



Garbages and Gardens: Attitude Made Simple:

Attitude: “A predisposition or a tendency to respond positively or negatively towards a certain idea, object, person, or situation. Attitude influences an individual's choice of action, and responses to challenges, incentives, and rewards” (www.businessdictionary.com)

The following is a simple, two-phase strategy toward developing and maintaining a positive attitude, (provided of course that you **want** to have a positive attitude – some people choose to like their negative attitude which is another problem unto itself)

If you want to have a positive attitude you should regularly “throw away” what isn’t good for you. Because we are human and imperfect, negative aspects of attitude can pop up at any time. People with a positive attitude have mastered the art of eliminating the thoughts that can transform a good attitude into a bad one. Everyone has negative thoughts at some point so it is critical to be able to know what thoughts are potentially dangerous to our outlook and attitude and then to quickly throw those negative thoughts in the garbage, like the trash that they are.

As one would expect, the next key component of maintaining a positive attitude is identifying and then nurturing the positive thoughts that sustain a positive mindset and viewpoint. The most important thing about positive thoughts is that they have to be *meaningful to you*. If thinking positive thoughts does not come naturally to you, then similar to growing a garden of flowers, you may need to plant, seed, fertilize, water and cultivate positive thoughts in order to help them “bloom” in your current state of mind.

The following questions will open discussion about attitude followed by further group activities afterward:

Attitude Self-Assessment

- **How would you rate your overall attitude in life?**
- **When you are struggling with your attitude, what does it look like to yourself and to others?**
- **What can trigger a negative shift in attitude for you?**
- **What are some challenges when it comes to your overall outlook and attitude in life today?**
- **What are some areas in which you have made improvement when it comes to your attitude?**
- **How do you look, act and feel when you are able to keep a positive attitude?**
- **Who or what can help you maintain and sustain a positive attitude?**
- **What do you think that you may still need to work on in these areas?**



Can that Bad Attitude

Directions: Think of some negative thoughts that can contribute to a bad attitude for you if you are not careful.

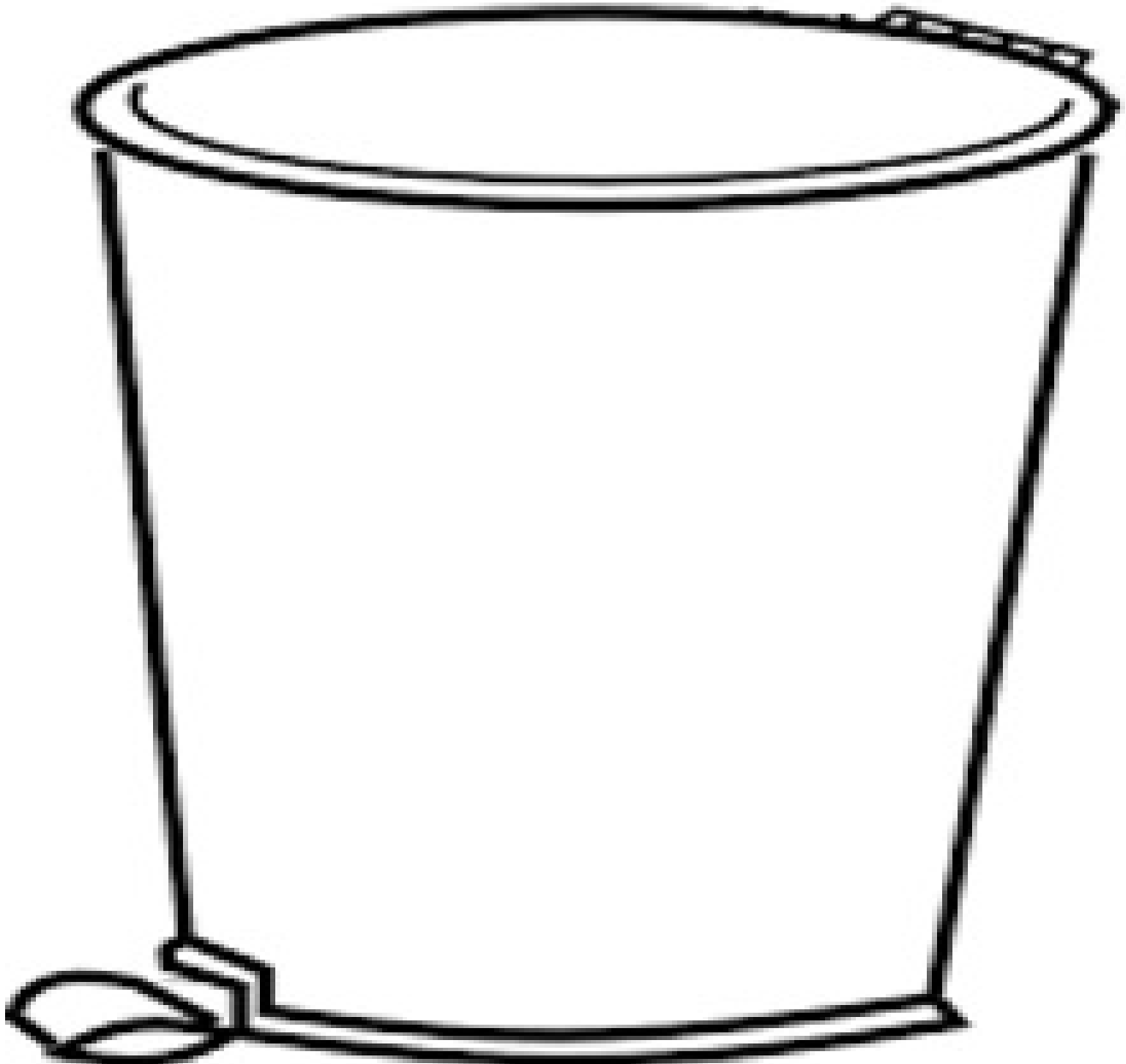
Think about how you may focus on yourself or your situation in a negative light, for example:

- “I’m going to make a fool of myself if I try...”
- “I’ll probably fail if...”
- “I’ll never get it right...”

Also think about how you may negatively focus on others, for example:

- “I’ll never be happy as long as... (Person keeps doing something).”
- “I need _____ to like me or I cannot be happy...”
- “Just about everyone ticks me off and I can’t handle it...”

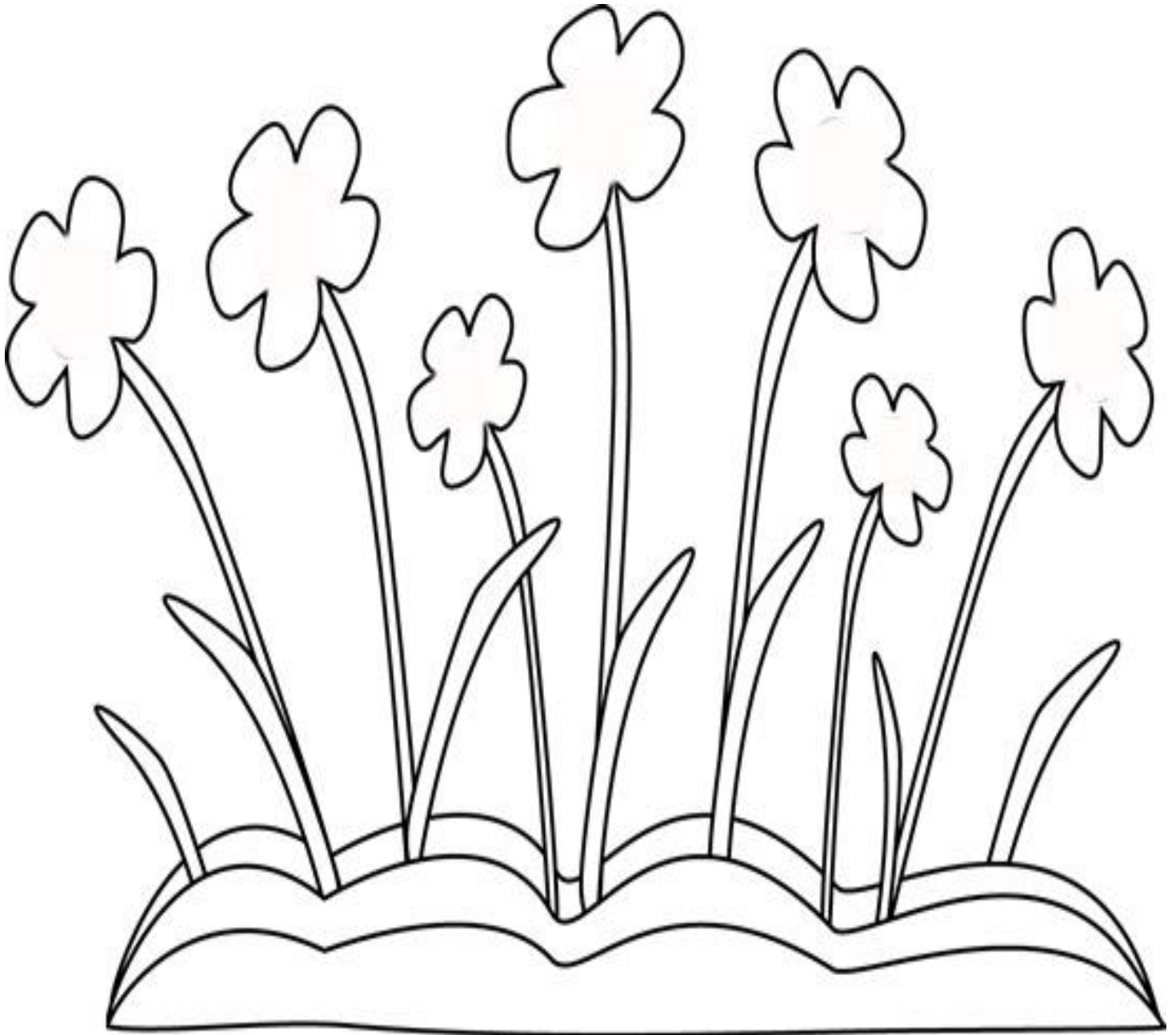
Now come up with your own negative thoughts and feelings that you need to simply “throw away” – Put them in the garbage can below. When you are done discuss your thoughts together as a group





Let Your Garden Grow

Directions: Think of some encouraging, constructive and uplifting thoughts that can help you to maintain a positive attitude. Write one in each flower below. Make sure that each one is meaningful to you personally:



Discuss:

How can you “water” these positive thoughts each day to help them grow?

