

Personal Growth and Writing Workshops for Youth and Adults



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“As we get older, achieving Personal Growth requires taking responsibility for our own feelings, thoughts and behaviors.

The choices we make are shaped by many things—our upbringing, family, peer, societal and cultural influences, education and income, etc. But no one can feel the consequences of our choices more than we can.

When faced with a problem, we can blame others, of course, but that will not result in change to make our lives better.

A key to understanding our choices is becoming more conscious—more aware—of ourselves and our identity, and paying attention by observing the world around us. This makes it possible to focus energy on what we have some control over, in order to effectively problem-solve by considering possible options in any given situation.

By becoming more aware, we will develop internal tools to become more competent in making the connection between our thinking, feelings and actions. We can use these insights to reflect and gain better clarity through noticing patterns in our lives and learning from mistakes. All of this can serve to help us make informed choices for more productive living.”

— Fannie LeFlore, MS, LPC, CADC-D,
Writer/Editor and Licensed Professional Counselor

TWO WORKSHOPS THAT INTEGRATE BEHAVIORAL SCIENCE AND WRITING STRATEGIES CAN MAKE A MAJOR DIFFERENCE:

“How We Look, Who We Are”

and

“Life Skills and Values Clarification”

These workshops will allow individuals to use the foundations and tools of psychotherapy (Cognitive-Behavioral approaches) combined with various forms of writing (journaling, rap/poetry, short stories, essays and composition).

The purpose is to help participants begin and continue a Personal Growth journey focused on three major factors that define, influence and determine behavioral health — our basic functioning and overall well-being:

Feelings/ Emotions

Thoughts/ Thinking

Behavior/ Actions

ABOUT THE WORKSHOPS’ DEVELOPER:

- Co-Writer/Editor of “The Road Less Traveled and Beyond,” with author M. Scott Peck, M.D. (1997)
- Co-Author of “How We Look, Who We Are,” with Pat Pollworth (2002-2006)
- Award-winning, former Newspaper Reporter and a former Corporate Communications Manager
- Licensed Professional Counselor (Mental Health) and Substance Abuse Counselor/ Psychotherapist
- Developer of Special Projects, including Healing from Racism Workshop and other Grant Proposal Writing

HOW WE LOOK, WHO WE ARE

Character Development as Foundation for Positive Identity, Choices and Respect for Self and Others

The workshop, “How We Look, Who We Are,” is designed for youth who are in the process of developing, defining and refining their own identity. It addresses gender, racial and cultural diversity issues as well as individual and group choices that can shape our values and character for a lifetime.

This workshop offers a hands-on opportunity for students to delve into the many facets of their identity and daily life to determine how these areas affect feelings, thoughts and behavior. Students are guided through experiential learning activities that will challenge them to think, reflect, write and discuss influences that shape their lives, who they are and the choices they make now and in the future.

Youth and adults are exposed to messages everyday about both themselves and others, and often come to decisions based on images that can be misleading due to stereotypes and myths. Some images taken for granted are destructive influences on the perceptions individuals have about their own value and the value of others.

The workshop themes are similar to those promoted by the late civil rights leader, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., on the importance of character. But appreciation for diversity also means challenging our assumptions and reconsidering ideas taken for granted that may influence our character.

The book, “How We Look, Who We Are,” written by Fannie LeFlore and Pat Pollworth, serves as the basis of the curriculum for this workshop.

The co-authors/co-instructors themselves have diverse backgrounds — one is a black female in her 40s who is a writer/editor and professional counselor; the other is a white female in her early 70s with wide-ranging experience working with various community-based organizations serving children, youth, adults and the elderly.

SESSION ONE: “The Color of Our Skin” – A discussion of 20 statements interspersed with some assumptions or myths regarding skin color, race, ethnicity, gender, identity, perceptions and personal characteristics, using the following outline: Let’s Think About; Let’s Talk About; Let’s Look It Up; Let’s Write It Down.

SESSION TWO: “How They Look, Who They Are” – Respecting Differences based on Q & A’s with people who are different in various ways including: someone in a wheelchair/motorized scooter, who wears a yarmulke, who is thin and blond, whose hair is Mohawk-styled and dresses in punk fashions, a woman in Muslim garb, etc. The focus is on challenging “other” stereotypes, perceptions and assumptions.

SESSION THREE: Stories for Identity and Awareness
The African Circle Tale
Learning to Write in the Sand
The Cracked Pot
The Wolves Within
The Ant and the Chrysalis

SESSION FOUR: “Making Choices based on The Three R’s” – A focus on problem-solving and communication in order to promote respect for self and others through insightful Reasoning, Reflecting and Responding.

SESSION FIVE: Resources for Understanding Identity and Appreciating Diversity.

Workshop Curriculum Meets Educational Standards

Based on standards for state public education requirements, the “How We Look, Who We Are” curriculum promotes student competencies in several categories:

- 1) It supports the foundation of work that teachers, counselors and other youth workers are doing by reinforcing informative resources that address diversity, character-building and the self-esteem needs of students to support positive thinking and decisions.
- 2) It equips students with ideas, skills and strategies at various learning levels, and gives students access to quality content and varied sources of information and tools to explore human-interest and personal growth topics relevant to themselves and others.
- 3) It provides opportunities for students to reflect and write using a range of non-fiction narrative and expository comments, questions and examples to encourage strategic, independent thinking and compassion for self and other.
- 4) It uses stories and positive messages to promote self identity for character development and appreciations for diversity.
- 5) The content of the book, *How We Look, Who We Are*, can also be used by families and general audiences to discuss matters pertaining to character development and appreciation of diversity.

[Schools and Organizations interested in offering the Workshop should contact:](#)

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Life Skills and Values Clarification Workshop

Flexible approaches to problem-solving based on concepts for life-long learning and personal growth

The late author M. Scott Peck wrote in his book, *The Road Less Traveled*, "Life is difficult." And, regardless of age, life means dealing with various stressors, problems and demands on one's time, attention and choices.

This workshop is designed to help people become more flexible in their coping, problem-solving and communication skills as a foundation for positive mental health.

Many youth and adults rely on street-smarts and other survival skills, but do not always know how to shift their thinking, feelings and behaviors in different settings, such as in corporate environments. As a result, they become frustrated and uncertain about how to handle situations that make them angry. They may feel mistreated or victimized due to limited education and life experience.

This workshop uses the strengths individuals already have to help them make the transition into the different environments, including the mainstream workforce. It consists of five sessions with "lessons" designed for educational and therapeutic purposes, and experiential activities designed for applicable life situations. Many individuals simply need to refine their "street smarts" to make them more applicable and productive in the larger world.

The Workshop's five subjects focus on values, soft-skills, work ethics, communication and coping, personal discipline and problem-solving that can be applied in all aspects of life including work, family and personal areas.

The topics are drawn from the workbook *Exploring The Road Less Traveled*, by Alice and Walden Howard, which is based on the classic best-seller, *The Road Less Traveled* by M. Scott Peck. Peck's book explores traditional values and skills that assist the individual in his or her self-awareness and life-long journey of growth toward responsibility and maturity, and in planning and follow-up to achieve various goals relevant to personal growth and career development, and other areas of life.

Although the content of *The Road Less Traveled* is sophisticated, this workshop adaptation is tailored more toward individuals who have limited formal education or sporadic work experience, as well as those with challenging lives.

The Instructor for this workshop, Fannie LeFlore, is a Psychotherapist and Writer who worked directly with Peck as Co-Writer/Editor on his book, "The Road Less Traveled and Beyond," which was published in 1997.

The Workshop's Five Sessions Include:

1) **Communication Skills:** Individuals will gain an understanding of the importance of non-verbal and verbal communication that will help them become open to continuous learning on the job and be willing to ask questions to gain clarity when unsure about work expectations. Participants will learn effective listening techniques, the use of "I" statements, dealing with difficult situations, problem-solving, conflict resolution and assertiveness skills.

2) **Problem-Solving:** Peck defined delaying gratification as one of the four tools of discipline for problem-solving. This issue is relevant to many people who have difficulty taking care of important business in their lives, which often results in denial and avoidance of issues, and not planning properly to achieve long-term goals. Many forces in the world today encourage or discourage delaying gratification. The need for an education is one example of encouraging delay. Easy access to credit cards is one example of discouraging delay. We'll explore other aspects of problem-solving as well.

3) **Accepting Responsibility:** The extent to which people will go psychologically to avoid assuming responsibility often results in either constantly blaming others on one extreme or taking on too much responsibility that is not properly theirs on the other extreme. Many people seek to avoid responsibility because it is associated with painful emotions and discomfort—whether that involves frustration, grief, sadness, fear or anxiety. In order to solve the problems in one's life, an individual must learn to discern when and what to take responsibility for, and to use this as a basis for learning and growth.

4) **Dedication to Reality:** Peck wrote that the third tool of discipline is dedication to truth. In short, this means that truth is reality and that which is false is unreal. "The more clearly we see the reality of the world, the better equipped we are to deal with the world. The less clearly we see the reality of the world, the less able we will be to determine correct courses of action and make wise decisions." Individuals are continually challenged to adjust to change in life. This means openness to revising our thinking and discarding old mental tapes to update with new information.

5) **Balancing:** Peck wrote that "Balancing is the discipline that gives us flexibility." An example of this is how we express anger—such as when, where, how and why. Although many people get stuck in patterns of behavior and thinking that seem irreversible, each new experience and each mistake offers the chance to learn. Flexibility allows us to learn new things, and the willingness to make adjustments in how we think and respond will determine our choices, goals and direction in life.

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Biographical Sketch of the Workshops' Developer and Facilitator

Fannie LeFlore, MS, LPC, CADC-D, is a Milwaukee-based *Writer/Editor and Corporate Communications Consultant*. She can best be described as a writer-of-all-subjects and master of flexible approaches to communication. She is highly skilled at doing all kinds of projects—including press releases, official business documents, brochures, project and annual reports, newsletters, grant proposals, crisis communications plans, content for websites and various marketing and public relations promotional materials inclusive of company history and overview, leadership profiles and news and feature articles relevant to past and present organizational achievements and milestones.

Prior to starting her own business in 2005, LeFlore Communications, LLC, Ms. LeFlore worked as the Corporate Communications Manager for a community health center in Milwaukee (and continues to do projects for the organization as an independent contractor, which indicates that the quality of work she did was highly valued by her previous employer). She was responsible for a variety of internal communications projects and external public relations/media-related tasks.

Ms. LeFlore received her bachelor's degree in Journalism in 1985 from the University of Iowa and her master's degree in Education/Counseling in 1993 from the University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh. Ms. LeFlore's communications background includes working for media in Iowa, Tennessee, Indiana and Chicago, Illinois, in addition to the five years she spent as a staff reporter at the Milwaukee Journal from 1986–91, where she won several journalism awards related to feature writing and human-interest articles. Ms. LeFlore left the Milwaukee newspaper to attend graduate school full-time and switch careers. Ms. LeFlore's subsequent professional experiences combine two primary career areas: writing/editing and social services (community health, education and counseling programs).

Over the years, Ms. LeFlore has taught writing classes for high school and college students, and taken part in various freelance projects that combine her areas of expertise in psychology and writing. In 1995–96, she worked as Co-writer/Editor of a book, *The Road Less Traveled and Beyond*, by the late internationally-known author, M. Scott Peck. As a Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC) since 1995, and certified Substance Abuse Counselor in Wisconsin, Ms. LeFlore has over ten years of experience providing psychotherapy and counseling to diverse individuals, groups and families. In the mid-1990s, she developed the Healing From Racism Workshops, which she periodically facilitated for community-based educational or group programs related to race, gender and mental health issues.

Ms. LeFlore provides diverse writing, editing and corporate communications services (including publication layout and design) for various small and mid-sized businesses, non-profit and community organizations, and as a consultant on individual projects locally and nationwide. She also develops and coordinates Special Projects in Human Services, with particular interest in projects related to mental health and AODA education, intervention and recovery issues.