# **Think**

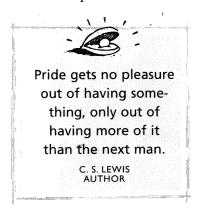


All-You-Can-Eat Buffet

# What do we live for, if it is not to make life less

difficult for each other?

I attended a tough business school that utilized the infamous "forced curve" grading policy. Every class consisted of ninety students and in each class, 10 percent, or nine people, would receive what was called a category III. A category III was a nice way of saying "You flunked!" In other words, no matter how well or poorly the class performed as a whole, nine people would flunk the class. And if you flunked too many classes, you were kicked out of school. The pressure was awful!



The problem was, everyone in the class was smart. (I must have been an admissions error.) So the competition became very intense, which *influenced* me (notice I didn't say *made* me) and my classmates to act in funny ways.

Instead of aiming for good grades, as I did in college and high school, I found myself aiming not to be one of the nine people that would flunk. Instead of playing to win, I was playing not to lose. It reminds me of the story I once heard about two friends being chased by a bear, when one turned to

the other and said, "I just realized that I don't need to outrun the bear; I only need to outrun you."

While sitting in class one day, I couldn't help but look around the room and try to count off nine people who were dumber than me. When someone made a stupid comment, I caught myself thinking, "Oh goody, he's guaranteed to flunk. Only eight more to go." Sometimes I found myself not wanting to share my best ideas with others during study groups because I was afraid they would steal my ideas and get credit for them instead of me. All these feelings were eating me up inside and making me feel real small, as if my heart were the size of a grape. The problem was, I was thinking Win-Lose. And Win-Lose thinking will always fill your heart with negative feelings. Luckily, there is a more excellent way. It's called Think Win-Win and it's Habit #4.

Think Win-Win is an attitude toward life, a mental frame of mind that says I can win, and so can you. It's not me or you, it's both of us.

Think Win-Win is the foundation for getting along well with other people. It begins with the belief that we are all equal, that no one is inferior or superior to anyone else, and no one really needs to be.

Now, you might say, "Get real, Sean. That's not how it is. It's a cutthroat, competitive world out there. Everyone can't always win."

I disagree. That's not how life really is. Life really isn't about competition, or getting ahead of others, or scoring in the 95th percentile. It may be that way in business, sports, and school, but those are merely institutions that we've created. It's certainly not that way in relationships. And relationships, as we learned just a chapter ago, are the stuff life is made of. Think how silly it is to say, "Whose winning in your relationship, you or your friend?"

So let's explore this strange idea called Think Win-Win. From my experience, the best way to do it is to see what Win-Win is not. Win-Win is not Win-Lose, Lose-Win, or Lose-Lose.

These are all common but poor attitudes toward life. Climb aboard, strap yourself in, and let's take a look at each one.

HEY, TOM, I JUST
REALIZED THAT I DON'T
NEED TO OUTRUN THE
BEAR; I ONLY NEED TO
OUTRUN YOU.

# WIN-LOSE—THE TOTEM POLE

"Mom, there's a big game tonight and I need to take the car."

"I'm sorry, Marie, but I need to get groceries tonight. Your friends will have to pick you up."

"But, Mom. My friends always have to pick me up. It's embarrassing."  $\,$ 

"Listen, you've been complaining about not having any food in the house for a week. This is the only time I have to get groceries. I'm sorry."

"You're not sorry. If you were sorry you'd let me take the car. You are so unfair. You could care less about me."

"All right. All right. Go ahead. Take the car. But don't come complaining to me when there's nothing to eat tomorrow."

Marie won and Mom lost. This is called Win-Lose. But has Marie really won? Maybe she has this time, but how does Mom feel? And what's she going to do the next time she has a chance to get even with Marie? That's why in the long run it never pays to think Win-Lose.

Win-Lose is an attitude toward life that says the pie of success





is only so big, and if you get a big piece there is less for me. So I'm going to make sure I get my slice first or that I get a bigger piece than you. Win-Lose is competitive. I call it the totem pole syndrome. "I don't care how good I am as long as I'm a notch higher than you on the totem pole." Relationships, friendships, and loyalty are all secondary to winning the game, being the best, and having it your way.

I'M BETTER

THAN YOU!

AT LEAST

I'M BETTER

THAN YOU.

HER!

I'M A LOSER!

Win-Lose is full of pride. In the words of C. S. Lewis, "Pride gets no pleasure out of having something, only out of having more of it than the next man ... It is the comparison that makes you proud, the pleasure of being above the rest." WELL I'M

Don't feel too bad if you think Win-Lose BETTER THAN at times, because we have been trained to do so from an early age, especially those of us who have been raised in the United States. Asian countries tend to be much more cooperative in their attitudes.

To illustrate my point, let's follow Rodney, an ordinary boy, as he grows up. Rodney's first experience with competition begins in the third grade when he runs in the annual field day events and quickly discovers that ribbons are given only to first, second, and third place finishers. Rodney doesn't win any races but is excited to at least receive a ribbon for participation, until his best friend tells him

that "those ribbons don't really count 'cause everyone gets one."

When Rodney enters middle school, his parents can't afford the latest-style jeans and shoes, so Rodney has to wear older, less trendy styles. He can't help but notice what his wealthier friends are wearing and feels as though he isn't quite measuring up.

In high school, Rodney begins playing the violin and joins the orchestra. To his dismay, he learns that only one person can be first fiddle. Rodney is disappointed when he's assigned second fiddle but feels very good about the fact that he's not third.

At home, Rodney has been his mom's favorite child for several years. But now his younger brother, who happened to win a lot of ribbons at his field day, is taking over as Mom's golden child. Rodney begins studying extra hard at school for he figures that if he can get better grades than his brother, he might become Mom's chosen one again.

After four years of high school, Rodney is ready for college. So he takes the SAT and scores in the 50th percentile, which means that he is smarter than half his peers but not as smart as the other half. Unfortunately, his score is not good enough to get into the college he wanted.

The college Rodney attends uses forced-curve grading. In his first chemistry class of thirty students, Rodney learns that there are only five A grades and five B grades available. The rest get C's and D's. Rodney works hard to avoid a C or D and luckily earns the last B grade available.

And the story continues ...

After being raised in this kind of world, is it any wonder then that Rodney and the rest of us grow up seeing life as a competition and winning as everything? Is it any wonder that we often find ourselves looking around to see how we stack up on the totem pole? Fortunately, you and I are not victims. We have the strength to be proactive and rise above all of this Win-Lose conditioning.

A Win-Lose attitude wears many faces. The following are some of them:

- Using other people, emotionally or physically, for your own selfish purposes.
- Trying to get ahead at the expense of another.
- Spreading rumors about someone else (as if putting someone else down builds you up).
- Always insisting on getting your way without concerning yourself with the feelings of others.
- Becoming jealous and envious when something good happens to someone close to you.

In the end Win-Lose will usually backfire. You may end up on the top of the totem pole. But you'll be there alone and without friends. "The trouble with the rat race," said actress Lily Tomlin, "is that even if you win, you're still a rat."

# LOSE-WIN—THE DOORMAT

One teen wrote:

"I, for one, am a big peacemaker. I would much rather take the blame for just about anything than get into an argument. I constantly find myself saying that I am dumb ..."

Do you find yourself identifying with this statement? If so, you have fallen into the trap of Lose-Win. Lose-Win looks prettier on the surface, but it's just as dangerous as Win-Lose. It's the doormat

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syndrome. Lose-Win says, "Have your way with me. Wipe your feet

DON'T

**ASK** 

on me. Everyone else does."

Lose-Win is weak. It's easy to get stepped on. It's easy to be the nice guy. It's easy to give in, all in the name of being a peacemaker. It's easy to let your parents have their way with you rather than try to share your feelings with them.

With a Lose-Win attitude you'll find yourself setting low expectations and compromising your standards again and again. Giving in to peer pressure is Lose-Win. Perhaps you don't want to ditch school, but the group wants you to. So you give in. What happened? Well, you lost and they won. That's called Lose-Win.

A girl named Jenny once told me about her wanderings in the world of Lose-Win during her eighth-grade year before she finally broke free:

My problems with my mom all started one day when she said to me sarcastically, "Wow, you're sure sassy today." I took it so literally that then and there I decided to close off from her and to never talk back to her. I began faking the respect and authority she wanted. So every time she would say something, even if I disagreed with her, I would just say, "Okay, whatever you want, Mom." Half the time she didn't even know that things were bothering me because I wouldn't tell her.

When my mom would set rules about friends and curfews I would just be like, "Whatever you say." It was easier to just do whatever she asked because I never felt that my opinions or suggestions would be taken seriously.

But it really got old quickly. And my resentment began to build. One night I had just finished talking to my mom about a school assignment to which she said, "Oh, that's nice," and then went back to mopping the floor.

"Don't you even care?" I thought. But I didn't say anything and stormed off. She had no idea I was even upset. She would have been willing to talk to me had I told her how important it was to me. But it seemed that I was eager to be a victim and to take whatever she dished out.

Eventually, I just blew up. "Mom, this has got to change. I can't handle you anymore. You tell me everything you want me to do and I just do it because it's easier than fighting. Well, I'm sick of it." I spilled my guts and let her know about all the feelings I had been harboring inside. This all came as a surprise to her.

After my blowup, it was really rocky for a while. We felt like we were starting all over in our relationship. But it's getting better all the time. We discuss things now, and I always share my feelings with her.

If you adopt Lose-Win as your basic attitude toward life, then people will wipe their dirty feet on you. And that's a real bummer. You'll also be hiding your true feelings deep inside. And that's not healthy.

There is a time to lose, of course. Lose-Win is just fine if the issue isn't that important to you, like if you and your sister can't agree on who gets which side of the closet or if your mom doesn't like the way you hold your fork. Let others win the little issues, and it will be a deposit into their RBA. Just be sure you take a stand on the important things.

If you're trapped in an abusive relationship, you're deep into Lose-Win. Abuse is a never-ending cycle of hurt and reconciliation, hurt and reconciliation. It never gets better. There's no win in it for you whatsoever, and you need to get out. Don't think that somehow the abuse is your fault or that somehow you deserve to be abused. That's how a doormat thinks. No one deserves to be abused, ever. (Please see the Abuse Hotlines in the back of this book.)

# LOSE-LOSE—THE DOWNWARD SPIRAL

Lose-Lose says, "If I'm going down, then you're going down with me, sucker." After all, misery enjoys company. War is a great example of Lose-Lose. Think about it. Whoever kills the most people wins the war. That doesn't sound like anyone ends up winning at all. Revenge is also Lose-Lose. By getting revenge, you may think you're winning, but you're really only hurting yourself.

Lose-Lose is usually what happens when two Win-Lose people get together. If you want to win at all costs, and the other person wants to win at all costs, you're both going to end up losing.

Lose-Lose can also occur when someone becomes obsessed with another person in a negative way. This is especially likely to happen with those closest to us.

"I don't care what happens to me as long as my brother fails."

"If I can't have Jeff, I'm sure as heck not going to let my friend Sarah have him."

If you're not careful, boyfriend-girlfriend relationships can sour into Lose-Lose. You've seen it. Two good people begin dating and

things go well at first. It's Win-Win. But gradually they become emotionally glued and codependent. They begin to get possessive and jealous. They constantly need to be together, to touch, to feel secure, as if they own the other person. Eventually, this dependency brings out the worst in both of them. They begin to fight, argue, and "get back at" each other, resulting in a downward spiral of Lose-Lose.

#### WIN-WIN—THE ALL-YOU-CAN-EAT BUFFET

Win-Win is a belief that everyone can win. It's both nice and tough all at once. I won't step on you, but I won't be your doormat either. You care about other people and you want them to succeed. But you also care about yourself, and you want to succeed as well. Win-Win is abundant. It is the belief that there's plenty of success to go

around. It's not either you or me. It's both of us. It's not a matter of who gets the biggest piece of pie. There's more than enough food for everyone. It's an all-you-can-eat buffet.

A friend of mine named Dawn Meeves shared how she discovered the power of thinking Win-Win:



As a high school sophomore, I played on the girls' basketball team. I was pretty good for my age and tall enough to be starter on the varsity team although I was just a sophomore. One of my classmates named Pam, a dear friend and a sophomore as well, was also moved up to be a starter on the varsity squad.

I had a sweet little shot I could hit quite regularly from ten feet out. I began making four or five of those shots a game and began getting recognized for it. It soon became apparent that Pam didn't like all the attention I was getting and decided, consciously or not, to keep the ball from me. It didn't matter how open I was for the shot, Pam stopped passing the ball to me.

One night, after playing a terrible game in which Pam kept the ball from me most of the game, I was as mad as I had ever been. I spent many hours talking with my dad, going over everything, and expressing my anger toward my friend-turned-enemy, Pam. After a long discussion, my dad told me that the best thing he could think of would be to give Pam the ball every time I got it. Every time. I thought it was the most stupid suggestion he had ever given me. He simply told me it would work and left me at the kitchen table to think about it. But I didn't. I knew it wouldn't work and put it aside as silly fatherly advice.

The next game came quickly, and I was determined to beat Pam at her own game. I planned and plotted and came out with a mission to ruin Pam's game. On my first possession of the ball, I heard my dad above the crowd. He had a booming voice, and though I shut out everything around me while playing basketball, I could always hear Dad's deep voice. At the moment I caught the ball, he yelled out, "Give her the ball!!" I hesitated for one second and then did what I knew was right. Although I was open for a shot, I found Pam and passed her the ball. She was shocked for a moment, then turned and shot, sinking the ball for two points. As I ran down the court to play defense, I felt a feeling I had never felt before: true joy for the success of another human being. And, even more, I realized that it put us ahead in the game. It felt good to be winning. I continued to give her the ball every time I got it in the first half. Every time. In the second half, I did the same, only shooting if it was a designated play or if I was wide open for a shot.

We won that game, and in the games that followed, Pam began to pass me the ball as much as I passed it to her. Our teamwork was getting stronger and stronger, and so was our friendship. We won the majority of our games that year and became a legendary small town duo. The local newspaper even did an article on our ability to pass to one another and sense each other's presence. Overall, I scored more points than ever before.

You see, Win-Win always creates more. An endless buffet. And as Dawn discovered, wanting another person to win fills you full of good feelings. By passing the ball, Dawn didn't score fewer points but eventually scored more. In fact, they both scored more points and won more games than if they had selfishly kept the ball from each other.

You probably do more Win-Win thinking than you give yourself credit for. The following are all examples of the Win-Win attitude:

- You recently got a promotion at the burger joint you work at.
   You share the praise and recognition with all of those who helped you get there.
- You were just elected to an important school office and make up your mind not to develop a "superiority complex." You treat everyone the same, including the friendless and the unpopular.

- Your best friend just got accepted at the college you wanted to get into. You didn't make it. Although you feel terrible about your own situation, you are genuinely happy for your friend.
- You want to go out for dinner. Your friend wants to see a movie. You jointly decide to rent a movie and pick up food to eat at home.

How to Think friend when he just got accepted at college and you didn't? How can you avoid feeling inferior to the girl next door who has all those gorgeous clothes? How can you find solutions to problems so that both of you can win?

Might I suggest two clues: Win the private victory first and avoid the tumor twins.

#### WIN THE PRIVATE VICTORY FIRST

It all begins with you. If you are extremely insecure and haven't paid the price to win the private victory, it will be difficult to think Win-Win. You'll be threatened by other people. It'll be hard to be happy for their successes. It will be difficult to share recognition or praise. Insecure people get jealous very easily. This conversation between Doug and his girlfriend is typical of an insecure person:

"Amy, who was the guy you were talking to just now?" asks Doug. "He's just a good friend I grew up with," says Amy.

"I don't want you hangin' out with that guy," rants Doug.

"Doug, he's just a friend I've known for a long time. We went to elementary school together."

"I don't care how long you've known him. You shouldn't be so friendly to him."

"It's no big deal. He's having some problems and just needs a friend."

"Are you committed to me or not?"

"OK, Doug. If that's what you want, I won't talk to him anymore."

Can you see how hard it would be for Doug to be big-hearted in this situation as long as he is insecure and emotionally dependent upon his girlfriend? Doug needs to start with himself. As he makes deposits into his PBA, takes responsibility for his life, and gets a plan in place, his confidence and security will increase and he'll start enjoying other people instead of being threatened by them. Personal security is the foundation for thinking Win-Win.

#### AVOID THE TUMOR TWINS

ET'S FIND

A WIN-WIN

SOLUTION.

DAD.

There are two habits that, like tumors, can slowly eat you away from the inside. They are twins and their names are competing and comparing. It's virtually impossible to think Win-Win with them around.

# Competing

Competition can be extremely healthy. It drives us to improve, to reach and stretch. Without it, we would never know how far we could push ourselves. In the business world, it makes our economy prosper. The glory of the Olympic Games is all about excellence and competition.

But there is another side to competition that isn't so nice. In the

movie Star Wars, Luke Skywalker learns about a positive energy shield called "the force," which gives

life to all things. Later, Luke confronts the evil Darth Vader and learns about the "dark side" of the force. As Darth puts it, "You don't know the power of the dark side." So it is with com-

petition. There is a sunny side and a dark side, and both are powerful. The difference is this: Competition is healthy when you compete against yourself, or when it challenges you to reach and stretch and become your best. Competition becomes dark when you

tie your self-worth into winning or when you use it as a way to place yourself above another.

While reading a book called *The Inner Game of Tennis* by Tim Galwey, I found some words that say it perfectly. Wrote Tim:

When competition is used as a means of creating a self-image relative to others, the worst in a person comes out; then the ordinary fears and frustrations become greatly exaggerated. It is as if some believe that only by being the best, only by being a winner, will they be eligible for the love and respect they seek. Children who have been taught to measure themselves in this way often become adults driven by a compulsion to succeed which overshadows all else.

A famous college coach once said that the two worst traits an athlete can have are a fear of failure and an inordinate desire to win, or a win-at-any-cost attitude.

I'll never forget an argument I had with my younger brother after his team beat mine in a game of sand volleyball.

"I can't believe you guys beat us," I said.

"What's so unbelievable about that?" he replied. "You think you're a better athlete than me, don't you?"

"I know I am. Look at the evidence. I went much further than you in sports."

"But you're using your own narrow definition of what an athlete is. I frankly think that I'm a better athlete because I can jump higher and run faster."

"Bull! You're not faster than me. And what does jumping and running have to do with it anyway? I can kick your butt in every sport."

HMMMM... MAYBE

HE'S GETTING TOO

COMPETITIVE !

"Oh yeah?"

"Yeah!"

After we calmed down, we both felt like jerks. We had been seduced by the dark side. And the dark side never leaves you with a good aftertaste.

Let's use competition as a benchmark to measure ourselves against, but let's stop competing over boyfriends, girlfriends, status, friends, popularity, positions, attention, and the like and start enjoying life.

### Comparing

Comparing is competition's twin. And just as cancerous. Comparing yourself to others is nothing but bad news. Why? Because we're all on different development timetables. Socially, mentally, and physically. Since we all bake differently, we shouldn't keep opening the oven door to see how well our cake is rising compared to our neighbor's, or our own cake won't rise at all. Although some of us are like the poplar tree, which grows like a weed the moment it's planted, others are like the bamboo tree, which shows no growth for four years but then grows ninety feet in year five.

I once heard it described this way: Life is like a great obstacle course. Each person has their own course, separated from every other course by tall walls. Your course comes complete with customized obstacles designed specifically for your personal growth. So what good does it do to climb the wall to see how well your neighbor is doing or to check out his obstacles in comparison to your own?

Building your life based on how you stack up compared to others is never good footing. If I get my security from the fact that my GPA is higher than yours or my friends are more popular than yours, then what happens when someone comes along with a higher GPA or more popular friends? Comparing ourselves makes us feel

# THE BAMBOO TREE







YEAR 2

like a wave of the sea tossed to and fro by the wind. We go up and down, feeling inferior one moment and superior the next, confident one moment and intimidated the next. The only good comparison is comparing yourself against your own potential.

I love how noted author Paul H. Dunn put it in a speech entitled "On Feeling Inferior":

I have noticed that daily we meet moments that steal our selfesteem. They are inevitable. Pick up any magazine; you see people who look healthier, skinnier, or better dressed than you are. Look around. There is always someone who seems smarter, another more self-assured, still another more talented. In fact, each day we are reminded that we lack certain talents, that we make mistakes, that we do not excel in all things. And amidst all this, it is easy to believe that we do not quite measure up in the great scheme of things, but are inferior in some secret way.

If you base your self-esteem, your feeling of self-worth, on anything outside the quality of your heart, your mind, or your soul, you have based it on a very shaky footing. So you and I are not perfect in form or physical figure. So you and I are not the richest, the wisest, the wittiest. So what?

I once interviewed a girl named Anne, who got caught in the web of comparisons for several years before managing to escape. She has a message for those who are caught:

My problems began during my freshman year when I entered Clayton Valley High School. Most of the kids in my high school had money. And how you dressed was everything. The big question was: Who is wearing what today? There were even some unspoken rules about clothes, such as never wear the same thing twice and never wear the same thing as someone else. Brand names and expensive jeans were a must. You had to have every color, every style.

During my freshman year, I had a boyfriend who was a junior and whom my parents didn't like. Our relationship was good at first, but after a while, he began to make me feel self-conscious. He would say

things like, "Why can't you look like her?" "How come you're so fat?" "If you just changed a little bit you'd be just right."

I began to believe my boyfriend. I started looking at other girls and analyzing all the reasons I wasn't as good as them. Even though I had a closet full of clothes, I remember having anxiety attacks because I couldn't decide what to wear. I even began shoplifting because I wanted to have the latest and best clothes. After a while, who I was hinged upon who I was with, what I looked like, and what kind of clothes I had on. I never felt good enough, for anyone.

To cope, I started to binge and purge. The eating gave me comfort and the purging gave me some strange form of control. Although I wasn't fat, I was so scared of being fat. It soon became a big part of my life. I started throwing up thirty to forty times a day. I would do it at school, in the bathrooms, and anywhere else I could find. It was my secret. I couldn't tell my parents because I didn't want to let them down.

I remember being asked by the popular group one time to go to the football game. They were sixteen, one year older than me. I was so excited! My mom and I worked and worked to find me the perfect outfit. I waited by the window for hours, but they never came to pick me up. I felt so worthless. I thought, "I wasn't picked up because I wasn't cool enough or didn't have the right look."

Finally, it all came to a head. While I was on stage performing in a play, I suddenly became totally disoriented and passed out. Waking up in the dressing room, I found my mom at my side. "I need help," I whispered.

Admitting that I had a problem was the first step to my recovery, which took several years. Looking back now, I can't believe I got myself into that state of mind. I had everything I needed to be happy yet I was so miserable. I was a cute, talented, skinny girl who got caught up in a world of comparisons and was made to feel not good enough. I want to shout out to the world: "Don't ever do this to yourself. It's not worth it."

The key to my recovery was meeting some really special friends who made me feel that I mattered because of who I was and not what I wore. They told me, "You don't need this. You are better than that." I began to change for myself, not because someone else told me that I had to change to be worthy of their love.

The pearl of wisdom from the story is: Stop doing it. Break the habit. Comparing yourself can become an addiction as strong as drugs or alcohol. You don't have to look like or dress like a model to be good enough. You know what really matters. Don't get caught up in the game and worry so much about being popular during your teen years, because most of life comes after. (Please see the Eating Disorder Hotlines and Web sites in the back of this book.)



#### THE FRUITS OF THE WIN-WIN SPIRIT

I've learned never to underestimate what can happen when someone thinks Win-Win. This was Andy's experience:

At first I could see no point to Win-Win. But I started applying it in my after-school jobs, and I was just blown away. I have used it now for two years and it's honestly scary how powerful this habit is—I wish I had known about it much sooner in my life. It's taught me to exercise my leadership ability and to approach my job with an attitude of "let's make this job more fun. Let's make it a win for both me and my employer." I now sit down with my manager monthly and tell her all the little things I can see in the company that aren't getting done that I am willing to do.

The last time we met she said to me, "I have always wondered how we could get all these little loose ends done. I am so impressed with how you look for opportunities and are so willing to perform." And then she gave me a dollar an hour raise.

Believe me, this Win-Win stuff is contagious. If you're bighearted, committed to helping others succeed, and willing to share recognition, you'll be a magnet for friends. Think about it. Don't you just love people who are interested in your success and want you to win? It makes you want to help them in return, doesn't it?

The Win-Win spirit can be applied to just about any situation, from working out major conflicts with your parents to deciding who walks the dog, as Jon shared below.

My sister and I are always arguing about who has to walk the dogs and do the dishes. We both would choose the dogs over the dishes any day. But someone has to do one or the other. So we decided that I would wash the dishes, she would dry them, and then we'd walk the dogs together. I'm glad it worked out like that, because now we get what needs to be done finished but also add a little fun to it by doing it together.

Sometimes, no matter how hard you try, you won't be able to find a Win-Win solution. Or the other party may be so bent on Win-Lose that you don't even want to approach him or her. That happens. In these situations, don't get ugly yourself (Win-Lose) or get stepped on (Lose-Win). Instead, go for Win-Win or No Deal. In other words, if you can't find a solution that works for both of you, decide not to play. No Deal. For example, if you and your friend can't decide what to do one night, instead of doing an activity that one of you might resent, split up that night and get together another



night. Or if you and your girlfriend or boyfriend can't develop a Win-Win relationship, it might be best to go for No Deal and part ways. It sure beats going for Win-Lose, Lose-Win, or, worst of all, Lose-Lose.

A fifteen-year-old named Bryan, who was taught Win-Win by his father, shared this interesting story:

Last year, my friend Steve and I wanted to make some money during summer break. So we started a window washing and lawn care business. We thought Green and Clean was kind of a cool name to use for our business.

Steve's parents had a friend who needed his windows washed, and before too long the word spread and we got a few jobs.

We used a program on my dad's computer to make a little sheet we call a Win-Win agreement. When we get to the house we go around and get the window measurements and write down an estimate. We make it totally clear that they are going to get clean windows for a set price. There is a line for them to sign on. If we don't perform well, we know we won't get hired back. After we are done, we walk them around and show them our work. We want them to know we're accountable. It puts us on a better footing with the customer.

We have a little Green and Clean fund. Once we started making money, we split the money and then put some aside to buy window washing equipment. As long as our customers are happy, and they get clean windows, they are winning. We win, because at fifteen, it's a way for us to make some extra money.



#### Watch How It Makes You Feel

Developing a Win-Win attitude is not easy. But you can do it. If you're thinking Win-Win only 10 percent of the time right now, start

thinking it 20 percent of the time, then 30 percent, and so on. Eventually, it will become a mental habit, and you won't even have to think about. It will become part of who you are.

Perhaps the most surprising benefit of thinking Win-Win is the good feelings it brings on. One of my favorite stories that illustrates the power of *thinking* Win-Win is the true story of Jacques Lusseyran as told in his autobiography *And There Was Light*. The editors of *PARABOLA* magazine, who wrote the book's foreword, summarize Lusseyran's story this way:

"Born in Paris in 1924, [Jacques] was fifteen at the time of the German occupation, and at sixteen he had formed and was heading an underground resistance movement ... which from a beginning of fifty-two boys ... within a year had grown to six hundred. This would seem remarkable enough, but add to it the fact that from the age of eight, Jacques had been totally blind."

Although totally blind, Jacques could see, in a different way. As he put it: "I saw light and went on seeing it though I was blind ... I could feel light rising, spreading, resting on objects, giving them form, then leaving them ... I lived in a stream of light." He called this stream of light that he lived in "my secret."

Yet there were times when Jacques' light would leave him and he became cloudy. It was whenever he thought Win-Lose. As he put it:

"When I was playing with my small companions, if I suddenly grew anxious to win, to be the first at all costs, then all at once I could see nothing. Literally I went into fog or smoke.

"I could no longer afford to be jealous or unfriendly, because, as soon as I was, a bandage came down over my eyes, and I was bound hand and foot and cast aside. All at once a black hole opened, and I was helpless inside it. But when I was happy and serene, approached people with confidence and thought well of them, I was rewarded with light. So is it surprising that I learned to love friendship and harmony when I was very young."

The true test of whether or not you are thinking Win-Win or one of the alternatives is how you feel. Win-Lose and Lose-Win thinking will cloud your judgment and fill you with negative feelings. You simply cannot afford to do it. On the other hand, just as Jacques discovered, thinking Win-Win will fill your heart with happy and serene thoughts. It will give you confidence. Even fill you with light.

# COMING ATTRACTIONS

In the upcoming chapter, I'll share the secret to getting under your parents' skins in a positive way. So don't stop now!





1	
	Pinpoint the area of your life where you most struggle with comparisons. Perhaps it's with clothes, physical features, friends, or talents.
	Where I'm struggling most with comparisons:
	If you play sports, show sportsmanship. Compliment someone from the opposing team after the match or game.
	If someone owes you money, don't be afraid to mention it in a friendly way. "Did you forget about that ten bucks I loaned you last week? I could use it right now." Think Win-Win, not Lose-Win.
	Without caring whether you win or lose, play a card, board, or computer game with others just for the fun of it.
	Do you have an important test coming up soon? If so, form a study group and share your best ideas with each other. You'll all do better.
	The next time someone close to you succeeds, be genuinely happy for them instead of feeling threatened.
	Think about your general attitude toward life. Is it based on Win-Lose, Lose-Win, Lose-Lose, or Win-Win thinking? How is that attitude affecting you?
	Think of a person who you feel is a model of Win-Win. What is it about this person you admire?
	Person:
	What Ladmire about them:

Are you in a Lose-Win relationship with a member of the opposite sex? If you are, then decide what must happen to make it a Win for you or choose to go for No Deal and get out of the relationship.