

High School Kit 3

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 4

Our Thoughts, Actions, and Feelings

Goal: ♦ To learn how our thoughts, actions, and feelings work in a self-reinforcing circle.

Objectives: ♦ To demonstrate a working knowledge of the *Positive Action* Thoughts-Actions-Feelings Circle model.
♦ To reveal how our thoughts, actions, and feelings can evolve into a constructive (positive) or destructive (negative) spiral.

MATERIALS

Needed

✓ None

Provided

✓ Image of “Thoughts-Actions-Feelings Circle” Poster

Procedure

Say: History is patched together with stories of glory and shame, stories of the best and worst in human nature. Many of the best events that have happened can be attributed to ingenuity, altruism, curiosity, and an open-ended, optimistic vision. While many of the awful things that have happened can be traced to the abuse of power, many of these terrible things can be attributed to the fact that people didn’t know any better. For example, until human beings understood that everyone on earth deserved to be treated with dignity and had *INTRINSIC* value, slavery was commonplace around the world. As people learned more about humanity—their own and that of others—they have gradually reduced the dehumanizing system of slavery.

Progress is based on learning—and learning, once it starts, can grow by leaps. If we could put everything we’ve learned scientifically throughout history in a bottle, the knowledge of the majority of those years would occupy only 10% of the bottle, while the knowledge of the last century alone would occupy 90% of the bottle. This increased *VELOCITY* in the human learning curve reflects how we have invented new theories and tools to tackle new challenges in every area of life. We have the theories and tools right now that could solve some of the biggest challenges, like eliminating much of poverty, disease, and illiteracy. What we lack is the physical, intellectual, social, and emotional mind-sets that can transform our theories and tools into a concrete pathway leading to life-affirming realities.

The *Positive Action* program offers a way to develop a life-enhancing mind-set to make positive visions become reality. We are offering the theories and tools to help your generation propel the ongoing search for knowledge to make this world a better place for all. The *Positive Action* philosophy is: *You feel good about yourself when you do positive actions, and there is a positive way to do everything.*

Teacher: Show the “Thoughts-Actions-Feelings Circle” Poster.

Say: We *are* our thoughts, actions, and feelings—and these profound and important facets of our core identity act as a self-reinforcing circle. This model is called the Thoughts-Actions-Feelings about Self Circle. It represents the program philosophy. If we practice



positive thoughts, actions, and feelings, we find ourselves in a Success Circle. If we practice negative thoughts, actions, and feelings, we end up in a Failure Circle. Depending on whether we regularly practice positive or negative thinking, these circles turn into either positive, uplifting spirals or downward, destructive spirals. Negative spirals have dire consequences, and contribute to things like a lack of healthy relationships, a lack of direction and focus, and a failure to live your dreams. The good thing is that negative spirals can be interrupted and transformed by positive thoughts. Positive spirals create lives filled with a sense of worth and connection and are essential for success and happiness.

What do our thoughts, actions, and feelings have to do with our lives?

Teacher: Wait for responses.

Say: Our thoughts, actions, and feelings shape our lives, impact our lives, create our lives. We are responsible for the choices moment by moment, and those choices we make are the result of our thinking, acting, and feeling. Part of becoming a “grown-up” is realizing our responsibility to make good choices based upon our thinking, acting, and feeling. As the English novelist Aldous Huxley wrote: “There is only one corner of the universe you can be certain of improving, and that’s your own self.”

That improvement comes about only when we are attentive and reflective regarding our thoughts, actions, and feelings. The Thoughts-Actions-Feelings Circle model gives us a handle on our thoughts, actions, and feelings, so we can make informed choices and take full responsibility for them. This amounts to owning an immensely useful tool for changing our lives for the better.

Let’s find a partner and talk about one Success Circle and one Failure Circle you have experienced today. Which circle is easier to be in? Which circle feels better to be in?

Teacher: Allow time for students to share in pairs. This activity could also be done as a group discussion.

Say: As we move through this curriculum, you’ll find that you will gain increasing power over your thoughts, actions, and feelings, and you’ll find yourself more and more frequently in Success Circles leading to a positive spiral!

Teacher’s Toolbox

Vocabulary

Intrinsic

Something that occurs naturally, as part of your normal essence and existence.

Velocity

Rate of speed. Usually increasingly fast.

Teacher’s Inspiration

“I touch the future. I teach.”

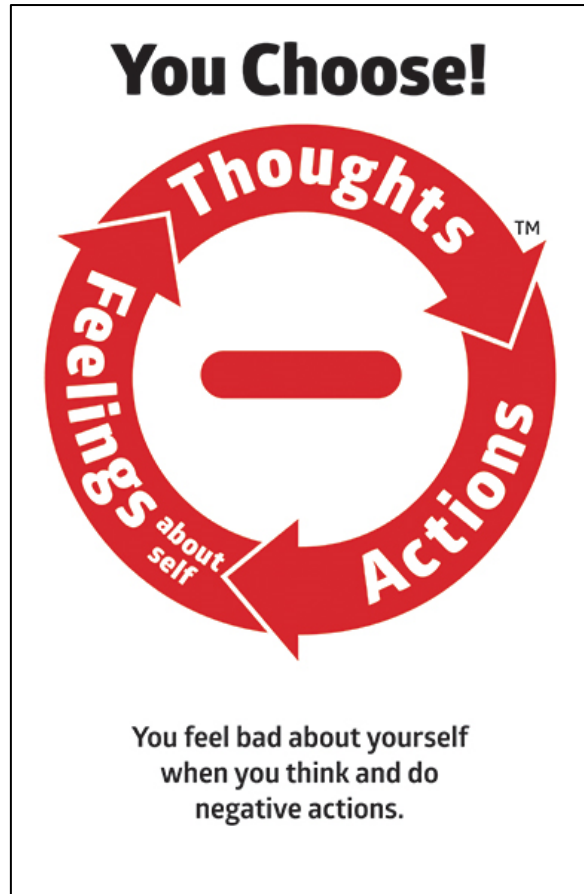
—Christa McAuliffe

Teaching a teenager how their thoughts, actions, and feelings influence and inform their world provides that young person with the power of positive choice. The result: a directed teenager, an educated teenager. *Positive Action* can change how you think, act, and feel about being a teacher.

Lesson 4



Front



Back

Lesson 7

How Do We Think?

Positive Thoughts

Goal: ♦ To learn about the role thoughts play in the Thoughts-Actions-Feelings Circle.

Objectives: ♦ To practice identifying positive and negative thoughts.
♦ To learn how to focus the mind on positive thoughts.

MATERIALS	Needed
	✓ None
	Provided
	✓ None

Procedure

Say: Welcome to the *Positive Action* program! It offers a way to develop a life-enhancing mind-set to make positive visions become reality. You have an important developmental task before you, figuring out who you are and what you can do with your hands, your heart, and your head—with your life. Every person has that task. Who you are is also called your self-concept, which is defined as how you think and feel about yourself, and is the result of your thoughts and actions. The *Positive Action* philosophy is: *You feel good about yourself when you do positive actions, and there is a positive way to do everything.*

The power of thoughts is impossible to overestimate. Can you think of anything in our lives that doesn't begin with just a thought? The chair you are sitting on? What you had for lunch? The last space mission?

Teacher: Wait for responses.

Say: Our thoughts shape and guide every aspect of our lives. How we perform physically, intellectually, socially, emotionally—all are consequences of the thinking we do. If we think we can't, we can't. If we think we can, we can. Have you heard an Olympian admit that the thinking part of their training was the most significant part of preparing to perform?

Teacher: Wait for responses.

Say: And think of Lech Walesa, who thought that working class people could change the course of history and establish democracies, one by one, in Eastern Europe. After he led his beloved Poland into democracy, open societies began to be created in former communist countries. His one thought was largely responsible for the fall of communism in Russia and Central Europe. It all began with one person's great and *GENERATIVE* thought. Are there any other great ideas out there in the world? What are they?

Teacher: Wait for responses.

Say: Teenagers have tons of life-enhancing ideas that can positively shape the world—and they will do so, unless if you choose to act in a negative way and get caught up in destructive obsessions, then your generation will have a bumpy ride, and the world in general will suffer more. If you stay focused on positive thoughts and offer your imaginative and



passionate ideals, then we have a chance for a better-than-ever world. Those thoughts streaming through your head at every moment are that crucial. What are some examples of positive thoughts?

Teacher: Wait for responses and write them on the board. If they aren't mentioned, add "**loving, kind, engaged, curious, honest, and adventurous.**"

Say: What are some examples of negative thoughts?

Teacher: Wait for responses and write them on the board. If they aren't mentioned, add "**harsh judgments, non-participation, hopelessness and helplessness, destructiveness, and refusal to acknowledge self-worth or the worth of others.**"

Say: What are the consequences of negative thoughts?

Teacher: Wait for responses.

Say: Negative thoughts lead to negative actions that create unsavory or negative consequences. What do our thoughts have to do with our lives?

Teacher: Wait for responses.

Say: Thoughts determine and shape our actions, which shape our lives moment by moment. If our thoughts reflect curiosity, then we will approach our world with a cat's fervor to explore. If our thoughts are infused with judgments and anger, then we will approach our world with narrow hostility, and even scare curious cats away!

How does what we think influence who we become?

Teacher: Wait for responses.

Say: We become what we choose to habitually think about. Notice the word "habitually." Sixty-thousand thoughts can pass through our brains everyday, but the ones that matter most are the handful we make a habit of choosing to pay attention to carefully. An **OPTIMIST** is someone who has made a habit of choosing to dwell in positive thoughts daily. A **PESSIMIST** is someone who has made a habit of choosing to obsess over negative thoughts constantly. The *Positive Action* curriculum provides tools to help you cultivate positive thoughts—the kind of thinking that will lead to positive actions and a high quality of life.

Here is an old adage from a Great Thinker that sums it up nicely. We don't know who originally said it, but many wise people have said it over the years.

Sow an idea, and you reap an act;

Sow an act, and you reap a habit.

Sow a habit, and you reap a character;

Sow a character, and you reap a destiny.

—Anonymous

Next time you think that a thought crossing your mind is trivial, think of the chain of events that begins with one small thought. Any thought you choose to focus upon has consequences. That is why we need to reflect carefully upon our thoughts and get to the bottom of our thinking since our thinking impacts our quality of life directly.

Teacher's Toolbox

Vocabulary

Generative

Good and powerful thoughts spawn more good and powerful thoughts.

Optimist

A person who believes the positive is possible in most situations.

Pessimist

A person who expects the negative from most situations.

Teacher's Inspiration

*"I cannot teach anybody anything, I can only make them think."
—Socrates*

By focusing your thoughts on the positive aspects of your students, your lessons, and your ultimate goals for your class, you increase your opportunities for success enormously. If you think you can direct their learning activities into more positive applications, you can. You absolutely can. Your modeling of positive thoughts is essential for success.

Lesson 25

Embodying Positive Energy: Dynamo or Dud?

Positive Thoughts

Goal: ♦ To learn the physical positive actions of getting enough sleep and rest.

- Objectives:** ♦ To understand how our cycles of sleep and movement help refresh our capacity to work and play at our best.
- ♦ To discuss personal preferences for sleep.
 - ♦ To learn about the positive value of paying attention to the need for sleep at appropriate times.

MATERIALS	Needed
	✓ None
	Provided
	✓ None

Procedure

Say: A lot of teens have trouble with getting enough sleep. The sleep issue needs to be understood biologically. Your *CIRCADIAN RHYTHMS*, your biologic rhythms over 24 hours, are always fluctuating and are impacted by your habits. If you stay up half the night, the next day you might be asleep on your feet at 5:30 p.m. and wide, roaring awake at midnight. Then you have to get up early to get to your classes and your eyes feel like lead and your brain is on hold. The only time you can catch up in on the weekends, so you sleep until noon. And lose half of your free time. Some kids are night owls; some people only come alive after about three in the afternoon; others are alert and ready to go at the first light of dawn. Everybody has somewhat different sleep patterns and sleep needs. Does this feel true to you?

Teacher: Wait for responses.

Say: And the thing about ignoring your need for sleep is that for a little while you might seem just fine doing so. But after days or weeks of depriving yourself of necessary sleep you probably won't feel "just fine." You will feel lousy physically, and then your moods will get—moody. The reason for this is simple: your body needs a steady diet of sleep in order for your body to be a *DYNAMO* of physical and mental energy. Why do you think this is?

Teacher: Wait for responses.

Say: Every form of life requires renewal and regeneration to keep on living. Cells in your body are constantly dying and being replaced by new cells. What do you think this has to do with sleep?

Teacher: Wait for responses.

Say: This biological renewal goes on all the time without your consent or awareness—but getting sufficient sleep allows your body's system of renewing itself to operate efficiently.



Your body's capacity to renew itself—which you sense in terms of your energy level—lessens if you repeatedly deprive yourself of sleep.

Now some of you may think drinking lots of coffee, or using other drinks or foods or drugs that promise to re-charge your energy will take the place of sufficient sleep. What's the fallacy in that belief?

Teacher: Wait for responses.

Say: Caffeine and other stimulants give a temporary energy boost—but do nothing over the span of a whole day to help your body renew itself biologically. In fact, they can even cause the depletion of essential vitamins and minerals if used intensively. So the bottom line is: Without sufficient sleep, you become a dud, unable to mentally focus on school, work, or friendships, unable physically to perform tasks with spark. How do teen insomniacs act?

Teacher: Wait for responses.

Say: Scientists are doing research that confirms the necessity of regular rest and sleep for good physical and mental health. Depriving ourselves of sleep deprives our brains of time to dream, a necessary activity for physical and mental health. Mick Jagger of The Rolling Stones band wasn't kidding when he sang, "Lose your dreams and you will lose your mind."

It makes sense literally and symbolically. Psychologists discovered in sleep deprivation experiments that otherwise healthily functioning people deprived of sleep regularly start behaving irrationally. To deprive yourself of the time needed to have dreams when you sleep impacts negatively the quality of your thinking. It can contribute to a wide range of physical and mental problems. And when you aren't up to facing the future, your life dreams seem impossible to reach. Is there anyone who hasn't had a bad day because they didn't get enough sleep?

Teacher: Wait for responses.

Say: So, why do so many of us fail to get sufficient sleep? Maybe because we have become a 24/7 culture where we crave endless stimulation without expending much physical effort, and find it hard to sleep after being so hooked on the stimulus of computer games, or television shows with a lot of sex or violence. The solution is: tune into and value your own body and discover your own cycles of sleep and activity that make sense to you, that help you feel positive about yourself. If you wish, over the next three days, chart your energy levels and your moods. See if there is a correlation between how much sleep you get and how moody you are, and what your energy levels are. Why is it important to track your moods and your sleep patterns?

Teacher: Wait for responses.

Say: One of the things we know is this: physical well-being and health is a condition for achievement. If you can't get your head on straight because you never get enough sleep, how can you expect to get reasonable grades? As you get your body into some kind of reasonable health, you'll begin to feel competent and confident, which is the first step for competence and capability. What does it feel like to have your act together physically as a teen?

Teacher: Wait for responses.

Say: Experiment with resting more often. Keep a graph of when you feel "high" and "low" emotionally before and after the periods of rest. What can you learn about the relationship of rest to your self-esteem?

Teacher: Wait for responses.

Teacher's Toolbox

Vocabulary

Circadian rhythms

Biological rhythms governing organisms during a 24 hour span.

Dynamo

A person or a machine with immense energy and power, fully directed and intentional.

Teacher's Inspiration

"Energy is eternal delight"

—William Blake

If the English romance poet William Blake's quote about energy has truth in it, why is it that we deal often with students who can't seem to handle their physical and psychological energy—who can't sit still or stop talking? Maybe "energy is eternal delight" only when we learn how to positively regulate and express it. This is what *Positive Action* offers.

Lesson 39

Where Does Your Brain Fit In?

Goal: ♦ To reflect on how the intellectual positive actions of creativity and analysis impact self-concept.

Objectives: ♦ To explore how creativity and analysis complement one another in each individual.
♦ To identify five activities where creativity and analysis enhance our quality of life.
♦ To discover how creativity and analysis impact self-concept.

MATERIALS

Needed

- ✓ Pens
- ✓ Paper

Provided

- ✓ *Guide to a Positive Life*
Student Texts, Chapter 13

Procedure

Say: Each person has both creative and analytical aspects. Some people think they are more creative, others think they are more analytical. It is optimal to blend your creative thinking and analytical thinking since both are needed to cope with challenges.

The poet William Blake once said, “Everything we now call ‘real’ was once imagined.” That’s profoundly true. It’s also true that it took analytical skills to make sure the thing worked right.

When you exercise both creative and analytical thinking, there’s no stopping you. Your self-concept soars.

Where do you think you are on the creativity and analysis scale? If 1 means you are really creative and 10 means you are extremely analytical?

Teacher: Wait for response.

Say: What are the strengths of the creative side? What are the strengths of the analytical side?

Teacher: Wait for responses.

Say: Why do creative people need a few analytical skills? And why do analytical types need to use some creativity?

Teacher: Wait for responses. Then, ask students to get out a piece of paper and a pen and write about whether they are more analytical or creative, and how they can incorporate some of the opposite quality into their usual routine.

Say: How do we fit creativity and analysis into the Thoughts-Actions-Feelings about Self Circle?

Teacher: Wait for responses.

Say: The positive thought is that you have both creativity and analytical ability as intellectual positive actions to help you shape the life you want. Everyone needs the *SYNERGISM*

Positive Feelings



resulting from the best of both. You can use your imagination to dream up things you want to do; and you have your ability to analyze those things to make sure they work well. Imagination enhances your sense of idealism while analytical thinking can enhance your sense of realism. On the other hand, creativity allows a very “hands-on” approach to life, while analysis tends to be cooler, loftier and more reasonable.

And the positive feelings resulting from the mix of imaginative and analytical thought will help you do what you want to do with your life. Both kinds of thinking are necessary for achievement.

Let’s read *Guide to a Positive Life* Student Text, Unit 2, Chapter 13, “What Do I Want to Create with My Life?”

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 as a group.

Teacher’s Toolbox

Vocabulary

Synergism

A combined energy of the whole is greater than the sum of its parts.

Word of the Week

Curious

Eager to learn how and why things happen.

Chapter 13

What Do I Want to Create with My Life?

Goals: To learn that the intellectual positive action of creating helps you to develop essential skills, to make something out of nothing, to gain competence and confidence in life, and to feel good about yourself.

Teenagers are deep wells of creativity. Do you ever get bored or distracted learning about English grammar or the War of 1812, and just kind of glaze over and go some place else? That's called mind traveling, and it births all kinds of creative activities: stories, other worlds, explorations, day dreams and night dreams, and relationships and adventures that might not otherwise happen. Your mind is a rich place to hang out. That interior life of the brain is the center of creativity.

Creating is a natural part of being human; it is a response to life. It could be in the areas of technology, the outdoors, art, leadership, sports, literature, helping others—the list could go on forever.



In what areas of my life do I feel creative? What makes me feel alive enough to make something or think about something in a new way?

Although people create things you can touch, eat, see, or do, you also create new thoughts, ideas, and attitudes, particularly for yourself. Creating isn't just limited to writers, artists, architects, or scientists. It's the way you live your everyday life. Just get out there and try something. You'll find that you express yourself through your creations. Everything you

make or do represents your thoughts, feelings, and abilities in one way or another. You have unique abilities to create in a few special areas of your life, to express yourself in ways that are yours alone. You find the heart of your creative abilities by looking at what you love to do, what makes you curious, what is fun for you, and what things mean the most to you.

For instance, maybe you have a knack for all things mechanical and are a little obsessive about big machines. The place you are happiest and most engaged is at the speedway, creating and testing, working and reworking on the fastest engine you can build. You can't stop thinking about it. You were built for speed. And you can base a life around this creativity.



*Where are my creative centers?
In what big aspect of life
can I create something new?
How would I feel about
yourself if I could do that?*

Or perhaps you love texture, color, and style, and you have talent for design in abundance, an artistic exuberance that shines in the way you dress and move. You could turn this creativity into a career in design, photography, modeling—anything that uses your flair.

You also feel better about what you are doing with your life if you think you are creating and contributing something important to your families, community, and school. Maybe you are the person who can find the cure for childhood cancer or unravel the way wars work, which leads to a startling understanding about world peace. It could be you.

The fact is that you do better, work harder, and create more in the areas of your life that you like best. Creating takes all of your physical, intellectual,

social, and emotional skills and abilities. That's why it makes you feel so good about yourself. The boost you get from making something new enhances your self-concept in a big way, and so you do it again and again, becoming increasingly proficient. All the while, you are getting closer to creating the life you really want, and feeling better about who you are and what you are doing. And you know what that means—success and happiness.

Lesson
58

Thoughts Worth Keeping vs. Thoughts Worth Discarding

Goal: ♦ To learn the social and emotional positive actions of managing our thoughts.

Objectives: ♦ To discern between positive thoughts worthy of smart management and negative thoughts worthy of discarding.

- ♦ To appreciate the connection between positive thought management and feeling in control of your life.
- ♦ To learn that there are a variety of techniques to manage thoughts including prioritizing, focusing, and asking yourself questions about what you are thinking and why.

MATERIALS	Needed
	✓ None
	Provided
	✓ None

Procedure

Say: Let's start with a silly-sounding question that isn't silly at all: what is a thought?

Teacher: Wait for responses. Write those responses on the board, and reinforce those responses; all of them are right. Suggest that, at base, thought is energy that flows along your *NEURAL PATHWAYS* in your brain. And that energy can be directed. It's important for teens to realize that they can redirect their thinking and impact the pathways in their neurology. The best way to do redirect thinking is to choose a more positive direction, which literally creates neural pathways that can take your brain in new directions. Because their brains are still growing and significantly changing, teens can actually do that more easily than adults.

Say: Is it really possible to ever think just one thought in isolation? I can't think of a single minute in life—can you?—when one thought doesn't follow another. So let's reframe the question: what is thinking?

Teacher: Wait for responses.

Say: Let's say that thinking is a mental process using energy to manipulate words, images, symbols, and ideas into different combinations in order to achieve a purpose. The *Positive Action* program is very concerned with the consequences of positive and negative thinking upon your quality of life. Why is the ability to discern clearly the differences between negative and positive thinking vital to have as a tool as you emerge into adulthood?

Teacher: Wait for responses.

Say: Thoughts have consequences, positive or negative, upon our self-perception and self-esteem, and most importantly, our actions. Some thoughts have immediate consequences. For example, thinking about the fact you're hungry and want to eat something immediately leads you to get some food. Some other thoughts might have more gradual consequences over days, months, or years, sometimes catching us by surprise. If you nurture thoughts about harming another person, this creates solid neural pathways in your brains. And



because you reinforce that thought over and over again, at some point it boils over into an action. You could have stopped the damage to another person's life, as well as your own, by questioning that thought and replacing it with a healthier, safer thought—and creating a better, healthier neural pathway. Has anybody done that?

Teacher: Wait for responses.

Say: There are lots of ways to manage thinking: Acting immediately upon a thought is a good idea if you are in danger and your brain is telling you to move. Questioning negative thoughts, then reframing those thoughts, or putting thoughts away for a while until the emotion attached to the moment calms down, is another way to manage thinking. What are some other management techniques?

Teacher: Wait for responses. Write them on the board. Guide toward: Sitting still and thinking something through, journaling, prioritizing, focusing, learning something new so you can better solve a problem, sorting out what happened and why.

What doesn't help is simply brooding on "what's wrong" and reinforcing how angry or scared or distracted or sad you are. Those activities reinforce those negative neural pathways. Switching into a problem-solving mode gets you out of the victim mind-set in a hurry, and increases self-esteem.

Say: Not every line of thinking is worth remembering, so our brains naturally discard a lot of thoughts. It's called forgetting. Some types of thinking are destructive to you, others, and the environment. Those we have to actively question and reframe them into more positive thoughts. Can anybody think of an example of reframing negative thought to positive thought?

Teacher: Wait for responses. Use an example of your own or this one: someone at school disrespects you, or worse, creates harm in your life, maybe to your body or your reputation. All you really want to do is lash out either verbally or physically. You are really angry, so feeling has reinforced thought—a really dangerous combination that creates a pathway for potentially dangerous action. So you force yourself to calm down, give yourself some space for those emotions to dissipate, and for reason to come back to you. It's called "coming to your senses." Then you form a plan based on the most positive pathway you can manage. That might include asking for help from an adult, finding ways to resolve the problem, confronting that person safely (perhaps in the counselor's office), or realigning your own thoughts so you find ways to be safe emotionally and socially, and out of that person's reach.

Say: Destructive or negative thinking doesn't help anyone or anything; it escalates problems, sometimes into violence. A rough and tumble man in one of *Positive Action's* parent programs realized that it wasn't his wife's behavior that caused violence in their home, it was his own thinking. When that clicked, he was able to solve problems rationally and calmly. What are the benefits of basing your life on life-enhancing, positive thoughts?

Teacher: Wait for responses. Write those on the board. Add these: you get to have a safe and sane life, you get to be successful and happy; you get to free up emotional room in your heart and head so there's energy and intellect to learn effectively; you create lasting relationships that will save your life; you become a person who adds something to life, instead of a person who gets life sapped out of you by a task, or a person who takes life. You get to have a life and a self you like. Big payoffs.

Teacher's Toolbox

Vocabulary

Neural Pathways

A linkage of neurons (brain cells) that grow in the brain. The more a thought or activity is reinforced, the longer and more complex those neural pathways grow.

Teacher's Inspiration

Managing your thoughts positively can dispel tensions associated with your school day. Teaching entails maintaining a supply of useful and positive thoughts in an environment with many interruptions, some of which can quickly catalyze negative thoughts. You might want to keep a copy of this poem entitled "Things to Think" by Robert Bly in your desk drawer for moments when you need to replenish and manage more effectively your storehouse of positive thoughts. Here is the opening stanza:

*"Think in ways you've never thought before
If the phone rings, think of it as carrying a message
Larger than anything you've ever heard"*

Lesson 63

Thinking About How You Act

Goal: ♦ To reflect upon the social and emotional positive actions of managing your actions.

- Objectives:** ♦ To reflect on how managing actions effectively gives a sense of empowerment as tasks are completed in a thorough fashion.
- ♦ To collect words and images from the Mass Media evoking a sense of frenzied, disordered, “action-packed” excitement—and counter them with words and images suggesting dynamic, well-managed actions.

MATERIALS

Needed

- ✓ Pens

Provided

- ✓ *Guide to a Positive Life* Student Texts, Chapter 21
- ✓ Image of “Thoughts-Actions-Feelings” Circle Poster

Procedure

Say: Let’s start today by daydreaming about how we can make our lives so action-packed that we won’t have to think about the stuff that bothers us. Does that sound like fun? Let me see how many would enjoy having today’s class be that exciting?

Teacher: Wait for responses.

Say: Anybody thinking that I’m tricking you? Raise your hand if you think I didn’t mean exactly what I said.

Teacher: Wait for responses.

Say: This was a bit of trick, but a worthy one to make you think about something from a different angle. I would like today’s class to be as interactive as it can be—but I don’t want it to be so action-packed that we can escape stuff that bothers us. Why not?

Teacher: Wait for responses.

Say: It’s not my job to compete with the action-packed entertainment of television and the Internet. As a teacher, I’m more interested in creating an interactive atmosphere that is both entertaining and educational, rather than one where you passively watch a lot of action someone else created to help you escape. You may think that I’m not being fair, and that downloading music from the Internet and playing computer games are interactive. Are there different kinds of interactivity?

Teacher: Wait for responses.

Say: Activity between yourself and someone else’s creation for your computer monitor or movie screen can be educational and entertaining if—notice the if—it puts you into a state of doing your own thinking and action rather than mindlessly reacting in order to escape managing your own thoughts and actions. How can you tell the difference between negative and positive interactivity with films, TV, and the Internet?

Positive Feelings



Teacher: Wait for responses.

Say: If you come away from a computer game, TV show, or Internet session with an enhanced sense of your own resourcefulness in thinking and feeling, that is a positive sign. If you can collect valuable lessons learned from the mass media that you can apply toward developing a positive, well managed life, that's a great sign that you had a positive interaction with *TECHNOLOGY*. Interestingly, you can apply that same standard to directly interacting with people socially in your real life. Might there also be some signals of negative interactivity with technology?

Teacher: Wait for responses.

Say: Feeling overwhelmed by a technology-produced game or feeling emotionally out-of-control and unable to think clearly about how to manage your actions are definite signs of destructive interaction. Common to destructive forms of mass media are extreme depictions of sex and violence, glorifying characters that can't manage their lives, who hurt others and themselves. Why would the media glamorize such destructive, unmanageable behavior?

Teacher: Wait for responses.

Say: Managing your actions takes effort. Is part of the allure, of people who don't manage their actions, an appeal to an irresponsible part in everyone?

Teacher: Wait for responses.

Say: An appeal to a part of us that just wants to live spontaneously and act anyway our impulses drive us?

Teacher: Wait for responses.

Say: Is a key function of mass media dramas and games helping us temporarily escape from the awareness that a satisfying adult life takes conscious effort?

Teacher: Wait for responses.

Say: Media-induced *OVER-STIMULATION* can lead to a state of confusion about how and when to act responsibly in your life. Remember that managing actions well in your life does not imply a life without excitement and fun.

Teacher: Be aware of some students who have never known anything but a mismanaged life filled with violent and sexually inappropriate actions in their home or temporary shelter. If that is the case, ask them to imagine alternatives and assure them that it is realistic to plan a positive life of their own as they manage their actions.

Say: Read *Guide to a Positive Life* Student Text, Unit 3, Chapter 21, "How Do I Manage What I Do?"

Teacher: Allow time for students to read. Depending on time availability and your preference, direct them to answer the questions in their journals, reflect on them as they read, or discuss them in small groups. When they finish, display the "Thoughts-Actions-Feelings Circle" Poster.

Say: Let's revisit our TAF circle:

Our positive thoughts direct our actions so that we maintain control of our lives. Our negative thoughts misdirect our actions, and we lose control of our lives.

Our positive actions keep us balanced, directed, focused, and in line with own goals and dreams.

Our positive feelings help us become the best person we can be.

Teacher's Toolbox

Vocabulary

Technology

Capability given by the practical application of knowledge.

Over-stimulation

When a person's nervous system is so excited that their capacity to manage their thoughts and actions positively is impaired.

Word of the Week

Actions

What you do or cause to happen.

Chapter 21

How Do I Manage What I Do?

Goals: To learn that the social and emotional positive action of managing our actions helps you create a life and a self worth having and a self-concept that is trustworthy.

Your actions are at the core of your existence. People who feel good about themselves and achieve their dreams are people who consciously choose to do the positive actions that connect them with their larger vision of themselves in their society. Managing your actions means choosing to do positive things that help yourself and other people.



What are 10 positive actions I did this week? How did they help me?

The positive influence starts with your thoughts, moves through your decisions, and provides energy and focus to do the things you need to do, when you need to do them. It isn't one positive action now and then that makes much difference. Rather, it is a core of physical, intellectual, social, and emotional positive actions performed over time that forms the basis of a strong character and that creates a self and a life worth having. It provides a healthy self-concept and a foundation for achievement and love. It takes choice, motivation, focus, action, and the ability to recognize that you have done something well.



What is the ratio of my positive actions to my negative actions?

Without a core of positive behaviors, you can get stuck. Even worse, you can fall into negative behavior patterns that harm you or others, such as addictions, violence, poverty, and despair. Life is

complicated, even with positive actions. Without them, you can wind up in a swirl of confusion, hopelessness, and helplessness.

So, how do you manage your actions? You have to think about what you are doing and why. You need to think about the consequences, the outcomes, and the effects on your self-concept and your possibilities. You also have to give yourself choices, exits, challenges, and opportunities. You make a conscious choice to do the best you can...and then you do it.



What happened the last time I consciously chose to do the positive thing? What happened when I distractedly or subconsciously chose to let a negative into my life? Would being aware of my choices have helped me?

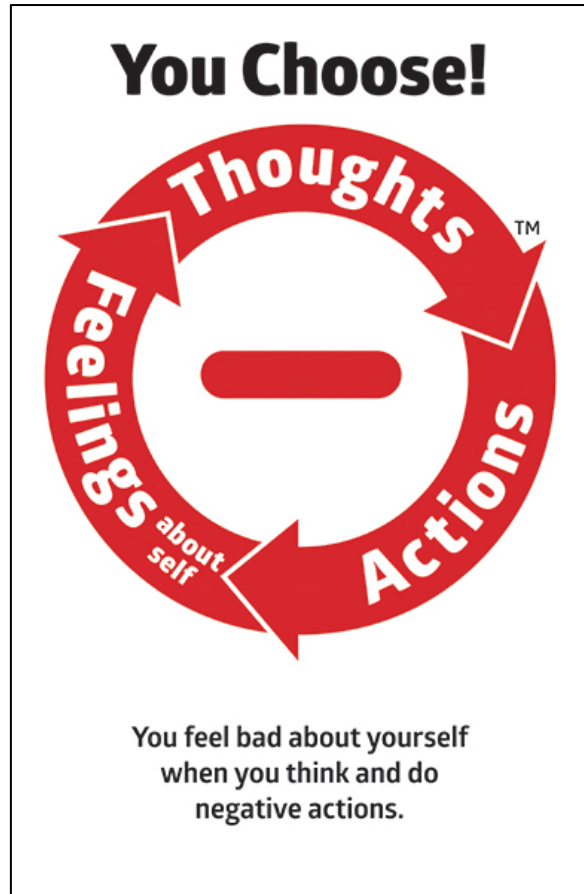
When you do positive actions over time, you become a person who is healthy and strong, on time and on task, and confident and competent. You can think clearly and stay focused; you are a creator and a connector. You have integrity and a dependable character; you are honest with yourself and other people; and you are capable of courage and leadership. You can love; you can be loved. You know who you are and what to do right now; and you have some idea what to do with the rest of your life.

Positive actions require your best self, and they also create a life and a self worth having.

Lesson 63



Front



Back

Lesson 67

What Do I Really Want and Need?

Positive Thoughts

Goals: ♦ To learn the social and emotional positive actions of how to get along with others by treating them the way we would wish to be treated.

- Objectives:** ♦ To articulate a personal Code of Conduct.
- ♦ To identify ways we want to be treated, thereby learning how we need to treat others.
 - ♦ To learn the biological and social foundations of getting along with others.
 - ♦ To explain the volunteer and video project.

MATERIALS

Needed
✓ Flip chart
✓ Marker
Provided
✓ None

Procedure

Teacher: Prepare flip chart with the first page left blank. The second page should have the words: *love, empathy, kindness, fairness, respect, cooperation, positive communication, and conflict-management* listed on it. Keep the second page covered until indicated.

Say: We all have social selves. And that social self has a mind of its own. Most teens feel a little crazed when they don't have a supportive systems of friends and family. What are some of the stories you've heard about teens who don't have a safe and sane social circle?

Teacher: Wait for responses.

Say: Learning how to get along with others is a critical part of growing up. It's one of your primary tasks as you move through high school. Students who can get along with others will get better grades, they will have a lot more fun, they will create safe *ENVIRONMENTS* for themselves and other people, and they will be healthier. They will earn more money and have better jobs over their lifetimes. Why is this true?

Teacher: Wait for responses. Guide toward: Being able to get along with others is key to molding healthy, positive families, earning a decent living, creating a livable, sustainable community. People who can't do that are marginalized to the edges of society, and many have more difficult lives.

Say: Every teen wants to have a lot of friends. That happens easily for some people but not so much for other people. We want more for you; we want to create an environment where everybody feels accepted and valued for who they are and what they are doing. Teens are going to make friends—primarily—with people who share the same interests, so we're not expecting that everyone will be a best friend. But we believe that you can learn how to treat everybody in a positive way. Does that feel reasonable to you?

Teacher: Wait for responses. This is an open-ended question.



Say: Learning how to treat other people is much more important than popularity, which can come and go on a whim. When you have a school where everybody feels accepted and valued, you create a safe environment for learning. If students don't feel accepted and valued, then things can get dangerous in a hurry. Those people might be inclined to set up gangs or cliques to protect themselves. Would you enjoy coming to school more if you knew you were going to be respected, where you felt safe, socially and emotionally?

Teacher: Wait for responses. This is an open-ended question.

Say: There are universal ways that everyone in the world wants to be treated. It's called a biological imperative—a thing that is required for the survival of the tribe or the species. As a result, your biological self gives you a big payoff when you connect with people in a good way. Your brain manufactures chemicals like adrenaline, serotonin, and oxytocin that make you feel good when you do good. It's a "survival of the species" thing. And the species is you.

Teacher: Bring out the flip chart. Use the first page to list student responses.

Say: How do you want to be treated?

Teacher: Write down their responses on the flip chart. Ask the class to vote on the ones that seem to be the most important for them. Then tear off the first sheet and tape it to the whiteboard, which will reveal the second page. Explain that on the second page are positive emotional and social actions identified the world over as universal and foundational for getting along with others, and that they will be working with these concepts. Look for correlations between the two lists for example: Empathy might be listed as understanding.

Say: We have thousands of positive actions for treating others the way we want to be treated. We are focusing on these eight because they are core. Teens, because they are still growing into their social and emotional lives, can freeze in a puzzling social situation. The way to figure out what to do is to think about how you would want to be treated in that situation. That answer will come fast. And that's how you will know what to do.

Teacher's Toolbox

Vocabulary

Environment

The circumstances or conditions by which one is surrounded, including physical, emotional, and social.

Teacher's Inspiration

Eleanor Roosevelt remarked:

"No one can make you feel inferior without your permission."

The rough-and-tumble social environment of some high schools can be places of real suffering and disconnection for some kids and their teachers. Our goal is to empower teachers and students to create healthy social environments where everyone can thrive. It's a lot easier when people treat each other the way they want to be treated; where people like each other, understand each other, and respect each other.

Lesson 82

Do I Respect the Right Things in the Right Way?

Goal: ♦ To learn the social and emotional positive action of respect; to be respectful in our interactions with others.

- Objectives:** ♦ To learn that respect of self and others entails recognition of boundaries to be honored and uniqueness to be accepted.
- ♦ To appreciate how self-respect and respect for others are intertwined.
 - ♦ To realize that different cultures have different ways to communicate respect, and that you should try to learn these ways when interacting with those from other cultures.

MATERIALS

Needed

✓ None

Provided

✓ None

Procedure

Say: Respect as a positive action is universal, but it comes with different nuances and intonations, and is reflected very differently in different cultures. In the United States we have thousands of cultures, thousands of different expectations for behaviors, which helps you move in an effective way in those cultures. What is respectful in one culture may not work in another.

You can find out what respect means to individuals and cultural groups. People will tell you. Or you can watch how people interact and research what's happening with other groups of people. What are some signs and signals of respect in our high school culture?

Teacher: Wait for responses. This is an open-ended question.

Say: What attitudes and actions of respect do we have in our general, over-arching culture?

Teacher: Wait for responses. Guide toward:

Listening to people as they talk to you; answering their questions.

Using your best manners; to act with civility and consideration.

Understanding a bit about another's culture and expectations for social behaviors.

Honoring the *BOUNDARIES* people need in order to maintain equilibrium in relationships. (An example: a teen might need a half an hour to an hour of quiet time after school to decompress.)

Being careful with other people's property, beliefs, politics, and financial status.



Say: How many of you are aware of where your boundaries are?

Teacher: Wait for responses.

Say: You can discover where your boundaries are when a stranger stands so close to you that you feel uncomfortable. Or when someone says something about you to your face that you feel isn't appropriate. Your boundaries are determined by where you feel your rights as a person begin and end. It includes your physical body and that invisible part of yourself called "your space." Every person has boundaries, but these boundaries may vary due to a number of factors. If a person has a negative opinion of themselves, they may not defend their boundaries well because they may not believe they are worthy of other people's respect. If you've known someone who has felt that way, what can you do to help them re-establish strong boundaries?

Teacher: Wait for responses.

Say: You can remind that person that you respect them—and that you expect them to respect themselves in order for there to be positive communication between you. Remind them that communication involves both parties respecting their boundaries. Different cultures may have slightly different ideas about the best way to respect boundaries, but the core principles of treating people with dignity and the right to their personal space are universal.

What are some things we want to avoid if we are trying to respect everyone?

Teacher: Wait for responses. Guide toward: Anything from disparagement, name-calling and harassment to rape, criminal activity, or violence.

Say: This hasn't been measured, but we suspect that the disrespect that we show to other people is in direct proportion to the disrespect we have for ourselves. When we disrespect others, it's a big red neon sign telling other people that our self-concept is a mess. As our self-concept improves through thinking positive thoughts and doing positive actions, the need to disrespect others decreases in a big way. Your ability to respect other people, their rights and their property is a direct reflection of your self-concept. Does this seem true to you?

Teacher: Wait for responses. This is an open-ended question.

Teacher's Toolbox

Vocabulary

Boundary

Something that limits or restrains; a limiting line, a stopping point.

Teacher's Inspiration

A popular gospel music group, The Staple Singers, had a hit song decades ago called "Respect Yourself." One verse was "If you don't respect yourself, no one else will give a good hoot." You might want to think about the meaning of this line on difficult days teaching when you feel your students aren't relating to you in a respectful manner. Check to be certain that you are teaching from a position of strong self-respect, and if that is the case, and they still aren't showing you respect, you could give them a writing assignment about a famous person in history that disrespected others, and the consequences that person faced.

Lesson 91

Do I Even Know the Truth?

Positive Thoughts

Goal: ♦ To learn the social and emotional positive actions of self-honesty by telling ourselves the truth about ourselves.

Objectives: ♦ To become aware of ways we are dishonest with ourselves.
♦ To learn that everyone is capable of expressing themselves through art.

MATERIALS	Needed
	✓ Pens
	Provided
	✓ None

Procedure

Say: Raise your hand if you think that being honest with yourself is a snap, something anybody can do, no sweat.

Teacher: Wait for responses.

Say: What exactly makes being honest with ourselves so challenging?

Teacher: Wait for responses.

Say: Here's a different angle on the question. How many of you love the way your face looks every time you look in the mirror?

Teacher: Wait for responses. Why or why not?

Say: A mirror reflects back our best and worst features at once. This can be difficult information to process if we're feeling insecure and generally negative about ourselves. One of the life-enhancing tools you'll be learning through *Positive Action* lessons is how to be positively accepting of all aspects of your physical and psychological identity. This is a major *PASSAGE*: the road to emerging into a happy and fulfilling adulthood. Meanwhile, it takes courage to look at ourselves, pimples and all, in a mirror until we fully make that passage into mature self-acceptance. Is looking deeply into ourselves in terms of how we behave every day any easier than looking at our face in the mirror?

Teacher: Wait for responses.

Say: It might be even harder looking into ourselves. We might discover meanness, pettiness, cruelty, and less than noble thoughts, alongside feelings of love, gratitude, care, and friendship. Lots of people who don't mature into a healthy positive adulthood deal with their negative personality characteristics by being dishonest with themselves. What are some common ways of being dishonest with ourselves?

Teacher: Wait for responses. Write the bolded words on the board and discuss the definitions and examples given.



- ♦ **Denial**—Insisting you didn’t say or do something (when you did); failing to acknowledge the truth to yourself.
- ♦ **Victimization**—I did it, but it’s because I’m (poor, crazy, rural, urban, sick, well, hungry, full, etc.).
- ♦ **Just alibi**—Excuses, excuses, excuses.
- ♦ **Selective memory loss**—Willful amnesia.
- ♦ **Blaming others**—It’s all his fault.
- ♦ **Rationalization**—Making up crazy, convoluted excuses for behavior. (The dog ate my homework. This could be true, but you don’t have a dog and you didn’t do your homework.)

Say: These are common forms of self-dishonesty. Luckily, there is a way to derail dishonesty and get you back on the positive track of self-honesty. You may be surprised at what it is. It’s art—and don’t sweat it if you don’t think you have any talent. Art is a fun way of honestly expressing who we are and can help us achieve self-honesty.

Teacher’s Toolbox

Vocabulary

Passage

A process of passing from one phase of life to another.

Teacher’s Inspiration

The modern theologian Paul Tillich once wrote about a paradox that we face as teachers as surely as students. Tillich wrote:

“The courage to be is the courage to accept oneself, in spite of being unacceptable.”

Teaching sometimes puts us in the position of preaching a credo of self-acceptance and self-honesty that we find difficult for ourselves to practice. Like any helping profession, teachers have days where they might prefer not to teach—if they let themselves be honest and admit it to themselves. We suggest that this unsettling thought is best controlled by writing in a journal where you can dialogue with that desire not to teach on a given day—and the desire to stay committed to teaching as a career.

Lesson 103

How Do I Know What's True?

Positive Thoughts

Goal: ♦ To learn that acknowledging the truth and refusing to rationalize are social and emotional positive actions that can create a web of safety and sanity for people.

Objectives: ♦ To learn that rationalization is making up long, convoluted explanations or excuses for an error or personal lapse.
♦ To learn that poor mental health can result from not being able to tell the truth, and avoiding harmful truths.

MATERIALS

Needed
✓ None
Provided
✓ None

Procedure

Say: Rationalization is a trickster; it has a way of twisting the truth so we can defend ourselves against the consequences of our actions. It offers somewhat believable, but untrue, reasons for our actions. As with any mental health issue, it depends on the degree of rationalization. The old “the dog ate my homework” is a light-hearted and safe rationalization. Your teacher probably knows you don’t have a dog and you didn’t do your homework. What are some issues that are dangerous to rationalize?

Teacher: Wait for responses. Guide toward: Using illegal drugs, failing to study or participate in learning, not being truthful about money.

Say: People who rationalize frequently create long, convoluted, whacked-out lists of reasons or excuses for not-so-positive actions. That language and behavior doesn’t make sense, and people catch on quick. It’s the way some mentally ill people process the world. It’s also shows up in people who’ve committed serious crimes. People involved with drugs and alcohol are sometimes gifted rationalizers, egged on by the unreality of a mind altered by chemicals. It’s a serious way to lie to yourself. Why do people resort to such transparent lies?

Teacher: Wait for responses. Guide toward: They think they are fooling other people, but the person who is being fooled is the individual.

Say: When we rationalize, we divert attention away from reality, and we mislead and confuse others and ourselves. However, the person hurt most by rationalization is the person who does it. Rationalization makes lives complicated and messy. The inability to recognize the truth keeps people trapped in a really bad place. When people rationalize, they are at greater risk for social problems, learning problems, poverty, illness, distraction, depression, anxiety, trouble with the law, and violence. It’s a behavior that *MARGINALIZES* people. Why is that?

Teacher: Wait for responses. Guide toward: Because you don’t have a solid footing in life if you don’t know, or can’t face, the truth, and you can drift into bad situations.



Say: Acknowledging the truth is the positive action that requires that we search for and find the truth. When we can accept our reality, then we get a grip. In fact, when people are able to focus on the truth, or as close as they can get to it, they begin to heal their lives and get on a positive pathway. Other realms of truthfulness become possible as they heal. If they can't get real, they'll stay stuck. Has that ever happened to anyone you know?

Teacher: Wait for responses.

Say: When we acknowledge the truth about our lives, we get sane, clear, and real, which creates space for thinking, acting, and feeling in positive ways. It's the only way we can create a self, a character, integrity, and a life worth having.

Teacher's Toolbox

Vocabulary

Marginalize

To limit importance or potential.

Teacher's Inspiration

Teaching requires a deep and strict adherence to the truth. It's no wonder you are tired at the end of the day; carrying the truth of the lives of over a hundred students is exhausting. The relief is telling somebody how really tired you are and taking a well-deserved break. Carry all those truths lightly. They are only yours for a little while. The Slovenians had it right:

"Speak the truth, but leave immediately after."

Lesson 112

What Visions Do You Have for the Future?

Positive Thoughts

Goal: ♦ To learn the social and emotional positive actions for continually improving yourself and Strategies for Success by setting goals and steps in the physical, intellectual, emotional, and social arenas.

- Objectives:** ♦ To use talents, intelligence, strengths and weaknesses, dreams and ideals as foundations for setting personal goals.
- ♦ To discuss why teens need to think about their futures in a systematic way.
 - ♦ To discuss visualization as foundational for doing the tasks that help teens meet their goals.

MATERIALS	
	Needed
✓	Pens
	Provided
✓	Activity Sheet 112-6-HSK3

Procedure

Say: Why is it important for teens to be able to visualize a wonderful thing they want to do with their lives?

Teacher: Wait for responses. Write those on the board. Guide toward: Our dreams and ideals invest meaning, purpose, direction, and focus in our lives. It's also a hedge against emptiness, anxiety, depression, alienation, and hopeless/helplessness. Since our self-concept is based on our actions, then what we do with our lives has immense importance to us.

Say: Goals give teens the ability to predict their own outcomes. Visualization provides a foundation for actually doing the tasks that will help you meet your goals. What else does it do for you?

Teacher: Wait for responses. Guide toward: It's a concrete measure of whether you are true to yourself and your dreams, or whether you are distracted and off-track.

Say: Why is it vital that teens have positive images of their lives, both imagined in their own minds and in the media culture?

Teacher: Wait for responses. Guide toward: Teens respond to messages and images about themselves in a visceral way, often in deeply psychological or emotional ways that can be unconscious.

Say: We're going to be talking about our goals today. Goals and steps are necessary for turning dreams into reality. If you dream of being a novelist, it will never happen if you don't take a class to learn how to write novels. And it will never happen if you don't actually write. That's the difference between people who have something powerful and important in their lives and people who don't. Those who succeed actually do the work required to get them where they want to go.

Teacher: Distribute "Goal Targets" Activity Sheet 112-6-HSK3 to each student.



Say: On your Goal Targets, write one or two sentences about who you would be as a “your best self” —physically, intellectually, emotionally, and socially in the space beside each Goal Target. Think about who you want to be in five years, the best self you can be in that time frame.

Teacher: Do the activity.

Say: Choose four dreams or ideals you want to work on; one each for the physical, intellectual, emotional, and social areas of your life that will help you get to your “best self.” Write those in the center of your four Goal Targets.

Teacher: Do the activity. Ask each student to talk about their goals, why they are important to them.

Say: Next, think about three steps that will help you achieve your goal in each of four areas of your life. Maybe these are big, multi-year steps. Maybe they are smaller steps, like taking a class. Maybe you want to become stronger or eat healthier food; maybe you need to secure an *APPRENTICESHIP* or a scholarship; maybe you want to be more connected to people; maybe you want to be more honest with yourself. Write in those three steps on your Goal Targets.

Teacher: Do the activity. Review those with each student. Ask for group suggestions that will help each student reach his/her goals, especially if the steps are unrealistic or too vague.

Say: Now the tricky part comes. Give yourself reasonable dates for completion.

Teacher: Do the activity.

Say: Your assignment, should you choose to accept it, is to use this process on other goals you are thinking about, especially if you are unsure about what you want to do with your life. As you work through this process, focus on steps that appeal to you. If you can’t do the steps, then the goal is not real for you. You need goals that are intriguing for you, steps that you really want to work on. It doesn’t mean that every task is going to be fun or enlightening; they’re not. But if you are willing to work through all of that, chances are the goals you’ve chosen are the right ones for you. And you will succeed at them. How does doing this process feel to you? What does it do for you?

Teacher: Wait for responses.

Say: Why do teens need to think about their futures in such depth and detail?

Teacher: Wait for responses. Guide toward: It helps you learn about what you need and want to do with your life. It helps make good things happen for you.

Teacher’s Toolbox

Vocabulary

Apprenticeship

A position where a beginner learns a trade or occupation under a professional in the field.

Teacher’s Inspiration

To laugh often and much;

To win the respect of intelligent people and the affection of children;

To earn the approbation of honest critics and endure the betrayal of false friends;

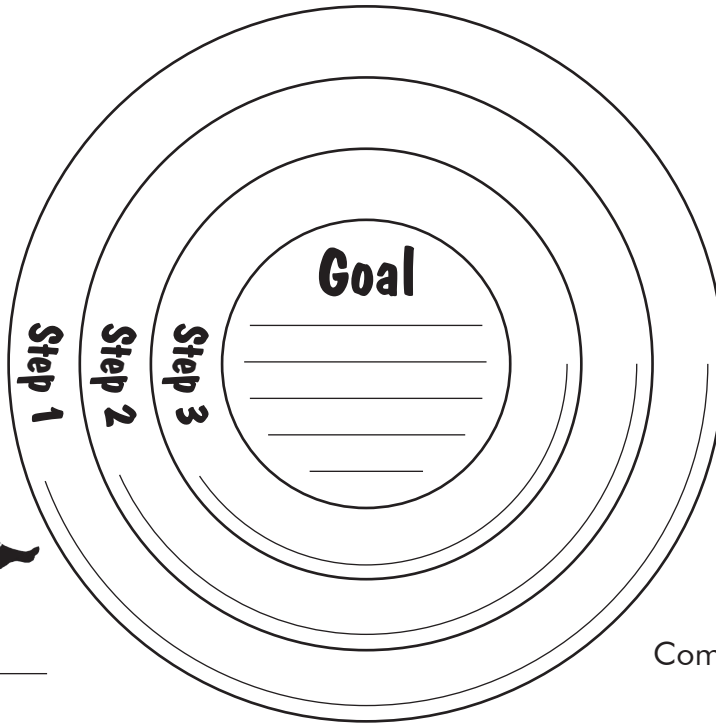
*To appreciate beauty;
To find the best in others;
To give of one's self;
To leave the world a bit better, whether by a healthy child, a garden patch, or a redeemed social condition;
To have played and laughed with enthusiasm and sung with exultation;
To know even one life has breathed easier because you have lived—
This is to have succeeded.*
—Ralph Waldo Emerson

This lovely poem is Emerson's definition of success. It might be an appropriate literary exercise to use with your students. Copy the poem, ask the students to use the structure of the poem to create their own definition of success.

Goal Targets

DIRECTIONS: First, sketch a picture or write a few words to convey your “best self.” What are your dreams for yourself—physically, intellectually, socially, and emotionally? Write a goal for each of the following areas: physical, intellectual, social, and emotional. Write your long-term goal in the center of the target. Then, fill in each step it will take to achieve that goal, starting with the outside ring and Step 1, and moving to the center. Fill in the start date. When the goal is accomplished, come back to this page and fill in the date when completed.

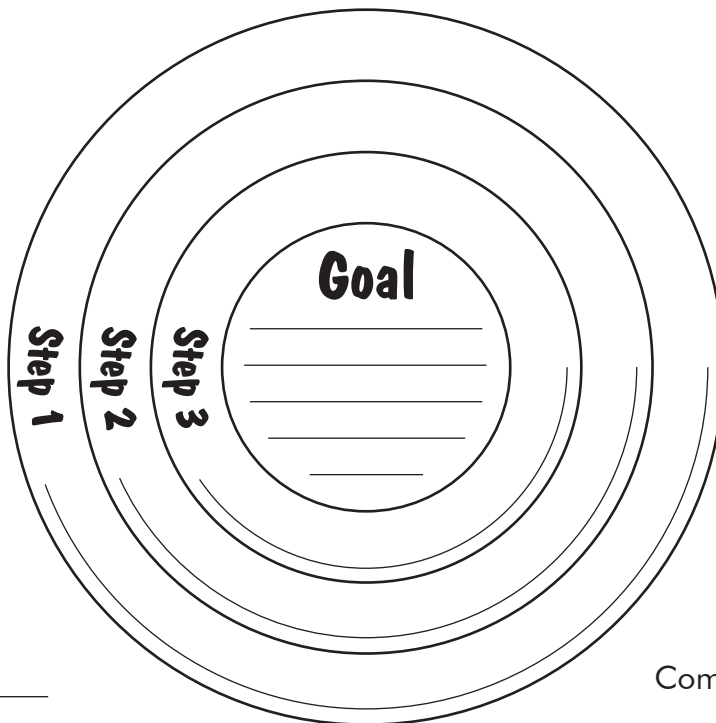
Physical



Started _____
(Date)

Completed _____
(Date)

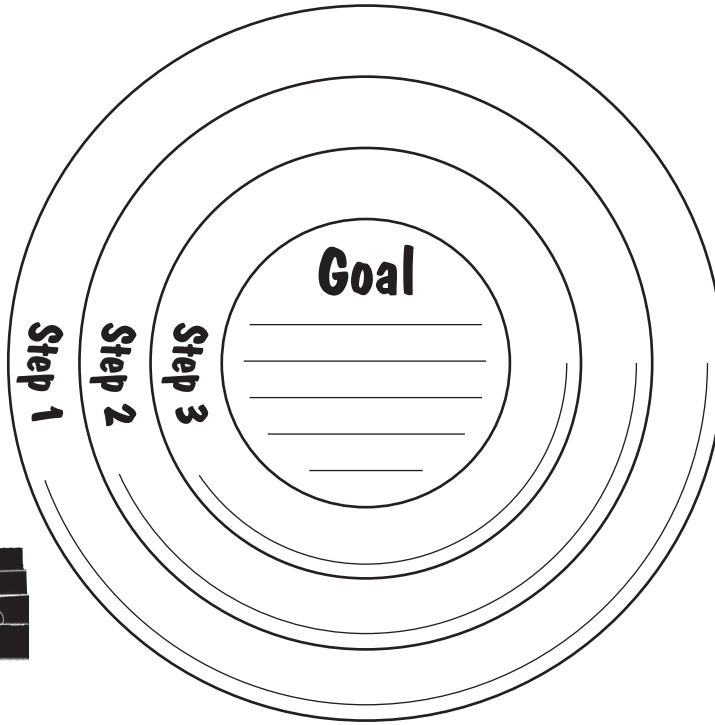
Intellectual



Started _____
(Date)

Completed _____
(Date)

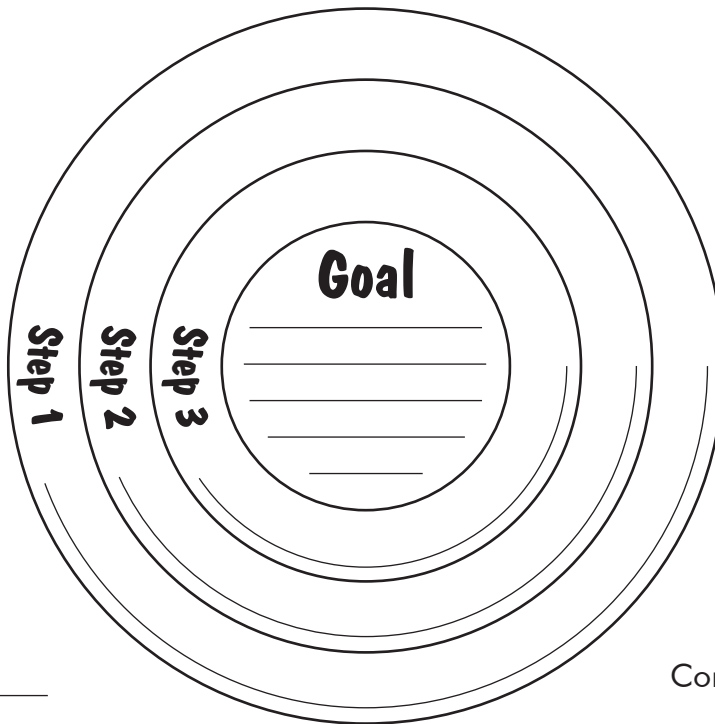
Social



Started _____
(Date)

Completed _____
(Date)

Emotional



Started _____
(Date)

Completed _____
(Date)

Lesson 127

Do I Stay with it or Change Direction?

Positive Thoughts

Goal: ♦ To learn the social and emotional positive actions of improving ourselves continually by persisting in our goals.

Objectives: ♦ To learn that persistence is foundational for success.
♦ To learn when persistence is essential and when it's time to rethink your goals.
♦ To discuss how the media often creates expectations for instant gratification.

MATERIALS

Needed
✓ None
Provided
✓ None

Procedure

Say: In the 1970s, a country-western singer named Kenny Rogers wrote a song called *The Gambler*, the story of an old man telling a younger one:

*"You got to know when to hold 'em, know when to fold 'em,
Know when to walk away and know when to run.
You never count your money when you're sittin' at the table.
There'll be time enough for countin' when the dealin's done."*

That's more or less the quandary we often face: knowing when to persist and when to change direction. Why is the metaphor of a gambler such a powerful one?

Teacher: Wait for responses. Guide toward: It's impossible to know what might happen at the beginning of an endeavor or during everyday life.

Say: We don't know how things are going to play out. But, perhaps a little bit of knowledge or strategy can help you decide whether to stick with something or to walk away. So how can you give yourself an edge?

Teacher: Wait for responses. Guide toward: You hold to your dreams and ideals, although how you work with them might change. You also stay with your goals when you have substantial, **VERIFIABLE** talent, the physical and intellectual capacity to succeed, enough support, and are clear about what you need to do next.

Say: The trickier question is how do you know when to modify your goals?

Teacher: Wait for responses. Write their responses on the board and include:

1. When you outgrow your dreams. Maybe being a rock star isn't for you after all; maybe being a chef is.
2. When people who are working in your area of interest tell you that your talent and skills won't serve you well.



3. If you can't actually complete the tasks or steps to meet your goals. If you can't willingly do the tasks, then either your heart or your head isn't in it, and you need to rethink.
4. Think over the importance of your goal. If it's a core of life issue for you, take more time to think about course corrections. If it is a passing fancy, change early and often, until you discover what's real for you.

Say: How do you chart a new direction when you need to do so?

Teacher: Wait for responses. Guide toward: Look for options in your area of interest. Maybe your legs won't hold up a tennis career, but maybe your words might guide you into career as a sportscaster or a sportswriter. Talk to other people about what you need to do to succeed in your field, and go from there. Look to the long view.

Say: Don't make decisions to change course when you are tired, discouraged, or suffer some kind of defeat. Sometimes people give up too soon. Maybe they didn't think it would be so difficult or competitive. Maybe they didn't know it would take so long. Has that ever happened to someone you know?

Teacher: Wait for responses.

Say: Sometimes teens expect to be wildly successful immediately and when that doesn't happen, they lose confidence and contact with their goals. Those teens can feel like a failure when they are still in the learning/practice stages. Our media focuses on the young success story so often, that we might not grasp how long it takes to achieve success. What can help that?

Teacher: Wait for responses. Guide toward: Being realistic about how long things take and what kind of effort is required. Knowing in your heart that it's worth the long hard pull.

Say: You need to know who you are and whether you are willing to put in the work required to succeed. When you know what you want and commit the time and effort it takes, that's when you persist—and eventually, succeed.

Teacher's Toolbox

Vocabulary

Verifiable

Able to confirm.

Teacher's Inspiration

Never give up, no matter what is happening.

No matter what is going on around you.

Never give up!

—The Dalai Lama



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