



# THE MASTERY CLUB

by Liliane Grace

## A RESOURCE FOR SCHOOLS

### Overview

*The Mastery Club - See the Invisible, Hear the Silent, Do the Impossible*, is a novel about five adolescents who form a club to support each other in achieving their goals and dreams.

In the process of achieving their goals they learn character values such as responsibility, resourcefulness and persistence, along with practical tools like goal setting.

*The Mastery Club* won the Bronze Medal for Juvenile Fiction in the 2007 Independent Book Publisher's Award. It is midway through its fourth print run and was published in China, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Macau in May 2010 (in Mandarin).

### The Author

Liliane Grace has had numerous articles and short stories published in various magazines and anthologies, and short plays performed in amateur theatre, since winning her first Short Story Competition at the age of seventeen. She recently won First and Second prizes in the 2004 Australasian Short Story Award.

Liliane has taught Creative Writing skills to adults and school-aged students since the late 80s and has been engaged in her own personal development study since she was a teenager.

### Themes

The values, attitudes and skills taught in *The Mastery Club*<sup>™</sup> book and program include:

- responsibility for managing one's own life and realising one's dreams and goals;
- possibility thinking - everything along the continuum from renewed hope to grand vision. In times of rapid change and apparent crises, many new skills are required of our youth, including the ability to envision new possibilities for themselves and the world as a whole;
- an openness to learning useful life skills and to learn from mentors;
- goal setting and an action oriented approach - being a future-maker and path-maker rather than a future-taker and path-taker;
- practical skills such as constructive thinking;
- self-leadership - re-creating personal identity/'reinventing oneself';
- self-knowledge, self-reliance and courage - in fact, the development of greater emotional intelligence;

- persistence and perseverance in the face of delays and obstacles;
- communication skills;
- recognition of one's own aptitudes and passions;
- a still, calm centre - the ability to find the value in all life experiences and to navigate a balanced life path;
- recognition that the journey is the true destination - 'The value of an ambitious goal is not measured by what it will bring to you. The worth of a goal is measured by what it will make of you in the process of following and attaining it.' (Ralph Marston)

### **Link to Victorian Educational Learning Standards**

*The Mastery Club* and associated programs complement many of the VELS streams and values.

### **Physical, Personal and Social Learning**

- *The Mastery Club* endorses healthy eating. The inspirational lead character, Nina, comes from a family that grows its own vegetables and eats an abundance of them at each meal. Junk food is recognised as being exactly that.
- Studies in sports psychology have revealed fascinating results in relation to the use of the mind in sports. These studies are referred to in the novel and can be researched more fully.
- The formation of a Mastery Club is a direct exercise in developing interpersonal, leadership and team skills.
- Attention is drawn to the very process of thinking and self-awareness.
- Responsibility in communication is demonstrated through an entertaining fictional story as the five adolescents deal with friendship and leadership challenges in the process of establishing their Club.
- The Club is formed and led by the students, but they are mentored by caring adults, and they learn a critical life lesson: the ability to learn widely, from everything and everyone that is happening around them.
- Working co-operatively as part of a team is another feature of *The Mastery Club*. Each member takes turns listening to and supporting the other members, and receiving support from them as they pursue their goals.
- When conflicts arise between the friends and in bullying situations, they are presented with novel ways of viewing and responding to the situation.
- Students are inclined to become more visionary upon reading *The Mastery Club*, both in terms of choosing their own goals and in developing the confidence to act on them.
- They learn distinctions about the goal setting process.
- Ten lessons are presented, a good half of which deal with the character traits that are required to succeed, such as resilience, resourcefulness, and emotional awareness / management.
- Respect for others is a core value presented in *The Mastery Club*.

## Discipline-Based Learning

- The novel naturally has value as an English language text. It can also be used in Philosophy and Enrichment subjects.
- The book encourages self-awareness, reflection and discussion. Teacher's Notes are available. Some unusual ideas and philosophies are presented and can be assessed and tested by the students; an opportunity in critical thinking.
- During the course of the story, an arts theme is introduced in the students' school. They are visited by an author and a potter, and observations from these arts are woven into the main themes of the story. In addition, a role in the school play becomes the goal of one of the main characters.
- *The Mastery Club* explores how we use language to 'create' our world. Language can be used to create imaginary worlds for the purpose of entertainment, and also to deliberately 'create' our reality, the world we are living in. How we interpret and interact with the world around us, and the meanings we ascribe to our experiences, are crucial factors in the 'making of our personal world'. *The Mastery Club* is an imaginary story about deliberately creating one's reality.
- *The Mastery Club* lends itself to a variety of uses: as pure literature, as material for multiple discussion topics, both written and oral, and as personal development stimulus material.
- Certain characters in the novel behave in confronting ways, stimulating conversation about how the characters respond to those behaviours. This sort of conversation obviously extends into the readers' lives as well.
- Goal setting practices are favoured by entrepreneurs, who often place a high value on personal development. In fact, *The Mastery Club* was endorsed by 2002 National Telstra Young Business Woman of the Year, Kirsty Dunphey. It is widely agreed that today's students need the creativity and lateral thinking skills common to entrepreneurs in order to succeed in the rapidly changing world they are growing into.
- Consumer maths is increasingly used to make the teaching of mathematics relevant to today's students. There is nothing more compelling than applying that study to the achievement of personal goals, such as raising funds to purchase a desired item.
- Quantum physics, the plasticity of the brain and the field of psycho-neuro-immunology are three areas of science that complement a reading of *The Mastery Club*. The realm of science also encourages the development of important character traits, such as critical thinking and insightfulness, as well as resourcefulness and persistence, as demonstrated by Thomas Edison's famous 'failures' in the pursuit of electricity.
- We are poised on the brink of an amazing era that has already been termed 'The Age of Imagination', in which today's students, and their children to come, will invent products and explore domains that we can barely even imagine today. Simple, 'undeveloped' societies consider current technological inventions such as a remote control or a television or an aeroplane to be sheer magic, but the technology to come will amaze us all the more. An unfettered imagination is a critical asset in the years ahead when the ability to be innovative will become our most highly prized trait as we tackle increasingly challenging global problems. *The Mastery Club* motto is 'See the Invisible, Hear the Silent, Do the Impossible'. Just as getting a rocket ship to the moon was once considered impossible, tomorrow's youth will be accustomed to thinking of 'six impossible things before breakfast'.

## Interdisciplinary Learning

- A physical law such as the Law of Gravity occurs across all contexts; there are no exceptions. Likewise, other principles find expression in a range of contexts, such as the Law of Polarity, which governs all of life, not just physically but also emotionally. This law is explored in *The Mastery Club*, rendering insights in the realm of human relationships. In *The Mastery Club*, an electrician, an author, a computer scientist, a potter and a 'bag lady' all deliver the same message but through their diverse personal experiences.
- Setting a goal, determining appropriate steps toward achieving that goal, facing practical obstacles and delays and finding the resources to creatively respond to those events are all critical life skills. *The Mastery Club* models this process in story form, but 'it's not just a story' - readers are invited to apply the ideas and act on their own dreams.
- *The Mastery Club* encourages students to pay attention to their thinking process, and take responsibility for their thinking to a greater degree than they may have done before.
- Reading the book, discussing the concepts and exploring the material in greater depth and across a range of disciplines, will deliver significant value. Readers of *The Mastery Club* often return to the book numerous times as the material is rich in depth and breadth.

## In the words of Futurist and Strategist, Dr Peter Ellyard,

*Liliane Grace is dedicated to assisting the next generation to transform themselves from future takers to future makers, so that they become masters and makers of both their lives and career paths and better community and planetary futures. The Mastery Club is a peer driven and shaped process where the young can aspire to become tall poppies and find affirming mentors and sources of inspiration as much from within their own ranks as from their elders. In a world where the peer group is all too often seen as a crusher of dreams and an enforcer of mediocrity, The Mastery Club is an uplifting peer group where the young are encouraged to aim high and stretch themselves to realise their goals.*

## The Mastery Club in Schools – examples of use

- Principal, Sholto Bowen from Huntingdale Girls School, read *The Mastery Club* to his entire school during lunchtimes.
- Special Education Teacher, Marita Nicholas from Belmont Secondary College, used the book as a class text.
- LOTE teacher, Nici Papisidero from St Francis De Sale Regional College in NSW, used the book with her students as a personal development tool.
- Two primary schools in NSW, The Kuluin School and Bli Bli Primary School, experienced a Mastery Club Author Visit and Workshop.
- Two primary schools in Victoria, Manchester Primary School and Glen Iris Primary School, experienced The Mastery Club™ 10 Lessons Program.
- Erasmus Primary School in Victoria hosted a Mastery Club 'Interview the Author' and writing workshop event.
- Secondary school teacher, Biljana Torbakova from Girrawheen Girls High School, used the book in her classroom and piloted the Mastery Club™ program with her students.

## Additional Information

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