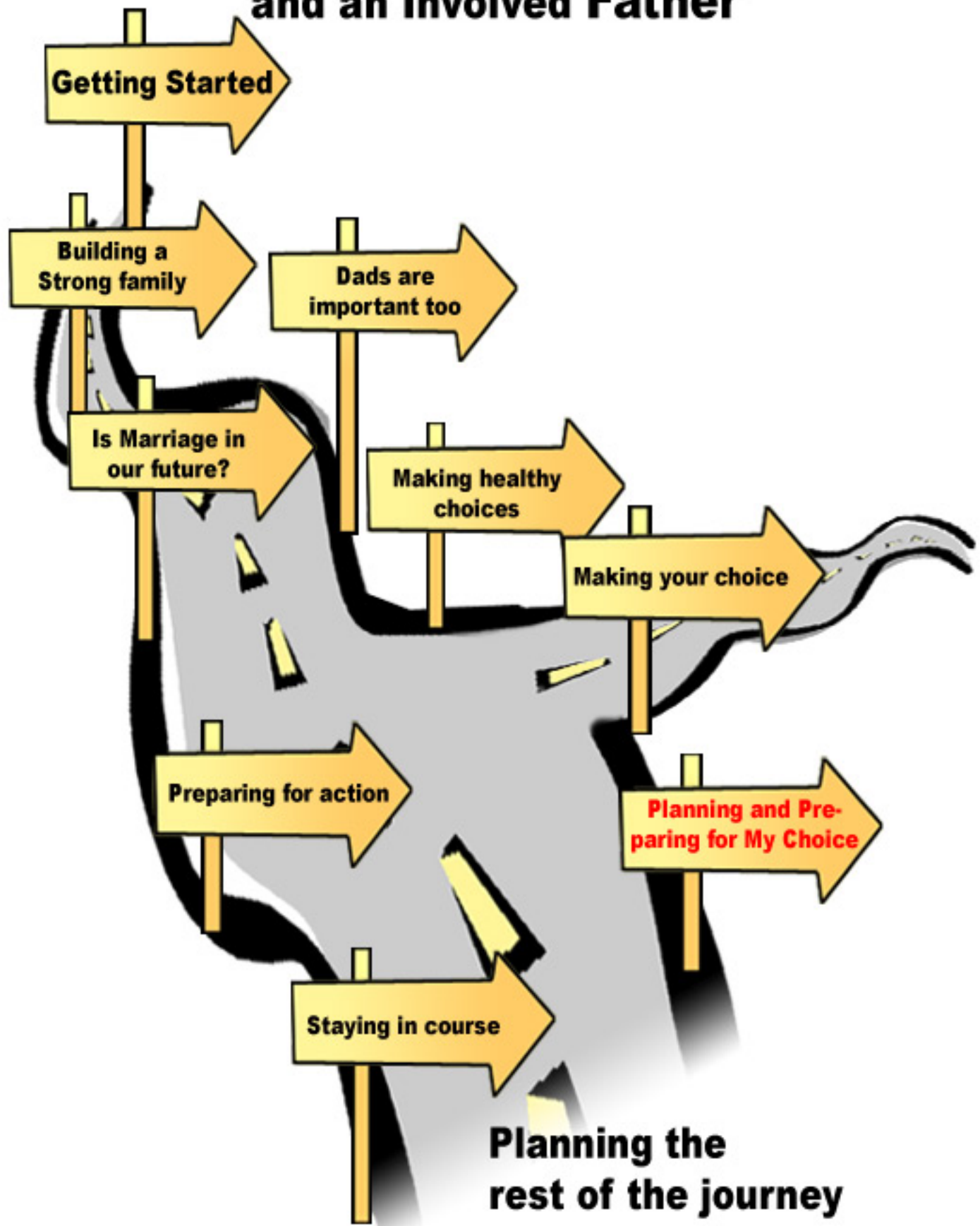


Road Map to a Stable Family and an Involved Father



TOOL BOX: LESSON 8

Materials

- Handouts:
 - *My Favorite Trip*
 - *What Kind of Traveler Are You?*
 - *Writing Goals*
 - *Examples of Goals*
- Transparencies/Power Point Slides
 - *Goals are Important*
 - *Writing Goals*
 - *Example of a Goal*
- Overhead projector/screen (or LCD)
- Pencils or pens

Prior to the Lesson

- Set up the room to use an overhead projector or an LCD projector and screen.
- Participants will need to write so tables will be required and places for small group (2-3 people) discussions.
- Copy handouts/transparencies.

Lesson Eight

Planning and Preparing for My Choice

In this lesson, new mothers and fathers will learn skills to help them take action on their choice.

Lesson Plan

Objectives

- Affirm one's commitment to his or her choice related to family formation
- Learn about the steps in setting goals and achieving them
- Write a simple action plan to begin implementing one's choice

Activity

Handout: *My Favorite Trip*

Getting From There to Here

In the last class, we looked at your level of commitment to your choice. It may seem like we have spent far too much time on this step. You may be ready for action and not patient with thinking about the choice you're making. That's okay to want to do something.

But this is also very important work you are doing. Many people often act before they think. They end up frustrated and give up. The work you are doing is on the inside and, you may not be able to see it. You are getting your thoughts and feelings in line with the choice you want to make. The effort you spend on committing and getting ready for action is well worth it! Remember, success begins with commitment.

Today we are going to focus on preparing and planning for action. The choice you have made and, what you need to do to make this choice, are a lot like taking a trip. To get you started thinking about the idea of taking a trip, spend a few minutes completing the handout "My Favorite Trip." This sheet will be put in your baby's memory book.

Find another person in the class. Introduce yourselves to each other if you do not know each other. Share your favorite trip with each other.

[Have members of the class share their favorite trip as time permits.]

Most of you recalled a very special trip. You gave many reasons why it was special. You may have taken it with those closest to you or gone to see someone you love very much. You may have seen a place you had never seen before. You may have eaten food that you usually didn't get at home.

The focus of today's class is not on how to plan a trip! Instead we are going to use the idea of planning a trip to talk about the need for planning your future. Although you may not have been aware of it at the time you went on your trip, someone spent time and energy planning for the trip. Most of us would not get into the car to take a long car trip without first figuring out where we are going and how we are going to get there – especially if we had never been there before. And, with a new baby, even more planning and preparation is needed.

Activity

Handout: *What Kind of Traveler Are You?*

What Kind of Traveler Are You?

It might be helpful to think about the kind of traveler you are. On the handout, "What Kind of Traveler Are You?" four different travelers are described. Spend a few minutes reading over the descriptions.

In small groups of two or three people, talk about these questions:

- For each case, list two or three things the person does that interfere with their trip being a success. What could they do differently?
- What makes Motivated Maria different from the other three kinds of travelers?

(continued on next page)

- Think of someone you know who is like each kind of traveler. Talk about what happens because of the way he or she goes about planning.
- How about you? Which kind of traveler do you think you are?

Setting Goals

The thing that makes Motivated Maria different from the other three travelers is that she sets goals she can reach.

Once you commit to a choice, goals become the steps to reach it. In the last activity you learned about the ways people approach making changes. There is one big difference between Motivated Maria and the other three people. Maria has goals. She decides what she wants to do and then sets specific steps for getting it.

On any trip we take or choice we make, the keys to success include the goals we set for ourselves. The goals become the map or path we follow to get what we want or where we want to go. Think of each goal as a “stop” on your roadmap. It gets you one step closer to what you want to have happen.

Goals Are Important

Here are several reasons why goals are important. Do any of these reasons look familiar? [refer to the previous activity]

- Goals give us a sense of purpose and direction.
- Goals help to move us to act. (The hardest part of the trip is getting started. Once you are started it gets easier.)
- Goals help you decide what is most important to do first.
- Goals keep you focused on improving your life and not just doing for doing’s sake.
- Goals give you signs that you are making progress.

Overhead/Power Point Slide

Goals Are Important

Activity

Handout: *Writing Goals*

Overhead/Power Point Slide

Writing Goals

Group Discussion

Setting goals

Getting Started on My Choice

To help you get started on making your choice come true, you are going to practice by writing two goals related to your choice. When you finish doing the steps for these two goals, you will be close to making your choice.

Writing Goals

First, think about what you want your choice to be. You can go back and look at your pros and cons worksheet where you wrote down your choice. Your goals needs to include the following things:

- What will I do now and in the future to make my family strong and healthy?
- What will be the role of my baby's father/mother in my baby's life? Will he/she be an active parent who sees my baby almost everyday? Or will he/she have set times when he/she visits my baby?
- What kind of relationship will I have with my baby's father/mother? Will we be romantically involved? Will we live together? Will we plan to marry in the future? Will we stay on good terms with each other although we don't plan to stay romantically involved?

All goals have a starting point. An important step is to look at where you are starting. Before writing your goals, spend 10 to 15 minutes answering the first four questions on your "Writing Goals" handout.

In groups of three or four, share your responses to these four questions.

Let's summarize what you talked about in the small groups:

1. Was it difficult for you to write about your commitment? Do you feel overwhelmed by how long it might take? (However, by breaking your goals into smaller steps that you can do today or this week, you will feel like you are accomplishing something.)

2. What kind of strengths or resources do you have to help you along the way? (Examples: supportive family, high school diploma, friends, a job, good health, a decent boyfriend) Are there more things you thought of as you talked together about your strengths and resources with each other?
3. What are some stumbling blocks you identified? Can you control any of them? Did you change your mind after thinking and talking about them?
4. What kind of costs did you think of for the different areas? Are you ready to pay this price to make your choice? (All choices have trade-offs or costs.)

Now, it is time to write your goals. Think of two goals that can help you make the changes you want to make. For each goal, think of three actual steps you can take today, in the next week and in the next month.

Let's do one example of a goal before you work on yours. What would you suggest for each step to help meet this goal?

Example of a Goal

Goal One: To open the lines of communication with my baby's mother or father

Step 1 -- What I can do today: (Think about why it is important to have a good relationship with my baby's other parent. Call my baby's other parent and talk to him/her about the baby.)

Step 2 -- What I can do this week: (Find a book or tape at the library to help me learn more about talking to others. Ask someone you trust for advice. Set a time to talk to my baby's other parent. Write a letter to my baby's other parent.)

Step 3 -- What I can do in a month: (Write a plan together.)

Overhead/Power Point Slide

Example of a Goal

Activity

Handout: *Examples of Goals*

What steps will take longer?

So do you have an idea of how to go about completing your goals? To help you think about goals, look at the list of examples. You are not limited to these – they are meant to get you thinking.

Moving into Action

You have worked very hard today in thinking about the steps you need to take to make your choice a reality. You may be feeling a little frustrated. That is okay! Put aside your planning for a day or two. Take it out later and read what you have planned already. Make any changes you'd like to.

In the next class, we will look at things you can do to stay on course in making your choice a reality.

My Favorite Trip

When I was growing up, my favorite trip was:



Who was with you?

Where did you go?

What did you see and do?

How did you get there?

What made the trip special?

What Kind of Traveler Are You?

Vicky the Victim is quick to tell others that it's not her fault that she always gets lost or is late for -- or misses -- her appointments. She rarely looks at a map or checks the bus routes before starting out. She's too busy complaining to those around her about all her bad trips in the past and how she can't seem to get anywhere. "If only that brother of mine hadn't taken the bus schedule out of my purse." Or "I didn't have any change for the bus because my boyfriend needed it for cigarettes." In her opinion, it is everyone else's fault that she can't get anywhere.

Partying Patty isn't too worried about where she needs to be tomorrow or next week. She doesn't think much about the future but likes to live for today. She rarely makes any travel plans unless it means going to a big party with her friends. Patty likes to party so much that she'll do almost anything to avoid work of any sort. She wants to keep things just the way they are. Patty hates change of any kind. The only plan she is making is to keep things the way they are – enjoying the party!

Denzel the Dreamer is really good at making plans and spends all his time planning his trip. He loves to tell his friends and family about all the great trips he is planning to take in the future. Unfortunately, he never does anything with his plans. He is a lot of talk and no action. Denzel says he wants to travel but is afraid to take any risks. He doesn't want to fail or get lost or be disappointed. He also doesn't want to work very hard.

Motivated Maria enjoys every trip she takes. This is because she spends time planning for the trip. She knows where she wants to go and the best way to get there. Maria learned that the first part of the trip – planning – is as important as the end of the trip. She sets goals, takes small steps towards her goals, and moves forward. Sometimes things happen – like one of her babies gets sick – that cause a change of plans. But Maria knows that it is only a temporary setback. Experience has taught her that the trip doesn't take care of itself.

1. List two or three things each person does to mess up their trip. What could they do differently?
2. What makes Motivated Maria different from the other three kinds of travelers?
3. Think of someone you know who is like each kind of traveler. Talk about what happens because of the way he or she goes about planning.
4. How about you? What kind of traveler are you? What might you need to do differently?

Adapted from: Maxwell, John C., *Your Road Map for Success: You Can Get There from Here*, Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2002, pp. 73-74.

Writing Goals

Write your choice here:

Look at where you are starting:

- 1) Think about your choice and how long it might take you to achieve it. Write a few words or a sentence about your choice and your commitment to get what you want.

- 2) Think about the things you have going for you. Write down your three biggest strengths to help you reach your goals.
 - a.

 - b.

 - c.

- 3) What stumbling blocks stand in your way? List three things that you can control that stand between you and your choice.
 - a.

 - b.

 - c.

4) What will it cost you to make this choice? What will you have to give up to get what you want?

- In money
- In time
- In relationships
- In your present living situation
- In other choices

Write down two goals that will get you closer to your choice. These need to be things that you can change and that you have control over. For each goal write down three steps you can take to reach this goal. Make one step something you can do today. Make one step something you can do this week. Make one step something you can do this month.

Goal One: _____

- Step 1 -- What I can do today

- Step 2 -- What I can do this week

- Step 3 -- What I can do in a month

Examples of Goals

For building a strong family

- To better manage my stress and anger
- To spend time with my baby and other children
- To take better care of myself so I can be a better parent
- To visit my mom once a week with the baby
- To earn enough money to care for my family
- To learn new job skills
- To set and work on goals for my family's future
- To keep a balance between my work and family responsibilities
- To think about my baby first when getting involved with someone romantically
- To find free or inexpensive things to do as a family
- To find safe and affordable child care
- To get to know my partner's other children

For involving my baby's father or mother -- for parenting together

- To prepare a parenting plan with my baby's other parent
- To set a time each week for my baby's dad to see him or her
- To find another man who can be a male presence for my baby
- To have my baby's dad help take care of my baby
- To get financial support from my baby's dad
- To help my child get to know his/her dad
- To increase my partner's involvement in making decisions about our baby
- To work together with my baby's dad to raise him or her
- To get the family members of my baby's dad involved
- To set aside my negative feelings about my baby's dad

For creating a healthy relationship with my baby's father

- To patch things up with my baby's father or mother
- To open the lines of communication with my baby's mother or father
- To get ready to marry my baby's father or mother, or another person
- To learn how to talk to my baby's father or other partner without being afraid
- To learn good listening skills
- To watch my body language and avoid giving mixed messages to my baby's father or other partners
- To listen and allow him/her to express his/her feelings when she/he does it safely
- To spend time together alone
- To be more assertive
- To ask for help from my family or baby's father or other partner
- To leave the relationship because it is unhealthy and unsafe for me and my baby
- To work toward a long-term relationship with my baby's mother or father
- To solve problems together about our baby
- To say "no" and not feel guilty
- To enjoy my life with or without a romantic relationship
- To recognize my strengths
- To nurture and take good care of myself
- To find a partner that wants a healthy and loving relationship with me
- To have a more positive relationship with my baby's father

If you don't know what to do, set a goal:

- To decide what role my baby's dad or mom should have in my baby's upbringing
- To decide your future involvement with my baby's other parent
- To decide the steps to make my family stronger