



UK Extension's
**Universe of
Possibilities™**

SKILLS FOR CREATING HAPPINESS AND BLESSING OTHERS

Facilitator's Guide

Simple, powerful, universally applicable, a breath of fresh air, life-transforming—men and women across the United States and beyond are using words like these to describe **UK Extension's Universe of Possibilities™**. Designed for both the interested public and professional educators, this Web-based, university-created human development curriculum is yours to use free-of-charge: You may employ or reproduce all of its resources for educational or nonprofit purposes.

UK Extension's Universe of Possibilities: Skills for Creating Happiness and Blessing Others is an instructional series containing 10 modules. Each module is built around an 8-page camera-ready publication accompanied by a Macromedia Flash® movie, a PowerPoint® presentation, a Teaching Outline, and other learning tools. The publications are also available online in a 4-page version.



THE NEED, THE RESPONSE

A few introductory points will help users of this program better understand how and why **UK Extension's Universe of Possibilities** was created:

◆ Because research tells us that the spiritual dimension of life, in its broad sense, is vitally important to the human experience, a thread of diversity-sensitive spirituality has been woven throughout the program as an underlying theme. In doing so, every effort has been made to honor the spiritual orientations

of all people, including those who do not subscribe to theistic beliefs.

◆ Every individual is part of a larger system so that what we each think, say, and do influences all the rest of us and the natural world in which we live. When we understand our interconnectedness, we realize that, in a very real sense, what we do to others we also do to ourselves. Once our world family begins to truly comprehend this principle, it will usher in untold blessings.

- ◆ Consider the troubled state of our nation and world. We are shaken by fears and threats; and we spend enormous amounts of time, money, and human energy to clean up blunders we as a nation and international community have largely created through our selfishness, greed, poor decisions, and lack of vision—major problems such as grossly unequal distribution of resources, poor health caused by lifestyle choices, badly handled international conflicts, environmental disasters, and a dangerously high U.S. national debt to name just a few.
- ◆ In trying to cope with such massive challenges, we typically fail to get at the root of the problem. We fail to understand that all of these difficulties are intimately connected, frequently sharing common causes and solutions.
- ◆ The challenges we face as individuals and as a world are complex and must be addressed on multiple levels. However, in the complexity of modern life, we often overlook the simple fact that there are certain core skills that can be beneficially applied across the board both to our challenges and our opportunities.
- ◆ One part of the solution to our problems is the application of universal skills of happiness—powerful research-based skills such as those taught in *UK Extension's Universe of Possibilities*. Examples from this series include holding a wise and clear vision, intelligent decision making, self-discipline, creativity, following the wisdom of our hearts, relating to others in healthy ways, choosing peace and love instead of conflict and fear, being grateful, and blessing others.
- ◆ Such universal principles of well-being can be beneficially applied in every sphere of life, regardless of one's age, circumstances, or background. Users of the program, *UK Extension's Universe of Possibilities*, can apply the skills it teaches to become better citizens, friends, spouses, parents, employees—better at just about anything.
- ◆ As an individual grows in a truly loving and balanced way, this growth benefits all those around him or her. The universal skills of happiness taught in this program work equally well, and with far greater benefits, when applied collectively in families, organizations, communities, societies, and nations.

- ◆ You may not agree with every idea in *UK Extension's Universe of Possibilities*, and you might find new and creative ways to present or develop the material; that's wonderful. You are encouraged to enrich the material with your own viewpoints, improvements, creativity, and resources.
- ◆ The material in this curriculum is not meant to be all-inclusive or to provide all the answers. It's meant to teach and stimulate, to raise productive questions, and to be a springboard for constructive criticism, fresh thinking, and new possibilities.

“There’s no use in trying,” said Alice. “One can’t believe impossible things.” “I daresay you haven’t had much practice,” said the Queen. “When I was your age, I always did it for half-an-hour a day. Why, sometimes I believed as many as six impossible things before breakfast.”

Lewis Carroll

OVERVIEW OF CURRICULUM

UK Extension's Universe of Possibilities offers a wonderful array of 10 modules. While each learning module stands by itself, the units can also be used in any combination or as a complete series.

- ♥ **Your Vision Map** (Creating a tangible picture of what you want to accomplish, with key steps for getting there)
- ♥ **Making the Growth Choice** (Learning to make choices that bless others and simultaneously increase your vitality, growth, and happiness)
- ♥ **The Way of Peace** (Weaving peace abundantly into our personal lives and into the fabric of society)
- ♥ **Heart Intelligence** (Employing our intuitive guidance to solve problems, spark creativity, and promote the well-being of all)
- ♥ **The Freedom of Self-Discipline** (Acquiring self-management skills that foster success and open doors to confidence, joy, and unimagined opportunities)

- ♥ **Embracing This Present Moment** (Mastering the vital skills of creatively accepting reality and living fully in the wonder of the present moment)
- ♥ **Accepting and Loving Your Body** (Cherishing and taking good care of one's physical body while sensitively listening to its signals of comfort and discomfort)
- ♥ **Healthy Relationships** (Exploring key guidelines for nourishing vital relationships and thriving societies)
- ♥ **Unleashing Your Creativity** (Applying the creative spirit that lives in each of us and that longs to express itself in unique and joyous ways)
- ♥ **Gifts of Gratitude and Blessing** (Discovering the vast untapped potential for personal satisfaction and societal renewal available through the skillful application of gratitude and blessing)

MANY WAYS TO USE THE POSSIBILITIES CURRICULUM

Opportunities abound for using the whole curriculum or any of its selected parts. The following small sample of suggestions might help to trigger your own imagination in finding possible ways to use this program and its many resources:

- ✓ Use the ten 8-page publications as a mail-out correspondence course.
- ✓ Get together weekly with a few like-minded friends and discuss the content and application of the ten modules, focusing on one module each week.
- ✓ Run a series of group educational programs through a local Cooperative Extension Office, library, or community center.
- ✓ Offer the total curriculum as an online community education course.
- ✓ Draw from the 30 long media articles to run a special series in a local newspaper.
- ✓ Employ the 45 short media articles as newsletter inserts or radio spots.
- ✓ Run copies of the publications and make them available in display racks or, for example, in health clubs, wellness centers, and waiting rooms.
- ✓ Include various portions of the curriculum in high school and college classes.

WEBSITE RESOURCES

Take time to acquaint yourself with the entire website and its many components and tools. The PowerPoint presentations are excellent and you can download them free from the website. For technical reasons, the Macromedia Flash presentations cannot be downloaded. However, they are available on CD along with the core of our website. These CDs are modestly priced, and purchase information is available on the *UK Extension's Universe of Possibilities* homepage.

If you are teaching one or more of the modules or facilitating a group, the single-page Teaching Outlines will come in handy. Under the "Additional Resources" portion of the Possibilities website, you'll find other beneficial tools such as a half-page action plan form titled "A New Possibility," Group Activities, Ground Rules for Learning Sessions, Drawing Out the Wisdom and Experience of Participants, and Today's Inspirations.

*How wonderful it is that nobody
need wait a single moment before
starting to improve the world.*

Anne Frank

Rather than use the PowerPoint presentations, some facilitators might prefer to work with the overhead transparency masters provided under the "PowerPoint Presentations" section of the website. Occasionally, a presenter might choose not to use any audiovisual aids and instead print out the transparency masters and use those sheets as personal notes as he or she presents.

The "Quotations Page" section of the website offers hundreds of superb quotes divided by subject. Well-selected quotations such as these can act as powerful seed thoughts. There are many ways you might use them, such as printing quotations pertinent to your session on cards and inviting participants to discuss their meaning and application. Or you can put quotation cards (or slips of paper with quotes typed on them) into a box and let participants draw quotes. Then each person can be given the option of discussing how the quote they drew "by chance" might speak to a particular need or area in their lives.

PLAN AHEAD AND HAVE FUN!

It goes without saying that, to conduct a top-notch learning session, you need to plan ahead and be well-prepared. Create a room setup that you like. Know the equipment you will use and test it ahead of time. Have all handouts and other resources organized and ready to go.

Know your material and present it in a way that feels comfortable to you. Teach in such a way that you draw out and actively involve your group members. At your discretion, modify or add to the content of a given module. Free feel to use your creativity to the max! And, by all means, enjoy yourself and help participants do the same. Have fun!

USING FLASH PRESENTATIONS WITH GROUPS

As mentioned above, the Macromedia Flash presentations and the core of the website are available on a modestly priced CD. Purchase information is on the *UK Extension's Universe of Possibilities* homepage.

In order to show the Flash movies to a medium-size or large group, you will need the Possibilities CD, a good notebook computer, a quality LCD projector, and a suitable projection screen or light-colored blank wall. Usually the best way to amplify the sound is with a set of desktop computer speakers. If the speakers have pretty good volume, that might suffice for moderate-size groups. For larger groups, placing a microphone close to the external computer speakers will amplify the volume nicely for the entire room.

Life is not easy for any of us. But what of it? We must have perseverance and, above all, confidence in ourselves. We must believe that we are gifted for something and that this thing must be attained.

Marie Curie

For learning sessions with groups, we recommend using the PowerPoint presentation as you present the content of each module. Toward the very end of your

session, we suggest leaving a relaxed period of time to show the brief Flash presentation for that particular module. Ask participants to relax, take a couple of deep breaths, and open their hearts and minds. Then show the Flash movie. It's a great way summarize the content of each module and leave the group inspired, soothed, and motivated.

ACTION PLANS—A VITALLY IMPORTANT LEARNING TOOL

As an educator or facilitator, an important part of your role is to help participants achieve small, positive, personally meaningful behavioral changes in their daily lives. In the *UK Extension's Universe of Possibilities* curriculum, the action plans are called "A New Possibility." Half-page forms for "A New Possibility" are available on the website under "Additional Resources." Following are a number of thoughts and suggestions related to action plans that we hope you will find helpful:

- ◆ Each participant should choose an action plan that is truly important to him or her. This is essential!
- ◆ Guide the members of your group in choosing a reasonably small commitment for their action plans. Biting off too much at one time can easily set a person up for frustration or failure. What most of us need are success experiences, and many of them. Small, positive steps are usually the best way to go.
- ◆ Generally speaking, action plans should be specific and measurable. An action plan that says, "I will try to do a better job at managing stress" is too vague and too hard to measure. A better plan might say, "During this next week, I will pray and meditate for ten minutes before I start my day." With a specific action plan, the person knows exactly what she plans to do. Having a definite game plan will help her follow through, and it will be much easier to measure the degree of success.
- ◆ If you will be using the *UK Extension's Universe of Possibilities* curriculum to conduct several learning sessions, ask participants to bring today's action plan back with them the next time so they can report on their success. At the beginning of each session, allow ample time for discussion of the previous session's action plans. The action plans will be one of the more important parts of your group's learning experience.

◆ When participants report on their progress with the action plans, be positive and encouraging in your responses. *Example*: “You may not have followed through the way you wanted, but you *did* make an action plan and you *did* try. That’s a great start!”

The greater danger is not that our hopes are too high and we fail to reach them, it's that they are too low and we do.

Michelangelo

◆ Emphasize that it takes courage to make out a personal action plan. As long as the individual has sincerely tried to follow through—even though he or she only had good intentions—it’s a positive step in the right direction. The person didn’t fail; he or she went through a learning adventure that is a stepping-stone toward success.

◆ After individual participants have completed their action plans, ask them to team up with a partner. Invite the partners to exchange phone numbers or addresses and, after a day or two, to give each other a call or note of encouragement. They might also want to sign each other’s action plans as a reminder of the commitment they have made to themselves and to each other.

*Care more than others think wise.
Risk more than others think safe.
Dream more than others think practical.
Expect more than others think possible.*

Howard Schultz

◆ Another approach is to invite participants to work in teams of three, each helping the others decide on and create their action plans for the week.

◆ You might suggest that group members share their action plans with a friend or family member they respect and can trust. This type of sharing heightens the probability of a successful follow-through.

◆ After the action plans are completed, and just before you conclude your learning session, invite those present to close their eyes, take several breaths, and relax. Then ask them to imagine they are successfully carrying out their action plans just the way they want to. Lead them in visualizing the positive results and in experiencing how good it feels. Without rushing, you might want to guide them in going over these images two or even three times. Explain that visualization can be a very effective way of learning. Many top-notch athletes, for example, use visualization as an essential technique for improving their skills.

◆ The action plans suggested toward the end of the publications are designed to assist participants in making small, positive changes that can be accomplished in one week or less. Although the general goal is to keep the action plans very manageable, with a high rate of follow-through and success, some individuals might prefer to choose action plans that involve making more major changes in their lives. This, of course, can also be an effective strategy for the right people at the right time in their lives.

AN EASY-TO-USE EVALUTION TOOL

It’s often a good idea to follow up with participants to find out if they put into positive action the information and skills they learned. To assist you with this task, you will find a simple and effective evaluation tool and instructions for using it under “Additional Resources” on the *UK Extension's Universe of Possibilities* website.



10 Educational Modules

UK Extension's Universe of Possibilities™: Skills for Creating Happiness and Blessing Others is an educational series containing 10 modules. Each module is accompanied by a Macromedia Flash® movie, a PowerPoint® presentation, and other teaching tools. All these resources, along with a Facilitator's Guide, are available free-of-charge in camera-ready format at the following website: www.ca.uky.edu/fcs/possibilities.

1. **Your Vision Map**
2. **Making the Growth Choice**
3. **The Way of Peace**
4. **Heart Intelligence**
5. **The Freedom of Self-Discipline**



6. **Embracing This Present Moment**
7. **Accepting and Loving Your Body**
8. **Healthy Relationships**
9. **Unleashing Your Creativity**
10. **Gifts of Gratitude and Blessing**



LOVE
MADE
VISIBLE

*Together,
let us envision and build
a world where all people enjoy
optimal well-being. Let us strive
to awaken fresh thinking, new
enthusiasm, and abundant love.
Let us create a world of
unimagined possibilities.
It can be done!*

*Prepared by Sam Quick, Ph.D., Extension Specialist in Human Development and Family Relations,
and Alex Lesueur, Jr., M.S.L.S., Staff Support Associate.*

Copyright © 2004 for materials developed by the University of Kentucky Cooperative Extension Service. These publications may be reproduced in portions or their entirety for educational or nonprofit purposes only. Permitted users shall give credit to the author(s) and include this copyright notice. Educational programs of the Kentucky Cooperative Extension Service serve all people regardless of race, color, age, sex, religion, disability, or national origin.