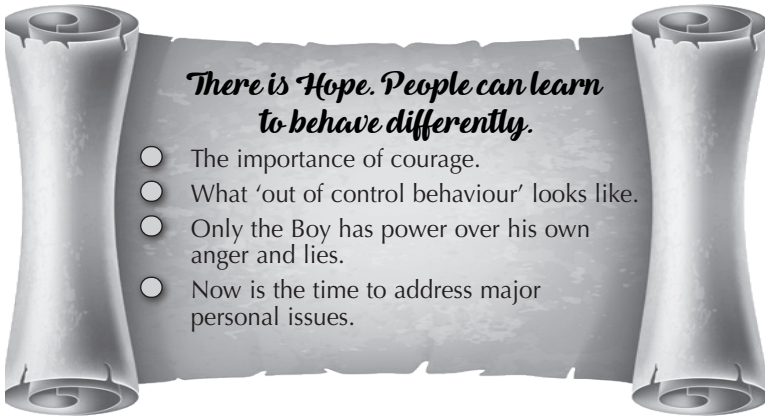
The Boy travels through time and space to encounter the Source of all Good Decisions who defines the Boy's adventure and encourages him towards successful living through effective decision-making, by keeping all his behaviour in line with his goal of reaching the Triple Peaks. Hugh also gives the Boy an essential element for success, and that is the power of the word "courage". *Courage* actions our intentions.

Next, the Boy encounters the Source of all Bad Decisions and for the first time is able to see him for who he is and recognise the Worm's destructive influence in the Boy's life.

We see that by reflecting on our decisions and our accomplishments together creates our self-image. By consistently making good choices and achieving what we planned we create a good reputation for ourselves, with ourselves.

Finally after encouragement, direction, victory and bravery in the face of the horde of Anger and Lie creatures the Boy becomes a victim of his own fears. This is a useful vignette to illustrate the opponent process theory where one emotional response is followed by the opposite feeling – we need to recognise that after a high, comes a low, and prepare ourselves for this.

*"Believe in yourself! Have faith in your abilities!  
Without a humble but reasonable confidence in your own powers,  
you cannot be successful or happy"*  
Norman Vincent Peale 1893 - 1993



## RON'S MODULE OUTCOMES

Taking hold of the reins of our life and bringing our behaviour in line with our goals takes courage. By definition courage is *"the attitude of facing and dealing with anything recognised as dangerous, difficult, or painful instead of withdrawing from it."* Use of the word *"courage"* in *"Gem of the First Water"* also incorporates the definition of self-discipline: *"controlling oneself; one's desires, actions, habits."* Learning to behave, think and feel differently comes from creating alternatives. Behaviour can be changed, and there are acceptable alternatives to habitual and self-destructive behaviours. A new way of behaving and thinking can create balance.

In Chapter 12, the Boy's sense of courage and growing confidence in his new direction is a clear contrast to the Worm's invitation to fall back into his dysfunctional habits. The enemy overplays his hand and, rather than being drawn to repeat his resentful and deceitful habits, so prevalent at the beginning of the journey, the Boy now rejects the Worm's offer and becomes an adversary of his former master.

This new clarity is his protection when, in Chapter 13, the Boy returns to face the consequence of a previous poor decision, his new courage now enables him to stand against the anger and lies that used to so easily overwhelm him.

#### AROUND THE CAMPFIRE DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1] What does Hugh want for the Boy?
- 2] What does "*create alternatives*" mean?
- 3] When is courage important?

What types of decisions take courage?

When you really want to do something but you know it is the wrong thing to do – Or if you really, really, don't want to do something, but you know it is the right choice. How is the word "*courage*" important in these two common situations?

- 4] Why is keeping one's behaviour in-line with a goal essential for achieving that goal?
- 5] Give an example of behaviour in-line with a goal.
- 6] Are we stuck as a family? Do we have behaviours out of line with a happy family?
- 7] When the Boy was stuck in the quicksand, who was the only one who could get him out?

8] What are the family's goals? (Triple Peaks)?

What do we want as a family? LIST

*Note: Be prepared with pencil/paper or whiteboard and pen. List all the discussion-generated responses. Then, as a family, prioritise the goals 1-10 and discuss.*

9] How does the in-line behaviour apply to the family?  
Name one behaviour or attitude you can move in-line with the stated family goals.

10] What does the Worm want for the Boy?

What does the Worm want for our family?

11] "Kid, I love it when you go off!" What does Worm love in your behaviours?

12] What family behaviours does the Worm love? Name them.

13] If we go back to our old way of relating or keep up our old behaviours, what will our family be like in 5 years? 10 years?

14] Why did the Anger and Lie Creatures respond to the Boy's command?

15] The Boy stepped boldly forward and commanded the Anger and Lies to get back! As a family what do we need to command to get back?

- yelling at each other;
- arguing/resisting;
- always being negative.

16] What can we, should we, do about them?

17] Why did the Boy run when he was out of their presence?

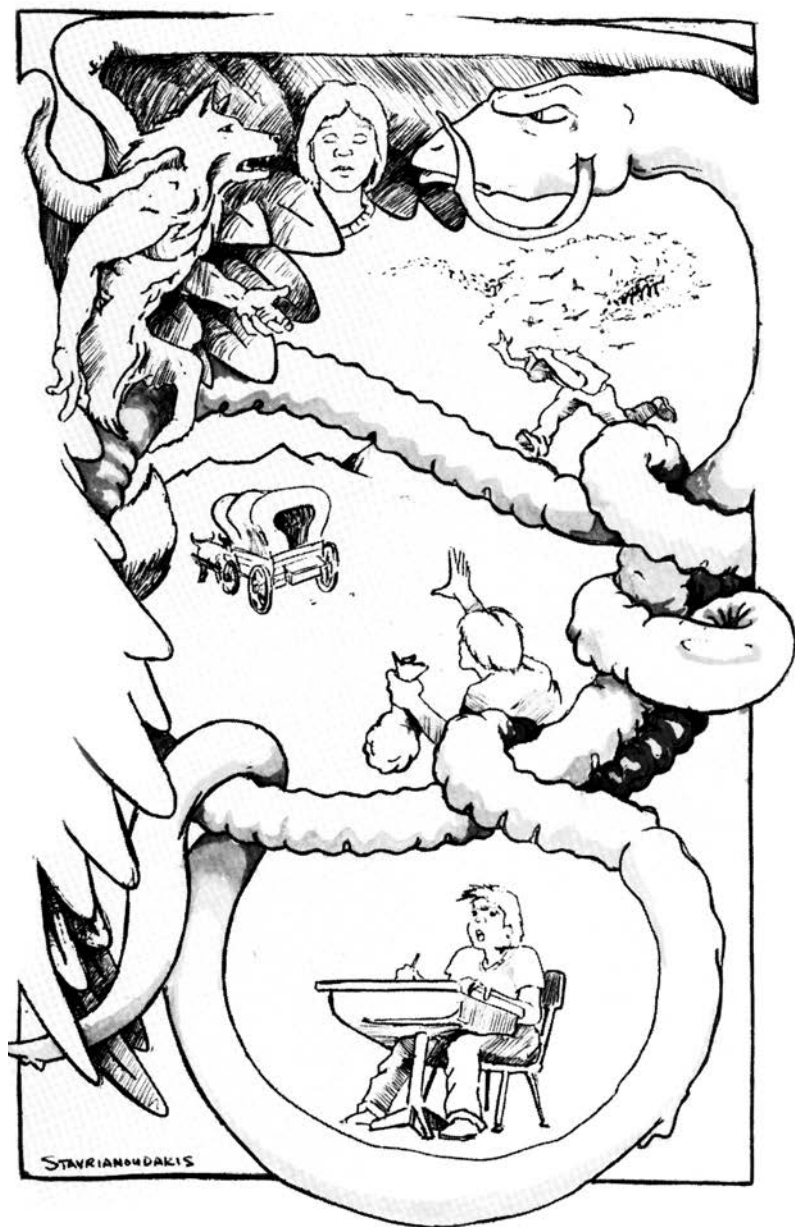
- 18] Is it easy to return to old behaviour?  
Does it take courage to change?
- 19] Does it take determination to change?
- 20] Foulcia and Dark Sunshine appear again in this chapter. Why is she so angry?

### MODULE 9 - PARENT/ STORYTELLER GOALS

By supporting your listeners through the process of identifying behaviours of thought or action that undermine their plans and dreams you put them on the path towards their own Triple Peaks. By emphasising courage you equip them for the struggle ahead.

### ONE SENTENCE TO DESCRIBE THE STORY

*“It takes courage and decision to change our behaviour”.*



## *The Pool of Right Decisions and The Desert of Choice*

The two chapters highlighted in these modules are presented together here because they both centre on a key concept in emotional well-being: Good Choices create Good Feelings.

The Boy and the Fox leave the rolling grasslands and head uphill. The temperature is extremely hot, and the walk is difficult. There is plenty of time for the Boy to think. At the top of the climb, a rumbling noise and wet breeze arouse the Boy. They see a green valley that is very enticing so they go down for a look. They follow a beautiful creek down an incredible trail, with orchids blooming everywhere. The trail leads to a flat rock that overlooks a waterfall and pool.

They walk to the cliff edge and the Boy prepares to dive in. The Fox grabs his pants leg and tells him, *“Not a good idea”*.

They then go down to the water and once the Boy dives into the magical water, he identifies the connection between good decisions and good feelings. For him it is a sudden, totally life-changing correlation.

Later the Boy ventures into the Desert of Simple Choice and three visions, induced by the sting of a giant wasp, provide further vignettes to reinforce the intuitive connection between the decisions we make and the way we feel about ourselves.

The wise and courageous choices outlined in these chapters highlight a number of dilemmas your listeners will face when trying to break old habits and begin to do the right thing in



life. The Boy's first decision is moral, a classic self or selfless decision. He chooses to return the money. The second decision is an ego or pride decision. He again chooses the right decision. Each time he makes a choice that is right, it is confirmed by a strong sensation of pleasure and success. His third decision is a decision of altruism. It is an example of conflict that requires no response. Strong internal messages restrain the Boy from action. Yet he chooses to take action for the good.

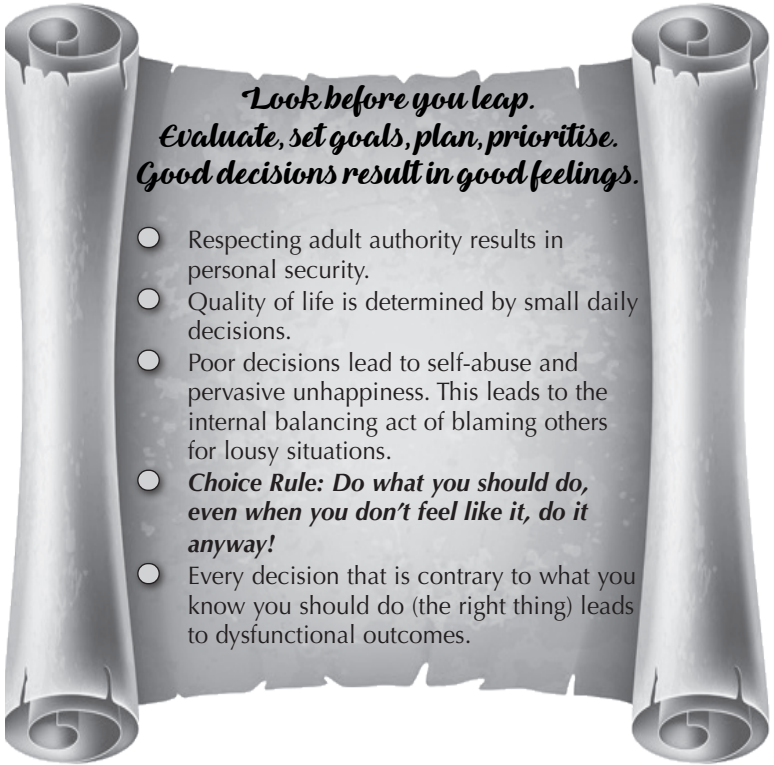
A person can be habituated to making either good or bad decisions. When a person habituates to poor decision-making, the behavioural, psychological, emotional direction is dysfunction.

When a person makes choices based on values, and those choices are habituated and predictable (that is, always choosing to do the right thing – when the right thing is clear, i.e. to return the coins or listen to the teacher's demands, etc.), the results are multiple: high self-esteem, good health, peace in relationships.

The opposite is also true and predictable. I could spell out all the negative results, but the morning paper clearly reports the results of such choices.

*"It is our choices. . . that show what we truly are,  
far more than our abilities"*

**J.K. Rowling 1999**



*Look before you leap.  
Evaluate, set goals, plan, prioritise.  
Good decisions result in good feelings.*

- Respecting adult authority results in personal security.
- Quality of life is determined by small daily decisions.
- Poor decisions lead to self-abuse and pervasive unhappiness. This leads to the internal balancing act of blaming others for lousy situations.
- ***Choice Rule: Do what you should do, even when you don't feel like it, do it anyway!***
- Every decision that is contrary to what you know you should do (the right thing) leads to dysfunctional outcomes.

## RON'S MODULE OUTCOMES

These are important chapters. I often tell listeners: *“Hey, forget everything else. What I have to tell you now is important. Listen or don't listen. Your choice!”*

I present a paradox as most listeners are still wrestling with opposition. I mention the ONE thing I want them to focus on, *“Good decisions, good decisions, good decisions!”*

I go on, *“If you want happiness, if you want something different than what you have now, get in touch with what you do when you're angry. If what you get is always the*

*same (tension, punishments like weed-pulling or room-time or no weekend outings), check out your choices. Maybe you're getting what you want. However, life doesn't have to be painful. Maybe it's you who has the problem."*

I believe that many individuals behave in such a way that confirms their lousy feelings. "Poor me" thinking, "life isn't fair" thinking justifies the ugly behaviour. This non-productive behaviour leads to authoritative conflict, resulting in secondary gain. This hard to understand gain confirms, to habituated individuals, that they are victims and "life just isn't fair, poor me". Denial and blame (projection) are their defense mechanisms of choice.

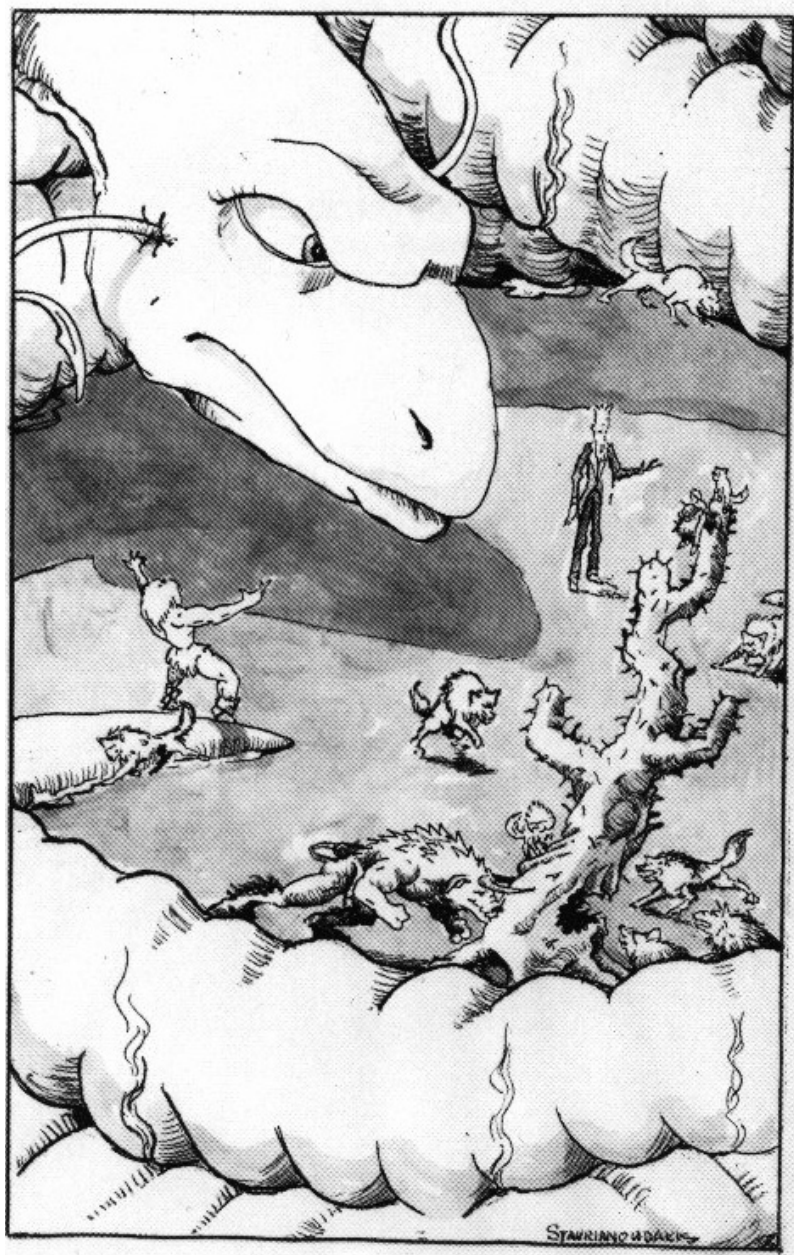
#### AROUND THE CAMPFIRE – DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1] Why would it have been foolish for the Boy to dive into the pool when he was on the cliff above the water? What could have happened?  
Do people break their necks when they dive into shallow water?
- 2] Name other areas of life where checking out the situation before acting would be important?
- 3] Tell about your last good decision. How did you feel after making that choice?
- 4] Can you get used to making poor decisions?
- 5] Do you have to make poor decisions?  
You do?  
Can you change?  
Are you getting what you want?
- 6] Is there a connection between feelings and decisions?

- 7] In each situation what did the Boy feel like doing?  
Would that choice have been the right choice? Would the Boy have felt good about himself if he had chosen to do what he felt like doing?
- 8] Did you ever have arguments in your mind, like the Boy does?  
For example, one side says, *“Finders, keepers, losers, weepers”* and the other side says, *“They really need it. It’s not yours, it’s theirs.”*  
Who usually wins between the discussions in your mind? Hugh or Worm?
- 9] Are some things in life unfair? Like what?  
How about having to wear glasses or having diabetes?
- 10] Should the unfairness wreck your life?  
Will it?
- 11] Have you ever been unjustly accused? What did you do? How did you act out? Did you suffer an even worse consequence?
- 12] Do parents sometimes get it wrong and you get accused wrongly? Do they/we have good reason?
- 13] What usually happens when you are accused of a misdeed? How do you usually react?
- 14] Which of the three dilemmas would have been hardest for you?
- 15] Did it take courage to do the right thing?

#### ONE SENTENCE TO DESCRIBE THE STORY

*“Good Decisions = Good Feelings”*



## *Worm's Wolves*

This module explains the importance of Self-Awareness, one of the eight elements of self. The Boy's journey was going so well, but in a moment of weakness he goes off track and ignores the warning of his trusted guide. This is an object lesson on the consequence of a bad decision.

The Boy wakes up completely focused on himself. It's a "me" day. His decisions are based solely on what he wants. He doesn't listen to counsel. He determines his own destiny on this day.

The Boy tires of walking uphill. At the crossroads, he chooses the path that seems easier. The easier path fades into no path, at which point the Boy and Fox are driven by Worm's wolves up a large cactus. It is extremely painful.

The Boy's bad decision is devastating and he cannot avoid its consequences. The chapter ends with him lying in the sand, injured physically, psychologically and emotionally.

*"How use doth breed a habit in a man"*

**William Shakespeare 1564 - 1616**



***Self-Awareness keeps us  
from going off track in life***

- The easiest way is not necessarily the best way.
- Consider how your decision will affect other people.
- Make decisions based on facts, not feelings.
- Even when life situations seem hopeless, don't lose hope.

**RON'S MODULE OUTCOMES**

A healthy self-awareness is our 'Master Element'. If we can be aware in the moment we are heading off track, we can save ourselves from many regrets. Self-awareness is the gravity that keeps us grounded and in touch with our soul, our spirit, our values and the 'big picture' as we journey through life.

Self-awareness equips us to stand up to ourselves and serves as an inner protector in times of trouble and our motivator to make positive change. As you present this chapter, keep in mind that every step the Boy takes away from the right path is a step he will need to retrace before he can find support and healing again. He can't expect to be rescued as his situation was his decision.

In this chapter we also have the opportunity to again reflect on the character of anger and lies and we meet a new adversary, Blame who only cares about protecting his image.

Anger is represented by Rage-On. The Boy observes his behaviour: violent, persistent, and oblivious to the needs of others. From the Boy's defeated position atop the cactus, he can see the Commodore of Lies clearly. Lies entrap, lies deceive, lies avoid responsibility and lies lead to more lies. Lies destroy relationships and prevent relationships. Later the Boy will learn the most destructive lies are internal lies. Lies dictate behaviour, energise anger and result in blame. Lies "*believed*" eventually result in lost hope.

Blame is the by-product of being out-of-balance. At some level, people instinctively recognise personal error. However, people don't want to be responsible for destructive living, so blame results. The internal and external messages are, "*It's not me*", "*I'm doing this because...*", "*I'm this way because my parents were...*" or "*... the job – is*". Blame is subtle. Blame is a lie, maybe the easiest and most destructive of all internal lies. People have great ability to internally justify every action.

#### AROUND THE CAMPFIRE – DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1] Before the Boy went downhill he gazed up the trail. What do you think he thought as he looked at that steep grade?
- 2] Which way did the Boy feel like going?
- 3] Why did the Boy go downhill?
- 4] What would have happened if the Boy had stopped at the third warning?
- 5] Do we have "*me*" days? Describe each other's "*me*" day behaviour.  
What are "*me*" days behaviours?  
Why are "*me*" days dangerous?



- 6] Why did the Fox have to suffer?
- 7] When you realise your mistake, do you have to go all the way into Venoma?
- 8] If the Boy had it to do again; what would he have done at the crossroads?
- 9] What if the boy was self-aware? What would he have done when he realised he was going the wrong way?
- 10] What did the Fox mean when he said this was supposed to be the easiest part of the journey?
- 11] In what ways is the Boy's journey down into Venoma like our family problems?
- 12] Anger, Lies, and Blame surround the Boy on the cactus. How do Anger, Lies and Blame affect the family?
- 13] Does blame ever change things?
- 14] Can you recall a situation where you suffered the consequences of someone else's bad decision? Have you forgiven them?
- 15] Can you think of a situation where you caused someone else to suffer for your mistake? Did you ask them to forgive you?
- 16] Are there people in Foulcia's dungeon who have blamed their troubles on other people all their lives?
- 17] Why didn't Regal zoom in and rescue the Boy? Is rescue always going to come your way?
- 18] Why is Dark Sunshine smiling?
- 19] Was the easy way the best way?
- 20] Who is a Fox in your life?

Who would go down into Venoma with you?  
Who is telling you right now, "*Hey, don't go that direction?*"  
Are they your enemies? What do they want for you?  
Your benefit or your destruction?

- 21] Do you listen to your foxes?
- 22] If the Boy had the day to do over again, what choices would change?

## MODULE 12 - PARENT / STORYTELLER GOALS

Bad decisions can be re-framed and learned from. Bad decisions are extremely important to the total redirection process. I have learned far more from my mistakes than my successes. Emotional pain that is felt when a person has absolutely 'blown it' is just as important as physical pain.

The pain a person immediately feels when the hammer lands on the left thumb is important to everyone. Chances are, it causes the individual to exercise caution once the hammering continues. Emotional pain should cause the same results. If a life experience causes time to stand still for a couple of days, learn from it, go with it, and appreciate the re-direction message.

***"A fool that repeats his folly  
is like a dog that returns to eat its vomit."  
(Proverb)***

"I can't", "I don't feel like", and "I don't want to" are debilitating self-talk messages. Advise your listeners to check it out – see what their first thought is when a difficult decision or an obvious work situation arises. Relying on feelings is in fact not always reliable, and often it's totally

wrong. For example, the first message my brain tells me every morning is *"Hey, I don't feel like getting up"*. It can sometimes be better to behave the opposite to how you feel.

Everyone has days like the Boy. When people are solely focused on gratifying themselves, they often make poor decisions that can affect the rest of their lives. Worse still, these bad decisions can have terrible consequences on the lives of others, usually family or friends, who reluctantly assist in making bad decisions a reality because they care.

(A note here to parents / mentors: What kind of Fox are you? Is your behaviour in line with your Triple Peaks?)

Having to *"suffer the consequences"* can motivate the desire to change oneself. It is especially hard to watch your loved ones *"suffer the consequences"* of your own poor or selfish decisions.

### ONE SENTENCE TO DESCRIBE THE STORY

Every decision that leads you to do what is contrary to what you know you should do, will lead to trouble, heartache and regret.

### THOUGHT

*"Listen to your fox."*





## *Reaping and Healing*

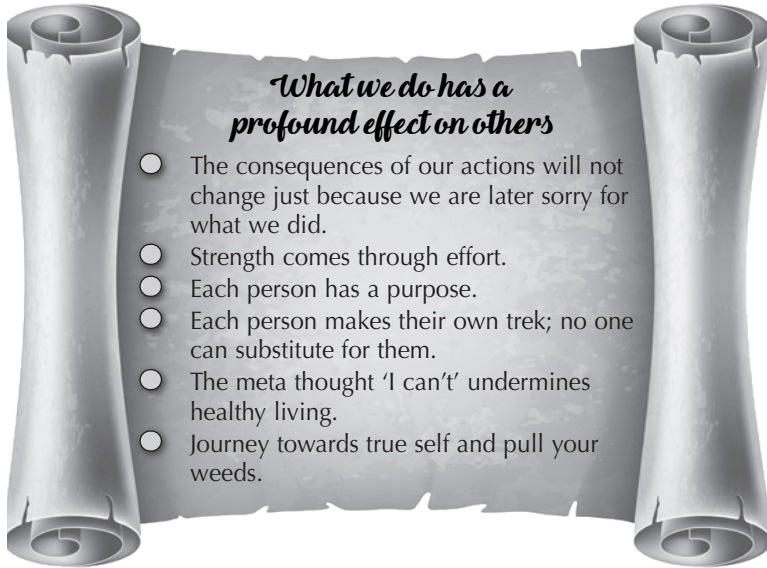
One of the most effective ways to avoid self-destructive and anti-social behaviour is to cultivate the habit of considering the consequences as part of our decision-making process.

In Module 13 we allow our listeners to reflect on all the repercussions of the Boy's decision to stray from the right path. The terrible situation intensifies. The Boy has given up his belt and the Fox has been taken prisoner. Devastated and despairing, the Boy lays by the felled cactus, his mind racing. The struggle is entirely in his mind. His primitive instincts tell him to give up, it's over. However the Element of his Awareness connects him to the moment, and speaks through his conscience which spurs him into action. *"Get up, start your journey back to the place where you left the way."* It was so easy going down into Venoma but the struggle back out is excruciating.

The Boy's efforts eventually bring him back to the crossroads, to the point where he went wrong. Lumberg, the Traveler, discovers him and takes him to Bartrum's. There the Boy develops an intense fever during which he reveals his deep beliefs about himself. *"I'm ugly, I'm stupid, life's been unfair to me, no one really cares about me."* Naturally Bartrum records his expressions and later, after the Boy recovers, Bartrum wisely teaches the Boy how these inner lies keep him stuck. The Boy also learns a major life lesson from Sweet Pauline, the *"I can't"* versus *"I can"* struggle for control of your thinking.

*"I believe the choice to be excellent begins with aligning your thoughts and words with the intention to require more from yourself."*

**Oprah Winfrey 2000**



***What we do has a  
profound effect on others***

- The consequences of our actions will not change just because we are later sorry for what we did.
- Strength comes through effort.
- Each person has a purpose.
- Each person makes their own trek; no one can substitute for them.
- The meta thought 'I can't' undermines healthy living.
- Journey towards true self and pull your weeds.

## RON'S MODULE OUTCOMES

Early in my career as a special education teacher, I discovered a very incongruent fact: some kids who were very smart were not able to read. I worked extremely hard to introduce sound phonics principles, yet they still remained illiterate. How could that be? They had great abilities and potential, they could get money out of my pocket and into theirs (a sign of real intelligence) yet they just couldn't read.

Both Piaget and Glasser helped explain this tragedy. Glasser taught me that these kids had taken the photo of them being able to read out of their picture album. Piaget taught me what I had suspected back in the mid-1970's: Many kids are caught in a bind. Their brains were simply

not at the developmental level that learning to read requires. The pressure to perform at a point when they were physiologically unable to read caused the big *"I can't read, I'm a dummy"* and this lie pervaded their thinking.

I got frustrated teaching and re-teaching phonetics, so I started a different strategy. I attacked the *"I can't"* messages. My classroom became a classroom without failure, without performance anxieties. Kids started learning to read.

I believe the number of children our schools' performance based system defeats, is incalculable. I know because I was one of them. At a reading circle I stumbled over some words and a little girl (I actually remember her name) said, *"Oh Ronnie's stupid!"* and I believed her. From that instant on I hated school, feared school, and became a discipline problem. When a child, a precious little developing youngster, hears from his peers that he is a dummy, he believes it and acts accordingly. Yet this kid, in order to avoid painful, daily humiliation, will develop combative behaviours to take the focus away from the original lie, *"I'm dumb"*.

What happened to morning milk and graham crackers and learning to be socially acceptable in fun games? Today, teachers have 'pressure to perform' instilled in them. I believe the first three to four years of a child's entrance into the world via school needs to be re-appraised. It should be the self-esteem building period, teaching via stories, games, group success, i.e. a school that begins with no failure.

By now you should be observing dramatic changes in the group's decision-making processes. Your listeners will have begun to identify behaviours that keep them in conflict. I have also observed children being honest with themselves, admitting *"I lie, I cheat, I disobey all the time ..."* *"My lying keeps me stuck"*, etc.



My simple response is: *“Start the long journey back to your crossroads. It ain’t easy, but the Boy is no tougher than you are. Now you know the truth – act accordingly.”*

The road to recovery is often lonely, difficult and painful. The persistent, internal message is *“Give up.”* It takes tremendous willpower to triumph over external circumstances and internal conflicts. Giving in to the internal statement *“I can’t”* ends a person’s positive effort.

But success is also scary. Success means change, and we almost always resist change, either consciously or unconsciously.

Following a traumatic or painful life experience, there is need for a time of healing. Nature has tremendous healing qualities.

Self-defeating *“lies”* we believe about ourselves, integrated early in a person’s life, soon become ingrained as *“the way it is”* or *“the way I am”* and will determine decisions, actions and feelings. These lies retard development, fuel anger, and block fun. Once we *“pull the weeds”* (get rid of these self-defeating lies), the beauty and potential that has been there all along will be manifested.

I often refer to another lie I believed since childhood. I believed I had no ability whatsoever to fix or build anything. If something needed fixing, I called my Dad or a friend. As a matter of fact, several of my foster sons did all my mechanical work. Change the spark plugs in my car? Out of the question. Build a fence in my back yard? Beyond my scope.

Then I realised that I was living and believing a lie. My belief had dictated my behaviour, which was to avoid, defer

and hire out all carpentry and mechanical work. I began to learn how to build fences, change oil and so on, and I now thoroughly enjoy these kinds of jobs.

Are there lies you believe? Maybe you can think of something to share from your life experience with the group.

### AROUND THE CAMPFIRE – DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1] What was different about the trip back to the crossroads?
- 2] Contrast the Boy's attitude going down and coming back up.
- 3] Does what we do have a profound effect on others? (each respond with a "For instance.")
- 4] Do we as a family go regularly down into Venoma by the way we treat/act towards each other?
- 5] Will this experience change him and if so, how?
- 6] What do we actually do when we get into conflict? How does it start? Then what happens and how does it usually end up? (Note: My guess is your family scripts are predictable. You say and do the same things in reaction to each other, then end up feeling the same afterwards.)
- 7] How is the discipline you receive, like what the Boy received important? Why?
- 8] Do you learn anything from your trips into Venoma?
- 9] Do some people live in Venoma?
- 10] If one of you really did something tragic, would others suffer?

For example, if you became a drug addict, would your parents suffer pain from your behaviour?

- 11] If the Commodore is your guide, where will you spend your life?
- 12] What will life in Venoma be like?  
Give me ten words to describe life in Venoma.  
Give me four more?
- 13] Courage was greatly exhibited. How?  
Should the Boy have used courage to override his desire to go downhill?  
Does it take courage (self-discipline) to do the things you ought to do (which are not what we want to do) or not to do the things you want to do (which are not what you should do)? Give examples.
- 14] Can anyone else complete the Boy's journey for him?  
Can anyone else complete your journey for you?
- 15] (Note to parents: Is anyone completing your parental journey for you? Or are you trying to do your children's trek for them?)
- 16] The Boy believed lies about himself. How did each of the following inner thoughts cause the Boy to behave?
  - stupid/dumb;
  - life's not fair;
  - no one understands or cares.
- 17] The Boy told Sweet Pauline, *"I can't make it to the Triple Peaks."* She surprised him by agreeing. *"You're right, you won't make it."*  
How did the Boy react to her comment?  
What *"I can't"* message do you believe?
- 18] If you believe that *"life's unfair"*, what effect does it have on you:

- feelings? How did it cause the Boy to feel?
- actions/decisions? Reflect on the Boy's behaviour at the journey's beginning.

19] What do each of you secretly believe is unfair?  
(Be honest).

How does it affect the way you behave?

20] Will it take courage to overcome those ingrained beliefs?

What are the options if you don't?

How do you know when you can trust a person?

21] How could thinking himself stupid affect the Boy?

22] *"Pull the weeds!"* Bartrum implored the Boy.

Could the beautiful flower be seen before the weeds were pulled?

How can a lousy attitude be just like this metaphor?

23] What very important lesson did the Boy learn from Bartrum out in the garden?

24] What is a lie you believe about yourself?

How does it affect how you think, behave and feel?

### ONE SENTENCE TO DESCRIBE THE STORY

*"You reap what you sow."*



## *The Wilderness*

Suffering teaches many lessons. We begin this chapter with a young man who has become more aware of his own frailty. The Boy must prepare himself to face his enemy and get his belt back. He needs to gain control of his body, mind and time. Lumberg takes the Boy on a wonderful trip into the wilderness which provides many important life lessons. He learns the importance of facing the difficulties of life by advancing towards the solution.

The Traveler gives him a glimpse of man's destructive nature. We can explain that once a person achieves their identity, a sense of reverence and protectiveness towards the natural world often comes with this new maturity.

This is an excellent time for discussing the importance of a sense of concern and responsibility for our environment. Once we acquire our identity a greater reverence and respect for the environment emerges. You can discuss the impact that the shallow life philosophy of globalization, materialism and consumerism has had on our world and what our young listeners can do to restore the balance lost by recent generations.

The wilderness is a real learning time. The Boy realises that self-worth is gained through self-discipline, and also the relationship between his decisions and his feelings. Lumberg gives him the Ten Tenets of Life. This experience gives him the necessary confidence to attempt to retrieve his belt.

*"Nature does nothing uselessly."*  
Aristotle 384Bc - 322Bc

### *Adolescence is a time of learning*

- Accomplishments come through doing, not talking.
- If someone decides to take action, others usually follow.
- Formula for success:
  - Run at scary challenges..
  - Keep your eyes on your goals.
  - • Obey what you know to be right.
- Practice and training are prerequisites of success.
- Everyone is responsible for taking care of the environment.
- "Daily renewal" is a new way of living.
- Fasting for brief periods is a powerful internal control technique (not appropriate for children with health or eating problems).
- Aerobic exercise clears the bodily systems.

### RON'S MODULE OUTCOMES

Thought is extremely important when starting a project. However, many major tasks in life are best accomplished by starting to act upon them. Once into an extended project, there is plenty of time to analyse, re-think and re-frame goals. Getting going may be the most difficult part. We often fear the unknown and the vignette of the old roaring lion, and the lesson of running at the threat is so important to

communicate clearly here. I will discuss this further in the Goals section.

The major task of adolescents is defining “*Who am I*”. This is done by identification of what style of living works best. Often adolescent youngsters will try several roles during this period.

They may experience intense feelings during these changes, and often they express those feelings through totally different dress styles, or drastic behavioural changes or surprising new activities or even a new circle of friends. This is a time of learning.

How parents handle their reaction to their children is also quite important. When parents ridicule or forbid certain dress or behaviours, children often counter-act with intense, powerful opposition. Keep in mind, adolescents often are in direct opposition to parents’ lifestyle, especially if parents are incongruent, i.e. preach one thing, but do another. Kids only focus on the gap between parental words and parental behaviour.

This is a difficult time for both kids and their parents. The children, by nature of their development level, have separated from their parents emotionally, psychologically and physically. Emotionally the separation comes in the form of less or no huggy, kissy behaviour. All of a sudden the loving child, whom the parent has known for all those years, becomes an angry, isolated individual and stranger.

Psychologically, the child thinks his/her parents “*just don’t understand. Only my friends know*”. Or they think “*My parents won’t let me grow up*”. When children quite often respond with a style of dress or behaviour that is directly incongruent with their parents’, this behaviour may be



passive aggression directed towards their parents. If this is the case, the oppositional behaviour often continues to the point that outside intervention becomes necessary. Parents too, if they desire a family rebalancing, need to look at their own behaviour.

The physical separation will manifest itself in a more independent living style. The bedroom door closes, phone conversations are hushed, schedules and timetables are left purposely unclear. What is to be done? ... Survive!

If your child is radically out of balance, honestly check out your own behaviours, attitudes, experiences. What are your priorities? If work, church, sports or literally any activity takes precedence over your kids, they know it, and start marching to their own drum. If substances are significant in your home, don't be surprised at your child's behaviour. If worry or depression dominate your family, don't be surprised that your child is not meeting minimum expectations. Simply, if aspects of your life are out of balance, your child is also likely to exhibit extreme behaviours.

#### MEMORISE THE TEN TENETS:

- 1] Be kind to everyone and everything.
- 2] Be slow to anger, slow to speak and quick to listen.
- 3] Honour your Mother and Father.
- 4] Your body is your gift.
- 5] Have fun.
- 6] Learn to enjoy physical work.
- 7] Your "yes" should mean "yes", and your "no" should mean "no".

- 8] Forgive.
- 9] Control your mind, body and time.
- 10] Search for the Way.

### AROUND THE CAMPFIRE – DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1] What would have happened if the Boy had run from the roar or if he had simply stayed still? (explain what this metaphor represents: problems/fears)
- 2] What are you doing now about your problems or fears? Is it working? Can anyone else do this thing for you?
- 3] What are the different types of problems or fears that we experience as a family? How do we typically handle them:
  - run;
  - do nothing;
  - face and solve them. Discuss.
- 4] Are there problems/fears we are not facing?  
How should we now deal with them?
- 5] How is the view the Boy saw from the tabletop mountain similar to our world in our time?
- 6] The Boy went without a meal. Why did he feel really good about his sacrifice?  
Should we try some sort of personal sacrifice?  
Example: miss a meal, no TV for a weekend, no Saturday golf.  
How important is self-denial to our success?
- 7] Why is it important to move your behaviour in-line with your goals?
- 8] What behaviours are in-line with a happy family?

- 9] Discuss each of the Ten Tenets. What do each of us have to do in order to be in-line with each tenet?
- 10] List what families can do about pollution/recycling.

Parents are often not smarter than their children, but parents should be light years wiser. Wisdom, when combined with congruent parental behaviour, produces positive results. Study Erik Erickson's work. Know what common developmental behaviours are. Expect the rapids and rocks of adolescence. Stay in your boat and enjoy the ride.

Children develop their own mini agendas. If you go up to your teenager and say "*Hey, let's sit down and rap (relate, jaw, chat, talk)*" he/or she will probably roll his/her eyes and grudgingly comply, and then sit there and actually be ten million miles away.

But, parents, if you make yourself available on your adolescent child's timetable, some night they will open their door, and if you are there, they will talk and talk and talk. If you listen (I mean work at listening and convey to them your highest positive regard), your kids will eventually ask for your opinion. Sometimes after eagerly listening, your kids will go full circle on a topic, and you will only have to agree with their final decision, which more often than not reflects your thinking. "*The apple never falls far from the tree.*"

#### MODULE 14 – PARENT / STORYTELLER GOALS

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Your children are experts on you. They know where you're coming from. This is especially true if you are inconsistent, if your words don't match your actions. Raising kids is like a chess game, best played by thinking two moves into the future. Much pain can be avoided with planning a trip to replace an activity which you know or strongly feel your child isn't ready for.

The responsibility for change has to be given back to the client, listener or student. The lion's roar metaphor is generic to all problems, fears and dilemmas. The three choices of action are:

- to retreat,
- to stand still, or
- to progress.

Retreating from or standing still in the face of dilemmas, fear and problems generally only exacerbates and intensifies the inability to take positive action, increasing dysfunction. But some problems and some dilemmas are best handled by withdrawal from behaviour. I view a cessation of dysfunctional behaviour as positive, progression toward the roar. Repetition of dysfunctional behaviour is running from the roar.

I also believe there are conflicts that only time can resolve. Some dilemmas/conflicts simply cannot be worked out at present. Therefore, time is essential. Insight into this fact is necessary, and sometimes doing nothing is the most effective behaviour in allowing time for resolution.

Turning from problems, fears and conflicts or denying them weakens self-esteem and develops the dysfunctional habit of responding in the same manner every time a new stressor comes around. Eventually the roar of the lion is misinterpreted; and its sound frightens the habituated individual into retreat or denial.

#### ONE SENTENCE TO DESCRIBE THE STORY

*"Pull your weeds".*



STAVRIANOUAKIS

## *Back to the Hole*

The Boy travels into Venoma knowing he must regain his belt if he's ever going to get to the Triple Peaks. He has learned well from the Traveler and the lessons of the wilderness give him courage to face this great challenge.

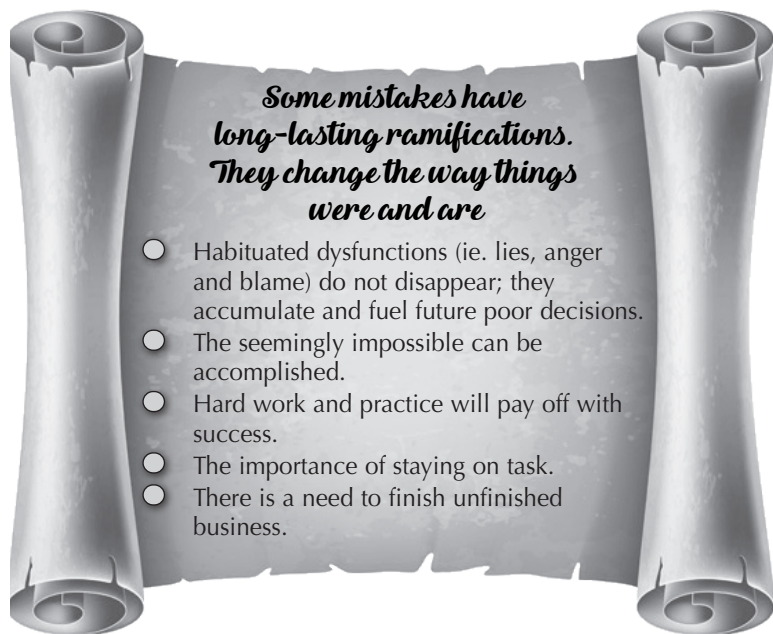
The creatures at the bottom of Murk Mire are in a celebration mode. All of them, Rage-on, Blame, the Commodore, Foulcia and the Worm, are enjoying the results of the poor decisions the Boy has made. In fact, to the Boy's utter amazement, the Source of all Bad Decisions feeds on his mistakes and negative attitudes, angry responses (actions), lies (false thinking) and blame (irresponsibility). He realises that his personal anger, lies and blame are all part of Worm's dining pleasure.

The Fox, shaved of his beautiful fur, is a prisoner in a steel cage suspended by a steel chain. The Boy tries to free the Fox, however it is not to be. The Fox tells him it is not his time and that he will be OK.

As the Boy makes his escape with his belt, the Worm gives him one last chance to return to his old ways, but something has awakened in the Boy, prompted by what he has seen in the hole. He rejects the Worm and finally determines to never feed his enemy again.

*"You can discover what your enemy fears the most  
by observing the means he uses to frighten you."*

**Eric Hoffer 1902 - 1983**



*Some mistakes have  
long-lasting ramifications.  
They change the way things  
were and are*

- Habituated dysfunctions (ie. lies, anger and blame) do not disappear; they accumulate and fuel future poor decisions.
- The seemingly impossible can be accomplished.
- Hard work and practice will pay off with success.
- The importance of staying on task.
- There is a need to finish unfinished business.

## RON'S MODULE OUTCOMES

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This chapter demonstrates the changes that the Boy has gone through – the young man who now faces the Worm is very different from the one who ran terrified from their first meeting.

When individuals change their dysfunctional (Shady Side) behaviour, they must realise that their point of balance in life will shift. Things won't feel 'normal' because their thinking no longer needs to accommodate the dysfunction. To strive for "*the way things were*" is unachievable. Situations and relationships do not stay in the same place. The aging process and environmental conditions are also changing.

A person who is striving for happiness needs to realise that going for "*what was*" is not possible. The new mindset needs

to be at a higher level. We are exploring new territory now. The encouraging aspect is that living at a higher level is absolutely possible. The “*way things were*” contributed to the individual’s fall into dysfunction. The “*way things can be*” will not include the contributing dysfunctional behaviours.

What didn’t work in the past is past tense. Press on to replace those old behaviours and thinking with new behaviours and thinking. It is the only way to achieve the lifestyle you desire. If this new way of living is truly integrated, “*the way things were*” will no longer be desired or acceptable. As much as the Worm entices us to revert to our old ways we know that they will no longer satisfy us. We have outgrown them.

I suppose regressing to a fantasised time and place is possible, but doesn’t really accomplish anything. Middle-aged people who try to return to their carefree college days can easily repeat earlier behaviours. However, my guess is that those behaviours are less satisfying than they are wistfully remembered to be.

The good news is that there is a new developmental balance point with new behaviours that are age-appropriate and satisfying.

In the midst of confronting fear, if people keep focused on their goal and behave in line with that goal, the fear will work itself out. The Boy’s wilderness training with the Traveler was an essential prerequisite to success. The Boy also needed a strong role model to show him successful living through example and repeated practice. The confrontation that was feared should no longer hold the same terror after an individual has experienced success in other areas and developed control over mind, body and time.



The vignette of Blame and Boast demonstrates that many projecting (blaming) individuals are self-centred. When events are in their favour, they strive for personal praise. When things go bad, they find fault and blame others. Both reactions are predictable.

This is a defence mechanism that benefits the user. It keeps all the issues of a negative nature externalised and denied. It allows the user to not ever take personal responsibility for anything negative and to assume all responsibility for the positive. Blame is well known to all, yet denied by many.

#### AROUND THE CAMPFIRE – DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1] Without time with the Traveler in the wilderness, could the Boy have been successful?  
How does school or practice relate to this question?
- 2] Describe the Boy's attitude while heading toward Murk Mire?
- 3] Why do you think Murk Mire was so easy to find?
- 4] How did the Boy confront fear? What happened when he did?
- 5] Throughout the story lots of good role models appear as friends to the Boy to help him. Who are two role models for you?  
What strengths do they have that you admire?
- 6] How does the Boy's attitude "*I will succeed*" help him?  
Do you believe in this kind of attitude?
- 7] What do you put your "*all*" into to be successful?
- 8] What is the big surprise the Boy discovers while in Murk Mire?

- 9] The Boy tells himself *"I will succeed"* as he travels into Venoma. What if he had told himself, *"I might succeed"* or *"I can't do this"*?
- 10] What do you tell yourself about your future? *"I will"*, *"I might"*, or *"I can't"*?
- 11] The Traveler and Fox are the Boy's examples in life. Who is a Traveler in your life?
- 12] Could the Boy have recovered the belt without going into the wilderness with the Traveler?
- 13] When the Boy first realised the Worm was feeding on his anger and lies, what must he have thought?
- 14] Blame was bragging and boasting while prancing on his walk-way. How is boasting related to blaming?
- 15] What are you presently doing that would feed the Worm?
- 16] Is blaming an issue within our family?
- 17] Is there a connection between the Fox's restored fur and what's now happening within your family?  
*"Never say never"* – both Worm and the Fox tell the Boy this same thing. Why is it an important expression?  
 Do you ever say *"I'm never going to ... again"*, & you end up doing just what you said you would never do?  
 Is this a harmful expression, especially if you keep failing yourself?  
 What's one example?
- 18] Why does Foulcia fear the Boy having contact with the Traveler and Hugh?
- 19] What does Blame say when everything seems *"Ok"*?  
 What does Blame say when the Boy gets the belt?
- 20] What matters the most to Blame?

- 21] Why did Rage-On crash right into the pillar?  
Why didn't he simply go around?  
When you are out-of-control angry, are you smart?
- 22] Is this trip into Murk Mire a great personal experience for the Boy?
- 23] The Boy's battle in Murk Mire is make-believe. He faces monsters, and beats them with supernatural powers. But what about you – an ordinary person – what do you have to battle the difficult things in life with?

## MODULE 15 PARENT / STORYTELLER GOALS

After this experience – after the realisation that the Worm, and his destructive and oppressive influence, is sustained by his anger, lies and blame, the Boy determines to starve the Worm (by not providing a banquet). This allows him to begin regaining control of his life and shows that he is mastering the eight elements of self. He is the captain of his own ship – he is acquiring his identity.

From this point on, the Boy's inner dialogue changes and he begins referring to himself in a new way. Our goal, as parents and storytellers, is to usher in this shift and encourage this new way of thinking as it emerges in our young listeners. From now on these are the kind of statements we can hope to hear from our listeners:

I have boundaries, I have standards for how I act, I know how to achieve what I set out to accomplish, I am pleased with myself and I know how to treat others well. I am in control of my thoughts and my emotions because I know how to master my thoughts and how to guard against troubling emotions. I am self-aware and I can, and will, avoid major

mistakes. My life will be filled with accomplishments and I intend to lead a life of fun and purpose.

Even though I'm not sure yet how I will contribute, I do know that whatever I end up doing to make my living, I will enjoy it because it is based on one of my passions; it will contribute to the well-being of others. I am eager to live my life.

Imagine starting life from this solid foundation – this is the gift you are giving your listeners.

#### ONE SENTENCE TO DESCRIBE THE STORY

*"No anger, lies, or blame, don't feed the Worm!"*



## *Outskirts of Splendor*

The Journey is almost at an end. The Boy escapes Venoma with the help of the Traveler. It's one exciting encounter after another, with the Boy asserting personal control in each situation. The Traveler takes the Boy to Splendor where many of the Boy's questions are answered in a remarkable way. The Boy truly starts to live his life by the principle of Standing Alone at Decision Time.

*"Go confidently in the direction of your dreams!  
Live the life you've imagined. As you simplify your life,  
the laws of the universe will be simpler."*

**Henry David Thoreau 1817 - 1862**

### *Personal anger can be controlled*

- Excessive lies expressed and believed can dictate behaviour of the Liar.
- The error in striving to be successful instead of striving to make life and living a success
- Alcohol's benefit to humans is a lie.
- Debt enslaves a person.
- There is a purpose to adolescence.
- One person can make a difference.
- Make your life puzzle look like the people you admire.

## RON'S MODULE OUTCOMES

This Module addresses some big issues. The Boy finally outgrows his old comforters. Anger and Lies and the destructive consequences of debt and substance abuse are explored on the journey to one of the most challenging paths in life: surviving sadness, grief and loss and the temptation to choose depression or even suicide as an escape from these. Finally the Boy carves his staff as a symbol to express his newfound identity and direction in life – a reminder of the kind of person he intends to be from now on.

We see that there is a significant difference between striving to be successful instead of striving to make life and living a success.

When a person is striving to be successful, things (accolades from others, wearing the latest fashions) are the marks of striving. When individuals put all their energy into “*being cool*”, they become blind to the needs of others or simply don’t have time or inclination to meet the needs of others. People climbing the ladder of success have priorities in line with the next ladder rung. Quality time spent with others (wife/husband, kids, parents) is neglected, abused, and all too often disregarded. The hedonistic pursuit of success destroys families and eventually the pursuer.

“*He who dies with the most toys wins*” is the pursuer’s spoken or unspoken theme. Upwardly mobile pursuers are out of balance. They strive for success because they believe the grand lie of our times – with success comes happiness.

It just isn’t so. Most of the time, with success comes “*unhappiness*” because all the available energy has gone into being “*cool*” and making all the necessary monthly payments in order to stay cool.

The Traveler told the Boy that knowing the difference between climbing the ladder of success and living successfully is what being on the Way is all about. The pursuer lives for tomorrow while the truly successful person enjoys today. The pursuer feels guilt over the dysfunction their misplaced priorities bring to themselves and those around them. They often are great providers for their children. The children have loads of material things, yet they, like the Boy, aren't satisfied, aren't grateful. They're angry, and growing up with the same attitudes as their parents. They can see what's really important to their parents.

Living successfully is not living a lazy, lethargic, or irresponsible life. It is living balanced, with the truly important priorities (wife/husband, children, parents) in their appropriate perspectives. It is being content at whatever economic level you can sustain, with your priorities in line. It is living optimally, wholeheartedly, putting 100% energy into all endeavours: work, family, recreation, home. Balance comes through meeting others' needs with total unselfish commitment. I find it interesting that in our day and age we treat the people we love most the worst. We save our best for outside people and priorities, and are generally so drained from being "cool" publicly, that all we have left for the family is anger and blame. This is fueled by the general belief that "*Material success equals happiness*" one of the biggest lies of our age.

The only successful way to navigate through the Canyon of Sadness is with courage, time and caution. Grief is normal and unavoidable. Many people fall into the swirling water and never leave the Canyon of Sadness. All too often people develop pervasive negativity and turn to external substances to cope (ie. alcohol, drugs, food, sleep, etc). The key is to keep going – it will get better, stay the course and get out the other side, don't remain stuck in the cycle.



The Traveler told the Boy *“You will be successful.”* How could he know? There are clear markers to positive change in a young person’s life, the list of qualities that the Traveler now observes in the Boy shows us what to look for as our listeners acquire their identity.

- I’ve watched you command your Stand-Alone time. You pause, start breathing for clarity and create space for the right decision.
- You have mastered your thoughts and your heart by making every thought your captive, not allowing your emotions to be troubled
- You have a working code of conduct. You demonstrate treating others like you like to be treated.
- You know how to get things done. As we trekked together your self-esteem and confidence has sky rocketed.
- You have a rule to base your decisions on. And you’ve made the connection between good decisions and self-esteem.
- You now avoid trouble rather than heading towards trouble.
- Every night we discussed the 10 Tenets. They will form the structure for how you will conduct yourself: You are kind, and in control of your actions. You respect all living things. You understand how important a balanced life is, a lifestyle of fun and work. You are honest with yourself and others. You have no old emotional baggage and are living in the moment. You are searching for the Way.

## AROUND THE CAMPFIRE – DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

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- 1] Why did the Anger and Lie creatures respond to the Boy's courageous command?  
Is the Boy now honest with himself?  
Who is the only one who could break the power of the Boy's anger and lies?
- 2] What kind of lies make up the vast army of Lie creatures?
- 3] One word to describe the situation of the people swirling around in the martini glass?
- 4] How could owing the Norseman of Debt get all those people stuck?  
Take a guess as to what was on the mind of all the stuck people.
- 5] How come the Boy thinks time is standing still when he is in the Canyon of Sadness?
- 6] Have you ever been in that canyon?  
How did it feel?
- 7] If he had slipped into the salty water, what would have happened?
- 8] How do people who are stuck there behave?  
If they continue with those self-destructive behaviours, will they ever get out of the canyon?
- 9] Does the same apply to you?
- 10] What is the significance of the people swirling around in the Martini glass? (Note: *Parents, is there substance abuse in your life? What's one word to describe how your kids view this aspect of your life? Nothing positive will replace the error you create with this out-of-balance message. Sorry.*)

- 11] How does debt cause people to get stuck?
- 12] Do people actually get stuck in the Canyon of Sadness? How? In what ways?  
When sad times come – and they will – how will you handle it?
- 13] The Boy receives a limb from the Mending Tree. How long does it take him to carve his staff?
- 14] What kind of staff would you carve?
- 15] Lumberg tells the Boy everyone goes through a learning time like his. Does the Traveler mean everyone? How about you?
- 16] The Boy is learning who he will be. The Traveler tells the Boy to make his life look like the different good qualities of the people he admires. What does he mean? Who would you like to be like? Why? Name three qualities.
- 17] Why are some people unhappy even though they have plenty of money?
- 18] When the Traveler said, *“You will be successful,”* what did he base his statement on?  
How will you know? \*
- 19] When the crowds cheered and shouted, *“He stood alone!”* what did they mean?  
How does it relate to *“quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to get angry”*?
- 20] The Traveler told the Boy *“Make your puzzle look like the people you admire.”* Who do you admire? Why?
- 21] What’s the difference between striving to be successful and striving to make your life a success?  
Is there a difference?

22] What symbol would you put at the top of your staff?  
Why?

ONE SENTENCE TO DESCRIBE THE STORY

*"Make your puzzle look like the people you admire."*

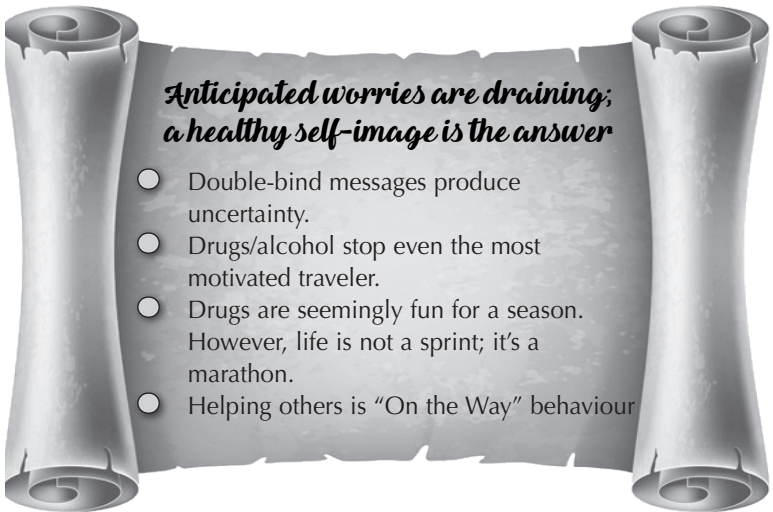


## *Valley of the Shadow*

In the Valley of the Shadow the Boy applies all that he has learned. He now has regained internal balance and recognises the consequences of poor decision making. On his journey towards identity acquisition, he has mastered the skill of Standing Alone at Decision Time when he evaluates tempting choices. As a result he is able to stay on the Way and not become side-tracked. This chapter is a metaphor for many of the issues of life.

*"Do not anticipate trouble,  
or worry about what might never happen.  
Keep in the sunlight."*

**Benjamin Franklin 1706 - 1790**



## RON'S MODULE OUTCOMES

When parents, teachers, counsellors or employers send mixed messages, it drives the receiver of the message into dysfunction. A mixed message is saying one thing but behaving and saying, non-verbally, the opposite. If one day some behaviour is “okay”, and on another day, the same type of behaviour warrants harsh punishment, this is a double-bind.

A parent, teacher or therapist, in order to produce the best in their child, must have a consistent value system and a consistent verbal/non-verbal message for their constituents. Situational decision-making, based on changing internal feelings, produces crazy kids. Your “yes’s” should be “yes” and your “no’s” should be “no”. By the way, I have found that one of the most therapeutic words in a parent/teacher’s vocabulary is “no”, when “no” means “no”.

Adolescents are exploring. They will constantly want to explore territory beyond their scope of wisdom. A parent needs to know their child’s decision-making development and decide if a request merits a “Yes, my child can handle that” or “No, my child is not ready yet”. When told no, young people will often come unglued, and outwardly display belligerence, yet privately they are grateful.

At times parents, because they’re tired or have some anger to project, will say hurtful things to their children. You absolutely should not. However if this does happen, asking the child’s forgiveness is essential to repairing the hurt. Be consistent.

By this point in the storytelling journey, I often see that the entire remaining discussion centres around the double-bind messages the kids have lived with. At this point, children

are ready to publicly share their stories, especially children in a therapeutic or preventative group setting. They will be seeking specific counsel and will recognise you as a trustworthy source for wisdom, clarity and balance. When this material is used with a larger, less personal audience, I would not expect or encourage intimate disclosure.

The Boy is ready to make good decisions, and willed himself to always make right decisions. He has no *“Maybe I will, maybe I won’t”* thoughts. His mindset is *“I will.”*

Rose creates a strong internal attachment. If the Boy acts on feelings, he will be trapped. Before committing emotionally to another, all other factors need to be considered.

Is what a person says or wants congruent with their behaviour and (controlling) motivation? What do they sincerely want? These are important appraisal questions.

#### AROUND THE CAMPFIRE – DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1] Why did the Boy not worry or fret all night when hearing from the Traveler that he was going through the Valley of the Shadow the next day on his own? Is there a lesson for us in his response?
- 2] The Boy was emotionally attracted to Rose. If he had left the Way to go to her, what would have happened? Is it important to be really certain of another person before becoming emotionally involved? (Remember the pain of your first love?)
- 3] If the Boy had left the way, would the Shadow have been successful?
- 4] Anticipated worries are draining; How can a healthy self-image be the answer?



What does it have to do with the worry and fret?

- 5] The Boy is prepared to make good decisions. He has willed himself to always make the right decision and to do what he should do. He has no, *"Maybe I will, maybe I won't"* thoughts. His mindset is *"I will"*. Can this actually be done?
- 6] Rose creates a strong internal attachment. If the Boy acts on feelings, he will be trapped. Before committing emotionally to another, all other factors need to be considered. Is what a person says or wants congruent with their behaviour and (controlling) motivation?  
What do they sincerely want?  
These are important appraisal questions to keep in mind. Do you?
- 7] What are the double-bind messages the twins relate?
- 8] Drugs are seemingly fun for a season. However, life is not a sprint; it's a marathon. What does this mean?
- 9] Helping others is *"On the Way"* behaviour. Explain.
- 10] When you worry, does it usually turn out different?
- 11] Will worry take your energy?
- 12] Has there ever been anyone in your life who says one thing and does another?
- 13] What does *"Don't doubt in the dark what you know to be true in the light"* mean?
- 14] Give an example of dark periods of life?  
Will it always remain dark?
- 15] What kind of behaviour will keep you in the dark?
- 16] Do you have to stay there?

- 17] Is it hard to be considered “chicken”?  
How do you feel when you’re called “chicken”, etc.
- 18] Are principles and values important during these dark periods? Why?
- 19] What do you think is happening right now to all those people in Foulcia’s dungeon?
- 20] Think back over the story. Give me five things the Boy did to make it to this point. Will people in Foulcia’s dungeon have to do the same things?
- 21] Is there trouble lurking for you if you leave the Way? (for example, if you tell us – your parents – you are at one place and you actually go somewhere else? Remember when he left the Way before.)
- 22] Will the Boy who calls himself Elvis ever get to his Triple Peaks? Why?  
If you become addicted to drugs will you ever achieve your goals (your Triple Peaks)?
- 23] Will the Boy who calls himself Elvis end up like the others behind the French doors?
- 24] The Puzzle Princess is a bit of a mystery. What do you think she was going to do in the Land of Confusion?
- 25] In what ways do we as a family help other people? Should we help others?
- 26] The Twins never got their invitation to the Boy right. Do we as parents give you mixed messages? How?

#### ONE SENTENCE TO DESCRIBE THE STORY

*“Freely receive and freely give.”*



STAVRIANOUAKIS

*Mott's Portals & an Odd Procession,  
The Trial & The Answer,  
Worth More Than Gold and  
Home Again*

In these final chapters of the story, the Boy faces a variety of challenges and gets to observe how people manage the struggles and concerns of life. He learns from their mistakes and takes heart from those who have pressed on, through hardship, to personal victories, just as we see him doing.

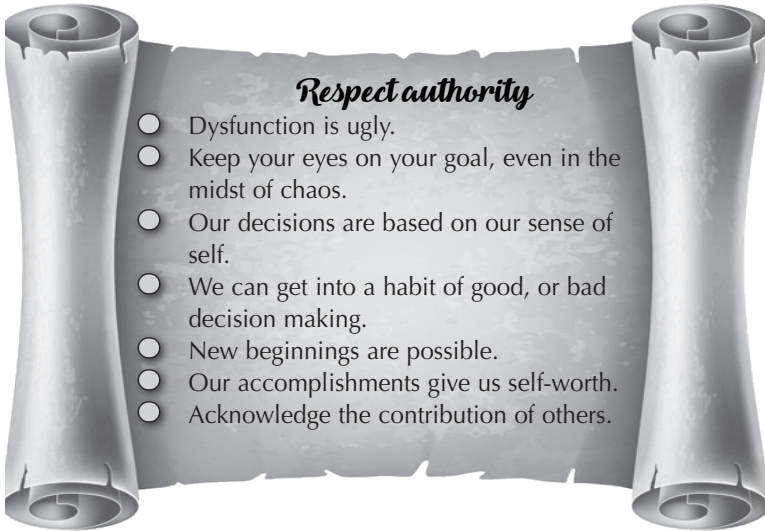
At the Portals, Mountain Mott requires the Boy to answer a riddle. While he ponders the answer, Foulicia shows up and brings accusations against him. He is taken to Venoma for a trial. On the way, they travel through many lands (issues) where people get stuck along their way.

At last, reaching the Triple Peaks and climbing the twelve golden stairs the Boy drinks from the Gem of the First Water and realises that the good character he has gained is a most valuable thing. He faces one final confrontation, and receives some supernatural assistance.

Finally the Boy has a precious time, reflecting on all he has experienced in the Land of Confusion. He meanwhile savours the wonders of Splendora until he is ready to make the journey home and introduce his parents to the new healthier, more mature young man he has become.

*"The thing always happens that you really believe in and the belief in a thing makes it happen."*

**Frank Lloyd Wright 1869 - 1959**



### *Respect authority*

- Dysfunction is ugly.
- Keep your eyes on your goal, even in the midst of chaos.
- Our decisions are based on our sense of self.
- We can get into a habit of good, or bad decision making.
- New beginnings are possible.
- Our accomplishments give us self-worth.
- Acknowledge the contribution of others.

## RON'S MODULE OUTCOMES

The Twelve Golden Stairs in the Land of the Most High provide us with a great opportunity to recap some of the central themes of the Gem Journey.

Through telling the story and observing the needs of the young people we work with, the emphasis in describing the stairs has developed over time. You will notice that the following list doesn't exactly match the way the original book tells it.

That's OK, it's a story. Every story you've ever told grows each time you tell it! The important thing is that we highlight the insights into the Journey's major lessons. You may tell it differently to me. You know what your audience needs.

1] The Boy sees himself before he began his journey. He had no self-awareness of his eight elements or how to master them. He realises how random, disconnected and vulnerable he had been ... and he stands there shuddering.

2] In the Spider's Web and his discussions with the Fox he now has personal command of his time. He stands on the second step mulling over the steps to taking charge of his life. He is in connection with himself; responsible for his decisions and determined to be in command of his Stand-Alone moments.

3] His three days in quicksand were very important because he was forced to look at his true self, to be honest and realise how angry and mis-directed he was. He realises he can manage his thoughts and can guard his emotions from anxiety as he thinks about the three stages of mind mastery - Honesty/Identification, Forgiveness/Resolve, Mind Triage/Management.

4] He stands a long time on the fourth step, determining to keep his emotions under control by vigilantly guarding his heart.

5] Seeing himself as others saw him was revealing. He is now ready for a new behaviour code, especially such a cool way to relate to others by using the Golden Rule – treating others how he himself likes to be treated. His new focus on relating to others will work everywhere and with everyone.

6] Next, he stands smiling with the full realisation that his accomplishments are key to his ongoing good mental health and he knows how to get things done.

7] On the seventh step the importance of The Choice rule for decision-making becomes clear. He realises his decisions

determine everything about him – and are the foundation of good mental health.

8] On the eighth step he remembers to watch for ‘Me Day thinking’. Being alert and running back to the way to avoid every cactus in life, was a far better alternative than the wasted time required in recovery process. Calling himself to total awareness and focused attention was a skill he would use throughout his life.

9] On the ninth step he thinks about the power that his new masteries have given him, realising he is now ready and equipped to design a lifestyle that suits him – a life of accomplishment, purpose and fun. His time in the wilderness and the Traveler’s ‘ten tenets’ come to mind.

10] On the tenth step he paces back and forth as he consolidates his thinking and anticipates how he will use the new skills he now has in his new life when he returns home.

11] He remembers the Canyon of Sadness on the eleventh step. Times of sadness will come but keep going! Take courage. Don’t doubt in the dark what you know to be true in the light.

12. And finally he now fully realises how much others contributed to the quality of his life as he stands before the huge Ruby Doors awaiting their opening.

This final session with your listeners has a nostalgic feel to it – you really have been on a great journey with them and this is your opportunity to highlight the lessons they responded to along the way.

## AROUND THE CAMPFIRE – DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

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- 1] Describe the Boy's attitude and behaviour on his way to the trial? Take some guesses on the following propositions:
  - Where was the focus of his thinking? *"I can't"* or *"I can"*?
  - How would he have reacted to this type of stress before he started this journey?
- 2] Did the Boy think about his Triple Peaks goal while in the midst of chaos?

Is this an important principle during tough times?  
How can we apply this to our lives?
- 3] Why is hope so important?

What is the connection between the Triple Peaks and hope?
- 4] What did all the *"Could have"* people have in common? List and discuss their characteristics.
- 5] As a family what could we be doing that we actually aren't? Should we start?
- 6] Are the Boy's decisions now predictable?
- 7] If the Boy had taken the soft option of blaming the Fox at the trial, how would he have felt?

Will it be hard for the Boy to explain away bad decisions, now that he has taken this journey?
- 8] If the Boy starts letting his goodness pour out, will he be successful?



Now, do you think he would...

- steal from Radino?
- jump on people's flowers?
- make fun of his parents?
- drop rubbish in the corridors at school?
- be rude and insulting to others?
- tell lies?
- disobey his teachers?

9] Hugh told Plymouth that hard work gives value to possessions and existence. What have you worked hard for or are not working hard for?

10] How do you treat possessions not worked for?<sup>3</sup>  
Can money buy a good name?

11] Will Plymouth live up to his new name?

12] The journey has had a huge impact upon Plymouth.  
How has it impacted your life?

13] Will it take "*courage*" to continue with the changes?<sup>7</sup>  
Should an evening each week be designated for us to talk and get/stay organised?  
Would this help us maintain the new beginning?

14] Have a celebration, gifts, speeches, good food and pictures to document the journey.

## ONE SENTENCE TO DESCRIBE THE STORY

*"Strive to make your life a success."*

## AUTHOR'S NOTE

As all adventures do, Plymouth's has come to an end – for the moment. He now knows who he is, he can stand alone and make wise decisions, he has mastered his eight elements and acquired his identity.

We'll leave him to grow a little older as he enjoys a brand new relationship with his dear parents, based on mutual love and respect.

In the meantime, you have my permission to go right ahead and change the stuff that hasn't been working for your family.

I hope you'll join Plymouth on his next exciting and enlightening adventure, this time with his new friend, Skylee, in the Galaxy of Questions.

Until we meet again in *"The Travels of Plymouth"* I wish you Good Luck with your new now.



*This Student Workbook is presented by  
Ron Phillips MA, MFT,  
originator of the  
Therapeutic Storytelling Intervention (T.S.I.) process.*

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