

THE CLFC FAMILY REUNION NEWS

THE *CREATING LASTING FAMILY CONNECTIONS*®
QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

Winter Edition

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Leadership is influence.

John C. Maxwell

The more tranquil a man becomes, the greater is his success, his influence, his power for good. Calmness of mind is one of the beautiful jewels of wisdom.

James Allen

CLFC Secrets of Influence versus Control

Influence versus control – a pivotal concept and practice that underpins and empowers all three programs in the NREPP-listed *CLFC Curriculum Series* (*The Original CLFC Program*, *The CLFC Fatherhood Program* and *The CLFC Marriage Enhancement Program*). Simply put, every aspect of *CLFC* is designed with positive, respectful influence in mind.

Agencies and individual facilitators operate with influence when they use an inclusive, respectful approach that validates participants' independence and autonomy. On the other hand, agencies and facilitators who engage in controlling approaches often limit freedom of choice and therefore unintentionally disrespect the very individuals they are trying to positively impact. The following chart briefly contrasts the two approaches:

Influence	Control
Guiding	Forcing
Suggesting	Demanding
Recommending	Compelling
Inviting	Coercing
Offering	Imposing

Research on the *CLFC Curriculum Series* published in multiple peer-reviewed journals is clear: respectful influence is an effective approach to long-term behavioral change.

In this edition of the *CLFC Family Reunion News*, discover the following *CLFC* secrets of influence versus control:

- How the behavioral change theory of *CLFC* (Connect-Immunity) incorporates influence versus control
- How agencies can practice influence versus control to create successful recruitment efforts

- How certified *CLFC* Implementation Trainers can introduce the “influence versus control” concept during the opening session of the *CLFC Program*
- How parents participating in the *CLFC Curriculum Series* can maximize influence with their children

Influence versus Control and Behavioral Change

The *CLFC Curriculum Series* Developer, Ted N. Strader, coined the term “Connect-Immunity” to describe the behavioral change theory behind *CLFC*. Connect-Immunity means the more healthily connected a person is to themselves, other healthy people and a higher purpose, vision or power, the more resistant that individual becomes to negative social influences. Across culture, race, gender and age, human beings appear to increase personal health, resilience and wellbeing from the formation and preservation of healthy connections.

These connections develop through relationship-building activities that involve open-communication, bonding and trust – all experiences that rely profoundly on influence. Conversely, controlling actions, gestures and language seem to often interrupt, diminish and prevent connected relationships. Therefore, operating out of influence is essential to forming the healthy connections in the theory of “connect-immunity”.

Effective Recruitment with Influence versus Control

Recruitment efforts are typically significantly enhanced by applying influence versus control. Recruitment is often customized to each agency and to each recruitment event. Nevertheless, we have found great success applying the following general principles and strategies:

1. *Structure participation in CLFC programming as a “reward” for success in another area, service or program.* For example, when we negotiate recruitment efforts with local community agencies, we often present the opportunity to participate in our *CLFC* programming as a “reward” for success in another service or program offered by the other, partnering agency (i.e., we might say the following to potential participants during a recruitment event: “Congratulations! Because you have demonstrated commitment and success in this program/service, you now have earned the opportunity to participate in The *CLFC Program*.”)
2. *Avoid behaviors or language that might come across to others as controlling or manipulative.* Many individuals resist even the appearance of control, which can reduce the likelihood of recruitment success. Even if people do sign up, they may feel coerced and threatened (by negative outcomes like disapproval or incarceration) and so display resistance during the program.
3. *Respectfully invite participants to consider participation in CLFC and share the benefits participants are likely to receive as validated by research published in peer-reviewed journals:* (i.e. increase 9 separate relationship skills (communication, conflict resolution, interpersonal, intra-personal, emotional awareness, emotional expression, relationship management, relationship commitment and relationship satisfaction) increase knowledge of Sexually Transmitted Diseases, increase spirituality, and reduce prison recidivism)

4. *Display genuine enthusiasm for the CLFC Program.* Sincere passion is often contagious. Most people want to invest their time and energy (participation) with other positive people who delight in what they do. Authentic enthusiasm can foster curiosity, belief and hope in others.

It might also be worth noting here that recruiting with influence compliments the ideas and practices of influence presented throughout the *CLFC Program* (i.e. “I” Messages, *Getting Real*, etc). In this way, recruitment with influence is an integrated approach that follows the spirit and design of the *CLFC Curriculum Series*.

First Day of CLFC Programming: Introducing “Influence versus Control”

In session 1 of each module in each of the three programs in *The CLFC Curriculum Series*, trainers are encouraged to discuss expectations with participants. These expectations include “consider new ideas”, “examine attitudes, perceptions and feelings (look at self)” and “pass if necessary.” Trainers can capitalize on these expectations by briefly elaborating on the concept of influence versus control.

Trainers can approach the idea of influence versus control by saying, “During this program, we invite you to consider new ideas. We don’t expect you to agree with everything we say. We call it the ‘buffet approach’. At each session, we intend to share with you a buffet of ideas, skills and concepts. Just like a buffet of food, please take what you want and leave the rest for others.”

Notice the words “influence” and “control” were not used in the above example. The “buffet approach” analogy can be an effective introduction to the concepts later described and demonstrated in the *CLFC Curriculum Series*.

How Parents Can Maximize Influence with Their Children

Parents participating in any one of the three programs in the *CLFC Curriculum Series* can apply influence (versus control) to significantly increase the effectiveness of their communication, interaction and overall relationship with their children.

Many people have experienced some form of corporal punishment (i.e. methods of managing children that involve physical discipline, verbal threats or even physical and verbal abuse) growing up. It is not uncommon for some parents to have used corporal punishment at some point to attempt to control their own children’s behavior. Research demonstrates that these methods sometimes appear to alter behavior in the short term (i.e., while the parent is observing the child), but often produce predictable long-term negative consequences. The following are some of the possible negative outcomes of prolonged use of corporal punishment:

1. Children often forget the behavioral lesson but remember their fear of the parent. (“I remember I got a beating but can’t remember what for...”)
2. Children may respect the parent’s physical power but lose overall respect for the parent.
3. Children may suffer from low self-esteem, which increases the likelihood of further mistakes and other negative outcomes.
4. Children receiving corporal punishment and verbal abuse often engage in violent behavior and are also victims of violent behavior outside the family.
5. Children often become insensitive to their own emotions while learning to handle the physical and emotional pain involved in the discipline. Low emotional awareness may lead to a variety of other negative outcomes including substance abuse, low academic achievement, inappropriate sexual activity, delinquency, and etc.

Using influence (i.e. guiding, inviting, role modeling) along with accountability mechanisms like *Developing Expectations and Consequences* that rely on natural or reasonable consequences rather than verbal or physical punishment, often leads to increased self-esteem, cooperation, sensitivity and connectedness that create lasting family connections. These long-term emotionally positive bonds create a protective influence (a.k.a. connect-immunity) that lasts a lifetime.

Announcing New Grant Opportunities!

The U.S. Department of Justice has released a number of grants for reentry populations. Our *CLFC Fatherhood Program*, listed on the National Registry of Evidence-based Programs and Practices, has demonstrated powerful results with this population. You or your agency may want to consider applying for this opportunity and utilize our *CLFC Fatherhood Program* with your mentors. Please see the following link for more details: www.ojjdp.gov/grants/solicitations/FY2015/FatherhoodMentoring.pdf.

“The key to successful leadership today is influence, not authority.”

Ken C. Blanchard

Ted N. Strader



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