

## Dear Parent or Counselor

The following directions will help your student or child/teen obtain the best results. This program will be effectively for children from four to eighteen. Research has been done with children of all ages. For best results, this program should be used over a 12 week period. Your child should learn to relax, become aware that he/she does have control over mind and body and will learn to deal more effectively with upsetting situations. As a result, your child will obtain a greater sense of self- control, self-confidence and self -esteem and get along better with others. University researchers found that *Old Me, New Me* helps decrease anxiety, aggression and other negative emotions that children and teens frequently experience. These researchers experienced the best results when adhering the following directions:

### Phase I

#### ***Relaxation Exercises:***

For the best results, use the *Relaxation Exercises for Children* before beginning the story tapes. The research using this program was done using this tape initially before the story tapes. This tape is included in Volume I or may be downloaded as a single recording from [www.oldmenewme.com](http://www.oldmenewme.com). Use the "*Relaxation Exercises*" tape at least twice prior to using a story tape and then again 3-4 times during the 12 weeks. Also, use the Slow Relax 3-4 times to reinforce the feelings of relaxation. Find a firm surface on which your child may lie down. For the first time or two, stop the tape and check to see if your child is relaxing each part of his/her body. Do this by lifting an arm or leg and feeling the weight of the relaxed body part. Let your child know how he/she is doing by saying "Yes, that's good", or "Let go even more", etc., until you feel the dead weight of that body part. Encouragement lets children know that their effort is correct. Some children have trouble tensing one set of muscles while relaxing the rest of the body since they have to think "relax" in one part of the body and "tense" in another. For example, when we are writing, we have to have some tension in our fingers to hold the pencil, but we can relax the rest of our body. If the child has great difficulty with this, don't get stuck; go on to the rest of the tape. At the end of the tape, check child's mouth, forehead and shoulders for tension. If tense, ask your child to let go even more.

Children need to know how it feels to be tense as compared to a feeling of relaxation. Today's children often have so many activities in their daily lives that they have never learned the valuable skill of relaxation. Children, who are anxious, fearful or have emotional concerns that are not being dealt with effectively, will often be tense and irritable. Unmet needs can appear as distractibility, hyperactivity and other kinds of behavior problems. Children with these problems are frequently medicated unnecessarily. Behaviors such as these can often be alleviated or improved dramatically with the use of relaxation, improved parent child relations and counseling.

### ***Slow Relax:***

The purpose of this tape is to teach children to relax completely by taking one deep breath and letting it all go. This tape is on Side B of ***Relaxation Exercises***. You can help your child learn to relax by teaching them a way to breathe that helps them let go all the tension. Explain that when they take a breath in, their ribs expand sideways and their stomach moves out as though it were a balloon filling with air. As the breath is let out, the stomach contracts as though it were balloon letting all the air out. Encourage your child to completely let go of the stomach muscles. Practice correct breathing with your child in this way: Sit by your child's side as he or she lies down or sits in a chair. Using an audible tone, say the word "ahhhhhh" in one long tone as the breath is exhaled. Then silently inhale. Do this for about five minutes a day for several days. This exercise is very helpful in teaching children to relax completely.

## **Phase II**

### ***Fantasy Stories:***

At the beginning of each story there is a relaxation time. For best results, use a tape daily at school or bedtime at home for at least 8 to 12 weeks. After all of the stories have been played, let your child choose his favorite story. Don't be concerned if your child goes to sleep during its use. To gain the most from this program, have your child practice relaxation in everyday situations, during test taking, during a stressful or upsetting situation or when it is necessary for the child to be assertive. At first, your child may not recognize the signs of tension. **It is important to help your child recognize when to calm down and when to "let go". You may wish to cue your child by suggesting gently that he or she take a deep breath and calm down.** This is especially true for children who are aggressive, labeled ADHD or who have behavior problems.

### ***Importance Of Positive Talk:***

Positive self-talk is included in every story and is key in helping children to change their self-image. People can change the images they have of themselves on an intellectual level and still be unable to change their feelings about themselves. For example, a child's grades may improve and he/she can see the improvement, yet that child may still possess a great deal of fear and anxiety about schoolwork. Positive self-talk used in a deeply relaxed state leaves a strong impression.

Here are some examples of how positive self-talk can be used. You may wish to develop appropriate ones for your child according to his/her own needs. For children who are easily angered: "When I get angry, I can be respectful of others and not hit anyone or anything. I can talk about how I feel instead." Teach your child how to express feelings appropriately and give permission to do so by using the words, "I feel". Giving children permission to express feelings in this way lessens the need for explosive behavior.

It is important for parents to learn to be relaxed too. Children often experience stress in the presence of a teacher or parent who is irritated, impatient or excited. This in turn can elicit hyperactive, impulsive or negative interactions. By learning to relax and having more patience with your child, you will experience greater family harmony and happier children.

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### **An Important Note to Parents**

The success of the ***Old Me, New Me*** to change behavior will depend on a number of factors. **One is the frequency with which the parents and/or teachers reinforce and give positive feedback on the new behaviors that they see.** Children need frequent positive feedback and acknowledgement of their efforts to make the necessary changes in their behavior. This may need to occur several times a day in the beginning and gradually diminish to several times a week. For example, when a child remembers to take a deep breath, calm down and express feelings rather than getting angry and exploding, this should be applauded. Remarks like: "I noticed that you are really trying to calm down and talk problems out with your brother rather than fight. I am proud of you!" During times of stress, a gentle reminder done in a very matter-of-fact tone of voice is very important. "Take a deep breath and relax" said before the problem escalates, rather than after it has already done so, will reinforce the positive changes you wish to see. During this time, parents need to remain as calm as possible in order to model the behavior they wish to see from their child.

**Another factor that inhibits change is the parents' own unresolved anger from their pasts.** Parents often direct that anger consciously or unconsciously to the vulnerable child. That anger is absorbed by the child and affects everything that he/she does. Children may feel responsible and guilty for some reason not understood. They will usually carry "left over" worrisome or negative feelings from arguments at home to the outside world from previous interactions. These children can be targeted as being unable to concentrate and in need of medication when in fact medication would not be appropriate. Helping your child regain his/her emotional balance before leaving for school can be very important for your child's mental health if an argument or upset has occurred. If parents will think back over their own childhood, they will realize the truth in these statements.

It is important therefore that parents work at creating a positive atmosphere in the home. Discipline and limit setting should be done in a positive rather than a negative manner. Parents will find that encouraging rather than discouraging words are in fact good medicine. Improved parent child relations can be accomplished by using the tapes together and talking about the concepts in the stories, as well as when to use them, listening to and spending fun times with your child, and/or attending parenting classes.

For those children who have had trauma in their lives, one or both parent have left due to divorce, death or neglect, know that these children can sometimes be very difficult and will test those adults in their lives to see if they too will leave even with their worst behavior. Post traumatic stress has left its mark, so set limits, give lots of love in spite of the misbehaviors, and with patience, these children can be rehabilitated and will grow up strong, resilient, and self confident.

Parenting classes can be very effective in teaching the valuable skills necessary to deal with these difficult and not so difficult children. Parents must find ways to strengthen their relationship and connection with their child in order to alleviate behavior problems and undue heartache for everyone.

Divorce issues are especially difficult for children and can create a lot of anxiety for them. Extra efforts to protect children during this time from being "caught in the middle" will make that transition easier and pay huge dividends for children in the future. Look for ***Children in the Middle*** divorce parenting classes to help alleviate these problems. See [www.oldmenew.com](http://www.oldmenew.com) regarding these classes. When parents do their part, and seek to alleviate their children's pain as well as their own, they will find that children will be happier, do their best in school and be more relaxed in general.

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## Good Medicine for Children

You're Great!  
I'm so proud of you!  
I can see you're really trying hard!  
You've got what it takes!  
How thoughtful!  
You are so smart!  
You're right!  
You brighten my day!  
You're terrific!

Don't forget to give lots of love. It makes all children feel wanted. And parents, don't forget to say you are sorry when you know you have made a mistake. That helps to reconnect with your children, develop a strong bond, and models positive behavior for them.

### Volume I

#### Tape I Side A: **Relaxation Exercises**

Helps children identify tension in their bodies by experiencing the difference between tension and relaxation.

#### Tape I Side B: **Slow Relax**

Teaches children how to relax in everyday situations.

#### Tape 2 Side A: **Trip to the Beach**

Teaches children that they have control over both their bodies and their mental attitudes.

#### Tape 2 Side B: **Walk in the Woods**

Stresses to children the importance of cooperation in their relationships with others.

#### Tape 3 Side A: **Old Me, New Me**

Emphasizes the fact that children can change and with the use of relaxation techniques, they can change for the better.

#### Tape 3 Side B: **Trip to the Mountains**

Children learn the importance of self-confidence in their everyday lives.

### Volume II

#### Tape 4 Side A: **Trip to a Star**

Children can be as peaceful inside as they choose and can learn to think clearly.

#### Tape 4 Side B: **Yes I Can**

Helps children develop patience with themselves and teaches that one does not have to be perfect.

#### Tape 5 Side A: **Secret Place**

Takes a child to special place to develop inner wisdom and intuition.

#### Tape 5 Side B: **Magic Mountain**

Teaches that criticism does not have to result in negative feelings

#### Tape 6 Side A: **Robin and the Magic Kingdom**

Teaches how to deal with conflicts in ways other than fighting or hurting others with words.

#### Tape 6 Side B: **Robin Returns**

Changing the way we think changes the way we act and feel.

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**Therapists Please Note:** For parents wishing to have their own set of this material, please refer them to [oldmenewme.com](http://oldmenewme.com) where this program can be downloaded. Therapists can also order in quantity and receive discount. For information, contact [schoolhousepublishing@QB36@aol.com](mailto:schoolhousepublishing@QB36@aol.com)

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The following positive self-talk statements can be put on individual posters in a child's room to remind him of positive statements that can be used daily.

### **My World Can be A Better Place**

1. Facing problems takes courage. I have courage because I believe in myself.
  2. When I am upset, I can stop, take a deep breath and calm down.
  3. Calming down helps me to think before I act so that I can stay in control.
  4. Calming down and thinking positive thoughts will help me make good choices.
  5. I can learn from my mistakes, and forgive myself.
  6. I can learn something new if I am patient with myself and take small steps.
  7. I am responsible for my own actions.
  8. I can express myself without hurting others with my words.
  9. I have a special purpose and my talents can make the world a better place.
  10. I can choose how I want to act so I can be my best self.
  11. I can be honest with my words and actions and do what I know is right.
  12. I like being successful and I am happy when others are successful too.
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