

Venn Meets Coercion

Purpose:	To provide participants a vehicle for examining coercion including peer pressure and flattery in their lives.
Essential Question:	In what ways do I allow others to control me?
Group Size:	4-40
Time Needed:	15 minutes small group time-2 minutes per small group for sharing (20 people = 55 minutes maximum)
Room:	Space for working in pairs with a flat surface for writing.
Age:	Students must be able to read at a fifth grade level when partnered. Recommended 5-10 th grade.
Materials:	Markers, Drawing paper, Tape – Scissors & Glue
Pre-learning:	Review or teach the rules of Venn Diagrams and Brainstorming.

Directions:

1. Put students in reading teams. This is chance to put a strong reader with a weaker reader.
2. Have students read aloud alternating paragraphs the article, Moving Towards Independence: Self-discipline - Becoming Inner Focused. (5 minutes)
3. Optional: You may want to pull from the students how they would define coercion and keep refining it until it comes close to – **Coercion is any way someone else tries you to get you to do something you may not want to do**. Write this on the board.
4. Say: “Think about the article you just read. It talks about coercion, which is anything someone else says or does to get you to do what you may not want to do. I’ve written the definition on the board. With your partner, brainstorm a list of ways in which people try to coerce each other. Before you start who remembers the rules of brainstorming?” “I’m giving you a sheet to help you brainstorm, think about what people say and what they do. FOR OLDER STUDENTS THE SHEET MAY BE LEFT OUT.” “Sometimes coercion can sound nice for example – ‘Sue have the best handwriting would you mind writing the spelling words on the board today.’ If Sue doesn’t want to do it, she may feel like the teacher coerced her into doing it. If you want to it isn’t

coercion. You have 3 minutes to brainstorm. I will give you a 1-minute warning.”

5. Label one circle “Adults” and the other circle “Friends”. Place items from your brainstormed list into the appropriate circle. You may have students rewrite their ideas or you can have them cut them apart and glue them into the circles. (5 minutes)
6. Large group sharing – pull from each group one thing that fell into the intersection. Ask each group to give you either an adult form of coercion or a friend form of coercion. Make sure that you have both physical ways people coerce and verbal ways. This is a good place to double check that coercion can sound friendly.
7. Ask students to individually journal which form of coercion is the most difficult for them to resist.

Hints: You can easily break this into two sessions, by expanding an open discussion of the article and doing a group brainstorm before having pairs brainstorm.

Ways People Coerce

What adults say:

What adults do:

What friends say:

What friends do:

Did you include 'nice' ways?

-Moving Towards Independence-

Becoming Self-discipline - Becoming Inner Focused

By: Shelley A.W. Roy

Have you ever thought that discipline is synonymous with FREEDOM? Probably not, because most people think of discipline as the negative garbage that adults spew when kids aren't doing what the adult wants. That is coercion, not discipline.

Coercion is a fancy word for all the lame stuff people do to get someone else to do what they want. For example when your Mom wants you to make your bed and you don't want to, she probably tries some form of coercion, like nagging, or bargaining (if ___ then___), or yelling, or threatening. She may even try being overly sweet by saying something like "You are the best son in the world, and I know you want to make your bed." Do you recognize any of these? Don't believe me? Check it out for yourself. Think for a minute, about two adults you know well. How do they act to try to get you to do what they want? Have some fun and ask a few friends about the rather dumb stuff parents and teachers do thinking they can get kids to do what they want. Before you, start-slamming adults remember your friends aren't any different. They use coercion to get you to do stuff too. For instance have you ever had a friend say, "Man you gotta go, everyone else is going." Maybe they said, "Hey if you want to hang with me you have to _____."; "You aren't going to eat all of those French fries are you." Or "You ain't gonna let him dis'respect you like that are you?" These are all forms of coercion. It is the confusion between coercion and real discipline, what I think of as discipline within, that is the reason that discipline has gotten a bad rap. Independent people know how to be self-disciplined and thus avoid coercion. They set their own standards of behavior and do not cross them for anyone or anything. The kind of standards I'm talking about are like a personal yardstick that you develop and use to measure your own actions.

Independent people are their own boss all of the time! More importantly, they set standards that serve themselves short and long-term and usually standards that do not harm others or themselves. Dependent individuals blame others and the world around them for the direction of their lives. They are *outer-focused* rather than *inner-focused*. Moving towards independence is all about learning to rely on self, especially when it would be easier not to. It is also about gaining freedom by maintaining high standards even when no one else is looking. Self-discipline is acting based on who you want to be, not on what is happening around you or based on what others think is right. Being self-disciplined is all about being honest and courageous. What is one standard that you are willing to hold yourself accountable to upholding?