

**Ohio Department of Job and Family Services
Office of Workforce Development**

Transcript of Webinar

Kids These Days, with Dr. Steven Parese, Part 2

Date: October 19, 2012

[Numbers in brackets indicate the approximate playtime, or time stamp, in the audio version]

RON WEBER: Well, I want to thank everyone for joining, or coming back, to join us this afternoon. We're very pleased to have our presenter, who joined from North Carolina, Dr. Steve Parese. We've sent him all over the state this week. I know some of you could not go to our regional training, so we're very happy to have this video conference. So, Steve, you're in the home stretch now. Our final session will be on preparing At-Risk Youth for Workplace Success. Take it away.

STEVE PARESE: Thank you. I appreciate that. Well, good afternoon Ohio. I'm glad to be back. For those of you that joined me this morning, just a reminder that my name is Steve Parese, by trade and training a special education teacher.

This morning, we looked at issues related to the traumatized youth. This afternoon, we're going to be focusing instead on issues related to getting them jobs and helping them keep jobs. Let's go ahead and shift over to our PowerPoint. If you've got a handout in front of you, one that looks like this, you're in great shape. If you don't, you should be able to follow along on the screen and with the PowerPoint handouts. There are three questions that we're going to try to answer this afternoon.

First, what are soft skills, which ones do employers demand most highly, and why do some people fail to use these skills? Secondly we're going to focus on workplace culture. Why is it that some youth have a difficult time fitting in with the workplace culture? Then finally, what can we do to help youth adapt to the workplace? We'll try to do all of this in 90 minutes. There will be some opportunities for interaction and some question and answer period. We'll leave that open at the end for question and answer, as well. [2:10]

Let's go ahead and get started with a little warm up exercise. On the front cover of your handout, if you've got one, you'll find a teen lingo quiz. So take a moment and look over the five items that are there. If you don't have one, be patient, we're going to be doing this on the screen in just a moment, as well. I want to reach out to some of the counties that are out there and encourage you to respond.

Medina County, I'm looking for the answer to number 1 from you. Seneca County, number 2. Holmes County, number 3. Ottawa County, number 4. Hocking County, lucky you, number 5. So take a moment to look over those items and come up with an answer. We'll go over them together.

While you're working out there in the audience, you're going to be hearing some voices in the room. Those are not voices in my head, or in your head. We have a little studio audience here. You've already met Ron. Let me have the rest of our participants here chime in and introduce themselves.

ALICE WORRELL: Good afternoon, I'm Alice Worrell; I'm the Project Manager for the Connect the Dots Foster Care Initiative here at ODJFS.

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CARMA LACY: Hi, I'm Carma Lacy; I'm in the Office of Workforce Development Grants Management Unit.

MICHAEL TAGGERT: Michael Taggert, Training and Development, Office of Workforce Development.

STEVE: And we've got Carol in the background over there.

CAROL WARGO: I'm in China. Carol Wargo, Workforce Dimensions, technical assistance provider.

STEVE: All right, thanks guys. So let's go ahead and do this team lingo quiz. I'm reaching out to Medina County. What does it mean to be "baked"? Medina, you out there? [4:04]

CAROL: They might recognize it as Medina.

STEVE: Medina County. Thank you.

MEDINA COUNTY: Medina County, to be "baked" – or stoned?

STEVE: What do you guys think? My studio audience, are they right? Exactly right, yup. As in "his eyes are all messed up man, I think he got baked last period." That's right, that's right. Number 2, "cheddar?" I'm going to Seneca County.

SENECA COUNTY: We're going to say carrying a weapon.

STEVE: What do you think studio audience? No.

RON: Could it be money?

STEVE: It is. "Cheddar" means money. Yup. As in "she hit it big on the Lottery last week, she got phat cheddar now." And it's P-h-f-a-t.

"Flossen," I'm going to Holmes County, what'd you got for me?

HOLMES COUNTY: He's showing off –

STEVE: Showing off your wealth? That's exactly right. "That fools got a new ride, now he be flossen all the time." Showing off his wealth. Number four is "Jella". I'm coming to Ottawa County. What'd you got for me Ottawa?

OTTAWA COUNTY: (Inaudible 05:10).

STEVE: That's exactly right. Jell to, means to get along with somebody. "Me and her, we really jell." Then our last one is "grill" and I'm going to Hocking County.

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HOCKING COUNTY: Just guessing, maybe carrying a weapon?

CARMA: Smile – your mouth.

STEVE: No. Carma’s shaking her head. What is it?

CARMA: That song, Grills. [5:38]

STEVE: It’s your smile or your mouth, as in “shut up or I’ll bust ya in your grill.”

Now I do this warm up exercise for two reasons. One is, it is 1:00 and we might need a warm up exercise after lunch, but, secondly, because I want to focus on the fact that teenagers have not just a lingo, but a culture all their own. Whether they’re kids who have been in trouble with the law or not, it becomes part of how they talk about the world, how they interact with their world. It’s not a white thing or a black thing or a Latino thing; if anything, it’s an urban thing, or a young thing. For us to be of help in helping them connect with the world at work, we have to be able to connect with them first.

So, this little workshop – this 90-minute session – is going to be about helping them understand the culture of the workplace. But to do that, we have to understand that they come from a culture all their own. White, black, Latino, Asian, no matter rich or poor, all youth share something in common. They share a culture that can be very different from the culture of the workplace. So that’s what we’re looking into today.

Our first question is going to focus on soft skills. What are they, and which skills do employers demand most? If you’ve got a handout, we’re on page two. Otherwise just follow along on the screen. By definition, soft skills are the personal and interpersonal skills that we need to successfully adjust to the social environment of the workplace, not the technical skills or the machine operation skills, but those interpersonal skills.

What I’d like you to do is to take a few moments with your partners around your tables in your sites, and brainstorm a short list of typical soft skills. Things that you think are essential. Then I’ll come to you, listen to you a little bit, and I’ll offer you what employers have told me. So let me give you two minutes to do that. [7:39]

All right, so let’s do some talking. I can call on you by county, but I’d rather just have you chime in. What are some of the things that you think are most essential for workplace success?

DEFIANCE COUNTY: I think something that is very – its body language and attitude.

STEVE: Defiance, you’re right. Employers are looking for people who can communicate clearly with their body language and understand the impact that has on other people. What else do we have out there?

GEAUGA COUNTY: Would be showing up for work and attendance.

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STEVE: Yeah, number one thing they're looking for: people who show up, warm bodies, right? And time management skills are necessary for that, organizational skills, as well. What else?

MADISON COUNTY: Initiation?

STEVE: The ability to take initiative?

MADISON COUNTY: Yes.

STEVE: To see what needs to be done and just do it without having to be told. Sure, that makes sense.

SENECA COUNTY: Seneca County would like to throw in –

STEVE: Jump in.

SENECA COUNTY: That they ask questions; they're willing to ask questions so that they can do it correctly.

STEVE: Very nicely said. Sure. A willingness to ask questions when you're not sure. That's part of communication skills, I'm sure. [9:51]

Let me share with you what employers have told me over the years. A lot of what I'm sharing with you this afternoon is drawn from a workforce soft skills program called Working It Out that I've been training across the country for the last fifteen years. And in developing that program, we went to employers across the country, in a number of different industries. Some of those were call centers, manufacturing, healthcare, and so on.

And we asked them: what is it that you're looking for from new employees, in particular, from youthful employees, or employees that don't have a strong background in the workforce? They ended up giving me, goodness, 200 different skills over the years. But it turns out that many of them cluster together into about 10 different categories. I want to share with you four of the most common categories.

The first ones were self-control skills. Employers are looking for people who can control their impulses. When you send a young person on the job, they want to know that young person can, for instance, handle stress, manage their anger, and control their body language. They want to be sure that when a young person comes on the job that they don't have to worry about that guy losing his temper, or that young lady getting all emotional and creating more drama than already exists in the workplace. So, the first thing they're looking for is folks that have got self-control skills.

The second skill they're looking for: communication skills. They want to know that the young people that you send to them can express a complaint in an appropriate way and can deal with criticism when a boss pulls them aside and says: hey, I need to talk with you about something. If I say, "Mike, I need to talk with you, you were late yesterday." What I don't want to hear back

is “Well you were late yourself Steve.” The supervisor needs to know that if they lodge a legitimate criticism, that the worker will be able to handle that without getting all defensive. So communication skills is the second category. [11:53]

The third most popular one was: social interaction skills. In other words, the ability to just get along with other people. For instance, interrupting a conversation. How often are you on a computer or on a phone call and have someone just come up and interrupt you in the middle of your phone call? Just step up into your office and cut you off. Employers expect that our young people will know how to interrupt when it’s necessary.

Joining social activities and empathizing with others are also examples of skills that are fairly intuitive for most of us, but a lot of the young people that we work with struggle with those social skills. Empathy is the ability not to feel other peoples’ feelings, but to imagine how your behavior would impact them, to put yourself in their shoes for a moment.

The fourth and final category, although we could continue on, the fourth one I’m going to share with you is problem solving skills. Employers want to know that you’re sending them employees, or job candidates, that can prioritize problems. How often does it happen that you’ve got only one thing to do at any given time? We’re constantly juggling our priorities, trying to figure out what we need to do first. Avoiding assumptions, a lot of problem solving goes awry when people make decisions on the basis of hearsay, or gossip, or innuendo, rather than just asking questions and getting the facts. And finally, predicting outcomes. If Carma were working for Ron over here and I wanted a day off, I need to ask Ron for an extra day off, and I can hear him behind closed doors with Carma and voices are raised. Is now really the best time for me to go in and – knock, knock, knock? “Ron, can I get a day off?” That’s a predictable outcome. I’m going to get a “heck no” if they’re in the middle of an argument. So predicting outcomes to problems.

We could go on and on, but these are some of the most common skills that employers are looking for. Now, let me ask you a question. If these skills are so important to success in the workplace, why is it that so many troubled youth fail to use them? Let me ask you guys in my studio audience here, what do you think?

RON: I think some youth are from families where they didn’t get to model the behavior because nobody else in the family was demonstrating those kinds of behaviors. [14:21]

STEVE: What Ron’s talking about is what I’d call a skills deficit. Kids growing up in environments where they just didn’t get those skills modeled for them. They never learned how to solve problems calmly and logically. The person who solved the problem was the one that was the biggest, and baddest, and loudest. They never learned good workplace communication skills because they didn’t have to use those in their home, they were never taught to them.

So one possibility is a skill deficit, a second possibility, it begins with the letter “M” – any guesses on that? How about from you folks out in the counties? Maybe they’ve got the skills, they’re just not, what?

MAN: Motivated?

STEVE: Motivated to use them. Yeah, absolutely. I was a classroom teacher for a lot of years and then, after that, I supervised student interns who were teachers in the classroom as well. Most of my student teaching stuff was done in Washington, D.C. So, I had a student teacher out in one of the urban schools, a really tough school, and I visited her each week and visited with the students, and I saw that they had a bunch of behavior problems. So I made a promise to them. I said, “If you guys can get 90% of your behavior on any given week, every student in this class gets at least 90% of their points, I will take the entire class out to lunch at a Chinese restaurant nearby.” I wasn’t terribly worried; I’d seen these kids behaving. I didn’t think they were going to earn their points.

Their, two weeks later, their student teacher comes up and says, “Steve, I’ve got to tell you, my kids have all gotten 90% -- 94% of their points!” I said, “Oh my Gosh, you’ve got to be kidding me?” She said, “No, you wouldn’t believe how hard they worked. They took you up on that challenge.” I have to tell you, I was shaking in my boots. I had seen these kids eat in the cafeteria and I was terribly embarrassed. I was worried they were going to embarrass me in the restaurant. I mean, I’d seen them spitting peas at each other, flicking food, putting their elbows on the table. [16:18]

Well, I brought them to this restaurant, and I was shocked. They put the napkins in the laps, they put their elbows at their side, it was yes ma’am, no ma’am, and may I please have. I couldn’t believe it. What I thought was a skill deficit was actually just a motivation deficit. They had the skills to use good table manners in the cafeteria; they just weren’t motivated to use those skills. The same thing with our kids in the workplace. Sometimes they have self-control skills, sometimes they have good problem solving skills, and they just don’t care enough about whatever job you’re putting them on to control their temper.

The third area is the one that I specialize in most. It’s cognitive conflict. Cognitive conflict. What a cognitive conflict means is that you have the skills, and maybe even the motivation, to use a skill, but there’s something about what you’re being asked to do that just feels wrong to you and you refuse to do it. I’ve done some work in Pennsylvania helping steel workers who have been laid off of their jobs, because steel plants shut down, and they found themselves in retail work. So we’ve got men in their forties and fifties, and sixties – who are used to working hard in a pretty hard environment – now in a retail environment, sometimes being supervised by women that were 25, 26, 27 years old.

I’ll tell you, I can’t tell you how many times they told me, “You know what Steve? I don’t care, they can fire me. I’m not going to do what that girl tells me to do.” Did they have the skills to do their job properly? Did they have the motivation? They sure did, but something about being told what to do by a young woman just felt wrong to these old-school steel workers, and in many cases they were willing to put their jobs at risk, rather than do what they were asked to do by a woman. That’s a cognitive conflict. We had to help them work through those conflicts; otherwise, they would have lost their jobs. [18:19]

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So, here's an example of a cognitive conflict. Kind of a silly one, but you'll get the idea. Let's imagine that you're a teenager who's been hired to work at a clothing shop in the mall. Now, that's a pretty sweet job, by any means. So I'm going to ask my studio audience here to chime in and ask you all out in the remote sites to talk with each other as I go through this. Let's imagine that your first day at work, and your boss comes up to you and says, "Would you mind hanging up these new dresses for me, please?" How many of us say, sure, we'd do that? Yeah? How come? Everyone here is nodding.

ALICE: Seems like a reasonable request for the type of job I have.

STEVE: Alice says it's a reasonable request, sure. Why else?

WOMAN: I understand what she wants me to do.

STEVE: It's not a hard thing to do. Mike?

MIKE: Person's supervisor.

STEVE: She is the supervisor and you're hardwired to do what a boss asks you to do. She did ask, too; she did say please. Imagine it's a little bit later in your shift, and your boss comes up to you and says, "How about running down to Starbucks and grabbing me a latte on your next break?" Would you still do it?

CARMA: I probably would, but I would wonder why she asked me to do it.

STEVE: Carma is saying, yes, she would do it. But you're not crazy about it, are you?

CARMA: Not right now.

STEVE: No. Anybody else in the room say, sure would, I would do that? How come Ron?
[19:36]

RON: I mean, I'm still getting paid for the time I'm down at Starbucks and so I can, maybe, take my time.

STEVE: Well, I guess you are getting paid for that time. Ron says as long as he's getting paid, he doesn't much care, although, it is on your break. Go ahead Alice.

ALICE: Oh, I'd say, no way. No way, that's my break; I want to get a snack out of the machine.

STEVE: No, because, for you, it's break time.

ALICE: Right.

STEVE: Now, if she wants to have you run an errand on her time, that's something different. Carma I got a sense that you weren't crazy about running for a latte?

CARMA: I guess for me it wouldn't have been an issue. Maybe I wanted something from Starbucks, too, so there's a benefit for me in it.

STEVE: Okay, so, yes, if you could use that as an excuse to grab yourself a latte, maybe even she'll pay for it, who knows?

CARMA: Right. Absolutely.

MIKE: Might see it as leverage for when I need flexibility sometime.

STEVE: Ahhh.

MIKE: Like something I can, kind of, put in my hip pocket, in case I needed flexibility.

STEVE: Mike is saying, you know – you scrub my back; I'll scrub yours – kind of a thing. Maybe, if I do her a little bit of a favor, later on I'll be able to ask for a favor in return somehow. For some of us, though, running errands might feel a little bit, I don't know, degrading. Let's imagine now that it's the end of the shift and your boss comes up to you and says, "I need you to pick up my son from daycare and spend an hour with him at the park."

Now, how many of us would still be okay with doing that? You're off the clock. Everyone here is shaking their heads. I'm guessing that everyone out there in the counties is doing the same thing. Why would you have a hard time with that? [21:08]

WOMAN: Not in my job description. It's on my time, you're not paying me.

STEVE: There's an awful lot of reasons, aren't there?

WOMAN: It's personal, why would you ask me to do your personal work?

STEVE: Exactly, it feels very personal.

MIKE: Disrespectful.

STEVE: Why disrespectful Mike?

MIKE: It would probably give the person a feeling that they're being – would that same person make the request of a peer?

STEVE: Ahhh. Especially if it felt like they're only doing it because you were new or you were young. Then it could feel like you were being used or taken advantage of. Disrespected. Absolutely. You know, sooner or later, no matter what job we're on, no matter what age we are, we get to the point where we say bump this, enough is enough. Congratulations, you've had a cognitive conflict.

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The difference between us and the young people that we work with is that when we're faced with cognitive conflicts we have the skills to work through those things. We have the communication skills, the problem solving skills, the self-control skills to ask ourselves – Is this really a big deal? And if it is, “Carma, listen, I’m not sure exactly what you’re expecting of me on this job. I guess we need to have that conversation before this goes much further.”

Where, our young people would probably feel angry, and if you were with me this morning and you heard me talk about aggressive and passive aggressive. The aggressive kid might get angry and yell, the passive aggressive kid might get sarcastic and cynical. The avoiding kid would probably just take a break and not come back from it. So we want to help kids learn how to work through these cognitive conflicts, rather than walking off the job or setting themselves up for failure. [22:44]

MAN: You might hear some urban words you had –

STEVE: You might get a few urban words that you don’t even know what they mean. So, my first key point is on the back of your booklet. If you don’t have one, it’s up there on the screen, as well.

Workplace success requires not only strong vocational skills, but mastery of a whole range of social skills or soft skills, as well. Some youth have never learned these skills, while others find that acting this way conflicts with their inner sense of right and wrong, creating what we’ve just called a cognitive conflict.

So, let’s go on to part two of our workshop: Understanding workplace culture. We’re going to take a look at what personal beliefs drive the social behavior of today’s young people. Now, on the top of page three of your handout, you’ll find a list of six common personal beliefs. If you don’t have that handout, I’ll put the first few of them up on the screen for you.

Let me ask you to take a look at these, actually, and what I’ll have you do is rate them from 1-5, depending on how strongly you think your youth might respond to these. Now, you can rate them for yourself if you want to, but we really want to focus on kids. How strongly, on a scale of 1-5, do your youth believe that life should be fun, for instance? I’ll give you just a moment to do that with your partners, or on your own. And let’s switch back to camera mode please. We’re going to switch back to camera mode so that we can see each other. [24:24]

I want to encourage a little bit of discussion about these. Which of these seem most powerful to you in your work with troubled kids, and why do you think they believe in them so strongly? So chime in if you’ve got a thought on this, please. Which of these seems very, very strong to you? I’ll encourage our studio group, too. Go ahead please.

MAN: Don in Summit County –

STEVE: You’re breaking up a little bit. Say again.

MAN: (Inaudible 25:04)

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STEVE: I'm sorry that you're breaking up a little bit. The technology is betraying us here.

MAN: I think he said fun. So he said number one.

STEVE: Life should be fun was a real power belief for some of your kids? I'd certainly agree with that, wouldn't you?

MAN: Yeah.

MAN: Sounded like he said some families might be number two.

STEVE: And loyalty to families can be very powerful to our kids as well. Jump in if you've got something else that you'd like to share, anyone out there in the counties, or here in studio.

Ashtabula County: Can you hear us?

STEVE: Yeah, we can, thanks.

MAN: Number two we think is one of the strongest ones that we see, even though it might be a, like, a dysfunctional family, they still – loyalty to their family comes first. We call it concentrating on the relationships instead of achievement. That's kind of how we look at it. But the loyalty to family and friends, we think, is the big problem that we always run into out here. It, kind of, takes over for everything else they should be thinking about. [26:29]

STEVE: That's well said. It almost seems as though the more dysfunctional the family, the more intense the loyalty. I grew up in a family system where the rule was, whatever happens in this house, stays in this house. It doesn't matter how messed up it might be, but you don't talk to your teachers, you don't talk to the preachers, you don't talk to anybody about the things that happen inside of this house.

What else do you see as being powerful with your youth?

STARK COUNTY: I find the Disney look – we talk about the Disney look, trying to get them to stay away from the tattoos, stay away from the piercings, stay away from the long hair; unkempt, and just being untidy – and they resent that tremendously and we seem to find that being a problem here.

STEVE: Absolutely. I imagine most of the rest of us would agree that a lot of the youth we work with look at their tattoos and their piercings as – this is who I am. For some of us, tattoos are just simply body art, but for a lot of the young people that I've worked with, tattoos are parts of their story. They tattoo themselves with names of people who have passed away, or pictures that represent something powerful in their lives. To cover that up is to cover up who they are, at least in their minds. Well said, yep. Let's get one more little bit of input from the field.

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How many of you see that “nobody has the right to boss me around” as being a pretty big issue for your kids? They’ll argue with you over the smallest things. Let’s flip back to the PowerPoint. Let’s take a look at how these beliefs drive behavior. I’m a cognitive behavioral specialist. I mentioned this this morning when we were talking that, when I see a behavior that a youth gets involved in, I try to help them to understand the beliefs that drive that behavior. [28:40]

Whenever we do anything, we’ve got a world view way of looking at the world that justifies that perspective. So if two characters, one on the bottom of page three and the other on the bottom of page four. Thomas has a fight with his parents when they criticize his choice of clothes. Ron, would you mind reading the lines that are up there on the screen?

RON: Pull your pants up, change that shirt, and take out that earring – why can’t you guys let me dress myself?

STEVE: So which belief is Thomas using from the six that are up there in the grey box. Which one is he acting on? From the studio audience, what do you think?

WOMAN: No one has the right to boss me around.

STEVE: I think there are at least two of them. One is that, no one has the right to boss me around, and there’s at least one other one, too.

WOMAN: How I look should be my decision.

STEVE: How I look should be my decision. Yep, so there are two beliefs that are getting fired up there. I think of beliefs as being sticks of dynamite and they are just sitting back there waiting for something to set them off. This is a young man who believes very strongly in making his own decisions and in dressing in the way that he feels comfortable. When his parents criticize him, that belief gets activated. He argues with them. Could that argument backfire on him? Sure, it could. He argues with his parents, he can’t take the car tonight. He’s grounded, something like that. But in the moment, he feels like he’s right.

Our second example involves a young lady named Lori. One night Lori decides to have a few drinks with her friends and stays out past her 11:00 p.m. curfew. When she gets home, her aunt is furious with her, but Lori blows her off. Alice, would you mind reading Lori’s lines for us? [30:21]

ALICE: It’s my life; I’m old enough to make up my own mind about what I can and can’t do.

STEVE: Nice attitude, by the way. Which personal belief is Lori using to justify her actions?

RON: I think, partly, life should be fun, because she just wants to go out.

STEVE: Definitely there’s some life should be fun there. I just want to go out and have a good time.

CARMA: I think no one has the right to boss –

STEVE: And, no one has the right to boss me around, is a second one. Could her argument backfire on her?

CARMA: Oh, absolutely.

STEVE: Sure, her aunt could say, “Well, if you want to live by your own rules, young lady, you can find somewhere else to live.” But in the moment, she feels like she’s doing the right thing because she is acting in concert with her belief system. By and large, most people, most of the time, try to act in ways that are consistent with our belief systems. If we don’t, we feel a sense of cognitive dissonance. The problem is that our belief systems don’t fit every single scenario and, sometimes, it’s like fitting a square peg into a round hole. It just doesn’t fit.

So, let’s continue on with part two, and we’re going to look at this idea of unspoken rules of the workforce. When I sit down with employers to ask them what they expect of youth, one of the main things I hear from them is, we want kids with a good attitude. In fact, they often say, we’d rather have someone with a good attitude and no vocational skills, than someone who’s got vocational skills but a bad attitude. The problem is, I don’t know how to teach good attitude all by itself. If I had a pill that could give good attitude, or a shot of good attitude, I’d make a fortune with that thing.

What I did discover is that employers, when they say good attitude, what they really mean is, somebody who understands their unspoken expectations intuitively. I don’t have to tell Carma to button up that blouse and not show so much cleavage. I don’t have to tell Ron to pull up his pants so that I can’t see his underwear. He just gets it. These guys just understand, intuitively, what I need from them. [32:39]

Now, in trying to help employers articulate their unspoken rules, I use this example, and let me use it with us as well. Imagine that you’ve got a young one at home, a two year old, a three year old, and it’s been a long time since you and your spouse or partner got out for an evening on the town. Now, you decide that you’re going to hire a babysitter, but you’ve just moved to a new town, and you don’t know who to contact. So you, kind of, reach out to your community and to your new friends, and they recommend this young lady that you see on the screen.

There are some common sense rules that you have for babysitters that are so common sense to you that you don’t even bother to explain them. You’ll give her your cell phone number, you’ll let her know that you’re coming back at 11:00, but there are some things that you don’t even bother to explain because they’re just so obvious. What are some of those common sense expectations? Let’s talk about them here in the studio, and let me encourage you to chat with your partners at the same time, while you’re listening in with us. What do you all think? Common sense.

ALICE: You’re going to be with my child all the time.

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STEVE: That's right. Be with my child. What else? Common sense.

RON: Don't invite strangers over.

STEVE: There you go.

RON: Don't take anything out of the house.

STEVE: Yeah, there you go. If you find a \$5 bill on the floor, it's not yours. What else would you say are common sense babysitter rules?

ALICE: Don't hit my child, or –

STEVE: I shouldn't have to tell you this, but you can't strike my children.

RON: Don't get anything out of the refrigerator unless I've said that's okay.

STEVE: Help yourself, but not to everything, right? You're missing some of the most obvious ones because they're so common sense, they're so obvious. There's beer in the refrigerator and liquor in the cabinet, you may not help yourself to that. My wife's lingerie drawer and her jewelry box, stay out of that. In fact, our bedroom, you've got no reason to be up there at all. We'll be back at 11:00, but if we're 10 minutes late –

MAN: Stay.

STEVE: Stay. Exactly. Now imagine that you've come back from your evening out, you've had a great time. Your spouse, or your partner, takes the babysitter home, you walk into the kitchen and fix yourself something to drink, and your jaw drops. You cannot believe the mess that this girl has left behind. The kitchen is trashed. Now, you didn't say clean up after yourself, but honestly, you didn't think you had to, did you? It's just common sense that if you take something out, put it away. Now, you spend some time cleaning up the kitchen, and part of you feels like calling her up, right now, and busting her out. But by morning time, you've calmed down and you promise yourself, I will never – what?

WOMAN: Use her again. [35:25]

STEVE: Never use her again. Now, you see her in the community later in the week and she comes up and says, "Oh I just love your little ones. Let me know if you need me again." And you say – "Sure, I'll let you know." Now there might be a few of you out there in the counties that are saying, "Nope. You know what, that's just not going to happen, honey. Let me tell you why." That's a good thing to do. But most of us would probably avoid that difficult conversation. Because, if you've got to say clean up after yourself, what else do you have to explain? Honey, go check your jewelry drawer, make sure nothing disappeared.

We try to avoid those difficult conversations because it's just so obvious what they should have been doing. Folks, what I want to suggest is that employers feel the same way. They've got

common sense rules, as well, and they feel just as strongly that your youth should follow those common sense rules, as we do with the babysitter. Unfortunately, though, they don't often explain those common sense rules before the youth begins, and they don't often explain what went wrong afterwards.

In fact, if one of your kids breaks one of these unspoken rules, what they're probably going to hear from a supervisor is, "You know what, I don't think it's working out for you here." And if they push it hard they'll say, "No, it's not you, it's just there's not a good fit for you here." Exactly right. If you've ever, in your career, had the conversation that said where an employer explained to you that it wasn't working out and it wasn't a good fit, what really happened is, you broke one of their unspoken rules and they didn't have the guts to tell you what you did wrong.

What we're going to do right now is share with you six of the most common unspoken rules of the workplace – unspoken rules that I hope you'll share with your youth as you prepare them for work. Here are six of the most common things that employers have told me. [37:17]

First, work comes first. Don't let personal issues get in the way. If you're having an argument with your boyfriend on the way into work, if you and your parents are having it out, we expect that, by the time you get to work, you will find a way to leave that behind. Don't bring your children to work with you. Don't bring your arguments and your fights to work with you. Leave your personal issues, leave your home issues, at home.

Second, do what you're asked to do, even if you don't really want to. When your boss says, "Carma would you mind", she doesn't really mean would you mind. What she means is –

RON: Do it.

STEVE: Do it. I'm just being polite. Our kids don't understand that when I say, "Hey, Mike would you mind picking this up", I'm not really asking, I'm telling.

MIKE: It's not a choice.

STEVE: It's not really a choice. I'm just being polite about how I'm saying it.

A third one is: do your best to fit in. Don't act or dress too different. A colleague of mine in Denver says, different we can handle, Steve; it's bizarre that we have a problem with. I watched this special on PBS about ten years ago. This fellow had shaved his head, tinted his skin kind of a reddish color, put these contact lenses – these cat's eye contact lenses in his eyes so that his eyes were yellow and he had a vertical slit. Tattooed himself – these tattoos were crawling up his neck – and, then, had surgically implanted these tiny little stubby horns in his forehead. Now, if you want to look like a demon, that's your business, but don't expect to get a job waiting tables at TGI Fridays looking like this. Different we can handle, it's bizarre we have a problem with. That crossed the line. [38:59]

A fourth one is: always stay busy, or at least look busy, right? I hired a couple of teenagers to help me rake leaves last fall. I live in a tiny town in North Carolina and we have six giant Oak

trees, 120 – 130 years old each. In the summer time they're lovely and in the fall, though, right about now, the leaves are falling and I've got a blanket a foot and a half deep. So I really needed some help, and these two kids came from a family that was really struggling. They go to our church, and so I hired them. I said, "Fellows, I'll give you \$10 an hour to help me rake these leaves." They're, like, you got it. Well I got them started on the leaves.

I went in to fix a cup of coffee, ended up spending some time doing some e-mail checking. I came back about 45 minutes later, they're leaning up against a tree texting their girlfriends on their cell phones, and they've got a tiny little pile of leaves in front of them. I'm like, "Fellows I'm paying you \$10 an hour to work, not to text your girlfriends." We switched over to a pay-per-job after that. Take as long as you want guys, I don't care. You're getting \$20.00 for the job each.

Always stay busy. Employers look at us being on the internet, or surfing the web, or chit chatting to each other as theft of time, especially if it's more than just a short break.

The next one is: Work is work. Don't expect it to always be fun. You know, sometimes it's fun if you're lucky enough to work with people you enjoy. But sometimes it's just work. I mean, if it was supposed to be fun, they'd call it fun, right? "Hey so Mike what time do you have to go into fun tomorrow? This weekend, let's go crazy and let's just work. What do you say?" Work is work. It's hard. Sometimes it's boring, but that's what we get paid for. A good worker knows how to make even tough stuff interesting. But, sometimes, it's just hard work.

The last one is: stay out of other people's problems. In simplest terms –

ALICE: Mind your own business.

STEVE: Mind your own business, that's right. Exactly right. Our kids with their blurred boundaries and their social relationships that overlap, they often don't get that. They don't understand how to stay out of other people's problems.

Now, there are two problems with these unspoken rules. One is that they're unspoken. Like the babysitter example, nobody told them to clean up after themselves in the kitchen. Nobody told them to always stay busy. Hey, I finished the job that you gave me to do Ron. So what's wrong with me texting my buddies until you come back. Find me again, and tell me what to do next. Nobody told them that they're always supposed to find something to do. That's a legitimate point.

The second problem with these unspoken rules, though, is that they often conflict with the personal beliefs that our kids have learned on the street, or in their home environments. If you've got a handout, look on page 5, and you'll see a white box on the top of the page with personal beliefs, and a black box on the right side of that same page with the work rules. What I'd like for you to do with your partners is to take just a moment and look for opposing beliefs.

For instance, number two has an arrow pointing to it. Loyalty to my family and friends should always come first, and that conflicts directly with letter A, which says that work comes first,

don't let personal issues get in the way. Let me give you a couple of minutes, well, a moment at least, to do that with your partners and look for those opposites.

In fact, the way I've got it set up on the screen, for those of you that may not have a handout in front of you, we should be able to do it this way, as well. So let's do this as a group and I'll encourage you out in the counties to go ahead and chat with each other as we're doing it here.

So, a lot of kids have been hardwired to believe that life should be fun. They've gone through a lot in their young lives; sometimes it's been hard, sometimes it's been boring. They know they're going to have to work when they get to be a grownup, but right now, life should be fun. What's the opposing one from the workplace?

ALICE: Work is work. Don't expect it to always be fun.

STEVE: That's right. The employer believes that work is work. Sometimes you can take a break after you have completed a job, but you can't take the day off because you've finished filing some files. You got to get right back to work after a short break.

The second belief that a lot of kids hold, and a lot of us hold as well, is that loyalty to friends and family should come first. Most of us would put our children or our family members before anything, but we're also good at balancing work and home demands. What is the belief at work?

RON: Work comes first; don't let personal issues get in the way. [43:30]

STEVE: That's right. The employer expects that you're going to put work first. Now, that can be a real challenge. Now, if Carma has a sick child at home, and she has to choose between home and work, she also has the skills to go to that supervisor and explain herself, explain what's going on. She's not going to just dodge out, without telling anybody where she's going. She's not going to explode and say "What do you expect me to do, my child is sick!" She's got the communication skills and the soft skills to work through that cognitive conflict. An awful lot of our young people don't seem to have those skills.

A third one: It's okay to take a break when you've worked hard. And in your personal life, you go to school all week long; Saturday comes, you want to sleep in on Saturday morning, instead of going out and mowing the yard. That makes sense, I get that. In your home life, sure, but what's the deal at work, what are you supposed to be doing? Always stay busy, or at least look busy, right? I wouldn't have minded if those boys who were raking my yard, raked for an hour or an hour and a half, and came in and wanted to get a cup of hot coco, or a soda, or something like that. But I expected that they would work more than ten minutes before they took a forty-five minute break.

Number four, friends should help each other out with problems. In your personal life, of course, that makes perfect sense. But what's the rule at work?

CARMA: Stay out of it. [45:32]

STEVE: Stay out of other people's problems. Carma you're right. Let's say that Carma and I are best friends. We don't know each other, but let's imagine that we did, and every time I come up to Columbus we get together. Our families have known each other for years, and last night, we got together for a bite of dinner and one of her old clients came up, clearly under the influence, and started giving her grief. Because I'm her friend, I stepped up and said, "Yo, you better back up out of her face. This is my friend. You got a problem with her, and you got a problem with me." Carma appreciated that because that's just what friends do in our book.

Well, this morning, I walk in here to do this conference and Carma's boss pulls her to the side and says, "Carma, over here right now!" I step up into his face and say, "Yo, you better back up out of her face. You got a problem with her, and ..." and Carma's, like, Steve, no, no. What was friendship last night, what was loyalty last night, is insubordination in the workplace. Standing up for your friends in the street is loyalty. Busting into your supervisor's office to say, "leave her alone, her boyfriend just broke up with her and she's pregnant. It's not her fault" – is inappropriate, that's insubordination. That doesn't mean that you can't stand up for your friends, but you don't do it during work hours. You do it on the break; you do it on a lunch hour, something like that. Our kids have a real hard time understanding that they can't be best friends during work hours.

Number five: How I look should be my decision. An awful lot of our kids feel strongly about that. But what's the workplace rule?

RON: Do your best to fit in.

STEVE: That's it. Don't look, or dress, or act, too different. What does it matter, they say, how I look, as long as I get my job done? Well, supervisors often feel differently about that. They're concerned about company image, aren't they? [47:23]

ALICE: Brand.

STEVE: Brand, yeah. Finally, no one has the right to boss you around. What's the opposite of that?

WOMAN: Do what you're asked to do.

STEVE: That's right. I remember working with a young lady in Philadelphia a few months ago who said, you know what Dr. P? Just because he's my boss doesn't give him the right to tell me what to do. I said, I'm sorry, actually it does. A good boss might not tell you what to do, he might ask you. But it doesn't mean that he or she doesn't have the right to do that, they do. Now, they can't ask you to do something illegal or immoral, but if they're giving you a direction, you do have to follow it. "Well, that's not how I was raised." That's exactly where we're going next, is that the way kids were raised, the beliefs that they've come to abide by in their personal lives often causes them problems when they get to the workplace.

In fact, here's an example of that. Here's our young man Thomas with his hairdo and his piercings, and, remember, he had some problems with his parents when they criticized his choice

Kids These Days, with Dr. Steven Parese, part 2

of clothes earlier. Let's take a look at what's going on with him. Thomas found a maintenance job at a major hotel chain. He got into a disagreement with his supervisor when he was asked to remove some of his facial jewelry and cover up his tattoos. Ron, would you mind reading Tom's lines one more time for us?

RON: Why can't I wear a nose ring? Why do I have to cover my ink? What does that have to do with cutting the grass?

STEVE: Now, he's got a legitimate point there if you look at it from the personal perspective. Which personal belief is he still using? He used it with his parents, now he's using it with his boss. [49:00]

RON: How I look should be my decision.

STEVE: Exactly right. He's doing the wrong thing, arguing with his boss, for what he believes to be the right reason. Because according to him, according to his code, the way he looks is his business. Mike, I'm going to ask you, if you don't mind, to read the supervisor's point of view.

MIKE: He just doesn't understand about company image. All those tattoos and piercings scare some of our guests. In our business, you have to keep up a certain image.

STEVE: Now that makes sense, too, doesn't it? Because a supervisor is coming from another perspective, a different point of view. Which work rule is he using?

ALICE: Fit in.

STEVE: Yep. Do your best to fit in. Don't look, or act, or dress too different. Exactly right. Now, this looks like a discipline problem, guys. This looks like Thomas is having a discipline issue, but what it really is, is a cognitive conflict. Thomas is doing the wrong thing for what he believes to be the right reason, because he's using the wrong set of beliefs to judge his behavior. According to him, he can make up his own mind about how he dresses.

Let's take a look at another example. You remember Lori? She's the one that got into an argument with her aunt about coming in on time. Now she's got a job as a checker in a supermarket. During a slow moment, her boss asked her to clean up a spill in the back, but she totally ignored him. Here's what Lori has to say. Alice, would you mind reading Lori?

ALICE: I'm the checker, not a janitor. He should get a janitor to do stuff like that. Why do I always have to do what he says?

STEVE: What belief is Lori using to justify her defiance? [50:42]

WOMAN: No one has a right to boss me around.

STEVE: That's it. Yep. It worked with her aunt, and it's working with her boss, or not. Here's what her boss has to say. Carma?

CARMA: She's standing there doing nothing and everyone else is busy, I'm going to ask her to help out, she's always bending the rules like they don't apply to her.

STEVE: Now that makes sense, too. Where's the boss coming from? Which work rule is he using?

RON: Do what you are asked to do, even if you don't want to.

STEVE: Even if you don't want to. Exactly right. And again, while that might look like a discipline issue, what it really is, is a cognitive conflict. Lori is doing the wrong thing, refusing to do the job, for what she believes to be the right reason. Now I'm not suggesting that we should excuse their behavior, but what I am suggesting is that we have to help them do what I call a code switch.

We have to help them switch from using the rules of their home life to using the rules of their work life. It's very much like going to a foreign country. Imagine going to China, or to Singapore, or to a European nation like Spain or France, and expecting that they're going to operate by American rules. I'll tell you, I've driven in New Zealand, and they don't drive on the correct side of the road. They are all driving on the left side, and no matter how hard I try to get every New Zealander to drive on the right side of the road, they just won't follow my rules. When in Rome, do as the Romans do.

But what our kids do is, they take the rules that they used in their personal lives and they apply them everywhere, and it just doesn't work. So my second key point is in the back of your booklet, and it's also up there on the screen. Most employers have unspoken expectations which they seldom explain directly to new employees. These often conflict with the beliefs that young workers use in their personal or social lives, leading to what we've been calling cognitive conflicts. [52:36]

Part three of our little workshop is going to be successful interventions. Now that we have an understanding of why kids misbehave, or fail to live up to employer expectations, and I've offered two reasons. One is that they don't have the soft skills that employers are looking for, and the second is that they often use the wrong set of beliefs to judge the appropriateness of their behavior. What can we do about this? How can we help?

Steven Covey, who, unfortunately, recently passed away, wrote a wonderful book called *Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*. I'm sure that many of you have read it; if you haven't, I strongly recommend it. One of his seven habits is to seek first to understand, and then to be understood. This is the essence of what we're going to be trying to do when we're working with kids who see things differently. Instead of trying to force them to see it from our perspective, we should seek first to understand their perspective, then code switch and help them see it from a new perspective.

Again cognitive psychologists call this code switching; switching from the rules of one environment to the rules of another. We do this all the time, when we're in a library we, or in

church, we often talk in a hushed tone of voice. When you go to a football game, you yell and scream. We understand, intuitively, that it's okay to yell in one place and not okay to yell in another place. You're out with your buddies, Ron, you might use profanities; if you're with your mother, you watch your language very carefully, even at our age.

Here's a silly example and we're going to pretend that Ron, I don't know if you were, Ron, but we're going to pretend that you used to be an all-star defensive safety on your high school football team. I'm going to ask for some studio participation here. When I say, "What does Ron do?" – you guys are going to say, "Tackle him." All right? Let's practice that, so, What does Ron do?

Studio: Tackle him.

STEVE: Say it like you mean it. So if Ron is an all-star defensive safety, man, nobody gets by Ron. Some guy comes running up the left side of the field, what does Ron do?

Studio: Tackle him.

STEVE: Tackles him. Somebody comes running up the right side of the field, Ron moves over and, guess what?

Studio: Tackles him.

STEVE: Tackles him. God help them if they come straight up the middle. You know what Ron's going to do?

Studio: Tackle him.

STEVE: Tackle him. Nobody gets past Ron; he's amazing. He's the best at what he does. The end of the football season comes, and the basketball coach comes up and says, "Ron, I want you on my team, son." And Ron says "Coach, I'm a football player. I don't play basketball." He says, "You're a natural athlete son, I'll teach you everything you need to know." Says, "All right." The first day of practice, some guy comes dribbling down the court with a ball. What does Ron do?

Studio: Tackles him.

STEVE: Tackles him. The coach runs up and says, "Son, what are you doing?" Ron says, "Coach, I told you, I'm a football player. That's all I know how to play." Now, on the football field, tackling the guy with the ball is exactly the right thing to do. The problem is, he's not playing football anymore. On the street, getting up in somebody's face when they talk trash to you might be exactly the right thing to do. It's not the thing I would do in the street, but our kids (some of them) live in worlds that I don't have to live in. They have to live with realities and survive realities that I don't have to survive.

For some of the kids I've worked with, and folks, my guess is that for some of the kids you work with, being rough and tough and getting in people's faces, or walking away and shutting down, those are survival reflexes. When they switch gears and, now, they're in the workplace instead of on the street, they need a new set of rules – the same way that Ron needs a new set of rules if he's going to be a basketball player. You can't tackle the guy with the basketball. [56:20]

But here's the thing. In my work with troubled kids, initially, when I first started teaching, I would try to teach the kids that I worked with certain social skills, soft skills, problem solving, negotiation, conflict resolution skills. Things that were useful in my world. They'd say to me, "Parese, I got to tell you, if I tried this conflict resolution stuff on the street, I'd get shot in the head three times." And I'd say, "No, no, no. You know what, just give it a try, it will work if you give it a try."

But I was wrong. Because what I didn't understand back in my early teaching days is that these kids have learned skills that are necessary for their survival. What if I were to tell Ron, "Now you know how to dribble a basketball, go back out to the football field and dribble the football." That's just as ridiculous as tackling the guy with the basketball. We can't strip away the survival skills that our kids have. We have to be willing to allow them to handle themselves in the street, or in their home environments, in the way to which they become accustomed. Now, I hope that they'll learn to manage their anger better, and make better decisions, but I've found that it's not worth the argument of trying to convince them that the skills I want to teach them for workforce have applicability everywhere, because they just don't.

How do we help them to develop these skills? Well, players learn to code switch from one sport to another. Our kids have to learn to code switch as well. So the first thing that we have to do is convince them that work and home are, in fact, different places, different sports. Once Ron understands that, "Hey, wait a minute, I'm playing basketball," and once he learns the rules of basketball, then he's available to learn the skills of basketball, as well.

So there's two strategies. Two cognitive behavioral strategies that I want to share with you in the time that we have left. If you're following along in a hand out, if you've got it in front of you, it's on page six of your handout. If not, then just follow along on the screen and you'll see the same kind of information.

The first is cognitive coaching, which means – to indirectly teach workplace attitudes and skills by coaching kids through those problems. This is useful when we're sitting one-on-one with kids, and after they've had a problem. Alice comes to me and says, "Mr. Parese, it's just not fair. My boss just let me go and all I was doing was talking on the cell phone." She just doesn't understand what she was doing wrong. Here's an opportunity to do some coaching with her, to help her learn the skills and the attitudes. Here's an example. Thomas finds a job in a maintenance center in a major hotel chain. This is the example that we just saw. In fact Ron, go ahead and read that line for us again.

RON: Why can't I wear a nose ring? Why do I have to cover my ink? What does that have to do with cutting the grass?

STEVE: Now you might be tempted to lecture him about company image and all the rest, but Steven Covey says – seek first to understand and then to be understood. So if we’re going to seek first to understand, we might say something like this: “So Ron, the way you see it, it shouldn’t matter how you look as long as you do your job and no one complains, right?”

RON: Yes. [59:38]

STEVE: We’re looking at it through his eyes first. Now we’ll flip the script and help him see it from the other perspective. “At home, Ron, you’d be right. How you look there at home, that’s your business. But let’s look at it from the hotel’s point of view. You know, a lot of guests there are old fashioned,” and we would go on then to explain the hotel perspective. So again, seek first to understand and then to be understood.

The second example is with Lori. As you’ll recall, Lori got a job as a checker in a supermarket and then refused to do what she was told when she was asked to clean up a spill in the back. Alice would you mind reading Lori’s lines again?

ALICE: I’m a checker, not a janitor. He should get a janitor to do the stuff like that. Why do I always have to do what he says?

STEVE: I want to give folks a moment in the counties, and here in the group, to try to fill in the blanks on the bottom of page six. See if you can come up with a response. So from your perspective _____ and then fill in the other perspective and see what you come up with. I’ll give you just about a minute or so to work together on that. All right, so I want to check in with you all about this. [1:02:10]

Go ahead and switch us back to camera mode. In a normal classroom environment, we’d all be face-to-face and it’d be easy for us to share our responses. But I’d like to get at least three of you from out there in the counties to respond with what you’ve come up with for Lori. I’m seeing a gentleman in green on the screen with me, right now, and hoping that he’ll participate.

RON: That’s Summit – Stark.

STEVE: Stark?

STARK: Yeah, Stark. This is a little different answer, but I said, “So from your perspective, you should only complete your job description? At home that may be the case as far as what your parents say to you, but at work, you’re going to do what I say as a supervisor.

STEVE: I like the first two pieces of that, but you recognize right away that – you’re going to do what I’m saying – what I’m going to say is a little bit hard. It’s going to create a defensive response on her part, but I definitely like the first two pieces of that.

STARK: It really does, but I think I often talk with my youth about cleaning up puke, for example, in the bathroom.

STEVE: Uh-huh, one of my favorite things.

STARK: You're working as a cashier. You might have to go clean up puke in the bathroom. There's no one available, you're the only one available. You're going to have to go do it and I often get the response, "Well, I'll walk out the door. So I tell them, "You know what? You want the paycheck, you have to work with your supervisor and do what's available. If you're the only one there, who's going to pick it up?" You know?

MAN: You've got to be part of the team.

STARK: Yeah, exactly.

MAN: You're part of the team, the team concept comes in.

STEVE: Uh-huh, part of the team. Now Steven Covey's advice would be to seek first to understand. Certainly we can understand that cleaning up vomit in a bathroom is a nasty task, but that it's got to be done, and, unfortunately, you're the one that has to do it. I think just saying that much would use some of his principles. I know what, I know it's a nasty task and nobody wants to have to do something like that, but it's got to be done, and I need you to do it. That's different than "you'll do what you're told to do." It's just a softer way of saying the same thing. Thanks for being willing to jump in first. We'll be sending you out a brand new car to thank you for being the first participant. [1:04:43]

STARK: I need one!

STEVE: Let's see if we can get at least two more teams from out in the counties to jump in with their insights with this one. Well, how about here in the studio audience, while we're waiting for someone to have the courage to jump in. What did we come up with?

RON: I had put almost the same for the first one. You shouldn't be expected to work outside your job description.

STEVE: So from your perspective you shouldn't be expected? She would certainly agree with that.

RON: Then I said that at home you are right, you only need to take orders from your parents, but at work, we all have to pitch in when we're not busy.

STEVE: There you go! There you go. So you've seen it from her perspective, you've compared home and work and contrasted them. But on the football field, you're expected to tackle people, but on the basketball court it's a different set of rules. Nice. That's good. Let's get one more from the group here in Columbus. Do you want to try?

ALICE: I said something real similar to Ron. So from your perspective your boss doesn't have the right to ask you to do something that's not literally your job?

STEVE: She would certainly agree with that.

ALICE: And at home that might be true, but at work that just doesn't work. Your boss has the right to ask you whatever needs to be done when there's no one else to do it and you're available.

STEVE: Good. So you've clarified what workplace expectations are. But first, you've seen it from her point of view. Well done. That's exactly the kind of statement we're looking for. Now it seems a little text book right now, of course, to fill in blanks, but the strategy as a whole tends to be much more effective. Our goal is to be able to help kids understand the rules of the workplace, and then to abide by those rules without provoking a defensive response. Without kicking in their aggressive, or passive aggressive, or avoiding, or dependent traits. So if we can say things in a certain way and get a better response, then it makes perfect sense to try to say those.

Yes, Mike, please.

MIKE: These examples seem to make the case for the importance for the tone of the voice.

STEVE: That's true, too.

MIKE: It's the words as well as the tone that some people will pick up on.

STEVE: How many times have we heard that from kids? "It's not what you said, it's the way you said it." We're all sensitive to that, too. I can ask you to pick up something in a nice tone of voice, or I can do it in an angry tone of voice. It provokes a very different response. Good observation, Mike. Let's go back to the PowerPoint. [1:07:23]

As we're firing up the PowerPoint again, I'm going to share with you another set of responses. You might say, "So from your perspective, he can ask, but just being your boss doesn't give him the right to tell you anything." And she'd say, "Absolutely." Then come back with (to be understood) "and at home you'd be right, but at work a boss does have the right to assign tasks and you do have to listen or you'll be insubordinate." Now if she says, "I don't care, I can always find another job," then there's not much we can do to force her to change.

What I would come back in and say is, "Yes, it's true you could do that. But look how hard you've worked to get this job. And look at all of the things that you're trying to accomplish. You're trying to make your parents proud of you. You're trying to save up money so that you can get to a place of your own. Are you really willing to throw that away in order teach your boss a lesson, so to speak? Maybe this is a job that's worth keeping and just doing what you're asked to do."

The second strategy is cognitive instruction. If you've got one of my handouts, then just flip the page to page seven. Cognitive skills instruction. Where cognitive coaching is often done one-on-one and kind of spur of the moment, it can take three minutes or ten minutes. Cognitive skills instruction is something that requires a lot more organization and structure. Generally, what we

do here is directly, rather than indirectly, teach those workplace attitudes and skills by providing classroom-based instruction.

A lot of your kids have been in anger management classes, or social skills classes, it's the same basic thing. We're going to teach work related skills in a very direct way. For instance, some of the skills that young workers need are things we talked about earlier in our workshop: self-awareness and self-control. How to express a complaint. How to deal with criticism. How to solve problems logically, and so on. Now, as it says in the booklet, learning new skills is easier when they are broken down into simple steps. So, anytime that we teach a particular skill, you want to break that skill down into its component steps and teach it one piece at a time.

Now, you don't have to have a commercial curriculum to teach soft skills. If you know what your employers are looking for, you can go ahead and create your own curriculum or, just, ad hoc, put together a lesson on managing anger, or dealing with criticism. I might have mentioned earlier, though, that much of the content that I'm sharing with you is – whoops. Hang on. Let me back up for a second. I got ahead of myself.

I want to look at each kind of skills that each character might use. Not only is it important to break skills down, but it's important to match up skills. A child that has anger management problems probably doesn't need a class on problem solving skills. One that has assertiveness issues probably doesn't need a class on anger management. So we really do need to match up their needs. [1:10:41]

A character like Thomas could probably use some empathy and the ability to express concerns, so that, when he has an issue about expectations to take his earrings out, that he can express a concern appropriately about that. A character like Lori, who is having some problems with doing what she's told, might need some skills like following directions and accepting feedback when it comes her way.

Now, again, once you've identified the skills that your kids most need, finding a way to teach those skills to them is pretty important. You can do it on your own – just create your own program to do it. Or you can look on-line and find some resources. If you're looking for some free resources for teaching skills, one of the best places I would send you to is researchpress.com. Researchpress.com. They do have some free stuff, and what isn't free, is very reasonably priced, \$25 or \$30, and you can buy a book that will help share how to teach anger management skills and social skills and so on.

I mentioned earlier that the content that I am sharing with you is derived from a series of soft skills training programs called, Working It Out. And the beginning to Working It Out program was one that was designed specifically for at-risk youth, kids who are at risk of drop out, and incarceration, or underemployment. The kind of population that many of you folks are serving directly. It teaches the exact skills, and also, that whole unspoken rules of the workplace thing that we've been doing here, is all embedded in that curriculum.

So if you're interested in finding out more about that program, my website is on the bottom of the page: workingitout.com. You can download some samples for that. That program is

available only to individuals who are trained as instructors, and I've been doing this workshop today around the state for the last three days. There's been a bit of interest building in joining an instructor training. So if that sounds like something that might fit your needs, after you've done some more research, get in touch with your supervisors and share with the folks here in Columbus. If there's enough interest, I'm sure we'll find a way to make something happen.

So anyway, my final point is up there on the screen and in your booklets. That youth have a natural tendency to use their personal beliefs and social experiences when judging the appropriateness of their workplace behavior. Cognitive coaching helps them develop new insights into employers' expectations. Cognitive skills instruction teaches them the new skills that they need to fit into the workplace better.

Going back to that basketball/football example, Ron. If we're going to turn you into a basketball player, cognitive coaching is going to teach you the new rules of the workplace, or rather the new rules of the sport. But, then, you're still going to need to learn the skills. Now that you understand you can't tackle the guy with the basketball, that doesn't mean you know how to dribble and shoot. We've still got to teach you those skills. Even when our kids understand that they've got to listen to what they're asked to do by their employers, they might still need self-control skills, communication skills, empathy, and those sorts of things.

Well, that brings me to the end of my formal presentation. I want to thank you for spending an hour and fifteen minutes with me this afternoon. We're going to stay live and on the screen for a few more minutes, so if you have specific questions about what I've been sharing, or if you have cases you are working on with kids and you'd like my input, I'd be happy to offer that. So, thanks so much folks, and I'll stay live with you for a little while. Thank you guys. [1:14:22]

RON: I actually have a question here in the studio about the cognitive coaching.

STEVE: Sure, Ron.

RON: Does that set up an expectation in the young person's mind that, when they get to the workplace, their boss will also use those coaching techniques, explain everything, and take the time to, sort of, make a case for why they ought to do the work? Because a lot of bosses are not going to do that, they're just going to say this is what I want, get it done.

STEVE: Ron, you're making a really good point. When I talk with employers, those that are willing to hire non-traditional populations like at-risk youth, or former offenders, or welfare-to-workers, what they'll often say is, "We don't mind providing a person with an opportunity to be, but we don't want to be social workers or counselors."

RON: Right.

STEVE: So, you make a good point when you express a concern about expecting that everyone will be my counselor, so to speak. But they do need some transition help. Ultimately, we want to transition them toward independence and self-sufficiency, but they need some help along the way.

RON: Okay.

STEVE: What I would do is offer this kind of coaching, but then continually say, when you get to the workplace, you know that your supervisor isn't going to be sitting down with you and talking about these sorts of things at this much length.

RON: Got it.

STEVE: You know, one of the things that employers tell me that they want, though, is a young person who is willing to ask for help when they need it, rather than just going off on their own initiative and doing something completely wrong. So teaching them the self-advocacy skills to say to a boss, "Listen, I'm kind of confused, I'm a little bit frustrated. What exactly is it that you are expecting of me?" Most decent supervisors would appreciate that level of self-advocacy.
[1:16:04]

RON: Okay.

STEVE: We do have a question. Go ahead please.

MAN: How much current involvement do you include, and let me give some examples. Being Latino, a lot of times the Latin community will send out scouts. They won't send the main group out. They may send a couple of people out to ask questions and bring the information back, to decide if it's worthwhile for everybody. So, how have you presented this, I guess, to get parents involved? Because with a Latino community, a lot of times, if you don't get that kind of involvement, you're not going to get the main people that you want to target.

STEVE: You're talking about getting buy in –

MAN: Do you follow what I'm saying?

STEVE: I think so.

MAN: Do you follow what I'm saying?

STEVE: I think so. If I'm understanding you right, you're talking about getting the buy-in of the community by getting parents of these scouts to see the value of this.

MAN: To get them interested, yeah.

STEVE: Most of my work, personally, is done in training instructors to deliver this program around the country and in providing support services for people like yourselves. I don't have as much direct contact with parents and communities. When I'm not working with instructors, I'm working directly with kids, so I can't offer much guidance there. Do we have any from the room?

RON: As far as youth outreach? I think it's just to take those scouts and be able to show them, "what's in it for me", or just the value of the outcomes, being able to explain the outcomes to them and then, hopefully, they'll take that message back and help sell the program.

ALICE: I would say just being aware that that culture has that kind of mentality. You respect that, and so, you reach them in the way that they need to be reached, so I think you do work with the parents or the community leaders, and then you reach the youth. That's respecting their culture.

STEVE: I wish I had some brilliant advice for you. I think when I've worked with populations with communities that have been suspicious of me and my motives, one of the things that I've done that has been successful is to get some of their key people to be trained as instructor themselves. So that, rather than letting me come in and teach their kids, I train them to teach their own kids. That way, they see themselves – and they are seen in their community – as leaders. And they are much more effective in delivering the program in ways that they know that their youth need. I trust that they understand the needs of their community better than I possibly could.

WOMAN: We have a question from Stark County. Some of us are here from – I'm sorry I don't have much of a voice today. Some of us are here from family court, and our question was, how do you get the employers to, kind of, play along with you when you're sending kids to them that they may already know are these "bad" kids. Then they get them in, and they do exhibit some of these behaviors, and they have automatically written them off. So they're willing to be just, like, okay, you can just leave. What can we say to them to, kind of, get them on the same track that we are? Do you have any ideas? [1:19:41]

STEVE: (jokingly) I find the biggest, baddest kids I possibly can and I send them out to meet them in the parking lot. No I'm not. No, blackmail generally doesn't work real well.

You're asking a good question. It can sometimes be seen as if employers are the enemy, instead of in the same boat with us. In the work that I've done with employment services in the last fifteen years, I see employers as our primary clients.

Again, they don't want to be social workers, they don't want to be counselors. They have a job to do, and they're often, occasionally, willing to hire a less-than-ideal candidate because there is something about one particular employer that enjoys making a difference. They have a sense of social responsibility. They want to make a difference in kids' lives. But, ultimately, if we're sending them kids that can't do the job, or that are more trouble than they're worth, it's a heck of a sales pitch, and you can't expect them to buy-in.

So I think what's really important is that we're able to convince employers that the youth that we have are work-ready. We will be there to support those youth, if it is at all possible, to support them in the first three months of employment, when the turnover rate is, by far, the highest. That means doing job coaching with kids on a pretty regular basis. Maybe even shadowing them from time to time to support them. The biggest fear I hear from employers about our population is

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that we're going to be sending them thugs and thugettes that are going to be intimidating their workforce and stealing from them on the side.

We know that most of our kids aren't like that. Most of our kids, if anything, they have low self-esteem, not inflated self-esteem. If anything, they're withdrawn and overly-passive and uncertain of themselves, rather than being gang bangers, going in there, trying to rob and steal. But employers need to know that they are not in this alone. That we're not going to drop off a "bad" kid on their door step, and pat them on the back, and say good luck. [1:21:57]

Those two things, I would say, might be helpful when you talk with employers. First off, we're not going to send you kids who aren't work-ready. Secondly, we're not going to leave you alone. We will be checking in on a regular basis and make sure that you do. Here's my cell phone number, if there is an issue, we will show up to help resolve those issues.

WOMAN: Okay, thank you.

STEVE: I hope that was helpful. Thanks for your question.

WOMAN: It was. Yes.

STEVE: (kidding) I have no idea what I'm talking about. Do we have any other questions? Is that the gentleman in the front that's getting the new car?

WOMAN: Yeah.

STEVE: All right!

MAN: I'm sorry ma'am. Third and fourth generation welfare. How do you approach them? Because I've run into situations where I have children that have never seen a parent in the household work before.

STEVE: Wow. You're right. When those kids look around them, when they look around the neighborhoods, what they see is unemployment, what they see is welfare dependency. Sometimes they see drug addiction and violence and dishonesty, and that looks normal to them. They look around and everyone appears to be behaving the same way. It's hard to convince those kids that there is value in getting up and going to work for \$7 an hour. When they see people around them doing almost nothing and still managing to get by.

I think we have to appeal to their higher nature if you will. That's not an easy thing to do without a role model in their lives. The research in criminality says that one of the greatest predictors of criminality is not only the presence of anti-social role models, but the absence of pro-social role models. Meaning that, not only do they have people around them breaking the law, but there's no one around them who's living life differently.

So I guess the main thing that I would suggest that you do, if it's humanly possible, is expose them to people who live life differently. That doesn't necessarily mean upper middle class

people living in monster mansions with huge swimming pools. It could be working class people who are barely making it, but are proud of the fact that they're working hard. If you can't break them out of the neighborhoods, at least, go visit someplace and spend an afternoon working with some people who are working hard and taking pride in the fact that they're providing for themselves and their families independently. [1:24:49]

When I was in direct care, and teaching and counseling with juvenile offenders, one of the most powerful things I did to help change perspectives was an empathy-building thing. We brought a group of hardcore juvenile offenders to Habitat for Humanity. These boys worked their tails off for three days, building a house for a lady who's – I've forgotten the circumstances. But they built a house for a woman. They got to see this woman and work hard side-by-side with some skilled carpenters and tradesmen, and when that house was finished, the pride on their faces was amazing. They got not a penny for that, but it was an incredibly valuable experience for them. It changed the way they thought about work. They left that, saying, "You know, I could be a carpenter, I could be tradesman, or a mason. I could do that." They didn't look down on construction after that. They thought that that was an incredible thing, to work three days, and then be able to see what I have accomplished.

In our work, we often don't see the direct impact of our work. That's one of the reasons I love gardening and carpentry so much, is because, after a hard day of work, I can see the difference. I think giving kids that experience, breaking them away from the worlds in which they are – even if it's only for a day – to go see someone who's willing to work hard, bust their butts, in order to put food on the table, and clothes on the back of the people who depend on them. That's probably one of the main things that we should try to do with kids who have been in three, four generations of welfare. At least, that's an opinion. [1:26:28]

RON: All right are there any other questions out there?

ALICE: I have one. When you use the basketball and football analogy, it seems like that really helps, that people can relate to that and say, "Oh, you would never use the rules of basketball to play football." Do you actually use those kinds of analogies with kids to say, this is what works at home, but this is what works at work?

STEVE: Absolutely. Absolutely. Then when you have a coaching moment afterwards, you say now, dude, you're playing by

ALICE: By the work –

STEVE: Your attack on the guy with the basketball, man, and then, click, they get it. I've got to give credit where credit's due. That particular example is one that I heard Ruby Payne use. Folks, if you haven't listened to, or read, any of Ruby Payne's materials, *Bridges Out of Poverty*, its powerful material. She does a really good job of helping folks to understand how the language of folks who live in poverty, versus the language of people in the middle class or upper class, can be wildly different. So thanks, Ruby, for that example. I appreciate it.

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Do we have any other questions? I'm happy to chat with you. I also have an e-mail address on your handout, and I'm happy to respond to queries via e-mail. I will tell you that the website has a number of handouts and many short articles that you can download. They're free for you to download and read through at your leisure.

RON: All right, Steve. I want to thank you for visiting us and giving us this great instruction. Thanks to all of you out there for joining us this afternoon and we'll talk to you again soon.

STEVE: Thanks folks, take care. Good weekend.

WOMAN: Thank you.