Choosing Love

“Educating the mind without educating the heart is no education at all.” - Aristotle
we can ALL Choose Love
People must learn to hate, and if they can learn to hate, they can be taught to love; for love comes more naturally to the human heart than its opposite.” Nelson Mandela
It was an angry thought that caused the tragedy.
A thought CAN BE CHANGED.
begin to think about what you are thinking about
choose a loving thought over an angry thought
The Cognitive Triangle

THOUGHTS

FEELINGS <-> BEHAVIOR
“Between stimulus and response, there is a space. In that space lies our freedom and power to choose our response. In our response lies our growth and freedom.”

Viktor E. Frankl
We can’t always choose what happens to us, but we can always choose how we respond...

We can always choose love...
Some of the Issues We Face

- 49 1/2% of our college bound US youth will have had a diagnosable **MENTAL ILLNESS** by the time they are 18 - anxiety (Child Mind Institute - Speak Up For Kids Report, 2015)
- TRAUMA in schools has increased from 1 in 5 students 20 years ago (ACE’s study) to over 50% (Clifford Beers)
- Reported **BULLYING** has increased 21% since we started tracking it in 2003. 77% of students are bullied mentally, physically and verbally. 160,000 kids stay home from school each day for fear of being bullied. 1 in 10 students drop out because of bullying. (National Center for Educational Statistics)
- There are more **SUICIDES** in the US than murders, despite state mandated suicide prevention programs.
- **SUBSTANCE ABUSE** is skyrocketing despite state mandated drug awareness programs (i.e. the “war on drugs”)
- **VIOLENCE** is increasing in our schools in type and severity. There have been over 220 school-related shootings since SHES - 1 per week in the US (everytownresearch.org)

Despite our best efforts...
49.5% of our college bound US youth will have had a diagnosable **MENTAL ILLNESS** by the time they are 18 years old (Child Mind Institute - Speak Up For Kids Report, 2015).
TRAUMA in schools has increased from 1 in 5 students 20 years ago (ACE’s study) to over 60% (Clifford Beers).
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There are more SUICIDES in the US than murders, despite state mandated suicide prevention programs.
SUBSTANCE ABUSE is skyrocketing despite state mandated drug awareness programs (i.e. the “war on drugs”).
Despite our best efforts?! 

**VIOLENCE** is dramatically increasing in our schools in type and severity.

There have been over 239+ school-related shootings since SHES - 1 per week in the US.

Twice as many students have been killed by students in their schools than in active military combat this year?!

(everytownresearch.org)
Our negative bias...
PTSD Versus PTG/Post Traumatic Growth

Trauma’s potential to transform us in positive ways

Courage + Forgiveness + Gratitude = Compassion
Choosing LOVE
“Character cannot be developed in ease and quiet. Only through experiences of trial and suffering can the soul be strengthened, vision cleared, ambition inspired and success achieved.”

Helen Keller
Think about a problem...
Write down all your thoughts and feelings about that issue...

Our definition: a problem affecting many people, disabilities, unemployment, global warming, divorce, terrorism, violence, racism, bullying, suicide, depression, alcohol, drugs, peer pressure, poverty, loneliness, forced labour, homelessness, world hunger, slavery, human trafficking.
focus on

- problems
- solutions
Who's going to fix it?

We must address the CAUSE of the issues for a Solution, not just the EFFECTS

We are!!!!!
#1 Way to Have a Safe School Environment!
#1 most proactive & preventative mental health initiative!
#1 way to improve school climate and culture!
#1 attribute wanted by top employers!
#1 way to break generational cycle of disfunction!
#1 way to reduce taxes w/proactive prevention! :)

Social and Emotional Learning
Benefits of Social and Emotional Learning

Children that have access to SEL experience:
* 11% improvement in academic performance (higher grades/test scores)
* 22% improvement in SEL skills
* 10% increase in Higher graduation rates
* 10% decrease in emotional distress
* Better classroom and school climate
* Increased positive relationships and connection
* Less stress and anxiety
* Less behavioral issues
* Less bullying

Proactive approach proven to prevent suffering before it starts!
Benefits of SEL Continued...

Long-term studies show:
* Increased health and well being—physically, mentally and emotionally
* Reduced substance abuse
* Reduced mental illness
* Less incarceration
* Less violence and anger
* Less divorce rates, etc.
Economic and Public Health Implications

*For every $1 invested, there is an $16 present value return to the community* (Columbia University, 2015)

*Reduces tax dollar expenditure of addressing symptoms of mental health issues, incarceration, substance abuse, etc.*
Study links Social and Emotional Competency in Kindergarten to Adult Success

(American Journal of Public Health, 2016)

- Kindergartners with good social skills are more likely to succeed as adults.
- Ability to share and cooperate in kindergarten was measured in 800 children over 20 years.

For every one-point increase a child’s social competency score in kindergarten, they were twice as likely to obtain a college degree and 46% more likely to have a full-time job by age 25.

For every one-point decrease in a child’s social skill score in kindergarten, he or she had a 67% higher chance of having been arrested in early adulthood, a 52% higher rate of binge drinking and an 82% higher chance of being in or on a waiting list for public housing.
Choose Love
Enrichment Program

• Written by Educators, for Educators
• Social & Emotional Learning, Positive Psychology, Mindfulness, PTG research, Neuroscience, Emotional Intelligence Character Education, and more!
• Easy to teach, easy to learn
• Flexible and takes very little time
• Focused on physical, mental and emotional benefits
• Aligned with Common Core, ASCA Mindsets and Behaviors Standards for school counselors and CASEL’s core Social and Emotional components
• Enhances the classroom and school climate and is a large factor in children’s future success!
• It’s a lot of fun!

Be a part of the Movement to Choose Love!

No cost!
Choose Love Resources

The A to Z Guide to:

Start Your Own
Choose Love Movement

= CHOOSING LOVE

COURAGE + GRATITUDE + FORGIVENESS

in Action

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Choose Love
Foundation

Enrichment Program
Choose Love Extension Programs

The Tapping Solution Foundation

Zensational Kids
breath • movement • mindfulness

Empowered Parenting
Practical tools for parents & school-aged children

Elisabeth Kübler-Ross Foundation

Jesse Lewis Choose Love Movement
50 States and 65+ Countries!

Over 1,300,000+ students!  By word of mouth...
The Choose Love Enrichment Program™ is a no cost Pre-K through 12th grade social and emotional learning program that teaches educators and their students how to choose love in any circumstance and helps them become connected, resilient, and empowered individuals. These skills, tools and attitudes have been proven through decades of scientific research to be the best way to ensure a healthy, meaningful and purpose-filled life.
Lesson 1:
COURAGE’S ROLE IN THE FORMULA FOR CHOOSING LOVE

**Preparation:** Write “courage + gratitude + forgiveness + compassion in action = choosing love” on the board.

**Discussion:** Talk about the definition of courage and its role in the “choosing love” formula.

Courage is defined as the mental and moral strength to venture and persevere, and to withstand danger, fear, or difficulty. It is also described as intrepidity, pluck, bravery and spirit. We practice courage every day, in many different situations and circumstances. Every time we try something new; make a decision that is difficult (but right for ourselves and others); or face, accept, and overcome negative emotions, we are using the courage we all have within us. Courage is much more prevalent in your life than you know. How does it feel to think that you are courageous on a daily basis?

This year we are going to learn a formula for choosing love. Courage is an underlying attribute. Maya Angelou said, “Courage is the most important of all the virtues because without courage, you can’t practice any other virtue consistently.”

With an umbrella of courage, we will learn about the physical, mental, and emotional benefits of practicing gratitude. Then we will learn about forgiveness. We will learn that forgiveness is a gift you give to yourself; it doesn’t mean you have to forget, or even condone; but having the courage to forgive will help you retain your personal power instead of giving it away to someone who has hurt you.

We will learn about compassion, which is made of two components: empathy (or identifying with someone’s pain) and action, where you actively do something to help ease that pain. It is the second component of compassion that is where all the love and effort you give out comes back to you.

Courage weaves all the elements together, because it takes courage to practice each of these character values: gratitude, forgiveness, and compassion in action. Thus the formula is: courage + gratitude + forgiveness + compassion in action = choosing love.
Who Can Implement the Program?

- Teachers
- Counselors
- All school staff (i.e. P.E. teachers, health teachers, art etc)
- Some collaboration/combination of the above

“This is more than a program, it is a culture shift.”

- Choose Love educator

Create a Choose Love Leadership group - the best results are when the pr
Choose Love Enrichment Program Survey Results May 2018:

- 99% said that they have seen an improvement in classroom climate
- 98% said that they have seen improvement in students' overall behavior
- 73% said that their students get along better
- 83% said their students have a more positive attitude
- 66% have seen an increase in academic performance in their students
“Love and compassion are necessities, not luxuries. Without them, humanity cannot survive.”
— Dalai Lama XIV, The Art of Happiness
Will Jon be able to use his mirror neurons to understand Garfield’s intentions better next time?
The Secret to Happiness...

Positive Relationships (Connection)

1. Happiness is LOVE or “Good relationships keep us happier and healthier.”
2. Doing good for others
3. Doing good for me (physically, mentally and emotionally)

(Harvard Survey, 1980/2010/2015, Grant & Guleck 75 year longitudinal study, “The Grant Study” Harvard University)
FBI Director of Drug Enforcement Quote:

“The opposite of addiction is connection.... and connection is love....”
Jesse McCord Lewis
Mindfulness = Paying Attention
“Focused Awareness”
Emotional Intelligence
List of Emotions

- Excited
- Happy
- Surprised
- Curious
- Love
- Belonging
- Joy
- Gratitude
- Vulnerability
- Empathy
- Shame
- Guilt
- Humiliation
- Embarrassment
- Anger
- Fear | Scared
- Overwhelmed
- Sad
- Hurt
- Disappointed
- Frustrated
- Jealous
- Worried
- Anxious
- Judgment
- Disgust
- Lonely
- Blame
- Grief
- Regret
Angry

AND/OR

Shut down

Fear / Scared
Overwhelmed
Sad
Hurt
Disappointed
Frustrated
Worried
Anxious
Judgment
Disgust

Lonely
Jealous
Blame
Grief
Regret
Shame
Guilt
Humiliation
Embarrassment
Identifying and strengthening that which holds the greatest value in life for you…where is your pleasure?

Positive Psychology

- Life sucks
- Pathology
- Illness
- Neurosis
- What is wrong with you?
- Is this all there is…?
- Life satisfaction
- What is right with you?
- Well-being
- Positive emotions
- Engagement
- Relationships
- Meaning
- Accomplishments

Identifying and strengthening that which holds the greatest value in life for you…where is your pleasure?
Positive Affirmations

I am in charge of how I feel and today I am choosing happiness.
I am courageous.
I can stop bullying.
I can use gratitude to make my life and others life better.
I know the difference between kindness and Bullying. I can use gratitude to help me think about good things when I am mad. I can help others.
Neuroscience

BRAIN PROFILE

Numbat Brain (Mammalian Brain)

Human Brain (Prefrontal Cortex)

Amygdala

Hippocampus

Lizard Brain (Reptilian)
Nurturing Health Love
COURAGE + GRATITUDE + FORGIVENESS + COMPASSION in Action = CHOOSING LOVE
Definition of Courage

Courage is the willingness and ability to walk through obstacles despite feeling embarrassment, fear, reluctance, or uncertainty.
In the fleeting instant that Adam Lanza’s gun jammed, brave Jesse Lewis yelled ‘run!’ to his classmates. Six did, and lived. Jesse didn’t.
We all have this courage... to choose love over fear in every situation and interaction.
Benefits of Courage

- Courage = Confidence (Minarik, 2013)
- Creates a sense of leadership (Minarik, 2013)
- Enables students to be ‘upstanders’ (Gundersen Luteran Medical Center, 2013)
- Makes us feel good (Hetter, 2011)
- Assists in mastering emotions (Minarik, 2013)
- Empowers us to accomplish things and make good choices (Hetter, 2011)
- Helps us overcome fear (and overconfidence—taking unnecessary risks) (Minarik, 2013)
- Supports us in finding balance (with thoughtful responses) (Minarik, 2013)
- Helps to counter bullying (10 seconds) (Hetter, 2011)
Courage in Education

IS BEING:

Present
Available
Kind
Caring
Compassionate
Vulnerable
Real
Thoughtful
Is implementing SEL
with fidelity

Yourself

Students won’t remember the content of the lesson, they will remember how you made them feel.
Gratitude

Gratitude is mindful thankfulness and the ability to be thankful even when things in life are challenging. When you practice gratitude you feel thankful and want to share that feeling with others. (Donaldson, Dollwet & Rao, 2014.)
In daily life we must see that it is not happiness that makes us grateful, but gratefulness that makes us happy. --Brother David Steindl-Rast
Forgiveness

Forgiveness means choosing to let go of anger and resentment toward yourself or someone else, to surrender thoughts of revenge, and to move forward with your personal power intact.
forgiveness = resilience
Forgiveness is cutting the cord that attaches you to pain and taking your personal power back.
Benefits of Forgiveness

- Healthier relationships (Chiaramello, Mesnil, Sastre, & Mullet 2008)
- Less Anger (Chiaramello, Mesnil, Sastre, & Mullet 2008)
- Greater physical and psychological well-being. (G. Bono, 2007)
- Less anxiety, stress and hostility (Scott, 2006)
- Lower blood pressure (Shwartz, 2016)
- Fewer symptoms of depression (Chiaramello, Mesnil, Sastre, & Mullet 2008)
- Stronger immune system (Thompson & Waltz, 2008)
- Improved heart health (Thompson & Waltz, 2008)
- Higher self-esteem (Chiaramello, Mesnil, Sastre, & Mullet 2008)
- Extends your life span! (Shwartz, 2016)
THE TRUE MEANING OF compassion = Identifying + Action
In 1994 over 1,000,000 Rwandan Tutsi's were killed by their neighboring Hutus within 100 days. Over 1,000,000 children were orphaned in one of the world's worst tragedies in history.

In December of 2012 JT Lewis lost his little brother, Jesse Lewis in the Sandy Hook Elementary massacre. Reeling from this personal tragedy he had the opportunity to Skype with orphan genocide survivors who had heard about the shooting and wanted to reach out to JT. During the Skype call they told him that they were so sorry about what had happened to his brother and they shared their personal experiences of heartbreak where they watched many of their family members die. They told JT that through gratitude, forgiveness and compassion they have healed and are now leading lives filled with hope and joy. This started JT on his own healing journey and inspired him to give back to the people from around the globe that had reached out to him in love.

Knowing that these young adults had no hope of going to college, JT set out to raise money to make their dreams come true. Several months after he began fundraising he was able to Skype back to the same group and announce that he had raised enough money to send one of them to college for a year. He has made the personal commitment to send this person to college for the remaining 3 years and hopes to do more.

newtownhelpsrwanda.org
Benefits of Compassion in Action

- Giving makes us feel happy, releases oxytocin and other feel good neurochemicals (Brooks-Gunn, et al., 1988)
- Giving is good for our general health & well-being (Scott, 2006)
- Promotes cooperation, social and relationship skills (Scott, 2006)
- Cultivates social connection, is fulfilling—what you give, you get back... (Worthington, 2014)
- Evokes Gratitude (Harbaugh & Vasey, 2014).
- Giving is contagious, creates a ripple effect (Gottberg, 2014)
- Counteracts depression, anger and anxiety (Scott, 2006)
- Reduces and relieves stress and mentally stimulates (Brooks-Gunn, et al., 1988)
- Increases self-confidence (Worthington, 2014)
- Give us a sense of purpose (Worthington, 2014)
- Better pain management and blood pressure (Brooks-Gunn, et al., 1988)
- Adds years to your life (studies show 22% reduction in mortality?!?) (Gottberg, 2014)
“Maid Study”

Mind-set matters: Exercise and the Placebo Effect (Ellen J. Langer, 2007)
What we know:
All human beings need connection (love)
We want to belong (as opposed to “fitting in”)
We need to learn resilience to overcome obstacles
We want to feel good.

Through having positive relationships, meaningful connections, being emotionally intelligent (understanding and managing their emotions), resilient and choosing love.

Choose LOVE
Have a lot of fun!
Retired 3 Star Marine Lieutenant General Martin Steele

Chairman of the Board of Directors, Jesse Lewis Choose Love Movement
Thank you for joining the Movement to Choose Love!

“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world, indeed, it’s the only thing that ever has.”

-Margaret Mead

We ARE creating a safer, more peaceful and loving place, together.
New Hampshire
Choose Love Program Coordinator

Shannon Desilets
shannon.desilets@nh.gov
To access program, go to www.jesselewischooselove.org
Choose LOVE

Jesse Lewis
Choose Love Movement
jesselewischooselove.org
How We Can Choose Love Everyday!

1. Remember, we ALL have Jesse’s COURAGE!

2. Everything starts with a thought, and a thought can be changed: CHOOSE LOVE!

3. Remember, ‘Life doesn’t happen TO you’ - your power lies in how to CHOOSE to respond (Perspective!)

4. BE PRESENT

5. Live the formula: COURAGE+GRATITUDE+FORGIVENESS+COMPASSION

6. “Have a Lot of fun”! (Jesse Lewis)