



CONTINUING EDUCATION THAT MAKES A CHANGE

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This is a side bar:

You will not be tested on the side bar information unless it is a highlight of information from the text.

When you are done with the course, take the posttest. When you pass the posttest (70% or higher) and pay the course fee (\$10 per unit), you will be issued a CEU Certificate of Completion.

Enjoy!

Course Name:	Life's Law #7: Adapt or stagnate
Course Number:	LL7
CEU:	1.0
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COURSE OBJECTIVES

1. You will study Life’s Law #7.
2. You will read real life examples of how to work with angry young adult patients.
3. You will study ways to keep defensive walls down.
4. You will experience story telling as a therapeutic tool.
5. You will see ways to open up a discussion with a teen or young adult patient.

SUGGESTED PREREQUISITE COURSES

None

Introduction

I have developed ten life laws that I teach to teens and young adults to help them navigate the rough waters of young adulthood. I have found, over the years, that these life laws give my patients directional posts that guide them outside of our therapy sessions. It is my intent for the young adult to have a framework to build their social skills on. I tend to “teach” one life law a week. (Based on the individual’s abilities.) I find that my patients quickly begin to implement change and self control into their lives. In this CEU course we will look at Life’s Law #7: Adapt or Stagnate.

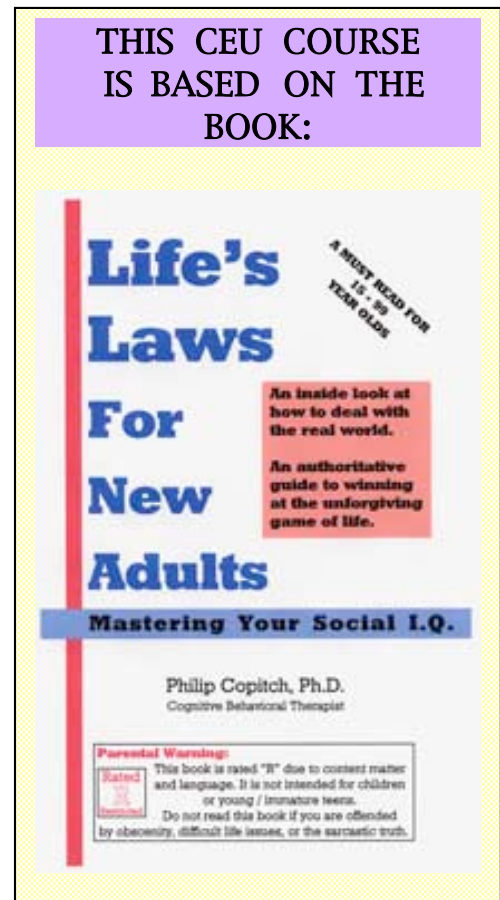
In my treatment of angry and “misunderstood” teens and young adults I take a cognitive behavioral approach and find that they appreciate my nonjudgmental frankness.

We are going to look at how to get teens and young adults to listen to you in an open minded way. The goal is to talk with your patient, not at them. This sounds easy, but unfortunately it isn’t. Over the years I have found that if I explain a needed concept to someone in a relaxed story format, it keeps their defensive walls down and lets them emotionally participate in the learning process. By sprinkling my conversation with humor and a little “I think it’s like this, what do you think?” humility, I find that my teen and young adult clients readily play off my stories and seriously challenge their own ways of dealing with their world.

The following is the way I introduce patients to the understanding that as new adults they need to allow themselves to deal with the concept of change and emotional growth.

LIFE’S LAW #7: ADAPT OR STAGNATE

At the end of the last chapter I asked you: Are you willing to do what it takes to get the outcome you desire? Life’s Law #7 is about follow



through and how to make shit happen. There are three major problems with follow through.

First, is our own self-talk and how we get in our own way. Second, is the influence friends and family have upon us. And third, is how human nature towards inactivity gets in our way. We will cover the first two problems in this chapter and focus on the third problem in Chapter #8 - Controlling Time. (CEU Course: LL8)

Are you willing to do what it takes to get the outcome you desire?

Hear again, many new adults will need “permission” and caution from you, their therapist, to allow change.

I would like to start off with a big fat warning. The above doesn't mean: Are you willing to do whatever it takes to get the outcome you desire at any cost? Screw everyone else! I am not advocating that you can do anything just because you want something. That's stupid. I'm stating that you are responsible for your actions and better use heaps of forethought before you initiate a plan. I once received a fortune cookie that read: “A bad person is a good example of a bad example.” At the onset of this chapter you must understand that morals concerning right and wrong must be incorporated into doing whatever it takes.

A perfect example of this bad example was in today's paper. The lead article of the local section was titled: Suspect - Shooting was an accident. The subtitle read: Redding teen pleads innocent to charges from robbery attempt.

As in other sections of this book, I will change the name. The article was about 18 year-old Albert Whole; A. Whole for short. It was explained in the paper that A. Whole “...told police he didn't mean to shoot a gas station clerk during a robbery attempt.”

A. Whole's sister was quoted, “He's a good kid. He made bad choices.”

The article continued:

The shooting at the Grease Street gas station came four days after A. Whole's friends allegedly burglarized a Shasta Lake home on Thanksgiving Day, stealing as many as 10 guns, A. Whole told police.

A group of four friends—including A. Whole—had talked about robbing a bank sometime in the next year, he told police. They spoke of using automatic weapons, grenades and rocket launchers, he said.

But, A. Whole decided to rob the gas station on his own he said, because he owed money to probation officials and didn't want to go back to prison.

So, A. Whole said he waited outside the station for two hours to see if the clerk would leave his booth. About 3:30 AM, he finally threw a rock at a parked car to get the attendant's attention, reports said.

The clerk emerged, and A. Whole appeared with a gun and demanded money, he said. The attendant refused, and the gun accidentally went off, the suspect said.

The gas station attendant suffered serious injuries.

In the above story, A. Whole worked it out in his mind that this was a good choice. He didn't think about right and wrong. He didn't think about the gas station attendant. He stayed focused on his problem and gave himself permission to disregard everyone else's needs. This selfish lack of insight is often confused with freedom, but in actuality it is simply stupidity.

Self-questions

Most new adults spend the majority of their emotional energy questioning the authority of the adults in their life. In this section we look at questioning our own authority. This is a new concept for most people, especially the young.

We need to question ourselves

As we take on adulthood we need to constantly question our own authority. We need to look at the bigger picture of our lives.

A few good self-questions are:

- Would I be proud of this behavior if it was explained on the front page of the newspaper?
- Would I feel right if I had to explain my behavior to _____? (Fill in the name of someone you truly respect and would not want to embarrass yourself in front of).

- Would I want someone to do this to me, or someone I love?
- Would I do this if I knew I was going to be caught?

These self-governing moral questions help us make good decisions, even when we want to do whatever initially crossed our minds.

Confide in yourself and choose your counsel well

Often when we want to change something in our world we bounce the emerging idea off others. This sounding board notion is both good and dangerous. It is good to seek out counsel and listen carefully to competent advice. It makes sense to talk to a highly experienced plumber if you are thinking about going into the plumbing trade. It makes sense to learn as much as possible about a school before you choose to apply. But, when you gather information you need to be aware that the giver of the information is filtering her answers through her own life experiences. You need to judge the filters of others.

At twenty years of age, the will reigns; at thirty, the wit; and at forty, the judgment.

Benjamin Franklin

I once told my Uncle Joe that I was thinking of applying for a doctoral program in psychology on the other side of the country. His words were very specific. “Listen to me boy, you’re a poor kid from Rottenchester, how are you getting into grad school?” He continued to explain that school was great for rich kids who buy a fancy piece of paper. He was positive that “people like us” had to make money with our hands.

I have often thought about Uncle Joe’s advice. If I had not understood his filters I would probably be a businessman in Rochester, New York. There is nothing wrong with that, but it wouldn’t have been my choice. I wanted to be a shrink.

Gathering information is imperative to making good choices. Over the years I have found books to be very helpful in giving me solid information. I am very choosy however. I tend not to believe any author who is trying to sell me something other than the information. Be super careful with diet books, make-money-quick books and books that tell you that they know what God is thinking.

stream. After enough time and enough water you end up with a wondrous tourist destination—the Grand Canyon. As we spoke of before, lots of small choices lead to accomplishments. The Grand Canyon was formed from raindrops and commitment to a path.

We humans are going to do something. We are like the raindrops. We are going to be. If we take our little choices and combine them, we become a force. Unlike a river, we are not stuck following the path of least resistance. We can take calculated risks and focus our life force towards a planned goal. If you don't know where you're going—you're there. You're stagnant. If you can adapt, you have a future.

The above conversation with a patient tends to open up family dynamics and can lead to finger pointing. “My mom never gets anything done!” “My dad is always having ideas, but he never does anything but talk!” This could be avoidance behavior or the tip of a clinical issue.

In our next chapter we are going to look at the third major problem of follow-through,, controlling time. If we understand how to take advantage of time, we can build destinations.

People can learn and grow

It is important to leave the patient with the understanding that they personally can learn and grow. I advise patients to take notes between sessions of their observations concerning life laws. This gives the patient much more than my time with them.

POSTTEST

When you're ready, take the posttest to obtain your CEU certificate. Your test consists of 5 multiple choice or true/false questions per Continuing Education Unit (3 CEU course = 15 questions).

