

# Choices: Encouraging Youth to Achieve Greatness

**Robin Cox**

Mentoring Matters, New Zealand

## **Abstract**

Positive face-to-face relationships are key to the health and well-being of youth in a post-pandemic world. The topic of this paper provides a proven, user-friendly framework to inspire and guide educators, parents, coaches, mentors, and youth workers—significant adults—to motivate youth to achieve greatness or reach their potential, and to live healthy and balanced lifestyles, no matter what their circumstances might be. In this paper, Robin Cox, a retired school principal, author, and developer of life skills, youth mentoring, and peer support programs in southern Africa, New Zealand, and Australia shares how he developed the CHOICES framework over forty years of research, combined with his personal experiences mentoring more than 1000 young people from different cultures and socio-economic environments in four countries to give credibility to the CHOICES framework. He links proven education and youth mentoring strategies with recent adolescent brain research. The paper invites reflection on the reader's adolescent journey to appreciate some of the challenges today's youth face while reminding all who work with increasingly anxious, confused, or underachieving youth of the importance of positive relationships in their lives. Tips and strategies linked to goal setting, effective communication, teamwork, self-learning, and resiliency—lifelong learning—can enhance the quality of teaching, mentoring, and coaching in a global community where most youths are desperate to be heard and supported. The CHOICES framework is common sense, fun, and potentially life-changing. The paper offers messages of hope to all who wish to be optimistic voices in the lives of youth.

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