Academic Success Exercise: Motivation and Language of Responsibility

We all have inner voices that influence our attitudes and behaviors. Some of these inner voices are very positive and encouraging; others are very negative and demeaning. By choosing which inner voice we use, we can influence our attitude.

### Victim Voices

**Inner Critic: “I’m not good, I’m terrible!”**
The Inner Critic judges us, blames us, complains about us, and devalues us. Its positive intention seems to be protecting us from attack from the outside; through constant self-criticism, and Inner Critic hopes to perfect our actions, thoughts, and feelings to meet the approval of others and thus avoid their displeasure and possible punishment.

**Inner Defender: “Your fault, not mine!”**
The Inner Defender judges others. It blames others, complains about them, and devalues them. Its positive intention seems to be fending off criticism and punishment from powerful others.

### Creator Voices

**Inner Guide: “I did this, now I need to correct it!”**
The Inner Guide offers an objective and wise perspective about ourselves and others. It neither devalues nor attacks. Our Inner Guide tells us the absolute truth (as best as we can know it at the moment), allowing us to be more fully conscious of the world, other people, and especially ourselves.

Victims and Creators see the world very differently. As a result, they use different vocabularies to represent their reality. In other words, you can tell a Victim and a Creator apart by their choice of words.

In the left hand column below, write the top 3 issues you feel contributed to your poor academic performance last semester. In the right hand column, rewrite the statements using Creator talk. Remember, you are in charge!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issues Contributing to Academic Probation</th>
<th>Creator Talk</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td></td>
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Our words determine our attitude!

We often set ourselves up for failure or make tasks more difficult by the language that we use to describe their importance. Many times, we say that we “have to” do something when that is not the case. We don’t have to do anything! For every stimulus, there are choices; and some choices are more attractive than others, based on the result of that choice.

In the left hand column below, write several things that you “have to” do. Then, keeping in mind that there are no tasks you have to do (but there are many you choose to do), in the right hand column, reword your “have to” phrases into phrases beginning with "I choose to...because..."

Example:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>“Have to”</th>
<th>“Choose to”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I have to go to college.</td>
<td>I choose to go to college because I want to be better prepared for the occupation of my choice.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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