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As such, I feel it necessary to post the final session first — since it addresses The Importance of Basic Education (pp. 163-168).

Then next, from the initial Introduction - Table of Contents (pp 1-4), I will begin with Session One (pp 5-16), and proceed onward.

The Key of Recovery is in getting to thoroughly know oneself. Understanding your point of view changes, the attached "Questions To Be Honest About" provides the student in Recovery the opportunity to actually consider points of view.

Feel free to share this material with your loved ones'.

For the Love of Truth,
Whispers

**SESSION FOURTEEN
LEARNING HOW TO LEARN
AND THE IMPORTANCE OF BASIC EDUCATION**

WEEK ONE:

- Learning — a requirement for successful living.

WEEK TWO:

- Your relationships with teachers and other students.

WEEK THREE:

- The value and benefits of education

WEEK FOUR:

- Developing good learning habits.

*Getting there from here is going to
be even easier.*

LEARNING HOW TO LEARN AND THE IMPORTANCE OF BASIC EDUCATION

We are the ones who turned the classroom into our private play ground areas. While the majority of the class focused on learning, our focus was to disrupt them. We were restless, watching the clock, talking and playing, instead of listening and learning. We did not see basic education as important. If we were not interested in a class subject being taught we did not pay attention. Some subjects were simply boring because *we felt* there was no need to learn about some things like science, language, math, reading or writing. Those subjects just did not apply to what our limited goals and vision for the future considered.

There were some class subjects we had short term interest in. We tried to focus, but we could not adapt, understand, and remember important things, like math formulas, or rules that applied in language. If the majority of the class adopted, we were forced to keep up, although frustrated, and when *test-time* came around, we scored poorly. We lost motivation and self confidence.

Some of us had learning disabilities and did not really understand why. No one knew the shame we felt in not being able to adapt to learning as others were in class. We lost interest. Sometimes problems at home, whether between adults or our older brothers and sisters, affected our performance. We took our worries, fears and frustrations to school with us, trapped inside our minds.

As we failed, in whatever way, to learn the importance of learning basic education, we were held responsible and the consequences affected us. We never learned to realize the common importance of education and how it would impact our lives on a daily basis as we grew up. We did not know what we wanted to be or do in the future; did not have a goal to work toward, nor support in identifying one and having positive assistance to help us focus on achievement.

Perhaps we did not have good study habits. No one to explain things that were difficult to us. It was painful to be called *stupid*. So it was easier to simply give up.

This session will help us to re-evaluate our mistakes and identify where our difficulties are so that we can now make an effort to learn - how to learn for ourselves.

KEY WORDS TO FOCUS ON

LEARNING: to gain knowledge of something unknown or inexperienced to us; to develop better skills; to obtain insight through instruction and study.

EDUCATION: to teach; to cultivate and train; to enlighten our awareness; to provide discipline.

IMPORTANCE: something of much worth, influence or valuable; things that are worthwhile, and effective for us.

QUESTIONS TO BE HONEST ABOUT

1. List five reasons why learning was difficult for you.
2. Identify what subjects you find problems understanding.
3. How can basic education in general subjects benefit you.
4. Explain what you would like to achieve in life and how you feel your goals can be reached



Things You Can Do

THE WORKSHEET FOR QUESTIONS TO BE HONEST ABOUT

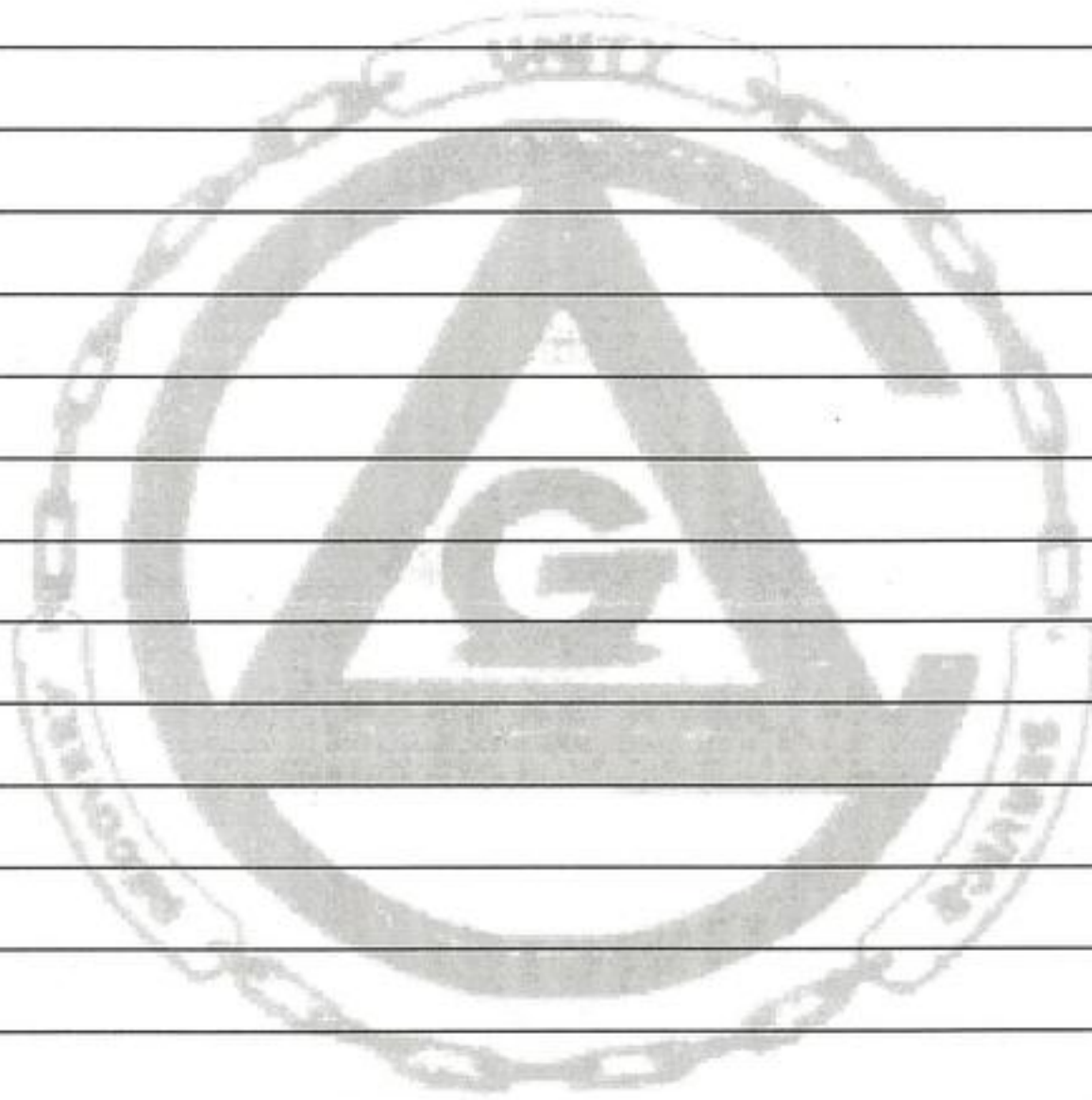


TABLE of CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	2
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	3
<i>SESSION ONE</i> WHO ARE WE?	5
<i>SESSION TWO</i> TAKING A CLOSE, HONEST AND CAREFUL REVIEW OF THE PAST	17
<i>SESSION THREE</i> WANTING TO BE POPULAR AMONG OUR FRIENDS AND ASSOCIATES.	23
<i>SESSION FOUR</i> GETTING HIGH, GETTING ADDICTED	30
<i>SESSION FIVE</i> THE FLAT TRUTH ABOUT GANGS	43
<i>SESSION SIX</i> PEOPLE, PLACES, THINGS AND SITUATIONS	58
<i>SESSION SEVEN</i> THE GAMES WE PLAY WITH OURSELVES	65
<i>SESSION EIGHT</i> COMMUNICATION BARRIERS IN THE HOME	71
<i>SESSION NINE</i> OPENING WINDOWS IN OUR MINDS OPENS DOORS TO SUCCESS	83
<i>SESSION TEN</i> THE POWER OF MISTRUST, TRUST AND OPEN-MINDEDNESS	89
<i>SESSION ELEVEN</i> WHAT ARE GOALS-HOW ARE THEY REACHED	104
<i>SESSION TWELVE</i> DEFINING OUR LIFESTYLE ADDICTION	112
<i>SESSION THIRTEEN</i> THE SOLUTION FOR SUCCESSFUL LIVING	119
<i>SESSION FOURTEEN</i> LEARNING HOW TO LEARN	163

INTRODUCTION

This book is important because we feel in our hearts how important you are. This book is written from real life experiences from those who've felt - what you feel now; those who have had the same style of manners that you have now; from those who have done everything you are doing and a lot more we hope you will not do. We are the voice of truth from your past, your present and your future. We do not have to "try to understand you." Nor can anything you have done turn us away from you.

This book is all about the facts and the truth about our common "lifestyle" and our common addiction to many different types of illegal activity including our involvement with gangs. What we are giving to you comes from blunt "time-tested experience." Illegal activity, gang involvement and substance abuse were our choices too. We thought we were in control of everything just like you believe now. We found that our addiction to illegal activity was more powerful than we were and had actually controlled us and pulled us deep into the "quicksand" of anger and failure, not once but over and over again and each time, it got worse and we became more out of control. We stepped on everyone and everything in our path, including our own families and always innocent people in the community. What we realize now was surely not the way we saw it or understood it at your age either. We were blind to the truth and no one "like us" was willing or knew how to really help us to stop and change course. We have to pass on the truth to you and guide you away from destruction. We owe it to you and we know you are the ones to save the next generation. Consider this book a "lighthouse" in the fog of your life. A candle of "hope" to lead you out of darkness. Accept it as love, but real "love" because we care.

Your common problems were our common problems. Our solution to our common problems is your solution to your common problems. Take this book serious, because the way we live as criminals and gangmembers (without recovery) is not a joke, nor a game. It is serious and we know you have the strength and courage to change.

"Let's Do This Together."

Richard M.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I take this opportunity to express my gratitude to those "Original Gangsters" who have been in "the mix of things" and survived to make this journey in recovery from our common lifestyle addiction . Your experiences, coupled with my own have facilitated my efforts to write this handbook so that we may all give -- from what we have learned, to help our younger brothers and sisters, homeboys and homegirls in need of this invaluable knowledge, so they may avoid our past frustrations and join us in the satisfactions of living life to its fullest. There are too many to name individually, but you know who you are. This book *I* dedicate to all of you with much love and respect.

Richard M.

Founder

California Gangs Anonymous

June 1996

Dedicated to *YOU*...
the ones with courage...
the ones who can
CHANGE
if YOU
think you can and then just do it!

**SESSION ONE
WHO ARE WE?
(How Our Characters are Shaped)**

WEEK ONE:

- What bad habits do you recognize you have?
- Where did your bad habits come from?
- How do your habits affect your thinking?
- How do your habits affect others?

WEEK TWO:

- Role models that influence you.
- Who do you respect, trust and why?
- Are they positive or negative influences.
- Can they help you achieve success or failure?

WEEK THREE:

- Identifying your present angers, frustrations and resentments.
- Common causes and understanding why you feel these feelings.
- Understanding empathy (jumping out of yourself to relate to the feelings of others).
- Being responsible for your actions and behavior, not others.

WEEK FOUR:

- How you see the position of your own life.
- A look at pride and self-esteem.
- Measuring your success and your failures and setting goals
- Do you truly care about yourself.

Getting to know you



WHO ARE WE?
(How Our Characters and Personalities are Shaped)

We were not simply born the way we are, with all the bad habits, attitudes, and other character defects. As we grew up we observed all sorts of situations and were directly affected by many different attitudes and behaviors. Bad habits of others we viewed as normal and we felt we'd some day grow and were suppose to do the same things we watched other adults do. Some of us were even given chemical substances or alcohol to *try* with full permission and encouragement by older adults when we were young. We observed violence at home, watched it on television and saw it happen often in our neighborhoods or schools. We thought it was acceptable forms of behavior and a way of expressing or protecting ourselves. Our characters were being formed and shaped.

When we'd go shopping with adults, if there was a small candy or toy we wanted we'd simply stick it in our pocket and walk out the store. It was easy and no one saw us take it. If we were later asked where it came from and how we got it, our favorite lie was either *I found it or it was given to me*. The habit of stealing was gradually forming from small items to larger items or property as we grew up.

At an early age we learned to lie and deceive people to *get our way* or to prevent *getting in trouble* for doing something wrong or failing to do what we were told to do. The more frequent we lied it became a routine habit. Our characters continued to be molded and shaped by things we did.

Most of the choices we made were the result of things we did that became a habit, combined with those many bad habits we observed by older adult role models and thought we were suppose to do -- as they did. This session will take you through many components of character development to help you grasp a clear perspective of how our characters are formed through a variety of habits, observations and attitudes.

CALL IT “Growing Up All Over Again.”

KEY WORDS TO FOCUS ON

CHARACTER: the distinctive qualities that we each have as individuals. Specific styles and habits can identify us.

HABITS: the way we act or behavior that occurs by repeating the same things over and over again.

ATTITUDES: the point of view; opinion, or manner of which we believe or disbelieve something.

PERSONALITY: our style that makes us unique from others; our conduct and character developed.

What bad habits do you recognize you have?

What these habits are, you will find they reach into many areas of your life, such as health, cleanliness, how you talk to people, how you talk to yourself, how you treat others, and how you treat yourself.

Consider things you avoid doing to be responsible: taking care of personal health; keeping living area clean, picking up after yourself, being neat and orderly. Eating properly, being thoughtful to others, honest, helpful, do you use foul language often? Do you use drugs or alcohol, do you participate in other illegal activities.

1. What does it mean to have bad habits?

2. How powerful and destructive can bad habits be?

Where did your bad habits come from?

Somewhere along the line you picked up these bad habits. Sometimes you developed them for some advantage, sometimes out of laziness, some things by watching other people do or say things, other things because you were trying to do like other people, for acceptance, or just because you felt you had to do it.

Was it someone you were trying to be like? Did you tell a lie because you were trying to avoid a problem or bad situation, or to get your way? Did you think you had to steal or take things to get what you wanted.

Explain in your own words.

How do these habits affect your thinking?

Are you so use to doing these things that you tell yourself they are *all right and acceptable*. Do you keep doing some things because you haven't got caught? Do you talk yourself into continuing to do things, and make excuses for doing wrong things.

1. Do you feel your bad habits are good and acceptable?

2. What five excuses do you tell yourself to keep holding on to your bad habits?

How do these habits affect others?

Do other people become affected by things you say or do? Is it fair for them to have your selfish ways forced *at* them? Do you ever consider the thoughts and feelings of others when your habits are in control doing what you want?

Answer these questions honestly.

Role models that influenced you:

When identifying who these role models are, think about their role in your life, if you followed their example or request out of love, obligation (feeling you had to) or because you admired them (looked up to them).

If their behavior (influence) was strong or powerful in effect upon you, it is important for you to recognize it and understand it because this *influence* is exactly what it is and impacted your thinking and behavior, rather than you continue feeling you were simply *born* to do those things.

1. Who were those people who influenced you with their bad habits, and how did you feel toward each one of these people?

2. Explain how their behavior (influences) was so strong over you.

Who do you respect, trust and why?

Who are these people in your life that *you look up to* as an example of the person you feel you should be following the way they are. Why do you feel you should or can trust them in any way that you do. How has *their* way of thinking and living prove to be a good way for you to follow?

Be as thorough as you can in answering these questions.

Identify your present angers, frustrations and resentments.

What are the big things you feel most angry about today. What are those things that bother you, keep you up during the night and are on your mind constantly that you can't find the answers to?

What people are you upset with, how long have you been upset with them, and why are you still upset?

Common causes and understanding why you feel these feelings.

What do you think your angers, frustrations and resentments are rooted to and still connected to? Why do you continue to hold on to these things? There are ways of releasing your anger; working through your frustrations and forgiving people so you do not carry resentments any longer.

Be as accurate as you can in answering the above questions.

Understanding empathy (jumping out of yourself to relate to the feelings of others.

It is important to slow down and consider how the other person thinks and feels about the issue or problem. Understanding there are two sides and then stepping out of your position into the side of the other person can greatly improve the chances of resolving the problem. Don't just think of yourself, think about how the other person feels or could feel.

1. Why is it important to consider how the other person thinks and feels?

2. How could it improve the chance of resolving the problem?

Being responsible for your actions and behavior, not others.

It is important to be responsible for your own actions and behavior because these are things in your power to change. You can not make people think, feel or act as you want or feel they should. It is your job to do what is right and necessary for you to be a better person, and allow the other person the same freedom to make the right choices.

Explain why it is important to be responsible for your own actions and behavior. Also, why is it important for the other person involved to be responsible for their own feelings?

How we see the position of your life.

It is a good practice to evaluate your own life to stop and look at yourself and the things you are doing to see where you are heading. You can then identify what you are doing that isn't good and take a careful look at what you could do to make you better and to live better.

What things do you do that are not good? How could you improve or change to become a better person?

A look at pride and self-esteem.

Many times misunderstanding *pride* can cause you to be stubborn and refuse to make good decisions. You feel that if *you give in* to the requests or even the demands of others would make you look bad or weak in some way or another. The goal is not trying to *look good* but *rather feel good*. And doing the right things for the right reasons is something to be proud about, and when you are, your self-esteem automatically goes up because you'll feel better.

Explain how pride has stopped you from making a good decision. Define self-esteem and explain how high or low your esteem is.

QUESTIONS TO BE HONEST ABOUT

1. Identify and explain five character or personality traits that you developed as a child from adult role.
2. Identify and explain five bad habits you developed at a young age that continue to have a negative effect on your life today.



Things You Can Do

THE WORKSHEET FOR QUESTIONS TO BE HONEST ABOUT

