

Module 7: My World, My Choice

It's important to identify whether you are behaving from an X, Y or Z pattern. It's also imperative that you know where you come from and understand the people around you. Your friends, family, and the other people you know, like teachers, counselors, doctors, and religious leaders, can play integral roles in how you develop as a person.

If you are an X or a Y, it can be extremely helpful to have some positive influences in your life. Always seek to surround yourself with people who demonstrate positive qualities and values and who have the power to offer you opportunities in the future.

If you are a Z, it is equally important to understand those around you, as there can be a huge difference between a Z-positive and a Z-negative influence. It's likely you will face some challenges in your future. Surround yourself with positive support, who will help you get through the difficult times and find your way back to being a Z-positive.

Think back to how we defined the family characteristics of the X, Y and Z patterns. What category do you think your family fits into? As you reflect, consider their ethical and moral behaviors, values, and personal attributes. You may also want to consider your family-members' financial situations and career choices. But remember, there are things that happen to us that we can't control. Even if your family lives in poverty, you should not assume they are X- types.

Whatever your family's type is, recognize that you can't control or force change on the people around you, just as they can't control or force change on you. While you may be disappointed to recognize some of the more negative characteristics in the people you love, understand that you don't have to share that same fate.

X family

A girl is born into an X-negative family. Society's perception is that she will continue the family pattern and be a drain on the system. However, she listens to her school counselor, makes positive connections through school activities, and engages in tutoring and other assistance.

She graduates from high school, then achieves a graduate degree and works as a professional, helping others. Although born into an X-negative family, through work and positive influence she can progress into being a Z-type and achieve more than society would have ever expected.

Y family

A male is born into a Y-positive family. Society's perception is that he may or may not follow his family's pattern, depending on the other influences in his life. Because his family is not a strong influence in his life, his friends become the primary determinant of his behaviors and attitudes. He begins engaging in negative after-school activities and ends up requiring rehab for substance abuse.

This young man lacked strong family values and influence. He was more influenced by the attention he received or didn't receive from friends, teachers, school administrators, and by other factors outside of his family. He could have chosen to surround himself with more positive influences, but because he did not, he never progressed past the Y-negative.

Z family

A Z-type professional may have a teen who feels overlooked and becomes rebellious and out of control. Her parents, while successful, do not put as much effort into her upbringing because they were more focused on their careers. For whatever reason, the professional's daughter found herself negatively influenced and she fell into a Y-negative pattern of behavior.

You've heard of siblings who come from similar backgrounds but take dramatically different paths in life. This is a matter of perception. See scenarios below:

Two Sisters

Consider two sisters who grew up in an abusive environment. One wants to overcome her past and sets out to do so, believing she can. This sister ends up highly educated, happily married, and engaged in a professional career. The other sister views her past as something that is holding her back, something she can't overcome. She engages in relationships with abusive men and raises children in the same situation in which she grew up. The first sister clearly becomes a Z, while the other continues the family tradition of being an X-negative.

Home life, family, and friends can likely play significant roles in a teen's development. In an ideal world, society's views would not influence the direction we all take with our own lives. Unfortunately, we don't live in an ideal world, and society's perspective can and does play a tremendous role in our personal achievement. It is never too late to begin developing a Z mentality and working your way towards a successful life. Success is a much easier journey the earlier you start, especially since society can be unforgiving.

Two Brothers

Consider two brothers who grew up in a home where the parents had a moderate income and were neither negative nor strong influences. One brother enjoys learning and is known for his academic success, garnering praise and recognition from the positive influences around him. He becomes a professor and a successful author.

The second born brother, unfortunately, paled in comparison even as a young child. Because he didn't receive the attention his brother received, he began acting out and getting into fights. Family, school staff, and other influencers rapidly began to expect only trouble from this brother, which in turn, made him feel like he was not worth believing in.

One day, he ended up in a fight that went dramatically wrong, and he took a person's life. The brother that had sought attention is now in prison, wasting years of his life, knowing he is

capable of better but also knowing his criminal record will label him as an X-negative for the rest of his life. Both brothers were influenced strongly by society's perceptions, which helped to determine the course of their lives.

Fame, Fortune, and Failure

Finally, consider the privileged child of a celebrity who is unable to handle the pressure or scrutiny of his Z family and engages in substance abuse.

Or perhaps the professional football player who has the world at his feet but becomes too accustomed to attaining whatever he wants. Consequently, he takes advantage of a girl because he feels entitled to have sex with whomever he chooses, whenever he wants. A Z-negative can become an X-type rapidly if he or she is not guided by strong, positive values.

Those who are poisoning you, no matter how much you love or care for them, *cannot continue to remain in your circle*. Those individuals need to be outside of your space for you to thrive. Continue to care for them and keep them in your life at a minimal level. Meaning, you can continue to love them from a distance. Limit your relationship to small talk and have very few or no interactions with them. It is a difficult process, but it is necessary if you are to move forward in a positive direction.

The unfortunate situation is that sometimes only allowing positive forces in your life means you may long for those you have chosen to love at a distance. This is a normal feeling because you are used to having that person or those people in your life on a daily basis. However, loving someone from a distance may be necessary for your quality of life.

In other words, you will live a more productive and joyful life if you minimize or eliminate serious negative forces and people, even when you love them. You may have times when limiting contact with negative influences makes you lonely. It's vital for you to understand that solitude and even loneliness is preferable to engaging in behaviors and attitudes that hold you back, or could even get you arrested or killed.

As you journey through this training, it will help you to think critically about the choices you make and develop patterns and habits of introspection and personal reflection.