

Grade 6

Sample Lessons



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Join us in *Positive Action*

Welcome to *Positive Action*.

In this lesson bundle, you will discover a tool that directly addresses the most pressing issue we have in education today: responding to the mental, social and emotional demands of our students and our educators. The pandemic has magnified the issue of our wellbeing almost beyond our understanding. We need help, and *Positive Action* can provide it.

For 40 years, schools have been successfully using the *Positive Action* program. This span of experience allows us to put a high sheen on the program's materials ensuring that they are of the highest quality and user-friendly. It also provides time for robust, randomized trials that take many years but ultimately establishes the program as one of the most highly evidence-based programs, which is duly recognized by many creditable groups.

Positive Action is a unique program that explains how profoundly our actions, positive or negative, affect us and our lives, one of those intuitive truths we recognize when we see it. The *Positive Action* philosophy makes it all clear: *you feel good about yourself when you do positive actions, and there is a positive way to do everything*—even in this daunting and unparalleled time.

The philosophy implies that we have a desire to feel good about ourselves, which we all do. To feel good about ourselves is a very powerful motivator. It is called intrinsic motivation, which is in all of us and one of the most influential forces to motivate us to do right.

Positive Action graphically represents the philosophy with the Thoughts-Actions-Feelings about Self Circle (TAF). It makes applying the philosophy easy to understand and, therefore, use. The TAF Circle demonstrates how thoughts lead to actions, actions lead to feelings about self (as in self-worth and *not* emotions, i.e., anger, fear, worry, etc.), and feelings about self lead back to thoughts. Whether the TAF Circle is positive or negative, it is always self-reinforcing.

The program aims to teach the philosophy, TAF Circle, and key positive actions for our whole self: physical, intellectual, social, and emotional areas.

All the components of the *Positive Action* program are organized into six units:

- Unit 1—The program foundation: Philosophy and TAF Circle
- Unit 2—Positive Actions for the physical and intellectual areas

(Units Three through Six are positive actions for the social and emotional areas)

- Unit 3—Positive Actions for Self-Management (thoughts, actions, feelings, time, energy, money, possessions, and talents)
- Unit 4—Positive Actions for Getting Along with Others
- Unit 5—Positive Actions for Honesty with Self and Others
- Unit 6—Positive Actions for Continual Self-Improvement

The program components are:

- Pre-K–12 curricula
- Supplemental curricula: Drug Education, Bullying Prevention, and Conflict Resolution

- School Climate Development
- Counselor's Kit
- Family Kit
- Family/Parenting Classes

Together, *Positive Action* is a unified but flexible system for the whole school community that provides a common language and shared goals. It is a powerful approach that generates innovative thinking that is needed, especially in overwhelmingly challenging times, as they are today.

The program has all the materials prepared for ease of use. The lessons/activities are planned and scripted, with all supporting materials assembled into a kit. You have the advantage of having an extensive amount of work done for you to assure that what you do is coherent, complete, and effective. You can quickly and easily get to the heart of the matter in just the right way with these well-developed materials.

For implementation, we suggest that you adapt the materials within the guidelines of honoring the concepts and strategies, while at the same time, considering your students—their needs, challenges, and cultures. With *Positive Action*, you are giving your students a wonderful gift: a way to view and achieve in life—by using positive actions—no matter the barriers.

The universality of the program's philosophy also works for you as a professional and personally. Your life experiences provide you with evidence of the validity of the concepts. Sharing your experiences with your students as you teach the lessons enhances their understanding of the value of positive actions even more deeply.

The end goal of *Positive Action* is to realize that when you feel good about yourself by doing positive actions, you are happy and successful. Success and happiness, as defined by *Positive Action*, is feeling good about who you are and what you are doing—this is the *Positive Action* way. It works for everyone, and it will work for you and your students too. This approach is needed now more than ever as we face these unprecedented challenges to how we think about happiness and success. There is a positive path through these dark days, and *Positive Action* is poised to help us discover it.

We warmly invite you to join us in creating a learning environment where potentials are reached and dreams achieved even in the challenging times of Covid-19 and other critical obstacles. By acting positively and working together, we, individually and collectively, can become even stronger and our wellbeing more improved than ever before.

Enclosed are sample lessons to provide you with a glimpse at what *Positive Action* has to offer. There are lessons for each of the six units. Some lessons are more appropriate for in-class use and others for hybrid/distance learning use. These lessons have been extracted from the complete instructor's manual. They have been edited to better stand alone; some have been modified omitting a few of the traditionally used materials that are provided in the complete kit. Images of posters, visual aids, activity sheets, and manipulatives can be requested through our support portal, allowing you to preview what you would receive in a complete kit.

LESSON 14 • UNIT 1 • GRADE 6

SELF-CONCEPT: ITS DEFINITION, FORMATION, AND IMPORTANCE

Purpose: To introduce the concepts of success and happiness and to define them both as feeling good about who you are and what you are doing.

Materials Needed: Pencils, paper

Materials Provided: None

Procedure:

- 1) SAY, “Today we will begin studying *Positive Action*, a series of lessons all about you. We’ll spend time finding out who you are, why you do the things you do, and ways you can feel better about who you are and what you are doing. We will learn the program’s philosophy: You feel good about yourself when you do positive actions, and there is a positive way to do everything. Does anyone know what positive actions are? (*Allow time for responses. Direct towards: to do or cause good things to happen.*)”

“In the Constitution, Americans are promised by the government the right to the pursuit of happiness—the right to find it for ourselves. But how are we supposed to find happiness if we don’t know what it is? What do you think happiness is?” (*Allow time for three or four responses.*)

“The word happiness means something different for each of us, but the truth is humans all have certain things in common. Happiness and success can be defined as: feeling good inside about who you are and what you are doing. That sounds a lot like the *Positive Action* philosophy, right? Happy people reach their dreams and get what they want because they know how to think about themselves in a way that makes them happy no matter what their situation is.”

“This is a sign of a good self-concept. Self-concept is how you feel about you, what you think about yourself. Are you positive about yourself, or negative about yourself? The answer to those questions determine how you live every day of your life, and whether or not you will reach your dreams and what you want out of life. Really. Self-concept is that powerful. Every person has a self-concept or a way of looking at themselves.”

- 2) SAY, “I’m going to read a story about someone who learns what self-concept is and learns to change it for the better. As I read, think about whether you have ever felt how Jason feels at different times in the story.”

FINDING HIS AWESOME

“How do you feel about you?”

Jason stared at the words on the board in confusion. How did he feel about himself? What kind of question was that?

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His teacher Ms. Harris smiled and asked a different question. “Do you like who you are? What do you think about you? It may seem odd, but everyone sees themselves a certain way. Sometimes what we think about ourselves is true and sometimes it isn’t. Be ready tomorrow to talk about how you see yourself.”

As the bell rang, Jason still felt confused. He had never thought before that you could feel anything at all about yourself. Did he like who he was?

As Jason moved down the hall, he came up to a group of his friends who were laughing and elbowing each other. Jason realized his friends were talking to Matt, a kid who liked band class. They were laughing at Matt’s huge trombone case.

“Hey, are you planning on playing music or are you going to shoot donuts at the moon with that thing?” Jason’s friend Alex laughed.

Matt tried to laugh along, but Jason could tell he was miserable as he waited for his classroom door to open. Jason didn’t like how it felt in the hall—tense and mean and almost dirty. But he didn’t say anything. He never said anything when his friend Alex got in this mood. If he did say something, Alex would just start picking on Jason instead.

As Jason walked away, a girl nearby muttered to him, “Bully.”

Jason jumped as if he’d been slapped. He looked for the girl who said it but she was already gone. Jason’s stomach sunk as he headed to science, and he sat in the back, staring blankly at a poster about frogs.

I don’t like myself very much, Jason realized. It hit Jason, all at once, that he thought of himself as a nobody. Somebody who was lucky to be friends with Alex at all. He didn’t think he was smart or funny or special. He didn’t think he was a bully either—but someone else thought he was.

After school, Jason was feeling so rotten he did something he hadn’t tried before. He went to Ms. Harris’s class and asked, “About today. What if we don’t like ourselves? What if we don’t see anything to like?”

Ms. Harris thought for a minute, then replied, “Maybe your problem is that you’re just looking at what you think is bad about you. No one gets better by focusing just on what they’re doing wrong. There’s a lot to like about you, Jason. You think hard about things and listen to other people. You make friends easily and you always try your best—that’s downright special. But you have to see it. And you have to see the things you don’t like and try to change them so you like them too. That’s just part of being a happy human that can reach their dreams.”

“Someone called me a bully today.” The words just tumbled out of Jason’s mouth. “I didn’t think I was one. I just...didn’t do anything.”

“Sometimes doing nothing is a negative action. But you know the best part?” asked Ms. Harris. “You don’t have to be that way. Every time we think a good thing about ourselves or someone else—every time we do a positive thing or try—we are improving our self-concept. You can feel better about you this minute, and the next day, and the next. By changing your

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negative thoughts to be more positive, you change your self-concept so that you like you. It makes you happy.”

“You’re awesome, Jason,” Ms. Harris finished. “There’s a little—or a lot—of awesome in everyone. But most people find it hardest to see when it’s inside themselves. Go make a list of five awesome things about you. It will help. I promise.”

It took all night for Jason to make the list—it was harder than he thought—but he finished. And Ms. Harris was right. He did feel better. He realized he wasn’t nearly the nobody he had thought he was just a few hours ago. But he could be better too. And that was somewhere to start.

A few days later, Jason came upon Alex laughing at Jessie’s super-curly hair, saying, “It’s like trampoline springs!”

Jason said, “C’mon Alex, that’s not true, her hair is cool. Her hair...” Jason searched for the right word, embarrassed to feel himself blushing as everyone looked at him. “Her hair is awesome.”

Alex fell oddly quiet, staring at Jason. Then he rolled his eyes and walked away, but Jason somehow didn’t mind. As the crowd cleared away, Jessie smiled, slumping in relief.

“My hair’s awesome?” she said quietly.

Jason shrugged, but he smiled back. In that minute, he liked who he was. He liked what he just did. And that felt good. Ms. Harris had been right, he wasn’t really the nobody he thought he was.

In fact, he planned on liking himself even better tomorrow.

- 3) SAY, “It’s kind of strange to think about whether or not we like ourselves, but it’s an important question to ask. Remember, self-concept is how we look at ourselves and what we believe about ourselves, and it has a lot to do with what actions we take. If we have positive self-concept, we tend to do and think positive things that make us—and other people—happy. When we have negative self-concept, the opposite happens. What kind of self-concept did you think Jason had at the beginning of the story—positive or negative?” (*Allow time for responses.*)

“Negative, right. What did Jason have to do to change his self-concept and be happier?” (*Allow time for students to share their thoughts.*)

“The truth is, only after we realize what our strengths are and really look at what’s good about ourselves can we really improve the things that are negative and making us unhappy. It’s not just about being happy, either. How many of you have dreams? Do you want to go to college? Make a sport’s team? Become a Youtube star or a hairstylist or an author? People with good self-concept achieve their dreams. When we see ourselves negatively our dreams disappear.”

“What would have happened if Jason had just focused on how he felt like a nobody or how he didn’t have the courage that day to stand up for his classmate being bullied? What if he had only looked at

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the negative thoughts he had about himself—what would have happened?” (*Allow time for students to share their thoughts.*)

“Jason’s self-concept wouldn’t have improved, because he probably would have given up. He would have still felt bad inside, still felt like a nobody. But he wasn’t a nobody. Those thoughts weren’t true. And he had the power to change himself and be happier by using his strengths to overcome his weaknesses and build a positive self-concept.”

- 4) “Please take out a piece of paper and a pencil. I want you to do what Jason did: write five awesome, positive things about yourself.”

TEACHER: Give students at least five minutes to do the activity. This can be shockingly hard, for adults too, and five minutes might not even be enough for students to finish their lists.

- 5) SAY, “It’s okay if you’re not finished. The best thing to do is to keep a list like this all the time and add to it when you think of more positive things about yourself—even for the rest of your life. It really helps and it gets easier with practice. Start looking for strengths you have, like listening, being persistent, patient, or working hard. Everybody has strengths in them and the potential to be better and happier and to achieve their dreams. If that feels impossible, it can help to ask someone who you feel is a positive person what is good about you. Positive people tend to notice the positive things in others, and they can help us build a good self-concept.”

“Just like Jason, a positive self-concept makes you happier and more confident. It makes it easier to do the right things that help yourself and others. It also makes it so those dreams you have, the things you want out of life, can be yours. It is something that all happy people have in common. You can build a positive self-concept one thought at a time, just like you build a skyscraper one brick or panel at a time. Even if you feel like you’re starting with bare dirt, the skyscraper will come along if you keep adding to your list and trying to change negative patterns. And you’ll be happier along the way with every step—which might just be the very best part.”

LESSON 17 • UNIT 1 • GRADE 6

SELF-CONCEPT: ITS DEFINITION, FORMATION, AND IMPORTANCE

Purpose: To introduce the Thoughts-Actions-Feelings about Self Circle, which teaches that positive thoughts lead to positive actions, positive actions lead to positive feelings about yourself, and positive feelings lead to more positive thoughts.

Materials Needed: Chalk/whiteboard and chalk/markers or virtual platform

Materials Provided: “Thoughts-Actions-Feelings Circle” Poster

Procedure:

- 1) *TEACHER: Draw this diagram on the board. Display the “Thoughts-Actions-Feelings Circle” Poster.*



- 2) SAY, “This circle illustrates something you do constantly, although you’re often unaware of it. First, you think about doing something. That thought usually leads to an action. The action produces certain feelings which determine what kind of thoughts you’ll have next. Those thoughts lead to another action, which leads to other feelings, which determine your next thoughts. The diagram for this process is called the **Thoughts-Actions-Feelings about Self Circle** and represents an endless cycle of thinking, acting, and feeling that operates in everything we do. The Circle is also a representation of the *Positive Action* philosophy: you feel good about yourself when you do positive actions, and there is a positive way to do everything.”
- 3) “Have you ever thought so hard about not being able to do something that when it came time to try, you failed?” (*Allow time for responses.*) “Have you ever been so sure you could do something that it was easy for you, even if you’d never tried it before?” (*Allow time for responses.*) “What feelings did you have about yourself after the first experience? After the second?” (*Allow time for responses.*) “We can be in positive or negative circles, the choice is ours. We can choose to think positive thoughts and break out of a negative circle if we find ourselves stuck in one.”
- 4) “We’ve all experienced the work of the Thoughts-Actions-Feelings about Self Circle in everything we do. Today we’ll try an experiment to see exactly how it works.”

TEACHER: Allow students to mark off two identical jump courses in two parts of the room. The courses should include a starting line, one measurement that all students will be able to cover in a

LESSON 17 • UNIT 1 • GRADE 6 (Continued)

single jump with ease, one that will be a little harder, but that everyone will succeed in jumping, and two which will challenge each student.

5) *Have the students form two groups and have each student cover the first distance on one of the two courses. Keep track of each student's success. When all students have jumped the first distance, elicit discussion with the questions that follow:*

- How did you feel before you jumped?
- How did that success make you feel about yourself?
- Did those feelings make you want to jump the next distance marked on the course?

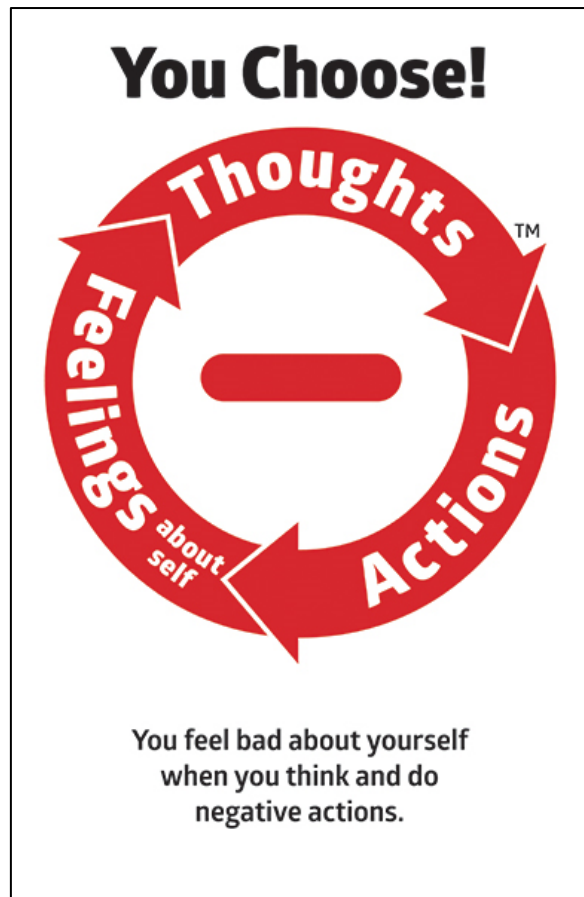
6) *Continue the activity until all students have tried all four distances. Or, after the first distance, the remaining three could be spaced throughout the day if it isn't convenient to do them all at once. After the next two rounds of jumping, elicit discussion with the questions that appear in Procedure Step 5. After the final round, elicit discussion with the questions that follow:*

- How did you feel before you jumped this time?
- Did you believe you would succeed or fail?
- If you failed, how do you feel right now?
- What thoughts have those feelings produced?
- If you failed, would you feel good about trying the same distance again? A greater distance?
- If you succeeded, how do you feel right now?
- Are you ready to try a greater distance?
- Can you think of other areas of your life where this kind of negative or positive thinking has led to similar actions and feelings? Tell us about them.
- What have you learned about yourself from this exercise and discussion?

Lesson 17



Front



Back

LESSON 29 • UNIT 2 • GRADE 6

**PHYSICAL AND INTELLECTUAL POSITIVE ACTIONS
FOR A HEALTHY SELF-CONCEPT**

Purpose: To emphasize the need for physical exercise for proper health.

Materials Needed: None

Materials Provided: Activity Sheet 29-2-6

Procedure:

- 1) SAY, “I’m going to read a story and while I do, I want you to think about the struggles Steve has and what he does to make them better.”

MOVING BETTER

Steve blinked painfully. His eyes ached from playing video games, but as usual he was literally too tired to do anything else but drive a cart around a virtual track until 2 AM. School had been terrible—he’d fallen asleep in two classes—and his teacher gave him the mad-teacher-look for forgetting his assignment again. He’d felt anxious butterflies in his stomach today, just like he’d felt sick, depressed and exhausted since school started in August. Every day felt like the worst.

Steve’s phone buzzed, and he glanced at the text, groaning as he read out loud: “Come play basketball, corner lot. Ten minutes.”

His friend Nic always invited him to play basketball, and Steve was always too tired. But hearing dishes clanking in the kitchen, Steve knew dish duty was coming if he didn’t avoid it somehow. He got up fast and forced himself out the door, jamming his shoes on as he went down the street to the neighborhood basketball court, still feeling a little guilty about the dishes.

Nic and Nic’s sister Sara were there, along with other neighbors he hadn’t seen in ages. He played basketball with his friends until the stars came out, forgetting he was tired as his team began to win. Steve wasn’t great at basketball, but he was determined. His face poured sweat and his arms ached but he got one brilliant shot in before they called it quits, breathing hard and calling for a rematch. Sara even showed him how to spin a basketball on his finger.

Steve came home, showered, and fell into bed. No one was more shocked than he was that he went to sleep instantly and woke up to his alarm feeling much better than his usual zombie self, if a little sore. The whole day was like that—a little better all around. Steve didn’t fall asleep once in class. Because he was actually awake, he remembered to grab his textbooks off the table and saved himself a lecture. He was a little proud of his aches and pains,

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remembering the game. He even didn't mind doing the dishes for his mom and seeing her smile made him feel relieved and almost peaceful.

So when the text from Nic came, Steve hesitated out of habit, then remembered. He'd felt good after basketball last night, tired in a good way. Happier. Maybe it was worth repeating.

Five minutes later, Steve was dribbling down the court and missing a shot. He didn't let that dampen this good day though. After all, he'd be back tomorrow. And why couldn't he have more good days, all in a row?

- 2) SAY, "Now, first off, Steve had some problems that probably all of us deal with at some point. What were some of his problems?" *(Possible answers: depression, sadness, anxiety, not sleeping, exhaustion, bad self-esteem, too many video games. 'Dishes' is actually not an acceptable answer, but make sure to explain this is because doing the dishes only felt negative because Steve was so tired he thought a lot of negative thoughts about them. Doing dishes was a positive action that in the end made Steve feel good. He just needed to change some of his habits so dishes didn't feel so hard. Sometimes negative actions like not exercising make positive actions like dishes harder to do.)*

"Take just a second and think about your life. Have you felt like Steve before? Maybe you even feel like him today, or felt like that yesterday. Think back to the last time you felt anxious, depressed, angry, exhausted, or sad about starting your day." *(Give the students maybe thirty seconds to think about it).*

"Now there are lots of reasons we feel this way, and sometimes we need help from parents or counselors or even doctors to really take care of these feelings. But like Steve, there's often something we can do right now to feel better. What helped Steve change his life? For all those problems, he made one positive action that improved all of them. What was it?" *(Steve chose to exercise instead of giving in to a negative habit and playing video games until 2 AM. If the students answer 'sleep' was the positive action, you'll want to explain that Steve had a really hard time sleeping until he implemented a different positive action. Steve gave his body good exercise that helped many of his emotional and physical problems improve—including his distaste for dishes, a chore all of us need to do sometime.)*

- 3) "Here's the thing about your body. It's like a machine. Leave it alone and it gets rusty, stiff and breaks down—even teenagers bodies do. And since most kids and teenagers spend a lot of time sitting at school or in front of the computer, you sit still a lot with your brain and body can feel like its getting rusty. Exercise fixes this by lubricating your joints, strengthening your heart (which keeps you alive, so kind of a big deal) and even helping your brain. This is why scientists are always saying exercise helps anxiety and depression and bad days in general. Exercise helps you sleep too, which matters because everyone knows that when you're really tired, it's really hard to have a good day. Some doctors even prescribe exercise like a medication for sleep or emotional problems, because it literally helps you feel happier."

LESSON 29 • UNIT 2 • GRADE 6

“That’s what’s great about exercise. No matter where you are or what you have, there’s something you can do to feel better about yourself and your body. Even ten minutes a day makes a difference, and you can do anything to get moving. You could do jumping jacks, jogging, or if you ask a parent for permission, you can go online and find tutorials to learn how to do yoga, a new style of dance, or even improve your sports skills. Like Steve, you can make friends with the skills you develop, or even make a career out of them one day.”

- 4) “I’m going to show you some easy exercises you can do at home to tap into the magic for your brain and body that is exercise. When it comes to feeling better about yourself and your body, little changes make a big change in the long run.”

TEACHER: Show the students simple exercises they can do while sitting, talking on the phone, riding in a car, or lying on a bed. Use Activity Sheet 29-2-6 for the sitting exercises.

- Sitting in a chair or riding in a car: shoulder rolls, raising toes then heels. Refer to Activity Sheet 29-2-6 for more.
- Talking on phone: jog in place, squats, lunges, side to side bends, raise up on toes, etc.
- Lying on bed: leg raises, sit-ups.

Have the students try as many of these as you have time for. Remind them, however, that such exercises are not appropriate in school where they would disturb others.

- 5) SAY: “Good job! Those are some ways you can keep moving the next time you realize you’ve been stuck on your phone or in front of a TV for hours. Remember, Steve noticed some positive feelings and rewards right away, but the best results come from doing positive actions over and over again, as often as you can. Don’t sweat it (pun intended) if you get lazy or stressed and forget for a while. Every positive action—and jumping jack—counts towards a happier you.”

Sitting Jog. This warm-up gets your heart and body ready to exercise.

Raise your heels as high as possible, one after the other. At the same time, raise your arms in a bent position, moving forward and backward as if you are jogging. Continue the exercise for 1–3 minutes.



Rise and Sit. This exercise speeds up circulation and stimulates the passage of blood to the legs.



Slowly stand up, without your hands if you can. Sit back down and flex your calves by lifting your toes. Repeat the exercise 10–15 times.

Quiet Exercise

Shoulder Rolls. This exercise stimulates the joints and relaxes the shoulder muscles.

Roll your shoulders forward in large circles. Repeat 10–15 times. Then, roll your shoulders backward in large circles. Repeat 10–15 times.



Picking Fruit. This exercise stimulates shoulder muscles and joints by alternately and rhythmically stretching the arms.

As if picking fruit from a tree, reach up with one arm, drop it back down, and then reach up with the other arm. Repeat 10–15 times for each arm.



LESSON 34 • UNIT 2 • GRADE 6

**PHYSICAL AND INTELLECTUAL POSITIVE ACTIONS
FOR A HEALTHY SELF-CONCEPT**

Purpose: To introduce the students to the concept of creative problem solving.

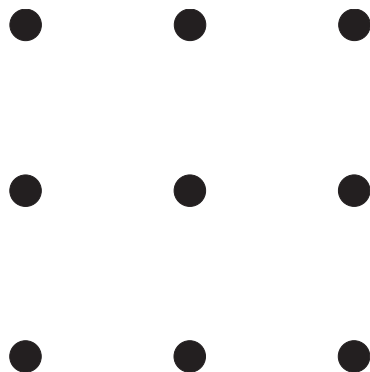
Materials Needed: Chalk/whiteboard and chalk/markers or virtual platform, pencils, paper

Materials Provided: None

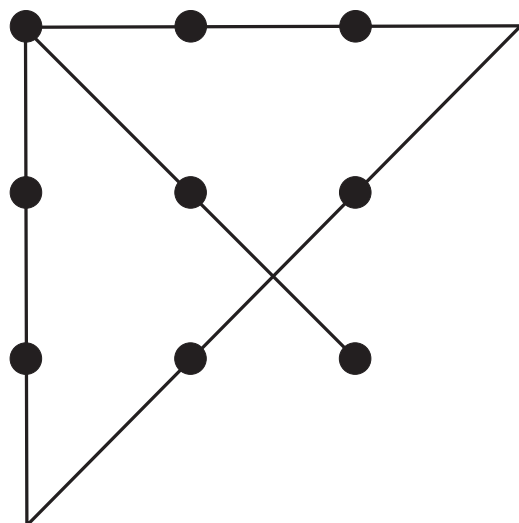
Procedure:

- 1) SAY, “One of the fun things about life is that it presents lots of problems.” (*Pause.*) “Yes, you heard me. Life without problems would be no challenge. Problems can seem overwhelming, that’s for sure, but they present us an opportunity to use our thinking skills. There are few thrills in life greater than matching wits with a problem and coming out on top—just by using your head and your own resources.”
- 2) “There are steps in solving any problem. Does anyone know what these steps are?” (*Allow for responses. Direct towards the steps below and discuss.*)
 - Defining the problem
 - Thinking of possible solutions
 - Choosing a solution
 - Trying the solution
 - Checking to see whether it works
- 3) SAY, “Many people make a big mistake by failing to understand what the real problem is. If you fail a math test, you may jump to a conclusion—I need to study longer. But it may be that the length of the study has nothing to do with it. Maybe you have misunderstood one simple concept. Perhaps one question—the right one—would get the problem straightened out. Or maybe a quick review of a previous chapter would get you back on the right track. So the first step is to think about the problem openly. If you jump to quick conclusions you will often fail to see what really needs to be done.”
- 4) “**Thinking creatively about a problem** means that you must be uncritical of possible solutions that come to mind—at least at first. Often you will limit yourself by saying, ‘Yeah, but I could never do that,’ or, ‘That wouldn’t work.’ At first, just consider all the possibilities.”
- 5) **TEACHER:** *Draw nine dots on the board:*

LESSON 34 • UNIT 2 • GRADE 6 (Continued)



Have the students draw nine dots on a sheet of paper with the same configuration. Then challenge them to connect those nine dots with just four straight lines, never lifting the pencil from the page and never retracing. Don't let them share their possible solutions with each other. Eventually show them one of several ways to solve the problem:



- 6) SAY, "What is interesting about this problem is that most people will say, 'But that's cheating. You went outside the box.' My answer is, 'What box?' Who said anything about how long the lines could be? The limits were ones you imagined, not ones that anyone gave to you. To solve a problem, often you have to see it in a whole new way, consider possibilities of all sorts."

LESSON 57 • UNIT 3 • GRADE 6

MANAGING YOURSELF USING SOCIAL/EMOTIONAL POSITIVE ACTIONS

Purpose: To introduce ideas for managing anger using social/emotional positive actions.

Materials Needed: None

Materials Provided: Image of “Thoughts-Actions-Feelings Circle” Poster

Procedure:

- 1) SAY, “One thing that all human beings share is emotion. People all over the world feel joy, worry, disappointment, jealousy, excitement, confidence, and a wide range of other emotions. Emotions are challenging to our lives and arise from almost every thought and action. They also influence the way we feel about ourselves.”

“Today, we are going to learn about the emotion of anger. Different people show **anger** in different ways—from dynamite bursts of temper to calm, cold control. All people can manage their anger by deciding ahead of time how they will behave. Learning ways to control anger is something each of us has to do. Different situations require different methods.”

- 2) “There are steps you can take that are helpful in managing anger. Before we discuss those, I want to introduce you to the Thoughts-Actions-Feelings about Self Circle. (*Display the “Thoughts-Actions-Feelings Circle” Poster. Be sure students can see both sides.*) This circle illustrates something you do constantly, although you’re often unaware of it. First, you think about doing something. That thought usually leads to an action. The action produces certain feelings which determine what your next thoughts will be. Then, those thoughts lead to another action, which leads to other feelings, which determine your next thoughts. It is an endless cycle that helps you decide how to behave, and it can be positive or negative.”

“Now, back to managing anger. There are three steps you could take:

- **Delay:** This is a great remedy for getting anger under control. When you feel mad, try very hard not to say anything until you cool off.
- **Don’t react physically:** Control impulses to hit and throw things. Physical violence is not a positive way to let someone know that you are mad. Perhaps simply telling someone that you are angry and then not saying anything more will be the most effective. Vigorous exercise or work will often help us blow off steam in a constructive way.”
- **Quiet words.** Soft answers spoken in kindness will often lessen angry feelings.

“Do you think these steps would work? Are they easy to do?” (*Allow time for responses.*)

LESSON 57 • UNIT 3 • GRADE 6 (Continued)

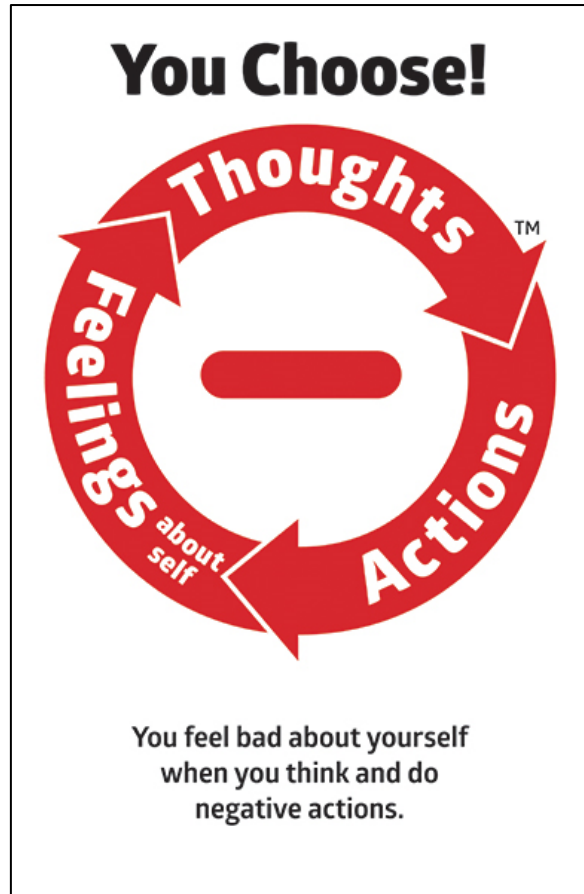
TEACHER: Allow time for brief responses. Ask students how they would respond to the following examples with the above steps and the Thoughts-Actions-Feelings about Self Circle in mind. Bring out different ways of controlling tempers.

- You have decided to make a cake for your father's birthday. He loves chocolate cake, so you get up early and go to the store with your mother to get all the ingredients. You spend the rest of the afternoon helping your mother make the cake from scratch. Right before your father gets home from work, you are asked to run an errand. When you return, you find that your brother has eaten a big piece of the cake that you were going to give to your father.
- Your mother asks you to put all the clean dishes away. But you're late for a baseball game at the park. As you are hurrying to get the job done, you drop and break one of her favorite mugs.
- Your brother comes into your room and accuses you of wearing his track shoes. You did not borrow them. He yells and calls you names.
- You are determined to win the 6th grade science fair. You spend hours building a volcano and feel certain that it's a good job. Several days before the fair, you come home from school and find the project has been ripped apart. Your little brother must have done it because he has been very interested in your project from the beginning. You go look for your little brother.

Lesson 57



Front



Back

LESSON 62 • UNIT 3 • GRADE 6

MANAGING YOURSELF USING SOCIAL/EMOTIONAL POSITIVE ACTIONS

Purpose: To provide suggestions for managing fear or anxiety.

Materials Needed: Pencils, chalk/whiteboard and chalk/markers or virtual platform

Materials Provided: None

Procedure:

- 1) SAY, “We’re going to talk about fear today. I’m going to read a story, and as I read I want you to think about if you’ve ever felt like Rick.”

UN-BECOMING SCAREDY MCGEE

“Scaredy McGee!”

Rick McGee flinched as he walked down the hall, trying not to blush. The middle school bully Josh did not give up that easily though. He kept walking next to Rick, chanting in Rick’s ear, “Scaredy McGee, where you running away to?”

“I don’t run away,” Rick lied. He did run away. All the time. Just not fast enough because somehow Josh always caught up with him. Rick walked faster, sweat running down his face, misery in his heart. They were attracting a crowd in the hall, but not big enough for the teachers to notice before Josh punched him. The punch came—hard in his shoulder, enough to leave a bruise. Rick flinched, anxiety buzzing in his stomach like bumbles stinging.

Then Josh was gone, a few seconds before Rick’s English teacher Mrs. Jarvis showed up. For once, Rick felt like Josh hadn’t been quite fast enough for the teachers not to notice his tactics. Mrs. Jarvis looked mad as a steamed lobster.

“Rick, come with me,” she said sternly, waving to her classroom.

Rick, wishing he could run the other direction down the hall, shuffled miserably into Mrs. Jarvis’s class. Mrs. Jarvis didn’t have a class this hour, and as she turned around all her fearsome attention was fixed on Rick. For a second, Rick felt like screaming or throwing up—he wasn’t sure which.

“Rick, it’s time you learn how to handle your fears,” she said firmly.

This is not at all what Rick was expecting. He shrugged.

“Now, Rick listen to me. The teachers don’t catch half of the mean things that happen in this school—we can’t be everywhere. And that counts for life too. How many things are you afraid of? Think about it for a second.”

Rick thought about it and felt almost sick instantly. He hated life in a way because he was afraid of it. Afraid of his dad when he had a bad day at work and came home yelling. Afraid of

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Josh the bully. He was afraid of Josh and the kids that laughed at him. He was afraid of tests and failing. Afraid of never being good enough for anything. Afraid of spiders, snakes, and food going bad. He was afraid of dying, other people dying, ghosts.

Just thinking about all those things, he felt his heart ache and his stomach go tight. His hands even shook.

"Listen to me," Mrs. Jarvis said. "Fear is a feeling everyone has. It is normal to be frightened now and then, and sometimes a healthy fear of something will keep you safe. Fear is caused by knowing that danger, pain, or evil is near."

"Fears are like monsters," Mrs. Jarvis explained. "They sit in the dark of our minds and hearts and snarl and snap and make us miserable. The first step is to turn on the light. Even if you're scared, look at your fear, face it even if you only face it in your own mind."

"I face Josh every day and it doesn't help," muttered Rick.

"But are you really seeing Josh?" asked Mrs. Jarvis. "You're not as powerless as you think. To take power over your fears, you can't let them manage you. You must manage fear by thinking positively and taking positive action. Show the monsters that you won't let them control you."

Together, Mrs. Jarvis and Rick went through his mental list of fears and found a way to shine a light on them and then manage them. Tests? Ask teachers for a list of things to study and prepare by studying the whole list. If the fear doesn't go away, ask the teacher if he would let you take the test after school when everyone else is gone and there is less pressure. Spiders and snakes? Go to a petting zoo and get introduced to a snake you can touch that can't possibly hurt you. Bullies?

"Bullies are people, not monsters with fur and claws," said Mrs. Jarvis. "They thrive off fear like monsters do though. What is the worst Josh can do to you?"

"Beat me up," Rick said instantly.

"Not really." Mrs. Jarvis shook her head. "Some bullies are so cruel that they beat people up until their lives are in danger—that's the worst, and often requires other people to help us. Josh isn't that kind of bully. He's just calling you names when teachers aren't around because you're afraid of him. He's making you miserable all the time with just the threat of a punch. You can't punch or fight back without breaking school rules like him and feeling bad, but you can refuse to let him talk to you that way."

"I can't," said Rick.

"You can," said Mrs. Jarvis. "Every time you see Josh, just picture a purple monster that shrinks when you refuse to let him make you cower. Look him in the eye when you do. Got it?"

The next day, Rick remembered her advice as Josh came up to him in the hall. "Hey, Scaredy McGee?"

Remembering Mrs. Jarvis's advice, Rick turned, looked Josh in the eye and said, "Quit calling me that, man. It's lame."

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“No, you’re lame!” Josh laughed.

“Seriously, stop it,” said Rick, half-hyperventilating. But he didn’t look away. “I’m done.”

Josh stepped up threateningly. “You’re done?”

Rick realized that he was done. He was done living in fear of what Josh could do. He would feel miserable giving in. Right now, he was scared—but he was proud of himself. He wasn’t Scaredy Mcgee right now. No matter what happened.

Rick nodded. “Yeah, man. I’m done.”

The bell rang. Josh laughed and walked away. Rick went to science class and shook for fifteen minutes, but he felt strangely free. Josh the Monster had shrunk, just a little. Now he was just Josh.

The next day, Josh called one, “Scaredy Mcgee!” up the hall but left Rick alone. After a few more days of Rick meeting Josh’s eyes, Josh gave up talking to him at all. Just like that, one of his fears had disappeared. Rick thought of all his other fears and realized he could help them disappear. He could face them and find solutions to shrink them. He didn’t have to be Scaredy Mcgee. He could just be him. And that was kind of awesome.

- 2) SAY, “Rick found ways to manage his fear instead of letting it manage him. Give me some fears. We’re going to write them on the board. *(Allow time for responses up to 8 or 10 fears.)*”

“With fear and worries, it helps to take positive action. For example, if you’re filled with anxiety about failing a test, the positive action is to study and prepare for it. It also helps to talk to someone about your fears and anxieties. When we verbalize them, we can understand them better and decide on a method of dealing with them. No matter what, confiding your fear to a person you trust can shrink that fear—just like shining a light on a monster in a closet and realizing just by knowing what it looks like, you don’t feel quite as frightened.”

- 3) “Ok, now let’s write down some ways to manage those fears with positive thoughts and actions.” *(Allow time for responses and write them on the board. Fears can be combatted by positive actions and thoughts. Fear of failure can be combatted by positive thoughts like “I only fail if I don’t try” and “as long as I do my best, I don’t have to feel bad if I fail. Failures don’t have to be final” and “I can try again. Even if I have to repeat a class or quiz, I will be ok. It doesn’t make me stupid”. Some fears are a little harder to handle because they require intervention, like fear of bullies or abuse or fear of dying. You might want to emphasize that some fears require outside help to really overcome them, but just talking about them can be a great first step. Don’t be afraid to go talk to a school counselor or trusted adult about some of these tough fears. The next part of the procedure will explain why this is).*
- 4) “Keep in mind, some fears we need help to overcome. If someone is threatening you, hitting you or abusing you, it is hard to get out of these situations alone. Managing this fear means not letting it hurt you anymore so that you can be happy—even if that means telling a teacher or counselor about

LESSON 62 • UNIT 3 • GRADE 6

your fear. Some fears need medication or other accommodations too, like anxiety that keeps you from being able to go to school or think.”

- 5) “Take out a piece of paper, and draw a line down the middle of your paper. On one half, describe a fear you have. On the other half, describe the positive actions you can take to manage that fear. If you cannot think of any, you can ask a parent or me for some help. By managing your fear, you can move past it and reach your dreams as a happier person. Often fears keep us from getting what we want, but this doesn’t have to be you. You just made a list to prove it.”

LESSON 71 • UNIT 4 • GRADE 6

**GETTING ALONG WITH OTHERS USING
SOCIAL/EMOTIONAL POSITIVE ACTIONS**

Purpose: To reinforce the positive action of getting along with others and to begin the creation of a Code of Conduct for the class.

Materials Needed: Pencils, paper, chalk/whiteboard and chalk/marker or virtual platform

Materials Provided: None

Procedure:

- 1) SAY, “I’m going to read a story, and as I read I want you to think about the problems that Captain Stacy is facing and how she figures out a way to make them better.”

THE SPACESHIPS NEW CODE

Astronaut Captain Stacy Wilson sat down on her tiny bunk on the spaceship New Vision, wondering if she and her team would ever survive this mission. They had been sent to build a colony on a new planet, preparing the way for mankind to flee Earth and the impending volcanic destruction there. But her team—and Stacy had to admit, herself too—were about to melt down long before Earth did.

It had started with small arguments over whose shift it was at the controls. Some personal belongings had gone missing, then two team members had sworn at and insulted each other. Finally, an actual fistfight broke out between two astronauts. In the fight, they knocked loose an oxygen port and sent the whole ship into chaos for half-a-day.

Millions of lives would be lost if Stacy and her team failed. They still had eight months before they’d reach their destination and at this rate none of them would live to see the new planet. They couldn’t leave. More mistakes and arguments could literally destroy the ship. They had to rely on each other to accomplish their mission. Stacy was their leader, but what could she do to change the tide?

After thinking for a while, Stacy decided they needed rules. Picking up a notebook, she struggled to think of any rules until she finally thought to herself, “How would I like to be treated on this mission? How would I like my team to act towards me while we work together?”

Pretty soon, Stacy had a long list as she considered how she would like to be treated. Be honest, don’t steal or touch each other’s stuff without permission. Be respectful and kind, no swearing, insulting, fighting or hitting. Cooperate and share, help each other with our duties and our problems. Communicate better, as a team. Talk to each other positively and work together to solve problems.

Stacy thought about her list and felt good. If her teammates treated her this way, life would be so much better. Stacy realized that she would have to keep all these rules too or else it

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wouldn't be fair. No one would listen to her and she could cause the very problems she was trying to fix by not keeping her own rules.

Stacy introduced the rules to her teammates that night. She said to her fellow astronauts, "This is your ship. These would have to be your rules too, so let's vote. Do we want to adopt this Code of Conduct on our ship?"

After discussing a few things that other teammates wanted to add, like no complaining and listen to each other, the team of astronauts voted all together to adopt the Code of Conduct. Though it was hard at first, Stacy sat down on her bunk a month later and was amazed to think of how much better life was on the ship. She felt like she and her teammates were true friends, and that their important mission would succeed. And that was worth worlds to her.

- 2) SAY: Imagine being stuck on a spaceship with the people you know from school or maybe your family. What kind of problems do you think you would have?" (*Allow for responses.*)

Yes, it's hard to have to be with people who aren't perfect every day, which we all deal with, whether we're on a spaceship or not. But Stacy's solution can work for you too. Stacy made a Code of Conduct, a list of rules for how she wanted to be treated and also how she would treat others—whether they followed the rules or not."

- 3) "Now take out a sheet of paper and a pencil and write down the ways you would like people to treat you. This will become our classroom Code of Conduct. We might have some in common with Stacy."

TEACHER: Give students a minute or two to do the activity. If they're struggling to come up with ideas, you can give a few prompts like 'no yelling' or 'no stealing' or 'no touching each other's stuff'. Once each student has something written down, have everyone stop writing to listen.

SAY, "Let's share some of the rules you wrote down. How do you want others to treat you?"

TEACHER: On the board write: Our Classroom Code of Conduct. Have students give their suggestions one by one, and list them on the board. If they say 'with fairness' or 'with respect,' etc., that's good, but ask them to translate those concepts into specific rules for behavior. This can be anything from 'no swearing at me or name-calling' to 'being kind when I have a bad day' or 'listening to me when I have ideas/talk' or 'telling me nice things about me'.

Listen for rules they have in common with one another, and point out how we all like to be treated in the same positive ways. Suggest that they add rules to their list as they listen to what other students share.

Once the classroom list is complete and all students agree to follow the rules, save a copy so you can refer to it as needed to remind students of the Code and that they agreed to follow it.

- 4) SAY, "We can never make others live our Code of Conduct—we'll just feel angry and depressed if we try to make someone else change. But we can always feel good about ourselves no matter how we are treated when we live our lives with our own positive Code of Conduct. That means we'll be happy and we'll be more likely to achieve our dreams and get what we want out of life."

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“Now think about a time when someone was mean to you, or maybe you argued or fought with someone. How did you feel afterwards?” *(Allow a short time for students to respond with the feelings they had, such as ‘angry’ or ‘upset’ or ‘bad’. If someone says ‘good’ you might have to clarify that sometimes fighting or saying mean things makes us feel powerful or like we’ve won for a little while, but we always feel worse in the end. The rush never lasts, and we always end up feeling depressed or unhappy long-term if we do negative actions often.)*

“The beauty of having a positive Code of Conduct for yourself is that if someone calls you an idiot you don’t have to call them one back—it’s against your rules after all. The truth is, we can choose how we feel inside by choosing to think positive thoughts and do positive actions that keep our Code of Conduct. When we choose to treat others the way we would like to be treated we are happier—no matter what the other person does. We really can control how we react and how we feel in tough situations by following a positive Code of Conduct. No longer do you have to feel like the people in your world control how bad or good you have to feel. Because, when you do good you feel good. And keeping your Code of Conduct will help you succeed at the mission of a happy life while helping others succeed too.”

“Now remember, there are some tough situations in which we need help to overcome. That’s why we have parents and doctors and counselors and policemen and teachers. Sometimes you are keeping your Code of Conduct by asking for help. That means you’re kind enough, and you care enough about yourself to ask for help to try and feel better.”

- 5) “Try to think of a time when you felt bad inside and you weren’t following the Code of Conduct we just made. I want you to commit right now to practicing just one of these rules better for a week. Maybe it’s ‘no yelling at my family’ or ‘don’t interrupt when other people talk’. You might be thinking of a person you fight or argue with a lot. Even if the other person is often negative, you can choose to feel better by following the Code of Conduct when you talk to that person by talking respectfully or not being mean back. Go ahead and circle the rule on your list that you want to work on. Try and do better at following this rule for one week, and then look back and see how it made you feel. Think how you would feel if you were to follow all the rules all of the time, not just in class and not just for a week.”

TEACHER: Give students a second to think and circle the rule they would like to keep better. This might be really personal, so you might or might not choose to ask them to share the rule they’d like to keep and why. Forcing answers could be counterproductive for some students.

SAY, “As you work on your Code of Conduct for a week, it might be really hard to be positive when everyone around you is being negative, like yelling or name calling or bullying. But you can do it, and you will feel better inside even if the people around you don’t appreciate what you’re trying to do. The more you follow a positive Code of Conduct, even if it’s just tiny changes every day, the happier you will feel. And sometimes, people like that can change the world—with or without a spaceship.”

LESSON 72 • UNIT 4 • GRADE 6

**GETTING ALONG WITH OTHERS USING
SOCIAL/EMOTIONAL POSITIVE ACTIONS**

Purpose: To develop a Code of Conduct the students can accept as rules for getting along with each other.

Materials Needed: Felt-tip marker, large sheet of poster paper or poster board

Materials Provided: None

Procedure:

- 1) SAY, "As students in the same class, you see each other a great deal, but each day you leave the school and don't see most of the students again until the next day. Suppose for a moment that this classroom is a spaceship and you are on an extended trip through space. This means that you need to get along as well as possible. It is crucial that you work well together for the success of the mission, but also because such extended 'togetherness' could easily lead to problems. What are some ways we could get along? (*Allow for responses. Write student suggestions on the board and direct towards kindness, respect, caring, honesty, fairness, patience, empathy, cooperation, if they are not suggested*).

Now, our spaceship has landed, but we still need to get along with each other. What I need to know now is what rules of behavior you can all agree upon. Reviewing the list we just came up with, ask yourself what rules should apply to our classroom. Can anyone suggest a rule that you think we should live by? We will call these rules our **Code of Conduct**."

- 2) *TEACHER: The first goal here is get the students to be specific. If someone says, "We should be kind to each other," ask for a more specific rule. Perhaps the student will respond, "We shouldn't tease each other." When such a rule is offered ask the students whether every single one of them can agree to that. Let them raise their hands in approval. If someone votes against it, ask why. The student might say, "Sometimes teasing is just fun. I don't think we should say that we don't ever want any teasing." Discuss this and see whether a guideline about teasing could be developed. Would a qualifying word for "teasing" make it acceptable to everyone?*
- 3) *This process, if taken seriously, can cause the students to think very seriously about what behavior they will accept. If they are accepting some behaviors too easily, raise some questions, make sure they understand what they are committing themselves to. Once a rule has been accepted, however, write it down on the poster paper and remind the students that this will be posted and that every person has agreed to it. Refer to it as needed to remind students they agreed to follow the code.*
- 4) SAY, "I'm very impressed. You have come up with _____ rules that I certainly accept and am willing to abide by. I hope that you also see the value of the process we have just gone through. Everyone would

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like to be treated well, but not everyone is willing to offer what he or she expects to receive. Let's live these rules and see if it won't improve the quality of friendship and cooperation in our class by following this **classroom Code of Conduct.**"

LESSON 89 • UNIT 5 • GRADE 6

**TELLING YOURSELF THE TRUTH USING
SOCIAL/EMOTIONAL POSITIVE ACTIONS**

Purpose: To introduce telling yourself the truth using social/emotional positive actions.

Materials Needed: None

Materials Provided: Image of “Polygraph” Poster 90-5-6

Procedure:

- 1) SAY, “Today we will learn about the importance of applying **self-honesty**—telling ourselves the truth about who we are, what we want, why we do the things we do. When we practice self-honesty, we look at ourselves closely to find out what we like and don’t like, what things we do well and what things we have difficulty with. I’m going to read a story called ‘Polygraph’—can anyone tell me what a polygraph is?” (*Allow time for responses.*) “A polygraph is a measurement of physical responses that can determine whether or not people are telling the truth. Usually we think of polygraph tests being given to people who have been accused of a crime or who are applying for high security risk jobs in which they must handle a lot of money or merchandise. In those cases, the testers are looking to see if the people tested are basically honest with others. But a polygraph can tell if you’re honest with yourself, as you’ll find out when you hear the story.”
- 2) *TEACHER: Display the “Polygraph” Poster 90-5-6. Read the story, and then elicit discussion with the questions that follow.*

POLYGRAPH

I remember when I first realized that I don’t always know myself very well. Sometimes it takes something “out there” to open your eyes to what you’re really thinking and feeling—something like a lie detector.

Ann and I had been best friends since third grade. We dressed alike, read the same books, had the same favorite movie stars and used the same expressions.

Sometimes, other kids would even call me “Ann” and Ann, “Jacque.”

One day, we were walking to our 7th grade history class together. Wow! I mean for some reason, I can remember the whole conversation.

“Did you get Mr. Biehl’s homework done this weekend?” Ann asked me.

“Yeah,” I answered.

“You did? I think Mr. Biehl is too hard. He acts like we’re in high school or something. Homework every night?”

“It was an interesting assignment, though,” I said.

LESSON 89 • UNIT 5 • GRADE 6 (Continued)

“You’re crazy! It was stupid. Who cares about what they used to do to witches in the 17th Century?”

That’s when I made my mistake. Well, actually, it turned out not to be a mistake, but it caused a lot of trouble for a while. “Marcie says it’s important,” I said, “because it’s just one more way in which women have been abused throughout the ages.”

“Marcie? When did you talk to Marcie?”

“At the mall. We had lunch together.”

“You didn’t tell me you were going to the mall!”

“I tried to call you,” I said, defending my loyalty, “but there was nobody home. I ran into her in line at the food court sandwich shop, so we shared a table and had an interesting talk.”

“Weren’t you afraid someone would see you with her? How was she dressed? I know...” Ann finished her sentence by walking as if something was wrong with her. Even then, it seemed a bit juvenile. But, I laughed anyway because Ann wasn’t being mean, just funny, and she was my best friend. I mean, Marcie does dress differently, but that’s just her. There’s nothing wrong with her. She just has a different fashion sense, as my mom would put it.

Just then, Marcie turned the corner of the 200 building. “Shh! Here she comes,” I said. “Hi Marcie.”

Marcie brightened up at being noticed. “Hi, Jacque, Ann,” she said. I remember thinking, “Boy, she’s really shy, but she wasn’t when I met her at the mall.” I wondered why. Then, the tardy bell rang and we hurried into our seats.

Ann didn’t speak to me during roll. Then, after Mr. Biehl started talking, she passed me a note. “What did you talk about?” it read.

I passed another back. “Feminism. Marcie said that Mr. Biehl was one of the non-sexist teachers in the school. Maybe she’s right.”

Ann passed me another note. It was real cute, but not overly intelligent. “Oh, la de da! Aren’t we the peewee women’s libbers today?” I didn’t answer the note. Mr. Biehl had stopped talking and he was toting a strange contraption to the front of the room. I kept hearing this “Psst! Psst!” Ann was trying to get my attention. She had another tiny piece of paper in her hand.

Mr. Biehl saw her. “Well,” he said, “if the giggle girls will allow us, I’d like to continue with class.”

As soon as he turned his back, Ann whispered, “Oh, yeah, he’s a real feminist all right.”

Okay, so nobody’s perfect. “Shh!” I said. “I want to hear this.” I did, too, because it was really interesting. I looked at my notes. They didn’t make any sense. Now what was Mr. Biehl saying? Something about polygraphs being the modern day equivalent of the vats of water once used to find out whether or not a woman was a witch. Poly whats? I had to look at the notes on the boy’s desk next to mine. “Polygraphs = lie detectors,” they read. Oh, so that’s what that contraption was.

Mr. Biehl fiddled with the wires in front of the room. “They measure emotional stress,” he said. (I know ‘cause I got that part down in my notes.) “You attach electrodes to places like a

LESSON 89 • UNIT 5 • GRADE 6 (Continued)

person's fingers, chest, temples, etc. As I said, the polygraph isn't foolproof, but it can usually indicate whether or not we are approaching a subject about which someone is anxious. Let's have some volunteers."

You know how it is. Everybody wants to be the guinea pig, but no one wants to let anyone know that they do. So everybody was volunteered by somebody else. As people were volunteered, they left the room so the rest of the class could choose questions. Ann raised her hand, "Jacque'd like to volunteer." I was hoping I'd be chosen, but you have to pretend you don't, so I protested a while and then gave in and left the room.

I was nervous when I went back inside. What would they ask me? I mean, it could be really embarrassing. They started with questions like name, age, school, but they ended with a special question which was supposed to show what happened when the person lied. They told Fritz, the brain of the class, to answer, "No," to his last question, no matter what the real answer was. Then, they asked him if he made the Dean's List last semester. "No," he answered, and the pens jumped. The polygraph seemed to work. Still, you always think something's been faked until you try it yourself. It would be fun to see if the pens would really jump when I lied.

I was last up. I swear, my liver was bopping around inside when I sat down. Mr. Biehl asked, "Is your name Jacque Washington?"

I giggled and answered, "No." The pens continued along a smooth course, drawing almost straight lines across the graph paper. That meant I was telling the truth. One jumped a little bit when I giggled.

"Truth," the class called out.

"Try not to laugh though," said Mr. Biehl. "It can affect the machine."

"Is your name Jacque Clark?"

"Yes." The pens continued along a smooth course. I was telling the truth. Well, I knew that.

"Very good. How old are you?"

"Twelve," I answered, "Next month." Truth.

After a few more questions, Mr. Biehl said, "Now, Jacque, we'd like you to answer, 'No,' to every one of these questions, no matter what the correct answer is. Understand?" I nodded my head.

"Jacque," Mr. Biehl said, "is Paula Ortiz your best friend?"

This would be easy. Everyone knew that Ann and I were best friends. My nerves calmed down. "No," I said. The little pens continued smoothly across the paper.

"Truth. Is Gloria Seward your best friend?"

"No."

"Truth. Is Ann Duncan your best friend?"

LESSON 89 • UNIT 5 • GRADE 6 (Continued)

As instructed, I answered, “No.” I watched the graph, but it was a moment before the double negative reasoning of the polygraph made sense. There was a strange stillness in the room. Something seemed to be wrong with the lie detector. When I answered “No,” the pens had again continued along an even course. According to the polygraph, I was telling the truth when I said that Ann was not my best friend.

“Truth,” Mr. Biehl said.

Someone in the room gasped. I wondered whether it was me or Ann.

Mr. Biehl continued. “Is Marcie Herbstein your best friend?”

“No,” I answered. A flood of amazed laughter came forth from the room. I stared in amazement as the pens jumped excitedly across the graph.

“Lie,” said Mr. Biehl.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What did the polygraph reveal about Jacque that she didn’t know?
- Why don’t we sometimes know ourselves?
- What does self-honesty mean? What did it mean for Jacque?
- What did Jacque have in common with Ann?
- What did she have in common with Marcie?

Lesson 89

Be A Good Lie Detector — Tell Yourself The Truth



**TELLING YOURSELF THE TRUTH USING
SOCIAL/EMOTIONAL POSITIVE ACTIONS**

Purpose: To introduce the positive action of examining actions for integrity.

Materials Needed: Paper, pencil

Materials Provided: None

Procedure:

- 1) SAY, “I have an important question for you, and it's important because knowing the answer to this question affects how you live your entire life. What do you think integrity is?” (*Allow time for responses.*)

“Here is the definition of integrity: Integrity is the quality of being honest with yourself and others to become your best self. This means being honest with yourself and others all the time, even when no one else would know if you lied. What do you think it means to be honest with yourself?” (*Allow students to take turns sharing some possible examples or ideas.*)

“There are times in our lives where we may do things for the wrong reasons. Sometimes we lie to ourselves about how we feel or what we really think. Sometimes we even live lies that no one ever knows about, but they hurt us anyway because remember: we can't do bad and feel good. Even if no one knows we lied or pretended, we'll end up feeling bad. As we read this story, try to pick out some things you would like to talk about that involve integrity and Kacey's struggle with it.”

TRUE AIM

Kacey glared down at the math test. There was a big red D at the top. Which meant her spot on the school volleyball team was in trouble, since the coaches would cut her from the team if she didn't improve her grades. Kacey had never liked math and none of her friends wanted to help her with it.

“Okay, everybody find a partner to go over your tests with,” said Mr. Jorgenson.

Kacey looked for one of her usual friends to buddy with, but then, she got an idea. There was Megan in the front. Megan was smart, and always got straight A's.

In that second, Kacey had an idea and got up, sitting in the empty desk in front of Megan. “Hi,” she said, with much more friendliness than she actually felt. Kacey felt vaguely embarrassed, but hid it. She didn't generally hang out with nerds.

Megan was a little shy at first, but Kacey was determined to get her grade up even if it meant being friendly to Megan. For a week, she sat in front of Megan and always asked, “How was your day?” or “How was English class?” or “I love that shirt, where did you get it?”

LESSON 101 • UNIT 5 • GRADE 6 (Continued)

Never having been friends with a bubbly extrovert like Kacey, Megan talked and talked, doing her homework in class while Kacey silently copied down Megan's answers and kept her talking. She told herself it wasn't cheating just to copy homework. Kacey's grade went up—she even learned some math along the way, so the tests she had to do alone were improving too—but soon Kacey noticed something was wrong.

At first she blamed her coaches or her friends who asked her why on earth she sat by Megan all the time. Kacey always laughed and said something mean about adopting a nerd. She started feeling angry at Megan for no reason, angry at the world, depressed—frustrated. She started blowing up at her teammates and at home, and she grew to hate math with a passion. "I'm fine," she said, any time her mom tried to ask her what was wrong. "I just want to be left alone."

Then, Kacey's coach said something in practice that really stuck with her, "Are you doing things for the right reasons? Are you saying things behind your friends' or siblings' backs that you wouldn't dare say if they were there? Pretending you're acting or feeling one way when you really feel another way is lying, even if you never get caught or no one ever knows. So don't pretend to care about this team unless you mean it."

Those words haunted Kacey for days. Even though it was hard at first, she made herself tell the truth about how she felt inside. Kacey knew she was hardly ever happy. Her friends all gossiped meanly about each other but were nice to each other's faces. And Megan...Kacey realized she felt terrible, terrible about Megan. Guilty and angry and frustrated and sad all at once. Kacey was using Megan, being nice to her just to get what she wanted. Lying to her. And Megan is nice, Kacey realized. She has never once said something mean like my friends always do.

Kacey knew she would never get caught—at what, befriending a girl in her class? It was a lie only she knew about. But it was hurting her all the same. All the lies she was living were. Feeling overwhelmed and bad about herself, Kacey decided to follow some of her volleyball coach's favorite advice. She could fix one thing at a time—she could be completely honest to just one person, and build on that.

So the next day at school, Kacey took every scrap of courage she had to say out of the blue to Megan, "I've been copying off you, Meg. I'm sorry. Seriously. I won't be fake anymore."

Megan blushed and looked down at the desk. Kacey realized Megan had guessed some of her unspoken lies already. Maybe she wasn't as good a liar as she thought.

Megan really was nice. She just smiled, still looking a little hurt, and said, "Sure. But you should tell Mr. Jorgenson."

Kacey froze, afraid for a moment that Megan would tell the teacher and she would lose her spot on the team for it. Mr. Jorgenson would never know Kacey cheated if Megan didn't tattle. Then Kacey saw Megan's pained face and felt guilty. Megan probably wouldn't tattle. But

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Kacey had lied to Mr. Jorgenson too by pretending her work was her own. How could Megan ever trust Kacey if she knew how quick Kacey was to lie again?

"I'll go with you," Megan said quietly. "Let's do it now."

So Kacey did. She got up and went with Megan to tell the teacher she'd been copying Megan's homework for weeks. Jorgensen was solemn at first, and he did tell Kacey this was serious—pulling the same stunt in college could get her expelled from a university.

"But I didn't catch you doing it," he said quietly. "And I respect the fact that you want to be honest now, but earning trust back takes work. So I need you to redo the assignments you copied on your own or with a tutor by the end of the semester. Don't help her, Megan. Okay?"

Walking out of math class, Kacey struggled not to cry. It had been harder than she thought to try and fix this. Then she felt an arm around her shoulder—it was Megan, who gave her a quick squeeze.

"Big day, Kace," she said with a smile. "Better?"

Kacey, to her astonishment, realized she did feel better. Lighter, happier. Like she'd been walking around with slimy muck on her hands for weeks and had finally washed it off. She even felt a little proud of herself despite the humiliation she'd just gone through. She hadn't lost Megan, who had become a real friend. She didn't have to show up at school tomorrow and pretend to Megan, or the teacher or even her mom by saying she was fine when she wasn't. Kacey realized she was just Kacey, no lies, no pretending.

It was a really, really good feeling.

- 2) SAY: "How was Kacey lying to Megan? What about Mr. Jorgenson?" *(Allow time for responses to both questions. You might want to emphasize it's possible to lie with more than just words—our actions and our thoughts can lie too.)*

"If making new friends is generally a good thing, a positive action, why did Kacey's reasons for making friends with Megan make it a negative action?" *(Allow time for responses. Emphasize that Kacey was lying to Megan by pretending to be her friend when she really just wanted something from her. True friends don't lie to each other because lies, even the ones we don't say with our words, hurt relationships and are negative actions.)*

"Think for a second about how hard it would be to do what Kacey did and admit you lied. Kacey could have lost her spot on the volleyball team for copying off Megan's homework. Kacey could have just stayed quiet about it, but she didn't. Why was it worth it to act with integrity no matter the risks?" *(Allow time for responses. After the students have commented, you'll want to emphasize that it's all about how you feel. When we are honest with ourselves and others, even bad situations feel better. Lies we carry around will always make us feel angry or depressed or bad about ourselves, and those situations tend to get worse even if no one finds out. It can be hard to live with integrity, just like it was for Kacey, but honest people are happier because it is a positive action to be honest. We need to be self-honest so we can trust ourselves.)*

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“Was Kacey a bad person for doing what she did?” (*Allow a moment for brief responses*). No, Kacey wasn’t a bad person. In fact, Kacey showed she was a really strong person for being able to honestly own up to the mistake, build integrity and change her life for the better. None of us are perfect, and everybody has something they can improve about themselves that will help them to be happier every day like Kacey.”

- 3) “I want you to take a minute now and think about how you feel about you. Even if you struggle sometimes to have integrity, you still can build it one positive action at a time, one day at a time, just like making a muscle stronger at the gym. I want you to think of one thing this week you want to be more honest about.”

“Maybe you want to try and keep your promises—even the small ones, like promising to do the dishes or your homework. It could be telling the truth about how you really feel from day to day. Or maybe you could make a list of the good things about yourself and remind yourself of them every day. That may seem odd, but the truth is we often lie to ourselves when we think tons of mean things about ourselves all the time that aren’t really true. All that’s required to build integrity and start feeling happier is that you give it an honest try. Just trying is a positive action.”

“Get a piece of paper and a pencil, and once you’ve decided, write down one thing you want to change and be more honest about this week. Goals written down are easier to keep. Don’t worry—no one else has to see your paper.”

TEACHER: Allow time for the activity. Unless a student wants to share what they wrote, it can be counterproductive to any who don’t. Being honest is a frightening thing, especially when we’re looking at ourselves. If they feel too embarrassed or ashamed, the student(s) might not try such an exercise again.

- 4) SAY: “Congratulations! You just did a positive action and built integrity. Seriously, it seems small, but even one line on a piece of paper can make a big difference when we stick with it. What you just did matters. We all make mistakes, but fixing those mistakes is another way we have integrity and it’s something to be proud of.”

LESSON 111 • UNIT 6 • GRADE 6

**IMPROVING YOURSELF CONTINUALLY USING
SOCIAL/EMOTIONAL POSITIVE ACTIONS**

Purpose: To introduce the concept of self-improvement and begin setting goals.

Materials Needed: Pencils, paper

Materials Provided: None

Procedure:

- 1) SAY, "In a study of successful people, a researcher learned that all of them loved to picture themselves at some time in the future. They often found themselves imagining their own progress and seeing themselves at a time when their goals were achieved. This 'envisioning' process seemed to keep them on track and keep them striving for worthwhile **goals**."
- 2) "I would like you now to picture yourself at age twenty-five. What will you be doing? What will your life be like? What will you accomplish? Go ahead and dream up the best things you can think about. Get out a piece of paper and write a paragraph about the picture you see. Then, when that part is done, make a list of the steps you could take to get there."
- 3) *TEACHER: Let the students write for a few minutes, and then ask some of them to share their ideas. For today, let them stay at the ideal level, imagining a sort of "super existence."*
- 4) *Tell students to keep what they have written so they can reflect on it often to see if they are on track to becoming their future selves.*

LESSON 112 • UNIT 6 • GRADE 6

**IMPROVING YOURSELF CONTINUALLY USING
SOCIAL/EMOTIONAL POSITIVE ACTIONS**

Purpose: To encourage students to consider more than material things in setting their goals.

Materials Needed: Pencils, paper

Materials Provided: None

Procedure:

- 1) SAY, “If you were to picture yourself at twenty-five years old how would you describe the way you would like your life to be? Would your description be centered on expensive things? Having a fancy house and expensive cars? Being wealthy and famous? Most people like to dwell on such ideas, but more important questions are: ‘What kind of person will you be?’ ‘What will you achieve?’ ‘Will you be happy?’ ‘Will you be satisfied with yourself?’ ”
- 2) “How many of you know who Elvis Presley was? Who can tell us something about him?” (*He was a famous singer, very popular and very rich.*) “How old was he when he died?” (*Forty-two.*) “What were the last few years of his life like?” (*He was using lots of drugs and he was frustrated by his life.*) “How could this be possible? Wasn’t he rich and famous? Didn’t he have a huge house and lots of expensive cars?” (*Yes, but he no longer had a goal. He had nowhere to go as a person.*) ”
- 3) “Now get out a piece of paper and write a paragraph about the picture you see of yourself. What things are important to you? Where would you like to go to college? What would you like to do for work? What sort of family would you like to have? What will you do to **give your life meaning**?”
- 4) **TEACHER:** *Have the students write for a few minutes and then share their vision of things.*



www.positiveaction.net | info@positiveaction.net | 800.345.2974 | 208.733.1328
260 3rd Avenue North, Twin Falls, ID 83301