

R Real world change begins with each of us and with how we educate children. This book is dedicated to you and other caring people like you—parents, teachers, coaches, students, child-life educators, counselors and administrators who have committed themselves to make a positive difference in the lives of our children and our world. ♥

Positive Beginnings

As parents and teachers there is no greater mission we can fulfill on this earth than teaching skills for positive living. Everything else depends on this—the state of our relationships, our health, our economy, the quality of our individual and collective lives, and life itself.

Our ultimate goal with children is to teach them positive perspectives that will enhance the quality of their lives and endure throughout their lifetime. There is a great advantage in beginning this process at an early age. Children who are taught to think positively and focus effectively will be well-equipped to pursue their goals and dreams, find joy in their experiences and direct the course of their own lives.

Children are highly capable of learning a variety of important life skills. They can apply these skills in virtually everything they do—play, games, sports, school, studies, art, music, dance, career developments, as well as within relationships and ongoing interactions at home and in the community.

You will provide a huge service to your children by teaching them positive life skills and stress control strategies *now*. The activities in this book are designed specifically to help you teach children to:

- Think positively
- Relax effectively
- Cope constructively with stress, conflict, anger and frustration
- Concentrate fully

- Recognize good qualities within themselves and others
- Find uplifting experiences (highlights) in each day
- Feel great about themselves
- Cooperate joyfully
- Use their imagination in positive ways
- Carry more positive perspectives into everyday transactions and pursuits

The overall goal of these activities is to free children to learn more effectively, live more joyfully and love more completely.

The activities in this book were developed from a deep commitment to meet the real needs of children, parents and teachers living through very challenging times. The activities have undergone extensive research with thousands of elementary school children. We spent ten years developing the activities and another three years testing them in the schools. Many children, along with their parents, teachers and principals have helped us to assess, refine and improve the overall quality and effectiveness of this program.

The impact of the *Feeling Great* activities has far surpassed our initial expectations. It has proven to be a highly effective program for teaching children critical skills for positive living. It has helped children learn to strengthen their confidence, cope effectively with stress, relax their minds and bodies, use their imagination in creative ways, channel their concentration, interact positively with others and feel great about themselves and their capabilities. It has resulted in less stress, more effective learning, and a greater sense of respect and harmony within and among children.

Children really enjoy the activities and apply these skills effectively in their daily lives. You can share these activities with your children at home or at school, repeating them often enough for children to gain competence at using them. When teaching children to excel at living, repetition is important.

You can do the activities together with your children at school, at home, in the outdoors or at bedtime. By participating in these activities your children will become surprisingly competent at living these important life skills.

Feeling Great and its soul mate (partner book) *Nice on My Feelings* provide the essential spirit, pathways and activities for teaching children skills for positive living. The activities are presented on the following pages. You can read the various scripts to your children (for relaxation, positive imagery, focusing and positive thinking) or you may prefer to sit back, relax and listen to the activities with your children on audio-tape. A *Curriculum Guide* and series of audio-tapes were created from the material in this book for teachers and parents who want a very simple and effective way to deliver this program to their children, day-by-day (see Resource section in this book).

Parents, teachers, and all those who interact closely with children can immediately put these activities to good use. Through your initiatives children will learn vital life skills—with joy and simplicity. You will be giving them the greatest gifts of life—skills that allow children, families and nations to excel at living.