

# **HELPING STUDENTS FIND STABILITY IN TODAY'S CHAOTIC WORLD:**

**TEACHING THE SKILLS NEEDED TO NAVIGATE  
THE FOG OF MODERN LIFE**





# Introduction

The format of this document is a bit different from my norm. You will be provided basic concepts, single-sentence explanations of each concept, and a brief overview of some ways to target that concept for a given age span. Beyond that, there is really nothing more to say. You will be operating within the constraints of your position, location, and the personalities and needs of the children you serve, so you will know best the concept order to tackle and the manner with which each topic should be broached.

Just remember, your goal is to provide separation between the student and the chaos of the world. To accomplish this goal, you must build conceptual understanding of that separation and the resilience required to manage the pressures the world creates. This logical, personal, and silence-based reflection is sadly missing in today's world and often must be directly taught. Once that separation is created for the student, they will be free to leverage the own power and control over situations, even the ones that are not of their own making.

In closing, know that there are constraints on how you should approach each lesson. This document has utilized a very low value code level, the Civic Code Level (see the document titled, *Value Code Shifting: Reaching the Hard-to-Reach Student* for value code continuum) to ensure that the content is useful to the widest audience. If you teach in a location that operates under another value code, you can easily expand these lessons (or restrict them) to meet that demand.

# Concepts

**Page 6-** Stopping and thinking will help me make good decisions.

**Page 9-** I can't fix a problem until I understand what is really wrong.

**Page 12-** Only short-term goals lead to long-term success.

**Page 15-** Are the goals being pursued really what I want from life?

**Page 18-** I should be fair to myself. I am not the best, but I am also not the worst!

**Page 21-** I must only focus on making progress.

**Page 24-** Dreams do not always come true. I must have a plan "B".

**Page 27-** I can free myself from my old patterns. I can change.

**Page 30-** My emotions can stop me from thinking clearly.

**Page 33-** No one can "offend me" or "make me angry" unless I allow that to happen. I am in control of my own emotions!

# Concepts

**Page 36-** I can only fix myself, not others.

**Page 39-** If I look through a negative lens, all I will see are negative things.

**Page 42-** I cannot change “history”. I can only change the present.

**Page 45-** If I want others to forgive and forget my mistakes, I must be willing to do the same in return.

**Page 48-** If I emotionally harm others, I am a bully. If I use social media to spread this message, I am a gang leader.

**Page 51-** Change may be good and it may be bad, regardless, it is.

**Page 54-** If I can't find something to be joyful about, I'm not looking hard enough.

**Page 57-** I am an important person in a vast universe.

**Page 60-** Leaders must be different.

**Page 63-** *Closing Message*

# **STOPPING AND THINKING WILL HELP ME MAKE GOOD DECISIONS**

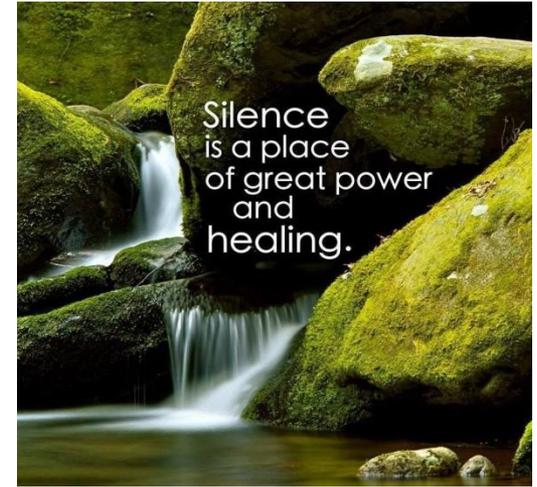


# Teach tolerance and use of “silence” to support personal reflection and planning...



Separation from the group is critical to personal development.

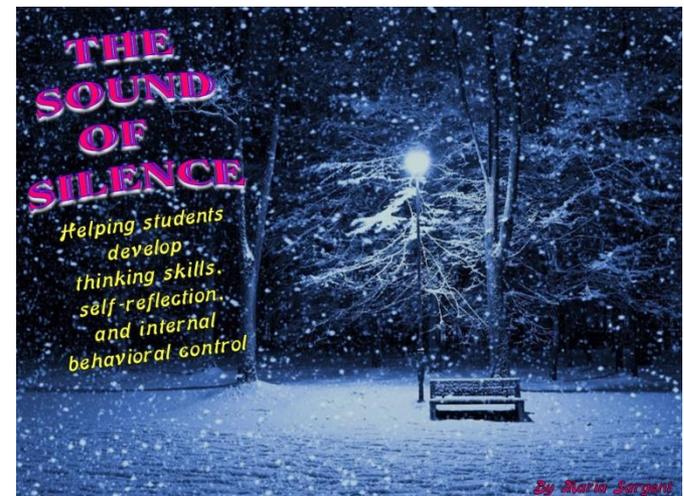
Today's world is noisy, so silence may not be tolerated at first.



**step  
by step**



The ability to use “silence” can be systematically taught.



## Younger Students

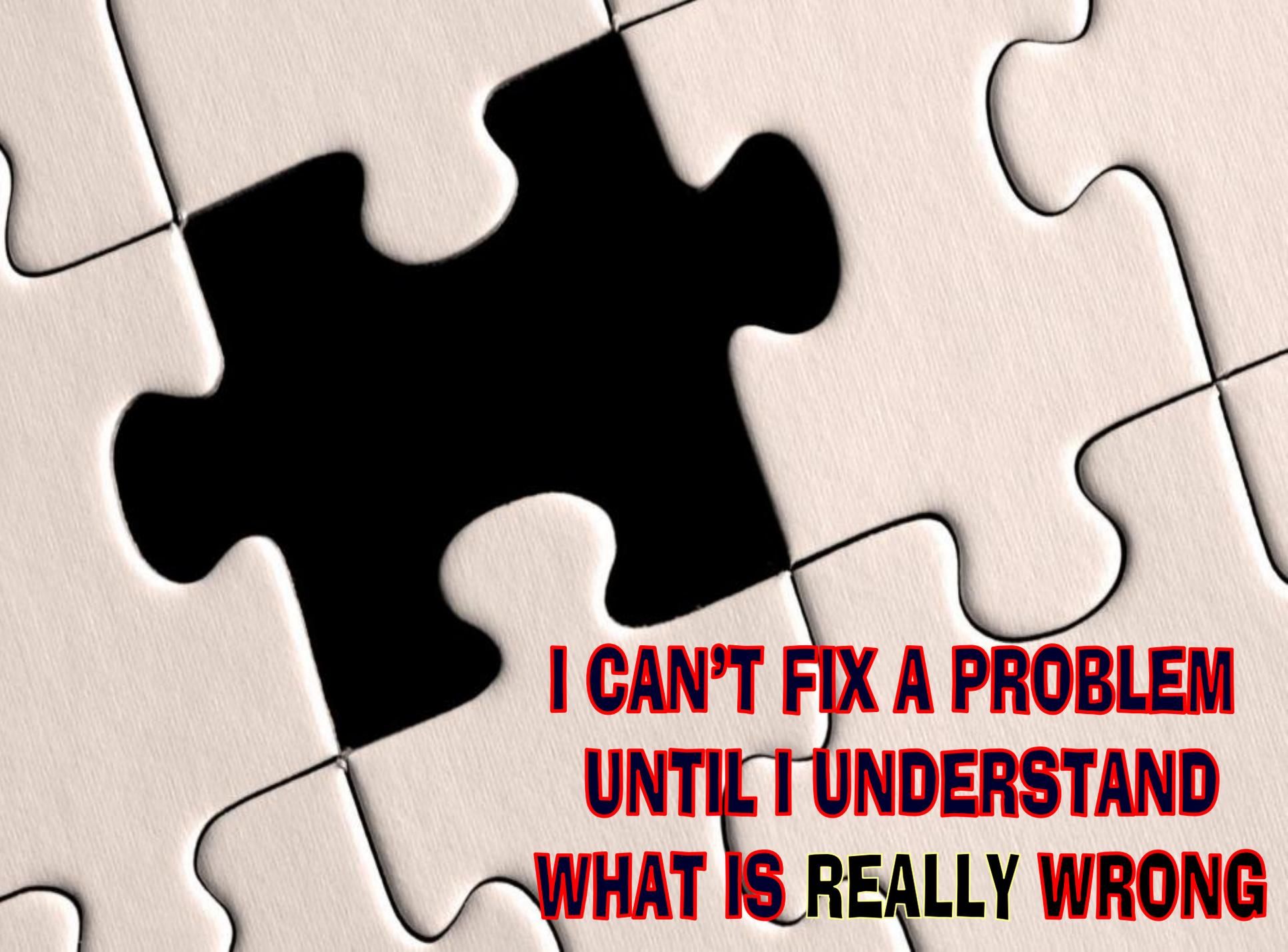
- Force “thinking” for a short period of time before making choices (e.g., making a choice for snack)
- Teach visualizing each possible choice during the thinking activity
- Articulate the “good parts” of each possible choice
- Articulate the “bad parts” of each possible choice
- Have them give a reason for a choice
- Work through “use of silence” continuum

## Older Students

- Articulate own choice and the reason for it
- Articulate why someone else might choose another way
- Include a short, written intro for each project describing how that topic was chosen
- Have short periods of silence in the morning and right after lunch so students can plan day
- Provide structure for students struggling with silence and opportunities for practice

## Oldest Students

- Have students construct “remember to think it through” reminder cue
- Teach visualizing for both choice-making and activities such as sports
- Address variations in ways to “be silent” and help students find their own methods
- Add stress-reduction strategies to silence periods
- Develop contingencies for choices in difficult situations (i.e., “I feel sick and have to go home” escape excuse)



**I CAN'T FIX A PROBLEM  
UNTIL I UNDERSTAND  
WHAT IS REALLY WRONG**

# Teach the ability to articulate the specific problem, not the emotions that stem from that problem...

Which question leads to finding solutions?



*"It's broken."*

or/

*"The wheels won't turn."*



Which specific issue is making me unhappy?  
Which specific issue is making me afraid?  
Which specific issue is stopping my progress?



Which solution do I need to learn to solve this issue?

## Younger Students

- Teach students to scan situations/problems with toys or activities to gain information
- Help them locate the specific problem and be able to verbalize it
- Help them generate possible solutions
- Help them try out solutions systematically and then assess which solution will work best
- Help them state the solution in a short phrase to encourage memory of the solution for the future

## Older Students

- Encourage students to analyze own work and activities for areas of improvement and plan a strategy to achieve it
- Force students to verbalize social problems as “something that must be fixed” or “what should be changed” rather than focusing on the emotional response
- Have them generate solutions, try them, and choose best methods for the future

## Oldest Students

- Have students reflect on problems in sports, activities, and schoolwork and generate solutions
- Have students anticipate problems and determine how to *keep those problems from happening*
- Have students discern the difference between real problems and problems based on only their own perception (considered a problem by them but not by others around them)

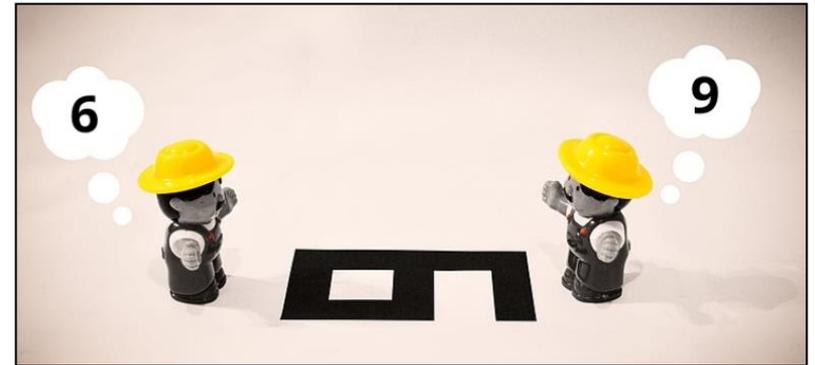
**ONLY SHORT-TERM  
GOALS LEAD TO  
LONG-TERM SUCCESS!**



# Set short-term and long-term personal goals (you set one....and the student sets one)



Set goals small enough that success is both ensured and rapid.



Student goals = learning to goal set  
Adult goals = encouraging needed skills

The highly gifted student may need the most help!



## Younger Students

- Have students learn to make single choices to plan their play activities
- Have students plan two or three choices and eventually whole day
- Have students make choices and then prioritize them
- Give students a “have to” activity that must be done sometime during their play period and have them plan for it
- Give students a “have to” that must be done over the next few days (work up to a week)

## Older Students

- Have students choose a goal for a short activity or work period
- Have students choose a daily goal, and you choose one for them as well
- Set the two goals for a week-long period
- Set the two goals for a week-long period and monitor with a mid-week benchmark of progress
- Set the two goals for a week-long period with daily benchmarks

## Oldest Students

- Have students articulate long-term goals for their schoolwork and their career/interest
- Help the students choose two or three short-term goals associated with the above plan
- Help the students develop a plan to “check in” on their goals and determine if they are being met or plan must be adjusted
- Help students seek and locate resources to fulfill their plans

**ARE THE GOALS BEING PURSUED  
REALLY WHAT YOU WANT  
FROM LIFE?**





## Younger Students

- Help students understand how opinions vary across a group (difference in favorite flavor of ice cream)
- Play games where students must “be different” or “give a different answer” from everyone else in the group
- Help students understand when they are feeling stressed, tired, pressured, or encouraged to “do what everyone else is doing”

## Older Students

- Help students understand how media influences their lives
- Encourage them to stop and think about their choices (Is this really what I want to do?)
- Have students begin to acknowledge and appreciate how their goals (academics, sports, arts, interests) differ from their peers
- Work on having students share their hopes and dreams with others without fear or embarrassment

## Oldest Students

- Have students reflect on when they are “going their own way” or “following the crowd”
- Discuss how “being different” is not better than “being like everyone else” (key is the reason and value behind the choice)
- Look at historical fads and reflect on how silly some now seem
- Help them locate media situations where same-age peers are following potentially silly trends to be part of the group

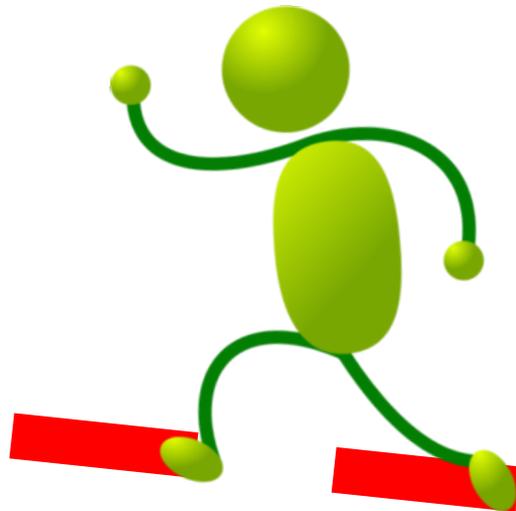
**I SHOULD BE FAIR TO MYSELF.**

**I AM NOT THE BEST, BUT I**

**ALSO AM NOT THE WORST!**



**The Best**





## Younger Students

- Have students articulate what makes a particular play product or activity good or bad and then analyze their own work based on that benchmark
- Help them understand when they are setting unrealistic goals (i.e., building a block tower 20 blocks high) and when a goal can be actually accomplished
- Help them recognize improvement rather than solely focusing on end results

## Older Students

- Have students continue to analyze work, now connecting the good aspects with recognition of the effort it took for that result
- Have them begin to recognize weaknesses as conditions that can be improved over time
- Help them accept being both higher and lower in some areas/skills
- Help them honestly and fairly critique the work of others and expand to social media figures if ready

## Oldest Students

- Have students provide a personal grade for their work in addition to your grade
- Help them reconcile the two grades and plan for any deficiencies noted
- Plan concrete ways to share accomplishments (NOTE: this should include improvement)
- Have them begin to recognize weaknesses and improvement needed by social media figures (in addition to just admiring their strengths)

**I MUST ONLY FOCUS  
ON MAKING PROGRESS**



# Concentrate on taking the “next step” and avoid over-emphasis on “meeting THE goal”...



Do not avoid having students experience failure...



...but support the learning process.

Use both lessons as a catalyst for future progress.

$$\frac{\text{effort} + \text{consistency}}{\text{time}}$$

## Younger Students

- Have students view play and work products and articulate the good and “need to improve” qualities
- Have students determine if the goals they envision are possible or impossible for the given time and adjust accordingly
- Have students recognize things that they are best at and can teach others as well as things they would like to learn from peers

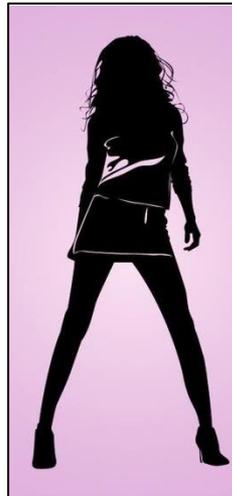
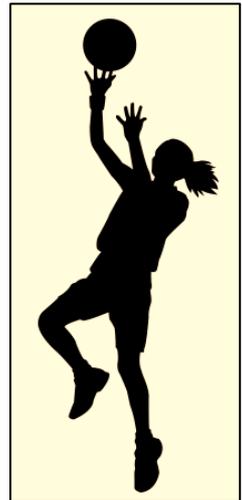
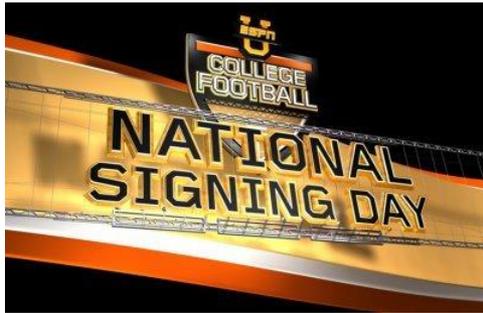
## Older Students

- Help students plan honest short-term and long-term goals to foster improvement
- Have them create a personal rating scale to analyze each day’s work and activities and plan “how to get to the next number/level”
- Help them recognize when progress will be slow and which goals may not be possible, at least at that moment
- Have them teach peers the skills and talents they possess

## Oldest Students

- Help students formally set long-term goals and then create the short-term goals that will be needed for that level of achievement
- Help students track goals formally over time using charts and graphs
- Help students learn to accept slow progress (use social media figures as models of people who have struggled during the course of their achievements)

**DREAMS DO NOT  
ALWAYS COME TRUE...  
I MUST HAVE A PLAN "B"**



# Teach students to create alternative goals...



Support students' dreams because you never know what they WILL become...



...while gently exposing them to related goals in case those dreams cannot be achieved.

  
**If you're a teacher,  
you're also a:**

life coach   motivator   discovery guide  
trip coordinator   negotiator   cheerleader  
rule enforcer   ୧୨୩୪୫୬୭୮୯୦   role model  
organizer   reality checker   fund raiser  
nose wiper   IT specialist   counselor  
handwriting expert   dream instiller   mediator  
truth detector   entertainer   trainer  
event planner   scheduler   decorator

Help students explore how a skill or talent can be used in a variety of careers, both those that are directly related to their "dream" and those that have an unexpected connection.

## Younger Students

- Help students articulate two or three ways to achieve a goal and learn the concepts of “different way”, “Plan B”, and “alternative”
- Help them begin to envision careers and goals that are prominent and easily defined, given their age
- Help them begin to connect behaviors and functional academics to success in those fields (i.e., football players must be able to read their contract)

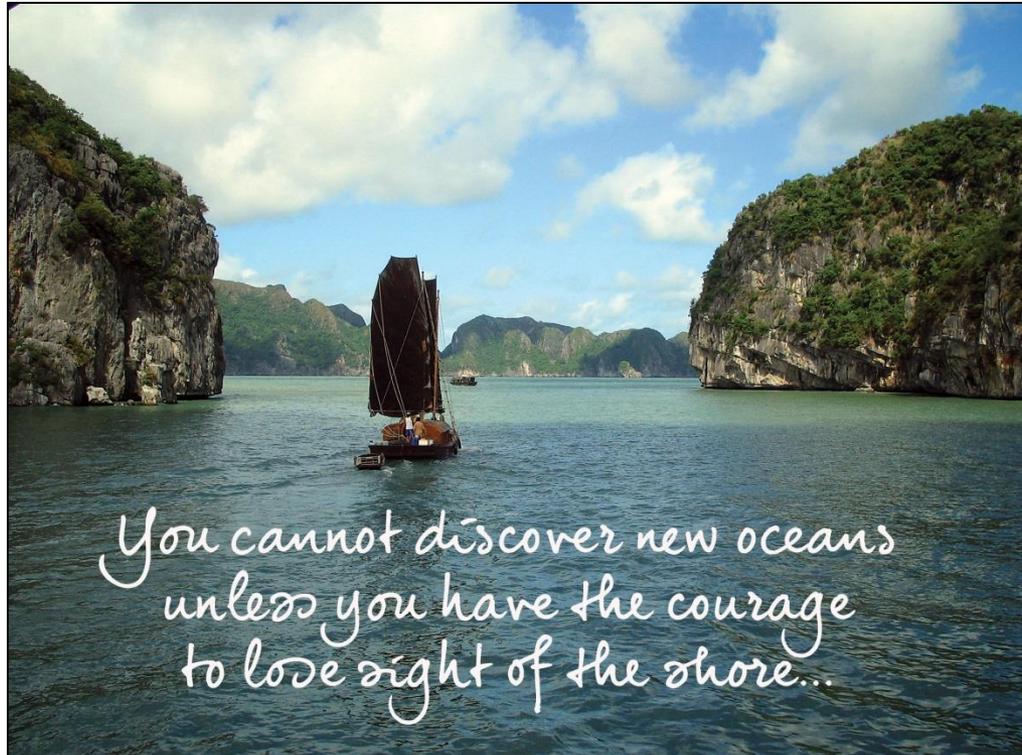
## Older Students

- Help students come up with two or three ways to achieve a goal or complete a project and then randomly pick which one to use (provides practice in managing unforeseen and unavoidable situations)
- Help students take a step back and analyze a problem or barrier to progress and then articulate a different way to achieve a similar end

## Oldest Students

- Have students begin to visualize a personal career goal or area of interest
- Help the students enlarge this career focus to all of the supporting jobs that surround that career (who are the personnel who work for and support a football player, singer, actor, etc.)
- Have students begin to actively make a Plan B, C, etc.

**I CAN FREE MYSELF  
FROM MY OLD PATTERNS  
I CAN CHANGE. . .**

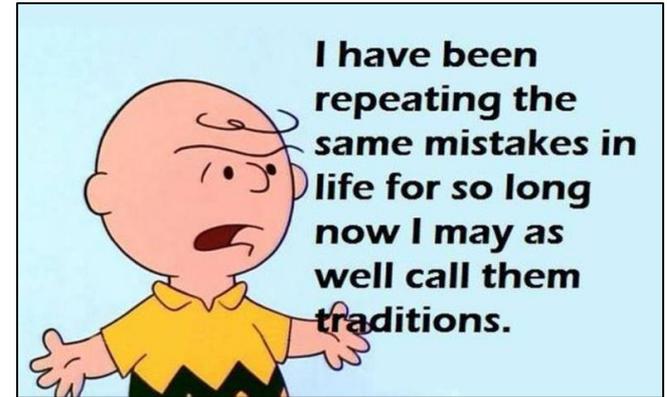


# Teach students to “*just start over*” without shame...

**MISTAKES**  
are proof that you are  
**TRYING**

Teach students to face mistakes  
and failures without shame  
or discouragement...

Help them make **SPECIFIC** plans  
(with short-term goals) to make  
the desired change a reality!



..but to also realize when  
repeated failures stem from  
a lack of effort to change or  
the need to learn a new skill.



## Younger Students

- Help students differentiate between doing something the same way and doing something different
- Watch children who perseverate on certain patterns or routines and help them to make very small changes
- Vary your own class routine on occasion to model change
- Teach the words “start over” when something goes wrong (make sure to model this action)

## Older Students

- Help students recognize when they are using good patterns or stuck in incorrect ones
- Help them make small changes and eventually plan for those changes
- Help students discern when they are trying their hardest (but maybe still failing) and when they have given up. Help them make plans for both circumstances
- Link the above plan to short-term goals to ensure success

## Oldest Students

- Have students acknowledge the comfort of routines
- Help them recognize which roles and identities they have routinely assumed
- Help them determine if these roles are their own choice, habits, or stemming from unconscious peer pressure
- Help them make plans to start over and/or create a new identity based on their goals, strengths, and interests

**I CAN ONLY FIX  
MYSELF, NOT OTHERS**



# Remove the tendency to focus on the behavior and attitudes of other people.

You cannot correct your mistakes by pointing out the mistakes of others.

It is much easier to focus on the errors of others...

Help them determine what they “*would have done instead*” when reviewing examples, and make sure they can articulate why they would have made that choice.

Be a witness,  
not a judge.  
Focus on yourself,  
not on others.  
Listen to your heart,  
not to the crowd.

..so always bring the students back to their own actions.



## Younger Students

- Help students avoid over-focus on the behavior of others
- If they see something someone else doing incorrectly, have them create a plan to help that individual, and if appropriate, ignore or avoid the issue until they can get adult help
- Have them vocalize what they would (should) have done in difficult situations. Start with play and then eventually move to daily social issues

## Older Students

- Help the student recognize how peers influence their behavior and perceptions
- Have students examine media to understand the subtle ways the outside world is trying to influence their opinions/behaviors
- Have them make concrete plans to manage problem situations with active engagement and to recognize when avoidance and seeking help would be wise

## Oldest Students

- Have students understand the subtle nature of peer influence and how it changes what they say, do, and think
- Have students always identify how their own actions should be changed in difficult situation, even if that action is to avoid, leave, or seek help
- Have students identify situations where it has been difficult to take the above actions

**I CANNOT CHANGE "HISTORY"**

**I CAN ONLY CHANGE THE PRESENT**



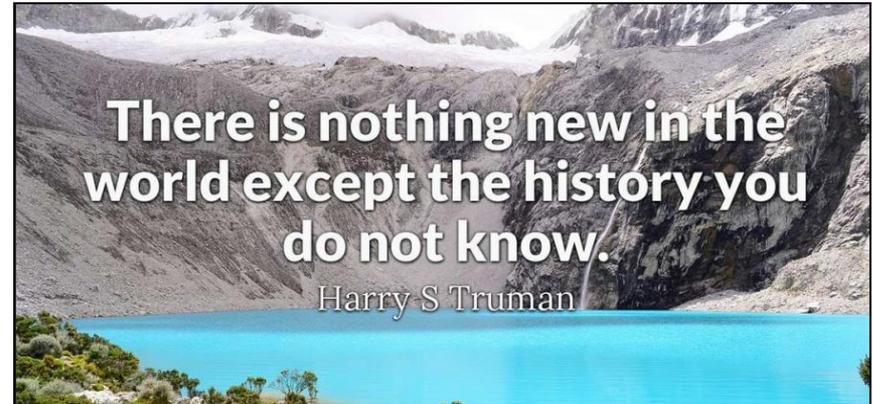
**I AM  
IN CONTROL**

# The past can only inform present action.



**Make sure any “history”** (previous school year, country’s history, or world’s history) **is remembered** (don’t erase or the lesson is lost) **and reviewed in a balanced manner. Help them understand that past norms may differ from current norms.** (I should not judge a kindergartener’s behavior using the expected behaviors for a middle school student, the 1500’s like this century, etc.)

**Help students realize that past issues** (last week, last year, or for that matter, previous centuries) **cannot be changed. How will they use that information to change THEIR CURRENT behavior?**



**Do NOT focus on a specific variable since every mistake has been duplicated across every classroom, grade, school, sex, race, religion, country, and historical period. Human errors are a function of humanity, so corrections are needed by ALL humanity.**

**IF THE CARDS ARE  
STACKED AGAINST YOU,  
RESHUFFLE THE DECK**

## Younger Students

- Have children reflect on their own history, starting first with what they did earlier that morning and eventually working back to the whole day, the previous week, the previous month, and the previous school year
- Begin to give students a sense of time, focusing on the evolution of their own friends and family (i.e., parents/caregivers were once children; grandparents were once children, etc.)

## Older Students

- Have the students begin to explore concrete differences in their own past versus how they behave now. Focus on real items like clothing, play, and interests. Restrict at first to the previous year/grade and move from there
- Explore how people “did things in the past” versus “today”. Again, use concrete items and work backwards in years. Emphasize understanding the norms of that period

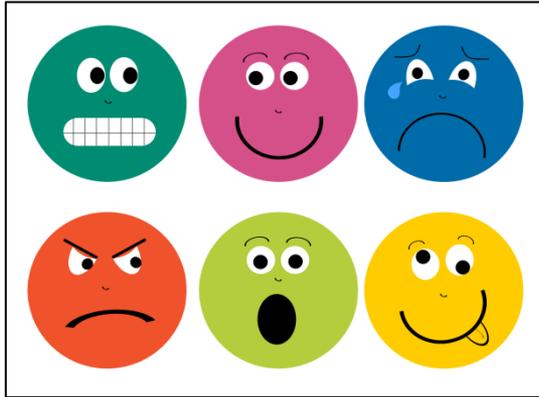
## Oldest Students

- Have students look at beliefs over time. Emphasize presence of current issues in past
- Help them realize that judgment of previous times is unfair and could be applied to us in the future (e.g., By the year 2400, dolphins are considered to be “human”. Should your name/work be erased from history because you visited an aquarium (prison) or did not support the creation of dolphin schools?)

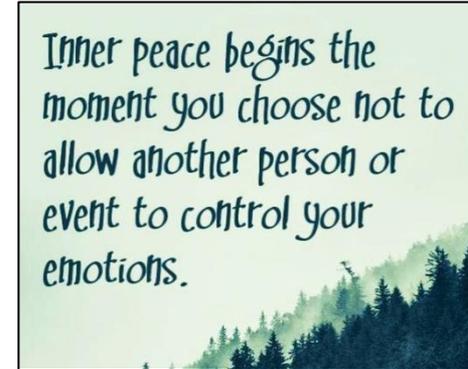
**NO ONE CAN "OFFEND ME"  
OR "MAKE ME ANGRY"  
UNLESS I ALLOW THAT TO HAPPEN  
I AM IN CONTROL  
OF MY OWN EMOTIONS!**



# Make it clear that emotions should not be used as an excuse for inappropriate actions...



**Acknowledge that emotions are real, but do not allow students to use them as an excuse to act inappropriately.**



**Teach students how to ignore and use their experiences (good and bad) to make changes in their own behavior.**

**Help them use these experiences to learn empathy, recognition of problems, and a catalyst to plan “a different way”. Emphasize that adult assistance may be needed to solve/manage some of the issues. No one has the right to hurt them in any way.**



## Younger Students

- Help students recognize the basic emotions and the situations that tend to encourage emotional responses
- Begin to help them understand how their own actions influence the emotions of others and how to change behavior to encourage positive emotions in peers
- Teach students the meaning of the word “ignore”, when it should be used, and when they must seek adult help

## Older Students

- Help students move away from using emotions as excuses for actions. Focus on boredom and defeated attitudes about school work and eventually move to jealousy, anger, and other more difficult social problems/issues
- Help students understand that if peers can control their emotions, they are also in control of you as a person (and your actions). They need to stop that control.

## Oldest Students

- Have students recognize when their emotions are influencing their behaviors and determine how to change their own attitude. Emphasize the use of ignoring when appropriate
- Explore the realities of being their age and the natural reluctance to admit help is needed. Create plans to obtain help from trusted adults in quiet ways by using coded “I need help” cues and texts

**IF I LOOK THROUGH  
A "NEGATIVE LENS"...**



**...ALL I WILL SEE  
ARE NEGATIVE THINGS**

# Teach students the power of perception...

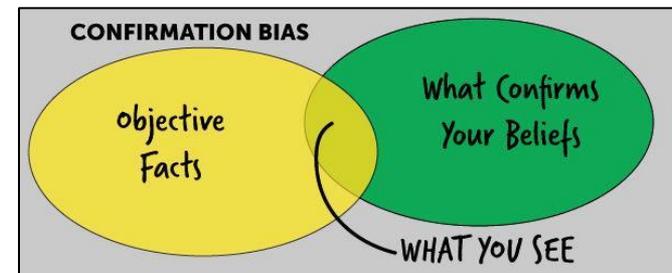


Teach students how what is anticipated/believed actually influences what IS seen.



Help students recognize that their own behavior can be influenced by the labels society imposes, even if they are well-meaning...

...and understand that removal of a label, bias, or stereotype should not be accomplished by imposing a DIFFERENT label, bias, or stereotype on someone else or another group.



## Younger Students

- Help students recognized how they “label” others using simple examples (kindergarteners don’t know how to read, people who play football are rough, etc.)
- Have them think about how it feels to be labeled as needing help when it’s not actually needed
- Directly teach how to avoid labeling others by seeing each person as an individual, not as a member of a group

## Older Students

- Have students reflect on how they have been labeled in the past and determine if the labels were helpful/incorrect (always need help in art, always know the cheers in cheerleading, etc.)
- Help them determine how things would have been different without those labels
- Provide strategies on how to avoid labeling others, especially people they do not know well

## Oldest Students

- Have students reflect on group labels (good and bad) that do NOT apply personally despite being considered part of that “group”
- Have them reflect (quietly) on bias / stereotypes and how to avoid those labels.
- Help them understand that reversing incorrect group labels cannot be done by mislabeling an entirely different group, race, economic class, gender, etc. (continues error in new form)

# MY EMOTIONS CAN STOP ME FROM THINKING CLEARLY

FEELINGS ARE JUST VISITORS.  
LET THEM COME AND GO.

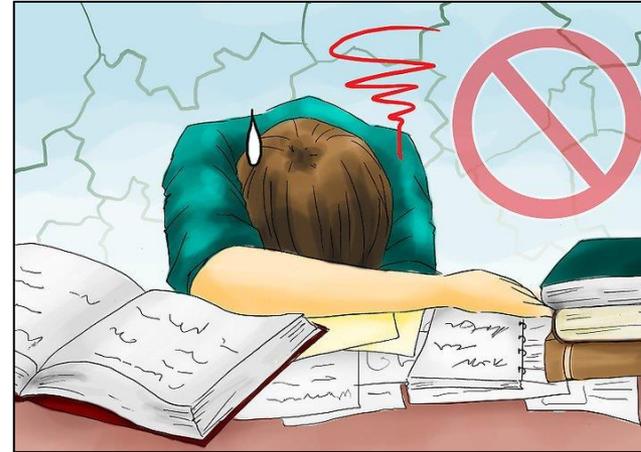


# Teach students the power of attitude...

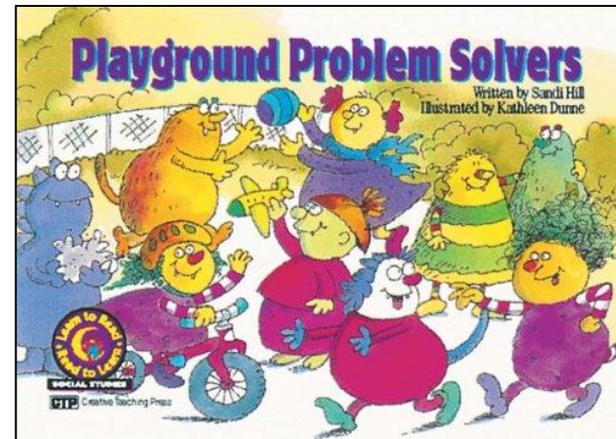


Teach self-calming techniques.

Then, teach them to use reflection/ journaling/data collection to replace problematic patterns and monitor progress towards change.



Help students note their emotions and motivation levels and also recognize how rapidly these can change for no reason.



## Younger Students

- Help students learn to control emotions (i.e., contain over-excitement, gain a better mood, and eventually to reduce anger, etc.)
- Directly teach age-appropriate stress-reduction techniques and how to regain focus when distracted. Emphasize that the emotion is not “wrong” but that does not mean it should be allowed to influence behavior or color overall attitude

## Older Students

- Directly teach the word “perception” and use stories and class situations to help them switch point-of-views
- Help them understand their emotion/attitude as they enter into their day and/or tackle work
- Help them apply strategies to change their perception and modify their attitude. (Start with simple boredom or work avoidance before difficult emotions like anger and jealousy)

## Oldest Students

- Directly teach students emotional management strategies such as visualization and deep breathing
- Help students anticipate the situations that impact their attitude (disliked work, beginning of the week, afternoon classes, after long breaks, after a sports loss, etc.) and make concrete plans to manage them
- Have them track how a “change in attitude” changed an outcome



**IF I  
WANT OTHERS  
TO FORGIVE  
AND FORGET  
MY MISTAKES,  
I MUST BE  
WILLING TO  
DO THE SAME  
IN RETURN**

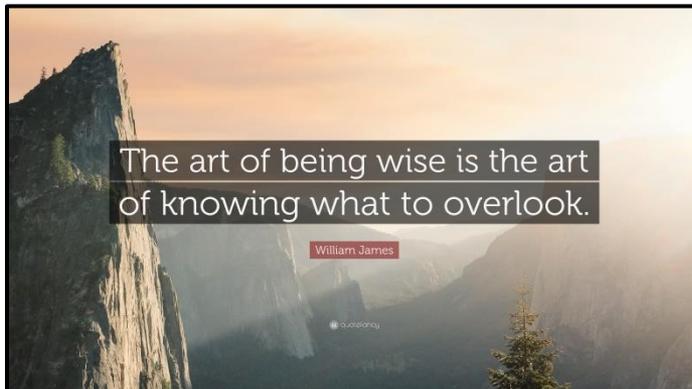
# Remove the tendency to shame, criticize, or publicly shun others...



Teach how to “help” someone else to change their actions...



...and emphasize which “forms of help” do more harm than good.



***Goal of critical thinking is not to be critical.***

**Balance wise analysis with understanding, compassion, and the ability to ignore.**

## Younger Students

- Assist students with helping others during natural, non-emotional situations
- Help students recognize when a student needs help but has not directly signaled it is needed
- Help them understand understand the power “the group” to both support and hurt
- Have them make a concrete plan as a group to help someone (make sure there is direct contact so they can see the result)

## Older Students

- Have students recognize what causes them to avoid asking for help
- Help students recognize the emotions that cause them to reject help when it is offered
- Superimpose that attitude on helping a younger student with a simple, non-emotional task (e.g., carrying too many objects)
- Help them plan ways to make others, and eventually themselves, more comfortable with “getting help”

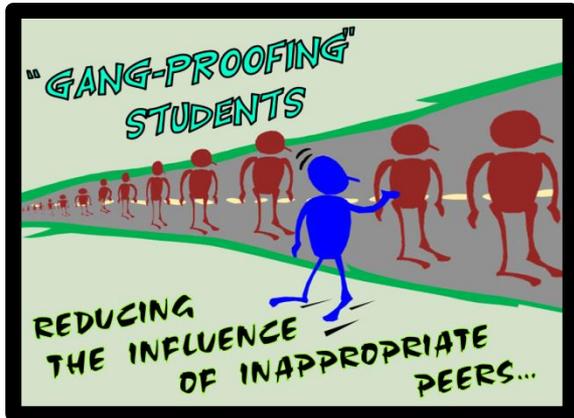
## Oldest Students

- Help students visualize how group attitudes directed against others would impact their life
- Have them identify people who may be feeling marginalized
- Have them make a concrete plan to bring that person “into the group” or to show “appreciation for that person”
- Help them recognize the fears, emotions, and group pressures that cause them to avoid the above activities

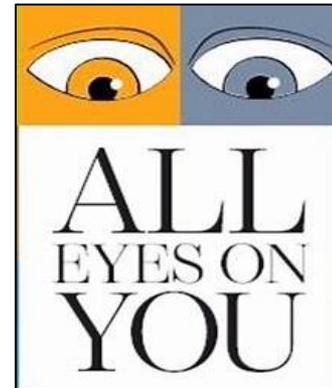
**IF I EMOTIONALLY HARM  
OTHERS, I AM A BULLY.  
IF I USE SOCIAL MEDIA  
TO SPREAD THIS MESSAGE,  
I AM A GANG LEADER**



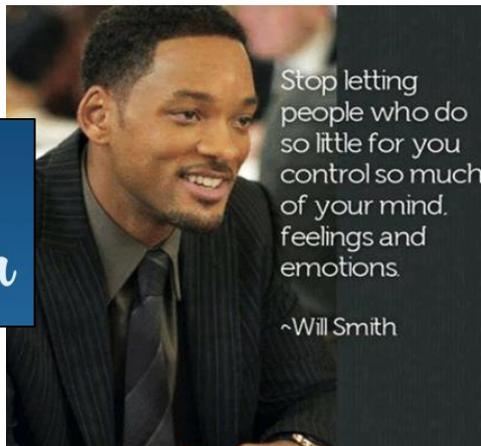
# Teach the ability to discern when good intentions are actually harming other people...



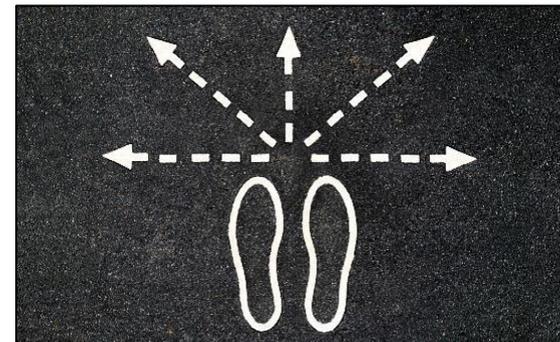
Teach students about peer influence...



..including its modern (expanded) meaning in today's media-driven world.



Encourage them to recognize when admired social leaders cross this line...



...and which responses would have been better so they have a personal plan.

## Younger Students

- Help children recognize when someone hurts them, both physically and emotionally, including making them feel afraid or shy
- Help them transfer this knowledge to how their own actions can hurt others, even if they were trying to “help”
- Have them practice creating two or three ways to “respond” to the situation and choose the one that will not cause harm

## Older Students

- Explore how even quiet actions (i.e., ignoring, snickering, strange looks, etc.) can cause harm to others
- Explore how social media can be used to cause harm, including encouraging others to “gang up” on someone, especially about looks, personal beliefs, or values
- Explore prominent and popular figures who have crossed the line and are hurting others using media

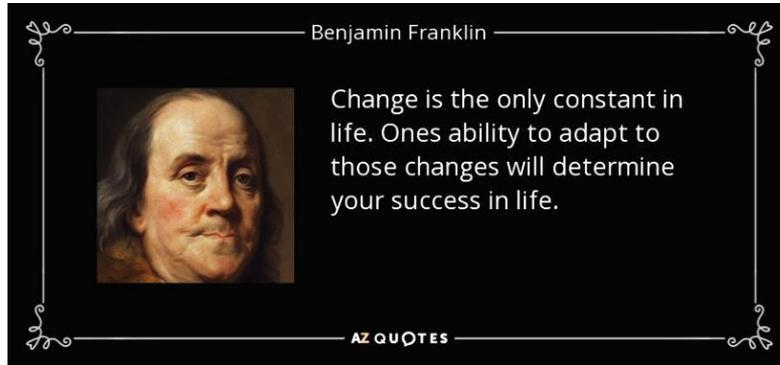
## Oldest Students

- Explore how peer pressure influences thought and/or encourages silence when beliefs or looks do not follow the norm
- Help students discern when their overt actions or use of media have caused direct or indirect harm
- Helps students understand how their silence in the face of this observed harm can cause just as much damage as overt action

**CHANGE MAY BE GOOD,  
AND IT MAY BE BAD...  
REGARDLESS, IT IS**



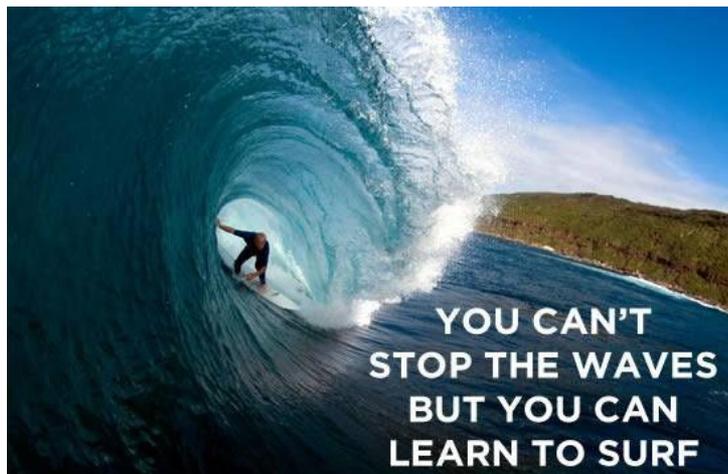
# Teach students to accept and tolerate change...



**Change cannot be avoided and may be uncomfortable for both you...**



**...and others around you!**



**Systematically help students learn to cope with unexpected change.**

## Younger Students

- Help students to learn simple routines and “ways of doing things”
- Then, help the students to accept variations and changes, including ones that are not necessarily desirable (i.e., creating an event and then artificially delaying it)
- Note and assist students who struggle with change, including those who must always play in the same area and/or who are always using the same play scenarios

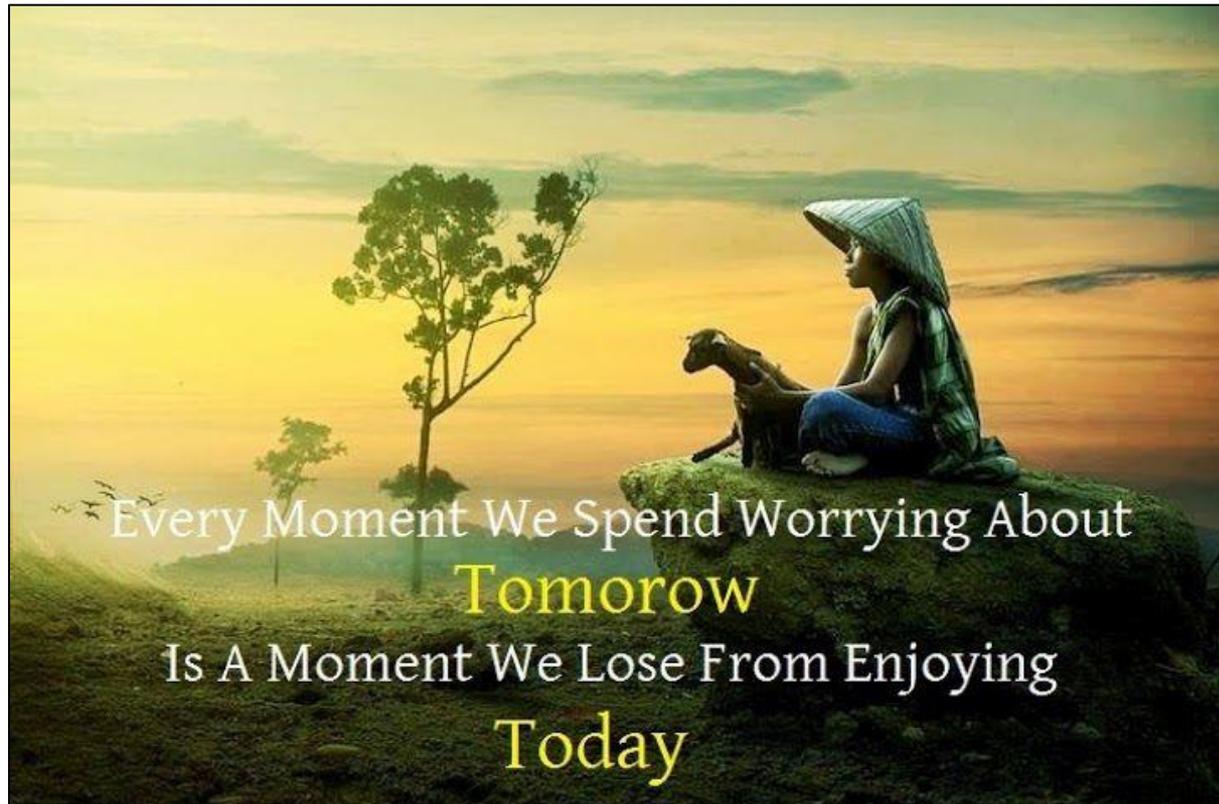
## Older Students

- Help students reflect on changes they have experienced over the last two years and categorize them as good or difficult
- Have them go back and think of “positives” that came out of the difficult changes, even if the only thing gained is resilience or strength
- Artificially construct change situations and help them cope with the disappointment or disruption to plans that are caused

## Oldest Students

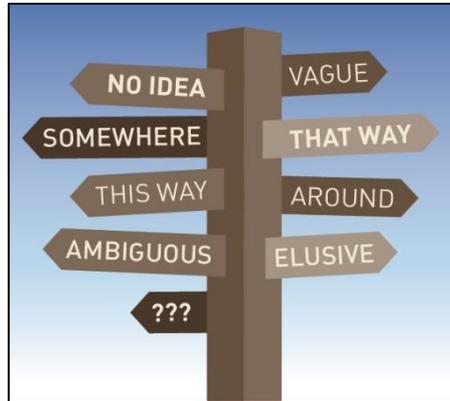
- Have students reflect on the dreams they had for various life events and how the reality differed from those dreams
- Help them determine some good aspects that stemmed from those disappointments
- Have them reflect on the hopes and plans they have for the near future/school and how variables might change them
- Help students plan how they will manage these potential changes

**IF I CAN'T FIND SOMETHING  
TO BE JOYFUL ABOUT,  
I'M NOT LOOKING HARD ENOUGH. . .**



Every Moment We Spend Worrying About  
**Tomorrow**  
Is A Moment We Lose From Enjoying  
**Today**

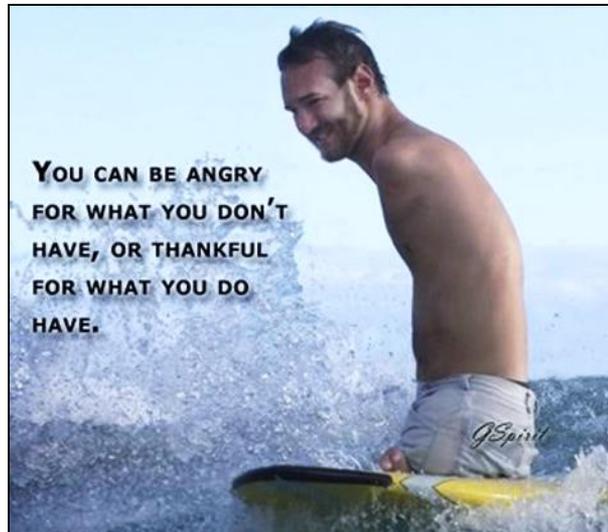
# Teach students to recognize and appreciate the wonderful things that are part of their daily life...



Help students appreciate daily (short-term) progress...



...as well as their long-term progress towards goals they have set (behavior, emotions, academics, etc.)



Encourage awareness and appreciation for all aspects of life, especially the abilities and functions that we tend to take for granted.

## Younger Students

- Help students recognize the daily events in their life that are easily discernible as positive
- Encourage them to begin to think about daily life realities that are also good but less noticed (being able to smell snack, being able to run in the gross motor room, etc.)
- Help the students reflect on some of their plans and celebrate the good things that have occurred, even if it is only effort, not progress

## Older Students

- Continue to help students reflect on the good things in life, including the less obvious, like getting a chance to work hard on homework
- Help them reflect on the progress they are making to manage personal issues and make changes (make sure to include non-academics like the arts, sports, and interests)
- Have them begin to journal these “positives”

## Oldest Students

- Encourage students to reflect on how their lives benefit from their home condition and or time period in history. (assist students who have fewer life positives to find wonderful variables)
- Encourage students to recognize progress towards goals and personal plans (make sure to widen this reflection to non-academics, personal interests, and career goals)

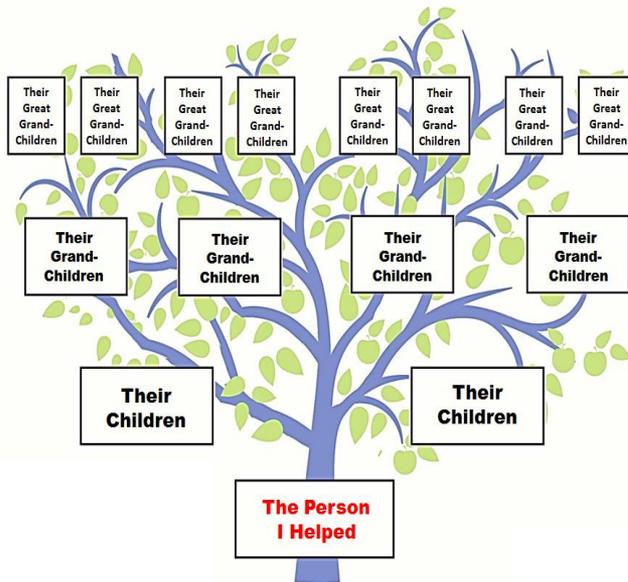
**I AM AN IMPORTANT PERSON  
IN A VAST UNIVERSE.**



# Help students gain perspective of time and space without losing the importance of “self”



Teach age-appropriate realities of history...



**Alaska has more than three million lakes over 20 acres in size.**

**Antarctica has as much ice as the Atlantic Ocean has water.**

Assuming population density of NY, the earth's ~7.8 billion people could fit in the state of Texas! If they stood shoulder-to-shoulder, they could all fit in the 500 square miles of L.A.

**The deepest lake is in the former USSR (Lake Baikal), and it's 400 mile wide and mile-deep depth could hold all five of the next largest lakes (The Great Lakes).**

**Just the Pacific ocean alone is 162 million square miles. (frame of reference: Texas has 266,874 square miles)**

**The Sahara Desert has a surface area of about 3.5 million square miles. (roughly 1/3 of the U.S.). The rain forest covers 3 million.**

...and the vastness of the world to enhance their ability to put issues into perspective

During this process, do not lose the importance of self, the power of personal action, or negate the influence they can exert on the world ---even if it impacts only on one person at a time.

## Younger Students

- Help children to explore the communities in their location (i.e., other classrooms, personnel they rarely meet, etc.)
- Help them learn about real-life community members in a direct and concrete manner through service projects (make sure to describe the person's location using comparisons they will understand--- i.e., it would take them two whole free play periods to get there)

## Older Students

- Help students begin to understand the size of their city and state. Only introduce the size of the nation/world if ready, to avoid confusion
- Use concrete comparisons of distance so students do not respond with fear to issues like harm to the rain forest
- Encourage them to “change the world” through their response to the people directly around them

## Oldest Students

- Help students understand the size and dimensions of earth and space
- Help them understand history and how humans repeat some errors in each era
- Provide diverse models of people who “changed the world”
- Have students reflect on the one person who changed their life
- Encourage them to be that “one person” for someone else

**LEADERS MUST  
BE DIFFERENT**



# Break the habit of blind conformity with a group...



Help students understand that blending into the group is comfortable because they can hide...



...and making a different choice (wanting to stand out) will put them in the spotlight and could result in discomfort.



If they want to be the best, make a difference, be in control, and make their own choices, sometimes they will need to step away from the crowd.

Do not choose to be wrong for the sake of being different.

(Herbert Louis Samuel)

Avoid making “being different” a goal in itself—it must have a legitimate purpose.

## Younger Students

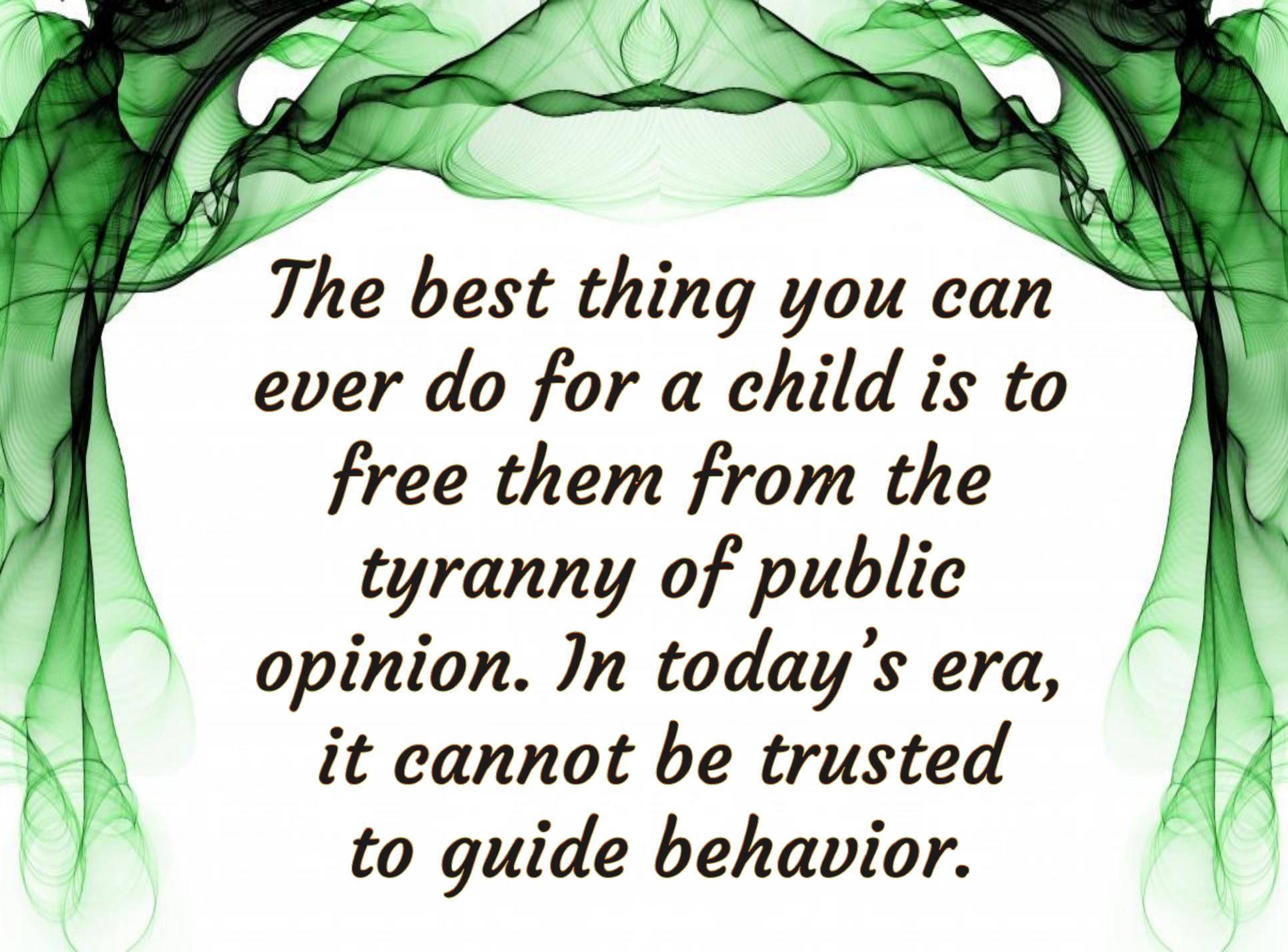
- Have students make choices and give a reason for that choice
- Create situations with a very wide range of choices that are eliminated as they are selected. Have students come up with a reason for their choice despite this restriction
- Recognize students that are doing something different from others
- Watch for “say the same thing” events when children answer and encourage variation

## Older Students

- Have students reflect on the good and bad associated with “doing what everyone else is doing”
- Have them reflect on the good and bad of “being different”.
- Help them understand that neither is the best way. It depends on why that way was chosen
- Help them begin to define a “leader” as someone who must stand out from the crowd, by default

## Oldest Students

- Have students reflect on how peers/media encourage conformity
- Examine media that encourages “group think”
- Have them reflect on how celebrities were noticed because they “stood out”
- Help them realize these leaders succeeded by being “different” but often turn around and encourage group conformity from “followers” on social media



*The best thing you can ever do for a child is to free them from the tyranny of public opinion. In today's era, it cannot be trusted to guide behavior.*