



High School Kit 1 Sample Lessons



positiveaction.net







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.

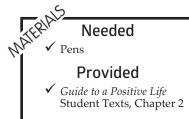


Why Do Positive Circles Matter to Me?

Goal: • To reflect on how the Thoughts-Actions-Feelings Circle works in our lives, and that we choose what thoughts, actions, and feelings to focus on.

Objectives: • To analyze the Thoughts-Actions-Feelings Circle of people in news stories and how they reflect paradigms related to our culture.

 To reflect, through journaling, on how the Thoughts-Actions-Feelings Circle—and how the paradigms we live in—affect our lives.



Procedure

Say: Thoughts, actions, and feelings are a self-perpetuating circle. Hundreds of positive and negative thoughts and images flood our minds every day. But we can choose which thoughts we focus on, which thoughts we act on. When we focus more and more on positive thoughts, our actions become more positive as well. The result is a sturdier, healthier self-concept and a stronger character arising from our thoughts, actions, and feelings. We feel good about ourselves because we are doing positive actions. This is the philosophy of the *Positive Action* program: *you feel good about yourself when you do positive actions, and there is a positive way to do everything*.

Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, who wrote the famous book, *Flow*, said this: "We create ourselves by the energy of our attention." We create a positive life and a positive identity by focusing, then acting on the positive. That's where we begin to take responsibility for our own image of ourselves, when we consciously and specifically choose to focus on positive thoughts and do positive actions.

A healthy, positive self-concept is the fuel that moves good things into our lives: an endless curiosity and life-long learning; strong relationships that protect us; a healthy body; careers that not only interest us, but provide a decent living—and a life and a self worth having. The choice is a powerful one, and it is yours.

Let's discuss what you have seen or read in the news recently. Who has a news story to share?

Teacher: Wait for responses. Have a couple of students briefly share a news story. After each story is shared, lead with these questions.

Say: Would you say the Thoughts-Actions-Feelings about Self Circle in this story is positive or negative? Why?

Teacher: Wait for responses.

Say: How do you think positive or negative thinking affects the person(s) involved in this situation? What could happen if the person(s) changed their circle of thinking?



One major paradigm in our culture includes these concepts: *OPTIMISM, PESSIMISM, REALISM, IDEALISM.* What do these words mean?

Teacher: Wait for responses. Utilizing the metaphor of the glass half-full or glass half-empty may help here.

Say: Read the *Guide to a Positive Life* Student Text, Unit 1, Chapter 2, "Thinking, Doing, & Feeling Good: How Do I Do It?"

Teacher: Allow time for students to read. Depending on time availability and your preference, direct them to reflect on the questions as they read, or discuss them in small groups or as a class.

Say: Let's think about and discuss who we are, answering our own "Life's Big Question." Who are you when you are navigating the world using a positive circle? What is your personality like? What is your character? Your self-concept? Your competence and confidence?

Who are you when you find yourself in a negative circle? What are your moods like? What are your stress levels like? What are your behaviors like? What are your connections to other people like? Your ability to tell the truth?

Do you think you are an optimist? A pessimist? An idealist? A realist? Or some combination of those things?

Teacher: Discuss the questions and ask for responses.

Say: Did anyone discover anything new about themselves? Anything old?

Teacher: Wait for responses.

Say: How do you think working from a positive perspective about change might affect the circles in your life?

Teacher: Wait for responses.

Say: If you have trouble coming up with positive thoughts to help you turn around a negative circle, it's a good idea to ask for help from the significant adults in your life. Some negative circles are tough to turn around, and some are impossible to turn around without help. When you decide to turn around a negative circle, people will appear in your life to help you; your parents, teachers, counselors, doctors, your friends, and others you may not expect. Remember: Help is always there when you ask.

—Teacher's-Toolbox-

Vocabulary

Idealism

Thinking and acting as if things are how we perceive or want them to be.

Optimism

Tendency to take a hopeful or cheerful view of things, expecting the best outcome. Tendency to believe that good will prevail.

Pessimism

Tendency to expect misfortune or a bad outcome for things. Tendency to believe that negativity will prevail.

Realism

Thinking and acting as if things "are what they are"—facing facts, being practical.

Word of the Week

Self-Concept

How you think and feel about yourself.



Thinking, Doing, and Feeling Good: How Do I Do It?

Goals: To learn that positive thoughts lead to positive actions, positive actions lead to positive feelings, and positive feelings lead to more positive thoughts in a self-reinforcing circle.

Have you ever been faced with a problem so overwhelming that you just gave up before you even tried? Well, there is hope—a proven method for making it through these tough situations. To help you understand, try imagining yourself in the following scenario.

You're nursing negative thoughts about your upcoming geometry test. You're so upset that you can't even open your textbook or look up your notes. So you worry about it until you can't think of anything else, but can't do anything about it.

If anybody asks you about studying for the test, you just blow up and stalk off. The night before the test you try to study, but that only lasts for about 10 minutes. When you can't make any sense of the material, you give up and play video games until 1 a.m. You fail the test the next day and feel miserable.



Has this kind of negative thinking, acting, and feeling ever happened to me? What were the outcomes?

Does any of this sound familiar to you? In this scenario, your negative thoughts propelled your ineffective and negative actions, and those created failure and incompetence—negative feelings about a negative situation.

Let's take a look at the same situation with a different point of view. You have the same problems with geometry, the same set of fears, the same IQ, but another set of thoughts, actions, and feelings.

When you realize a geometry test is coming up soon, you decide it's time for action. The material just isn't making sense to you, but you think that you can get it with a little help. So you turn to your friend, the one who seems like a natural at math.

With an hour a day and your friend's patient explanations, the basic theorems start to make more sense, and then everything starts clicking into place. Patterns emerge and your memory strengthens. You go to your teacher for a little extra help, and she's happy to give it to you and tells you she's proud of your progress. The night before the test you feel confident enough to relax for a while and then get a good night's sleep.

You take the test and find that you know most of the answers, you can guess at more, and only one or two questions really stump you. You get a B+! Your best score yet! You're thrilled, your parents are beaming, and your teacher is impressed. You'll never love geometry, but you'll get through it and move on. You had a positive thought to solve the situation, you acted on it, and it produced a positive outcome and positive feelings about yourself. So, which scenario seems better to you?



Have I created this kind of positive cycle in my life? What were the outcomes?

These scenarios demonstrate the Thoughts-Actions-Feelings Circle. The Thoughts-Actions-Feelings Circle explains that thoughts lead to actions, actions lead to feelings about yourself, and feelings lead to more thoughts. This process can be either positive or negative, just like the scenarios.

A positive circle is a safe and happy place to be, and it's called a Success Circle. When you stay in the Success Circle, it creates a positive cycle, leading to an upward spiral that uplifts you throughout your life.

A negative circle is a dangerous and dismal place to be, so dismal that it's called the Failure Circle. Selfrepeating Failure Circles become negative cycles that can create a downward spiral, which is very tough to recover from. These downward spirals may include things like problems with parents and schools, addiction, overdosing, jail time, unwanted pregnancies, sexually transmitted diseases, and poverty. These are places no one wants to end up.

Fortunately, you can interrupt a Failure Circle and turn it into a Success Circle. That process is called flipping. Whenever you find yourself in a Failure Circle, you can substitute a positive thought for the negative thought. You act on that positive thought with a positive action, and then you experience a positive feeling about yourself. Then, voila, you're in a Success Circle!

Of course, it's not as easy as snapping your fingers. Thinking positively can be much more difficult than thinking negatively, but it's worth it in the end. More possibilities will open up to you. You'll feel better about yourself—and everybody else as well.



What could happen in my life if I began to focus on positive thoughts and actions? Who could I be? Is there a Failure Circle that I can flip to a Success Circle by replacing the negative thought with a positive one?

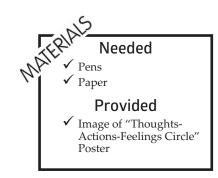


Does What We Do Matter?

Goal: • To learn the part actions play in the Thoughts-Actions-Feelings about Self Circle.

Objectives: • To understand how thoughts lead to actions.

- To become aware of the positive actions we already do in our own lives.
- To begin to consciously choose to do positive actions.





Teacher: Display "Thoughts-Actions-Feelings Circle" Poster.

Say: This model depicts how our thoughts, actions, and feelings work in a self-reinforcing circle. Our thoughts lead to our actions, which lead to feelings about ourselves. These circles can be either positive or negative. The model is also representative of the Positive Action program philosophy: you feel good about yourself when you do positive actions, and there is a positive way to do everything.

Actions are the critical junction in the Thoughts-Actions-Feelings about Self Circle—the visible outcomes of our thoughts. Even though we have many thoughts going through our minds each day, we can choose which thoughts we will act on. And we can choose what actions we are going to do—or not going to do.

The decision to use alcohol or drugs for the first time can be traced back to shaky thoughts about your lives; maybe you were bored or curious, and there was substantial pressure from your friends. That action is the outcome of those thoughts. All of your actions are. So are mine.

That's why it's so important to slow down a little bit, to reflect on your thoughts and your choices and to be conscious of our actions.

Positive actions are the good things we do for ourselves and for other people. As we gain conscious control over our thoughts, our actions change as well. Our actions have immense power over the way our lives turn out; our actions show the world who we are. Consequences, the ones we like and the ones we don't, attach themselves to our actions at every turn. Positive actions help us become competent and confident with our own lives. Negative actions are destructive and can have serious consequences attached to them.

Some people think of positive actions as big, courageous actions that are featured in the newspaper or on the news. But everyday activities are also be positive actions. Take out a piece of paper and write at the top "Positive Actions I Did Today." Now, think back over your day and write down a list of all the things you did "right"—all the positive actions you



made today. It helps to think of the physical, intellectual, emotional, and social parts of your lives.

Teacher: Give everyone a few moments to create their lists.

Say: Count up your responses. As I read the following series of questions, raise your hands in response. How many of you came up with one positive action? How many came up with two? Three? Four? Five? Six to ten? More than ten?

Would you be willing to share what is on your list? We'll pop around the room and give everyone a chance to say something.

Teacher: Ask for one or two students to come up and write the positive actions on the board. Try to cover the board with positive actions.

Say: As we are talking about positive actions and writing them down, reflect for yourself: Did I do this action today, too? If you also did that action and you don't have it on your list, add it to your list.

Teacher: As necessary, ask the students to clarify or explain why something is a positive action. If you hesitate to say something is a positive action but things are moving well (i.e., someone says "I chose to do nothing"), create a holding tank on the board and follow up after the initial brainstorming. Perhaps "nothing" was the most positive choice if the other options in their mind included picking a fight or making a mean remark. If no one throws out any "questionable" actions, sum up the discussion with:

Say: Did anyone do anything today that supported their physical selves (how active were you, what did you eat, are you clean)? Their intellectual selves (what did you learn, were you curious about something, were you creative, were you analytical)? Emotional (did you manage yourself, were you honest with yourself, did you pursue a dream or goal)? Social (did you connect with others by treating them the way you want to be treated)? Let's add a few more: Did you get up? Eat breakfast? Brush your teeth? Come to school this morning? Are you participating in this exercise? Did you get to class on time? Did you stop at a stop sign? Or ride your bike to school? Were you good to your mom or dad, a brother or sister this morning? Did something interest you in the news? Did you listen to music you like? Or read a good book? Draw? Did you smile at anyone? Are there some of these you can add to your list?

Teacher: Wait for responses and for them to quickly add these to their lists.

Say: What did you learn from this exercise?

Teacher: Wait for responses. Guide toward: Most of us do positive actions most of the time.

Say: Life would come to a halt, or would get very dangerous, if we stopped doing positive actions. They are everywhere. Our whole lives depend on them; our whole society depends on them. At the beginning of this discussion, some of you had fewer than five positive actions you'd taken today. If you've been keeping up with adding other actions you now realize you've done, your list should have grown. Please keep this list you've created for yourselves. If you're having a bad day, or a day when you feel like you aren't much or haven't done much, use this list to help you realize that you are on track with your life, in spite of having a bumpy day. Just looking over your list can get you off to a good start and help you gather positive momentum. It doesn't have to create a headline to be a positive action: in fact, it's the little things we do everyday that matter most.

Choosing to do positive actions helps us develop "core strength" —a deep inner strength. All these positive choices (many of which become subconscious habits over time) help us build *INTEGRITY*. Integrity guides us in our life tasks, helps us establish a career, and a strong character. We need positive actions for achievement of any kind, and for developing a strong, positive sense of ourselves.

My challenge for you today is to consciously choose to do a positive action for someone else. For example: Encourage someone. Assist with a task. Offer a compliment. Do a household chore. Pitch in to finish a job.

Be prepared to tell us about your action tomorrow.

Teacher: Plan to have some students share their experiences the next day.

-Teacher's Toolbox-

Vocabulary

Integrity

A sense of inner strength that comes from being honest, being ourselves, and living aligned with moral and legal laws.

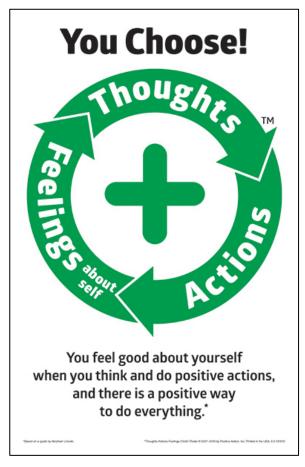
Teacher's Inspiration

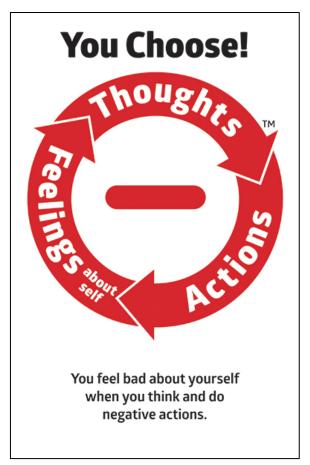
"Too often we underestimate the power of a touch, a smile, a kind word, a listening ear, an honest compliment, or the smallest act of caring, all of which have the potential to turn a life around."

—Leo Buscaglia

Always remember that most people, when asked about a person who was a role model, leader or helper, will have a teacher somewhere very high on their list. Every day, you choose the positive action of showing up to work with young people—doing that routine thing which becomes subconscious. Thank you.

Lesson 10



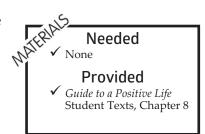


Front Back



What "Moves" Are Best for Me?

- **Goal:** To reflect on how the physical positive action of exercise supports and strengthens our body image and our self-concept.
- **Objectives:** To reflect on the role that exercise currently plays in our life.
 - To reflect on what steps we can each begin to take to put more exercise in our own lives.
 - To talk about body image and its impact upon our self-concept.



Procedure

- **Say:** Few positive actions will have as big of an impact on your life as getting some exercise. This is one of the major energy stabilizers in your life. It contributes to your overall wellness, physically, intellectually, emotionally, and socially. Sluggitis is a major cause of teen emotional states such as stress, distraction, restlessness, irritability, sleeplessness, anxiety, depression...What else?
- **Teacher:** Wait for responses.
 - **Say:** There is also a direct correlation between the shape of our bodies and our view of our selves. That's called body image. If you are appalled at the way your body looks in your skivvies, then it carries over into your ability to study, to connect with other people, whether you can tell yourself the truth, or set goals and achieve them. Does this ring true for you?
- **Teacher:** Wait for responses.
 - **Say:** The thing is this: if you start exercising, even if you have yet to see results, your self-concept already is strengthened. With every step you take, every ball you kick, or every block you do on your bike, you get stronger—physically, intellectually, emotionally, and socially. And slowly you begin to look better too.
 - Read Guide to a Positive Life Student Text, Unit 2, Chapter 8, "Why Do I Need to Move?"
- **Teacher:** Allow time for students to read. Depending on time availability and your preference, direct them to reflect on the questions as they read, or discuss them in small groups or as a class.
 - **Say:** Thinking about your personality, your lifestyle, and your body image, what are two or three physical activities you'd like to try? For example, if you are an extrovert who likes speed and being outside, you might like skiing or snowboarding. Maybe you are a diva; you might like ballet or jazz dance. If you are a photographer, you might like hiking. Now,



think about why you chose those activities, and what steps you could take to become more involved with one of those activities on a regular basis.

Teacher: Discuss as a class. Share your own example and ask for volunteers to share the physical

activities they chose and why.

Say: What would help you get moving?

Teacher: Wait for responses.

-Teacher's-Toolbox-

Vocabulary

Body Image

The picture we hold in our minds of what our bodies look like and how they function. If we have a positive body image, we might analyze our body's strengths and build on them. If we have a negative body image, we might focus instead on our body's weaknesses, and limit our activity to protect those weaknesses.

Word of the Week

Wellness

To be totally healthy in body, mind, and heart.

Why Do I Need to Move?

Goals: To learn that the physical positive action of getting enough exercise helps you get strong and vital, avoid obesity, and feel good about yourself.

You've evaluated your body image in relation to your eating habits, but it's also affected by your exercise habits. It goes back to the balance thing. It's not healthy to expect to look like a model, many of whom starve themselves and then have their images airbrushed before going up on that billboard or magazine cover. Nor is it healthy to let your body become so out of shape that you can't make it up the stairs. Neither extremes look good, but more importantly, they don't feel good. And they have dangerous long-term consequences.

No matter what, you need to move. It hardly matters how or when. A walk around the block, a wild and crazy dance, a track practice, a swim down the river, a football game, a trek up the mountain—every movement is contact with a physical imperative. You need to move.



Am I proud of my body?
If not, how can thinking about exercise differently help me like what I see in the mirror?

If you haven't exercised for a while, a good way to start is to walk around the block, shoot a few hoops, or dance like mad for a little while. Let the music propel you into a better frame of mind. If you need to lose weight, you'll need to exercise moderately for about an hour a day. A long, quiet walk is a great

way to start. As you get stronger, you can walk faster and harder, or you can move into exercise classes with a trainer or a coach. If you are very heavy or have other physical challenges, work with your doctor or someone your doctor suggests, like a nutritionist or a specialist in developing exercise programs for overweight people. If that's out of your price range or accessibility, find a buddy and work on those things together.



What are my goals for my body? What exercise would help me get there?

If you are stressed, anxious, distracted, or depressed, exercise is a critical factor in overcoming those moods. It helps immensely to battle the lethargy if you do some stretching every day. Often, just getting up off the couch and out the door is the biggest hurdle, but it gets easier after that. Having the accountability of a workout partner can give you just the boost you need.

However you make yourself do it, after you exercise, your moods will significantly improve with a healthier body, time outside, time to think, and realigning with your more positive self.



How could exercise improve my mood? Do my moods need improvement?

Your body has very specific needs for exercise. Be aware of what hurts, and stop doing that. Find what helps and keep slowly increasing those things. If you have questions, talk to your school nurse, a coach, or your family doctor.

As your body gets stronger and healthier, it's important to respect the bodies of others. You never know what kind of body image issues and other challenges they are struggling with. A disparaging remark can really harm someone, so keep your mind open to other people's strengths and vulnerabilities.

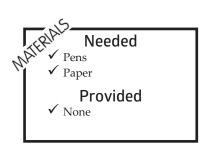
So, what are you waiting for? Get out there and get moving!



Is There a **Problem Here?**

Goal: • To learn that the intellectual positive action of problem-solving and analysis creates a strong self-concept and increased self-competence.

- **Objectives:** To learn and practice analysis by asking the "Five Whys."
 - To practice problem-solving using positive actions as a practical skill.





Procedure

Say: Everybody has trouble with something; everybody is challenged by a problem at some point in their lives. Some of us are challenged by several things at once. If we can't figure out how to resolve those problems, we get stuck and we stay stuck.

We have this illusion that the perfect teen shouldn't have problems: grades should come easy, participating in activities should come easy, a healthy social life should be easy. We expect ourselves to do well—without even knowing how. That's one of the squirmy thoughts that keep us locked in illusion. And that keep us from trying and learning new things.

If we've got problems, we've got to deal with them. What problems do teens have to deal with these days?

Teacher: Wait for responses.

Say: Problem-solving is a skill that you can learn and practice. You begin by analyzing the problem. Until you know what's really happening, you can't solve the problem. What if you apply all your problem-solving strategies only to find out that you are focusing on the wrong thing? Maybe the source of the problem is something you didn't remember or know about. Until the core of a problem is addressed, a problem remains unresolved. It will just pop up later in another shape or form.

There are lots of ways to analyze a problem. The most basic way is to ask questions, particularly of yourself. "The important thing is not to stop questioning," Albert Einstein said, "The basis of critical thinking is the ability to ask questions."

That's where the "Five Whys" come into play. Using the Five Whys can help you get to the core of an issue fast. Here's how it works:

Problem: I am getting incompletes and wrong answers in math.

- First Why: Why is that happening? Response: I don't understand math very well.
- Second Why: Why is that? Response: I started to have trouble with math in the third grade, and it's just gotten worse.



- Third Why: Why did that happen? Response: I made a big mistake in front of the whole class, and everybody laughed at me.
- Fourth Why: Why does that influence what's happening now?
 Response: Because I hate math so much, I can't stand to study. It brings back those bad memories. I feel dumb when I do math, so I don't do it. (Usually, during the Fourth Why, you get an "ah ha!" response; something that indicates a new understanding about yourself.)
- Fifth Why: Why do I let a bad experience a long time ago influence my grades and my life in the present?

 Response: I guess I don't need to. I can think differently about that experience. If I do that, maybe I can move past those old memories and get on with my life. Maybe I'm not dumb after all; maybe I was just stuck in that old experience.

This exercise is an example of one kind of *ANALYSIS*. There are hundreds of others. What are some other kinds of analysis?

Teacher: Wait for responses. Guide toward: Scientific, mathematical, medical, political/social, and financial, historical, technological, among many thousands of others.

Say: People have spent fortunes and decades in developing tools for analysis and evaluation. Tests in schools are one kind of evaluation and, when you pool all of the tests from students in a grade level, nationally, you have the data you need for analysis. Every evaluation and analytical tool focuses on questions, looking at the facts, looking at the data (which is nothing more than a large number of related facts). The basics are "who, what, where, how, why, and when. The questions and answers that provide the most understanding are why and how. Where do you find some of those evaluation and analytical tools?

Teacher: Wait for responses. Guide toward: Library and the Internet.

Say: Let's develop some positive actions to help our math-challenged student.

Teacher: Write the words "Physical" and "Intellectual" on the board.

Say: Which physical positive actions would help our student get better grades in math?

Teacher: Wait for responses.

Say: What intellectual positive actions would help?

Teacher: Wait for responses.

Say: Positive actions help resolve this issue?

Teacher: Wait for responses.

Say: Think about a challenge in your own life you would like to address. Ask yourself the Five Whys. Write down your responses on your paper. If you can't figure it out in five, try seven.

-Teacher's-Toolbox-

Vocabulary

Analysis

To examine in detail and in depth.

Teacher's Inspiration

"To make mistakes is human; to stumble is common place; to be able to laugh at yourself is maturity." –William Arthur Ward

Adolescents will make mistakes and stumbles. The newness of freedom and responsibilities means they don't have life experiences to guide them. So, our job is to give them the physical, intellectual, social and emotional positive actions they need to guide them. Knowing how to ask them the right questions, so t hey can make better decisions for themselves by focusing on their own positive thoughts and positive actions. Questions like "why?" and "how?"



How Do You Manage Your Brain?

Goal: • To apply the social and emotional positive action of managing thoughts.

Objectives: • To influence positive behavior by using knowledge of brain development.

 To manage thoughts by using positive sayings and reframing techniques.



Procedure

Say: Our brains are the most miraculous things on the planet and the most troublesome. Our brains are brilliant creators, unstoppable learners, and a speedier processor of information than our most complex computers. Our brains are an emotional kaleidoscope, a fountainhead of PERPLEXITY. And teen brains are the most perplexing of all.

The reason your brain is unpredictable is because it's growing quickly and developing in an uneven pattern. What do you think is different about teenage brains?

Teacher: Wait for responses. Guide toward: They are not like adult brains or children's brains. Teen brains are expanding and learning new things all the time, every day.

Say: Teen brains are growing neural cells and neural pathways in your prefrontal cortex—in a big way. Babies up to the age of about three experience remarkable growth in their neural cells; the next and only time during your lifetime that happens again is during the year or so just before puberty, and then it takes a few years to settle. The timing varies, of course, with every teen. By eleven or twelve, you begin to feel some confusion; you may not know what to think or do, so you mimic your peers who are as confused as you are. By sixteen or seventeen, you, and the world, begin to make sense again. About the age of 25, your brain completes this task of rapid brain development. Your brain still grows and changes, but at a much slower rate. What stage of brain development do you think teens your age are in?

Teacher: Wait for responses.

Say: The frontal lobe is the part of your brain that is responsible for making decisions, for ordering and understanding, for making reasonable, logical judgments, for setting goals and following through with them. That's the area of the brain that helps make us civilized. While we're developing those neural cells, the moderating influences of the frontal cortex aren't as available to us as much as we'd like. That's why we may say or do things that seem odd, troublesome, or just inexplicable. It's also why we can have a terrible time making decisions, particularly when we're stressed or sad. Because your neural pathways are developing, they are not as well articulated, which is why, given a little performance pressure, you seem to stop thinking altogether. The pathways of energy and chemistry through those neural pathways are not yet reliable. Has any of this happened to you?



Teacher: Wait for responses.

Say: It's your growing and changing brain that's causing you all this grief. The good news: it gets much better as you get older. And you can learn to outsmart your own brain.

There are many different ways to manage what's going on in your brain right now. What are some of the most effective?

Teacher: Write down their responses, and add these if they don't occur naturally:

- Giving yourself adequate time to think things through
- Giving yourself more choices than you thought you had
- *REFRAMING* negative thoughts into positive thoughts

Say: Something happens when teens have an angry outburst with parents, teachers, or friends. The judgment filters in your developing brain are not quite up to speed yet, and actions and words come out of you that surprise others. What might have happened had you given yourself time to think about your responses?

Teacher: Wait for responses.

Say: What about teens who have an ongoing problem making decisions? What might help them?

Teacher: Wait for responses.

Say: People often have trouble making decisions when they think they have either no choice or all negative choices. This can lead to a lot of anxiety that plays over and over again—they get stuck in a rut. What can help you get past that bad place?

Teacher: Wait for responses. Guide toward: Creating more choices. One choice is no choice. Two choices are just the beginning. Three choices—that's choice.

Say: Think about this scenario. Math is your hardest class and your teacher evaluates your performance on how much you participate in class. You studied the material until you knew it well. You raise your hand and the teacher calls on you. Then, your brain "freezes" and you can't remember your own name, let alone solve the problem. Your ears burn with embarrassment. What do you tell yourself when that happens?

Teacher: Wait for responses.

Say: A lot of people say, "I'm dumb. I can't learn; it's hopeless," or something similar. But there's a technique we can use to deal with those negative messages we're telling ourselves—it's called "reframing." Instead of saying "I'm dumb," which is not true, you could say, "My brain just froze momentarily," which is truer. You couldn't access the neural pathways you needed, possibly due to the amount of stress you were feeling at the time. Let's try something: I want you to repeat, "I'm dumb, I just can't learn; it's hopeless." How do you feel when you say those words?

Teacher: Wait for responses.

Say: Now repeat: "My brain was stuck because I was feeling stressed. I'm actually smart and learn well." How do you feel when you say that instead? What are the differences in your physical and emotional responses?

Teacher: Wait for responses.

Say: This is called processing your thoughts; it's turning a negative thought into a positive thought. It's reframing a negative perception, understanding it in a better light. And it's vital that the reframes are truthful, because if they aren't, your brain won't buy them. The internal dialogue you have with yourself is one of the most important conversations you

have. If it's primarily filled with negative thoughts, you will be miserable. If it's filled with mostly positive thoughts, you will have a much better time of it, emotionally and socially.

Does anyone have a quote or saying for yourself, something that—when you read it—helps you feel or think more clearly. Would anyone be willing to share what they have?

Teacher: Wait for responses.

Say: One of my favorite quotes is: (insert your quote here). It helps me out because (put your reason here). Any of you who don't yet have a quote, did you hear anything today that means something to you? Something you can hold on to?

Teacher: Wait for responses.

Say: Meditative and inspirational quotes are an easy, low-cost way to help your brain get un-stuck, and to help train it to return to a positive state. Every time you read your quote, you're building and strengthening neural pathways that your brain can use when it is "exhausted," "stuck," or has hit a wall. It's the groundwork for bouncing back. If you don't have a quote, be thinking about this: What do you do when your thoughts are everywhere and you are trying to calm down enough to solve a problem or make a decision? What is your touchstone?

-Teacher's-Toolbox-

Vocabulary

Reframe

To change how you view an event or a thought.

Media Enrichment

The primary source for this material is on a video tape, *Inside the Teenage Brain*, a PBS Frontline production. It's available in most libraries.

Sophie's World (not to be confused in *Sophie's Choice*) by Jostein Gaardner is a philosophy book written for teens. It reviews the great thinkers and shows how their work influenced the world.

Of course, there are many movies where negative thoughts take somebody down the wrong road, but one of the best might be *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, originally from the book by Robert Louis Stevenson. The film is steeped in positive and negative metaphors.

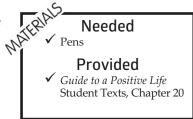
Our favorite movie about the power of thoughts is *What The Bleep Do We Know?* It's a documentary about the power of the brain to create health and well-being and presents the ideas of quantum physicists and psychoneuroimmunologists. There may be some inappropriate language, so please preview before you show it.



Practicing Your Brain Flips

Goal: • To reflect on the social and emotional positive action of managing thoughts.

Objective: • To reflect on reframing negative thoughts into positive thoughts and other touchstones.



Procedure

Say: Why is it so hard for people to focus on the positive in themselves and other people?

Teacher: Wait for responses.

Say: It could be because our culture focuses on the negative; our nightly news is skewed toward the negative. There are a million acts of kindness, generosity, bravery and intelligence every day in our country. But what do we pay attention to? The eight or ten negative newsworthy events that occurred. That's what we've been trained to focus on. It's what first pops into our minds.

At school, we do the same thing. For example, we take a test and pass with an 89% score. Do we look at what we did right? No, we agonize over our mistakes. Out of a tournament of 32 basketball teams, we focus on the champion team that wins and often see the other 31 as losers. But weren't there good shots and good plays made by all the teams? Didn't everyone strive to do their best?

Teacher: Wait for responses.

Say: If we use the paradigm of a basketball tournament, with one winning team and 31 losing teams, only 12 athletes can consider themselves successful—perhaps out of 1,200 kids in your school. If you multiply that by 31 other teams and all the kids in their schools (assuming a 1,200 student population at each of those schools), you wind up with 37,200 teens who feel like losers. That's a pretty dismal outcome. When we add in our school population, it comes to 38,400 teens, which is a lot of people to sacrifice to a bad idea. We want all 38,412 students to feel like they matter, that what they do counts; that they can be successful in their own way and their own time.

We've been *IMPRINTED* with the negative. And it will take *PRACTICE* to get our brains wrapped around the positive. But once you start looking for the positive in yourself and in other people, you'll find it everywhere. And that changes everything.

Teacher: You can use the following suggestions to guide student journaling exercises or to facilitate small group discussion within your class. The students can either talk with each other in small groups or can choose to journal by writing or drawing.



Say: I'm going to read a list of negative thoughts that pass through our minds every day. I want you to choose three from the list, write them down and reframe them.

- Nobody understands me.
- School is a waste of time.
- My parents are trying to control my life.
- ◆ I'll never make any money.
- Teachers hate me.
- ◆ There's no reason to try.
- I'm always the last one chosen.
- ◆ I'll never get it done on time.
- I can't learn to dance.
- ◆ It's not fair.
- ◆ That girl is so ugly.
- ◆ That guy is so dorky.
- ◆ It's too hard for me.
- Everybody hates me.
- ◆ I never get anything I want.

After you reframe the three negative thoughts, write how using the new positive, reframed thoughts could create more choices for you and could make a difference in your life. Read your reframed thought several times (like a meditation) and then ask yourself: How does that feel to me? Do I feel better? Does my brain accept this as a truth?

Teacher: Do the activity. Then, ask the student to read their reframes. Ask if some would like to share how positive, reframed thoughts could make a difference in their life.

Say: Let's summarize all of these methods for managing your thoughts by reading *Guide to a Positive Life* Student Text, Unit 3, Chapter 20, "How Do I Manage What I Think?"

Teacher: Allow time for students to read. Depending on time availability and your preference, direct them to reflect on them as they read, or discuss them in small groups or as a class.

Say: Managing your brain may feel like you're herding cats. We all feel that way sometimes. These techniques have worked for many people, and are offered as ideas for you to use. They are certainly not the only ways; touchstones are many and personal. Finding your touchstone—the way that works to calm your mind—is part of discovering who you are.

-Teacher's-Toolbox-

Vocabulary

Imprint

To fix in memory.

Practice

Repetition of thoughts and behaviors in order to improve.

Word of the Week

Thoughts

Ideas that result from thinking.



Goals: To learn that the social and emotional positive action of managing your thoughts gives you the power to develop a self and a life worth having, keeps you on track and on time, and helps you feel good about yourself.

What goes on in the space between your ears has a lot to do with how you feel about yourself and how your life turns out. In fact, there's a lot going on in your head when you are an adolescent.

You've learned in the lessons that your brain is changing and developing, particularly in your frontal cortex, the place where your judgment, goal-setting, and decision-making tasks take place. These changes can create havoc in your life. You may have verbal outbursts or actions that perplex you, have performance anxiety that blocks access to the right answers, or have a tough time with decision-making tasks.

The good news is that while your body and brain make these adjustments, you can take some positive actions to manage your thoughts in a way that gets you through adolescence to adulthood in one happy, healthy piece.

The first strategy for managing your thoughts is giving yourself time to think through things. Your brain may send you impetuous thoughts and actions that aren't in your best interest. This is when you can take a few minutes to find better pathways for yourself: reasonable decisions, emotions that are better controlled, a return to sanity and safety.



What recent situation that turned out negatively could have been avoided if I would have paused to think about it? The second strategy is giving yourself more choices. Your developing brain can get stuck in certain neural pathways. Sometimes it may feel like you can never make a decision, that things will never work out, that you have no choice or no way through. This is when it is vital that you give yourself more choices. Sit down and make a list of options for dealing with situations. Then consider the pros and cons of each choice to find the best one.



Where am I stuck now? What options can I give myself? What positive thoughts would help?

The third strategy is re-framing your thinking by looking at a bad situation in a new way. It's the same process you use to flip from a Failure Circle to a Success Circle, and it starts with the same thing: the thought. You've got to start by examining the thoughts that are running through your head. For example, "I'm so dumb," runs through your mind over and over again. This is an extremely negative and harmful thought. A better, more positive thought is this, "I'm learning in my own way and my own time." It's truthful and it gives you options and possibilities that the negative, old, worn-out, useless thought does not. Of course, now that you have a positive thought, positive actions and feelings will follow.

You'll find yourself in a Success Circle rather than a Failure Circle. Your thoughts are that important.

In fact, learning how to manage them is your most complex developmental task. It goes back to training your brain to be positive, which takes practice, intention, and consciousness.

So, give yourself some time, some choices, and the chance to re-frame from the negative to the positive, and let your thoughts propel you to a brighter future of achievement, success, and happiness.

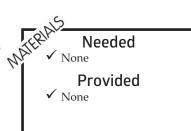


Why Does Kindness Matter to Teens?

Goal: • To learn the social and emotional positive actions of treating others the way we want to be treated by using kindness.

Objectives: • To discuss violence in schools.

- To discuss kindness as an antidote for violence.
- To explore kindness as a tool for creating social and emotional bonds and safe communities for learning.





Say: The week this lesson was written, in January of 2007, school shootings took place in two schools in the West. Previously, when those who have committed school shootings have been interviewed, they suggested that part of their motivation for going to such extremes was that other students harassed and bullied them to the point where their lives were misery. Do you think it could happen here?

Teacher: Wait for responses.

Say: Why?

Teacher: Wait for responses.

Say: What kind of social and emotional behaviors harm others and can become the roots of violence in a school?

Teacher: Wait for responses. Write their responses on the board. Include:

- 1. Separation between groups of students; cliques based on economic status, religious, or ethnic differences. Groups that treat others with disrespect, cruelty, or violence.
- 2. Petty violence, such as pushing others into lockers, rejecting or harassing others, bullying, verbal cruelty, ignoring others, cheating.
- 3. Sensibility that some teens are "better" than others.
- 4. Failure to value every person for being who he/she is.
- 5. Failure to practice positive social and emotional actions.

Say: One of the things we know for sure is that violence never springs from an act of kindness. Sometimes teens think that kindness is outdated, or for the terminally uncool, but in fact, it is the social and emotional glue that creates the bonds that protect people and nourishes safe communities. Do you think the social and emotional climate of our school tends toward kindness? Or something else?



Teacher: Wait for responses. Write those responses on the board. Those things could be positive, negative, or somewhere in between. Circle the positive ones.

Say: Sometimes teens think that they have no power in their school, but every day, as a student body, you can create an unsafe environment conducive to violence or a safe environment conducive for learning and growing.

The choice is yours, because no matter how much leadership and guidance is provided by your teachers and school administrators, you always make your own decisions about your behaviors. Does that feel true to you? Give me examples, either way.

Teacher: Wait for responses.

Say: What kind of school would we have if our students were kinder to each other, if they were not so competitive, or didn't *OSTRACIZE* those who are "different"?

Teacher: Wait for responses. Write them on the board. Include:

- A place where people learn to know and appreciate each other. People wouldn't have to be best friends, but they would know the other students better because they could talk to each other;
- 2. A place where people would generally like each other, and have social and emotional bonds that included different groups of people;
- 3. A place where teens feel like they belonged to something important: a community of learners and achievers;
- 4. A place where teens would feel safe enough to try hard enough to succeed;
- 5. A school that would be a lot more fun;
- 6. A school that would be safer and saner;
- 7. A school where our feelings about ourselves and our school would be a lot more positive.

Say: Is this possible for our school?

Teacher: Wait for responses.

Say: What are some suggestions that would improve the situation at our school? How could using the positive action of kindness help us?

Teacher: Wait for responses.

-Teacher-'s-Toolbox-

Vocabulary

Ostracize

When a group excludes others based on cruel and unfair reasons. Ignoring others because he/she is "different."

Teacher's Inspiration

"Then it is only kindness that makes sense anymore, only kindness that ties your shoes and sends you out into the day to mail letters and purchase bread, only kindness that raises its head

from the crowd of the world to say it is I you have been looking for, and then goes with you everywhere like a shadow or a friend." —Naomi Shihab Nye

Naomi wrote this poem after she had traveled and talked to people in the war-torn countries of the Middle East. Kindness may be the only thing that reaches teens born and raised in violent neighborhoods, or who are in such competitive environments that they are afraid of failure and too stressed at every turn. Kindness can provide a much-needed salve for anyone dealing with a difficult situation.

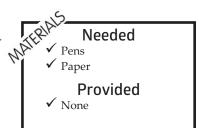


Do I Respect Myself?

Goal: • To use the social and emotional positive actions of treating others the way we want to be treated by using respect.

Objectives: • To discuss self-respect and respect directed toward others.

 To discuss positive actions that are indicative of respect.



Procedure

Say: Do you think most teens like and accept themselves? Do they respect themselves?

Teacher: Wait for responses.

Say: A positive self-concept is also called self-respect. Self-respect isn't an inflated ego or a falsely cheery attitude. It's a sense of your own value and worth; a feeling of trust in yourself—that you know what to do and how to do it. You trust yourself to tell the truth, to be able to do what you need to do when you need to do it, and to relate well to other people socially and emotionally. How do you obtain a healthy self-concept, a positive self-esteem?

Teacher: Wait for responses. Guide toward:

- Thinking positive thoughts, doing positive actions, and enjoying positive feelings about yourself. Continuing to think and act positively gives you positive feelings about yourself. The more you continue with positive thoughts, actions and feelings, the more they become a habit.
- Those positive feelings project themselves directly into how we treat others.

Say: There is strong evidence that people who treat others badly, who treat others disrespectfully through sexual harassment, bullying, intimidation, and verbal or physical abuse have a negative self-concept.

When you despise yourself, it's tough to respect anyone else. It puts you outside affiliative behaviors (we call those positive actions) which connect you to safety and security, achievement and love. And that creates a *DISSONANCE* (where one part of your self disagrees with another part of your self) that can lead to depression and anxiety. Do you know of anyone in this situation?

Teacher: Wait for responses.

Say: We are genetically programmed to treat each other with respect, and to receive respect. Sometimes that's not clear to us because we may be in families that don't show enough respect for each other, or we may be in a community that does not respect all of its citizens.



Treating others with disrespect causes problems. Families that operate on disrespect and distrust often have very stressful lives. Have you seen families like this?

Teacher: Wait for responses.

Say: What can happen when a community does not treat its citizens with respect? What can happen at a work place, or a school when people are constantly treated with disrespect?

Teacher: Wait for responses.

Say: Something deep inside us becomes very unhappy and unsettled when we choose behaviors that distance us from others. Our self-esteem takes a big hit, and we may end up projecting our crummy feelings about ourselves onto other people. What does it mean when I say we "project" our negative feelings about ourselves onto others?

Teacher: Wait for responses.

Say: "Projection" happens when we blame others for something they have nothing to do with. We may see an aspect we dislike in ourselves magnified in someone else's behavior, and because that makes us feel anxious and uncomfortable, we become angry at the other person and treat them badly.

Our attitudes and actions are mirrors that reflect what we think. If we believe we aren't worthy of respect, then we send a lot of disrespect into the world. All of those "dis-sing" behaviors people do to each other are actually projections. The disrespect has much more to do with the "Dis-er" than the "Dis-ee." A very important thing to keep in mind. Have you ever been the "Dis-ee?" How did that feel?

Teacher: Wait for responses.

Say: There are three big umbrellas that cover the positive actions of respect. If you can grasp these three concepts, then your actions will, more or less, fall into place. The first is civility, which means treating others courteously and with respect. What social and emotional positive actions reflect civility?

Teacher: Ask the students to identify 10 positive actions of civility and write them on the board. Ask students to also write them on a piece of paper to reflect on later.

Say: The next big umbrella is recognizing the right of other people to be who they are. If you absolutely can't stand someone, there's a good chance that you have some issues in your own life. An example; you can't stand people who are overweight. Maybe it's really because you're afraid you could be overweight, or you're worried that you aren't attractive enough. Does this feel true?

Teacher: Wait for responses.

Say: Let's identify 10 positive actions that show that we take other people seriously and accept them just as they are.

Teacher: Write those on the board. Ask the students to write them on their paper.

Say: The last big umbrella is identifying different kinds of respect that are appropriate to the time, the culture, and the place. For example, in a business culture, dressing the way your employer wants you to dress is a sign of respect. In a hip hop culture, dressing like you would for work may distance you from other people and can signal disrespect. If you are attending a formal wedding, dressing and acting in a way that is appropriate to the occasion shows respect to the bride and groom and their families. If you have friends who are from a different culture than yours, it helps to learn about the customs important to that culture, and what are and aren't appropriate ways to interact. This shows your respect toward your friends. What principles could guide you as you move through these different worlds?

Teacher: Wait for responses. Guide toward: Being aware of how other cultures operate and what is important to them. Paying attention to what other people need and want from you in

those cultures.

Write these responses on the board and ask students to write them on their paper.

Say: You can stay true to who you are in your own culture while learning to appreciate, understand, and respect all kinds of traditions, all kinds of people. And that can be fascinating and fun!

-Teacher's -Toolbox-

Vocabulary

Dissonance

Conflict; lack of harmony, agreement or consistency.

Media Enrichment

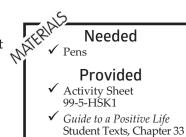
City of the Beasts by Isabelle Allende is a read-aloud book that talks to teens about respecting other cultures and other creatures.

Second Hand Lions is a movie that explores family relationships and how people come to respect and care for each other—through listening to each others' stories and getting to know each other. It carries a PG rating, so you may wish to review it before you show it to your students. Or you can look up a review on www.screenit.com.



How Do I Do What I Say I'll Do?

- **Goal:** To reflect on the social and emotional positive actions of telling ourselves the truth by doing what we say we will do.
- **Objectives:** To create a plan to help solve a problem or change a harmful behavior.
 - To integrate keeping promises you make to yourself by following a plan to change something negative in your life.



Procedure

Say: Let's start with a scenario. You take a hard look at a situation in your life you know isn't working. You tell yourself the truth, you are in touch with your motivation to change, you create your intentions, you work with your resistances. You're ready to do what you've promised yourself and other people.

Then, something unexpected happens; life throws you a punch and it knocks you off balance so badly you find it nearly impossible to do what you need to do. Has anyone experienced this?

Teacher: Wait for responses.

Say: These unexpected things life sometimes gives us are called *BARRIERS*, and can include such things as changes in your home life, losing a job, becoming ill or injured, not having enough money, feeling exhausted, not having enough time, and having too many complications. Sometimes after recognizing barriers, we can remove them. Other times we may need to find alternative ways around them.

So now, in addition to the changes you want to make, you also have to deal with unexpected barriers. One way to deal with them is to use your own positive thoughts, actions, and feelings to work your way through them.

Teacher: Direct students to "What Do I Really Want?" Activity Sheet 99-5-HSK1.

Say: This worksheet is a way to look at your challenges and barriers, and to look at what you promised to do and to find a way to do it.

So, think about something that is driving you a little nuts and see what options you have. Remember—the power is in your actions, what you do, and how you keep your promises to yourself and to other people.

Here's your Life's Big Question: Who are you when you can keep your promises?

Teacher: Do the activity. Discuss the findings in a general way.



Say: Let's read from our *Guide to a Positive Life* Student Text, Unit 5, Chapter 33, "Did I Keep My

Promises Today?"

Teacher: Allow time for students to read. Depending on time availability and your preference, direct

them to reflect on them as they read, or discuss them in small groups or as a class

.

-Teacher's-Toolbox-

Vocabulary

Barriers

Obstacles that prevent you from achieving what you want to achieve.

Word of the Week

Integrity

To do what you say you will do..

WHAT DO I REAlly WANT?

DIRECTIONS: This is an activity sheet that will help you create a plan to change a harmful habit or solve a problem. The plan will include deciding upon a primary promise you'll make to yourself and creating and following a plan of action that can help you keep the promises you've made to yourself. Think about a situation in your life that you want to change, and a promise you could make to yourself to help with this change. Then complete the activity sheet.



Goals: To learn that the social and emotional positive action of doing what you say you will do creates a positive, healthy identity and character, creates a reliable track record, and helps you feel good about yourself and others.

You need to keep the promises you make—it's the basis of integrity and character. The key to doing what you say you will do is giving yourself the time, space, thoughtfulness, and opportunity to do it right.

When you keep your promises to yourself and other people, you become competent socially, and you trust yourself to do the things you need to do. You create a positive track record and people know they can trust you. Opportunities open up before you.

When you blow off your commitments, your character takes a hit and you have less respect and trust for yourself. You miss out on opportunities because of it, sidelining yourself from the great things in life.



What percent of the time do I do what I say I will do?
What kinds of things do
I usually blow off?

Sometimes at your age people have trouble connecting with parents or teachers and can blow off big commitments or promises. Sometimes they show up two hours late or not at all. That's because you are trying to establish your own identity apart from your family's identity, a psychological process called differentiation. That's a normal thing; but the key to managing that behavior is being honest with people about where you will be and when you will be there.

Otherwise, people lose faith and trust in you. One or two slips won't derail your life; but a pattern of slippage is a key predictor of having issues, sometimes to the point of failure.



Have I misled people about where I'll be and when I'll be there? What positive actions would help me become more accurate about my time and my life?

It's not always easy to do the things you've promised. Sometimes there are reasons you get derailed. You might not be clear about what needs to be done and why. You might be over-committed or shy. As you tell the truth about those things, you can move into compliance with your own best interests.

It will help if you sort out your intentions and motivations. Your intentions are what you are willing to do—in your heart and in your head. Maybe your music teacher has given you a new piece of music to learn. You say "yes, teacher," because that's what good students do. But in your heart of hearts, you know it will snow in the Florida Keys before you learn that piece of music. You hate it. You never intended to do it. So you slough it off, don't practice, and your teacher gets more and more frustrated with you, and you don't feel so good yourself. You said yes, but you didn't intend to do it.

It's better to acknowledge up-front your intentions and ask for another piece that you actually like. Apply a little humor, a little self-honesty, and get with it. You don't have to do it on a grand scale or do it perfectly; you just have to do it in a goodenough fashion—and be honest about it. That way you come away intact, pleased that you told the truth to yourself first and your teacher. And your teacher will respect you, too.

Your motivations are the deep down impulses that propel you into action—or not. For example, maybe you were really frightened of a bad midterm grade in geometry, and that propelled a completely different attitude and action toward geometry. You studied—hard. Your newly found motivation moved you into a higher level of achievement.

Fear can motivate a lot of people, but a better motivation is to do it because you want to do better, to do things in a positive way. There is significantly less stress and more personal power when you use your own desires for a better life to motivate you.

Motivation can be hidden deep inside your brain and heart. It propels you into action even when you are tired or distracted. You can figure out what does motivate you, what does propel you to the successful completion of your tasks. That energy will get you moving again.



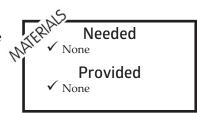
What motivates me to do better? Do I act from fear or distrust? Or do I act from my own perceptions and goals?

Doing what you say you will do takes self-knowledge and an honest interpretation. By telling yourself the truth about what you do intend to do and don't intend do, you can use your internal motivations to move into more positive attitudes and actions—a life of achievement, success, and happiness.



Would I Know the Truth If I Saw It?

- **Goal:** To learn the social and emotional positive actions of telling ourselves the truth by acknowledging the truth and by refusing to rationalize.
- **Objectives: •** To define rationalization and demonstrate examples.
 - To learn that most people can spot rationalization quickly.





Procedure

- **Say:** "The dog ate my homework" is a beloved dodge of responsibility. It could be true, except for this: you didn't do your homework—and you don't have a dog. It's a cliché at this point, but we love it nonetheless. Why are we fond of it?
- **Teacher:** Wait for responses: Guide toward: It's a standard joke. It evokes a simpler time when it might have worked, and there's something good natured and innocent about it.
 - **Say:** It's also a good example of a type of lying called rationalization. What is rationalization? And why do people try it so often?
- **Teacher:** Wait for responses. Guide toward: Rationalization is an explanation for one's conduct that may be believable, but is either half-true or untrue. People *RATIONALIZE* to cover up some failing on their part, particularly when there are consequences attached to the failing.
 - **Say:** We often see instances of rationalization in news stories about public figures, such as celebrities and politicians, and on TV shows, particularly those about court cases and solving crimes. Can you think of some other examples?
- **Teacher:** Wait for responses.
 - **Say:** Is rationalization easy to detect? How?
- **Teacher:** Wait for responses. Guide toward:
 - The Thoughts-Actions-Feelings about Self Circle doesn't make sense.
 - The details are not in alignment with facts in the known world.
 - There are physical clues, such as: people won't look you in the eye; they seem to be making things up as they go along; they are evasive about the details or incidents that would confirm their stories.
 - We have an *INTUITIVE* sense that the person isn't telling the truth.

Say: Why do people rationalize? What's the core problem?



Teacher: Wait for responses. Guide toward:

- Their core thoughts about the situation and their ability to deal with it are negative.
- They may have a harmed self-concept.
- They may have a profound belief that the problem is inescapable or beyond their ability to cope.
- They may have an emotional need (fear and anxiety) to escape responsibility for their actions.

Say: If someone is constantly rationalizing their behavior, it may indicate they need to take a serious look at their life, and possibly seek help. When people get caught in a cycle of constant rationalization and begin to believe their own lies and evasions, it can lead to a terrible disconnect with reality.

So, why is telling the truth, as cleanly and clearly as you can, an social and emotional positive action?

Teacher: Wait for responses. Guide toward:

- Your self-concept is not harmed by telling yourself the truth.
- You strengthen your self-concept, your feelings about yourself.
- The consequences are less drastic.
- You are more aligned with reality
- You are more in control of your own destiny.

-Teacher-'s-Toolbox-

Vocabulary

Intuitive

A biological or emotional awareness.

Rationalize

To offer rational, but specious (untrue or actually wrong) explanations for one's actions or behaviors.

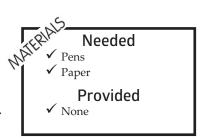
Teacher's Inspiration

"All truths are easy to understand once they are discovered; the point is to discover them." —Galileo Galilei



How Do I Keep on Keeping On?

- **Goal:** To learn the social and emotional positive actions of continually improving ourselves by persevering.
- **Objectives:** To explore the questions students need to ask themselves as they grow into or out of their teen years.
 - To refocus on positive questions that will result in a healthy, positive, outcome.





Say: Let's pretend that you are a soccer star or a smart techie. You've got a college scholarship riding on your soccer skills, or maybe an engineering school in San Francisco is offering you a scholarship.

But you hit some kind of emotional wall. And it's a dandy. Suddenly you are bored out of your mind by soccer and computers. You are viscerally opposed to whatever it is that you have to do. What kind of thoughts might you be having?

- **Teacher:** Wait for responses.
 - **Say:** Of course, late adolescence can be a time of great confusion, lack of focus, and vulnerability to distraction and depression. All you really want to do is quit and spend the rest of your life on a beach in Mexico, without responsibility or direction. Is this normal? And what could possibly be positive about this turn of events?
- **Teacher:** Wait for responses. Guide toward: It's not only normal, it's universal. Everybody goes through this at some point.
 - **Say:** There's actually a lot that is positive about what is happening to you. Boredom, exhaustion, and distraction are vitally important messages from your brain and heart telling you that something isn't right and you need to figure out what it is and do your best to correct it. How do you figure out what it is?
- **Teacher:** Wait for responses. Guide toward: You ask yourself questions—about what you are thinking, doing, and feeling.
 - **Say:** Those hit-the-wall moments are symptoms of things like burnout; or a growth spurt of some sort (physical, intellectual, social, or emotional); or something else may be surfacing in your life. Any kind of emotional or social disruption in mood or action is a wake-up call, and the most positive thing you can do is pay attention to it. Why is that important?
- **Teacher:** Wait for responses. Guide toward: If you don't pay attention to your feelings and experiences, you slow down your social and emotional development. You could get stuck in a dead-end situation.

Say: Burnout and disengagement happens frequently, particularly for students during the time period beginning the middle of their junior year through the middle of their senior year of high school. That's a growth spurt. You are increasingly ready to tackle the next part of your life, but you have yet to navigate the old part. That can feel itchy and constricting, and you might feel a little conflicted. Has anybody here felt that way? What helps?

Teacher: Wait for responses.

Say: Your brain is beginning the final phase of this stage of development, readying you for new challenges and responsibilities. Things you once considered vital may be taking a back seat to new interests.

Maybe you've always been a techie and now all you can think of is art. Maybe you've always been someone who argues and debates, but all you want now is to sit and think—to be quiet for a while. Maybe you are just tired. So how do you sort this out?

Teacher: Wait for responses. Write down their responses and guide toward:

Paying attention to your thoughts and feelings, bringing them back around to the positive.

Asking yourself if you have what you need and want, and then doing your best to assure that all the positives you need are part of your life:

- Healthy food, exercise, rest
- Learning, creating, analyzing, being curious
- Managing yourself
- Connecting with others
- Telling yourself the truth
- Improving yourself and your life
- Deciding whether to persist or whether to move on
- Deciding to explore the new thing that interests you

Say: What other questions do you need to ask yourself to help make your decision?

Teacher: Wait for responses. Write their questions on the board (try for at least 30), and encourage them to write the questions that apply to them on their paper (try for at least five). Next, ask the students to write answers to their selected questions, then have them share some of their answers with the class. Suggest that students write down the answers that resonate with them. Include these questions:

- Is it part of your identity?
- Is it part of your neural sets or your physical self?
- What are your character and your core-self telling you?
- Do you have the talent or skill to make a long-term commitment?
- Have you just burned out entirely and need something new to think about?
- What's new that is surfacing in your life?
- Do you just need a break?
- Is it in your own best interests to complete the task? Do you need to persevere?

Say: When you are a teen, you are creating the foundations for your life. By choosing positive thoughts, actions, and feelings, you are laying down the bricks that will sustain great

adventure, true love, and learning for the sake of learning. It also creates a community of friends and family that is an encircling haven of safety and fun—but that gives you a lot of room to change the factors and still be successful and happy. The things you do not want to give up on are you and the people around you. That's where you need to persevere. Everything else is *NEGOTIABLE*.

-Teacher<u>'</u>'s-Toolbox-

Vocabulary

An idea or option that is worthy of rethinking and reworking.

Teacher's Inspiration

"Most of the important things in the world have been accomplished by people who have kept on trying when there seemed to be no hope at all." —Dale Carnegie

"I know the price of success: dedication, hard work, and an unremitting devotion to the things you want to see happen." —Frank Lloyd Wright

"Let me tell you the secret that has led me to my goal: my strength lies solely in my tenacity." –Louis Pasteur

"Whoever said anybody has a right to give up?" —Marian Wright Edelman

"Many of life's failures are people who did not realize how close they were to success when they gave up."

—Thomas Alva Edison

"If you're going through hell, keep going." -Winston Churchill

Teachers are prime models of perseverance. They rarely give up on a student. They try everything. And then they try it all over again.



How Do I Create a Successful and **Happy Life?**

Goal: • To learn the social and emotional positive actions of continually improving ourselves by creating a great life built upon cumulative positive thoughts,

actions, and feelings.

Objective: • To focus on creating a positive life through continuous application of positive thoughts, actions, and feelings.





Procedure

Say: Let's say you did one or two positive actions during this course. Your self-concept got a little positive boost, but then you lapsed back into your negative ways of thinking, acting, and feeling, making yourself a little more depressed and anxious along the way—maybe launching yourself into some negative behaviors. You decide that Positive Action just didn't work. So what's up with this thinking?

Teacher: Wait for responses.

Say: You were actually working and reinforcing the negative circle. The philosophy is working the way it always does, but you're headed in a negative direction. Why didn't one or two positive actions make enough of a difference?

Teacher: Wait for responses.

Say: Humans create a foundation of positive feelings about themselves if they consistently think positive thoughts and do positive actions. Every time you think another positive thought and do another positive action, your brain is creating neuro-pathways for brain chemicals, such as adrenaline, serotonin, and oxytocin, which make you feel increasingly better. It doesn't happen with one or two positive actions, but it does happen when you choose positive thoughts and actions consistently over time—and it happens at your cellular level.

If you get your physical, intellectual, social, and emotional acts pointed in a primarily positive direction, you feel good about yourself and everybody else most of the time. Why is the choice to be happy and successful your responsibility?

Teacher: Wait for responses.

Say: No one else can choose between positive and negative actions, and only you can choose to be healthy or to become smarter. No one else can manage your days and your money; no one else can create webs of safety and connections to other people; no one else can tell your truths; and no one else can chart your pathways in the world. People, like parents, coaches,



friends, and bosses, can help you find out how to do those things, but you're the one who chooses. Why is that both an enormous power and an enormous responsibility?

Teacher: Wait for responses. Guide toward: It's the difference between a life you actually like and one that keeps you small in accomplishment and prosperity. Choosing to think positive thoughts, do positive actions, and enjoy positive feelings over time is the core ingredient in creating a successful and happy life.

Say: We've asked you a lot about your life, your identity, your character, your core-self, and your self-concept. And we've asked you about the person you want to become. Now we want you to draw a self-portrait. You can make the drawing as artistic or as simple as you wish. Around your picture, include little icons of the things that you love—your favorite technologies, your favorite movies, what you love about nature or the city, your sports, your art, your dreams and ideals, your talents, your strengths, the people that you love. After you've done your portrait, write five words that describe your character, your self-concept, and your core self.

Teacher: Distribute the art supplies. Do the activity. Share the drawings and the words that describe character, self-concept, and core self. Explain that their identity is reflected in their drawings. This is one of the answers to Life's Big Question: "Who Am I?"

-Teacher's-Toolbox-

Teacher's Inspiration

"Happiness is a warm puppy." -Charles Schulz

"The Constitution only gives people the right to pursue happiness. You have to catch it yourself." —Ben Franklin

"Nobody really cares if you're miserable, so you might as well be happy." -Cynthia Nelms

"Happiness is an expression of the soul in considered actions." —Aristotle

Ahhhh...Think of fields of golden daffodils, think of the laughter of children, the first time a kitty settles in your lap, think of teens graduating...



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