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DEVELOPING A THEATER SKILLS-BASED WORKSHOP TO FACILITATE
EXPLORATION OF SELF-IDENTITY FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

by

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©

SYNTHESIS*

MASTER OF ARTS

CRITICAL AND CREATIVE THINKING

UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS BOSTON

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Advisor: Robert Ricketts

* The Synthesis can take a variety of forms, from a position paper to curriculum or professional development workshop to an original contribution in the creative arts or writing. The expectation is that students use their Synthesis to show how they have integrated knowledge, tools, experience, and support gained in the program so as to prepare themselves to be constructive, reflective agents of change in work, education, social movements, science, creative arts, or other endeavor

ABSTRACT

This synthesis will explore the premise of a working outreach platform comprised of experiential methodology, and practical tools and strategies to serve the intended audience. The paper presents an in-depth example of a workshop curriculum created for middle-school aged youth, (12-14 years old), who may struggle with self-esteem, understanding their self-worth, and making responsible decisions.

The work explores two intersecting ideas that 1) poor self-concepts and misperceived thinking can lead youth to behave negatively and make detrimental decisions, and 2) theater involvement can produce a theater-based skillset capable of combating those poor self-concepts and misperceived thoughts and changing the trajectory of youths' lives. Lastly, research findings of other comparable youth programming, theories, and self-improvement workshops with commonalities and shared objectives are presented to explore tensions between various theories, ideas, and workshop activities.

The three guiding questions used as a focal point and to drive the direction of the paper are 1) How does or how can theater skills apply to real life? 2) How can theater performing arts teach youth or help youth develop? 3) How does theater performing arts help youth become more productive or successful. I employ personal reflections as a case-study for this project, drawing upon my various life-stage roles from adolescence through professional middle school educator to dedicated reflective practitioner utilizing those experiences, along with outside sources, to support the perspectives and rationale laid forth throughout this paper.

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ACT I

Introduction

It is almost magical how youth come alive when performing onstage; how introverted and quiet individuals tap into talents they never knew they had and transform into lively, captivating performers. This sentiment is also shared by KaLyn Fagan, a young actress in the Cleveland Theater Group who once said, “Certain kids are really quiet, but when they get on stage, they’re a whole different person” (Wisner, 2019). What is more magical is the inner transformation that has taken place. While in preparation for performing, youth develop a myriad of transferable skills that equip them to not only thrive on stage, but to also thrive in life, as these skills are signature components of their emotional, social, and psychological growth (Wisner, 2019).

This synthesis paper will explore the premise of a working outreach platform comprised of experiential methodology, and practical tools and strategies to serve my intended audience. I will present an in-depth example of a workshop curriculum created for middle-school aged youth, (12-14 years old), who may struggle with self-esteem, understanding their self-worth, and making responsible decisions. Additionally, I will demonstrate two key concepts, which are 1) youth’s misperceived beliefs in themselves as well as other poor self-concepts can contribute to and/or propagate a pattern of negative behavior that leads to negative decision-making, and 2) theater produces and equips youth with soft skills and qualities that improves their self-esteem, and can also be used as beneficial life tools. Lastly, I will present research findings of other comparable youth programming, theories, and self-improvement workshops with commonalities and shared objectives and explore tensions between our theories, ideas, and workshop activities.

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The three guiding questions I will be using as a focal point and to drive the direction of the paper are 1) How does or how can theater skills apply to real life? 2) How can theater performing arts teach youth or help youth develop? 3) How does theater performing arts help youth become more productive or successful.

As I can personally relate to self-esteem and self-image challenges, I am using myself as a case-study for this project, drawing upon my various life-stage roles from adolescence through professional middle school educator to dedicated reflective practitioner utilizing those experiences, along with outside sources, to support the perspectives and rationale laid forth throughout this paper.

Background

Growing up I was somewhat shy and did not really have too many friends, but I did have a vivid imagination that I used to my advantage. Acting and writing were the means I used to escape my harsh realities. I was a chubby little girl being raised by her grandmother. My grandmother lived off a fixed income, so she did not always have extra money to buy me the latest and greatest toys and clothing other kids had, which meant I got teased and bullied a lot for being “poor”. These factors, including the absence of a strong and consistent family support system, contributed to me devaluing myself, developing low self-esteem, and harboring a great deal of animosity and anger, especially towards authoritative figures. As I got older, I developed a cyclical pattern of destructive behavior, which almost always resulted in negative consequences that stunted my emotional and psychological growth.

Around the age of nine my life changed. I was exposed to the live arts and introduced to real-life performances aside from the ones I held in my bedroom with my dolls and stuffed animals. My aunt began taking me to musicals and plays at local theaters. Though I did not

always understand the plays' content or dialogue, I greatly enjoyed them and remember feeling a sense of excitement and admiration as I watched the actors on stage. The two things I admired the most were 1) the actor's ability to retain lines then recite them in a dialogue or monologue as if the words were truly their own and 2) the actor's courage to perform in front of others with charisma and conviction. I had not yet grown into the extroverted and outgoing individual I am now, so the thought of talking and performing before a crowd other than my stuffed animals was quite frightening to me and was not something, I thought I would ever have the chance to do or be courageous enough to do.

In the ninth grade I received my first acting opportunity to star as "Mama" in Lorraine Hansberry's play, *A Raisin in the Sun* and my life changed again. After that first performance, I felt proud, accomplished, and confident; feelings I never felt before. By reflecting on my personal experiences, I have come to believe that if given an opportunity to express themselves through an art form such as theater, youth who devalue themselves and/or suffer from low self-esteem will be able see their potential and grow in confidence just as I was able to.

My Theorization

Unrecognized Worth and Potential

I am confident that most, if not all, poor-life decisions are made because a person, or in this case youth, have false or skewed perceptions of themselves. For youth who are raised in a loving and supportive environment, recognizing one's worth or value can be easy or almost intuitive. Additionally, youth from supportive backgrounds have an easier time handling conflicts, resisting negative pressures, making friends, and have a generally optimistic view of the world and their life (Children's Health, S, Self-Esteem, n.d.).

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In contrast, for youth who struggle with self-esteem, recognizing their worth or value can be difficult. Oftentimes a warped perception of self leads youth to behave negatively and/or make bad decisions that have the potential to cause them physical, emotional, or relational detriment. Examples include, dropping out of school or poor academic achievement; criminal and violent behavior; teenage pregnancy; smoking or using alcohol and other drugs; depression; and suicidal thoughts that lead to suicide attempts or suicide. (Children's Health, S, Self-Esteem, n.d.). Such detrimental behaviors and decision-making can result in negative consequences that have a lasting impact on youth's lives, altering their life trajectory and threatening their future success. Communities can be negatively impacted as well if youth's behaviors and decisions consist of criminal and violent activities. Communities experience a breakdown in socialization and residential relationships which can perpetuate youth crime and unfavorable decisions or exacerbate their existence. According to a study conducted by David J. Harding,

“In a violent neighborhood, individuals are often cautious about intervening in conflicts or monitoring children for fear of retribution. Residents keep to themselves rather than interacting with neighbors, resulting in more sparse networks and weaker capacity for cooperative behavior...because residents find it increasingly hard to monitor and control the behavior of community members, especially youth. Community norms regarding school attendance or sexual behavior may weaken, and parents may be less likely to help one another monitor youth behavior, leading to greater likelihood of school dropout and teenage pregnancy (Dardin, 2009).

Furthermore, from personal experience I recognize how the inability for youth to see their true worth can prohibit or delay their ability to fulfill their purpose and live out their full potential as they “may hesitate to try new things and are pessimistic about themselves and their life” (Children's Health, S, Self-Esteem, n.d.), thus becoming or remaining stagnant in their personal development.

Self-Concepts and Behavior Patterns

I would be remiss if I did not at least define self-esteem as it relates to this project and/or workshop. With that said, I will also define the terms self-image and self-perception as they are sometimes used interchangeably with self-esteem, but each term holds a slightly different meaning and therefore their proper context should be understood. Definitions and descriptions are derived from three different sources, including Daryl Bem's Self-Perception Theory.

- *Self-Esteem* – how we feel about ourselves and how we *judge* our worth. This evaluation has a profound impact on the choices we make since it determines, to a great extent, what we consider ourselves capable and worthy of doing (LaTour, 2014).
- *Self-Image* – our *view* or *concept* of ourselves. Self-image is a crucial aspect of an individual's personality that can determine the success of relationships and a sense of general well-being. A negative self-image is often a cause of dysfunctions and of self-abusive, self-defeating, or self-destructive behavior (American Association of Psychology, n.d.).
- *Self-Perception* – our *view, opinions, and attitudes* of ourselves developed by observing our own behaviors and emotions and drawing conclusions from them (Bem, 1972).

When reflecting on my adolescence, I begin to examine the negative decisions/choices I made, my destructive behavior, and my governing emotions or mind-set at the time I made those negative decisions/choices. I realized my behavior had a cyclical pattern. My poor self-image or misunderstanding of myself led me to have low self-esteem, which led me to make unfavorable decisions and misbehave, which led to negative consequences, which made me feel shameful and think badly of myself again, which led once again to poor decisions, and on and on it went.

After identifying a pattern, I decided to create a visual model that depicted my revelation. With so much existing literature, empirical data and studies, and psychological theories on self-

concepts and adolescent development and behavior, I assumed the model I created of my own adolescent behavior pattern would hold similarities to others. Upon further investigation I discovered my behavior was congruent with or typical for someone, more specifically a youth struggling with self-esteem. In Ameé LaTour's article, *8 Common Causes of Low Self-Esteem*, she describes the impact low self-esteem has on the choices one makes,

Self-esteem is simply how you feel about yourself and how you judge your worth. This evaluation has a profound impact on the choices you make since it determines, to a great extent, what you consider yourself capable and worthy of doing... Without a proper amount of self-valuing, we don't pursue meaningful activities. Instead, we get stuck in a cycle of de-valuing ourselves and not doing anything meaningful to boost our sense of self-worth (LaTour, 2014).

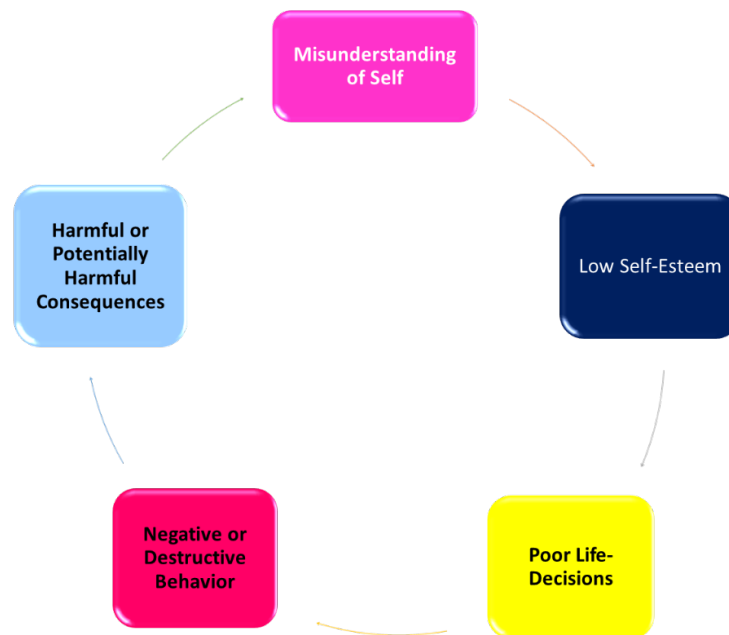


Figure 1. My Negative Behavior Pattern (Natasha N. Goss, 2021)

Additionally, impulsivity, the inability to delay gratification can be linked to making rash decisions unintentionally. When considering my behavior pattern from a psychopathology context, I would not say that my negative decisions and/or behavior were a result of me wanting instant satisfaction, but I will agree they were consistent with all three characteristic impulsive

traits, which are: 1) acting swiftly without forethought or conscious judgment, (2) behaving without adequate thought, and (3) often acting with less forethought than most of my peers with equal ability and knowledge (Impulsivity: A Review, 2006).

“Tough Love” vs. Empathy

One could argue that middle school aged youth are old enough to understand and know the difference between “right” and “wrong”, as well as understand that there are consequences for being disobedient and/or misbehaving. If adults try to have a heart-to-heart with youth each time they break the rules rather than allow them to experience the consequences of their actions, youth will continue their pattern of self-destruction, causing harm to themselves and potentially others around them. While it may seem harsh, sometimes it is necessary to show youth “tough love” to obtain effective results. I would counter that argument by saying, it is not only important for at-risk youth to modify their negative behavior and perceptions of themselves to live a fulfilling life, but it is also important for them to understand why they are choosing to act and think in the negative manner they are.

We cannot assume all youth were taught the principles of what is appropriate or inappropriate behavior, nor can we assume they are fully aware of or understand the severity of the consequences they may face. As for myself, I was taught the difference between appropriate and inappropriate behavior, but I wrestled with my emotions constantly. There were times when I could not understand why I was angry, sad, hurt, etc. Moreover, I could not always articulate those feelings to others, so most times I reacted or overreacted. The result of my actions was always a form of punishment to “teach me a lesson”, never understanding. If I acted out in school, which was often, I was kicked out of class, given detention, suspended, and even threatened with expulsion from school.

Educators and other adults in my life did not take the time to help me extrapolate my feelings, understand the “lesson”, or reflect upon my decisions, instead they made me feel shame and guilt for “being bad” or being a “menace”, which perpetuated my low self-esteem. Thus, for preventative and corrective purposes, it is an adult’s responsibility to teach youth how to navigate their negative feelings. For if we (adults) only try to promote their welfare or teach them accountability by administering “tough love” or enforcing constraints and restrictions and do not engage with them in reflective discussions, youth may never understand the root of their actions and perpetuate self-destructive behavior throughout their adulthood as well.

Moreover, it is imperative for adults to validate and affirm youths’ worth and provide or explore opportunities that promote positive thinking and improves negative self-concepts. My assertion is theater arts and workshops present such opportunities.

Why a Workshop?

As short-term methods of teaching or introducing practical skills, workshops have several benefits for both participants and facilitators, including meeting new people and developing relationships. Additional workshop benefits are:

- *Hands-on learning* – workshops teach hands-on skills that offer participants a chance to try out new methods and fail in a safe situation.
- *Participatory Environment* - participants can be active, in both influencing the direction of the workshop and in practicing the techniques, skills, etc. that are under discussion.
- *Informal Structure* - rather than having a teacher deliver lecture material for students to passively absorb, workshops offer interactive participation as well as dialogue and discussion.

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- *Collaboration & Teambuilding* - a workshop can help create a sense of community or common purpose among its participants, especially for those who work or live together in a communal space (University of Kansas, n.d.).

Also, workshops can vary in size because facilitators have the autonomy to limit the number of participants in their workshop, which is not the case for classroom educators.

Depending on the grade level and subject, classroom educators are mandated, at least in Boston, Massachusetts, to serve between 22-31 students in an inclusive¹ or general education² classroom (Class Size FAQs, n.d.). Of course, these numbers have decreased significantly to adhere to COVID-19 safety and social distancing protocols.

My own battle with and victory over low self-esteem, and the opportunities for personal development I have experienced in the performing arts is what compels me to create a workshop that uses acquired theater skills as building blocks to assist and teach youth how to resolve their inner self-conflicts. Furthermore, by using a workshop format, which is informally structured and limits the participants size of the workshop, I am creating an intimate and comfortable setting for youth to learn and share.

As a former middle school educator, I am quite familiar with classroom settings, and regardless of how comfortable and relatable a teacher may try to make the classroom environment, students/youth still have an awareness of the power dynamic between themselves, as students, and their teacher as an authoritative figure. However, in a workshop setting this awareness may decrease or disappear altogether, allowing youth to fully disclose their thoughts and feelings without any anxiety or fear of saying the “wrong” thing, thus heightening their

¹ An inclusive classroom is a general education classroom where students with and without learning differences learn together.

² A general education classroom is a classroom that teaches a standard curriculum without special teaching methods or supports.

attention, encouraging their engagement, and motivating their willingness to accept the information that is being offered.

ACT II

The 3 R's of Self Workshop

The title of my workshop is, “The 3 R's of Self: The First 3 Steps to Finding One's True Identity”. The 3 R's workshop format and content is designed to be a creative and informative outlet where youth can gain insight regarding their own struggles with self-concepts and acquire tools for how to react and think differently and divorce their feelings of worthlessness, all while having fun doing it. My role as a facilitator is non-clinical, instead it is to encourage community-building amongst youth and help them discover and acknowledge their talents and positive attributes. I endeavor to accomplish these objectives through limited acting and improvisation, icebreaker exercises, group discussions, and individual reflective activities.

Who Is My Audience?

While my target audience is middle school aged youth between the ages of 12 and 14, my intended audience for this synthesis paper are four groups, 1) Parents, Caregivers, and Care Providers; 2) Government Agencies, Educational Organizations, and Non-profits; 3) Funders; and 4) Performing Artists and Local Theaters. Each of these groups benefit in some manner by either having youth participate in the workshop or having the workshop operate within their organization or affiliated organization; these are my stakeholders.

1) The first set of stakeholders: *Parents, Caregivers, and Care Providers*, (including teachers, caseworkers, and social workers) benefit from having a workshop such as the 3 R's because it is primarily designed to assist and empower youth, whether they are at home or in the classroom, struggling with self-identity. While the workshop is not a cure-all, it can be used as a

supplemental resource to what parents and teachers may already be doing or using to assist their children or students; I imagine parents and teachers are even more appreciative for the 3 R's workshop if they do not already have such a purpose driven resource to aid them.

2) The second set of stakeholders: *Government Agencies, Educational Organizations, and Non-profits*, (including schools, after school programs, community-based organizations, juvenile detention facilities, and other non-profit youth organizations) can benefit from the 3 R's operating within their establishment. The workshop fulfills the overwhelming need for self-esteem educational programming for at-risk youth and youth in general, especially now that a vaccine is available to decrease the spread of COVID-19 and juvenile delinquency is estimated to rise (Buchanan, 2020).

Research has shown that social limitations, stay at-home mandates, business closures, and fewer pedestrians have limited the opportunities for crimes such as robbery, burglary, and larceny to occur (Buchanan, 2020). With parents/guardians working from home and keeping a watchful eye, retail businesses being closed, and very few victims walking the streets, young offenders have not been given much of an opportunity to offend. However, many people are receiving the COVID-19 vaccination and as a result, social distancing restrictions are being eased and lifted, businesses are reopening across the country, and parents are returning to the office, thus increasing opportunities for delinquencies to occur again (Buchanan, 2020).

Those same youth with poor self-esteem who were committing crimes before the world shut down, are also reemerging from their COVID dens and their negative behavior patterns, and compromised decision-making skills are reemerging with them, which means they are more than likely to return back to their law-breaking habits. This reiterates my argument that community-based stakeholders can benefit from the 3 R's workshop operating within their establishments, as

it can help curtail youth's law-breaking habits by helping them understand why they exist and provide tools to help break them.

3) The third set of stakeholders: *Funders*, (including philanthropists, individuals, investors, charities, foundations, and government agencies) may find the 3 R's beneficial for the following reasons: they are mission-driven and the workshop's purpose may align with their own values; they can see the impact their money has on the workshop and the youth it serves; they may have also suffered from low self-esteem as a child or someone close to them may have, and therefore they feel a personal connection to the cause; and lastly they may simply want to be a part of something (Network for Good, 2020), and why not be a part of something so meaningful and life-changing for the young people it serves?

4) The last set of stakeholders: *Performing Artists and Local Theaters* (including local actors, local artists, and thespians) may find the 3 R's workshop beneficial because they want to genuinely see the success of youth and will provide their support whenever possible or necessary in any way they can, whether that is providing financial support, or educational support by teaching classes, or attending youth performances.

Overview & Logistics

It can be extremely challenging for youth to understand their identity in a world that constantly tries to dictate who and what they are, or who and what they are supposed to be. Therefore, I argue the first 3 steps to youth finding their true selves are to 1) **Renew** their minds, 2) **Reclaim** their purpose, and 3) **Re-present** their newfound selves to themselves and then the world. I recognize one workshop cannot help youth undo years of self-loathing and self-hating, so I thought it would be more effective to make the workshop a 3-part series, committing time and attention to each of the R's. As I have theorized, renewing one's mind is the first step in

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understanding oneself, therefore the RENEW term/concept is the curriculum I chose to develop first for presentation in this Critical and Creative Thinking synthesis project.

In its entirety, the workshop will span over the course of three days with each day focusing on a different “R”. (I will expand in the following paragraphs.) Each workshop will last 90-minutes with a total of 4.5 hours for the series. Most of the activity and exercises within the curriculum are original ideas, but some have been modified from their original version to better serve the purpose and objectives of the workshop lesson plan. Research produced several handouts on self-esteem I found to be useful for youth’s individual growth as well as entertaining, such as “Mood Music” (Mylemarks), a worksheet that asks youth to identify their favorite songs or the music they listen to when they are in different moods. Additionally, the curriculum is inspired by activities I engaged in as an adolescent while at school or camp. These games and activities made me feel in charge, challenged my creative and critical thinking, and enabled me to verbally share my thoughts and opinions. Examples include leading group discussions or presenting new information from a project; solving mazes, riddles, and picture puzzles; and sharing my creative writing. A more detailed explanation of how youth will be informed about the workshop, the location of the workshop, and additional logistics will be explained towards the end of the paper in the segment entitled, “The Bigger Vision”.

It is my hope that the activities, discussions, and social engagement youth experience will plant a seed of change that continuously grows while the principles and practices discussed throughout the workshop will be retained and utilized in their daily lives. And while I am hoping, it is my wish that the workshop sparks an interest in theater that leads youth to pursue additional theater classes and/or workshops and, ultimately develop a love for the performing arts just as I did.

The Origin of Renew, Reclaim, and Re-present

The inspiration for each “R” word and the corresponding definition was derived from a combination of bible scriptures and conversations with close friends. While theater was my saving grace throughout high school and a little beyond, it was not until I became a Born-Again Christian³ in my mid-twenties that I truly felt complete freedom from my negative thinking and behavior. Just as I consistently struggled with my own self-esteem and self-perception, many of my friends did as well.

Later in life those friends also became Born-Again Christians, and whenever adverse situations would arise in any of our lives, we would often encourage each other using scriptures we had learned on our Christian walk. One day in 2019, while I was lost in self-introspection, I began to randomly reflect on my friend’s encouraging words over the years and the scriptures we often quoted to one another. Three specific scriptures, or the words of these three scriptures resonated with me because they helped me change the way I thought of myself. I began to write out how the scriptures helped me and how I applied them to my life and once I was finished, I closed my phone and did not look at those notes again until a year later.

When the idea arose to create a self-esteem workshop for youth, I remembered the notes or thoughts I had written in my phone and returned to them to draw more inspiration. The Theater and Life Tools (TLT), which I will discuss shortly, had already been identified and defined. I was able to synthesize the “3 R’s” notes with the TLTs and my lived experiences from adolescence to young adulthood to create a working outline for the “3 R’s” workshop, which eventually evolved into the sample curriculum I will be presenting in this paper. The three scriptures that specifically relate to each “R” are:

³Born again, or to experience the new birth, is a phrase, particularly in evangelicalism, that refers to "spiritual rebirth", or a regeneration of the human spirit from the Holy Spirit, contrasted with physical birth.

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Renew - Romans 12:2a⁴ (New International Version)

Reclaim - Jeremiah 29:11⁵ (New International Version)

Re-present - Isaiah 43:18-19a⁶ (New International Version)

With the exception of the word, *Renew*, the words *Reclaim* and *Re-present* are not actually used in the scriptures, but the definition I have created for them still correlates to the meaning or interpretation of the scriptures. Whereas the curriculum sample I am providing only focuses on one of the 3 R's, *Renew*, I thought it was necessary to share the definitions of each one for context.

RENEW

If we are to accomplish anything successful in our lifetime, we must first believe we can, which means we must change any negative perception of who we think we are. Oftentimes we associate our adverse circumstances or wrong choices with our identity. Our misconceptions create a false self-image and can prohibit us from recognizing and understanding our true value. Therefore, it is necessary for us to *renew* our minds, to abandon the self-doubt and negative self-perception we have developed and embrace a more positive outlook, which can allow us to live a fulfilling and prosperous life.

RECLAIM

All of us are born with a purpose, but often when we make mistakes or commit offenses, we count ourselves out or determine we cannot triumph over those mistakes or wrong doings and give up. However, none of us are perfect and life mistakes are inevitable, whether they are

⁴ “Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.”

⁵ “For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.

⁶ “Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past. See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it?”

intentional or not. Nevertheless, we must decide to not allow our transgressions and errors to dictate the rest of our lives and/or prevent us from reaching our full potential. We must search within ourselves to discover what our purpose is and *reclaim* our lives to fulfill that purpose.

RE-PRESENT

Once we have renewed our minds and reclaimed our purpose, we will have evolved into a new person, a person that we nor the world has ever met. Our new identity, our TRUE identity deserves even more recognition and attention than the wrong identity. As we have lived as imposters, believing ourselves to be people we were not and having presented a false version of ourselves to others, it is imperative that we *re-present* our newfound selves to others as well.

Evidence for the 3 R's

While the 3 R's concept is grounded in my religious faith, it is both relevant and appropriate in a Critical and Creative Thinking graduate program to place personal belief in tension with alternatives. Additional research led me to discover that aside from the bible, the objectives of and methods used in Cognitive Behavior Therapy (CBT) not only support the 3 R's concept, but they also align with the workshop's curriculum.

In Edward D. Andrews's book, *Renew Your Mind*, he describes CBT as, "a psycho-social intervention that focuses on challenging and changing unhelpful cognitive distortions and behaviors, improving emotional regulation, and developing personal coping strategies that target solving current problems" (Andrews, 2020). Edwards is not the founder of CBT, (It was founded by Dr. Aaron T. Beck in the 1960s), but his definition or the definition he provided for CBT clearly relates to the primary objective of the 3 R's workshop, which is to change youth's perception or "cognitive distortions" of themselves.

CBT works to eradicate spontaneous negative thoughts, which Dr. Peck called, “automatic thoughts” by helping patients/people identify and evaluate why they are having them. As they uncover the various reasons or roots of their negative thinking using deep introspection, discussions, and exercises, patients begin to think in a more realistic manner, feel emotionally better, and eventually perceive themselves more positively (History of Cognitive Behavior Therapy, 2020). Since its induction, Cognitive Behavior Therapy has demonstrated to be effective in treating a wide variety of disorders with more than 2,000 studies proving its efficacy for psychiatric disorders, psychological problems, and medical problems with a psychiatric component (History of Cognitive Behavior Therapy, 2020).

Further investigation of CBT revealed that negative perceptions or cognitive distortions can be a result of depression, which is not something I actually considered when I began crafting the 3 R’s outline. As an adolescent or young adult, I had never been clinically diagnosed as being depressed, so I did not connect depression to my negative thinking or other youth’s negative thinking. However, in retrospect depression that would have resulted from my traumatic childhood could very well account for my low self-esteem and is perhaps the root of other youths’ self-esteem struggles as well, but that theory is a paper for another day.

Theater and Life Tools (TLT)

I continued performing on stage throughout high school but took a pause in my early twenties. I started again in my mid-twenties and performed my last live production in my late thirties. By the time I completed high school my self-confidence had grown significantly higher from what it was in elementary and middle school and I attribute that growth to my involvement in theater. The more involved I was, the less self-destructive I became and the more I began to like myself. I was better disciplined at controlling my emotions, so my decisions were made

with more forethought and wisdom, thus decreasing my negative and reckless behavior; overall I had a better attitude about life, particularly my life.

I argue that youth also need an attitude adjustment. If they are to stop making bad decisions and become more productive and effective beings in society, they first need to believe they are not worthless, useless, unwanted, or any other negative adjective they perceive themselves to be. My hypothesis is, these damaging beliefs can be combated with what I am coining Theater and Life Tools (TLT), which are developed and acquired while engaging in theater activities, such as studying lines, rehearsing with fellow actors, memorizing stage directions, and performing on stage. These theater-based skills are quite valuable and serve a purpose for young people both on and off stage.

Derek Green, Associate Producer for Education at Cleveland Play House believes this as well, as he states, “theater for teens is a great way to gain self-confidence and work on some of the soft skills that aren’t always taught in school” (Wisner, 2019). Additionally, he states “communication, teamwork, and creative problem-solving are all things youth theater emphasizes” (Wisner, 2019).

The Theater and Life Tools I have identified are listed below. I have created full descriptions of each tool and how they are applied in both theater and in life.

1. Accountability

When in rehearsal or performing, cast members rely on each other to be at their best so they can collectively achieve favorable results, which means they are implicitly holding each other accountable to do the necessary work offstage, as well as holding themselves responsible if they do not do the necessary work. In life, the willingness to accept responsibility for your actions, mistakes, or negative choices builds your character and demonstrates to others you are integrous and trustworthy.

2. Collaboration

Whether you have the lead role or just one line, you are part of a team. Theater teaches you how to successfully work alongside groups of people with multiple personalities, ethnicities, cultures, and beliefs; each of you growing and learning together. Furthermore, there are great advantages to partnering or collaborating with others such as influential power, a sense of community, deeper understanding or alternative perspectives of situations, and additional assistance when solving problems.

3. Commitment

Learning lines, attending multiple rehearsals, and performing numerous times can be tiring and feel redundant. For many, this is not an easy feat and our instinct is to give up or run away from things that are difficult or uncomfortable. But refraining from retreat, pushing past your comfort zone, and staying dedicated no matter what, are qualities of commitment. In life, it is essential for you to be fully committed to accomplish anything or succeed at anything.

4. Confidence

A sense of accomplishment and pride usually follows any theater performance, for it takes several internal and external skills and talents to put on a show and being able to do so may invoke a feeling of self-assurance and appreciation for one's abilities. Therefore, theater cultivates confidence in oneself and your capability to produce something meaningful and great

5. Creative Thinking

In theater you learn how to "think on your feet". Unlike a movie that can be edited, when things go wrong in theater, you must keep going and see it through to the end. This means sometimes you may have to improvise if you or someone forgets their lines. Outside of the theater, learning how to think on your feet is an important skill to have when life challenges arise that you were unprepared for.

6. Detail Orientation

There are a ton of cues and directions in theater and not all of them are verbal. Once you learn how to pay close attention and observe things intently, you will be able to apply those same skills in real life situations for better clarification and understanding.

7. Discipline

In theater discipline is key because it relates to preparation. Once you have been casted in role, you are expected to dedicate countless hours to studying your script, rehearsing lines, learning stage directions, etc. You must train yourself to act in accordance with these expectations to strengthen your acting and become a better performer. It takes self-control and a determined attitude to devote such consistent effort repeatedly; the same self-control and determined attitude are necessary in life to learn new things, accomplish goals, or develop yourself.

8. Focus

Distractions come in every form. You must stay focused on the task at hand, so you can perform during rehearsals and on stage at your best level. Theater teaches you how to block out unnecessary, unwanted, or even harmful hindrances surrounding your life, thus centering your interest on what is important at the time.

9. Humility

In theatre, your words are just as important as your actions, so public speaking is crucial. Audiences rely on what you are saying to follow along with the story, therefore, enunciation and voice projection are fundamental skills. Consistently speaking before an audience helps to enhance communications skills, and helps to overcome speech challenges, such as anxiety and fear, thus increasing your confidence in yourself. Additionally, when used publicly your voice can be a powerful weapon to motivate and promote change.

10. Public Speaking

Substantial time and energy are put into theater rehearsals to ensure a successful performance, which means you must often relinquish spending time with friends and family or doing other leisure activities. In this sense, theater teaches you how to sacrifice things you may want to keep, for the greater good of something else.

11. Sacrifice

Substantial time and energy are put into theater rehearsals to ensure a successful performance, which means you must often relinquish spending time with friends and family or doing other leisure activities. In this sense, theater teaches you how to sacrifice things you may want to keep, for the greater good of something else.

12. Submission

Being able to take direction is very important in theater, even when you feel your way is better for the scene, character, or overall play. Trusting the theater director's vision and ability to lead shows your willingness to submit to the authority of someone else, such capability is just as important in life. Submission in the right context can be viewed as a sign of respect as well as an acknowledgement that you know how to follow others, not just lead.

What's Out There

This segment of the paper contains examples of other comparable youth programming that services middle-school aged youth. As the 3 R's workshop will primarily operate from a Boston based location, I researched programs within Boston and its surrounding areas, and as you can see my findings were limited.

Self Esteem Boston

Self Esteem Boston provides psycho-educational training for clients of community agency programs in greater Boston and the Pioneer Valley, and they provide staff and

organizational development programs for agencies that provide services for at-risk clients throughout Massachusetts. Their primary purpose is to teach self-esteem skills to the homeless, substance abusers, victims of domestic violence, individuals transitioning out of the criminal justice system, and the unemployed (What We Do, 2020).

While Self Esteem Boston is the only Massachusetts program solely focused on self-esteem education, their services and trainings are only available to adults, they do not have youth programming, nor do they mention if they offer training to youth-based organizations.

Girls on the Run (GOTR)

GOTR is an all-girls running program that services young girls from third to twelfth grade. They are recognized as the only national physical activity-based positive youth development program for girls. Young girls learn the importance of connecting the body with the mind. Coaches use a variety of physical activities and discussions to build social, emotional, and physical skills in every girl while encouraging healthy habits for life (Girls on the Run Greater Boston, 2021).

Similarly, GOTR has identified an acquired skillset or tools girls develop while participating in the program, such as confidence, character, care, connections, contribution, and competence (the 6 C's). Two additional similarities they share with the 3 R's is their strong focus on intentional decision-making and helping young girls develop a positive self-identity.

R.I.S.E

R.I.S.E, an acronym for Reaching Into Self Esteem, is another all-girls youth program serving ages 6-14 years old. The program was found in 1994 by Mona Thompson and seeks to foster healthy self-esteem through friendships, self-awareness & community partnerships (RISE, 2020). Though located in Boston, R.I.S.E has now become internationally known after

publishing its pledge in book format in 2017, followed by a two-book series, Shine and Grow (RISE, 2020).

As a former R.I.S.E volunteer I can attest to the quality service it provides to young girls, my daughter being an alum of the program. One of the greatest similarities it shares with the 3 R's is its strong commitment to helping young girls recognize their potential through performing arts and self-reflection activities. I have to admit I am quite surprised there are not many youth programs that exist within Boston that primarily address self-esteem building, most are violence/gang prevention driven, which is not a bad thing because my research has shown that negative behavior and decisions definitely lead to juvenile delinquency and violent crimes. However, I would have liked to see more programs offered for young boys and girls that are not necessarily reactive programs but proactive and more holistic. It is imperative to recognize self-esteem programs are just as important as violence/gang prevention programs, as it is what often leads youth to join gangs or participate in acts of juvenile delinquency to mask the emptiness and unhealthy feelings they have about themselves.

We as a community of adults, leaders, and local government officials must get to the heart of the matter and not look at the aftermath of youth's anger, hurt, and neglect. Preventative measures need to be taken and workshops or programs like the 3 R's is where we need to start.

Beyond the Stage

From my opening paragraph up until now I have shared my personal connection to theater and have illustrated through personal testimony how theater helped me renew, reclaim, and re-present the thoughts, opinions, and beliefs I held about myself during my teenage and young adult years. Now, in this segment, I will provide nonpersonal examples of how other

individuals and professionals, and/or organizations are also utilizing theater concepts and processes in practical manners to assist youth and adults with everyday living.

Theater as Therapy: Using the Stage to Heal and Reveal

As discussed previously, “being yourself” or expressing one’s emotions can be an arduous or even confusing thing for young people to do, hence the benefit of theater; it is a great outlet and safe environment to release frustration and explore feelings and desires without the fear of being judged. Additionally, theater encourages imagination, allowing youth to assume alternative lives and become other characters, which can help alleviate some of the stress they may feel from being themselves, experiencing fun instead. Many psychologists use theater or drama as therapy for these very reasons and more.

According to the North American Drama Therapy Association (NADTA), drama therapy “taps into children and adolescents’ natural propensity toward action and utilizes it to engage them in play as a means of safely exploring issues and painful feelings. Because the drama therapist is willing to meet the child at whatever space they are in, be it angry, frustrated, refusing to talk, etc., and because drama therapy accesses the imagination, it is a safer, familiar method for young people” (Research 101: Frequently Asked Questions, 2021).

In their company fact sheet, NADTA lists several benefits likely to be achieved using drama therapy that align with and support this synthesis, such as reducing feelings of isolation, developing new coping skills and patterns, broadening the range of expression of feelings, and experiencing improved self-esteem and self-worth” (Research 101: Frequently Asked Questions, 2021). As pertaining to decision-making, drama therapy helps to reduce or eliminate feelings of worthlessness and inferiority, feelings of worthlessness and inferiority are two major components of low self-esteem, and low self-esteem contributes to poor decision-making. To support my

overall theory of how low self-esteem affects decision-making I will turn to the work of American psychologist, Lawrence Kohlberg.

Following in the footsteps of famed Swiss psychologist Jean Piaget, who pioneered the Cognitive Development theory, Lawrence Kohlberg developed his own theory entitled, the “Theory of Moral Development”. He believed moral reasoning changed as people grew, which includes decision-making (Kurt, 2020). While decision-making can be influenced by one’s self-esteem, decisions are also influenced by moral reasoning. Kohlberg hypothesized there are three stages to moral development and as people move through each stage, their moral reasoning changes, making their reasoning more abstract (Kurt, 2020). Youth that are acting out may be aware they are behaving inappropriately, but if they are harboring hurt or angry feelings, they may feel justified in their reason for misbehaving, thus demonstrating what Kohlberg describes as abstract reasoning.

Theatrical Intelligence

Ann Sachs is a Carnegie-Mellon theater graduate and has worked as a professional actress on and off Broadway for 25 years (1967-1992). She successfully assisted her husband, Tony Morgan, with theater design for an additional 22 years (1992-2014) before stepping down and focusing on various writing projects (Ensemble Members: Ann Sachs, n.d.). One of those writing projects includes a working theory and concept entitled, “Theatrical Intelligence”. While working with her husband, Ann recognized all the things he hated doing, she loved doing, which later prompted her to develop strategies, exercises, and tools to help others identify their talents and bring them into their work or workplace to re-engage themselves with their job (Sachs, 2021).

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As Ann describes it, Theatrical Intelligence is, “a system that identifies and captures your unique area of talent in order to bring it into your work and your workplace. It is based on the theatrical production model: Collaboration, which is “the foundation all theatre is built on” (Sachs, 2021). Using Howard Gardner’s theory of “Multiple Intelligences”, Ann juxtaposed theater production and the workplace to describe the system components of her own theory.

Such components include:

Eight Roles: 1) Playwright, 2) Producer, 3) Actor, 4) Director, 5) Designer, 6) Manager, 7) Technician, 8) Critic

Six Principles: 1) Everyone shares the same goal 2) Everyone shares an equivalent risk 3) Collaboration rules 4) The work matters 5) Failure is your friend 6) Success requires the courage to step into the unknown

Eight Phases: 1) Creation 2) Development 3) Pre-Production 4) Rehearsal 5) Production 6) Technical Rehearsals/Previews 7) Opening 8) Run of Play

A brief comparison of Ann’s Theatrical Intelligence (TI) concept and my Theater and Life Tools (TLT) shows we both believe theater arts produces skills or tools that can be used in other aspects outside of theater. However, Ann uses actual theater titles, such as director, actor, playwright, etc. to draw a parallel between theater roles and workplace roles, whereas I focus mainly on theater skills/practices being tools. In any event, theater skills-based programs, workshops, or processes are a relevant medium to address developmental objectives in general, and perhaps in particular, an exploration of self-identity for young people.

ACT III

The Bigger Vision - Flip the Script Youth Theater Program

Whereas the 3 R’s workshop curriculum was developed and shaped over the course of this semester, the concept of the workshop was established in 2019. It is part of a bigger vision, the bigger vision being a non-profit organization titled, “Flip the Script”. This final segment

concludes the theoretical part of the paper and discusses next steps as it pertains to the workshop itself. Provided below is a more complete overview of Flip the Script's vision, including logistical details of the overall operation.

Flip the Script is conceptualized as a theater initiative program for at-risk youth and juvenile felons between the ages of 11 and 17. The program's core mission is to use theater as a medium to educate, empower and transform youth, while aiding in the development of their creative voice and confidence in an ever-changing society. The idea was created by my nephew Anthony Goss. Like me, Anthony has a passion for theater and youth and wanted to combine those two passions, as well as expose at-risk youth to the vast opportunities' theater can create for them both inside the world of theater and outside if they are willing to put in the required work. Such opportunities include careers in acting; directing and producing; theatre history and criticism; playwriting; set and costume design; theatre technology; teaching; arts management; public relations; and drama therapy (Fine Arts Career Services: A Career Guide for Theater Majors, 2015) just to name a few.

My involvement in this non-profit venture did not take place until the end of 2019, when Anthony asked me to edit a proposal he was drafting. After reading what he had written and an outline of his business plan, I felt an overwhelming inclination to partner with him. He agreed, and thus began our journey. Our thoughts evolved over meetings and time and it was decided to make Flip the Script a non-profit, so we filed for 501c3 status in March of 2020, right before Covid harshly invaded the world and were approved later that summer.

Upon starting, Flip the Script will identify and negotiate a leasing contract with one of the larger local Boston youth/community organizations to be housed within their establishment until we have enough funding and participants to move into our own space. Potential organizations

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are, the Roxbury Boys and Girls Club, the Dorchester YMCA, The Dorchester Boys and Girls Club, or The Dorchester House. Contact has not been made with any of these organizations, but they are part of our ever-growing stakeholder wish list. We chose them because of their physical size, geographical location, program size, membership size, and reputation within their communities. If we are unable to secure a residence with one of them, we will research other community organizations with our preferred demographics. And if we are still unable to find a youth/community organization, then we will research local theaters with classroom space.

Programs and Performances

While Anthony and I are still teasing out the finer details, (class schedules, names and types of workshops and classes, types of productions, etc.) there are a few things we have decided upon. Flip the Script will be both performance and program based. It will operate year-round, Monday through Friday 1pm-9pm. During the school year, it will serve as an afterschool program and during the summer, hours of operation will coincide with general work hours of Monday through Friday, 9am-5pm to allow more flexibility for activities, field trips, and parents' work schedules. As part of the program's focus is centered on helping or engaging youth held in juvenile detention centers as well so we will have a separate schedule and partnership that enables us to visit various or perhaps just one detention center to teach classes and hold workshops.

Our staff will consist of professionals with varying backgrounds including, theater, music, marketing, technology, education, administration, film, etc. On the performance side, we plan to have classes and workshops that teach theater, film, and entertainment. Students will have the opportunity to perform in both original and existing plays. Our goal is to have one large production each year that serves as a fundraiser and smaller productions throughout the year.

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We have not decided what those productions will be. For the most part, Anthony will oversee the performance side of Flip the Script by directing plays, managing productions, filming videos/short films, etc. When he is unable to do so, someone on staff will step in.

On the programmatic side, we plan to have workshops that focus on life skills, self-care, and self-image. I will oversee these workshops as well as develop original and modified program curricula. As we are looking to help youth modify their perceptions and behaviors, all workshop curricula will indirectly or directly utilize the 12 Theater and Life Tools identified earlier to address the following:

- Prevention – Working to prevent negative behavior or decision-making by encouraging youth to value themselves through tools and strategies that teach them how to recognize their feelings and process them before making regretful decisions. *These tools and strategies will be presented in the form of skits, plays, self-written and published monologues, improvisational exercises, discussions, workshops, guest speakers, and any other materials deemed appropriate and relevant to the objective.*
- Correction – Once youth start to exhibit negative behavior or demonstrate they view themselves as inferior, we will offer ways in which they can change that behavior or perception. *These offerings will be researched resources from other theater and/or self-esteem building youth programming that have been proven to be successful in correcting and modifying negative attitudes and behavior. Additionally, we will offer non-theatrical resources or strategies that assisted both me and Anthony with regulating our anger/behavior and rebuilding and strengthening our own self-esteem, such as coloring, drawing, and playing basketball.*
- Rehabilitation – After mistakes or bad decisions have been made and consequences have been dealt, youth need an opportunity to redeem themselves by learning how to accept responsibility, acknowledge their actions, and rebuild or transform their future. *Opportunities to redeem themselves as well as learn civic responsibility will be in the form of community service work, which is discussed in the next segment.*

Community Service

While our main constituents are youth, we also want to bring Flip the Script outside of its four walls and serve the community. Though Anthony now lives in New York, both he and I were born and raised in Boston, so the program will be Boston-based. Each summer we plan to perform modern day Shakespeare plays in public parks. Students in the program will be able to act alongside professional actors from our staff, and perhaps even me or Anthony. We will offer informal workshops and Q&A sessions after the performances to engage with audience members.

We recognize that community organizations and businesses, as well as residents, are important stakeholders and want to include them in the works we are doing. Additionally, we want to ensure our students/youth understand the concept of civic engagement, therefore we plan to provide opportunities for youth to interact with residents and engage in community service within different neighborhoods. Engagement activities include but are not limited to, free car washes; free lemonade and food stands; assisting with home gardening/landscaping; removing trash and debris from public parks; and cleaning public schools and community centers we service or that need our general assistance.

As stated before, Flip the Script is a big vision and there is still much work to do, but Anthony and I are cognizant that this type of work; empowering young people and helping to build human potential can be challenging, but fulfilling work. We are preparing ourselves for a marathon, not a sprint and once we have crossed the finish line, (completed the 3 R's of Self workshop, secured funding and a location, etc.) we will be prepared to run again with others alongside us.

Conclusion

Throughout this paper I have argued a multi-faceted theory that suggests youth's misperceived beliefs in themselves as well as other poor self-concepts can contribute to and/or propagate a pattern of negative behavior that leads to negative decision-making, and that theater produces and equips youth with soft skills and qualities that not only improve their self-esteem but can benefit them in life as well. The research findings of other comparable youth and theater programming, self-improvement methodology, and self-esteem theories that were presented demonstrate my argument is not only viable but is relevant and relatable to my target audience.

Research has shown me there are a multitude of organizations and professionals committed to the same work I am. While these organizations and professionals may have different names for the tools they use and the work they do, such as "Theatrical Intelligence" or "Theater Therapy", we are all in agreement and care about the same thing, which is the success and holistic development of youth and people in general. When young people are surrounded by a community of supportive individuals, they can learn how to thrive in a cruel world despite the adversities they experience. Recognition of their potential and worth is just the type of knowledge youth need to become the best versions of themselves. The 3 R's workshop is positioned to foster that knowledge of self by utilizing experiential wisdom, an acquired theater-based skillset, and a supportive community of adults.

Measuring Success

It is not always easy to quantitatively evaluate how well a youth is doing in a workshop or if he or she is absorbing/learning and applying the material. Last semester, during my Research and Engagement class I interviewed Rachel Goren for the expert interview assignment. Rachel is the Education Director at The Play Group Theater, a K-12 nonprofit, educational

theatre organization in New York. During my interview, I asked Rachel what the best way was to measure the success of the 3 R's workshop or any workshop and curriculum and she made the following suggestions:

- Monitor youth's involvement
 - Are they actively participating in discussions/activities?
 - Are they having fun?
- For youth who may have behavioral challenges, she suggested to ask their individual teachers if they have noticed a change in their behavior during class, or in school in general. She also suggested I follow up the question by asking if the youths' behavior has gotten better since participating in the 3 R's workshop.
- Give youth an assessment at the beginning, midpoint, and end of the program. As Flip the Script is an ongoing program with no real start or end, a beginning, midpoint, and end of program assessment would have to be broken down into quarters or months.

What If...

While I would love for students to like the 3 R's workshop and all the other workshops, I know that may not be the case, therefore I will need to have a contingency plan or find ways in which I can evaluate the workshop(s). I have come up with the following solutions:

- Develop a questionnaire/survey for youth to complete that allows them to comment on what they did not like about the workshop and make suggestions on how to improve.
- Work with a focus group or someone in the field of curriculum & development to assist me with re-writing the curriculum.
- Conduct more research to see what is working for other organizations.

Personal Reflection

Pushing Past the Hurt

It is no secret to anyone who knows me I am passionate about encouraging others, so writing this paper was easy in that sense, but finding the research to support my passion was sometimes difficult to do. Throwing things in the Google, is not as simple as one might think. You have to ask the “right” questions to get the results you want, which meant I had to often revise my questions. However, once I did figure out the right question syntax, I was able to find sufficient and interesting information.

If I had to identify one thing I valued or learned from my experience writing this synthesis paper, I would say the feedback. The feedback from each writing workshop, peer group, consultation, and even from the synthesis presentation was extremely helpful and pushed me to go the distance even when I thought I had gone far enough. But I will be honest and say the feedback was not always easy to hear, and one set of comments really hurt my feelings, though I know the person did not intend for the comments to do so. However, once I pushed past the hurt and set my feelings aside, I was able to see the truth in what the person said and realized there were some large holes in my paper that needed mending. I am grateful the holes were pointed out before I submitted my final draft, but I am even more grateful I was willing to admit the holes existed, which demonstrates how much I have grown since entering the CCT program, and quite frankly at this late in my life there is no time or room to be prideful, there is only room for growth.

CCT and Me...The Journey

To say my four years in the Critical and Creative Thinking program was a journey would be an understatement. It seems I experienced more personal challenges and adversities during

this academic leg than any other time in my life, now that may not be quite true, but again that is how it seems. But just as much as I have experienced personal adversities, I have also experienced awakenings and epiphanies, both personally and academically, and perhaps the cause and effect for this are one in the same; maturation and a deeper understanding and knowledge of myself.

In a previous reflection paper, I wrote last semester I shared that throughout my entire graduate program experience, I was not living as a CCT student, but merely existing as one. To expand on that statement, I was unable to fully appreciate or utilize the CCT tools I was given because Life kept happening and my attention and emotions were more invested in trying to prevent and solve Life happenings than learning from them. What I find most ironic about even being a part of the CCT family is that I initially did not want to join the program because I did not think it was the right fit for the career I was trying to pursue, but in retrospect, it was the exact program I needed to join to teach myself how to think differently.

I had decided in my last year of undergrad I no longer wanted to become an English teacher and go back into the classroom, instead I wanted to develop a curriculum; a new holistic and inclusive curriculum that I felt was missing in the public middle school sector. Leading up to that “aha” moment, I had never written a formal curriculum, nor did I know how to write one, but I did know how to use my vivid imagination, so I just pretended I knew what I was doing. I periodically researched Massachusetts frameworks and standards for middle school English curricula and then wrote ideas for lesson plans based on what I read. I wrote assessments, objectives, propositions, counterpropositions, and a ton of reflective reasoning. Of course, I did not know these things I was writing had conventional names in the education and CCT world;

that I learned when I entered grad school, but at the time I was simply writing them intuitively and from a place of passion.

But let me back up, because this “aha” moment I experienced did not just randomly happen, it was happening my entire life, but I was not aware of it. The passion that I spoke of was fueled by my disdain for the use of standardization in education, specifically in testing and curricula. I struggled with reading comprehension from elementary to high school. However, my comprehension struggles could have been eased or resolved if my elementary and high school teachers saw me as an individual person and not a “standard” student. They neglected and failed to provide alternative ways to teach me subject matter, so I continued to drown in an abyss of confusion, doubt, shame, rejection, and hurt that eventually led me to become the case study I wrote about in this paper.

At some point after I graduated from high school, my comprehension greatly improved, and I turned into an avid reader, reading 4-6 books a month and even more in the summer. My newfound love for reading, my experiences as a struggling reader, and working daily with over 300 middle school students inspired me to become an English teacher, so I charted the course and shipped off. And as I shared, I was sailing smoothly until that last year in undergrad when I decided to rechart my course and go in a different direction.

As I had no experience in developing curriculum, I knew I had to learn so I began researching master programs in *education*. Unfortunately, every program required a one-year practicum that I could not afford or wanted to do. I had left my full-time job as a middle school educator to finish my last year in undergrad and that was a financial struggle. I survived with my husband’s support, but there was no way I was going to do it again, so I needed to find an

alternative masters programs in *education*. If you notice, I keep italicizing the word education, that is because it holds significance in this story, which I will soon share...I promise.

I looked into UMass Boston's Master of Education program and found a major that specialized in curriculum design and did not require me to complete a practicum. I excitedly clicked on the link only to find out the program had been dismantled and replaced by Critical and Creative Thinking...what the Sam? WHAT IN THE WORLD WAS CRITICAL AND CREATIVE THINKING?! I was so upset that I slammed my laptop close and did not return to the website until almost a month later when I felt a prompting to do so. The problem, or what I thought was the problem, was that CCT was not a Master of Education program, and I did not want to major in some willy-nilly program that was not going to propel me to my destiny of curriculum design; but my thinking was way off base. After forcing myself to reread the CCT program description I realized the curriculum principles I needed to learn, (construction, purpose, depth, progression, relevance, coherence, etc.) and what I wanted to do, (design a reimagined and transformative middle-school curriculum) could be accomplished in the CCT program, well at least I could be given the tools to accomplish these things. I applied, got accepted, and here we are...

So, to circle back to what I said about CCT being the exact program I needed to help me change my way of thinking, I was so convinced I could only learn how to design curriculum within a Master of Education program that I did not consider there were other routes I could take to get me to my destination. My own peripheral vision and biased thinking almost cost me to lose out on participating in one of the best academic programs in existence, but thankfully I did not miss my shot.

8 Things that I Have Learned

I have learned numerous things while participating in the Critical and Creative Thinking program, but I think they all can be summarized in these eight bullets...at least I will try to summarize them:

- To think outside the box, you have to be *willing* to think outside the box.
- True growth and change cannot take place without submission.
- Just when you think you have gone deep enough, go deeper.
- To get the best answers, you must ask the right questions, to know the right questions, you must consider what you want to explore.
- Acquiring knowledge cannot produce sustainable change alone, there has to be a repeated process of returning to the drawing board to discover new methods and apply those methods to what you already know; this is how you build a better mouse trap; this is how you reinvent yourself.
- CCT is the mirror that forces you to take a hard look at yourself and then dare to see more.
- You cannot be you if you are told who you are, instead you must find yourself through introspection, reflection, and some good, old-fashioned acceptance.
- To renew your thinking, you must figure out why you thought what you did and resolve that first.

Where Do I Go from Here?

After spending five months of thinking, researching, analyzing, writing, and revising the contents within this synthesis paper, I would be lying if I said I was done. The truth is, I am more excited than ever to finish the 3 R's Workshop, especially now that Flip the Script has

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received 501c3 status and we are able to apply for funding. As I discussed briefly in “The Bigger Vision” segment, the 3 R’s workshop will span over the course of one-week, therefore I need to develop the lesson plans for the additional days, being mindful of the multiple learning modalities that exist and creating or modifying the activities and exercises to be diverse and inclusive. I am also going to revise my current synthesis presentation so it is more appropriate for potential funders and create a second presentation that I am calling a “multi-versed” presentation, the format will be conversational, workshop-style, and include interactive activities relating to the content within the 3 R’s workshop.

Anthony and I plan on using the 3 R’s as a catalyst for other workshops, but first we want to perfect it: iron out all the kinks before developing any new self-awareness or self-development workshops. Once the 3 R’s is up and running, we agree the best way to measure its success is to use an evaluation form and simply ask participants/youth about their experience with the workshop and me, as a facilitator. Those responses will be instrumental in revising and updating the workshop content.

Now that I have a little more time on my hands, I plan to focus on my poetry and art business, Artfelt Words and continue writing my blog, www.iamnatashanicole.com. I usually write my blog on Sundays, but I have been dedicating the past 4 weekends to finishing my presentation and this synthesis. I plan to revamp my Etsy store to include my latest word art posters and digitize all its inventory to make them more accessible to customers and less of a hassle for me to ship them out. Additionally, I plan to continue designing and writing greeting cards and find stores, such as the Paper Source that would be willing to sell them, at least on a trial basis, in their store.

DEVELOPING A THEATER SKILLS-BASED WORKSHOP

Finally, I want to make sure I accomplish what I enrolled in CCT to do; design and create a reimagined and transformative middle-school curriculum. Now that I have obtained the skills and tools to do so, I have no excuse. Even if it takes the next ten years to develop, I believe this new curriculum will be worth the wait and definitely beneficial to the generations it will serve.

In general, there are many other things I would like to do, (clearly, I have to live to be 102 years old to accomplish them all) but the one thing I can *never* stop doing is utilizing my creativity, writing, and voice to encourage, educate, and empower others. As an adolescent, I may not have understood my purpose, doubted my worth, and questioned my identity, but I am certain of who I am now. I am a leader, an encourager, and a visionary; I AM a change agent.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: THE 3 R'S OF SELF WORKSHOP CURRICULUM: RENEW – DAY 1

Workshop Description

It has been proven that when youth feel good about themselves or are in control of their emotions, they are more cognizant and intentional about the decisions or choices they make. Furthermore, because they value their self-worth and lives, they will most likely not engage in behaviors or activities that jeopardize either one. (Nemours Foundation, n.d.)

This workshop is designed for youth struggling with negative behavior patterns, poor decision-making skills, and/or low self-esteem. By adopting and implementing simple theater practices to their everyday lives, youth will be able to:

1. Identify misconceptions they have about themselves
2. Build their self-esteem
3. Recognize and foster their talents and strengths
4. Understand their self-worth.

Logistics

The workshop is imagined as a 3-part series spanning over the course of 3 days. The overall workshop length is 4.5 hours with each workshop focusing on a different “R” and lasting 90-minutes. The R’s in the workshop stand for **Renew**, **Reclaim**, and **Re-present**. Activities and exercises for each workshop day will be completed utilizing limited acting and improvisation, icebreaker exercises, group discussions, and individual reflective activities.

As a part of their learning journey, youth will be provided with a journal to take notes, answer questions, and record their thoughts. They will be encouraged to periodically write in the journal outside of the workshop as a way to regulate their emotions, evoke mindfulness and

DEVELOPING A THEATER SKILLS-BASED WORKSHOP

creativity, and reflect on their day. In addition, youth will be provided with their own workshop binder. The binder will be separated by workshop days and contain additional activities, exercises, and worksheets youth can complete in their leisure time apart from the workshop. All contents are carefully researched and designed as self-esteem building tools, or points of reference whenever necessary.

Youth are expected to bring their journals and binders each day of the workshop. The binder will house all additional handouts given throughout the workshop series. On the last day of the workshop, youth will be given an evaluation form to rate and comment on their workshop experience and evaluate the facilitator's effectiveness and ability to present relevant, informative, and helpful material they can apply in their daily lives.

RENEW (Day 1)

Purpose:

Oftentimes youth associate their negative circumstances or choices with their identity. Their misconceptions can cause them to create a false image of self, which prohibits them from seeing their true value. Therefore, it is fitting for youth to begin this workshop and their transformation by *renewing* their mind or changing the way they look at themselves. Through a series of independent self-esteem activities and group discussions youth will learn about self-concepts, the role these play in their lives, as well as discover ways to combat their own negative self-perceptions.

“RENEW” Binder Content:

Self-Esteem Apologies Sheet (Bos, 2021)

- A handout that list things youth should not apologize for needing, wanting, or having.

Over-apologizing can be a symptom of low self-esteem triggered by insecurities and self-

DEVELOPING A THEATER SKILLS-BASED WORKSHOP

doubt. Youth, and people in general do not need to apologize for simply existing in the world or having needs; this handout serves as a reminder of that.

Mood Music Handout Worksheet (Mylemarks)

- Music is said to be a universal language, but it is also known to change and control emotions. This worksheet is a fun way youth can identify the way music impacts their emotions and feelings by answering the statements with songs.

Theater and Life Tools List

- This handout identifies 12 soft skills, attitudes, and principles formed and practiced in theater performing arts and describes how they can be used in daily living. *Please note, this handout is not exclusive to the “RENEW” lesson plan but is relevant to each workshop day since it contains tools youth can utilize in all three stages of finding their true identity.*

Optical Illusions Packet

- This packet contains a series of fun optical illusions youth can review and share with others. Optical illusions require great focus and perception to see the image being disguised or hidden. Just like the hidden image, youth who struggle with self-perception have difficulty identifying their true selves.

Theater and Life Tools

Listed below are the “Theater and Life Tools” used for the RENEW workshop activities. Each tool displays a short definition of how they relate or can be applied to the lesson plan’s objectives. ***(Please note, these definitions are only excerpts and have been modified to meet the lesson plan needs. For full definitions of each tool, see the “Theater and Life Tool List” in the Appendix).***

DEVELOPING A THEATER SKILLS-BASED WORKSHOP

- *Commitment* - Stay committed to the process of changing one's mind and actively striving to see your worth.
- *Confidence* - Be proud of who are currently are, recognize your short-comings, and be confident that in time you will become the person you wish to be.
- *Creative Thinking* – When experiencing a loss or being unable to accomplish a task, rather than seeing oneself as a failure, think of creative ways to find the brighter side of the situation, in other words find the lesson in each loss.

Objectives

- Students will be able to recognize the misconceptions they have about themselves.
- Students will learn the definitions of self-esteem, self-image, and self-perception.
- Students will be able to identify and name attributes they like and dislike about themselves.
- Students will be able to understand the power of words and the role they play on their lives.
- Students will be able to create and use positive declarations/affirmations to combat low self-esteem.
- Students will be able to identify SMART goals and name their own short-term personal goals.

Guiding Questions

These questions will be used as whole group discussion prompts before and after activities. They are meant to reinforce the objectives of the lesson plan, as well as provoke youth to apply their critical thinking skills to make connections and explore tensions between what they are learning and the self-concepts and knowledge they currently have about themselves.

DEVELOPING A THEATER SKILLS-BASED WORKSHOP

- What is a misconception?
- How do misconceptions affect the way you think about yourself or act?
- Why is it important to understand your worth?
- Why are words and thoughts powerful?
- How does negative self-concepts affect one's ability to make good decisions?
- What role does theater play in developing self-esteem?
- How does theater skills/principles such as, commitment, confidence, and creative thinking translate to life?

Key Terms/Vocabulary

- Affirmations
- Self-Esteem
- Self-Image
- Self-Perception

Materials

- Pencils and Pens (Used all three days)
- Journals (Used all three days)
- 3 R's Workshop Binder (Used all three days)
- Markers
- Handheld mirrors
- Colorful Index Cards
- Key Ring
- Scissors
- Glue Sticks

Central Texts & Handouts

- STAR Pledge Handout
- Self-Assessment Check-up Worksheet (Mylemarks)
- Designing Affirmations (Ackerman, Positive Psychology, 2020)
- Positive Self-Talk Handout (Mylemarks)
- SMART Goals Worksheet (Smart Goals)

Workshop Pace (90 Minutes)

- *Warm-ups/Introductions – 30 minutes*
 - Introductions – 10 mins.
 - STAR Pledge – 5 mins.
 - Icebreaker – 10 mins.
 - Agenda/Objectives – 5 mins.
- *Presentation of New Skills/ Material/Concepts – 10 minutes*
- *Activities – 30 minutes*
 - Self-Assessment Check-up – 10 mins.
 - Affirmations – 10 mins.
 - Positive Self-Talk – 10 mins.
- *Assessment – 10 minutes*
 - Comp Checks (Comprehension Checks)
- *Wrap-up – 10 minutes*
 - Next Steps – 5 mins.
 - Q&A – 5 mins.

Assessments

Debrief discussions and a comprehension check will serve as assessments throughout the workshop series.

- **Debriefs** – Following the “Self-Esteem Check-Up” activity and the “Defining Affirmations” activity, youth will engage in a quick debriefing to discuss any new knowledge or revelations or comment on the activity. Youth will be informed before starting activities they will lead the debriefing. While they are not required to share information from their individual worksheets, they are welcomed to do so.

LESSON PLAN

Below is the agenda/lesson plan. Please note all items are listed in the order they will be executed during the workshop.

1. Warm-ups/Introductions

Introductions

The facilitator will introduce him or herself and the workshop. Youth will then introduce themselves by answering the following questions.

1. What is your name?
2. What school do you attend?
3. What was your favorite childhood game?

STAR Pledge

Youth will be given a copy of the STAR pledge. After a brief explanation of the pledge, youth will recite the pledge together. The pledge will be recited each day.

Purpose:

STAR is an acronym for Flip the Script's four core values, which are 1) Show-up, 2) Trust the Process, 3) Accept Your Truth, and 4) Rewrite Your Story. Each value must be embraced by youth if they are to see sustainable growth and change to their self-esteem and themselves in general.

The STAR Pledge combines these values in a succinct manner, which is easy to understand and remember. Similarly, to affirmations, the pledge is a positive and personal declaration or promise youth can make to themselves. It was written with all intents and purposes to challenge youth to acknowledge their shortcomings, acknowledge change as a process, and recognize their current state in life, whatever it may be, is not their final destination unless they chose for it be. When spoken on a consistent basis, the words will establish a new set of truths and hopefully transform those individuals who need change the most.

Agenda/Objectives

The facilitator will discuss the agenda for RENEW – Day 1, as well as list the (6) objectives and the (3) Theater and Life Tools associated with the objectives.

Icebreaker - Mirror, Mirror

Youth will be given a handheld mirror and marker to write with. 3-5 minutes will be given to write negative words or criticisms they have ever said or continue to say to themselves on the mirror. Once they have finished writing, they will look at themselves in the mirror. If done correctly youth should be unable to see themselves, which is the objective of the exercise. A brief discussion will follow explaining how too many negative words we say about ourselves can prevent us from seeing who we truly are.

Purpose:

The purpose of this icebreaker is to demonstrate to youth how criticisms and negative words and thoughts can prevent them from seeing themselves. If youth are going to renew their minds, they must also renew their words and thoughts so their reflection in the mirror is one they are proud of and enjoy seeing.

2. Presentation of New Skills/ Material/Concepts

In preparation for the first activity the facilitator will introduce the following key terms, 1) Self-Esteem; 2) Self-Image; 3) Self-Perception. As a group youth will briefly discuss their understanding of each word, including their similarities and their differences. The terms self-image and self-perception are sometimes used interchangeably with self-esteem, but each term holds a slightly different meaning and therefore their proper context should be understood.

The below definitions and descriptions are derived from three different sources, including Daryl Bem's "Self-Perception Theory.

- Self-Esteem – how we feel about ourselves and how we judge our worth. This evaluation has a profound impact on the choices we make since it determines, to a great extent, what we consider ourselves capable and worthy of doing (LaTour, 2014).
- Self-Image – our view or concept of ourselves. Self-image is a crucial aspect of an individual's personality that can determine the success of relationships and a sense of general well-being. A negative self-image is often a cause of dysfunctions and of self-abusive, self-defeating, or self-destructive behavior (American Association of Psychology, n.d.).
- Self-Perception – our view, opinions, and attitudes of ourselves developed by observing our own behaviors and emotions and drawing conclusions from them (Bem, 1972).

3. **Activities**

Individual Activity 1 - Self-Esteem Check-Up

Youth will be given the “Self-Esteem Check-Up” worksheet (see Appendix) to complete individually. After 5 minutes, they will come back together as a group and answer the below questions. To promote leadership opportunities and engagement, the facilitator will ask for a youth to volunteer to facilitate the discussion.

Purpose:

The purpose of the activity is to help youth identify the areas in their lives where they may feel insecure, inferior and/or doubtful. Once these areas are identified, youth can request help discovering the origin of their feelings, understanding why they have them, and learn how to change them.

Questions for discussion include:

- What did you learn about yourself from this activity?
- Was your rating higher or lower than you expected?
- What is one thing you can do to increase your rating?

Individual Activity 2 – Defining Affirmations

Youth will be given the Affirmations Instruction Sheet as a point of reference for the activity. The facilitator will introduce the key term, Affirmation and provide instructions for the activity. Using their completed Self-Esteem Check-Up worksheet and journals, youth will write their own affirmations based on their lowest check-up ratings. After 5 minutes, they will come back together as a group and answer the below questions. To promote leadership opportunities and engagement, the facilitator will ask for a youth to volunteer to facilitate the discussion.

Purpose:

The purpose of this activity is to encourage and teach youth how to boldly pronounce positive declarations about themselves. The exercise in itself is a courageous step towards dismantling pessimistic beliefs and improving positive thought, as youth are challenged to repeat the affirmations daily whether in private or before family and/or friends.

Questions for discussion include:

- What is one tip for creating or using affirmations?
- What did you find most challenging about creating affirmations?
- What did you like or dislike about this activity?

Group Activity 3 – Positive Self-Talk Cards

To further reinforce the idea of “renewing” negative self-perceptions and/or self-images, youth will create mobile positive self-talk cards they can bring anywhere with them and refer to as needed. Each youth will choose (14) pre-hole punched colored 3x5 index card. A bin of markers, scissors, and glue sticks will be placed on each table group to share. *(If tables are not set in a U-shape, then youth will retrieve their own materials, including an individual pack of markers).* Youth will be instructed to remove their “Positive Self-Talk handout from their binder and follow the instructions on the handout. After cutting and pasting individual self-talk statements on each index card, youth should have a collection of (14) positive self-talk cards attached to a keyring. *(Facilitator should encourage youth to decorate their cards.)*

Once the activity is completed, the facilitator will lead a comprehension check as the final debrief discussion. The debriefing questions are found in the following segment entitled, “Comprehension Checks”.

Purpose:

This activity is yet another way for youth to reinforce positive thinking. It is my experience that when you lack self-confidence you often compare yourself to others and find difficulty accepting yourself and/or seeing the great attributes you possess. The Self-Talk cards are a helpful tool youth can use when they need a confidence boost. The cards contain several uplifting statements to remind youth how special they are.

4. Assessment

Comprehension Checks

At the closing of each workshop day and once all activities have been completed, a final debrief discussion will take place to briefly assess or get a pulse on youth's comprehension of the day's activities. Youth will answer the following questions:

- What is one thing you can take away from today?
- What did you learn that you can start doing today or tomorrow?
- What is the difference between self-esteem, self-image, and self-perception?
- How have today's activities or discussions help you better understand how you perceive yourself?

5. Wrap-up

SMART Goals

For next steps or preparation for the proceeding workshop day, RECLAIM, youth will be given the "SMART Goals" handout. A brief explanation will be given about the worksheet and youth will be instructed to complete the worksheet for homework.

Before concluding for the day, 5-minutes will be given to allow youth to ask clarifying questions about events of the day, homework, or the workshop in general.

Purpose:

The purpose of the SMART Goals activity is to assist youth with understanding the purpose and importance of goal setting. Rather than striving to achieve one large unrealistic or poorly timed goal, youth will learn how to craft smaller personal goals that can be just as important and more attainable. The key is for youth to trust the process of change and success no matter how long it may take. Overnight success is not necessarily a good thing or the best thing because lessons are usually lost or devalued along the way. As Aesop's fable of the hare and the tortoise teaches, "slow and steady" often wins the race.

APPENDIX B: STAR PLEDGE

S.T.A.R Pledge

I am a STAR.

I show up in life ready to face my challenges.

I trust the process of endurance because I know my results will be great.

I accept my truth, knowing full well the person I am today is not who I will be tomorrow.

I am rewriting the negative stories of my past and present, and becoming the best version of myself.

APPENDIX C: STAR VALUES

S.T.A.R Values

We believe that every person is a S.T.A.R. However, to achieve success or stardom in this world and fulfill your God-given purpose, there are four things we believe you must do.

Show-up

The first step in succeeding in anything in life is showing up. Nothing ever gets accomplished without first deciding to be present and accepting the task or challenge presented to you. You must show up for the easy and hard things, not just literally, but figuratively as well. And when you do show up, be ready to learn; explore; practice; work hard; and most importantly, open yourself up to new ideas and opportunities.

Trust the Process

In a millennium so eager to gain instant gratification, patience has almost become a lost virtue, but everything in life has a process. Processes can be difficult, exhausting, and sometimes painful. However, one must continue to strive to the other side of the process to receive the results he or she is looking for.

Accept Your Truth

Embrace the good and bad things about yourself, which means accepting your truths. It is easy to hide behind a mask or play a role other than yourself when pain is associated with your truth. But regardless of how you feel, despite how ugly your truth looks, you must accept yourself for who you currently are with the understanding that you will not be that person forever.

Rewrite Your Story

Mistakes from your past can easily keep you from living in the present or believing you have a future to look forward to. But everyone is capable of being redeemed, and therefore can rewrite their stories. By changing your perspective of yourself and your situation, you can radically alter your life narrative, so you become a never-ending saga that is full of hope and joy and becomes better with each edit.

APPENDIX D: SELF-ESTEEM CHECK-UP WORKSHEET

Self-Esteem Check-Up

The way you think of yourself plays a huge role in the way you interact with others and how you respond to different life situations. Truly accepting yourself, flaws and all, is one of the most important factors to living a happy and flourishing life.

Directions: Rate from 0 to 10 how much you believe each statement. ‘0’ means you do not believe it at all and ‘10’ means you completely believe it.

Statement	Rate
1. I believe in myself	_____
2. I am just as valuable as other people	_____
3. I would rather be me than someone else	_____
4. I am proud of my accomplishments	_____
5. I feel good when I get compliments	_____
6. I can handle criticism	_____
7. I am good at solving problems	_____
8. I love trying new things	_____
9. I respect myself	_____
10. I like the way I look	_____
11. I love myself even when others reject me	_____
12. I know my positive qualities	_____
13. I focus on my successes and not my failures	_____
14. I’m not afraid to make mistakes	_____
15. I am happy to be me	_____
Total Score	_____

Overall, how would you rate your self-esteem on the following scale:



I don't like
who I am

I completely like
who I am

Think on It: *What would need to change in your life for you to move up one point on the rating scale? (For example, if you rated yourself a “5”, what would need to happen for you to rate yourself a “6”?)*

APPENDIX E: DESIGNING AFFIRMATIONS INSTRUCTION SHEET

Designing Affirmations

To have a positive impact on your self-esteem, your self-affirmations should be positively focused. Goal related positive affirmations should concern behaviors you can act in accordance with to reinforce your sense of self-identity, or outcomes that are related to meaningful personal values.

Try to practice them regularly if your goal is to build a self-narrative that will enhance your self-esteem over time.

- *Affirmations start with the words “I am...”*
- *Affirmations are positive. Never use the word “not” in an affirmation. For example, instead of writing “I am not afraid to express myself,” you could write, “I am confidently sharing my opinion”.*
- *Affirmations are short.*
- *Affirmations are specific. For example, instead of writing, “I am driving a new car,” you would write, “I am driving a new black Range Rover”.*
- *Affirmations are in the present tense and include a word that ends in “-ing”.*
- *Affirmations have a “feeling” word in them. Examples include “confidently,” “successfully,” or “gracefully”.*
- *Affirmations are about yourself. They should be about your own behavior, never someone else’s.*

When you have a set of affirmations ready, you can try these tips for using them:

- Place them somewhere you can see them every day.
- Say and visualize your affirmations every day
- If your affirmations include goals, take time to see yourself accomplishing the goals you’ve set.
- Think about how good it will feel once you have accomplished your goals.

To get into the habit, try to start by sticking with a schedule—for example, you might try repeating your affirmations:

1. When you wake up
2. On your break at school or work
3. Before going to sleep

Visualizing and planning for success makes it much more likely that you will achieve your goals. If needed, give your child guidance and support when coming up with affirmations, but allow them to take ownership of this activity and see the amazing results of their commitment.

Positive Self-Talk

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APPENDIX F: POSITIVE SELF-TALK CARDS – PAGE 2

оНЖЛЦІННЖТ
ЗЙКЕЦ оВМЦІННЖ
ЎМНАДР ЈКПНЖКП

Г ЦІЛНЖОЦІННЖЛЖ
ЖИЦІЛЬЛБЕЛЫЕУНЖ
ДІЗЙЖНДРКВКЖТД?

Г ЦІЛІЙНКАНУЖЖ
ЛЦАЖКІЈЖДРКВК
ЛЦІЛЬВЕЖОЖТІМ

оНЖЛЕПННЖ
ЛВІЗІЙНДРКВКЖ
ЖИЖКГ ТІПЦІНН
НАКІЙЕЛКІЙЕУЦК

ωЦІЙНІЙНКАТЦАЖ
ЛЦІЛЬВМЦІБЕЛНЖОВГ
РЕЦ оЛБЕЛНЖЖЖУЫ
ЈТШЙ

ωЛЦІВВННБЕКР
ОЦІЛЦВРІЈЖДЦ о
ЎБЛЖННАНБОЦІЛК
ЛЙМ

APPENDIX G: SMART GOALS WORKSHEET – PAGE 1

GOAL:



What do you want to accomplish? Who needs to be involved to help you?



How can you measure progress and know if you've successfully met your goal?



Is this goal realistic? Do you have the required skills to attain this goal?



Why am I setting this goal now? Does it matter to me?



How long will it take to accomplish this goal? When will I complete it?

APPENDIX G: SMART GOALS WORKSHEET – PAGE 2



Make sure your goal is focused and identifies a physical or noticeable outcome. Without the specifics, your goal runs the risk of being unclear. Being more specific helps you identify what you want to achieve. You should also identify what resources you are going to use to achieve success.



You should have some clear definition of success. This will help you to evaluate achievement as well as progress. This part often answers how much or how many of something you will need and highlights how you'll know you've achieved your goal.



Your goal should be challenging, but still reasonable to achieve. Reflecting on this part can reveal any potential barriers that you may need to overcome to realize success. Outline the steps you're planning to take to achieve your goal.



This is about getting real with yourself and ensuring what you're trying to achieve is worthwhile to you. Determine if this is aligned to your values and if it is priority focus for you. This helps you answer the why.



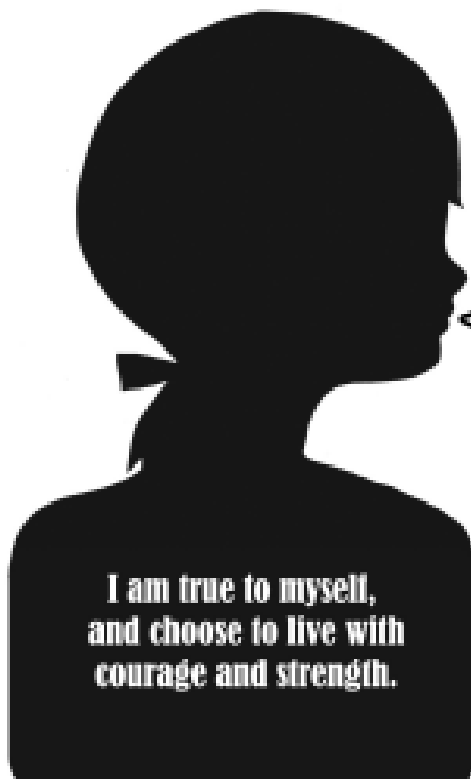
Every goal needs a target date, something that motivates you to really apply the focus and discipline necessary to achieve it. It's important to set a realistic time frame to achieve your goal to ensure you don't get discouraged.

APPENDIX H: SELF-ESTEEM APOLOGIES SHEET

What I should apologize for:

- For hurting someone through my actions or words

An apology is an admission that you've wronged others and that you are actually sorry for it.




What I should NOT apologize for:

- For saying NO
- For being strong
- For being different
- For being unique
- For wanting something
- For asking questions
- For not knowing how to do something
- For not understanding or knowing the answer
- For not being perfect
- For being good at something
- For being bad at something
- For learning and growing
- For listening to my needs
- For being honest
- For not meeting someone else's expectations of me
- For not doing what someone else wants
- For taking care of myself
- For asking for what I need
- For standing up for myself
- For being brave
- For being bold
- For following my dream
- For being awesome
- For my priorities
- For being better at something than someone else
- For being true to myself
- For following my heart
- For believing in myself
- For not wanting the same thing as someone else
- For choosing my own path
- For standing my ground
- For loving someone
- For taking care of myself
- For my choices
- For needing to take time
- For someone else
- For being me




APPENDIX I: MOOD MUSIC WORKSHEET




Mood Music

Music can be very powerful. Sometimes we use it to change our moods, and other times we choose songs that can relate to how we're feeling in the moment. Use this worksheet to share about music and how it may impact your mood.

<p>A song I listen to when I'm feeling angry...</p> <hr/> <p>A song that makes me dance every time...</p> <hr/> <p>My favorite song lyric of all time...</p> <hr/> <p>My favorite musician of all time...</p> <hr/> <p>A musician that I can't stand to listen to...</p> <hr/> <p>A song that makes me feel good about myself...</p> <hr/>	<p>A song that I listen to when I'm feeling sad...</p> <hr/> <p>My favorite place to listen to music...</p> <hr/> <p>A song that gets me pumped up...</p> <hr/> <p>A song that reminds me of my favorite person...</p> <hr/> <p>A song that calms me down when I'm anxious...</p> <hr/> <p>My guilty pleasure song...</p> <hr/>	<p>My favorite musical group of all time...</p> <hr/> <p>A song that best describes me...</p> <hr/> <p>A song that gets me pumped up...</p> <hr/> <p>A song that reminds me of my favorite person...</p> <hr/> <p>A song that calms me down when I'm anxious...</p> <hr/> <p>A song I can listen to on repeat all day...</p> <hr/> <p>A song that has made me cry...</p> <hr/>
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My guilty pleasure song...



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For more resources, visit www.mylemarks.com
Illustration by PigKind | www.pigkind.com/Products/

Theater and Life Tools

Accountability

When in rehearsal or performing, cast members rely on each other to be at their best so they can collectively achieve favorable results, which means they are implicitly holding each other accountable to do the necessary work offstage, as well as holding themselves responsible if they do not do the necessary work. In life, the willingness to accept responsibility for your actions, mistakes, or negative choices builds your character and demonstrates to others you are integrous and trustworthy.

Collaboration

Whether you have the lead role or just one line, you are part of a team. Theater teaches you how to successfully work alongside groups of people with multiple personalities, ethnicities, cultures, and beliefs; each of you growing and learning together. Furthermore, there are great advantages to partnering or collaborating with others such as influential power, a sense of community, deeper understanding or alternative perspectives of situations, and additional assistance when solving problems.

Commitment

Learning lines, attending multiple rehearsals, and performing numerous times can be tiring and feel redundant. For many, this is not an easy feat and our instinct is to give up or run away from things that are difficult or uncomfortable. But refraining from retreat, pushing past your comfort zone, and staying dedicated no matter what, are qualities of commitment. In life, it is essential for you to be fully committed to accomplish anything or succeed at anything.

Confidence

A sense of accomplishment and pride usually follows any theater performance, for it takes several internal and external skills and talents to put on a show and being able to do so may invoke a feeling of self-assurance and appreciation for one's abilities. Therefore, theater cultivates confidence in oneself and your capability to produce something meaningful and great.

Creative Thinking

In theater you learn how to "think on your feet". Unlike a movie that can be edited, when things go wrong in theater, you must keep going and see it through to the end. This means sometimes you may have to improvise if you or someone forgets their lines. Outside of the theater, learning how to think on your feet is an important skill to have when life challenges arise that you were unprepared for.

Detail Orientation

There are a ton of cues and directions in theater and not all of them are verbal. Once you learn how to pay close attention and observe things intently, you will be able to apply those same skills in real life situations for better clarification and understanding.

APPENDIX J: THEATER AND LIFE TOOLS LIST – PAGE 2

Discipline

In theater discipline is key because it relates to preparation. Once you have been casted in role, you are expected to dedicate countless hours to studying your script, rehearsing lines, learning stage directions, etc. You must train yourself to act in accordance with these expectations to strengthen your acting and become a better performer. It takes self-control and a determined attitude to devote such consistent effort repeatedly; the same self-control and determined attitude are necessary in life to learn new things, accomplish goals, or develop yourself.

Focus

Distractions come in every form. You must stay focused on the task at hand, so you can perform during rehearsals and on stage at your best level. Theater teaches you how to block out unnecessary, unwanted, or even harmful hindrances surrounding your life, thus centering your interest on what is important at the time.

Humility

When a performance goes well, the credit almost always goes to the stars of the show, but it must be remembered that the success of any production is a team effort, there is no room for big I's and little U's. Those who possess a lead role understand they are only as good as the cast who works alongside them and whatever accolades they receive must be shared by all. In life, the same holds true. Despite how talented, skilled, or intelligent one may be, having too much pride can be more of a liability than an asset. Learning to think of yourself less is not an admission of weakness, but a sign of strength, and demonstrates your ability to recognize there are others just as great as you.

Public Speaking

In theatre, your words are just as important as your actions, so public speaking is crucial. Audiences rely on what you are saying to follow along with the story, therefore, enunciation and voice projection are fundamental skills. Consistently speaking before an audience helps to enhance communications skills, and helps to overcome speech challenges, such as anxiety and fear, thus increasing your confidence in yourself. Additionally, when used publicly your voice can be a powerful weapon to motivate and promote change.

Sacrifice

Substantial time and energy are put into theater rehearsals to ensure a successful performance, which means you must often relinquish spending time with friends and family or doing other leisure activities. In this sense, theater teaches you how to sacrifice things you may want to keep, for the greater good of something else.

Submission

Being able to take direction is very important in theater, even when you feel your way is better for the scene, character, or overall play. Trusting the theater director's vision and ability to lead shows your willingness to submit to the authority of someone else, such capability is just as important in life. Submission in the right context can be viewed as a sign of respect as well as an acknowledgement that you know how to follow others, not just lead.

APPENDIX K: OPTICAL ILLUSIONS PACKET

How many people are in this picture?



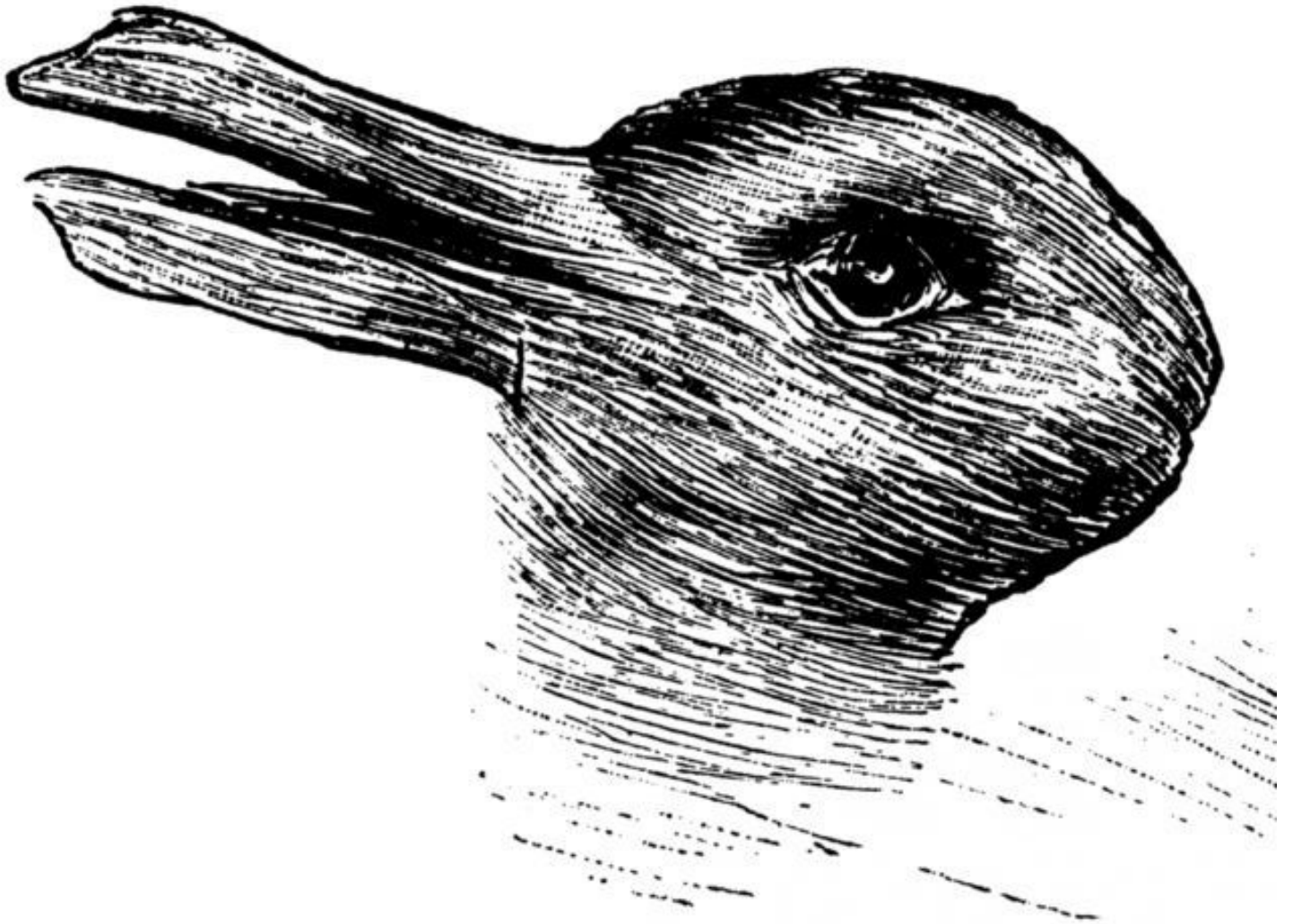
How many men do you see? One or two?



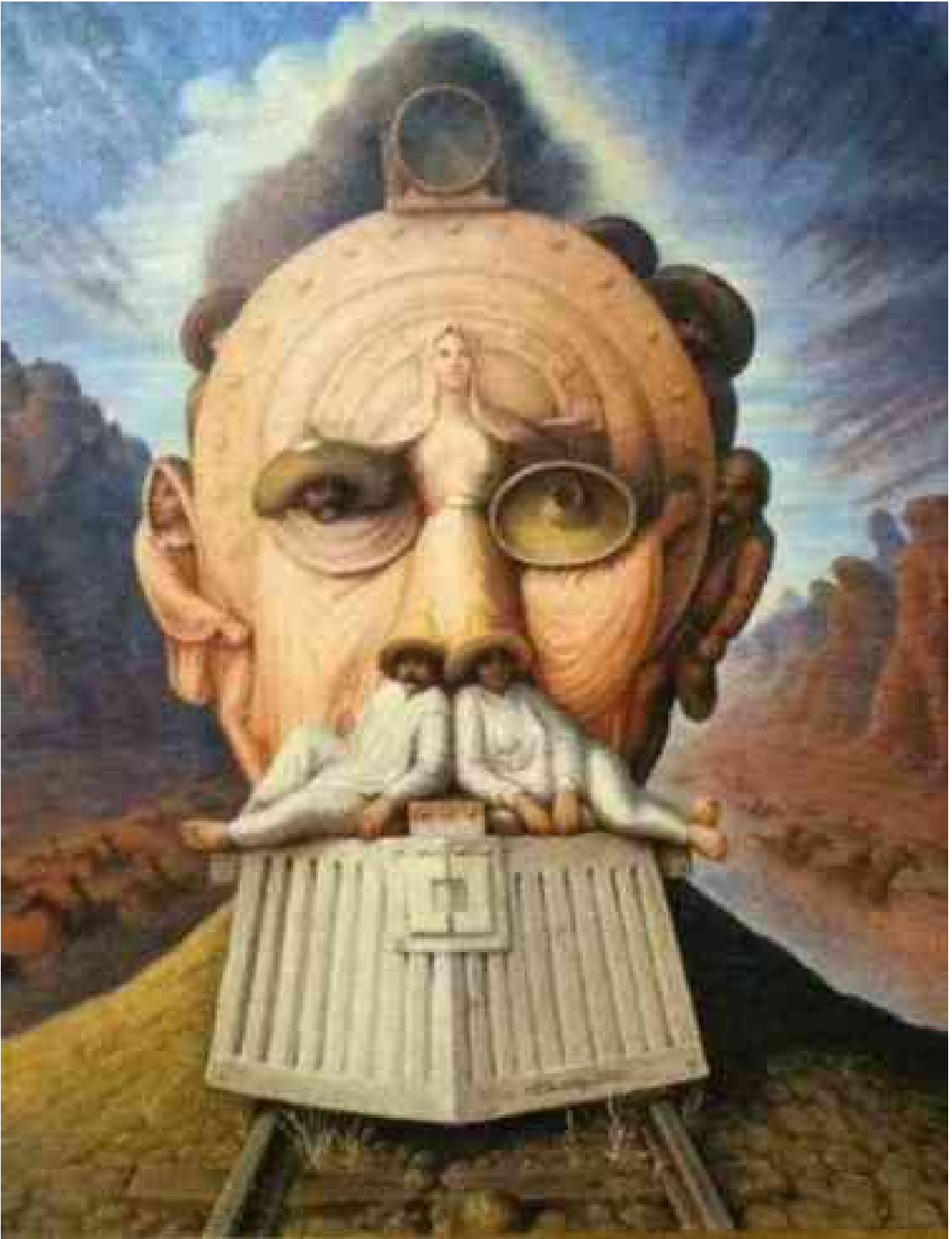
**This picture contains a woman, wolves, an eagle, a tiger, and more.
How many can you find?**



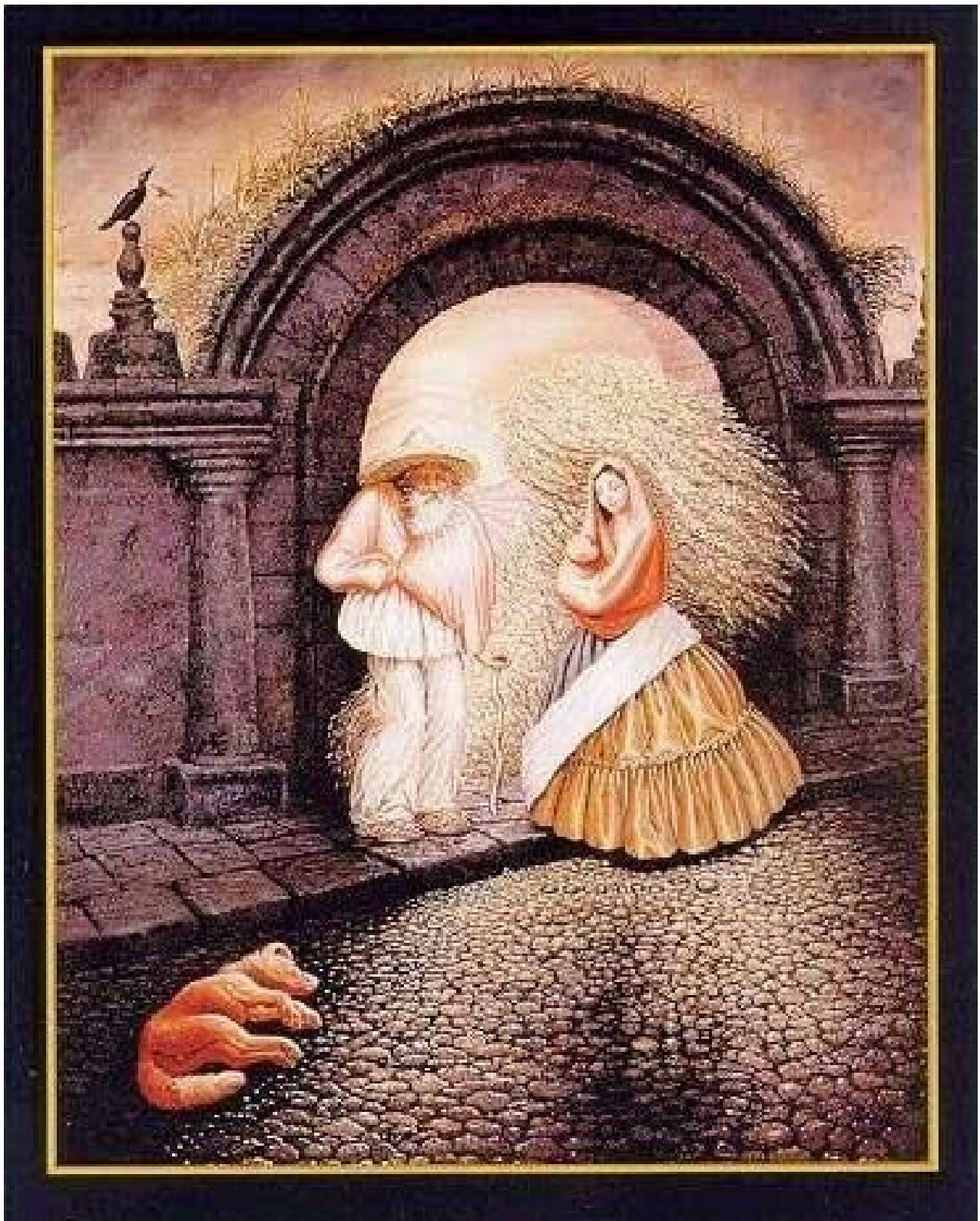
Do you see a duck or a rabbit?



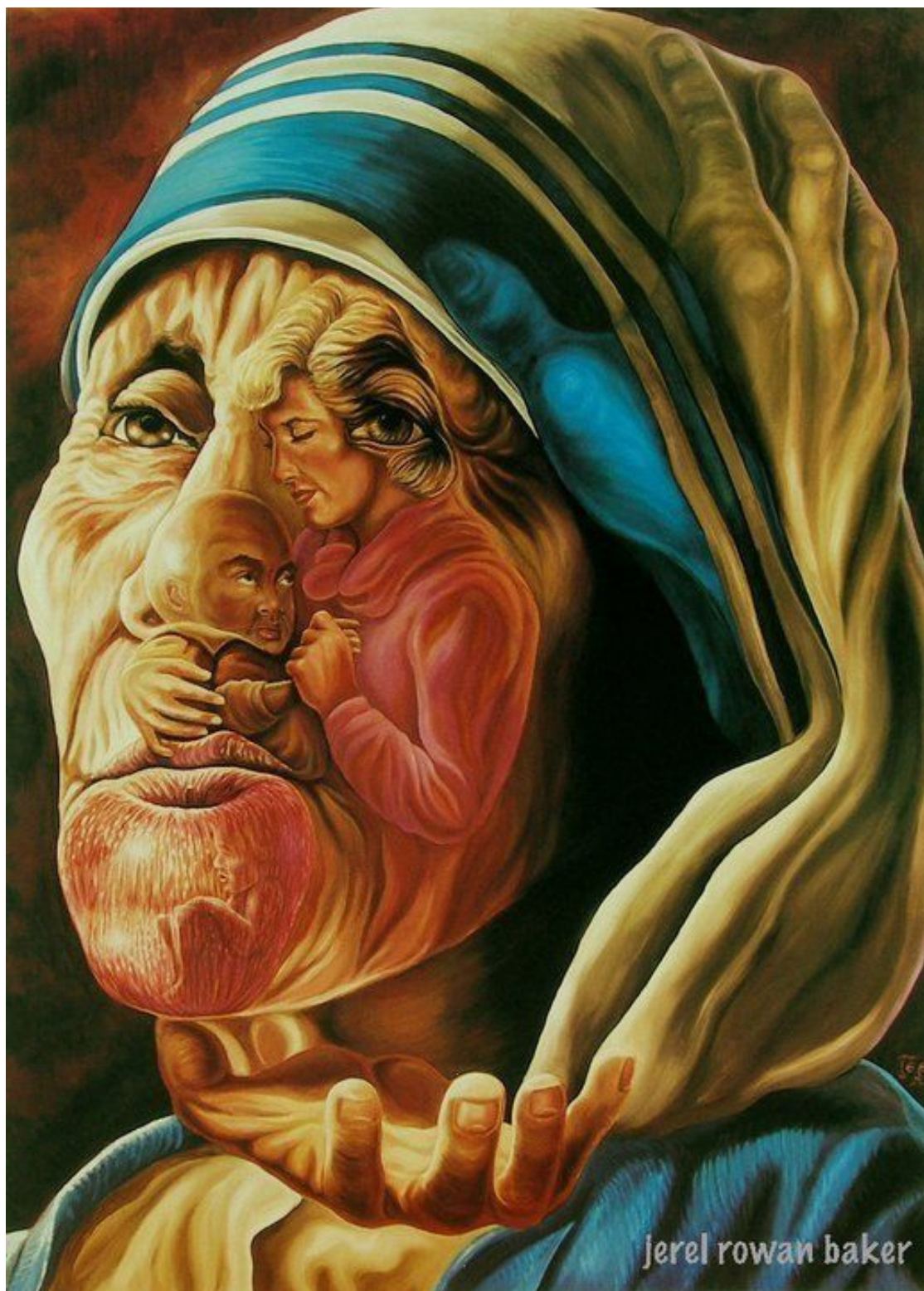
Do you see a train or its passengers?



How many people are in this picture?



There are at least 6 images in this picture, can you find them?



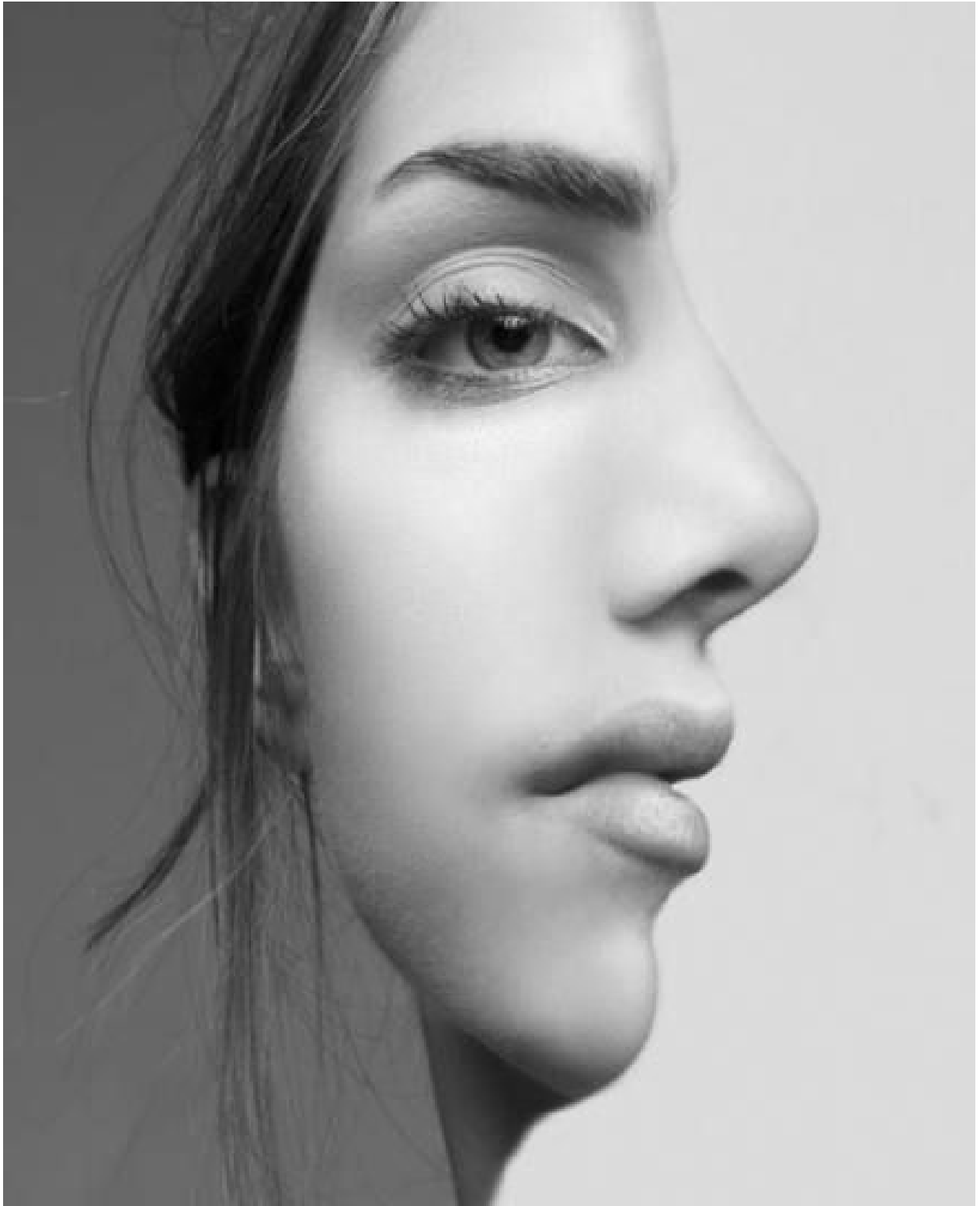
How many tigers do you see?



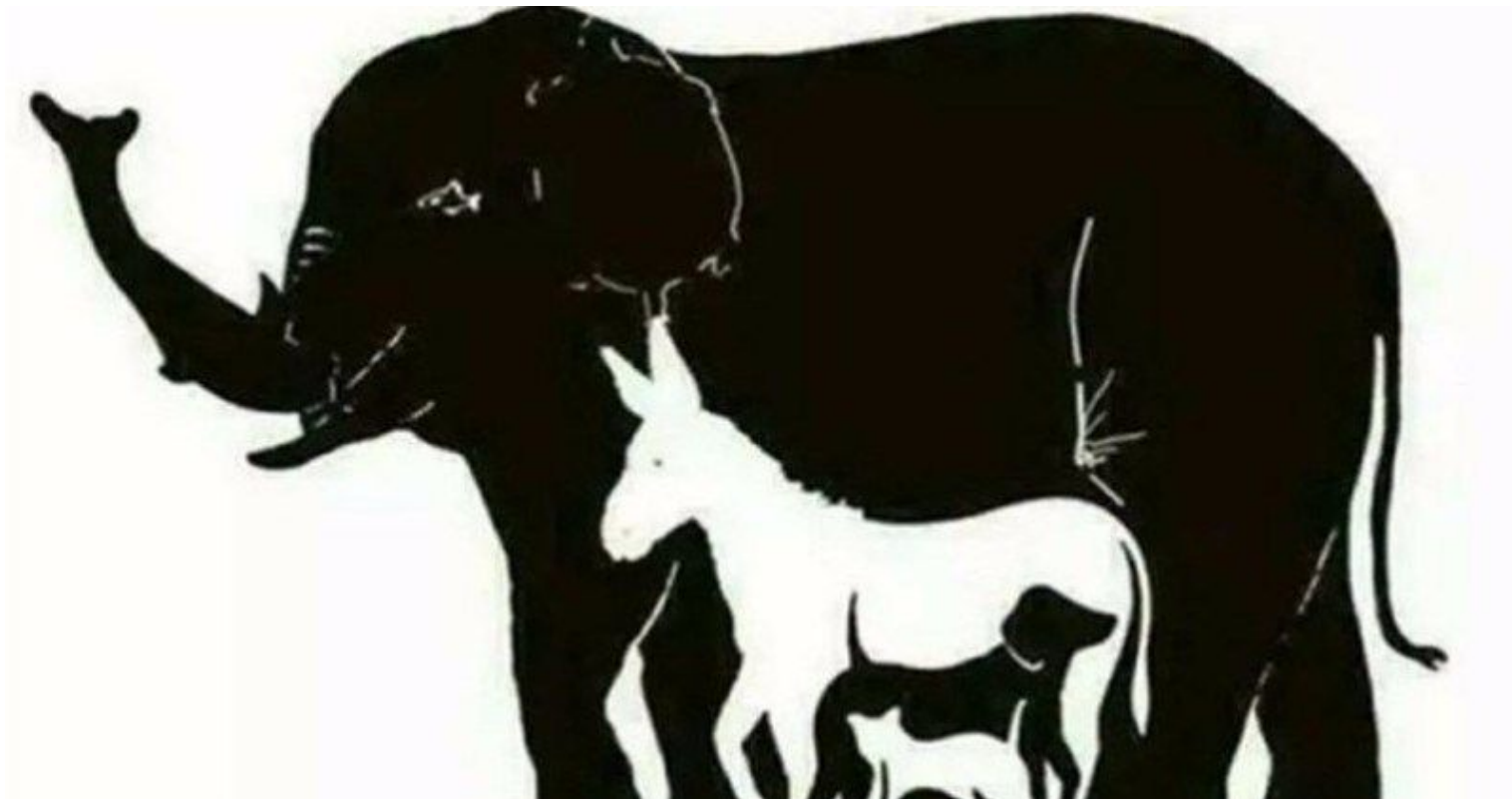
How many faces do you see?

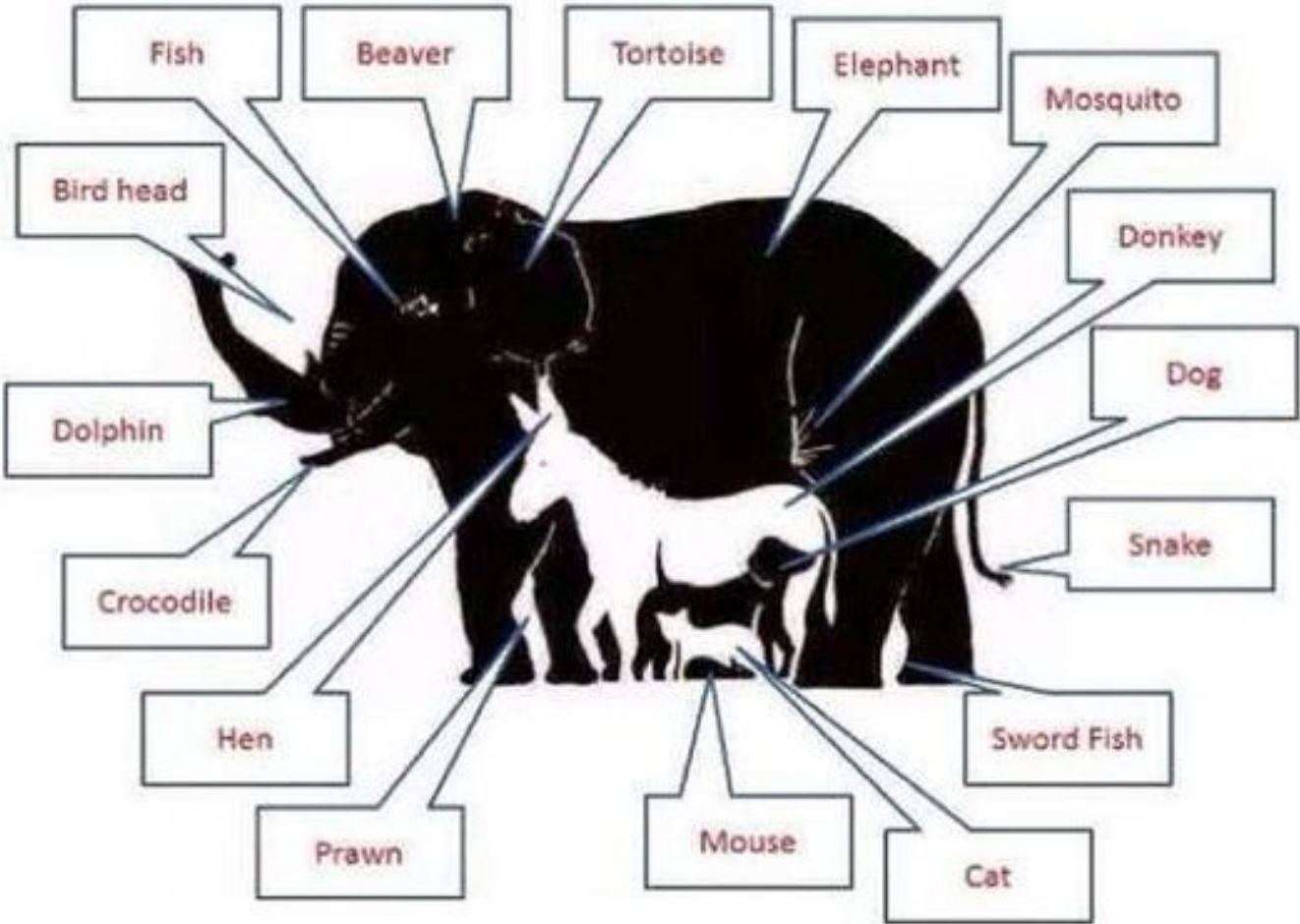


Is she looking forward or to the side?



There are 16 animals in this picture, can you find them all?





APPENDIX L: WORKSHOP EVALUATION FORM

FLIP THE SCRIPT

Workshop Evaluation Form

Date: _____ Course Title: _____
Name: _____ Presenter: _____
(Optional)

- How would you rate the overall quality of this workshop? Excellent Good Fair Poor
- How well did the presenter state the objectives? Excellent Good Fair Poor
- How well did the presenter keep the session fun and interesting? Excellent Good Fair Poor
- What is your overall rating of the presenter? Excellent Good Fair Poor
- How helpful was this workshop? Excellent Good Fair Poor
- How effective were the handouts? Excellent Good Fair Poor
- How convenient was the location? Excellent Good Fair Poor

What was the most interesting thing you learned in this workshop?

What was the least interesting thing you learned in this workshop?

Was the length of the workshop sufficient for the topics presented/discussed? (Explain)

What would have made the workshop more effective?

The knowledge and skills I gained from this workshop will be useful in my daily life. Yes No
If YES, list one suggestion, exercise, or tool from the workshop that you are going to try again or use.

What other training or workshops would you like Flip the Script to provide?

Additional Comments:
