



## **Course Name: Character Development (The Choice Diagram)**

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### **Course description:**

This course continues to discuss the biblical necessity of godly character. In this lesson, we focus on the impact of our choices on our relationships with others. The concept of “the box” is developed to aid us in the way we approach those relationships.

### **Course Objectives: By the end of the class students will have:**

- A. Reviewed the choice diagram and discussed how it affects our relationships.
- B. Discovered four types of boxes we get into regarding relationship with others.

### **Outline of the class:**

- A. For this lesson, please read *Leadership and Self-Deception* and have a familiarity with *The Anatomy of Peace*. Both books contribute to the entire lesson.
  - 1. Each of these books present a narrative about how we tend to deal with relationships and how we can improve them.
  - 2. The discussion within them is needed for anyone who serves in leadership.
- B. The Choice Diagram explained.
  - 1. The idea of “the box” suggests that when we have a sense or desire to help someone in an area of need, we make a choice. We choose to honor that sense and help, or we betray that sense and do something else, generally, self-centered.
  - 2. Once we choose to betray that sense, we get in “the box,” better known as the *box of self-betrayal*. When this happens, it changes the way we feel, the way we view ourselves, the way we view others, and the way we view the world.
    - a. When we betray that sense of what is right, our feelings range from anger to depression, to bitterness, and justification.
    - b. When we betray our sense of what is right, the way we view ourselves ranges from feeling better than others, being a victim (owed), “I” was made to be bad, or to be seen well.
    - c. When we betray our sense of what is right, the way we view others ranges from they have no rights, they rob us of our peace, to they are a threat, and they are bigots.

- d. When we betray our senses of what is right, the way we view the world ranges from the world being unfair to unjust, it is burdensome, and the world is against us.
  - e. When we betray ourselves, we enter the box; we become self-deceived; we inflate other's faults, inflate our own virtues, blame the other person, and inflate the value of things that justify our self-betrayal.
- C. The next section discusses the four types of boxes that people can get into, based on the material in *The Anatomy of Peace*.
1. "Better-than" box
    - a. Feelings: Impatient, disdainful, indifferent
    - b. View of myself: Superior, important, virtuous/right
    - c. View of others: Inferior, incapable/irrelevant, false/wrong
    - d. View of the world: Competitive, troubled, needs me
  2. "I-deserve" box
    - a. Feelings: Entitled, deprived, resentful
    - b. View of myself: Meritorious, mistreated/victim, unappreciated
    - c. View of others: Mistaken, mistreating, ungrateful
    - d. View of the world: Unfair, unjust, owes me
  3. "Must-be-seen-as" box
    - a. Feelings: Anxious/afraid, needy/stressed, overwhelmed
    - b. View of myself: Need to be well thought of, fake
    - c. View of others: judgmental, threatening, my audience
    - d. View of the world: dangerous, watching, judging me
  4. "Worse-than" box
    - a. Feelings: Helpless, jealous/bitter, depressed
    - b. View of myself: Not as good, broken/deficient, fated
    - c. View of others: Advantaged, privileged, blessed
    - d. View of the world: hard/difficult, against me, ignoring me
- D. Divide the class into groups of three or four and ask each group to spend about 10 minutes to make a list of these four boxes and describe how we get in these boxes as Christians.
- E. When finished, ask each group to share and discuss as a class the importance of knowing these boxes when it involves leadership.

- F. The third book, *The Outward Mindset*, is one that provides the true answer for staying out of the box and how to get out of the box when we are in it.
1. The idea behind this book involves seeing beyond ourselves to the needs of others.
  2. When we stop to consider what is best for others first and allow that to determine the direction of our decisions and behavior, it changes everything about the nature of our relationships.
  3. Consider the implications of this thought as Paul writes about Jesus in Philippians 2:6-9. Then, back up and look at verses 3-5.
    - a. This text clearly points us to the example of Jesus.
    - b. It further instructs us to follow that example in the way we approach one another.
  4. The result is the type of character that people will follow.

Conclusion:

- A. We often find ourselves in “the box” when it comes to our relationship with others. During the course of a day, we can be in any one of the four boxes. There may even be times when we are in all four at the same time. Well, maybe not, but we tend to jump from one to the other at times in life.
- B. The challenge for us is to understand the biblical principle of putting others above ourselves, developing the outward mindset and see beyond ourselves to the good of others. Isn’t this what biblical love is all about. We need this in the church and in the world today more than ever.
- C. Next week, we continue to build on this discussion and consider additional areas directly related to our character.

Recommended Reading:

Arbinger Institute, *Leadership and Self-Deception*

Arbinger Institute, *The Anatomy of Peace*

Arbinger Institute, *The Outward Mindset*