

LIFE TALK NEWS 29

THE POWER OF WISE CHOICES



Empowering youth to make life-enriching choices; equipping parents for proactive parenting; inspiring families to thrive...

HELP TEENS TO MAKE BETTER CHOICES

95% of the problems shared with Life Talk Forum (by teens, young adults and parents) stem from the choices that they, or others, have made. Other than illness- or disorder-related issues, 100% of the rest of the problems and heartache we deal with stems from choices made.

The many challenges faced by children (including bullying, alcohol abuse, drugs, violence, teen pregnancies, eating disorders, depression and others) are so avoidable – if only different choices could be made by them (and/or by their parents).

The fact that so many serious challenges are so avoidable is what drives Life Talk's passionate mission to empower young people to make wise, life-enriching choices. We do so by using the Tug of Life concept (based on the groundbreaking *Tug of Life* book by Izabella Gates).

Following on the successes we've been achieving, we ran a monitored pilot where the impact of the Tug of Life programme was measured. Questionnaires were administered pre and post the Tug of Life concept being introduced to 480 Grade 8 and 9 learners at Steenberg High, and the impact was measured particularly where choices, goals and problem-solving are concerned.

The results were astoundingly powerful. We had been told that if we could achieve a 20%-30% shift in focusing on choices then the programme would be a great success. After analysis, the results showed that, after being introduced to the Tug of Life® concept:

75% OF LEARNERS FEEL EQUIPPED TO MAKE BETTER CHOICES

1. More than 75% of the programme participants feel that the programme assisted them with the choices and consequences thereof in their lives.
2. More than 75% of the programme participants feel empowered to achieve their goals after being in the programme – they therefore have hope and they developed a better future perspective.
3. More than 70% of the participants feel they can effectively solve their problems after being in the programme.
4. More than 70% feel that the Tug of Life 'characters' helped them in their lives and helped them to understand their choices more clearly.

In addition, after participating in the Tug of Life®, the programme participants developed the following skills:

- Enhanced self-image, self-esteem and self-respect
- More self-confidence
- More assertive
- Making better choices
- Positive future perspective
- Developed hope
- Empathy for others (they want to help and assist others)
- More honest and trustworthy

Mr Andre Kraak, principal of Steenberg High, says 'the beauty of Tug of Life is its simplicity and the fact that it can be applied within minutes of a brief introduction. There are no deadlines or time-consuming demands on the educators – it's just a thought process and a vocabulary that everyone, irrespective of age, can apply to every situation in their life. I wish I'd had this tool a long time ago, it would have changed my life!'

Mpilo Khumalo, a youth coordinator who runs Tug of Life workshops and trains youth and youth leaders, explains: 'Tug of Life is the most wonderful tool to get young people thinking about their choices, the consequences and where they want to go in their lives. It provides an amazing non-threatening way of getting discussions going, and gets young people to share their dilemmas, thoughts and feelings in the most constructive way. It's so simple and can be used in so many ways, and for all situations. Even months later, people come to me and say how Tug of Life has changed their thinking and approach to challenges. It's changed my life too.'

Based on these powerful results, we've been asked to spread the news to everyone. Imagine the impact on all children and families (and on society as a whole) if they could all be introduced to this fun and simple way of identifying choices, consequences and desired outcomes. Imagine if we could reduce by 75% the number of challenges our children face...

STARTING THE TUG OF LIFE IN YOUR FAMILY

To start the Tug of Life process within your family, have fun going through *the Tug of Life* book and the various scenarios that pop up in daily life. At the very least it's guaranteed to generate thought-provoking and interesting discussions! To maximise the effect, it's helpful to go through the various 'contests' and to discuss the Challengers, Ch-izers, Factors and Galvanizers that could play a role in each person's life. (7 of the 9 sections tend to be applicable to anyone from the age of 12 to 90 – teens will soon be young adults, in relationships, and they will be working some day, whereas health and other issues apply to all of us, so all the topics are of relevance.) You can make it fun too, by drawing the 'field of life' and debating the 'characters' and the choices they present, and the effects they have on the outcomes we desire. Encouraging children to use the Tug of Life terminology in the situations and dilemmas they face really can be life-changing.

IMPLEMENTING TUG OF LIFE IN SCHOOLS, CHURCHES & CO'S

To implement Tug of Life at your school, church or company, or if you would like to help with funding disadvantaged schools or communities, email Life Talk Forum director Nicoleen@lifetalk.co.za. Life Talk Forum is a registered PBO so all donations are tax-deductible and it provides a great CSI opportunity for companies. (*Tug of Life* is also available in isiZulu.) Let's get South Africa tugging! See www.tugoflife.com for more information.

LIFE TALK FORUM'S ROLE

Life Talk Forum NPC is an organisation dedicated to addressing the challenges that affect the lives of so many of today's children, young adults and families. Started in South Africa 10 years ago, Life Talk's messages and subscriber base rapidly spread across the globe. The Forum reaches tens of thousands of youth and parents annually. Izabella Gates (MD and author of the bestselling *Life Talk* and *Tug of Life* books) explains that the mission is 'to empower millions of young people to make life-enriching choices; and to equip parents for proactive parenting.' She and her team are working to galvanise the whole country into 'tugging' for what counts in all aspects of life.

PARENTING WORKSHOP ON 28th OCTOBER:

Your Parenting Journey – start with the end in mind (your 'tug-of-parenting')

We can still squeeze in a couple of seats for next week's workshop in Joburg. It's about equipping your child with essential life skills and tools to successfully navigate the teen years. This workshop will provide you with:

- Invaluable insight into your unique parenting journey.
- Opportunity to create a 'vivid vision' for your family.
- Life-changing parenting tools that can be applied immediately.
- A unique approach to tackling day-to-day parenting issues.
- Information on (and ways to) address the "must-know" challenges that most children will face.
- Expert advice on self-esteem; discipline versus punishment; communication; taking responsibility; dealing empathetically with feelings; the role of identifying your values; and maximizing opportunities to experience happiness and success.

Cost for the workshop (comprising 3 once-a-week sessions and a copy of the *Tug of Life* book) is R1,050.

IZABELLA GATES ON CLASSIC FM SUNDAY 25th OCT

Izabella is being interviewed on Richard Cock's "People of Note" from 18h00 – 21h00 this Sunday on Classic FM.

PARENT-CHILD COMMUNICATION: EdTV 09h55 Monday 26th October channel 190

Izabella takes part in a discussion on "Communication between parents and children" facilitated by Carly, and joined by psychologist Candice Cowen and Family Life counsellor Karen Moross, on Mental Health Matters at 09h55 on EdTV channel 190 this Monday 26th October.

TO SUBSCRIBE TO THE LIFE TALK FORUM:

Visit www.lifetalk.co.za and enter your details on any of the 'subscribe' pages. Join us on **Facebook Life Talk Tug-of-War and TugOfLife** – follow us on **Twitter @TugOfLife**

DOWNLOAD NEWSLETTERS. 1 – 28 COVER: Dangerous computer games, alcohol and the teen brain; huffing; clubs; Facebook guide for parents; drugs; cell phones; pocket money; hubbly bubby; chewing tobacco; clubs & fake IDs; communication; discipline & boundaries; depression; Grade 8 hiccups; promiscuity; self-mutilation; eating disorders; self-esteem; bullying; abuse; ADHD; EMO; subject choices; MXit; divorce; ice-spiking with 'eye drops', head injuries; cults; chat-rooms; child-trafficking; cyberbullying, choking games; exam stress; tips for hosting parties; prescription drug-abuse; blended families; and many others.

SPECIAL ON LIFE TALK BOOKS!

R200 a book - or buy 4 books for R680 and save R120!

Our invaluable range of Life Talk books is suitable for the whole family. They provide a 'tool-kit' of essential tips on many of the current issues facing teens, young adults and parents. The Life Talk series comprises *Life Talk for a Daughter*, *Life Talk for a Son* (for ages 12 – 20+) and *Life Talk for Parents* (for parents of children of all ages).

The Tug-of-Life provides a unique and fun approach to tackling life's dilemmas and challenges. It empowers teens and adults alike to make the best choices, and it helps them to achieve their desired outcomes and to take control of their lives. Used by schools, youth groups, churches and corporates, its simple methodology is life-changing and a "must have" for everyone.

Not only do the books make great gifts, but book sales help fund the essential work that we do. So, please support us by buying your copy today!

■ Total excludes postage/courier, depending on chosen option.

More info: www.tugoflife.com

IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO FUND US

Email one of our directors: Izabella@lifetalk.co.za , Sally@lifetalk.co.za or Nicoleen@lifetalk.co.za . We'd love to hear from you!

Watch our descriptive Tug-of-Life video on www.tugoflife.com

