

CHAPTER TWO **INNER GPS.**

THEORY BEHIND INNER GPS.

This generation of youth has the opportunity to be some of the greatest leaders that this world has ever seen! There is tremendous potential in this generation due to their high level of creativity, access to information and technology, their poly-cultural communities, and their breadth of experiences. This generation is also dealing with a tremendous amount of grief due to the ever-rising rates of divorce, violence, poverty, depression, and media pressures to conform to certain unattainable images. As demonstrated by great leaders such as Martin Luther King Jr., Florence Nightingale, Nelson Mandela, and Princess Diana, individuals who can turn their painful experiences into fuel are also able to overcome obstacles. The ability to transform painful experiences from an emotional burden into an opportunity for growth and self-reflection comes largely from an internal sense of meaning and purpose.

This sense of purpose is grounded in developing a moral standard and is best discovered within the context of history and family legacy. The truth is that none of us arrived where we are today without the sacrifices of those who have gone before us. It is important as community leaders (teachers, parents, and mentors) to identify these past sacrifices and to understand the opportunity we have to sacrifice in order to meet the needs of our communities in creative ways today. As youth see sacrificial leadership in the communities, they will unconsciously emulate it, perpetuating a positive leadership style.

In addition to looking to the past to understand our current situations, it is equally important to intentionally consider our futures. Encouraging youth to intentionally imagine their futures and consider where they want to be, how they want to be perceived, and what ultimately matters to them as individuals will help youth develop long-term goals. This workshop is designed to stimulate youth to think creatively about where their families have come from, where their lives are headed, and where they want to be. It is time that today's youth begin to see themselves as creating the future for the next generation, just as we, as today's leaders, are creating a future for the youth we are working with.

SCIENTIFIC APPLICATION LAW OF THERMODYNAMICS

According to the third law of thermodynamics, energy that is created will never cease to exist but will continue on forever. Constructed of millions of atoms our bodies are vessels that create huge amounts of energy. Consequently, the thoughts we have, the words we speak, and the actions we take put out energy to the world and universe that we live in. Since Einstein's theory of relativity proves energy is a form of mass, we know that who we are extends beyond just physical realms to include metaphysics. Plainly put, the energy we put out will affect the rest of the world. The question then is, what kind of energy will you put out? Let's take a look at what your affect on the earth when you are gone, or legacy, will be.

HIPHOP APPLICATION JAZZ IMPULSE: SAMPLING CONSCIOUSNESS

Hiphop culture has roots in various forms of music from gospel and blues, to salsa and jazz. With each musical influence also comes knowledge about life and philosophy of survival. In jazz comes the knowledge that our lives are best understood in context between what was and what will be. Jazz teaches us that we are a link in the chain of tradition. This link in jazz expresses an ability to learn from the past, redefine the moment to change the future. Jazz from the beginning is a music that redefines the use of classical instruments and uses it to tell a new story, one of freedom.

The work of John Coltrane, for example, completely revolutionized how people thought the saxophone could be used. His voice, expressed through the sax, tells the story of the civil rights struggle for freedom and equality. You hear some Malcolm, Martin, and Huey in his music. The Jazz Impulse represents a constant process of redefinition: as an individual, a member in a community, and what the future could look like. This jazz way of life as it applies to Hiphop culture, is best seen by looking at the DJ.

A great DJ is someone who can read the crowd so well that he or she can not only play music that communicates where the crowd is from and meet them where they are at, but also sees the possibility of where the crowd could go. DJ Kool Herc (Hiphop's first DJ) was one such DJ. Connected with his own roots and history while growing up in Jamaica, Herc saw the power music had to bring people together and to move them in a positive direction.

While Herc was growing up in Jamaica, the radio stations were controlled by the government and since the government wanted to control the people, they controlled the music that came over the airwaves. Jamaican DJs would bring their huge sound systems out to the park and play their revolutionary reggae music, which would gather huge crowds of people together. Herc's family moved to New York when he was thirteen, and he brought this knowledge of music as a revolutionary tool with him.

The Bronx neighborhood that he lived in at the time was experiencing some racist treatment from the government. They built a highway that displaced thousands of families, they cut the art and music programs in the schools, and the banks would not give the black and Hispanic populations loans to start businesses or buy property. Many of the youth reacted to this oppression using violent means and many of them joined gangs. After many years of death and destruction, a peace treaty was called that gave Herc his big chance to bring the community together the best way he knew how...through music.

Herc sampled what he had seen in Jamaica and threw his own type of party with his own "spin" that was unique and authentic to folks in his community. Herc and his sister threw a back-to-school party, where he would borrow his dad's sounds system and play records for the youth who attended. He knew how to play the music that would keep the white, black, Asian, and Latin youth all interested. At one party Herc realized that he could get all these youth to dance with the most passion when he played the "break beat" or instrumental break of the songs. He decided to experiment and see what could happen if he could extend this part of the record.

Herc bought two copies of the same record and set up two turntables. At the opportune time, Herc played the break beat and right when that was getting ready to end on one record, he cued up the other at the beginning of the break beat and created a loop. This loop, or endless break, allowed for so many more options for all in attendance. No one knew what to do to this super hype music, so learning from each other the Asian, Latin, black and white youth began to exchange moves that would evolve into break dance. This instrumental break also allowed folks to rhyme over the beat, which would evolve into MCing or rap. Herc had sampled from the past in what he saw happening in Jamaica, added his own flavor, and with the help of his community began to give birth to a new sound and culture that would be known as Hip-hop.



IMPLEMENTING THE WORKSHOP ñ

WHERE THE RUBBER HITS THE ROAD

MAIN POINTS OF THIS WORKSHOP.

This workshop is meant to get youth to critically think about what sacrifices have been made to get them to where they are today, where they want to be, and how they will overcome challenges to get to where they want to be. It will further develop the ideas from the last session regarding what they believe about reality and fantasy. In addition, it will help youth begin considering what kind of legacy they wish to leave. Encourage youth to consider challenges in their lives, and in the world that they are concerned about and how might they overcome challenges and help find solutions.

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Facilitator note: Write the following Talib Kweli (pronounced “tah-lib kwell-ee”) quote on the board before class starts.

**“THEY TRY TO BOX ME IN, BUT I GOT KNOWLEDGE OF SELF,
WHICH IS STRONGER THAN ANY CAGE THAT YOU CAN LOCK ME IN.”
– Talib Kweli**

STEP ONE: REVIEW

- A. Looking at the picture of the train, what routes would be the easiest for it to go down? Why? (Ideal answer: Toward distraction or destruction because there is less resistance.)
- B. Who benefits from us chasing their fantasy definitions of the Good Life? (Ideal answer: Advertisers, Big Business, media companies, prison companies, alcohol and drug companies.)
- C. What are the consequences of “Living a Get Rich or Die” mentality? (Ideal answer: You will either die trying to get stuff or have a bunch of stuff and not be happy.)
- D. What route will take the most power to go down? Why? (Ideal answer: The mountain of dreams because there will be more resistance.)
- E. Remember that power is the ability to define reality and influence others to accept that definition as their own. What are the three different types of power? (Ideal answer: Money, people, and power.)

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TRANSITION POINT: Today we are going to define what the dream is for ourselves, and begin to see what knowledge and resources we have that can help us to move forward in fulfilling this dream.



STEP TWO: THE BOX

Share with the youth: A rapper named Talib Kweli says in one of his songs: “They try to box me in, but I got knowledge of self, which is stronger than any cage that you can lock me in.”

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Who is the “They” in this quote? (Ideal answer: People who don’t like you, Big Business, the media, etc)
 2. What are some ways that they try to box us in? (Ideal answer: Race, sex, where you live, your past, etc.)
 3. How do they benefit? (Ideal answer: They get us to believe their ideas of how we should look and act.)
 4. What are the consequences of being boxed in? (Ideal answer: You never get to be your true self.)
 5. “Big Business says, these kids don’t know who they are, so that is what we are going to sell them.” —Chuck D from Public Enemy
- Can we have a wrong perception of who we are and not know it? (Ideal answer: It is possible if we are not in tune with those who care about us or if we are not honest with ourselves.)

STEP THREE: TELL YOUR OWN STORY

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Facilitator note: It is important here for the facilitator to give an example of how you have been boxed in either by how you look (race, gender, etc.) or something you were affiliated with (a community, culture, etc.) in your past.

STEP FOUR: KNOWLEDGE OF SELF

What is knowledge of self? Why is it like a key? (Ideal answer: It helps to unlock us from the box.)

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TRANSITION POINT: Knowledge of self means being in touch with your whole self and making sure that you are rooted and grounded in reality.

MINI-LESSON #1:

All human beings have a mind, a body, a heart, and a soul. Someone who is boxed in either is isolated from these parts of themselves or is trapped from knowing their realities about these areas. The mind refers to the way we think and our intelligence, the body refers to our physical bodies and our ability to do things, the heart refers to our emotions and relationships, and the soul has to do with legacy and where we envision going in the future.

BREAK OUT OF THE BOX

*Have youth self-identify ways that they have been boxed in.
Have them do the Redefinition section on page 37 in their journals.
Have the youth share when they are done.*

STEP FIVE: SOUL POWER

- A. We are going to focus a bit today on the soul part of ourselves. What do you think of when someone says soul?
One way to define Soul is: the part of you that deals with your sense of purpose.
- B. Rage Against the Machine (a famous rock/rap group) says, “he who controls the past controls the future.” Also, an African proverb says, “In order to know where you are going, you have to first know how you got to where you are at.”
- C. How could knowledge of our past affect our future? Can you truly know who you are if you don’t know where you are from? (Ideal answer: Understanding and learning from our history is a huge resource that can help us in moving forward.)

F *Facilitator note: Reiterate that knowing where we are from can help us to know ourselves better, which can then equip us to have a clearer idea of our future.*

T **TRANSITION POINT:** Let’s take some time to look back.

STEP SIX: GETTING PLUGGED IN

- A. What are some positive influences that can help empower us to know where we are from?
- B. Listen to the Where I Am From Poem (Located on Track 2 of the CD).

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. What do you think the artist means by saying, “My parents, two different seeds representing distant nations would meet and create me a hybrid child born with dual vision?” (Ideal answer: He is bi-racial.)
2. How many different senses does he use? (Ideal answer: Sound, taste, touch, smell, and feeling.)
3. Try to use all your senses in your own “Where I Am From” poems found in the Word Up section of their journals, on page 30. (This could also just cover your life story or family story.)

F *Facilitator note: Have youth share once they have been writing for about five minutes.*



STEP SEVEN: THE GREAT LIFE LEGACY

- A. What does the word legacy mean? (Ideal answer: It is something that is handed down to a predecessor.)
- B. Can someone leave a bad legacy? Can they leave a good legacy? (Ideal answer: Yes, an example of a bad legacy is Adolf Hitler, good is Martin Luther King Jr.)

INNER GPS CHECK...ONE...TWO IN THE YOUTH JOURNAL:

Take some time and have the youth do some reflection in their journals, on page 29, on people that they would say have left a good legacy.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

Once they have finished, ask them the following questions.

1. Do they all have money? Are they all famous?
2. Did anyone write down someone who is a family member or a friend? Why? (Have the youth share some of the names of the people and why they chose them.)
3. What are some of the attributes of these folks? (Write this on the board.)
4. If a true hero is someone who leaves a good legacy by doing something purposeful for someone other than him- or herself, can we do the same?**TRANSITION POINT:** Let's take a look at a teen who did exactly this. He sampled from those in his community and with his own spin found his way of giving back.)



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STEP EIGHT: DOING THE KNOWLEDGE READING

Read the Do The Knowledge section on Sampling Consciousness, on page 27 in the youth journals.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. What types of music has influenced Hip-hop? (Ideal answer: Jazz, gospel, blues, etc.)
2. How did Herc's knowledge of his roots help him when he moved to the Bronx? (Ideal answer: He saw how the DJs in Jamaica were able to uplift the lives of the people through music and he began to do the same with his own style of music.)
3. How did he add his own spin? (Ideal answer: He played music that was relevant to the folks in the community he lived in.)
4. What was Herc's legacy? (Ideal answer: He helped folks move in a direction of empowerment through music and having fun.)
5. What did the break beat begin to do to people who had been separated? (Ideal answer: They began to come together to look for solutions.)



TRANSITION POINT: Herc had a vision for his people and where things could move for the better. Let's try to sample from this example for our own lives.

STEP NINE: DROPPING SCIENCE—WHEN YOUR ENERGY CONTINUES

Read the Dropping Science section on page 33 in the journals .

- What will people say about you when you are gone?
- Did you live a good legacy?
- What purpose did you live for beyond yourself?

STEP ELEVEN

Have youth take turns sharing what they wrote in small groups (no larger than five). Have them begin to brainstorm what problems and solutions they could envision either for their school or for their community.

STEP TWELVE

Ask youth what problems they see in the school, the community, or the world. How have some of their heroes dealt with some of these issues in the past? How can we sample from these examples and put our own spin on them? Have them meet in small groups to discuss this. (This will be built upon later as youth begin to develop plans for helping and serving the community.)



NOTES