

### Uncompromising Teen Development – Autonomy, Relatedness, Competence *Fellow Elective*

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| <b>AUTHOR(S):</b>        | Josh Sterling Friedman   |
| <b>SUMMARY:</b>          | In this session we will: use our minds and bodies to deconstruct the incessant challenges of working with teens through the life of revolutionary psychologist Lev Vygotsky and the story of 'The Turkey Sage'.  |
| <b>ABC GOALS:</b>        | <p><b>Affective:</b> Participants will feel...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Curious, in the face of success, failure, and everything in between</li> <li>• Capable, confident in the language they share with teens in their local context</li> <li>• Inspired, witnessing new thoughts flower in flow</li> </ul> <p><b>Behavior:</b> Participants will be able to...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Start training their perception to notice the level of autonomy, relatedness, and competence in an activity, environment, or person.</li> <li>• Coach adolescents to coach adolescents to coach adults to coach adolescents; to guide others identify a shared language and negotiate acceptable variables across two, or more, sides.</li> <li>• Model the art of living two essential maxims: 1) no more than my place, and no less than my space; 2) give a little and get a little.</li> </ul> <p><b>Cognitive:</b> Participants will know...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• About the self-determination theory of learning and development</li> <li>• Guiding questions for designing and integrating teen experiences, and / or finding a shared language</li> <li>• How to find their breath</li> </ul> |
| <b>AUDIENCE:</b>         | Counselors and leadership staff who work with teens, as well as teens themselves   |
| <b>TIMING:</b>           | 60 minutes   |
| <b>APPENDICES:</b>       | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Five-Finger Contract</li> <li>2. The Turkey Prince Story</li> <li>3. ARC Source sheet</li> </ol>   |
| <b>MATERIALS NEEDED:</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Speakers</li> <li>• Machine to play music with</li> </ul>   |

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|                               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cord to connect music player to speakers (or Bluetooth compatible speakers)</li> <li>• Alternative to 3 materials above: live band</li> <li>• A rope / webbing long enough to have every participant hold onto it while standing in a circle shape with at least 3-4 feet between them</li> <li>• 2 Post-It Notes (standard size) per participant</li> <li>• 1 Giant Post-It Note</li> </ul>   |
| <p><b>SET-UP DETAILS:</b></p> | <p>Any space with enough room for all of the participants to stand in a circle, walk in pairs, and dance in a circle, preferably a good room for audio as well. Outside acceptable, so long as not raining or there is a live band available</p> <p>Have the pack of Post-Its (split into two Post-It stacks so that the stickiness of at least one note is unharmed) by the door with writing utensils, tie a water knot into the long rope / webbing so that is in a circle; write Turkey Reflection 1 prompts (see outline below) on Giant Post-It in a 2x2 table with numbers for each in the top left corner of each cell.</p> |

### SESSION TIMELINE

- 00:00-00:05 - Purpose, Introductions, & Norms
- 00:05-00:10 – Turkey Reflection I
- 00:10-00:25 - Spot Tag
- 00:25-00:35 - Turkey Trot
- 00:35-00:50 - Turkey Reflection II
- 00:50-00:60 - Turkey Consolidation and Preparation

### SESSION OUTLINE:

*[Learning Facilitator (LF); Group (G); Small Group's (SGs); Partners (Ps); Individuals (I's)]*

00:00-00:05 - Purpose, Introductions, & Norms

LF stands at the entry way, greeting each of the I's as they walk into the space, introducing themselves (name & pronouns), waits for a response, and then hands them a post-it note and a writing utensil, and invites them to not write, but find a place in the space that feels right and consider the question *"What does being here mean to me?"*

Once everyone is in the room, LF will invite I's to write down an answer on the sticky side of their post-it to the question: *"Why am I here?"* [answer inquiries as feels right]. And once written, to form a chicken-wing/elbows out circle (where everyone can see everyone else), and to place their post-it on the ground between their feet to become the "Spots" for Spot Tag (see below).

LF will then brief the group on the Five Finger contract (see Appendix 1) and then invite I's who wish to add additional norms for our time together, and symbolize them with a form, motion, or 'writing' of/on the hand. Once all of the norms have been voiced in the circle, LF will invite G to high five everyone to their left and to their right to send the norms around the circle.

00:05-00:10 – Turkey Reflection I

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LF will invite I's to answer one of the prompts below (written on the Giant Post-it note and placed somewhere everyone can see, e.g., the middle of the circle) by writing its number on their second Post-It and their answer.

- 1) Describe a time you learned something at camp from a teen, or taught something to a teen
- 2) Describe a time a teen was let down, disappointed, or upset by an activity that wasn't intended to instigate those feelings
- 3) Describe a time you failed at camp, or witnessed a failure at camp, involving a teen
- 4) Describe a "teachable moment" at camp that went awry

Once finished, I's will keep these Post-its with them / in their hand or pocket.

### 00:10-00:25 - Spot Tag

LF will explain the Goal and the Rules of Spot Tag (below), play each round for about 2-3 minutes (as energy allows, want to give time for momentum to build, not so long people get repetitive, formulaic, and bored), and then have a short 3-5 minute discussion around the experience (there will also be time to return to these questions later).

- a. Group Goal: to move across the circle, exchanging their place (spot / post-it note) with another, without stepping on, moving, or harming the post-it
- b. Rules:
  - i. 1<sup>st</sup> Round: no rules, just state the goal;
  - ii. 2<sup>nd</sup>: If you make eye contact, move;
  - iii. 3<sup>rd</sup>: if you make eye contact, find a commonality by shouting it across the circle (e.g., "I love baked potatoes for lunch"; "ME TOO!");
  - iv. 4<sup>th</sup>: no rules again
- c. Facilitator Goal: to create space for the exploration of 'success', specifically in terms of how each construction of the game allows for (or doesn't and could) "autonomy", "relatedness", and "competence", as well as how "failure" is defined; question the lines between competition and collaboration.

Before beginning the discussion, LF will invite individuals to collect their Purpose Post-it, find the last person they swapped places with, meet with each other somewhere inside the circle, and share the purpose they wrote down (if they need to go find their note they can); tie up 'loose ends' here so that everyone has a partner. If there is a group of three needed, whoever is 'leading' in the Trot below, make sure they are in the middle of the other two (see below).

Once everyone has shared their purpose with their partner, LF invites G to reform the circle, and poses a question or two from below that feel most relevant to the experience.

- d. Suggested Discussion Questions:
  - i. How is success defined in this activity? Failure?
  - ii. How does this activity allow for, and restrict, autonomy? Relatedness/connection? developing Competence?
  - iii. How is competition present in this activity? How is collaboration?

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*Towards the end of this time, LF will unfurl the long rope circle and hand it to the I's by walking around the inside of the circle.*

00:25-00:35 - Turkey Trot

LF will invite the G to step back while holding the rope until it is a taut-but-not-strained circle, and then lay it at their feet. LF will then invite Ps to split themselves over the circle line, so that one P is on the outside of the circle and one P on the inside (or 2 on the inside if there is a group of 3), and then ask everyone to face the same direction, like they are walking clockwise or counter-clockwise around the rim of the circle.

LF will then introduce the rules of the Turkey Trot:

- 1) Music will play, and during that time, everyone will move forward at a pace that won't interrupt the Ps in front or behind them.
- 2) The inside P will get to move in any way they wish that doesn't break the first rule.
- 3) The outside P will attempt to replicate the movements of the inside P (or the middle if a group of 3)
- 4) The LF will announce when the Ps will switch who is on the inside.

After about 5 minutes (give time for Ps to find a rhythm, feel free to change the songs, but not too often), LF will announce the switch (or after 3 minutes if there is a group of 3, *optional*).

Briefly, LF may pose 1 or 2 of the following:

- 1) What does it feel like to lead? To initiate?
- 2) What does it feel like to follow? To predict?

00:35-00:50 - Turkey Reflection II

LF will invite G to give thanks to their Ps in any way they choose, and move freely around the circle for a moment or two, and then have them stop where they are, and describe the "Zone of Proximal Development" or "Learning Zone" as the circle line:

*Inside of this line is the "Comfort Zone", that space where you are totally comfortable and able to do anything all on your own; outside of this line is the "Danger Zone", that space where you are unable to access, unable to participate, unable to succeed, even if someone helps you; and the "Learning Zone", that rope, that space in between, is where you are able to succeed, if only you can get a little bit (or a lot sometimes) of help.*

LF will then invite participants to visualize, look at, or move if they so choose, where in the space the first activity (Spot Tag) was for them; after it seems the G has settled, where in the space the second activity (Turkey Trot) was for them; third, after the G has settled, where their pocket Post-it (numbered prompt response) was; finally, where their Purpose Post-it (joining the session today) was.

LF will then ask the G to move back into a circle, for a willing participant to handout the ARC source sheet (see Appendix 3), and themselves recount the story of the Turkey Prince, told by Rabbi Nachman of Breslov (see Appendix 2).

With the time that is left, LF will ask G the following questions:

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- 1) How do our activities today remind of you of the Turkey Sage and the Turkey Prince?
- 2) What was your answer to the numbered prompts at the beginning of the session? How would the Turkey Sage address them?
- 3) Thinking about our first activity (Spot Tag), what are the 'rules of engagement' and 'success' from your situation?
- 4) Thinking about our second activity (Turkey Trot), what have you learned today about what it means to follow a teen's lead? Does this apply to the situation you wrote down before? How so?
- 5) Is there anything inspiring you on the ARC source sheet? Why? How does it relate to the scenario you wrote down?

00:50-00:60 - Turkey Consolidation and Preparation

LF will then invite I's to find their Ps again, and this time, sit down together, share their situation (short version) and discuss ways that what they experienced in the session could help them approach the situation in a new light, if they got the chance to. Consider the ARC source sheet and its advice as well.

If there is time before the end and discussion has died down, LF can invite reflections from the Ps for the whole group.

### **BRINGING IT TO YOUR CAMP:**

- Perhaps you don't have a full hour; choosing only one of the two activities will cut down on time, pick the one that seems most relevant to your staff's challenges with teens (clearly communicating with them, or learning when and how to follow their lead)!
- The materials here are easy, paper and some rope, if you don't have the speakers, or will be outdoors, a songleader is a great replacement option for the Turkey Trot, it can also be done with no sound at all, simply the direction to move in a circle however they would like and mimic each other!
- Sometimes teens will not want to feel silly or appear vulnerable, in this case, some simple guidelines, such as switching when you make eye contact during Spot Tag or giving specific movements like marching, 'moving like water', or doing the 'grapevine' during te Turkey Trot can really help!