

HOW GROWTH PLANNING HELPS @RISK-W/HIGH-POTENTIAL YOUTH SUCCEED
 ... And Close The Achievement Gap!

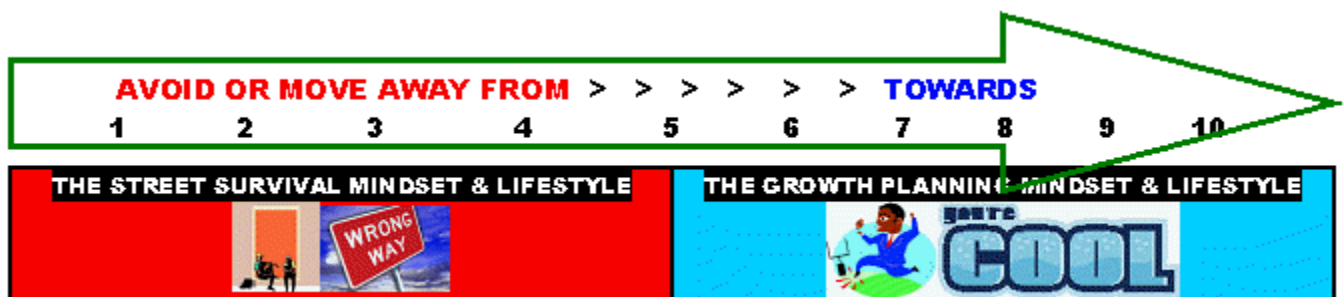
This detailed introduction and three-part description of our growth planning process is, in effect, "our case statement" covering why and how we do what we do ... and why our approach to helping @risk-w/high-potential and other adolescent youth and young adults succeed is unique, innovative, and merits support. Here's the outline for this case statement:



- ▶ **AN INTRODUCTION** includes a definition of growth planning and @risk youth, plus it includes our fundamental assumption about youth development.
- ▶ **PART ONE** presents our (admittedly) debatable view of the *primary* (but not the only) underlying cause of the educational achievement gap among @risk-w/high-potential youth.
- ▶ **PART TWO** describes how our growth planning process is designed to make a significant contribution to closing this gap.
- ▶ **PART THREE** covers what is unique and innovative about our growth planning process and why it merits support.

An Introduction

Simply put, growth planning is a self-identity, mindset & lifestyle change and development process that helps @risk-w/high-potential and other youth and young adults to avoid or measurably move step-by-step away from what we call a "Street Survival Mindset & Lifestyle" ... towards what we call a "Growth Planning Mindset & Lifestyle" ... as shown graphically below.



IMPORTANT NOTE: It is our firm belief that the "street survival" mindset & lifestyle has played a very positive role in enabling many teens to survive family, neighborhood, or other problems. But, to truly succeed in all aspects of their everyday life, we also believe that they now need to move beyond "street survival"...towards living with a growth planning mindset & lifestyle.

Specifically, we define growth planning as:

"the learned art and skill of having a lifelong continuous growth mindset and a proactive, self-motivated, and self-disciplined lifestyle that uses the three skills of (1) visioning, (2) goal-setting, and (3) step-by-step benchmarking to continuously improve our self as a person and to achieve our vision and goals."

And, we define "@risk-w/high-potential youth" as . . .

"8th grade, high school or college age young people in danger of not successfully completing high school, college, a trade school, or skill training program ... thereby limiting their ability to live up to their high potential for success in all aspects of their life." We actively seek opportunities to work with all @risk-w/high-potential youth, although to date about 90% of our high school age growth planners have been African American.

We have identified Six @Risk-w/High-Potential Youth Early Warning Signs, any one or a combination of which could put a young person severely at risk:

1. Having a severely disruptive family life, without several caring adults significantly involved in their child & youth development
2. Having a history of poor grades or repeated behavior problems at school
3. Participating in risky sexual behavior that could result in disease or a teen pregnancy
4. Having repeated incidents with the law;
5. Frequently using drugs or alcohol; and
6. Allowing society's prejudicial barriers or what others think of them to keep them from succeeding at school or in other aspects of their life.

Finally, here is our fundamental assumption about youth development:

ALL YOUTH NEED TO DEVELOP & LIVE THEIR EVERYDAY LIFE WITH
A LIFELONG CONTINUOUS GROWTH MINDSET

To develop to their full potential and succeed in life, we believe all youth need to develop and demonstrate in their everyday life a *lifelong continuous growth* mindset that is built on the core belief that our qualities, talents, abilities and advantages in life can be developed over time through:

1. Demonstrating a passion for continuous incremental learning,
2. Welcoming challenges,
3. Working very hard and smart,
4. Learning from & bouncing back from our inevitable mistakes and setbacks in life, and
5. Persisting in the face of obstacles

And, our corresponding assumption is that our basic human intelligence is not inborn and fixed. Rather, we believe (and research now largely confirms) that human intelligence is teachable and able to be developed over time through continuous experiential learning, effort, and reflection on those learnings and experiences.

By contrast, some youth are brought up to have a *fixed mindset* that is based on the core belief that some people have inborn or societally obtained qualities, talents, abilities and advantages in life, and others don't. And, the fixed mindset's corresponding assumption is that our basic human intelligence is also inborn and fixed; so, some people are naturally smart and others aren't – end of story. Thus, those holding a fixed mindset tend to believe that they need to prove over and over to others that they are not stupid, that they're one of the few "smart ones," and that they must avoid challenges that could cause them to make a mistake.

PART ONE

What Is The Underlying Root Cause Of The Achievement Gap?

Despite Improvements, Gap Persists. In a recent study the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation called it "The Silent Epidemic." Nearly one in three ninth graders fail to graduate from high school, and of all students who do earn a high school diploma, only one-third graduate college ready. For urban students of color, about one in two will graduate in four years, and of those who do graduate, only about one-quarter are college-ready. And, when Black and Latino students do stay in high school or complete college, significant gaps in academic achievement still persist between themselves and White and Asian students, despite slight recent improvements. Tragically, all their lives those who fail to graduate or perform up to their potential pay a price ... as do we all as a nation.

UNDERLYING ROOT CAUSE IS FOUND IN CHILD & YOUTH DEVELOPMENT PRACTICES ... EXACERBATED BY A TOXIC POP YOUTH CULTURE

Most research on the basic, underlying causes of the achievement gap has focused on the Black-White achievement gap, and 4 underlying causes are most often identified.

1. The structural viewpoint says the gap is basically the result of socio/economic structural disparities caused by the legacy of slavery and racism/prejudice, and that to close the gap we must remove the structural disparities and the prejudice that perpetuates them.
2. The individual/remedial viewpoint says that some individuals simply have some learning/tool and behavioral deficiencies, and that to close the gap we must give individuals an early childhood education start and supplemental tutoring help.
3. The faulty education system viewpoint says that our education system is at fault, and that to close the gap our entire education system must be totally reformed.
4. And, the cultural viewpoint says that, today, the main obstacle to Black achievement can be found in (1) some relatively recent negative-impact child and youth development mindset values, beliefs, and attitudes & lifestyle behaviors and practices arising from the *everyday culture** (see definition below) of some groups of American youth ... that are exacerbated by (2) a toxic youth subculture (more about this below.) And, to close the gap, these cultural deficiencies must be identified, admitted, and specifically addressed.

We believe all 4 underlying root causes must be addressed. However, we believe the primary underlying root cause of the achievement gap is cultural ... a point of view echoed in the works of black authors John McWhorter, Shelby Steele, Orlando Patterson, Juan Williams, Bill Cosby and Alvin Poussaint, as well as in the research of Stephan and Abigail Thernstrom, among others.

* **We define "everyday culture" as . . .** "the distinct interactive whole (which is greater than the sum of its component parts) made up of the:

1. Prioritized values
2. Deeply held beliefs
3. Pervasive attitudes; and
4. Norms and sanctions of behavior that shape the way things are really done (or not done) in a group or society."

Cultural artifacts are the visible "tip of the iceberg" items and practices that symbolize, differentiate, and re-present this distinct and sometimes invisible underlying everyday culture to the larger society. Such artifacts can include attire, colloquial terms and language patterns, musical preferences and dance modes, cuisine, bodily gestures and posture, and overall attitude or temperament.

OUR YOUTH "POP CULTURE" IS HAVING A TOXIC EFFECT ... ESPECIALLY ON THOSE MOST AT RISK

As briefly mentioned above, we believe that today the always difficult task of child and family development is now being adversely affected by our highly commercialized, mass media driven popular youth-oriented culture.

And, it is our view that this pop culture (as seen in music, video games, films, advertising, clothing styles, etc.) is having a "toxic effect" on the everyday lives of most U. S. teens. But, tragically, the most severe adverse impact is falling upon large segments of the African American and Latino family structures and youth subcultures that are most vulnerable to outside mass media influence.

[And, by the way, this view of pop culture's adverse affect on youth is echoed in the writing of black authors John McWhorter and Bakari Kitwana, among others. However, other black authors like Michael Eric Dyson highlight the more positive aspects of hip hop pop culture on youth.]

EIGHT CHARACTERISTICS OF @RISK-W/HIGH-POTENTIAL YOUTH TODAY

Our limited, still in-progress research conducted to date among @risk-w/high-potential and other youth and young adults has led us to tentatively identify the following eight mindset and lifestyle orientations or predispositions of today's U. S. @risk-w/high-potential youth.

- 1) **Self-esteem Orientation.** Self-definition and self-esteem gained through acquiring things, experiences, and networks of friends . . . rather than through demonstrating intellectual rigor and academic performance in school.
- 2) **Role Model Orientation.** Media hyped far-off heroes seen as role models for their lives ... rather than their role models coming from people close-in to them, such as from their own family, teachers, community, or others around them.
- 3) **Directional Orientation.** Strongly external peer-group-directed . . . rather than internal self-directed.
- 4) **Motivational Orientation.** Extrinsic financial and other reward motivated . . . rather than intrinsic self-learning and pride-of-personal-achievement motivated.
- 5) **Learning Orientation.** "Capture my interest and I may become motivated to learn what you have to offer" . . . rather than being self-motivated to find interesting things to learn and master.
- 6) **Effort Orientation.** Get it the easiest and quickest way I can ... rather than demonstrating the personal discipline of doing the hard step-by-step work now in order to reap the benefits later.
- 7) **Time Orientation.** Live-in-the-present, take-a-day-at-a-time oriented ... rather than future-oriented.
- 8) **Action Orientation.** Hang back and re-act to things ... rather than pro-actively plan and take specific actions to make things happen in their everyday life.

**RESULT:
MOST @RISK-W/HIGH-POTENTIAL YOUTH
ARE FUTURE-VISIONING & FUTURE-PLANNING ADVERSE**

We think a major bottom-line result of the interaction of the social, cultural, and educational practices referenced above and this pervasive youth subculture is that most (but not all) U. S. @risk-w/high-potential youth tend to live their everyday lives with what we call a "*Street Survival Mindset & Lifestyle*." To us, this means that they tend to live their lives with an only present-focused "live for the moment" mindset ... combined with a reactive, other-directed "go with the flow" lifestyle. And, some are even fatalistic about whether they'll live beyond their teens or 20's.

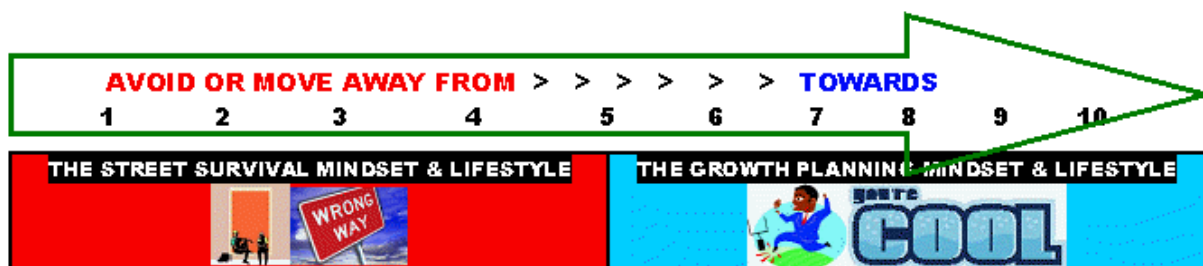
Great At Dreaming, But Lack Follow-Through Skills. However, most @risk-w/high-potential youth are very good at dreaming about their desired future. And, in our view, dreaming comes naturally to everyone and is almost always a flight of fantasy, ungrounded in present reality. Visioning, on the other hand, is grounded in, and projects current reality into both a stretch and a realistic desired future. In addition, most @risk-w/high-potential youth today lack both the *planning skills* needed to develop an integrated and prioritized set of goals to begin to realize their dream, and the *self-motivated personal discipline* needed to stay focused on achieving those goals on a day-to-day basis.

... Yet, They're Highly Resilient. It is important to note, however, that many @risk-w/high-potential youth are very resilient in overcoming difficult life-circumstances, and that any work with @risk-w/high-potential youth should affirm and build upon this resiliency. Often this resiliency shows itself in the ability to achieve a highly valued single goal (such as getting a good grade in a favorite course, staying sober, or being a starter on the basketball or soccer team). However, @risk-w/high-potential youth usually lack the ability to achieve a balanced set of prioritized goals covering multiple aspects of their everyday life.

**PART TWO
How Does Growth Planning Contribute To The Solution?**

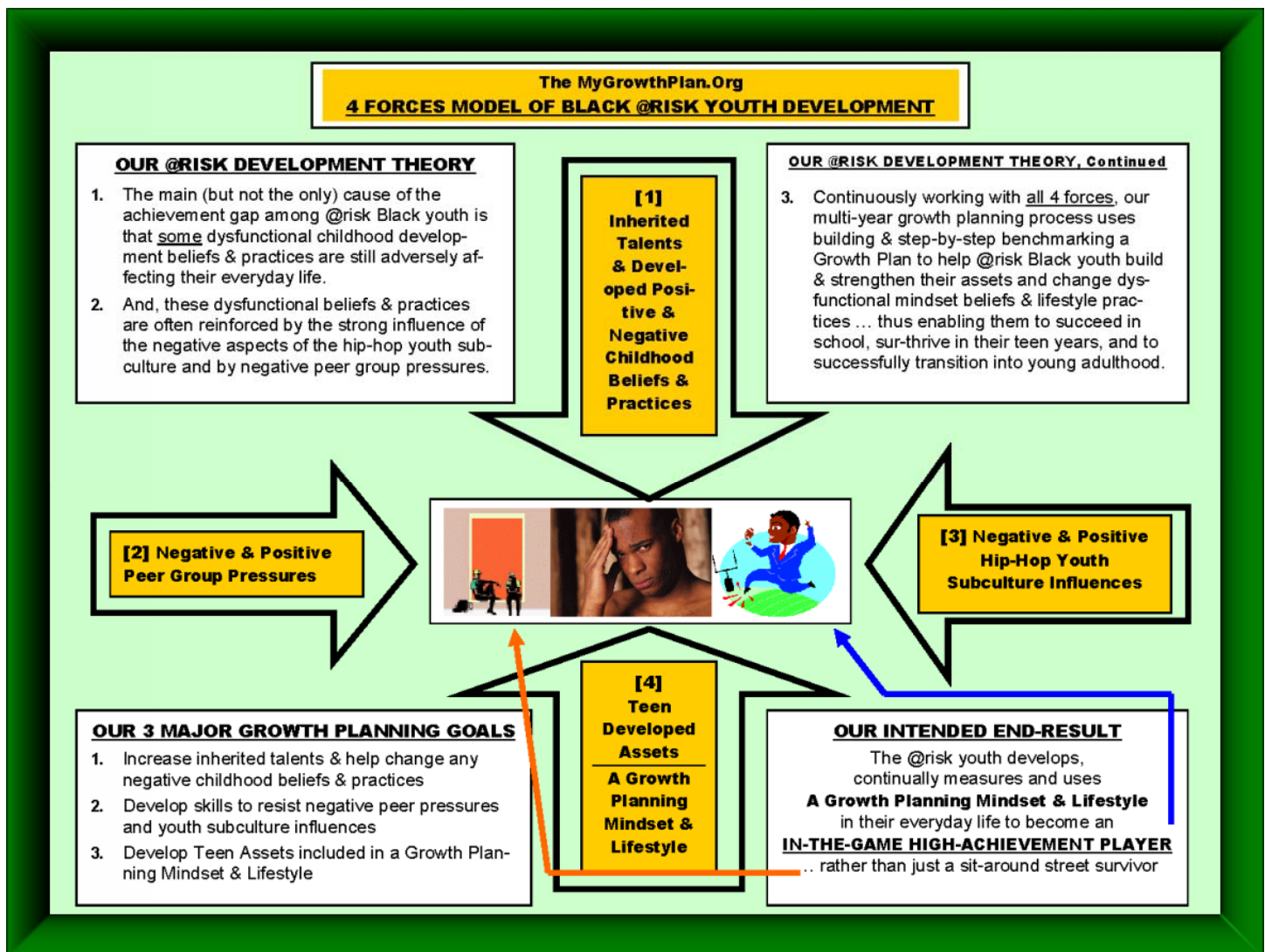
Since we believe the primary underlying problem causing the achievement gap is found in some relatively recent negative-impact youth development mindset and lifestyle practices, it is only logical that we also believe that the primary solution to the achievement gap must include efforts to correct for these negative-impact youth development mindset orientations and lifestyle practices.

So, we have intentionally designed our multi-year growth planning process to be like a "mental boot camp" experience that enables @risk-w/high-potential and other youth to avoid or measurably move step-by-step away from living their lives with a "*Street Survival Mindset & Lifestyle*" . . . towards living their lives with what we call a "*Growth Planning Mindset & Lifestyle*," as shown again here.



Since about 90% of our teen growth planners have been African American, based on extensive research, we developed our 4 Forces Model of Black @Risk Youth Development (shown below) to guide us in specifically adapting our growth planning process to help close the achievement gap among Black youth. Although not everyone will agree with our theory and model, we think it is extremely important to specifically identify your view of the main underlying cause of the achievement gap in order to create a solution that effectively helps close it.

- In the model we use the scientific definition of theory as “a set of facts, propositions, or principles analyzed in their relation to one another and used to explain phenomena that are to be further examined and tested in practice.”



There are two distinct phases in our growth planning process:

1. The Growth Plan BUILDING Phase. It takes about 36 hours for 8th grade and high school students – under the guidance of a Growth Plan Coach – to build the 1st draft of their personal Growth Plan on our website and to begin learning the fundamentals of life-long growth planning. After this phase, youth “graduate” into the . . .
2. The Growth Plan BENCHMARKING Phase. In this multi-year phase, youth initially meet about weekly and then monthly with their Growth Plan Coach to set and evaluate their progress in meeting their step-by-step benchmarks towards achieving their Growth Plan, including the demonstration of a growth planning mindset & lifestyle in their everyday life.

OUR 3 CURRICULUM COMPONENTS

We use three basic Growth Planning Curriculum Components (plus many supplementary curriculum materials) to help youth make these fundamental mindset and lifestyle changes.

1. Our 12 Growth Planning Worksheets;
2. Our 10 Growth Planning Life-Skills; and
3. Our 30 Growth Planning Bio-Sketches.

Taken together, these 3 curriculum components (along with their supplementary curriculum materials) help enable at risk and other youth to develop and measurably demonstrate in their everyday life (1) a lifelong optimistic, positive, and future-focused growth planning mindset, and (2) a lifelong proactive, self-motivated, and self-disciplined lifestyle.

BUT . . . NO SINGLE, QUICK-FIX SOLUTION

For most @risk-w/high-potential youth, making these self-identity, mindset and lifestyle changes amounts to developing an entirely new way to see and live their everyday life. So, we know there is no single quick-fix solution.

That's why we only do growth planning in partnership with schools and youth organizations already serving @risk-w/high-potential youth. We do this because we know growth planning is most successful, not as a stand-alone activity, but when it adds to and reinforces other youth educational and developmental initiatives. And, as needed, we modify our process to ensure that it reinforces and adds to our partner's educational, developmental, and skill-building initiatives.

When done in such partnerships, we know that growth planning makes a substantial contribution to removing the @risk-w/high-potential youth and family cultural practices described above, thereby enabling the youth to succeed right now while they're in school ... and throughout their entire life. Each growth planning design goal is explained in detail below, along with the curriculum component that helps achieve this goal.

Growth Planning Design Goal #1: DEVELOP A POSITIVE, OPTIMISTIC & FUTURE-FOCUS MINDSET

1st Curriculum Component - 12 Worksheets Are Mind-Stretching Exercises. It takes approximately 20 hours for 8th grade and high school students to build a Growth Plan and to introduce them to the fundamentals of the art, skill, and power of life-long growth planning.

To build a Growth Plan, they take a 12-stop online interactive journey, one for each of Our 12 Growth Planning Worksheets, two of which are optional for 8th grade and high school students. Along each step of the way, they are guided by either an assigned or an entrepreneurial Growth Plan Coach. [[Click here](#) to see a job description of an Assigned Growth Plan Coach; and [click here](#) to see a job description of an Entrepreneurial Growth Plan Coach.]

Each stop (or worksheet) along their journey is designed to be a mind-stretching exercise, helping the growth planner to think:

1. Retrospectively about what has brought them to this point in their life;
2. Introspectively about who they are as a unique, high-potential individual with many strengths and some developmental needs; or
3. Prospectively about what they want their life to look and feel like in their immediate and more distant future.

As they complete each worksheet, key data is automatically combined into a Growth Plan they can print out and frame. All their planning data resides in their own private Growth Plan Data-Center on our website.

Growth Plans are developed using a 5-year rolling plan format. That is, youth are trained to envision their desired life five years ahead into the "unclear fog" of their future. Then, at the end of each year, they stretch their vision of their desired life one more year into the future.

2nd Curriculum Component - 10 Life-Skills Help Correct For Youth Development Deficiencies.

In addition, during the Growth Plan development process, youth learn, discuss, and present creative presentations for one another on Our 10 Growth Planning Life-Skills. Each Life-Skill has been specifically designed to help correct for a different limiting aspect of the @risk-w/high-potential youth mindset and lifestyle. Mastering these life-skills is now widely recognized as a vital component of the Framework For 21st Century Learning, as described on the website, www.21stcenturyskills.org.

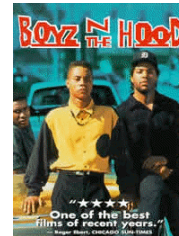
3rd Curriculum Component - 30 Bio-Sketches Illustrate Life-Skills. To further help develop a future-focused growth planning mindset, while developing their Growth Plan, youth read, discuss, and present creative presentations for one another using one or more of Our 30 Growth Planning Biographical Sketches. Each quote and biographical sketch has been selected to illustrate one or more of Our 10 Growth Planning Life-Skills.

Supplementary Curriculum Materials. The following seven sets of instructional and measurement materials are used to supplement the above 3 basic curriculum materials:

1. **Online Assessments** help youth identify their unique self and to incorporate the assessment results in the youth's Growth Plan. High school students take and receive certified interpretation of two online personal assessments - the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator and the Newly Revised Strong Interest Inventory. College students also take the FIRO-B assessment.
2. **Two PowerPoint CD Tutorials** help introduce and reinforce the basic principles of growth planning. One Tutorial is on the Growth Planning Fundamentals, and the other is on The 10 Life-Skills.
3. **An Online Brainology Tutorial** helps youth understand the changes going on in their adolescent brain. It shows how 9th graders Chris and Dahlia who are having problems with their schoolwork visit the lab of Dr. Cerebrus, a slightly mad brain scientist, who teaches them all about the care and feeding of the adolescent brain.



4. **Life-Skill Readings** help youth understand and apply the 10 Growth Planning Life-Skills to their everyday life.
5. **Mindset & Lifestyle Progress Measurement Forms** help each growth planner measure his or her progress in avoiding "A Street Survival Mindset & Lifestyle" and in moving towards living their everyday life with "A Growth Planning Mindset & Lifestyle." At the beginning of the growth planning process, growth planners take a **Mindset & Lifestyle Baseline Self-Assessment Form** that measures their current mindset patterns and lifestyle behaviors using our 35 Growth Planning Mindset & Lifestyle Development Indicators included on the last page of this description. Then, they periodically re-take the form to measure their progress. And, they select from 3 to 6 people to complete a **Mindset & Lifestyle Line-Of-Sight Assessment Form** that gives them feedback on the same 35 Indicators. Significant learning comes from comparing their self-ratings to their line-of-sight ratings.
6. **Bio-Sketch Analysis Forms** help youth apply lessons learned from the Bio-Sketches to their everyday life.
7. **Copies of DVD Films & Analysis Forms** help youth candidly discuss with one another the differences they see in their everyday life between the Street Survival and Growth Planning mindsets and lifestyles. Films are selected to meet the unique interests and needs of each group of growth planners and currently include John Singleton's *Boyz N The Hood* and *Poetic Justice*.



Growth Planning Design Goal #2:

DEMONSTRATE A PROACTIVE, SELF-MOTIVATED & SELF-DISCIPLINED LIFESTYLE

- ▶ **Benchmarks Measure Short-Term Progress.** Once a Growth Plan is created, during the multi-year implementation process, the primary activity for the growth planner is to repeatedly set and work hard to meet short-term monthly or quarterly Performance Progress Benchmarks that keep them in continuous forward-progress motion towards achieving their longer-term goals and vision. 8th grade and high school age growth planners meet with their Growth Plan Coach monthly to discuss progress on their benchmarks and quarterly to officially review the previous quarter's benchmarks and to set new quarterly benchmarks.
- ▶ **Life-Skills & Bio-Sketches Reinforced.** To assist in developing and demonstrating these attributes, the Growth Plan Coach frequently relates the appropriate Growth Planning Life-Skill or Growth Planning Bio-Sketch (introduced earlier) to what is actually going on in the youth's everyday life.
- ▶ **Adult Role Models Are Critical.** Although our interactive website and growth planning curriculum are important and effective contributors to helping @risk-w/high-potential youth develop and begin to demonstrate a lifelong growth planning mindset and lifestyle, we believe the most critical growth planning success factor are the frequent positive interactions between the growth planner and his or her Growth Plan Coach and Support Network Members. As a part of building their Growth Plan, youth identify up to 6 Support Network Members to whom they give online access so they can offer encouragement and suggestions for achieving their Growth Plan goals.

Two Major Outcome Measures: ACHIEVE VISION & GOALS . . . AND DEMONSTRATE CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT

It is our design intent that the overall outcome from the total multi-year experience of building and implementing a Growth Plan is for each growth planner to make substantial and measurable progress in both achieving his or her short-term benchmarks and longer-term goals, and in demonstrating three critical youth development qualities in their everyday life:

- ▶ **Inner self-worth & self-esteem**, self-identity, self-confidence, and self-direction as a unique, high-potential individual.
- ▶ **Self-motivated personal discipline** in setting and achieving high-performance goals
- ▶ **No-excuse personal accountability** for their own performance and everyday actions.

Short, intermediate, and longer-term outcome measures are used to measure each growth planner's progress in both achieving their benchmarks and goals, and in demonstrating the three youth development qualities in their everyday life.

PART Three

What Is Unique & Innovative About Our Process?

An independent survey of youth-oriented planning processes conducted for us identified 5 characteristics of our approach that make it unique and innovative.

1. Both Goal Attainment & Youth Development Focused. Most planning processes just focus on the youth's academic progress, career selection, financial literacy, character development, or on just helping them identify future goals. We take a 360-degree, whole-life planning approach that is focused not only on identifying and achieving future goals, but also on helping (especially) @risk-w/high-potential youth make deeply personal developmental mindset and lifestyle changes in multiple areas of their everyday life. And, we do it in a way that intentionally affirms and builds on their self-resilient assets, as well as specifically addresses their developmental needs.

Our growth planning process is grounded in seven strains of current youth development, intelligence, and pathways out of poverty research:

- 1) **Identity**. Our growth planning process aids in the search for and development of a personal identity, as described by E. Erickson and J. E. Marcia.
- 2) **Meaning Systems**. Our process is rooted in the social-cognitive theory of the development of the self that addresses how youth's beliefs, values, and goals set up a meaning system within which they define themselves, develop and operate. Dr. Carol S. Dweck has done extensive research and written in this area, including her books, *Mindset: The New Psychology of Success*, and *Self-Theories: Their Role in Motivation, Personality, and Development*.
- 3) **Developmental Intelligence**. Our process draws upon current 21st century theories of developmental intelligence, including Howard Gardner's Multiple Intelligence Theory that human intelligence is teachable and that people can be word smart, math smart, sport smart, art smart, people smart, self smart, nature smart, and wonder smart.
- 4) **Developmental Pathways**. Our process assists youth in making a successful transition through the Adolescent Developmental Pathways Paradigm, as described by Blumenkrantz & Gavazzi and as applied to African American youth by C.C. Brookins.

- 5) **Developmental Assets.** Our growth planning process significantly contributes to youth acquiring and demonstrating 21 of the Minneapolis-based Search Institute's 40 Developmental Assets . . . especially including the following assets: Adult Relationships, High Expectations, Youth Programs, Achievement Motivation, Responsibility, Planning & Decision-making, Personal Power, Self-Esteem, Sense of Purpose, and Positive View of Personal Future.
 - 6) **Youth Developmental Outcomes.** Our growth planning process contributes to meeting 34 of the 55 Clark Foundation outcomes . . . especially including the following outcomes: Basic Cognitive Skills, Higher-Order Thinking Skills, Achievement Motivation, Intellectual & Academic Self-Concept, Curiosity, Leadership, Risk-Resistance, Character Development, and Sense of Personal Identity.
 - 7) **Bridges Out Of The "Mindset Of Poverty" Framework.** Our mindset & lifestyle change and development growth planning process draws upon Ruby K. Payne's additive framework that (1) affirms the resilient survival skills of people living in a present-focused, relationship-oriented so-called "*culture of poverty*", but also (2) practically helps them develop & add the bridge-building transitional skills needed for them to successfully operate in our future-focused, achievement-oriented mainline culture.
2. Both Short & Long-Term Focused. We fully realize there are no single-solution quick-fixes to making lasting changes in existing, deeply held @risk-w/high-potential youth self-identity, mindset preferences and lifestyle habits. So, because of the complexity of making these changes, we have designed our growth planning process to help @risk-w/high-potential youth to achieve short-term success using the skill of benchmarking, and to attain their long-term vision and goals using a 5-year rolling plan format.
 3. Both Web & Support-Group Based. Each growth planner can access and update their Growth Plan in their private Growth Plan Data-Center on our website 24 hours a day from anywhere in the world. Although our user-friendly web technology is helpful, we know that the hands-on support and encouragement from our trained Growth Plan Coaches and their concerned Support Network Members is the most critical success-factor in our entire process.
 4. Research-based. We thoroughly field-test, evaluate over the long-term, and continuously improve everything we do to ensure that it is having its intended longer-term positive effect.
 5. Partnership-oriented. We only provide our growth planning services in partnership with schools, colleges, and youth organizations already serving @risk-w/high-potential youth. We do not do growth planning with @risk-w/high-potential youth as a stand-alone activity because our field-test experience has shown that: (1) growth planning is most effective when it adds to and reinforces other educational, developmental, and skill-building activities; and (2) youth need another institution (with a carrot & stick capability) to help keep them engaged in growth planning long enough to achieve lasting mindset and lifestyle change in their everyday lives.

These five characteristics make our approach to youth development unique and innovative. And, if given sufficient volunteer and funding support, we are confident that growth planning will enable @risk-w/high-potential youth to make substantial and measurable progress in . . .

- ▶ **Achieving their vision and goals,**
- ▶ **Developing & demonstrating** qualities that enable them to live up to their full potential
- ▶ **Succeeding** in school now ... and throughout their entire life.

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For additional information, go to <http://mygrowthplan.org>

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