



## Let's Inspire Young People to Reach Their Full Potential.

### I appreciate your participation in my presentation!

In the following pages, you'll find the PowerPoint slides you requested.

If your community and organization need to go beyond collaboration to true consensus, let's connect. Together, we can set a **compelling community rally point** that everyone can believe in! [Find out more](#) and let's connect for a no-commitment chat about what you'd love to achieve in your community and organization.



### EMPOWER K-16 LEARNERS WITH THE SKILL TREE!

All students need vital human skills like adaptability, communication, coping, self-management, and more. The **Skill Tree** is a turnkey solution to introduce students of all ages to 21 professional skills they need for school, work and life. The motive? Their own powerful, personal competitive advantage.



[Explore the Skill Tree now](#)

Scan this QR code ►

*Sign up to get three sample Skill Tree lessons from each of our K-6, 7-12, and 13-16 curriculum tracks!*



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I appreciate and applaud your commitment to the next generation, and I hope we can stay in touch. Enjoy the PowerPoint slides!

**MARK C. PERNA**

SPEAKER | AUTHOR | CEO

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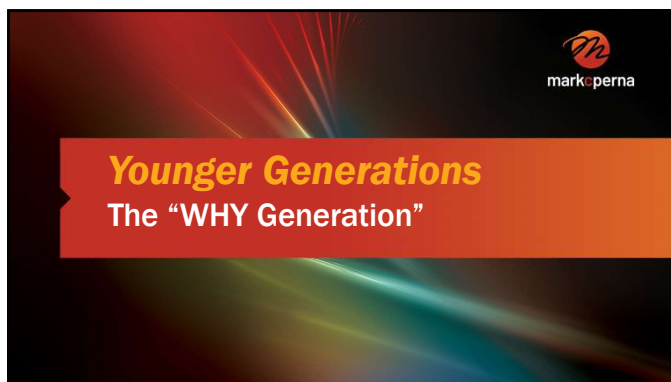
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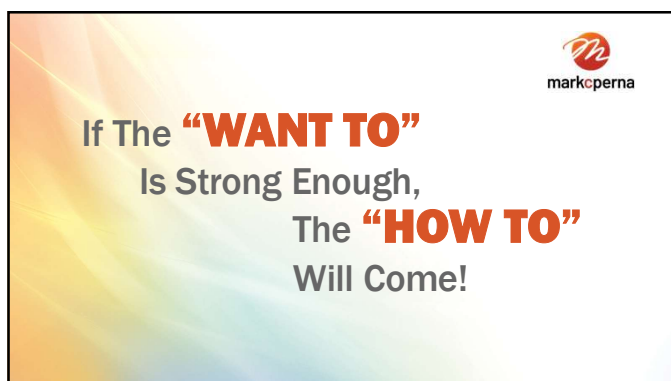
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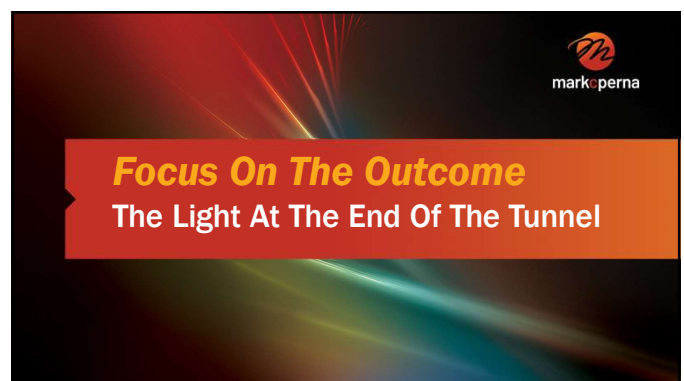
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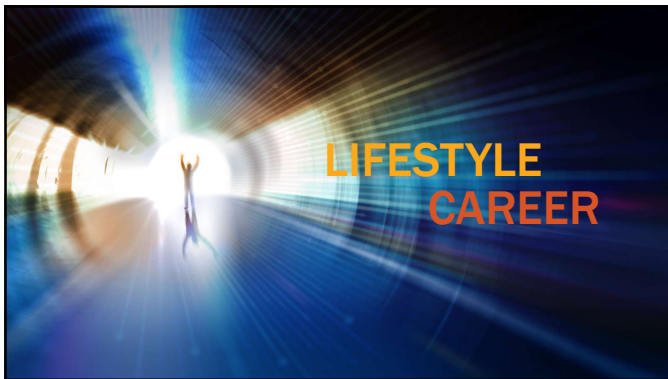
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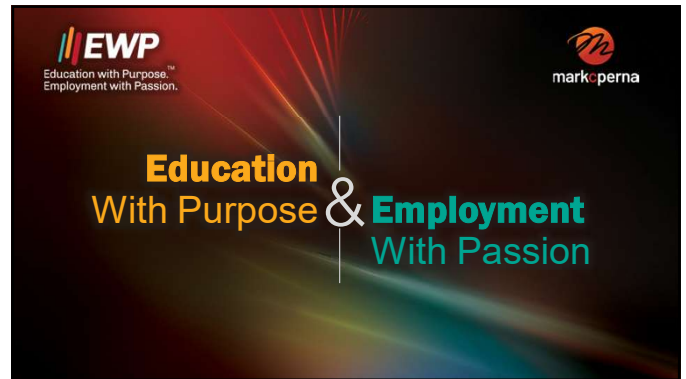
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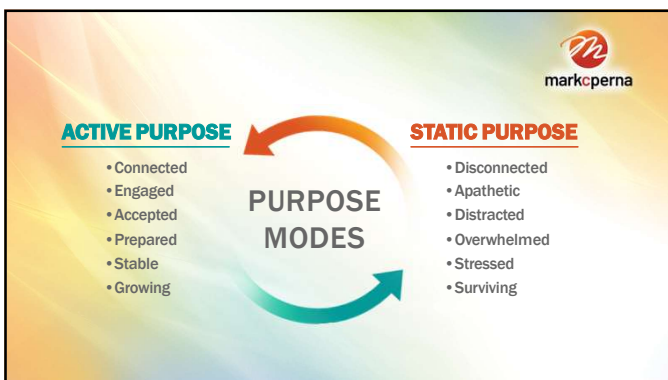
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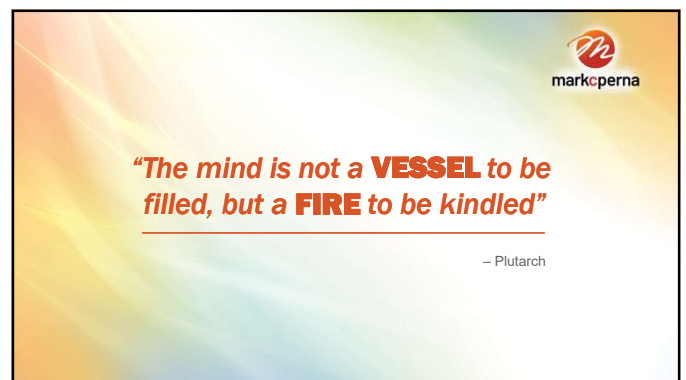
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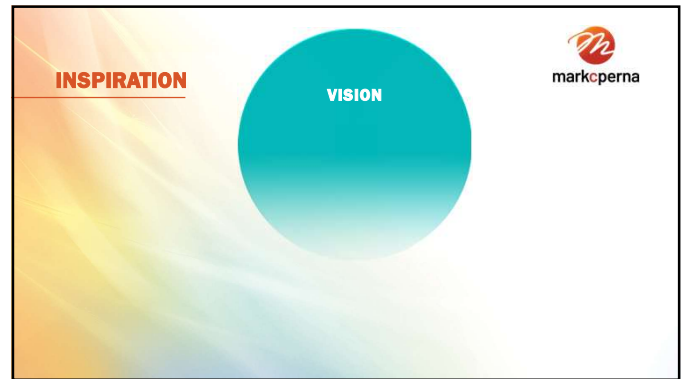
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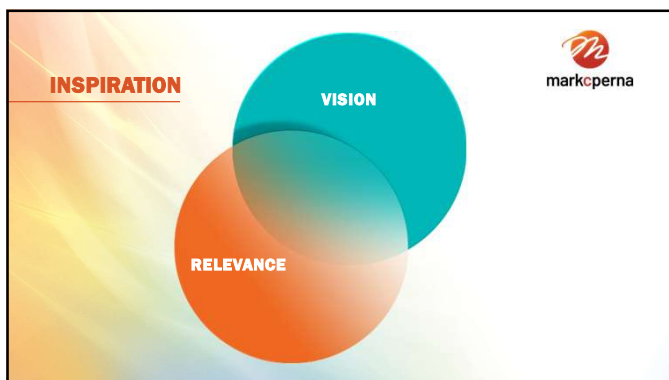
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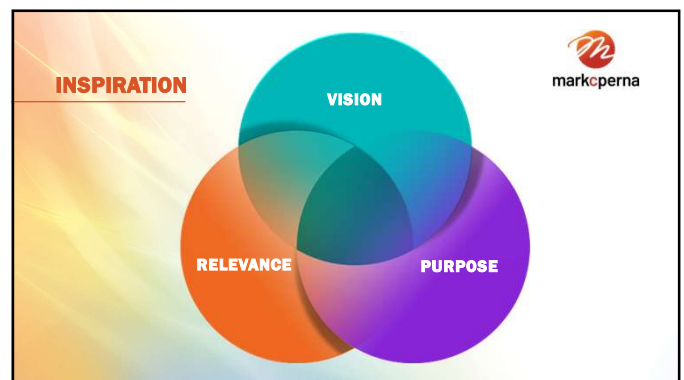
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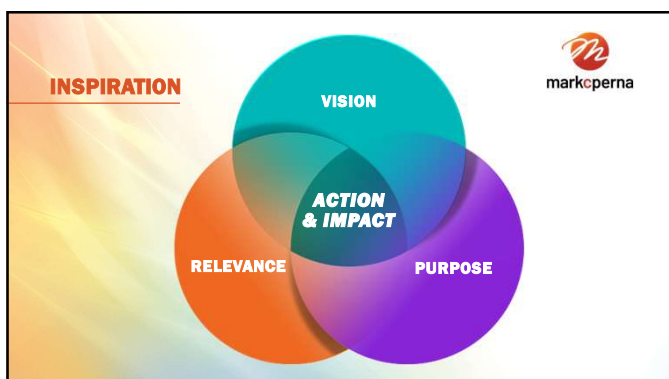
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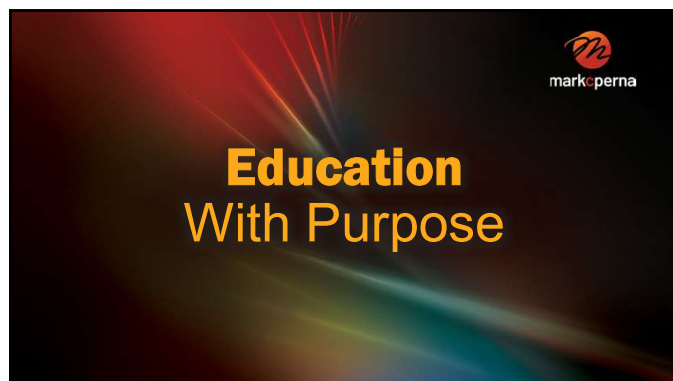


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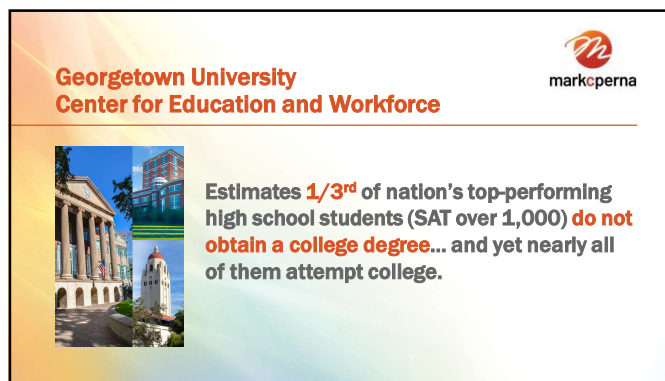


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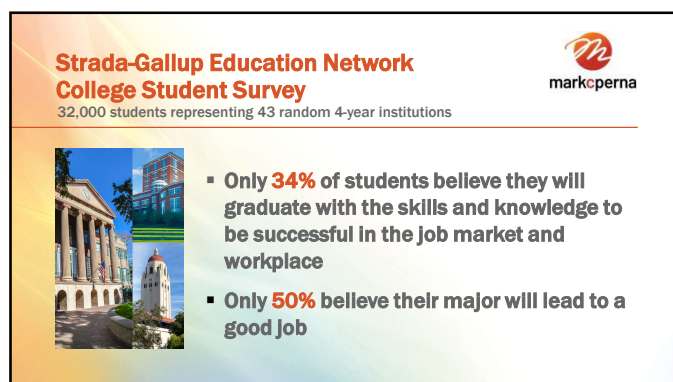
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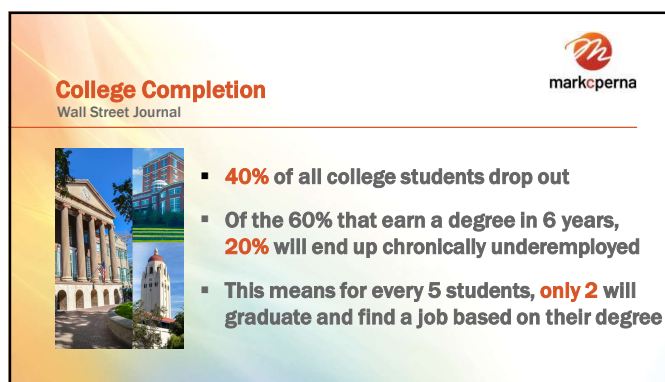
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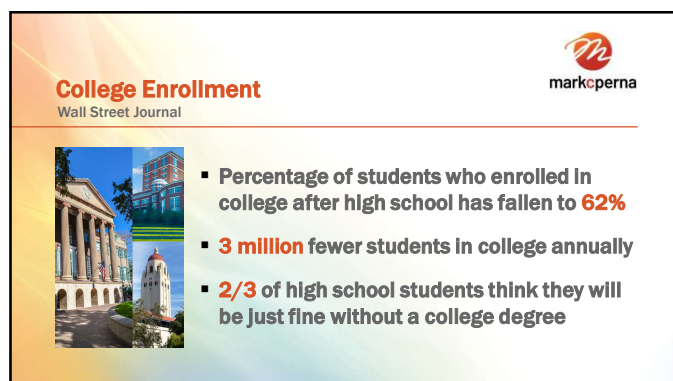
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### Etiquette Gap Among Recent College Graduates

Intelligent.com, Survey of Managers, Directors, and Executives Involved in Hiring

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**At the Interview:**

- **53%** Struggled with Good Eye Contact
- **50%** Asked for Unreasonable Compensation
- **47%** Dressed Inappropriately
- **27%** Used Inappropriate Language
- **21%** Refused to Turn On Camera During Virtual Interview
- **19%** Brought a Parent to the Interview

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### Recent College Graduates Workforce Integration

Intelligent.com, Nationwide Business Leaders Involved in Hiring

markperna

**Businesses Who Recently Hired College Graduates:**

- **75%** Some Or All Were Unsatisfactory
- **60%** Fired A College Graduate They Hired This Year
- **90%** Say College Graduates Need Etiquette Training
- **1 In 7** May Refrain From Hiring College Graduates
- **Overall** "Hiring managers say recent college graduates are unprepared for the workforce, can't handle the workload, and are unprofessional"

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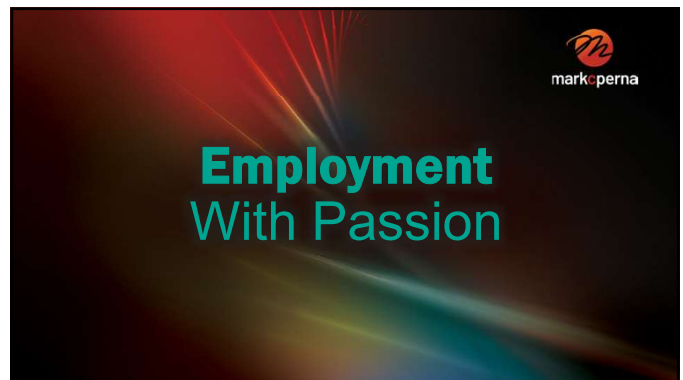
### Recent College Graduates Did College Fail Me?

Hult International Business School, National Survey of Employees

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- **77%** "I learned more in 6 months at my job than in my entire 4-year education"
- **85%** "I wish my college had better prepared me for the workplace"
- **87%** "I received better job training from my employer than I did from my undergraduate education"
- **94%** "I have regrets about my degree"

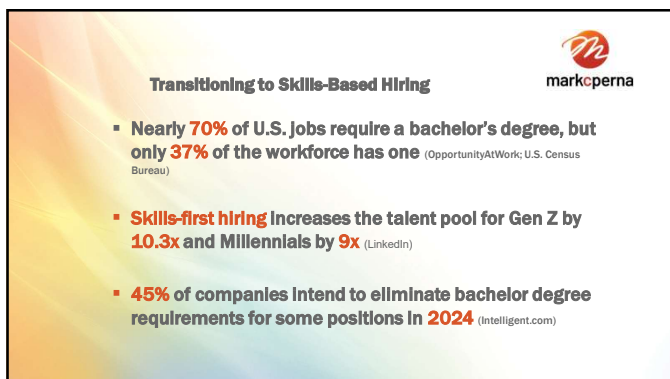
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## Employment With Passion

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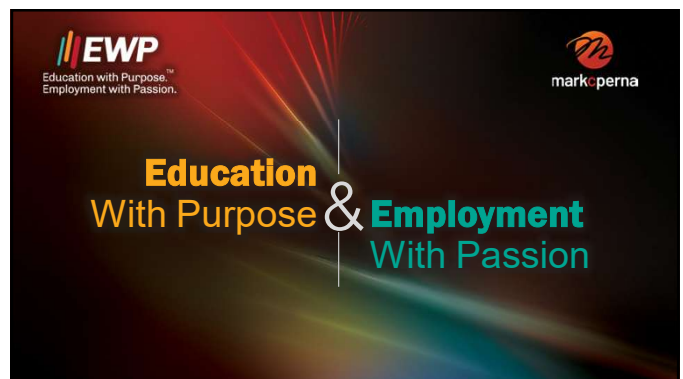


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### Transitioning to Skills-Based Hiring

- Nearly **70%** of U.S. jobs require a bachelor's degree, but only **37%** of the workforce has one (OpportunityAtWork; U.S. Census Bureau)
- **Skills-first hiring** increases the talent pool for Gen Z by **10.3x** and Millennials by **9x** (LinkedIn)
- **45%** of companies intend to eliminate bachelor degree requirements for some positions in **2024** (Intelligent.com)

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**EWP**  
Education with Purpose.™  
Employment with Passion.

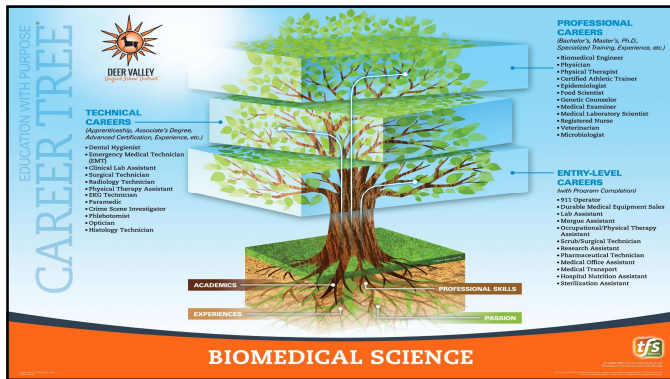
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## Education With Purpose & Employment With Passion

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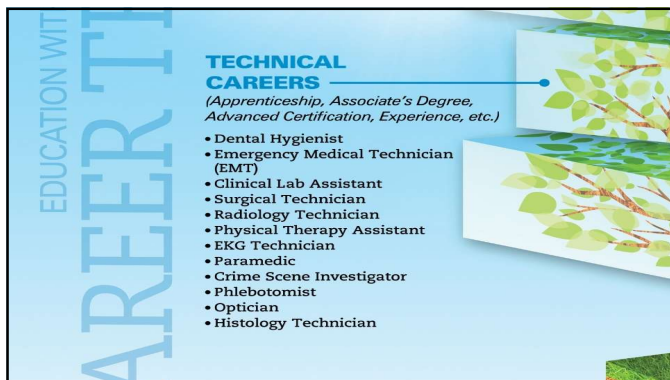
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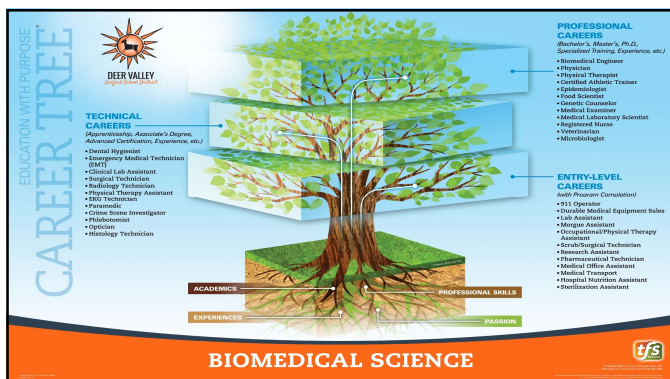
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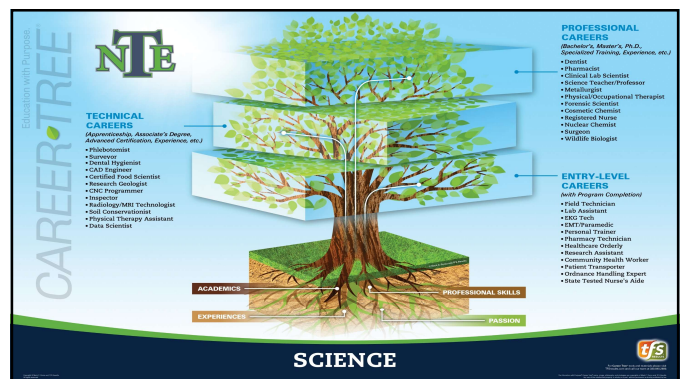
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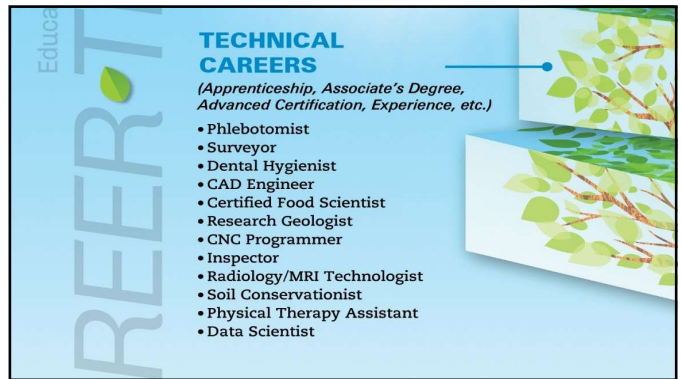


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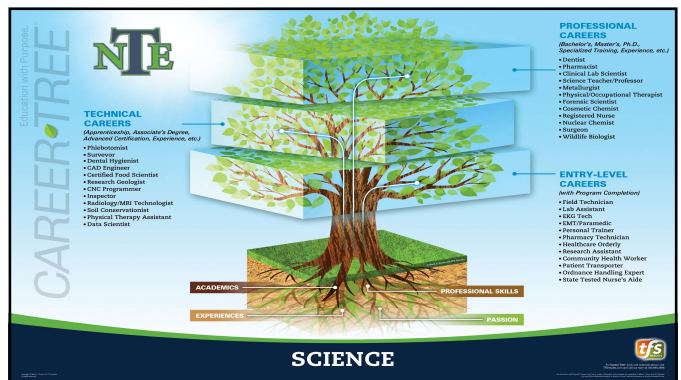
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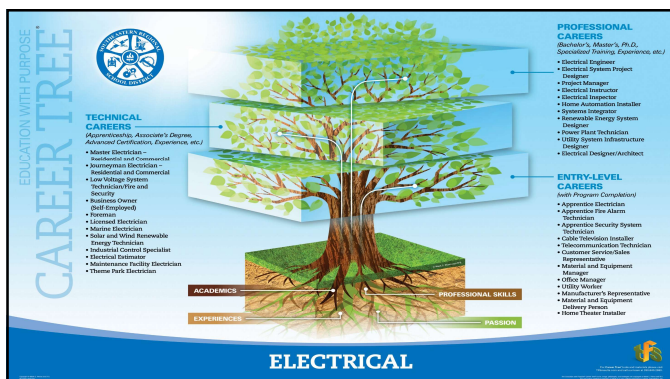
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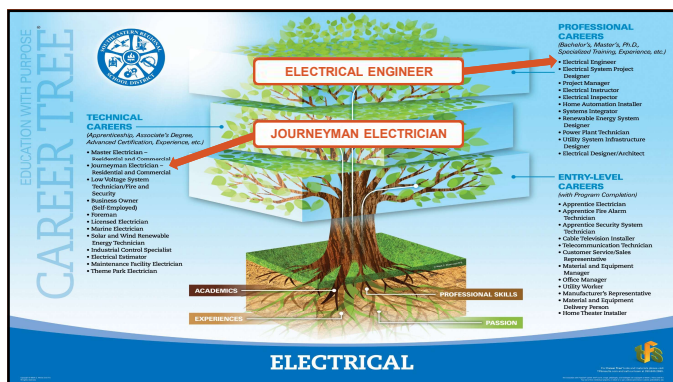
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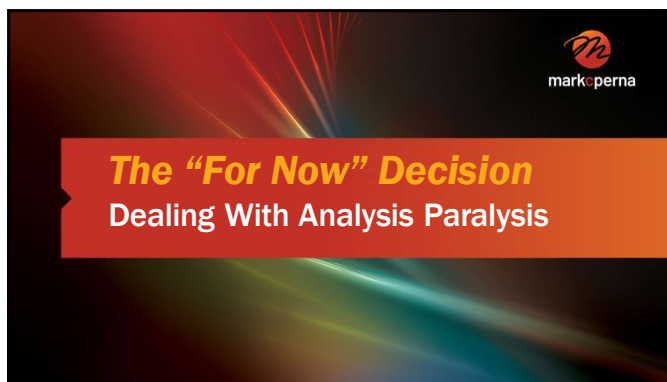
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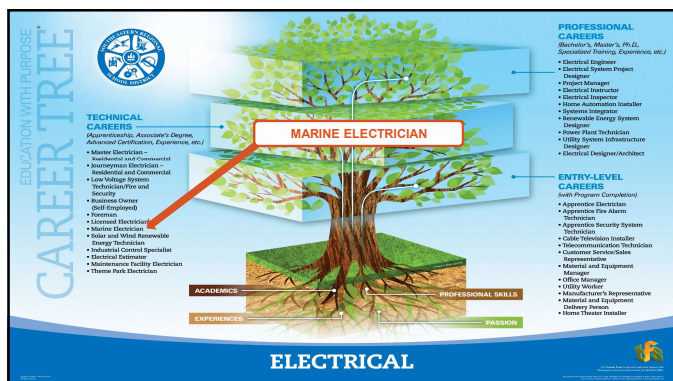
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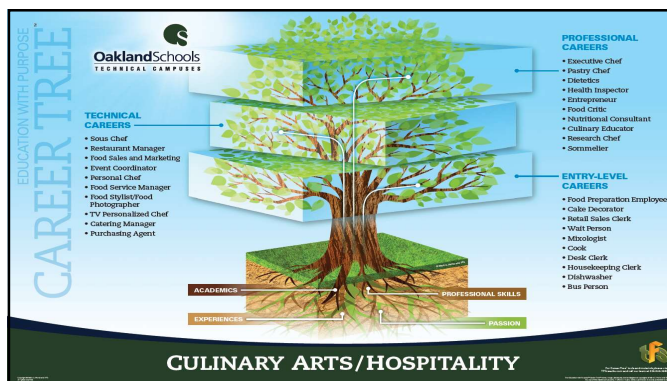
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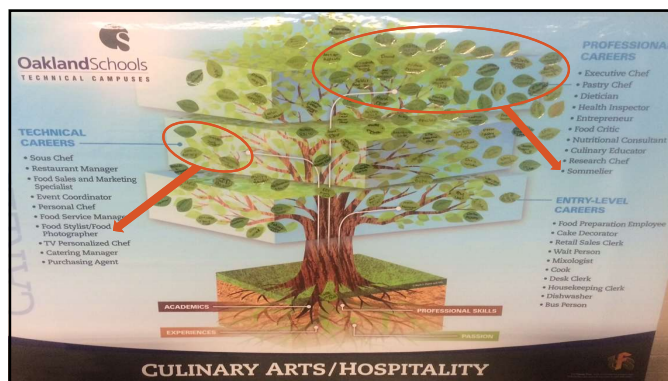


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**Speaker, Author, and CEO**

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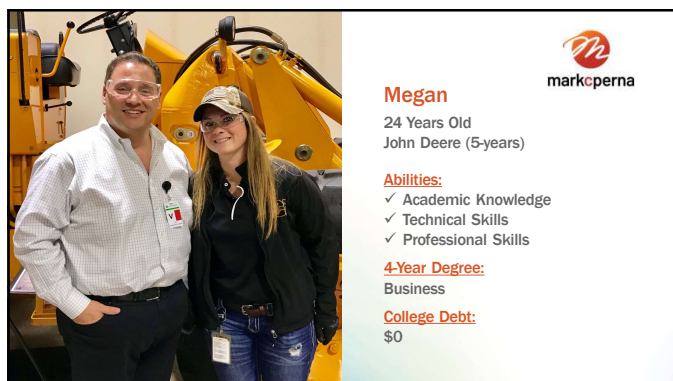
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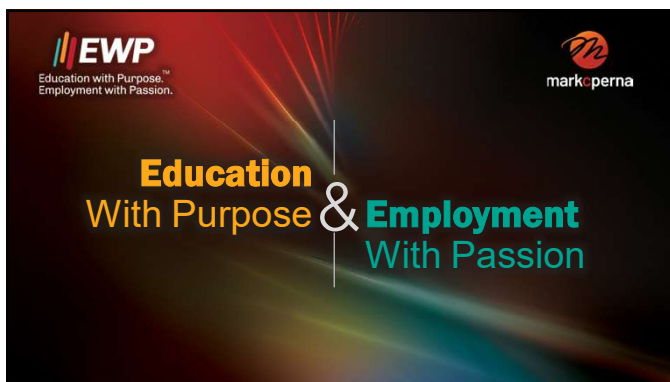
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The slide has a dark blue background with a large white "X" shape. The title "COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE TRACK™" is in large white letters. Below the title, a list of six slices is shown in orange text:

- Slice 1: "Why We All Need a Personal Competitive Advantage (Part 1)"
- Slice 2: "Why We All Need a Personal Competitive Advantage (Part 2)"
- Slice 3: "Leveraging The Human Connection"
- Slice 4: "Building Your Dream"
- Slice 5: "The Power of Failure"
- Slice 6: "Be Comfortable Being Uncomfortable"

The Mark C. Perna logo is in the top left.

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The slide has a dark blue background with a large white "X" shape. The title "COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE TRACK™" is in large white letters. Below the title, a list of resources is shown in orange text:

- Facilitator Reflection
- Discussion Starters
- Supersize Suggestions (Activities)
- Big Picture View

A photo of a classroom is on the left. The URL "MarkCPerna.com/cat" is at the bottom in orange. The Mark C. Perna logo is in the top left.

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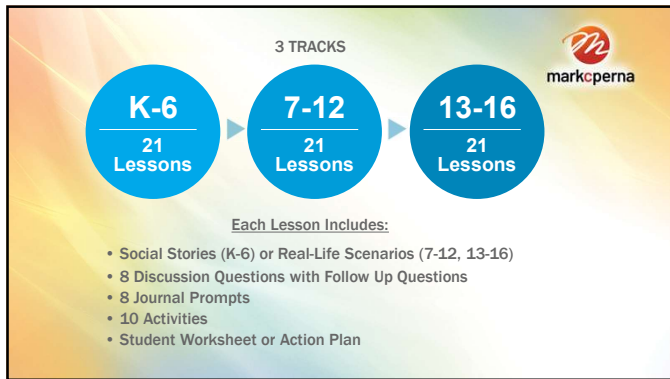
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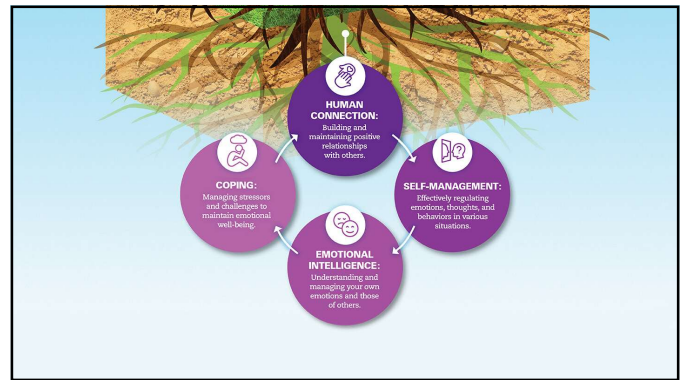
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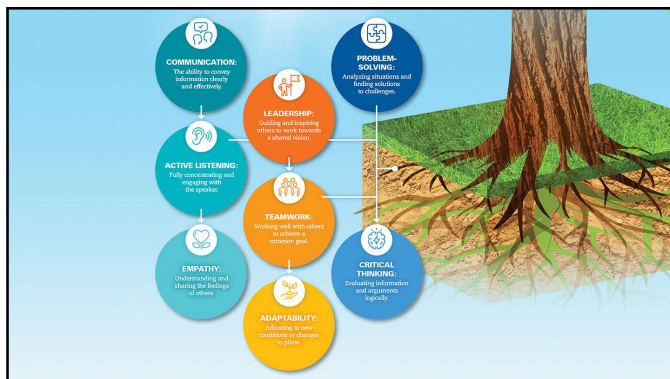
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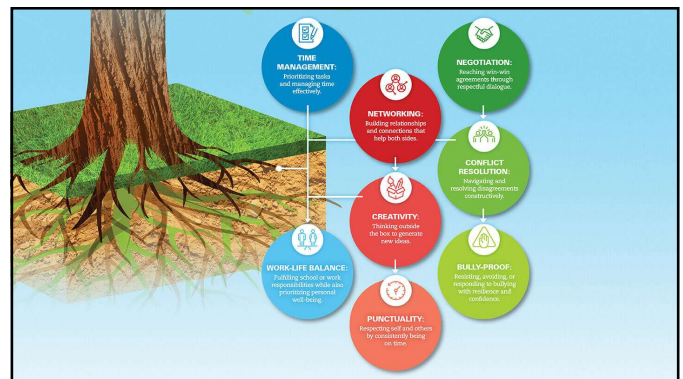
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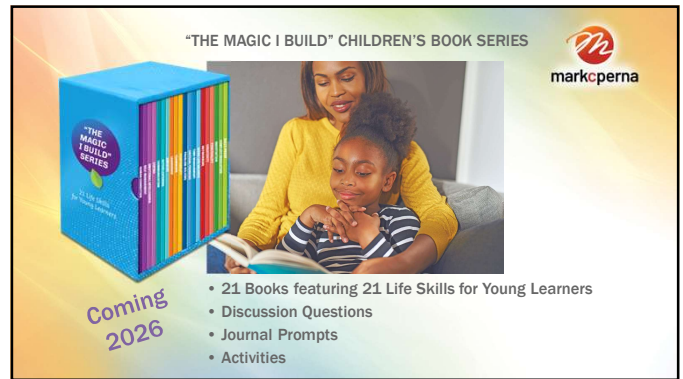


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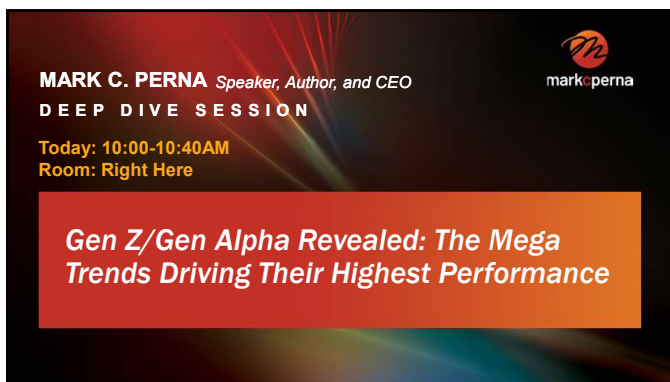
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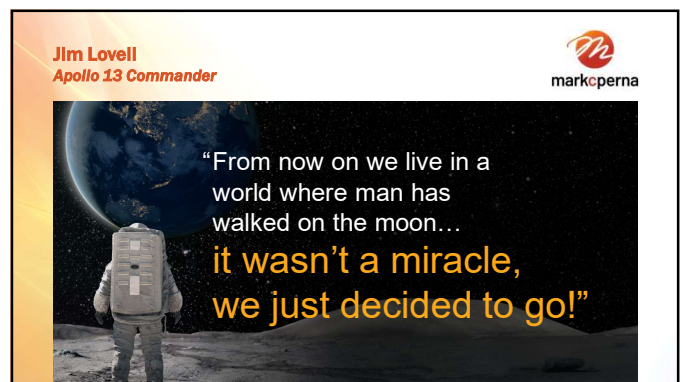
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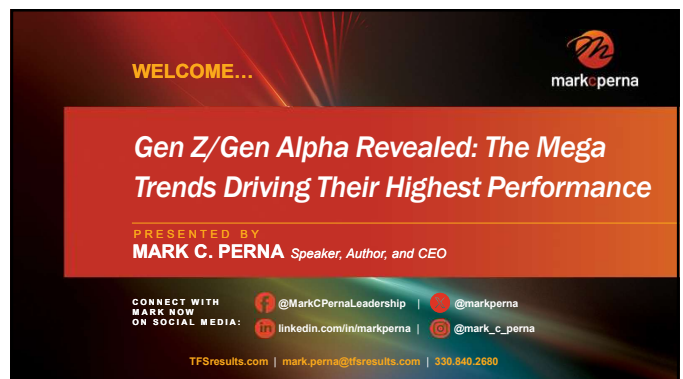
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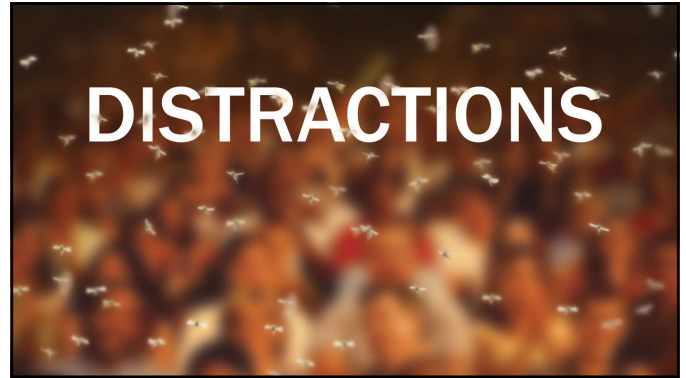


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**CONNECT**

- Human Connection
  - Human Needs Met
  - Respect
  - Trust
    - Boundaries & Expectations
      - Consequences
      - Punitive/Payoff
- Empathetic Communication
  - Active Listening
  - Meet Them Where They Are
  - Validate Their Circumstances
  - Check-Ins
- Winning Hearts & Minds
  - Empowering Performance

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**CONNECT**

Do you see me?

Do you hear me?

Do I matter?


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**ENGAGE**

- Ownership
  - Control, Choice, and Voice
- Encouragement
  - Positive Attention
- Experience is Everything
  - Emboldened
  - Enthusiasm
- Real World Impact
  - Solution-based
- Perfection

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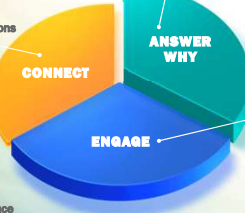


**ANSWER WHY**

- Light At The End Of The Tunnel
  - The Big Picture & Positive Framing
    - Why Would Anyone Do This?
    - Tips For Success (Hacks)
  - Relevance To Their Journey

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**ACTIVE PURPOSE**



**CONNECT**

- Human Connection
  - Human Needs Met
  - Respect
  - Trust
    - Boundaries & Expectations
      - Consequences
      - Punitive/Payoff
  - Empathetic Communication
    - Active Listening
    - Meet Them Where They Are
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**ANSWER WHY**

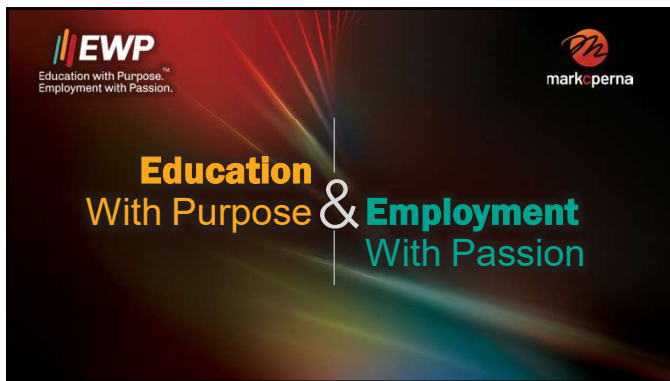
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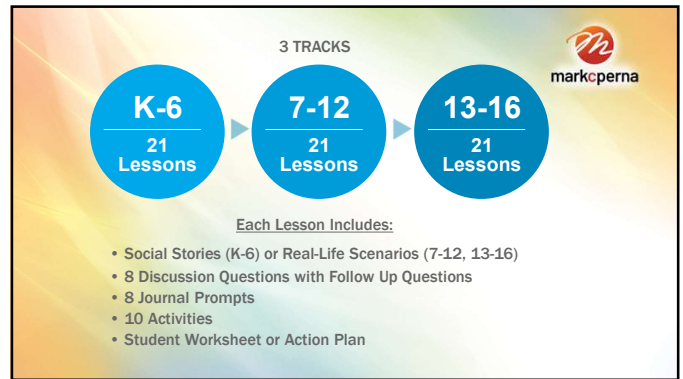


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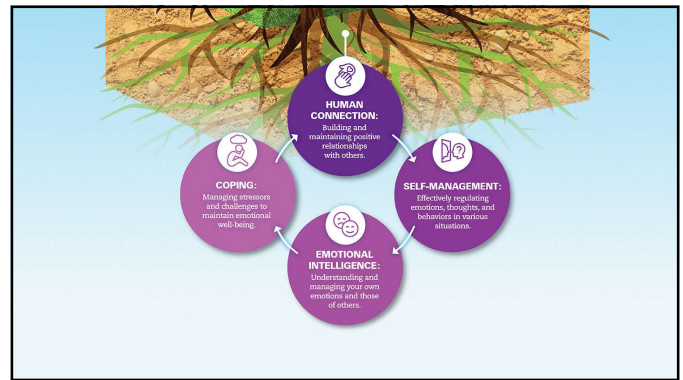
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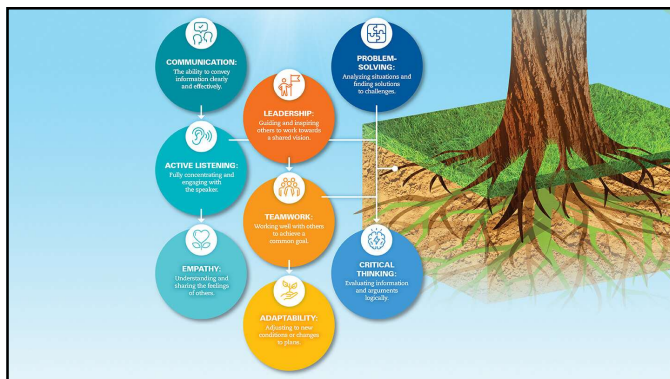
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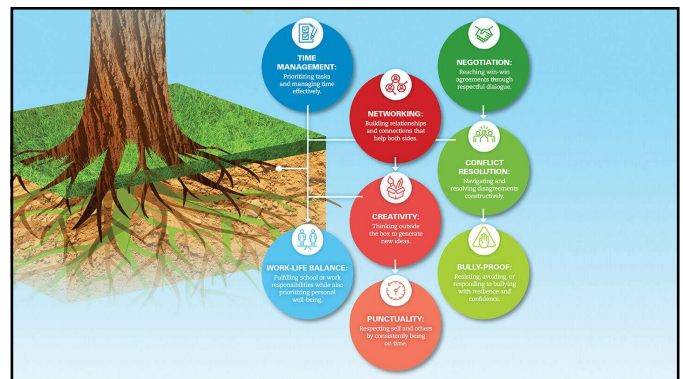
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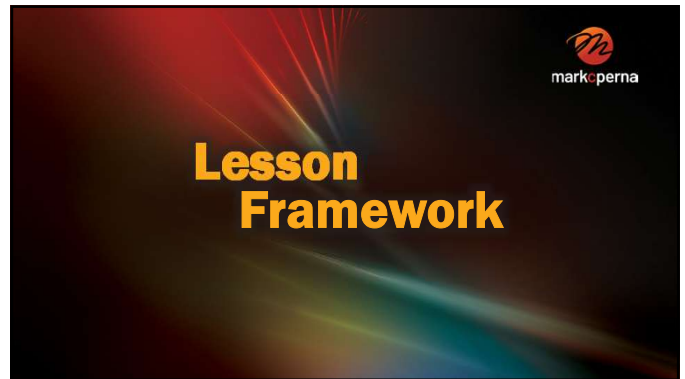
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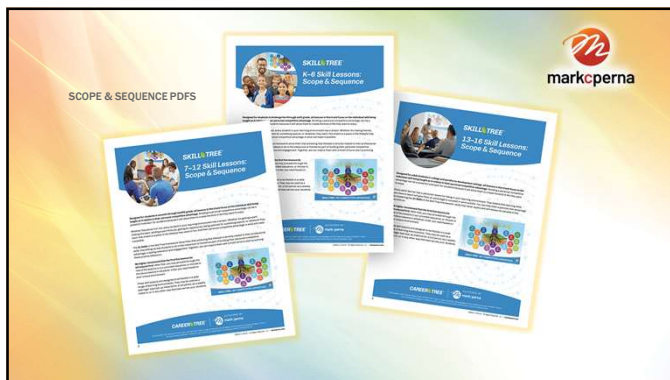
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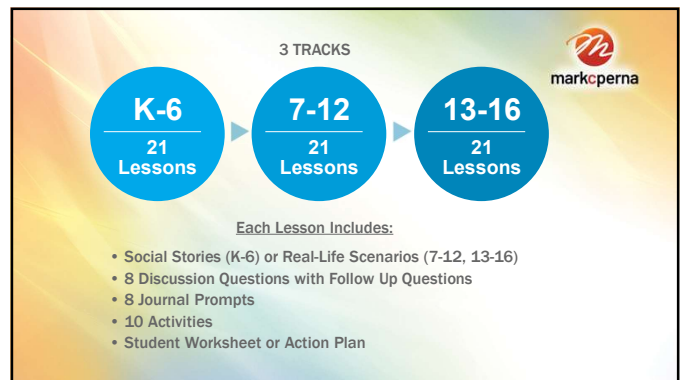
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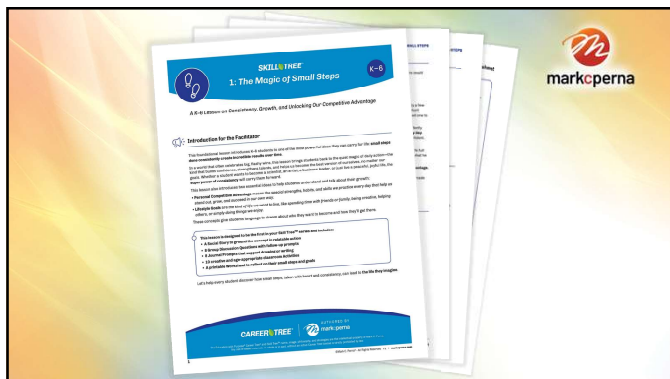
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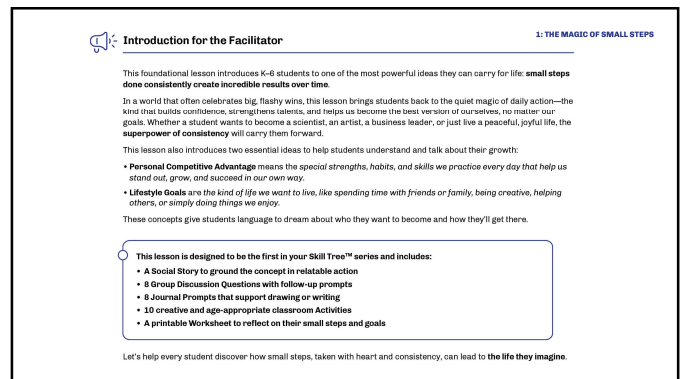
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1: THE MAGIC OF SMALL STEPS

 **Social Story: Milo's Big Change, One Step at a Time**

Milo used to think success was all about being the best at something right away. When he saw classmates who could read faster or jump higher or draw better, he would get frustrated and say, "I'll never catch up!"

One day, his counselor Ms. Vega asked him, "What's one thing you want to get better at?"

"Writing stories," Milo said quietly.


"Then let's do a little every day," Ms. Vega smiled. "Even five minutes a day adds up."

So every afternoon, Milo wrote for five minutes. Some days it was only a few lines. Other days it turned into a whole page. After a week, he had a short story. After a month, he had three. After two months, his teacher picked one to read aloud to the class. Milo's face lit up.

That's when he understood. The magic wasn't in doing everything perfectly all at once. The magic was in **showing up and taking small steps every day**. It didn't just help him get better at writing—it helped him feel more confident, proud, and in control of his growth.


Milo didn't want to be the best writer in the world. He wanted to live a life full of stories, imagination, and sharing ideas. That was his **lifestyle goal**: what he wanted his life to feel and look like.

Writing a little each day helped Milo build his **personal competitive advantage**, which means his own special strengths that get stronger every time he practices. Milo's new superpower was the small, consistent steps that made him better every day. It wasn't flashy, but it was powerful!



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1: THE MAGIC OF SMALL STEPS

 **Group Discussion Questions**

1. **What is something you want to get better at?**  
Follow-up: What is one small step you could take today, tomorrow, and the next day to practice that?
2. **Why do small steps feel easier than big leaps?**  
Follow-up: What happens when we take small steps every day?
3. **Have you ever worked hard at something little by little?**  
Follow-up: How did it feel to look back and see your progress?
4. **What do we mean by "consistency"?**  
Follow-up: Why does doing something again and again help us grow?
5. **What is a personal competitive advantage?**  
Follow-up: What are some strengths or habits that help build yours?
6. **What does "lifestyle" mean to you?**  
Follow-up: What kind of life do you want to build with your small steps?
7. **What gets in the way of taking small steps sometimes?**  
Follow-up: How can we get back on track when we get distracted or discouraged?
8. **How is consistency like a superpower?**  
Follow-up: What would your superpower look like in action?

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1: THE MAGIC OF SMALL STEPS


 **Journal Prompts**

(Students can write or draw their answers based on age and ability.)

1. Draw or write about a time when you practiced something until you got better.
2. What is one small thing you can do each day to grow your skills?
3. What does your dream lifestyle look like? What small steps can help you get there?
4. Describe or draw a way that being consistent has helped you in school or at home.
5. What is your personal competitive advantage? What makes you stand out?
6. If you had a "Consistency Cape" that gave you superpowers, what would it help you do?
7. What's something that feels hard right now, but could get easier with practice?
8. How can small steps help you reach a goal that feels really big?

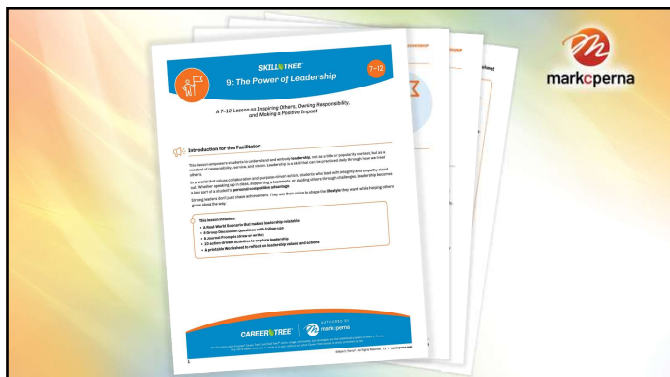
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1: THE MAGIC OF SMALL STEPS

 **Activities**

1. **Steps Tracker**  
Each student uses a staircase and writes or illustrates a small daily step on each step toward a personal goal.
2. **Consistency Superhero**  
Students create their superhero character who uses small daily actions to make a big difference in the world.
3. **Before and After Board**  
Display student work (writing, drawing, or math) from the beginning of the month or school year and compare it to more recent work to show progress.
4. **Lifestyle Collage**  
Students create a collage or drawing of what their ideal lifestyle looks like (peaceful, fun, creative, sporty, etc.).
5. **Competitive Advantage Cards**  
Students write down one of their strengths or habits and trade cards with peers to celebrate unique talents and get ideas for the next piece of their own competitive advantage to start developing.
6. **Daily Goal Journal**  
For one week, students write one small goal in the morning and reflect on it in the afternoon.
7. **Big Idea, Tiny Steps Challenge**  
Choose a class goal (e.g., clean room, kindness, teamwork) and brainstorm small steps to achieve it daily for a week.
8. **"I Noticed" Celebration**  
Students compliment classmates by sharing when they noticed someone taking a consistent small step.
9. **One-Minute Skill Builder**  
Practice a mini-skill daily for one minute (e.g., mindfulness, stretching, kindness) and log the streak.
10. **Paper Chain Progress**  
Add a paper link each time a student completes a small step. Watch the class chain grow over time.

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SKILLS TREE  
9: The Power of Leadership

an 8th-grade lesson on Inspiring Others, Owning Responsibility, and Making a Positive Impact

Introduction for the Facilitator

This lesson empowers students to understand and embody leadership, not as a title or popularity contest, but as a mindset of responsibility, service, and vision. Leadership is a skill that can be practiced daily through how we treat others.

In a world that values collaboration and purpose-driven action, students who lead with integrity and empathy stand out. Whether speaking up in class, supporting a teammate, or guiding others through challenges, leadership becomes a key part of a student's **personal competitive advantage**.

Strong leaders don't just chase achievement. They use their voice to shape the **lifestyle** they want while helping others grow along the way.


This lesson includes:

- A Real-World Scenario that makes leadership relatable
- 8 Group Discussion Questions with follow-ups
- 8 Journal Prompts (draw or write)
- 10 action-driven Activities to explore leadership
- A printable Worksheet to reflect on leadership values and actions

CAREER TREE

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9: THE POWER OF LEADERSHIP

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*Answering Why: Unleashing Passion, Purpose, and Performance in Younger Generations*

9: THE POWER OF LEADERSHIP

 **Real-Life Scenario**

Your group project is falling apart. No one's doing their part. People are frustrated, and nothing is getting done.


You're not the "leader" but you speak up.

"Let's make a plan. I'll take this part. Who wants to take the next step?"

People start responding. The mood shifts. The work gets done.

You didn't wait for permission. You saw a need and stepped up.

**That's leadership.** It's not about being the loudest or the boss. It's about guiding people toward something better, for an outcome that is good for everyone.



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9: THE POWER OF LEADERSHIP

 **Group Discussion Questions**

1. What does leadership mean to you?  
Follow-up: What does a "strong leader" look or sound like in everyday life?
2. What's the difference between leading and controlling?  
Follow-up: How do leaders build trust instead of fear?
3. Can someone be a leader without having a title or role?  
Follow-up: When have you seen leadership from someone unexpected?
4. What makes it hard to step up as a leader sometimes?  
Follow-up: What helps us overcome fear or doubt in those moments?
5. How can leaders make others feel included, not left out?  
Follow-up: What actions show people that their voice matters?
6. How do great leaders handle mistakes, whether their own or others?  
Follow-up: Why is that important?
7. How does leadership build your personal competitive advantage?  
Follow-up: How might it affect your future opportunities?
8. What kind of lifestyle do you want to live?  
Follow-up: How can strong leadership help you build that life for yourself and others?

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9: THE POWER OF LEADERSHIP


 **Journal Prompts**

(Students can write or draw their responses depending on learning style or preference.)

1. Write or draw about a time you stepped up as a leader. What did you learn?
2. Describe a leader you admire. What makes them inspiring?
3. What qualities do you think a good leader must have? Which ones do you already show?
4. Sketch or label your "Leadership Style." How do you lead best: in actions, words, support, or ideas?
5. What's a moment when you stayed quiet but now wish you had spoken up?
6. What's one fear that holds you back from leading more often? How can you face it?
7. If you were leading a team tomorrow, what would you do to build trust and motivation?
8. How does leadership help grow your personal competitive advantage?

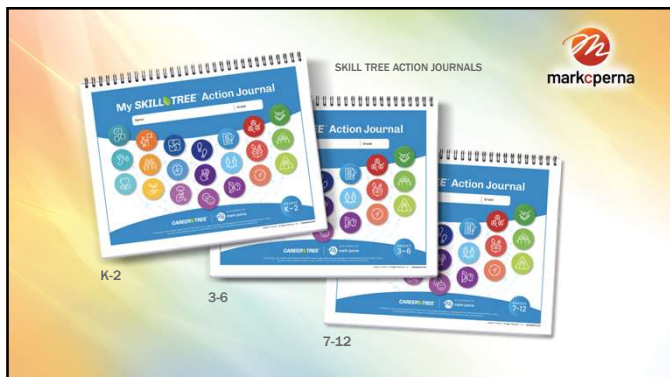
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9: THE POWER OF LEADERSHIP

 **Activities**

1. **Leadership Role Models Gallery**  
Students create a collage or slide featuring people they see as great leaders (famous or not) and explain what makes each one stand out.
2. **Lead a Mini-Team Challenge**  
Small groups take on a classroom challenge (design something, solve a puzzle). Each student takes turns being the leader for their group.
3. **Situational Leadership Scenarios**  
Students read brief scenarios and discuss or act out how a leader might respond. Focus on empathy, courage, and decision-making.
4. **Leadership Journaling Wall**  
Create a space where students anonymously post leadership wins: "I helped someone today try..." or "I spoke up when..."
5. **Compliment and Credit Circle**  
Students practice giving credit and encouragement—two major traits of strong leaders—in a group reflection activity.
6. **The Quiet Leader Challenge**  
Students complete a task using leadership that doesn't rely on being the loudest or most visible. Reflect on how it felt to lead with action or kindness.
7. **Leadership Values Card Sort**  
Provide leadership values (respect, courage, honesty, etc.). Students sort them into "most important," "hardest to practice," and "want to grow in."
8. **Redesign the Rules**  
In small groups, students pretend they're leading a club, school, or team. They rewrite "community guidelines" based on inclusion and empathy.
9. **Public Speaking Practice**  
Give students sentence starters to help them practice speaking with clarity and purpose in front of a small group or class.
10. **The Ripple Effect Map**  
Students map out how one leadership action (like standing up for someone) can positively affect others around them.

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