

Helping Children to Change Undesirable Behaviours Diamond of the Week

I believe the children are our future. Teach them well and let them lead the way,
Show them all the beauty they possess inside
Give them a sense of pride.... (The Greatest Love of All – Whitney Houston)

Helping children to know and appreciate themselves

Each has his particular duty, task, role as an individual. Do that duty, carry on that task, play that role as best you can; that is how one can fulfill himself.

Sathya Sai Baba

‘The first duty of the teacher is to help the student to know himself and to discover what he is capable of doing.’

The Mother

One of the foremost aims of Educare is to help **all** children to find their own, unique, special gifts that will enable them to be fulfilled and useful contributors to society, to help them to strengthen their gifts and change the not-so-good qualities that are getting in the way.

The first aim of this activity was to encourage the children to find these unique strengths that make each one of them special. The first lesson began with the use of **silent thinking** – a simple, quick technique involving children sitting quietly and using their imaginations to visualize empowering situations. We used the idea put forward by a number of experienced psychologists, of enclosing hyperactive children in a golden circle that helps them to define their boundaries, but extended the idea to a golden bubble that enclosed them completely. The golden colour represents security and purity.

Imagine that you are inside a golden bubble. You are floating around in the bubble, very safe and happy. The other children are in their bubbles too. Sometimes you bump gently against each other but you are inside your own bubble and nobody else can come in. Your golden bubble is your own special space where you can go whenever you like.

Next imagine that you are very, very tiny and you are walking inside your own brain. It looks like a library, with lots of shelves and books. Inside the books is all the things you have ever learned. You walk along the shelves until suddenly you find what you are looking for. It is a big book on a very high shelf. You take it off the shelf and look at the cover. On the cover it has your name and it is called “My Book of Special Strengths”. Imagine that you open the book. On the first page there is a list of all the special strengths that you have, and all the things that you are good at. It might be words, or it might be a picture, or it might be like a movie. If you can’t see anything don’t worry because it will pop into your mind later. Have a good look at what is on the page and make sure you take careful notice of the information that is given to you. When you are ready, close the book and put it back on the shelf.

Following this, they shared what they perceived to be their own special strengths or talents. Some of the ideas they shared with us later were:

- I am kind.

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- I smile a lot.
- I take pride in everything that I do.
- I invite children who are lonely to play with us.
- I make Mum laugh with my jokes.
- I do things (like tidying my room) without having to be asked.
- I am good at playing the piano.
- I am a good football player.

After this each child was given a class list and asked to write what they saw as being the special strengths of each of their classmates. Children themselves can be very perceptive in recognizing their classmates' gifts and potentials. Phase 2 of the project required each child to fill out a weekly diary on "How I used my special strengths to help (a) myself, (b) my friends, (c) my family, (d) my school, and (e) the world.

Diamonds of the Week

A diamond is first just a dull piece of stone, a hard pebble, only when it is cut by a skilful artisan does it become a multi-faceted flame of fire.

Sathya Sai Baba

It was in Phase 3 that we really integrated the concept of children using their strengths to help themselves and others with the idea of helping them to come to a deeper understanding of themselves. First the children repeated the same silent thinking exercise as above, but this time they were asked to find in the book something that was not so good about themselves, that they would like to change. Over a period of several weeks, one child was chosen each week to be the "diamond" for the week, to be polished and purified. First they shared with their classmates what the thing was that they would like to improve in themselves, following which they were invited to share how they would like their classmates to help them to make this improvement. The rest of the class and the teacher then suggested further ideas, and they all agreed that they would work together in unity to help that week's "diamond" in the agreed ways for the week to come.

When we first called for a volunteer, the first hand to shoot up was that of a child diagnosed with Attention Deficit Disorder. He sincerely wanted to change himself – he wanted to be able to sit still at his desk and do his work. We agreed that his classmates would help him by reminding him to focus on his work and help him if he was having difficulties, as well as to use silent thinking to withdraw into his "golden bubble" if he was feeling agitated or disturbed. In the second week the "diamond" was a boy who said that he wanted to stop being mean to children who are mean to him. We talked about some strategies including walking away from a confrontational situation and drinking a glass of water to cool down, and his classmates worked very hard at taking him away from potential conflicts and playing somewhere else with him. The class teacher reported that, even in the very short time of the project, the improved behaviour and self-esteem of these troubled children was miraculous. The third week's "diamond" was a girl who wanted to improve her concentration. At the end of the week, the class reported that she had focused so hard on helping herself that there had been no need for any of the other children to remind her or help her.

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One of the girls said that she wanted to stop being annoyed by her brother. In our final session she told us that: “Whenever my brother starts to annoy me, I do my silent thinking and go into my golden bubble. Then I become calm and my brother stops annoying me. And then Mum and Dad are happy because we are not fighting. So when I use silent thinking instead of fighting back when my brother annoys me, it makes everyone in the family happy.”

After finding the talents, and purifying the diamonds, it is important to put them to good use.

Happiness consists only in helping others.

Sathya Sai Baba

He who dedicates his time, skill and strength to service can never meet defeat, distress or disappointment. He will have no foe, no fear.

Sathya Sai Baba

The focus of this teaching experiment was for the children to engage in **selfless service** to help their classmates, one at a time, to recognize their unique inner qualities and to work on those characteristics within themselves that they wanted to change. Next the children’s teachers encouraged them, over an extended period of time, to find ways of using their special strengths to help themselves, their friends, their families, their school and the whole world. The ultimate goal is for these children to come to the stage described in the two quotations below.

“He [the child of the future] is never lonely because he has found his true self. He knows that happiness means enjoying the things around him, and for that he doesn’t have to possess them; that true joy is to possess the wholeness of things, the wholeness of himself and the wholeness of the universe – a wholeness which, since his babyhood, he has never left.”

Medhananda (1996)

*If there could be only one thing in life for me to learn
I would learn to love...
To respect others so that I may find respect in myself,
To learn the value of giving, so that if ever there comes a time in my life that someone really needs, I will give,
To act in a manner that I would wish to be treated; to be proud of myself,
To laugh and smile as much as I can, in order to help bring joy back into this world.
To have faith in others,
To be understanding....
To stand tall in this world and to learn to depend on myself,
To only take from this Earth those things which I really need, so there will be enough for others,
To not depend on money or material things for my happiness, but*

*To learn to appreciate the people who love me, my own simple beauty and to find peace and security within myself.
I hope I have learned all of these things,
For they are love.*

Adapted from “A Teacher’s Prayer”, Donna Dargis
Sathya Sai Human Values, Sathya Centre of Telok Blangah, Singapore, 1996.



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Linking the Project to Health and Well-Being Curricula

To illustrate how this project can be linked to mainstream health and well-being curricula, we have considered the *Personal Futures – Maintaining Wellbeing* segment from the *Essential Learnings* (Education Department of Tasmania, Australia).

Key points from Essential Learning's	How these points were brought out in this project
Mental	
Able to respond constructively to situations	Children examine the things they would like to change about themselves and take ownership by discussing with their classmates the strategies that can be used to help them
Self-acceptance	Children learn to appreciate their own special qualities – particularly effective if done with support and input from parents, classmates etc.
Self-efficacy	We are all empowered to change the things about ourselves that we want to change.
Connectedness	Exploring how we are all connected to each other and can therefore use our own strengths to help and support others (at individual, family, school and world levels)
Emotional	
Recognizing, understanding and effectively managing our emotions and choosing to use this knowledge when we think, feel and act.	Children are constantly reminded of 3HV – the engagement of head, heart and hands. Silent thinking is introduced on a regular basis as a tool for recognizing and managing our emotions. A class big book of strategies for managing emotions is developed, based on the children's experiences in monitoring and changing their "weaknesses" (for example, strategies for managing anger)
How we manage our emotions shapes our interactions with others and our understanding of ourselves	The child chosen as "diamond of the week" is invited to reflect on this. Classmates are invited to give their input.
Social	
How we react and behave in our relationships with others and the community	Children are encouraged to reflect, weekly, on how they can use their special strengths to make a contribution to the family, school and wider community
Empathy, trust, feelings of belonging, compassion, caring, peer relationships and mutual obligation	Children experience the benefits of giving selfless service to others, including their classmates. The incoming "diamond of the week" is invited to sit in the centre of the circle and the

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	other Children “throw” good thoughts at him/her.
Spiritual	
A positive sense of meaning and purpose in life	<p>Through recognizing their own special strengths and ways in which they can use these for the wellbeing of themselves and society, Children are developing a positive sense of meaning and purpose that – hopefully – can be carried over into their whole lives.</p> <p>Through recognizing that they have personal empowerment to change the things they want to change about themselves, they are given a sense of hope and purpose.</p> <p>Silent thinking is a very powerful tool to use here, as it helps Children to tap into their own inner resources. With regular use of this tool they learn to become increasingly self-sufficient in times of problems, and less likely to be swayed by external events that happen to them.</p>

Specifically related to the standard two learners (i.e. the level at which we initially targeted the project, although we have since replicated it successfully with pupils of all ages):

Understands some of the factors that contribute to wellbeing and begins to make connections between them.	<p>Emphasis is on the feelings of wellbeing that arise from giving service to self and others – this is discussed whenever Children are reporting on their service activities.</p> <p>When using silent thinking, reflective discussion focuses on the feelings of inner peace that it can create and the way they can use it to monitor and control their emotions.</p>
Engage purposefully in opportunities to pose and solve problems	Children are recognizing for themselves the things they would like to change about themselves, and suggest and evaluate their own strategies for doing this.
Encouraged to use relevant ‘wellbeing’ language	Children are encouraged to focus on ‘wellbeing’ terms including inner peace/not being disturbed if upsetting things happen around them/appreciating having a place of silence and solitude where they can feel free to be themselves etc.
Significant value in class of group meetings to identify issues, pose problems and provide strategies to reinforce personal and social responsibility	A weekly meeting is held for Children to share what they have done to help others, for the “diamond of the week” to reflect on how the experience has helped him/her, and for the incoming “diamond of the week” to discuss helpful strategies

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Self-directed, adaptable and resilient and recognize the interdependent factors that contribute to wellbeing	As the result of regular discussions, Children are aware of the power of everyone combining forces to help somebody who wants to change, but that it is important to do this in the way that person wants
‘stop’, ‘think’, ‘do’ strategies	Children respond very well to the idea of ‘head, heart and hands’ – that is, whenever an idea comes into our head, we should examine in our heart whether or not it is a good thing to do, before we put it into action with our hands.
Developing a sense of belonging to a group	Children develop a sense of group solidarity as they begin to recognize the powerful effect of everyone helping and supporting each other.
Key concept of ‘space’	It is very important for young children – particularly hyperactive ones – to have a sense of their own space. Psychologists have made effective use of visualizing a golden circle or bubble enclosing the child to promote this sense of personal space. This is used regularly (preferably daily) in silent thinking.
Understand what is involved in making health decisions and in managing and maintaining a healthy and balanced lifestyle	As Children fill in the space in their weekly diaries about ‘helping myself’ they become increasingly aware of the factors that are important to them for their wellbeing (getting enough rest, being happy with themselves, playing a musical instrument to make themselves feel happy, playing sport because it makes them feel good, etc). This has been particularly successful if their parents become involved.
Starting to identify differences in other people and begin to understand that others do not necessarily share the same perspective on issues that they do.	Emphasis is placed on the fact that EVERYONE has special strengths and talents and that it is important for us to recognize and celebrate these.
Friendship groups – understanding how to be a good friend and keep friends	Diary entries have included comments such as “I invited somebody who was lonely to join in a game we were playing.” This kind of emphasis on how to be a good friend can be encouraged through the diary entry on ‘helping my friends’. Children become aware of consciously putting into practice strategies to help their friends.

Activity Outlines

Session 1

- Prior to the project starting, a letter was sent home explaining that the children would be given a diary, and inviting parents to assist them to fill in and to sign to show they had read it. This proved to be a very effective community activity.
- Silent thinking, focusing on imagining yourself inside your own brain and finding your own strengths (see above)
- Children reflect on and share their strengths and then one of the child sitting on their right
- Brainstorm ways we can use these special strengths to help ourselves and others.

Some examples suggested by the children:

To help myself:

- *Walk away from X when she's bothering me*
- *Being quiet for [teacher] so everyone can learn*
- *Being kind to myself by listening to how my body is feeling (e.g. tired, hungry)*

To help my friends:

- *Smiling and being friendly*
- *I can help my friends and help the world by being happy*

To help my family:

- *Speak nicely to each other*
- *Keep Mum smiling with my great jokes*

To help the world:

Turn taps off tightly to save water

- Children are divided into three groups. Each child is given a set of stickers with the names of the other group members. They are asked to write what they see as being the special strengths of each child named on the sheet. (Later the teacher can compile the stickers onto one page for each child.)
- Silent thinking – children sit silently and visualized themselves using their special strengths to help themselves and others.
- Homework task – diary introduced (see resources)

Session 2

- Share diaries
- The same silent thinking activity is repeated but this time children are asked to identify something that is stopping them from being all they can be – something they would like to change or develop so they can become stronger people.
- Children record by writing or drawing the thing they would like to work on

Session 3

- **Silent thinking (with music)** Introduce them to the idea of filling their heads, hearts and hands with light so they can help each other.

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Imagine that you are sitting under a tree. It can be any tree that you really know or a pretend one. Feel the tree trunk on your back just like the back of the chair, and lean back against it. Breathe in deeply but gently. Feel the warmth of the sun and the coolness of the earth protecting you and making you feel safe. Look at yourself doing the thing that you have chosen to change about yourself. Then do something to destroy that picture. You can tear it up and throw it in the bin, burn it, stamp on it or whatever you like. Now celebrate – do whatever you want to do – have a party or whatever you would like to do – to celebrate that the picture has gone. Now come back to sit under the tree and lean against it. Now think about the new strength that you need to be able to change. As you breathe in imagine this new strength getting stronger and stronger in you.

Other silent thinking ideas related to the focus of this session

- Visualise a golden wheel with a black hole in the middle. Breathe all your worries and fears into the black middle, and breathe in the golden spokes to replace it.
 - Imagine a balloon with your ‘false’ faces that hide who you really are. E.g. if you act like a clown, imagine a clown face on the balloon. Imagine that you squeeze the balloon and let go. Every time you let go imagine that now you don’t need to be that false face any more. Keep doing this until you have squeezed all the energy out of the balloon. Then let the balloon go or burst it.
 - Be like a bee going from flower to flower, taking nectar and spreading it to the next one, helping each one to get better and stronger. Don’t be like the mosquito that sucks others’ blood and spreads disease and suffering.
 - Imagine yourself floating in a boat on calm, smooth water....nothing that happens stops you from feeling calm. If you do something good and others praise you, you just smile and accept, without becoming big-headed. If somebody shouts at you or hurts you, you do not feel small; you just keep on floating in your boat. (The golden bubble can also be used for this.)
 - If you cannot do good at least refrain from doing bad.
- Children share what they would like to change from previous session, e.g.
 - X wants to stop being silly**
 - What is x going to do to help himself?
 - What can we all do to help him with this goal?

 - Three of the girls want to be better friends.**
 - What can they do to help themselves?
 - (Always feel the same for your friend as you do for yourself, i.e. if a friend gets something special, feel as happy for them as your would for yourself instead of feeling jealous)
 - What can we do to help them with this goal?

 - One child volunteers to be ‘diamond of the week’, e.g.

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Y wants to sit still and do his work.

What can Y do to help himself?

- Sit somewhere where he can't see anyone else.
- Do silent thinking and put himself inside the golden circle

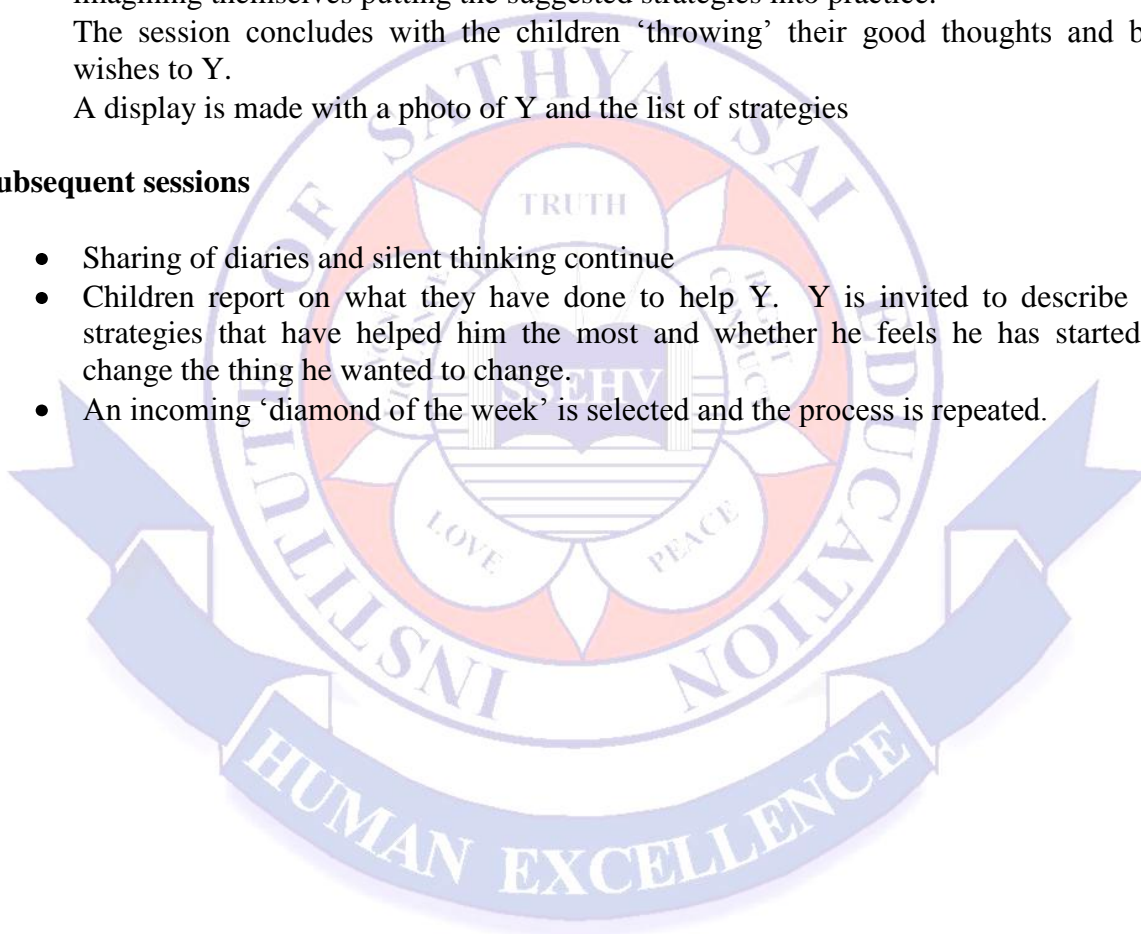
What can we all do to help Y?

- Remind him to go and sit somewhere where he can't see anyone else.
- Remind him to do silent thinking or go and do it with him.

- In groups, children suggest strategies they can use to help Y.
- The strategies are suggested to Y and he discusses whether or not he thinks they will be helpful.
- Y is invited to sit in the middle of the circle and the children do silent thinking, imagining themselves putting the suggested strategies into practice.
- The session concludes with the children 'throwing' their good thoughts and best wishes to Y.
- A display is made with a photo of Y and the list of strategies

Subsequent sessions

- Sharing of diaries and silent thinking continue
- Children report on what they have done to help Y. Y is invited to describe the strategies that have helped him the most and whether he feels he has started to change the thing he wanted to change.
- An incoming 'diamond of the week' is selected and the process is repeated.



Examples of Strategies Suggested by Children

Good ways to be a better listener and to help others to be good listeners.

1. Sit next to friends who are good listeners.
2. Be quiet when others are speaking and remind others to be quiet.
3. Sit at the front with your legs crossed.
4. Look at the person who is speaking and show respect.
5. Practise ignoring people who distract you.
6. Move away from people who distract you.
7. Be a good example and show others how to sit still and be a good listener.
8. Practise sitting still.
10. Remind others to sit nicely and be good listeners
11. Smile at the person who is speaking.
12. Be quiet and remind others to be quiet.
13. Use a person's name if you want them to listen to you.
14. Use a signal to remind others to be quiet and to listen.
15. Read this special book.
16. Use an inside voice so you can hear the teacher.
17. Remind others about a quiet line.
18. Remind others about the raffle tickets.
19. Tell people about the golden bubble.
20. If you see two people being silly, sit between them.
21. If someone is unsettled tell them to think of a good thing that has happened.
22. Wait until it is your turn to speak.
23. Remind people to put toys away so they won't fiddle when they need to listen.

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Good ways to be kind and help others to be kind

1. If someone is mean, walk away and play somewhere else.
2. If you feel angry drink some cold water.
3. Use kind words like ‘thank-you’ and ‘okay’ and remind others to do the same.
4. Tell others how much you want to be with them when they are good friends.
5. Take some deep breaths if you feel angry.
6. Remember to use an inside voice when you are inside.
7. Remind others about the rules and remember the rules yourself.
8. Play with sensible people.
9. Thank people when they say kind words.
10. Think kind thoughts about people.

Good ways I can help myself.

1. Read lots of good books.
2. Get better at listening.
3. Sit quietly.
4. Learn to play lots of games.
5. Eat healthy food.
6. Sit next to and play with sensible people.
7. Look after my belongings.
8. Keep my room tidy.
9. Do homework.
10. Keep clean.

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11. Do lots of exercise.
12. Ignore silly behaviour.
13. Go to a duty teacher if I need help.

Good ways I can help my school.

1. Be kind and helpful to everyone.
2. Smile!
3. Teach your strengths to others.
4. Keep the school clean and tidy.
5. Be a good friend.
6. Sit still when you need to.
7. Ask lonely people to join in.
8. Share.
9. Talk things through.
10. Keep others safe.
11. Have peanut butter at home and not at school.
12. Go in school events like the Cross Country and dress up days.
13. Be a good listener.

Resources

What are my special strengths? Silent thinking

Imagine that you are inside a golden bubble. You are floating around in the bubble, very safe and happy. The other children are in their bubbles too. Sometimes you bump gently against each other but you are inside your own bubble and nobody else can come in. Your golden bubble is your own special space where you can go whenever you like.

Next imagine that you are very very tiny and you are walking inside your own brain. It looks like a library, with lots of shelves and books. Inside the books are all the things you have ever learned. You walk along the shelves until suddenly you find what you are looking for. It is a big book on a very high shelf. You take it off the shelf and look at the cover. On the cover it has your name and it is called “My Book of Special Strengths”. Imagine that you open the book. On the first page there is a list of all the special strengths that you have, and all the things that you are good at. It might be words, or it might be a picture, or it might be like a movie. If you can’t see anything don’t worry because it will pop into your mind later. Have a good look at what is on the page and make sure you take careful notice of the information that is given to you. When you are ready, close the book and put it back on the shelf.

Follow-up silent thinking

Continue to use the theme of the golden bubble or a golden circle.

Also get the children to imagine themselves in situations where they are “helpful”, e.g. a tree growing up and giving shade to others, a lighthouse shining light all around to help others, a staircase or ladder or bridge to allow others to climb higher etc. When we know what the children have listed as their strengths I’ll try to help you to prepare some more specific silent thinkings.

Some silent thinking examples

1. Close your eyes so that nobody else can disturb you. Breathe in a big breath of fresh air that makes you feel peaceful, and as you breathe out let your breath carry away your monkey mind (that’s the part of your mind that can’t settle and concentrate). .. Next, imagine that the sun is shining down on you, making you feel warm and happy. Imagine yourself filling up with the sun’s light and warmth, until you are just like the sun yourself, warm and golden and glowing. Now imagine that you are getting bigger so that your warmth spreads to the people beside you, to make them feel just as warm and happy as you are. ...Next imagine that you are big enough to have the whole school inside you, so that all the children and teachers feel warm and happy because of you. Now imagine that you have grown bigger than the whole world, and you can hold the whole world inside your heart. You can shine your sunlight and warmth and happiness on every country and every person in the whole world, so they can all feel just as warm and happy as you do. Then when you are ready, gradually go back to your normal size and back into the classroom, but try to keep the warm and happy feeling inside you.

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2. Close your eyes and imagine that you are sitting inside your golden bubble, a place you can go whenever you want to concentrate, so that nobody can disturb you. Just enjoy sitting there, looking at the colour of the walls, and feeling the gentle movement as you float softly around. Now for a moment start to think about your special thing that you are good at. Think about how you feel when you are doing this thing. Now imagine that you are doing it with somebody else. You might be playing a tune or reading a story to a friend. You might be playing football or a computer game and letting your friend have a turn before you. You might be smiling at somebody. Imagine how you are making the other person feel because you are sharing your special strength with them.
3. Sit in a space alone so you cannot touch anybody else if you reach out your hands in any direction. Now close your eyes so your monkey mind will not be able to stop you from concentrating, and stretch out your arms as far as you can on both sides. Imagine that you are drawing a gold circle all around where you are sitting, so it is as wide as your arms can reach. This is your own special space. You can sit here and be quiet and still in your mind, so you can think of good ideas for your helping project. First think about your own special strength. Have you discovered any new special strengths this week? Now think about another person you have helped at school this week. It might be a friend or a teacher or even a visitor. It might have been something big, or it might just have been a small thing like not disturbing somebody, or smiling or saying hello to somebody. Next, while you are still sitting inside the gold circle, imagine yourself at home. Can you remember one time when you helped somebody at home this week? Can you remember a time when you could have helped somebody at home but perhaps didn't take the opportunity? Think about what would have happened if you HAD helped that person. Try to imagine how you would feel if you had. Try to imagine how the other person in your family would feel if you had helped them. How might things have turned out differently in your home that day, if you had only done that one thing to help?
4. Sit in a space alone where you have enough room to make your golden circle or golden bubble, whichever one you like better. When you are in your private space, imagine that you are in a space ship, traveling far away from the Earth. As you look out the window, you can see the Earth getting smaller and smaller, and further and further away. As you look down, you can see some of the things that are wrong with the world. Some people are not being kind and loving enough to each other. Some people are dropping rubbish and choking the rivers and the seas and the land. Some people are being greedy and selfish and wasting too much money on things that they don't really need, instead of sharing it with other people who really do need help. Some people are bullying other people. Now look closely at just one of these problems. What can you see? How does it make you feel? Suddenly you think of something that YOU can do, all by yourself, to help to solve this problem. Just sit for a moment and imagine yourself doing this thing. ... Then imagine that your spaceship zooms back to Earth. As soon as you arrive, you can really start to do the thing that you imagined yourself doing.

Silent Thinking to Improve Listening

Monday

Close your eyes and take three slow, deep breaths to make yourself feel calm. Then imagine that you are a tree with roots that go deep into the ground. You can feel your toes digging into the warm soft earth and you can feel your arms reaching high up to the sky. It is wonderful to be a tree because you can enjoy the sun and the breeze and the rain and you can give people shelter and all sorts of help, and you don't have to worry about anything at all. One of the greatest strengths of being a tree is that you can watch and listen to everything that goes on around you, so your ears are very sharp. Imagine for a minute that you are listening to the sound of the breeze whispering in your branches. Now listen very carefully for the chirping of a baby bird in a nest high up in one of your branches. If you listen very carefully you can hear the sounds of the children playing in the school ground – you can hear them laughing because they are having a lot of fun. In the distance you can hear cars going along the road and far above your head you can hear an aero plane flying [note to reader – pause after naming each of these to give the children a chance to focus on each thing]. Now just listen very carefully and try to find other sounds that you can hear. When you are ready you can open your eyes and come back to being a person again – but remember to keep your ears open and sharp for the rest of the day.

Tuesday

Close your eyes. Have you ever really listened to silence before? For 30 seconds I am going to say nothing at all and I want you to just listen to the silence that you can hear in your head. Even if you can hear other sounds in the classroom or outside, forget about them and only think about the silence inside your head. Concentrate with all of your energy on just listening to your own silence. [Pause]. Next I want you to notice a sound in the classroom. For the next 30 seconds, I would like you to concentrate as hard as you can, with all your effort, to listen just to that sound and try to close out any other sounds around you. [Pause]. Now for the next 30 seconds try to find a sound outside the classroom somewhere and use all of your energy to concentrate on listening just to that sound and to nothing else. [Pause]. Last of all, come back again to the silence inside your own head, and listen to that for a moment longer....then when you are ready, you can open your eyes.

Wednesday

Today we are going to use the light of the sun to help us to improve our listening. Imagine that you are sitting in a special, peaceful place and the sun is shining down on you. You are wearing a hat so you are protected from being sunburnt, but the good effects of the sunrays are coming through your hat and into your head. Just enjoy sitting there with the warmth and the sunlight filling your head, until your head is also a ball of light just like the sun. [Pause for a moment to let them reflect on this]. Now imagine that the sunlight is running along the passages that connect your brain and your ears. You can feel the warmth and see the brightness lighting up all of these passages so the connection between your brain and your ears is clear and working well. Maybe there are some places where the passage is blocked. If there are, you need to get rid of them because these can stop you from listening as well. So let the sun melt any blockages, and then the passage is completely clear. [Pause for a few

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seconds]. Now imagine that somebody is talking to you. It might be your teacher, or your parent, or one of your friends. Imagine that you can see their words as they come into your ear and then travel along the sunlit passage that you have just cleared and into your brain, where the message is received and you can hear exactly what the person said to you. After you open your eyes and we start our work, keep remembering that you have these two sunlit passages and that whatever the person who is speaking says will now go straight into your brain.

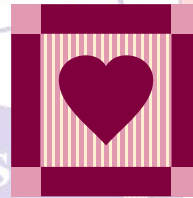
Thursday

Today I am going to play some quiet music for you to listen to for two minutes. Try very hard to close out all of the other sounds around you and only listen to the music, even if there are other noises in the background. While you listen to the music you can imagine whatever you like – whatever the music makes you think about.

Friday

When we are listening to somebody who is speaking to us we cannot close our eyes – so today we are going to do silent thinking with our eyes open so we can see how it can help us to listen better to somebody if we also look at them. As I am speaking I would like you to look at me with all of your concentration. Imagine that there is a thread going from your eyes to my eyes. You can make the thread any colour that you like and as thick as you like, but just be careful to make it connect from your eyes to mine for the whole time I am talking and don't let it break. This is very important – whatever you do, don't let that thread break. Now I would like you to send some feelings along the line from you to me. First please send me the feeling of respect; because it is very important for us to respect the person we are listening to if we are going to be good listeners. [Pause]. Next, please send good thoughts along the line from your eyes to my eyes because this will help me to be able to say good and useful things. [Pause]. Next, imagine that you are sending a smile along the line – let the smile start in your mouth but then send it up through your eyes and along the line to my eyes so I can see it. [Pause]. Last of all, please send me some support – imagine that the support you are sending me along the line is making me stronger and stronger so I can be a better and better speaker for you. Today when we are sitting on the mat, I would like you to try to remember about the thread from your eyes to mine and to try as hard as you can not to break it. And when other people in the class are speaking, you can try to do the same thing with them.

My Helping Diary



Name: _____






My special strengths are:

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Date: _____

This is how I have used my special strengths this week to help:

<i>Myself</i> 	<i>My Friends</i> 	<i>My Family</i> 	<i>My School</i> 	<i>The World</i> 

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