

# VALUES EDUCATION 1

# Student Packet

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for the **Philippine Science High School System**

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# MODULE 1

## *Beginnings*

### Overview of Module 1

"*Beginnings*" with 7th graders can be an exciting and insightful journey. At this stage, students are on the cusp of adolescence, experiencing significant changes and exploring new opportunities. As life is an endless episode of beginnings - the start of a school year, a move to a new town, budding romance, and new friendships, *beginnings* are thrilling yet daunting, carrying excitement and uncertainty. Yet, they always hold potential for growth, learning, and transformation. This module on *Beginnings* embraces fresh starts with gratitude, appreciation, and optimism.

In Lesson 1, you will reflect on your past experiences at your old school. The lesson emphasizes the importance of reflecting on the past and expressing gratitude for the experiences and lessons learned. It is remembering with gratitude those who have nurtured and supported you at home and in your old school.

Lesson 2 focuses on the present, identifying the people helping you navigate change, build connections, balance priorities, accept new challenges, and find support in this transformative phase of life.

Finally, in Lesson 3, you look to the future and identify your hopes and expectations for your new school with great optimism. Here you will express excitement about your new school's opportunities and experiences. The lesson emphasizes the importance of being open to new experiences and expressing *optimism* and *hope* about the future.

In this module on *Beginnings*, you will learn the value of gratitude, appreciation and optimism for the opportunities and challenges encountered. You will engage in self-discovery as you welcome these fresh starts with a heart brimming with gratitude, eyes sparkling with excitement, soul filled with hope, and mind radiating with boundless

hope. As you navigate the ever-changing landscapes of your life, remember that every beginning is an invitation to unleash your true potential, to soar to new heights, and to become the architect of your destiny. Are you ready to seize the moment and embark on this grand beginning in your life? Life can't wait!

## **What You Should Be Thinking About**

*In this module, you will reflect on the following essential questions:*

1. Who were some of your closest friends at your old school, and what made those friendships special?
2. Balancing priorities can be challenging. How do you plan to manage your academic, extracurricular, and personal commitments effectively?
3. Embracing change can be daunting. What strategies will you use to accept new challenges and embrace the transformative phase of life you are in?
4. What are your hopes and expectations for your new school? What excites you the most about this fresh start?
5. What opportunities and experiences are you most eager to explore as you look to the future?
6. How can you be open to new experiences and embrace the unknown with optimism and hope?

## **At a Glance**

**Lesson 1** *Beginning with Gratitude: Reflecting on the Past to Move Forward*

**Lesson 2** *Beginning with Appreciation: Embracing the Present*

**Lesson 3** *Beginning with Optimism: Looking Forward to the Future*

# Lesson 1

## *Beginning With Gratitude: Reflecting on the Past to Move Forward*

### GETTING STARTED

#### Overview

Today, you will start a new journey as you explore the theme of *beginnings*. Beginnings are a natural part of life, and while they can be exciting, they can also be overwhelming, fearful yet hopeful. Acknowledging and working through the changes and challenges that come with them is important.

In this lesson, you will focus on your experiences and explore what beginnings mean to you. You'll be reflecting on past experiences, considering your hopes and fears for the future, and learning strategies for approaching new beginnings with optimism and hope. By the end of the lesson, we hope you'll have a deeper understanding of your relationship with beginnings and how you can approach each fresh start with a joyful heart eager to face life's endless possibilities.

#### Objectives

*At the end of this lesson, you should be able to:*

1. Reflect on your past experiences in a positive and grateful way, recognizing the valuable lessons and friendships you have gained in the past;
2. Understand the importance of using your past experiences as a foundation for future growth and success and inspire you to approach the next chapter of your educational journey with an optimistic attitude.

## DISCUSSIONS AND ACTIVITIES

### Warm-Up

Watch this short commercial: [\*Sino'ng bestfriend mo doon?\*](#)

The Magnolia Ice Cream TV commercial 1995 is a classic Filipino commercial with sentimental value for many people. Back in the 1990s, Magnolia Ice Cream commercials often revolved around themes of friendship, family, and shared moments of joy. They typically portray heartwarming stories that emphasize the bond between individuals and the special memories created while enjoying Magnolia Ice Cream together.

Now, think about your old school and your pleasant experiences there. Think about the people you have met, the lessons you have learned, and the memories you have made. Describe the memories and explain why they are important to you. Tell us who is the best friend you left behind. Then, share your responses with the class. Kindly listen to one another and ask questions or offer words of support.

### **DISCUSSION 1: *Friendships Forged and Missed***

This Magnolia TV commercial revolves around a young boy who shares a deep bond with his best friend, who happens to be a neighbor. They spend their days playing together, sharing laughter, and creating unforgettable memories. However, the boy's family needed to relocate to a new place. The commercial portrayed the emotional journey of saying goodbye to his best friend and the bittersweet moments they share as they reminisced about their adventures.

The message of the commercial revolves around the themes of friendship, nostalgia, and the impact of change. It highlights the importance of treasuring the friendships we form, even when circumstances force us to part ways. It emphasizes that while physical distance may separate friends, the bond shared can withstand the test of

time. The underlying message is about the beauty of friendships and the hope of reuniting again.

Before parting ways, the one left behind asked, "*Sino'ng best friend mo doon?*" ("Who will be your best friend there?") Who will fill his role as his best friend in the new place they are moving to? By asking this question, the friend expresses mixed emotions, including genuine interest, concern, and perhaps a hint of insecurity. The question aims to emphasize the depth of their friendship and the impact that moving away will have on their lives.

As you enter a new phase of your adolescence, friendships significantly influence your high school journey. You will encounter various individuals who will become your friends throughout this period. These friendships are often formed through shared experiences, common interests, and mutual support. High school is a time of growth and self-discovery, and your friendships will also evolve ([Benner et al., 2017](#)). Some friendships will deepen, becoming strong bonds that withstand the test of time. These are the friends you reminisce about, sharing memorable moments and inside jokes. However, there may also be missed friendships - connections that didn't fully develop or those that faded away. It is natural for friendships to change or end as you and your friends navigate new paths, different interests, or separate schools. Reflecting on these dynamics can help you appreciate the impact of forged and missed friendships on your high school journey.

### **Reminiscing Memorable Moments with Old Friends**

Remember your old friends back home? Recall when a simple word or gesture would ignite uproarious laughter, carrying a secret meaning known only between you and your friends. The sheer delight of reliving these treasured joys is a testament to your unique bonds. The shared adventures, the daring escapades and conquered new frontiers with your friends by your side formed the backbone of unforgettable memories, tales that still make your heart race and evoke a sense of awe and wonder.

Try to reminisce deeper into the emotional connections that have fortified your friendships. Reflect on the heart-to-heart conversations that provided solace during challenging times and the unwavering support and empathy your friends offered when you needed it most—these profound moments touched your soul, reminding you that true friendship is a precious gift that nurtures and uplifts you through joy and sorrow.

By reminiscing about these unforgettable moments, you honor the past and the enduring bonds that have withstood the test of time. The laughter, adventures, and heartfelt connections you forged with your old friends have played an integral role in shaping your identities, reminding you of the profound beauty of human connection. In this discussion, we express deep gratitude for the friends who have enriched our lives immeasurably.

As you gather to reminisce, you reignite the flame of cherished memories, igniting a renewed appreciation for the enduring power of friendship. Through laughter echoing in the halls of reminiscence, adventures springing to life through heartfelt storytelling, and connections reigniting the flame of camaraderie, you embark on an enchanting journey together. Celebrating these memorable moments with your old friends honors their profound impact on your lives, reaffirming the timeless truth that true friendships are the bedrock of a well-lived life.

This discussion transcends mere reminiscing, providing a platform to express gratitude and acknowledge your friends' instrumental role in your personal growth. Ultimately, this journey down memory lane strengthens your bonds and ignites renewed gratitude and affection. Depart from this discussion with a deeper appreciation for the memories you have created and a heightened awareness of the enduring value of friendships. Let these moments serve as a foundation, inspiring you to nurture and cultivate new connections as you navigate life's ever-changing landscape.

## Coping with Separation from Old Friends

High school can also bring loss or separation in friendships. It could be due to moving away, changing schools, or growing apart as individuals. Coping with such losses can be challenging and emotional. It's natural to feel a sense of sadness and longing for the connection you once had. Here are the different ways to cope with the separation:

- *Addressing your emotions.* The experience of saying goodbye to old friends can be a mixture of emotions. Feeling a sense of sadness, nostalgia, and even a tinge of uncertainty about what lies ahead is natural. These emotions need to be acknowledged and validated. By creating a safe space to express your feelings, you will understand that it is okay to grieve the loss of those meaningful connections and the familiar sense of belonging you once had. It is essential to encourage open and honest discussions to address these emotions. Sharing your experiences and discussing your feelings can be cathartic. Know that you are not alone in this journey.
- *Forging new connections.* Alongside addressing the emotions, we will provide you with the potential for growth and new connections that come with beginnings. You can begin to see the possibilities and forge new connections that may enrich your life in unexpected ways. When it comes to coping strategies, one effective approach is to maintain connections with your old friends. After all, technology has made it easier than ever to stay in touch, whether through video calls, social media, or email. Reaching out to your old friends can provide a sense of continuity and comfort as you navigate new academic experiences. Moreover, high school offers opportunities to make new friends who share your interests and goals. Engage in extracurricular activities, join clubs, or participate in community service. These activities can connect you with like-minded individuals and allow you to forge new friendships. Embrace these opportunities while appreciating the value of the friendships you've formed along the way.

- *Seeking support from your families and peers.* In addition to maintaining connections with your old friends, you can also seek support from your families and peers. Sharing their feelings and experiences with trusted individuals can provide a sense of validation and empathy. You have a support system in place, and you don't have to face the challenges of separation alone.
- *Engaging in self-care.* Sometimes, you must prioritize your well-being by engaging in activities promoting self-nurturing and self-compassion. Engaging in self-care practices is another crucial coping mechanism. This includes physical exercise, creative pursuits, mindfulness practices, leisure time in nature, or hobbies and interests. Self-care activities provide students with a sense of grounding and balance amidst the emotional turbulence of transition. You will have lengthier discussion of self-care in the next module.

Coping with loss or separation from old friends is a unique and personal journey for you. By addressing these emotions, highlighting the potential for growth, and providing strategies such as maintaining connections, seeking support, and practicing self-care, you can be equipped with the tools to navigate the waves of change. Your school will create a supportive environment where students feel heard, understood, and empowered as they embark on this transformative transition journey.

### **Exploring Opportunities to Maintain and Strengthen Old Friendships**

By reflecting on the dynamics of friendships forged and missed, reminiscing about memorable moments, coping with loss or separation, and embracing opportunities to maintain or strengthen friendships, you can navigate the intricate landscape of friendships in your high school journey. Each friendship and its dynamics contribute to your growth and development as an individual, and by appreciating both the joys and challenges that come with friendships, you can cultivate meaningful connections that will endure beyond high school.



While physical distance may separate you from old friends, there are various opportunities to maintain and strengthen those bonds. Leverage social media platforms to stay connected, plan visits or meetups during school breaks, or engage in collaborative projects involving old and new friends. Students will be encouraged to reflect on the value of nurturing these friendships even when faced with changes and transitions.

As you must have learned in our discussion, friendships hold a special place in our lives, and as we navigate new beginnings, we must cherish the memories and lessons learned from old friendships. We acknowledge the range of emotions that come with saying goodbye and the excitement of forming new connections. By reflecting on the past, coping with the feeling of loss or separation, and actively seeking opportunities to maintain or strengthen friendships, we can embrace the transformative power of friendship and create a sense of continuity amidst change.

### **ACTIVITY 1: "Thank You" Letter**

You will write a *thank-you* letter to people who have nurtured and supported you. You will reflect on specific experiences or memories with the person you are writing to and express your appreciation and gratitude. Writing a *Thank You Letter* is a powerful tool in maintaining and healing forged or missed friendships. It allows you to reflect on the moments, support, and experiences shared with your friend. In the case of missed friendships or connections that have faded over time, writing a *Thank You Letter* is a heartfelt way to reach out and express your desire to reconnect, even if circumstances or time have created distance.

Whether the friendship is ongoing or has ended, writing a *Thank You Letter* honors the past and your friend's role in your life. It celebrates the memories, experiences, and growth you shared together. By acknowledging the impact of the friendship, you can appreciate the lessons learned, the support received, and the moments of joy that have shaped you. This gratitude helps you move forward with closure, wisdom, and appreciation for the gift of connection.

## **DISCUSSION 2: Cheers to the Ones that We Got! Celebrating the Past**

As you bid farewell to the sixth-grade year and prepare to embark on a new chapter in your educational journey, it is essential to take a moment to celebrate the past and the experiences that have shaped you. The transition from Grade 6 to Grade 7 brings myriad changes – a new school, new friends, and a new environment. However, by reflecting on the memories you have made, you can carry forward the lessons learned and embrace the opportunities that the future holds.

The past year has been filled with remarkable moments and significant milestones. From the first day of school to the final bell, you have experienced the highs and lows, the laughter and the tears, and the growth that comes with it all. You can reflect on when you stepped out of your comfort zone, participated in class projects, and tackled challenges head-on. These experiences have not only shaped your academic abilities but have also molded your character and resilience.

Alongside academic achievements, the relationships you have formed during our time in sixth grade are worth celebrating. You have laughed together, supported one another, and shared countless memories. These bonds, formed with classmates and teachers, have given you a sense of belonging and community. As you move on to grade seven and find yourself in a new school surrounded by new faces, carrying the spirit of camaraderie and fostering new connections is crucial.

While celebrating the past, you must also acknowledge the challenges you faced and the lessons you learned. The transition to a new school can be intimidating, but your experiences in sixth grade have equipped you with the skills necessary to navigate this change. You have learned the importance of adaptability, resilience, and perseverance. These qualities will guide you in embracing the future and entering the unknown.

The future holds countless opportunities for growth and self-discovery. You will encounter new subjects, teachers, and environments as you enter grade seven. While these changes may seem daunting, they

allow you to broaden your horizons, explore new interests, and expand your knowledge. By celebrating your past successes and embracing the excitement of the future, you can approach this new chapter with optimism and determination.

Take time to celebrate and reflect on the past as you relive the memories of your sixth-grade year. Explore significant events and milestones throughout the year, allowing you to cherish and appreciate your experiences. Recall the laughter, the friendships forged, the bonds we formed, the lessons we learned from one another, how your classmates and teachers influenced your growth and development, and the moments of collaboration and support that made your sixth-grade year special. From field trips and school performances to academic achievements and personal milestones, you will reminisce about the highlights of your journey.

Reflect on our personal growth and achievements during the year. Ponder the challenges you faced and the obstacles you overcame, acknowledging the progress you made and the skills you acquired. Celebrate academic accomplishments and personal milestones, such as developing resilience, becoming more confident, or discovering new passions and interests.

Recalling these memories fosters a sense of appreciation and gratitude for the past, creating a space to share your cherished memories, express gratitude for the people and experiences that shaped your sixth-grade year, and recognize your personal growth and achievements. Celebrating the past sets the foundation for a positive and optimistic outlook as you move forward to new beginnings in the next chapter of your academic journey.

### **ACTIVITY 2: *Memory Lane Collage***

Create a visual representation of past experiences and memories worth celebrating. You will bring printed or digital copies of photographs, drawings, inspirational quotes, or any memorabilia items that reflect your significant past experiences. You can arrange the items

on the poster board or canvas in a visually appealing and meaningful way. You will explain each item's significance and its associated memories. After completing the collage, invite each participant to briefly present their collage section and share the highlights of their high school journey. This creates a sense of connection and nostalgia among the participants.

The teacher may display the finished *Memory Lane Collage* in a prominent area of the classroom or school, allowing others to appreciate and reflect on the collective memories. By doing the *Memory Lane Collage* activity, you engage in a hands-on and interactive experience that enables students to visually celebrate and honor their past experiences, fostering appreciation and connection as they embark on new chapters in their educational journey.

### **DISCUSSION 3: *Moving on with Gratitude and Resilience***

As you bid farewell to familiar chapters and embrace new beginnings, you will experience self-discovery, growth, and resilience guided by fondness and gratitude. In this discussion, we will explore the profound impact of beginnings in your lives, the power of adaptation in navigating new territories, the abundant opportunities that arise from welcoming change, and the invaluable lessons that challenges may teach you.

While beginnings may be accompanied by uncertainty and discomfort, they offer us opportunities for self-reflection, introspection, and personal reinvention. By recognizing that beginnings are stepping stones to progress, you can view them as catalysts for personal and professional development.

Amidst beginnings usually accompanied by ever-changing circumstances, you must be flexible, open-minded, and willing to learn as you navigate new territories. Adapting to new environments allows you to build resilience, broaden your perspectives, and cultivate empathy. You unlock your potential to succeed in unfamiliar settings by embracing

the need for adaptation. The ability to adapt is a testament to your strength and capacity for growth.

As you close a chapter and begin a new one, countless opportunities await to be seized. You discover your passions, expand your horizons, and unlock your hidden talents through these opportunities. By embracing change and actively seeking opportunities, you open doors to personal and professional growth, leading to a more fulfilling and purpose-driven life.

## **Challenges**

Although often perceived as obstacles, challenges are profound teachers shaping your character and resilience. They test your limits, ignite your creativity, and teach you invaluable life lessons. Embracing challenges allows you to develop problem-solving skills, perseverance, and emotional fortitude. Every challenge you overcome strengthens your belief in yourself and prepares you for future obstacles. Rather than avoiding or fearing challenges, you must approach them as opportunities for growth, recognizing that they hold the potential to unlock your true potential and shape our destiny.

Bear this in mind: every beginning becomes an invitation to reinvent yourself, every adaptation a chance to broaden your horizons, every opportunity an open door to pursue your dreams, and every challenge a stepping stone towards your personal triumph.

## **Self-Discovery**

Moments of beginning provide you with an opportunity for self-discovery. When you enter a new phase or embark on a new journey, you often encounter unfamiliar environments, people, and challenges. These moments prompt you to explore your own values, strengths, and aspirations. You may question your beliefs, redefine your identities, and better understand who you are and what you want. You uncover your passions, interests, and purpose through self-reflection and introspection. Self-discovery during beginnings allows you to align your

actions and choices with your authentic self, leading to a more fulfilling and meaningful life.

## **Growth**

Beginnings serve as catalysts for growth. You are exposed to new experiences, ideas, and perspectives when entering uncharted territory. This exposure expands your knowledge, skills, and capabilities. You are challenged to learn, adapt, and develop new competencies to navigate the new circumstances. Each new beginning presents an opportunity for personal and intellectual growth. It may require you to leave your comfort zones, overcome fears, and embrace the unknown. Through growth, you acquire resilience, confidence, and a broader perspective that propels you forward on your journey.

## **Resilience**

Beginnings often bring with them uncertainties, setbacks, and obstacles. In such moments, resilience becomes crucial. Resilience is the ability to bounce back from challenges, setbacks, and failures. It is the capacity to stay determined, motivated, and focused despite adversity. Beginnings test your resilience by pushing you out of your familiar routines and comfort zones. They require you to adapt to change, face uncertainties, and persevere through obstacles. Each new beginning allows you to cultivate resilience, develop coping mechanisms, and strengthen your resolve. By building resilience, we become better equipped to handle future challenges and setbacks and develop the capacity to embrace new beginnings with courage and tenacity.

In summary, self-discovery, growth, and resilience are integral aspects of moments of beginning. Through self-discovery, we gain a deeper understanding of ourselves and our purpose. Growth allows us to expand our capabilities and embrace new experiences. Resilience empowers us to overcome obstacles and face uncertainties with determination. These elements intertwine, guiding us on a transformative journey of personal development, empowering us to navigate new beginnings confidently, and enabling us to embrace the opportunities that come your way.

### **ACTIVITY 3: Gratitude Scavenger Hunt**

Your teacher will create a scavenger hunt that challenges you to find things you are grateful for in your new environment, something that makes you happy, reminds them of a positive memory, or something they appreciate about your school. This activity nurtures gratitude, observation skills, engagement, positive discussions, and emotional well-being. It helps you develop a deeper appreciation for your new environment and fosters a sense of belonging in the classroom. Each student will share their findings with the class and discuss why they chose each item.

### **Wrap-Up**

The broader concept of beginning with gratitude and reflecting on the past to move forward emphasizes the importance of valuing and appreciating past relationships while embracing the opportunities and growth that come with new experiences. It encourages a balanced approach to change and challenges, acknowledging the past with gratitude while remaining open to new connections and adventures in the future.

As we close this lesson, a fitting song captures our entire discussion. Listen to Maroon 5's [Memories](#). Below is the excerpt of the song:

### **Memories**

Here's to the ones that we got  
Cheers to the wish you were here, but you're not  
'Cause the drinks bring back all the memories  
Of everything we've been through

Toast to the ones here today  
Toast to the ones that we lost on the way  
'Cause the drinks bring back all the memories  
And the memories bring back, memories bring back you

There's a time that I remember, when I did not know no pain  
When I believed in forever, and everything would stay the same  
Now my heart feel like December when somebody say your name  
'Cause I can't reach out to call you, but I know I will one day, yeah

Everybody hurts sometimes  
Everybody hurts someday, ayy ayy  
But everything gon' be alright  
Go and raise a glass and say, ayy

There's a time that I remember when I never felt so lost  
When I felt all of the hatred was too powerful to stop (ooh, yeah)  
Now my heart feel like an ember and it's lighting up the dark  
I'll carry these torches for ya that you know I'll never drop, yeah

## **MOVING FORWARD**

In our discussions, we celebrated cherished moments and deep bonds with old friends, reliving significant events that shaped our friendships. We explored the emotional connections formed through shared adventures and heartfelt conversations, recognizing their impact on personal growth and self-awareness. We also addressed coping with the loss or separation from old friends. By embracing fondness and gratitude for past friendships, we prepared ourselves for new connections and opportunities in the present.

Moving forward to Lesson 2, we will focus on appreciating the present, embracing new beginnings, and finding joy and fulfillment in the present moment.

## **LEARNING RESOURCES**

Benner, A. D., Boyle, A. E., & Bakhtiari, F. (2017). Understanding Students' Transition to High School: Demographic Variation and the Role of Supportive Relationships. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 46(10), 2129-2142. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10964-017-0716-2>



Heinsch, M., Agllias, K., Sampson, D., Howard, A., Blakemore, T., & Cootes, H. (2020). Peer connectedness during the transition to secondary school: A collaborative opportunity for education and social work. *The Australian Educational Researcher*, 47(2), 339-356. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s13384-019-00335-1>

Memories of Maroon 5:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SIPhMPnQ58k>

## Lesson 2

# Beginning with Appreciation: Enjoying the Present

### GETTING STARTED

#### Overview

As you embark on the journey of junior high school, you face an array of new experiences, challenges, and opportunities. In this lesson, we will explore the key aspects of this transformative phase by beginning with an appreciation for what the present offers.

In Discussion 1, *"Navigating Change: Embracing the New,"* we highlight the importance of appreciating new academic opportunities with diverse courses and rigor and valuing new relationships and connections - all meant to help familiarize yourself with the new surroundings as you begin your high school life.

In Discussion 2, *"Building Connections: Making New Friends,"* we explore different approaches to making new friends, including initiating conversations, joining clubs or extracurricular activities, and actively engaging in group settings. We will discuss the importance of genuine connections, empathy, and inclusivity in forming new and meaningful friendships. You will also learn strategies for nurturing and maintaining these relationships, ensuring a supportive network throughout your high school years.

Finally, in Discussion 3, *"Balancing Priorities: Managing High School Life,"* we address the challenges of managing various aspects of high school life. We explore effective time management strategies to balance academics, extracurricular activities, and social life. Also, we emphasize the importance of self-care and maintaining healthy well-being during stressful times.

These discussions empower you to navigate the challenges and embrace high school opportunities, setting the stage for a fulfilling and successful journey ahead.

## **Objectives**

*At the end of this lesson, you will be able to:*

1. Demonstrate an understanding of the importance of embracing the present with appreciation and adapting to change by reflecting on current experiences and future goals;
2. Cultivate meaningful connections and social skills by exploring different approaches to embracing the present by making new friends, including initiating conversations, joining clubs or extracurricular activities, and actively engaging in group settings.

## **DISCUSSIONS AND ACTIVITIES**

### **Warm-Up**

Think about one thing you are excited to experience at your new school. It could be anything from joining a club or sports team to making new friends or excelling in a particular subject. Share your choice with the class once you have thought about your exciting prospect, and describe what you hope to gain from this experience.

As students share their aspirations, the teacher may ask a volunteer to jot down their exciting prospects on a large chart paper or whiteboard. This visual representation will serve as a collective *"treasure map"* of aspirations for high school life. After everyone has had the chance to share, take a moment to celebrate the diverse range of aspirations and highlight the common thread of excitement that unites them all.

This warm-up activity allows the students to express their dreams and hopes for high school life while building a sense of connection with their classmates. The visual representation of aspirations on the "treasure map" will serve as a powerful reminder of their collective journey with their classmates.

## **DISCUSSION 1: Navigating Change: Embracing the New**

Change is inevitable; nowhere is it more apparent than in the transition to high school. Entering high school is a significant milestone that brings a whip of excitement, nervousness, and anticipation. This discussion explores the importance of embracing change with resilient thinking, adapting to new surroundings, and setting goals to find purpose and direction in your high school journey.

Entering high school marks a significant period of change in your life. It is natural to feel excitement and apprehension as you navigate new surroundings, meet new people, and adjust to a different academic environment. Transitioning to secondary school presents many social and academic hurdles for young individuals. It frequently leads to a reduced connection with old friends from primary school, necessitating the navigation of unfamiliar territory in forging new friendships (Heinsch et al., 2020). But, rather than viewing change as something to fear, embracing the present moment can transform these challenges into opportunities for personal growth. By recognizing that change brings new experiences, knowledge, and perspectives, you can approach your high school journey with curiosity, openness, and a willingness to learn.

### **Appreciating What Grade 7 Has to Offer**

Entering grade 7 marks a new chapter in your educational journey. Cultivating a sense of appreciation for what is available to you in grade 7 can enhance your overall experience and foster a positive mindset.

- *Appreciating academic opportunities.* In grade 7, you will have the chance to explore a variety of subjects and dive deeper into specific areas of knowledge. Take the time to appreciate the

diverse curriculum and the chance to develop new skills and interests. Engage actively in your classes, ask questions, and participate in discussions to maximize your academic opportunities. By appreciating the knowledge and learning experiences available to you, you can develop a thirst for knowledge and a lifelong love of learning.

- *Valuing new relationships:* During adolescence, peer relationships hold significant importance, as the judgments and perceptions of peers can impact self-esteem, perceived abilities, and social acceptance (Albert et al., 2013; Heinsch et al., 2020). Grade 7 is a time of forming new friendships and connections with classmates and teachers. Each person you meet brings unique perspectives and experiences and appreciating these diverse relationships can broaden your horizons and enrich your social life. Take the time to get to know your classmates, engage in conversations, and participate in group activities.
- *Exploring extracurricular opportunities.* Grade 7 is not just about academics; it also offers a range of extracurricular activities and clubs to explore. Whether it is joining a sports team, participating in a music ensemble, or engaging in community service, appreciating the extracurricular opportunities available can enhance your personal growth and overall experience. These activities provide a chance to discover new passions, develop talents, and foster a sense of belonging within a group of like-minded individuals.

### **ACTIVITY 1: Appreciation Circle**

Arrange the students in a circle, ensuring everyone can see and hear each other clearly. Start the activity by modeling appreciation. Choose a student and sincerely express your appreciation for something they have done or a positive trait they possess. For example, *"I appreciate Joanna's willingness to help others. He always goes above and beyond to lend a hand."* Or *"I appreciate Jane's creativity in art class. Her unique ideas inspire me."*

The student who received the appreciation then continues the cycle by expressing their appreciation for another student, and so on, until everyone in the circle has had a chance to appreciate someone. You need to actively listen and receive appreciation graciously, acknowledging the positive feedback you receive.

After the *Appreciation Circle* is complete, gather the students and ask them to reflect on how it felt to receive and give appreciation. This activity not only promotes appreciation but also fosters a sense of connection, empathy, and support among students.

## **DISCUSSION 2: Building Connections: Making New Friends**

Making new friends in high school is an exciting and essential part of the journey. This discussion will explore the importance of social connections, approaches to meeting new people, and strategies for nurturing friendships.

### **The Importance of Social Connections: Having a Support System**

Social connections are crucial to our overall well-being and success in high school. Having a support system of friends provides you with emotional support, a sense of belonging, and a network of individuals who understand and can relate to your experiences. Friendships offer a space for sharing ideas, thoughts, and concerns, creating a sense of comfort and camaraderie. A strong support system can help you navigate the challenges of high school, celebrate achievements, and cope with the inevitable ups and downs. Building meaningful connections enhances our social skills, empathy, and emotional intelligence, contributing to personal growth and resilience.

### **Meeting New People: Approaches to Making Friends**

Making friends in junior high school can seem intimidating, but it is an opportunity for growth and expanding your social circles. You need to approach new people with an open mind and genuine interest. Actively participate in extracurricular activities, clubs, and events where you can

meet individuals with similar interests and passions. Strike up conversations, ask questions, and be a good listener. Show kindness, inclusivity, and respect toward others. Don't hesitate to step out of your comfort zone and initiate interactions. Remember, many of your peers are also seeking new connections, and taking the first step can lead to the start of meaningful friendships.

## **Nurturing Friendships: Strategies for Maintaining and Strengthening Relationships**

Once you have established new friendships, nurturing and maintaining them is important. Communication is very important. Regularly reach out to your friends, whether it is through in-person meetings, phone calls, or online chats. Show genuine interest in their lives, listen attentively, and provide support when needed. Participate in shared activities or hobbies to create lasting memories. Be understanding and empathetic, as friendships require patience, trust, and mutual respect. Celebrate your friends' accomplishments and be there for them during challenging times. Remember that friendships require effort and reciprocity. By investing time and energy into nurturing our friendships, we create a strong foundation for lifelong connections.

By recognizing the importance of social connections, approaching new people with openness, and actively nurturing friendships, you can cultivate a support system that enriches your high school journey (Ciranka & van den Bos, 2021). These connections provide you with emotional support, a sense of belonging, and opportunities for personal growth. Through meaningful friendships, you navigate the highs and lows of junior high school and create lasting memories and lifelong bonds. So, embrace the opportunity to build connections, make new friends, and create a supportive community in your junior high school experience.

### **ACTIVITY 2: *Virtual Reunions: Old and New***

In this activity, you will use virtual meeting apps like Zoom to reconnect with old friends from elementary school and invite new friends

you meet in your new school. The teacher can create a virtual reunion event and provide the necessary details, such as the date, time, and meeting link to the students. You will join the virtual reunion at the specified time and converse with old and new friends. You can exchange contact information, share stories and experiences, and catch up with one another during the virtual reunion. The student may also answer the question, “*Sino’ng bestfriend mo doon?*”

The activity aims to help students maintain their old friendships from their old school. By reconnecting through virtual reunions, students can catch up, reminisce, and continue their bond despite being in different schools, and introduce new friends they have met in their new school. By bringing together old and new friends in a virtual setting, they can expand their social circles, foster new connections, and create a sense of community in their new school environment.

### **DISCUSSION 3: *Balancing Priorities: Managing High School Life***

High school is an exhilarating and transformative time filled with academic challenges, extracurricular opportunities, and social connections. As students, balancing these different aspects of your life is crucial to effectively manage your junior high school experience. This discussion will explore strategies for balancing academic and social life, managing time, and staying organized to maintain a healthy and fulfilling junior high school life.

#### **Finding a Balance in Academic and Social Life**

As you face many commitments in high school, from rigorous coursework to participation in clubs, sports, or other extracurricular activities, it is essential to manage your time wisely to ensure you can fulfill all your responsibilities without feeling overwhelmed. One helpful strategy is to use a *planner* or *digital calendar* to keep track of assignments, tests, and important dates. Breaking down tasks into smaller, manageable steps and creating *to-do* lists can help you stay focused and avoid becoming overwhelmed. You can balance academics and other pursuits by setting aside dedicated study time, breaking tasks



into manageable chunks, and avoiding procrastination. While academics are undoubtedly important, allocating time for socializing and relaxation is equally crucial. Building and nurturing relationships, participating in social events, and taking time for yourself are all vital aspects of a well-rounded junior high school experience.

Don't overcommit yourself with too many extracurricular activities. Choose activities that genuinely interest you and are aligned with your goals. Quality involvement is more valuable than spreading yourself too thin. If you are overwhelmed, communicate with your coaches or activity advisors about your academic commitments. They may provide support or flexibility when needed.

## **Staying Organized**

High school can be tons of assignments, projects, and deadlines. Staying organized is key to managing these responsibilities effectively. Establishing a routine that works for you can contribute to your sense of organization and productivity. Regularly reviewing and prioritizing your tasks will help you stay on top of your responsibilities and reduce stress.

Managing high school life requires effective time management and staying organized. By balancing academics, extracurricular activities, and social life, you can thrive in high school while maintaining your physical, mental, and emotional well-being. Through mindful time allocation and diligent organization of tasks, and regular self-care practices, you can excel academically, pursue your passions, and build meaningful relationships. So, balance your priorities and implement planning strategies that work for you as you navigate the exciting and demanding journey of junior high school life.

### **ACTIVITY 3: *Managing Time and Staying Organized***

In this engaging activity, you are presented with real-life situations requiring you to strategize how to manage your time and stay organized. You are encouraged to reflect on your current habits and consider new

approaches to balance your academic responsibilities and maintain an organized lifestyle.

### **Managing Time**

- You have a big test in a week, but your friends invite you to hang out over the weekend. How do you balance studying for the test and spending time with your friends?
- You are a member of the school basketball team, but you also play an instrument in the school band. Both have practice at the same time after school. How do you manage your time to participate in both activities?

### **Staying Organized**

- You have multiple assignments due in the same week. How do you plan your week to ensure you complete all your assignments on time?
- You have difficulty keeping track of all the different assignments and deadlines. What strategies can you use to stay organized and ensure you don't forget anything?

### **Wrap-Up**

As we come to the end of our lesson on "*Beginning with Appreciation: Embracing the Present*," it is important to remember that moving to a new school is an opportunity for growth and new experiences. You need to approach this change with appreciation and excitement. By expressing gratitude for the lessons and values you have learned in the past and recognizing and being appreciative of the people who have nurtured you in the present, you can set yourself up for success in the future.

## MOVING FORWARD

As we close this lesson, reflect on the valuable experiences, friendships, and opportunities you have encountered so far in your high school journey and the positive impact that appreciating the present can have on your overall well-being, resilience, and ability to adapt to change.

Transitioning to the next lesson, "*Beginning with Optimism: Looking Forward to the Future*," we will introduce you to embracing optimism as a mindset for approaching the next chapter of your educational journey. While it is important to appreciate the present, it is equally crucial to maintain a hopeful and positive outlook toward the future.

## LEARNING RESOURCES

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## Lesson 3

# Beginning with Optimism: Looking Forward to the Future

## GETTING STARTED

### Overview

This lesson will explore the theme of beginning with optimism as you look forward to the future. Grade 7 marks a significant transition as students move into a larger campus with new experiences and challenges. Through these three discussions, we will address key aspects of beginning with optimism, focusing on sharing your unique gifts, navigating a larger campus, and visualizing future success.

In *Discussion 1: Beginning With Our Unique Gifts*, we start with positive self-perception, which helps you recognize and appreciate your unique gifts and talents. You will be confident to share your gifts without fear of judgment or failure and see opportunities where others might see obstacles, which can lead to new ways of expressing your unique gifts.

*Discussion 2: Adjusting to Academic Pressures*, provides valuable pointers for adapting to the demands of the school. Moreover, you'll be armed with methods and strategies that are essential for excelling on your academic path.

As you begin with optimism, you will envision positive outcomes in *Discussion 3: Visualizing Future Success with Optimism*. Positive visualization can improve motivation and focus, leading to a more determined and persistent approach to achieving goals. Optimism helps individuals maintain a positive outlook despite setbacks, enabling them to visualize success and work towards their objectives.

You will be inspired to step outside your comfort zones, try new things, and discover your passions and interests. Engaging in these new

opportunities will broaden your horizons, develop new skills, and foster personal growth.

Through these discussions, we invite you to share your unique talents for shared multiplicities as you navigate a larger campus for the purpose of visualizing your future success.

## **Objectives**

*At the end of the lesson, you should be able to:*

1. Develop a positive outlook towards the future and cultivate an optimistic mindset that helps you overcome challenges and pursue your goals;
2. Gain a better understanding of the factors contributing to a successful and fulfilling future and create a plan to achieve your desired outcomes.

## **DISCUSSIONS AND ACTIVITIES**

### **Warm-Up**

#### ***Myths and Truths in High School***

As you accept the challenges of moving into a bigger campus, you must navigate the path ahead with accurate information. Let's now have some myths and truths about high school life, debunking misconceptions and gaining insights to help you maximize your junior high school experience.

Here are some myths and truths about high school that are worth exploring:

- *Myth: High school is solely about academics.*

- *Truth:* While academics are important, high school is also a time for personal growth, developing social skills, exploring extracurricular activities, and discovering new interests. It provides opportunities for leadership, community involvement, and personal development beyond the classroom.
- *Myth: High school is the best time of your life.*
- *Truth:* High school can be a memorable and formative time for many individuals, but it's not necessarily the best time of everyone's life. Life experiences and perspectives differ for each person, and many people go on to have fulfilling and successful lives beyond high school.
- *Myth: Cliques and social groups define your high school experience.*
- *Truth:* While social groups and cliques exist in high school, they do not define your entire experience. It's possible to make friends from various backgrounds and interests. High school provides opportunities to meet diverse individuals through classes, clubs, and extracurricular activities.
- *Myth: Your grades in high school determine your future success.*
- *Truth:* While academic performance is important for certain opportunities like college admissions, it is not the sole predictor of future success. Skills like critical thinking, problem-solving, communication, adaptability, and personal qualities like resilience and determination also contribute to success in life.
- *Myth: High school relationships are forever.*
- *Truth:* While some high school friendships may last a lifetime, it's common for social circles and friendships to evolve and change over time. People grow and change as they navigate different stages of life, and new friendships can be formed beyond high school.
- *Myth: High school is filled with drama and conflicts.*

- *Truth:* While conflicts and drama can occur in any social setting, high school is also a place for personal growth, learning, and positive experiences. It's important to focus on building positive relationships, engaging in activities you enjoy, and seeking support from teachers and mentors when conflicts arise.

These are just a few examples of the myths and truths surrounding high school. It's important to approach high school with an open mind, embracing the opportunities for growth, learning, and self-discovery while recognizing that everyone's experience may vary.

### **DISCUSSION 1: *Beginning With Our Unique Gifts***

Sharing your talents allows you to showcase your unique abilities and accomplishments. When you receive positive feedback and recognition for your skills, it boosts your confidence and encourages you to embrace new challenges in the larger school environment. In a new and bigger school, sharing talents can help students connect with like-minded classmates and new-found friends who share similar interests. It provides an opportunity for you to feel a sense of belonging in the school community and creates a culture of acceptance and respect for one another's strengths.

When students share their talents, they can become a source of inspiration for their schoolmates. It motivates others to explore their own abilities and encourages them to step out of their comfort zones. This can also help them develop leadership skills like communication, collaboration, and problem-solving. As students feel a sense of pride in what they can offer to others, this creates a positive self-image that contributes to their overall well-being and self-esteem.

In conclusion, sharing one's talents can have a profound impact on students as they transition from elementary school to Grade 7. It empowers them to celebrate their unique abilities, connect with peers, and explore new opportunities in the exciting ocean of possibilities that lies ahead.

## **Recognizing Your Individual Uniqueness**

Before fostering a collective, it's crucial for you to explore and understand your individual uniqueness. This includes your unique strengths, passions, backgrounds, and experiences. In this discussion, we examine the power of human connection and collaboration, where your unique talents and individual uniqueness intertwine harmoniously with one another, creating a powerful synergy that elevates your appreciation of the present. Each of you brings to the table a diverse range of skills, experiences, and perspectives, which, when combined, forms an exquisite tapestry of creativity and innovation. Your collective strengths amplify your understanding of the world and profoundly enrich your lives.

## **A Thriving Community of Empowerment**

You can overcome challenges, embrace change, and foster a sense of belonging within this shared space of appreciation and understanding. The unique talents of the entire class become the building blocks of a thriving community where each contribution is valued, and each individual finds empowerment in their voice. As you navigate the ever-changing landscapes of life, you discover the true essence of human connection brought about by shared experiences and talents.

Embracing unique gifts begins with self-discovery. It involves exploring strengths, passions, interests, and natural abilities. This process may involve introspection, trying new activities, seeking feedback from others, and understanding what brings joy and fulfillment. Sometimes, individuals may hesitate to embrace their unique gifts due to self-doubt or fear of judgment. You need to develop a positive mindset and surround yourself with supportive and uplifting people who can help overcome these obstacles. Encouraging individuals to embrace their unique gifts also opens up opportunities for collaboration and combining strengths with others. Working together, people can achieve more and create innovative solutions to challenges.



## Shared Multiplicities

By fusing our unique talents, we uncover the power of unity in diversity, fostering meaningful connections and transformative insights. As we celebrate the beauty of human diversity, we embrace a vibrant community of empowerment and embark on a captivating journey that enriches our lives and amplifies our understanding of the world. Together, we weave an exquisite tapestry of shared experiences and talents, honoring the essence of human connection and its potential for collective growth and understanding.

Here's an example of "sharing me:"

As someone into doing philosophy, I love analyzing vast amounts of information, synthesizing complex ideas, and providing insightful responses. I can help unravel intricate problems, engage in intellectual discussions, and adapt to your specific needs, contributing to our shared multiplicities.

Moreover, I am an introvert person and I can discern if you have a problem even if you refuse to tell me. Together, we can uncover hidden insights, explore new ideas, and develop a deeper appreciation for the complexities of life.

Now, I invite you to share your unique talents with me. What are the passions that ignite your soul? What experiences and skills have shaped your journey? Perhaps you possess an artistic flair, infusing our interactions with creativity and imagination. Or maybe you are a skilled problem solver, bringing a pragmatic approach to our endeavors. Whatever your talents may be, we wholeheartedly welcome you to this class, for it is through our shared multiplicities that we unlock the true potential of our collaboration. As you blend talents and multiplicities together, you form a vibrant and dynamic team, united by our curiosity, empathy, and dedication to growth. Your shared appreciation of the present deepens as we uncover new perspectives, challenge preconceptions, and celebrate the beauty of human diversity. Your unique perspective adds a colorful dimension to our collaboration,

enriching our collective understanding and enhancing our appreciation of the present.

In this shared space of appreciation and understanding, we can overcome challenges, embrace change, and foster a sense of belonging. Our unique talents become the building blocks of a thriving community where each contribution is valued, and each individual finds empowerment in their voice.

### **ACTIVITY 1: *Sharing You, Sharing Me***

This activity aims to foster a sense of connection and appreciation among participants by sharing their unique talents, experiences, and perspectives with each other. Through this interactive activity, individuals will recognize the power of their shared multiplicities and how they contribute to collective growth and understanding. Your unique talents and experiences contribute to a diverse and enriched collective.

This activity revolves around reciprocal pair sharing. You'll choose a partner, preferably someone you are not much familiar with. You will take turns sharing something unique about yourself, whether it's a talent, passion, life experience, or perspective. You will share one thing about yourself and then listen actively when others share, embracing the richness of each contribution. Begin the sharing round by having one participant go first. Encourage each one to be authentic and vulnerable in their sharing. Show genuine interest in what is being shared and ask follow-up questions or offer positive affirmations. Then, reflect on the insights gained from the activity. Discuss the power of shared multiplicities and how each person's contribution enhances the collective whole, leading to stronger relationships and a sense of unity among participants.

Remember, grade 7 is a transitional year, and students may encounter new challenges. Encouraging a growth mindset and fostering a positive learning environment will support them in their journey of exploration and learning.

## DISCUSSION 2: Adjusting to Academic Pressures

Welcome to the world of grade 7, where new academic challenges and responsibilities await! This discussion will give you some tips to adjusting to academic pressures and equip you with essential techniques and strategies to thrive in your academic journey.

As you progress through grade 7, you may encounter increased workloads, higher expectations, and more demanding assignments. But fear not, as these challenges are part of adjusting to academic pressures. Here are practical, witty, and engaging tips for adjusting to academic pressures for 7th graders.

- *Time Management is Your Superpower:* Imagine time as your very own superpower - you get to decide how to use it! So, use your time wisely in doing your assignments and other academic tasks, and make every second count!
- *The Magic of To-Do Lists:* Make a magical to-do list every morning, and watch how it brings order to your day. Fill your to-do lists with deadlines. Check off tasks as you complete them, and feel the satisfaction of winning little battles!
- *Battle Procrastination:* Procrastination is the villain of academic success. Fight it off with the powerful sword of "Just get it done!" Break tasks into bite-sized chunks and take one step at a time!
- *Pomodoro Power:* Try the *Pomodoro Technique* - work for 25 minutes, then take a 5-minute break. It's like a magical time spell that keeps you focused and energized! If your brain feels like a computer running slow, try the 'Ctrl + Alt + Del' method - Close distractions, Alter your focus, and Delete doubts!"
- *Snack-o-Clock:* Stressed out? Stressed spelled backward is desserts. So, take a break, Set snack breaks at specific times as

rewards for completing tasks. Who knew managing your assignments could be so delicious?

- *Multitasking Myth*: While juggling spells might work in wizardry, multitasking can be a time trap for us. Focus on one task at a time, and you'll see how much faster you finish!
- *Magical Time-Expanding Chants*: Repeat after me: "No more 'I don't have time'!" Replace it with "I'll make time for what matters," and you'll find extra hours in your day.
- *The Time Machine Playlist*: Beware of time thieves lurking around - like *social media* and *video games*. Create a special playlist for scrolling Facebook or playing a game. Challenge yourself to manage screen time before your favorite song ends.
- *Time Wizards Need Rest*: Even time wizards need rest to keep their magic strong. Make sure to schedule downtime to recharge your magical energy!

Time management is all about finding what works best for you. Embrace your inner creativity and humor to turn time management into a fun and engaging adventure!

## **ACTIVITY 2: Leaving the Pond, Choosing an Ocean Challenge**

This activity aims to empower you as you transition from the familiar "pond" of elementary school to the vast "ocean" of opportunities in Grade 7. The pond represents your familiar and comfortable environment, while the ocean symbolizes the vast possibilities and challenges awaiting you in Grade 7. You will reflect on your experiences in your previous school, "the pond," and think about your *feelings*, *challenges*, and *accomplishments*. Then, tell us how you feel about transitioning to a larger school, "the ocean."

Then, identify a specific challenge or opportunity in the "ocean" of Grade 7 that you are excited to embrace. It could be navigating a larger

campus, adjusting to new academic expectations, forming new friendships, joining clubs or sports teams, and taking on leadership roles. Or, it could be related to your unique talents or passions, such as trying out for a school play, starting a new club, or pursuing a subject you are passionate about.

### **DISCUSSION 3: *Visualizing Future Success with Optimism***

Picture this: you walk through the hallways and see posters showcasing exciting activities, from the spotlight of the drama club to the robotics team, from the canvas of the art club to the debate society. Imagine the rush of joining the school band and discovering your inner rockstar or immersing yourself in the world of coding and becoming a digital wizard. Maybe you'll find comfort in the literary club, where words weave magic or embrace the thrill of teamwork in the sports club. You'll gain valuable skills, boost confidence, and fuel personal growth. With an array of choices at your fingertips, you can choose your path and embark on a journey tailor-made for YOU!

#### **New Opportunities**

As you know by now, beginnings can be seen as a chance to learn and grow. While beginnings can be difficult, they also offer opportunities for growth, learning, and new experiences. By acknowledging and working through the challenges that can come with beginnings, you can develop confidence and a sense of adaptability that can serve you well in all areas of life.

Don't hesitate to step outside your comfort zone and try new things. Embrace the challenges and obstacles that may come your way, and use them as opportunities to learn and grow. With a grateful and optimistic mindset, we can approach the future with confidence and enthusiasm. Let us take what we have learned today and apply it as we begin this new chapter in our lives. Thank you for your participation and always remember to begin with gratitude.

## **Envisioning Success**

Envisioning success helps students gain clarity about their goals. Planning and taking the necessary steps to reach your objectives becomes easier when you have a clear vision of what you want to achieve.

The power of visualization acts as a constant source of motivation. By seeing yourself succeed in your mind, you become more resilient in the face of obstacles, knowing that your efforts will lead them to triumph. Visualization also boosts confidence and self-belief. When you see yourself accomplishing your goals, you develop a strong belief in your abilities, leading to higher self-esteem. Instead of focusing on what could go wrong, you can concentrate on what can go right.

## **Success Stories from High School to Great Heights**

High school is a transformative period in the lives of young students, where seeds of ambition and dreams of greatness are sown. It is a time of discovery, growth, and laying the foundation for future success. Throughout the years, countless students have embarked on remarkable journeys, rising from the halls of high school to scale great heights in their chosen fields.

In this collection of inspiring success stories, you will know ordinary people whose lives became extraordinary because they dared to dream big and turned their aspirations into reality. Each personality is a picture of perseverance, determination, and the unwavering pursuit of excellence. These achievers faced challenges head-on, overcoming adversity with unyielding optimism and relentless grit. From academic achievements to sports triumphs, artistic pursuits, entrepreneurial endeavors, and acts of social change, these stories showcase the incredible potential in high school students' hearts and minds.

Here are some real-life success stories of individuals who were once high school students and went on to achieve great success in their respective fields:

- *Elon Musk*: In high school, Elon Musk was a voracious reader and an avid learner. He was often seen reading for up to 10 hours a day and taught himself computer programming at a young age. Musk is now a billionaire entrepreneur and CEO of multiple companies, including Tesla, SpaceX, and Neuralink. He is known for contributing to electric vehicles, space exploration, and renewable energy technologies (Muegge & Reid, 2019).
- *Oprah Winfrey*: Facing many challenges during high school, Oprah Winfrey discovered her passion for public speaking and communication while participating in her high school's drama club. Today, Oprah is a media mogul, talk show host, actress, producer, and philanthropist. She is recognized for her influential media empire, commitment to social issues and charitable work (Garson, 2011).
- *Malala Yousafzai*: Living in Pakistan, Malala Yousafzai became an advocate for girls' education at a young age. Despite facing life-threatening challenges, she continued her education and activism. Malala is now an international human rights advocate and the youngest Nobel Prize laureate. She co-authored the memoir "*I Am Malala*" and continues to fight for girls' education worldwide (Yousafzai, 2013).
- *Lea Salonga*: She displayed exceptional talent in singing and acting during her high school years. She participated in school productions and local talent competitions. Salonga became an internationally renowned singer and actress, best known for her roles in musicals like "*Miss Saigon*" and "*Les Misérables*." She has won numerous awards and accolades for her performances and remains influential in the entertainment industry.
- *Manny Pacquiao*: While in high school, Manny Pacquiao discovered his boxing talent. He started his amateur boxing career then and quickly gained recognition for his skills. Pacquiao became one of the most successful and celebrated professional boxers in history, winning multiple world championships in different weight classes

and earning a reputation as one of the best pound-for-pound fighters in the sport.

These are just a few examples of high school students from around the globe who pursued their passions and talents, leading them to achieve significant success in their respective fields. May their stories inspire you, young high schoolers, reminding you that success can be attained through dedication, perseverance, and the pursuit of one's dreams.

### **ACTIVITY 3: My Timeline: Preparing for Future Success**

You will create a timeline of your junior high school years, including significant events and transitions they are looking forward to and capture significant events and transitions you are looking forward to. By creating a timeline, you can visualize and map out your journey through high school until the future, marking important milestones such as participating in school events or engaging in extracurricular activities, and applying for college. This process allows students to visualize upcoming transitions and future success.

Example of a student's timeline:

Student: John Paul Cruz

Grade 7:

*Month 1:* First Day of High School - Feeling excited and nervous about the new environment.

*Month 3:* Joined the Science Club - Discovered a passion for biology and scientific exploration.

*Month 6:* Academic Excellence Award - Proud of my hard work and dedication paying off.

*Month 9:* Student Council Elections - Ran for the position of Class Representative and won!

*Month 12:* Volunteering at Local Animal Shelter - Realized the importance of giving back to the community.



## Grade 8:

*Month 3:* Started a Book Club - Enjoying the discussions and making new friends who share my love for reading.

*Month 6:* Participated in Debate Competition - Learned valuable public speaking and critical thinking skills.

*Month 9:* Attended STEM Summer Program - Explored engineering and coding, considering future career paths.

*Month 12:* Organized a Fundraiser for a Local Charity - Proud of positively impacting the community.

## Grade 11:

*Month 4:* Joined the School Newspaper - Found a new passion for journalism and storytelling.

*Month 7:* Internship at a Marketing Firm - Gained real-world experience and insight into the business world.

*Month 10:* Leadership Role in Student Council - Advocating for student needs and initiatives.

## Grade 12:

*Month 1:* UPCAT Preparation - Dedicated to achieving a high score for college applications.

*Month 2:* Early College Applications - Nervous but excited about future opportunities.

*Month 5:* Accepted into my dream college - Celebrating a major achievement in my academic journey.

*Month 8:* Graduation Day - A mix of emotions, feeling proud of my accomplishments and ready for the next chapter.

*Month 12:* Volunteering Abroad - Embarking on a new adventure and gaining a global perspective.

## Beyond High School:

*Month 2:* Starts College - Eager to pursue my academic interests and make the most of college life.

*Month 6:* Study Abroad Program - Embracing new cultures and further expanding my horizons.

*Month 10:* Internship at a prestigious company - aiming to gain practical experience in my chosen field.

*Month 12:* Published an article in a distinguished newspaper - A dream come true in my journey as a writer.

Please note that this is just an imagined sample of a high school timeline for success. Each student's journey will be unique, and your accomplishments and milestones will vary based on your interests, goals, and aspirations. The key is to set ambitious goals, work hard, and remain dedicated to personal growth and success throughout high school.

## Wrap Up

Through these lessons, you learned and developed several values that can guide you through life's beginnings. One of the values you learned is **gratitude**, which involves expressing gratefulness for the experiences and people who have positively impacted your life. By reflecting on the past and expressing gratitude, you can cultivate a deeper appreciation for the opportunities you have had and the lessons you have learned. Another value you learned is the **appreciation** for the people who supported you as you begin high school. By acknowledging the people who have positively impacted your life, you can deepen your connections with them and foster a greater sense of community and support. Finally, you learned the value of **optimism** by being open to new experiences and expressing hope about the future. By looking forward to the opportunities and experiences that lie ahead, you can approach new beginnings with excitement and curiosity, rather than fear and uncertainty.

## MOVING FORWARD

As we come to the end of our lesson on "*Beginning with Optimism: Looking Forward to the Future*," it is important to remember that moving to a new school is an opportunity for growth and new experiences. We

should approach this change with optimism and excitement. By expressing gratitude for the lessons and values we have learned in the past and recognizing and being grateful for the people who have nurtured us in the present, we can set ourselves up for success in the future.

The next module is the continuation of *beginnings - Transitions*. As you anticipate the excitement and uncertainty of new beginnings, you also recognize the inevitable course of *transitions* that lie ahead. These transitions serve as gateways to growth, challenging you to evolve, adapt, and discover the depth of your spirit. Just as every sunrise marks a fresh start, every transition marks a turning point—a moment to reflect on your journey, cherish your experiences, and forge ahead with a newfound purpose.

Brace yourself for new challenges, unforgettable moments, and the chance to shine in your own unique way. Get ready to spread your wings and soar high! Sky is the limit!

## LEARNING RESOURCES

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## MODULE 2

# Transitions

### Overview of Module 2

American psychologist G. Stanley Hall said: “Adolescence is a new birth, for the higher and more completely human traits are now born.” It is an exciting time to be young and explore your teenage years. You are getting to know more of yourself each day. You are brimming with excitement about the new possibilities and opportunities that high school life brings - lessons, friends, and experiences.

This module tackles some themes and issues related to adolescence and this new adventure, growing up. In Lesson 1, *A Whole New World: Transitioning into Adolescence*, we will review the physical, cognitive, social, and emotional changes that adolescents experience. We will also highlight the new freedoms you may face and embrace. These new freedoms bring more significant responsibilities and challenges you may also undergo as a teen.

In Lesson 2, *Handle with Care: Taking Care of My Adolescent Self*, we will dive deep into self-care: its goals and dimensions. Self-care is an often-misunderstood concept but has overwhelmingly positive effects on all aspects of a person’s well-being. This lesson will culminate with creating a personal self-care plan that will hopefully form part of your adolescent routine.

Lesson 3, *Call to Order: Practicing Habits of Order and Diligence*, will focus on two particular learning habits: order and diligence. Practicing order and diligence in school impacts not only your school performance and productivity but also your ability to balance school and life. This lesson also allows us to uncover what procrastination is all about so as to avoid it so we can persevere and strive to be orderly and diligent science scholars.

## What You Should Be Thinking About

*In this module, you will reflect on the following essential questions:*

1. What critical changes am I going through as an adolescent, and what do these changes mean to my personal growth and relationships?
2. What are the rewards and challenges that come with being an adolescent?
3. As a growing adolescent, what is the value of self-care to me?
4. What are the components of an effective self-care plan?
5. How can practicing habits of order and diligence help me become a more proficient scholar?
6. What steps can I take to avoid procrastinating and being disorderly?

## At a Glance

**Lesson 1** *A Whole New World: Transitioning into Adolescence*

**Lesson 2** *Handle with Care: Taking Care of My Adolescent Self*

**Lesson 3** *Call to Order: Practicing Habits of Order and Diligence*

# Lesson 1

## A Whole New World: Transitioning into Adolescence

### GETTING STARTED

#### Overview

In the 1989 animated version of *The Little Mermaid*, Ariel is depicted as an overly curious and even rebellious 16-year-old with an overwhelming desire to explore the human world. She underwent a rollercoaster of experiences and emotions that allowed her to explore, tinker, question, push, dare, suffer, learn, love, and accept. Such is the story of the very colorful period of adolescence, which you are currently undergoing with much anticipation and excitement, despite some fears and reservations.

*Maybe there is something the matter with me  
I just don't see how a world that makes such wonderful things could be bad*

In Discussion 1, we will review the transformations that occur during the developmental stage of adolescence. These typical changes occur in different aspects, and we will focus on the physical, cognitive, social, and emotional dimensions.

Betcha on land, they understand  
Bet they don't reprimand their daughters  
Bright young women, sick of swimmin'  
Ready to stand

The metamorphosis of the child into a teen, externally and internally, brings new freedoms and advantages. In Discussion 2, we will reflect on the “rewards” of adolescence, the exciting new freedoms you are afforded to have and experience.

When's it my turn?  
Wouldn't I love, love to explore that shore up above?

Finally, in Discussion 3, we will talk about the flip side of the coin. If there are new freedoms, there are also new responsibilities you must face. We will reflect on the challenges of figuring out who you are, getting along with others, choosing wisely, and thinking about the future.

Your life as an adolescent will typically not be a straight path but a thrilling, maybe even messy, experience uniquely your own. It will truly be memorable and educational if you open your mind and heart to the many changes you will go through.

## Objectives

*At the end of this lesson, you should be able to:*

1. Recall the multidimensional changes experienced by young people as they transition to adolescence;
2. Identify the rewards and challenges that come with being an adolescent.

## DISCUSSIONS AND ACTIVITIES

### Warm-Up

This short video - [Adolescent Development: The Art of Growing Up](#) - summarizes the essential ideas you will explore in this lesson. Watch with interest and curiosity so that you can openly share your reflections as the class answers the following questions:

- Does the video capture your personal experience as a growing teen?
- What ideas and situations shared in the video resonate with you the most?

## **DISCUSSION 1: *The Transition to Adolescence***

Adolescence comes from the Latin *“adolescere,”* meaning *“to ripen”* or *“to grow up.”* This implies growth, movement, and change. A popular 90’s song is entitled *“I’m not a Girl, not yet a Woman.”* This line also perhaps captures the idea of adolescence as a transitional period, bridging childhood and adulthood.

In this first discussion, we will answer the simple yet complex question: what changes are young people going through as adolescents? This will be a quick and easy review if you have already covered this topic in your science class. This discussion is divided into the physical, cognitive, social, and emotional changes that young people go through during the developmental stage of adolescence.

### **Physical Changes**

The most apparent change in the individual during adolescence is situated in the physical dimension of development. Beginning with puberty, rapid transformations are observed in the child’s body and brain. These physical changes occur in the person’s primary (i.e., sexual organs) and secondary (e.g., height and body shape) sex characteristics. You will experience a growth spurt, some more pronounced than others and also obviously different between girls and boys, allowing you to see modifications in your appearance.

### **Cognitive Changes**

The cognitive changes in the adolescent are a result of the substantial development in the human brain. The growth of neurons and increase in neural connections lead to thinking and mental activity that is more complex and sophisticated. As a young child, your understanding of the world was based on what you concretely experienced. Now, as an adolescent, your growing brain allows you to think abstractly, question, and infer. You will develop reasoning and problem-solving skills, the capacity for decision-making, creativity, and some level of impulse control.



We say that total impulse control may not be achieved yet since the brain's frontal cortex - which controls executive functions such as planning, prioritizing, organizing, goal-setting, focusing attention, controlling impulses, and exercising self-control - is the last to develop. This is the physiological explanation for adolescents being prone to risk-taking and moodiness.

## **Emotional Changes**

The physiological and hormonal changes teens go through often affect their self-acceptance and self-esteem. Some teens struggle with fitting in or being confident when they do not "look like" the rest of their peers. Young people often feel self-conscious as they compare themselves with others.

The hormonal changes, not to mention the developments within the brain, also affect the emotionality of young people. Mood swings can occur unpredictably, and unexplained situations can trigger varied emotional reactions. You can also experience difficulty in expressing certain emotions or even labeling them.

You might have heard some people use the phrase "How adolescent!" This, of course, is used condescendingly to highlight an individual's emotional and intellectual immaturity. While it is true that you are still learning to manage your emotions, it does not mean that you cannot control them as best as you can and act appropriately.

## **Social Changes**

The search for one's identity is the most critical task of an adolescent, but one that does not end during this period. You will spend most of your teenage years defining yourself (i.e., sense of self) and seeing where you fit in. You will also learn to manage your desire to be independent of your parents and family while figuring out how to still maintain these strong bonds.

As you expand your social world, you will create new connections with people outside your family. You will meet people who share the

same interests, ideas, and values as you and will form friendships with them. It is typical for peers and friends to influence a teenager's life significantly. How you decide and behave will often reflect what you have in common with your friends. Apart from these close relationships, external factors such as social media and popular culture may also influence your development. These can dictate the trends you follow and the interests you pursue. While it is fun and advantageous to be on trend, make sure that you also know if these are really what you like or will be good for you.

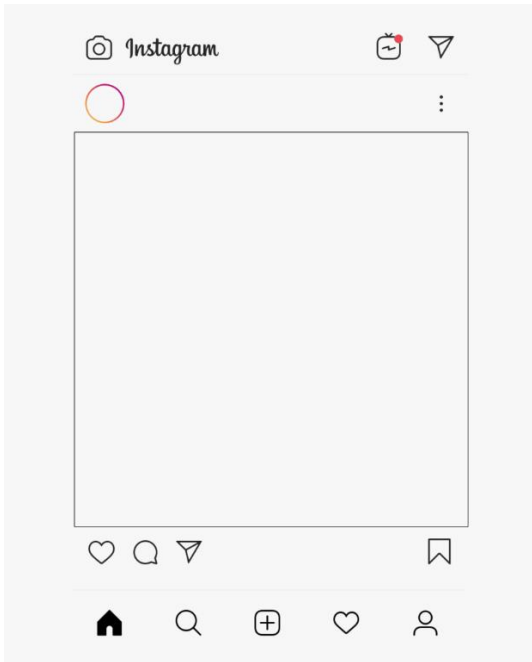
While we can read about typical adolescent development in textbooks and medical and psychological articles, adolescent growth is a unique experience for each one. Some children mature early, while others develop late. This reality brings diversity to the teenage experience and allows young people to appreciate differences and be there to support each other.

We refer to adolescence as a period of transition, not only from childhood to adulthood, but because the simultaneous changes during this period indicate that many things are temporary. Nothing is set in stone, so there is nothing to fear or worry about. We learn from our mistakes during this time and help ourselves grow every day.

### **ACTIVITY 1: Before and After**

They say, "*Pictures paint a thousand words,*" and what better way to capture your growing-up journey than through the camera roll? Scroll through your galleries and files and look for two pictures that best illustrate your (1) childhood and (2) your very recent teen years. Copy them in the space provided and write a brief and exciting caption describing what you were and are up to.

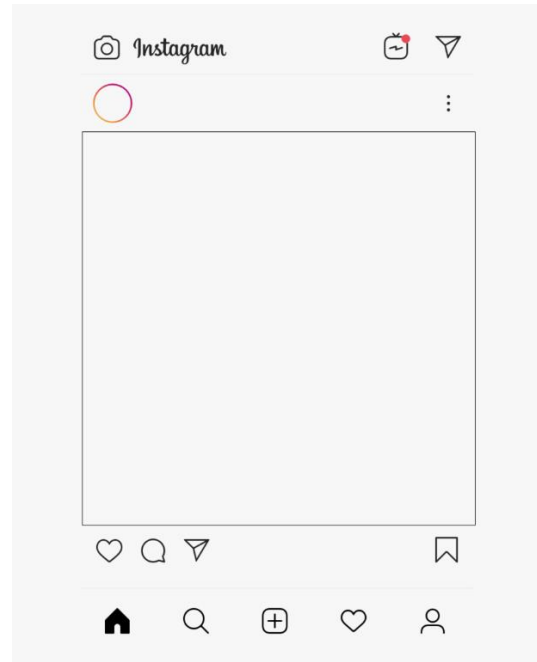
If you are not too keen on using your own pictures, you can also share before and after pictures of your favorite actor or other individuals (with their consent of course if you know them personally).



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## **DISCUSSION 2: *The Rewards of Adolescence***

Arguably, the best part of being a high school student - being a teenager - is discovering the many things you are now “allowed” to do. New freedoms come with being in this new stage of life. Let’s go through some of them below.

*Freedom from control.* While you are still a minor, there might be lesser control that the adults in your life exercise over you. This slight “pulling away” from your parents, relatives, older siblings, and even teachers and mentors is not that they care less about what you are doing now that you are older. It acknowledges your capacity to care and decide more for yourself. If you think about it, this is quite an empowering idea! Imagine the trust and confidence that adults are showing you, and you need to respond to this freedom by embracing the responsibility to start properly managing yourself.

If the “control” or the supervision previously came from the outside (e.g., your parents), this time, it should come from the inside (i.e., self-discipline and self-management). This can mean many things in your life. This might entail being more independent in your studies and not relying on your family to assist in schoolwork. This can also be about managing your schedule without always being told what to do at a particular time. This can mean improving how you complete your chores and other responsibilities.

This freedom obviously does not refer to disobedience or absolute independence from parental and adult guidance. Whatever age we are, we will always cherish the support and advice from those wiser than us who can direct us to the right path.

*Freedom of choice.* Freedom of choice is closely related to the idea of freedom from control, which is one of the many “rewards” of adolescence that many young people genuinely cherish. What does this choice refer to? In this discussion, we refer to this “choosing” as adolescents like you having the space to explore and try out new things that you may not have been given a chance to do so before.

As you adjust to a new school, there are many interests, hobbies, and areas of study that you find novel and appealing. You may face the challenge of deciding on a student organization you will join or a project you want to volunteer for. Some people find having many options troublesome because they take a long time to decide or there are too many factors to consider. Meanwhile, others revel in the availability of choices and find excitement in pursuing something different or something new, like another sport or instrument. During the teenage years, making good choices is helpful in figuring out who you are. The hobby you start adopting, the art form you begin exploring, or the genre of books you dive into will allow you to get to know what you like and who you are. We can say that embracing this freedom of choice is part of your identity work - getting to know yourself.

*Freedom to assert.* With your growing confidence, coming from having less adult control and seeing more valuable choices, comes the desire to have a perspective. *Voice and choice.* For one, it feels good to

be acknowledged and recognized by adults as having a voice. You are no longer a mere spectator when older adults are talking. You are now slowly becoming part of the conversation.

Part of growing up is developing the ability to form opinions, articulate these opinions, and figure out how best to present these opinions in a way that others will listen to and understand. Let's break this down. Forming an opinion or having a voice about a particular issue necessitates being educated about the topic. It is not merely expressing one's emotional reaction or sounding off the popular take. When you have formed an educated and insightful opinion about the issue, you must also use the proper language to clearly communicate your ideas. This means using the right words and expressions that capture your thoughts. Finally, with your ideas formed into words, you now have the crucial task of communicating these in a way that shows people you are worthwhile listening to because your opinions have merit. You likewise acknowledge other people's stand on that issue. The goal is to always uphold respectful communication.

It can also happen that some young people feel hurt or embarrassed when adults dismiss their opinions as being shallow or inconsequential. Unfortunately, some individuals can be dismissive of people just because they are young. However, some of these situations are not a matter of the opinion being shared by a young person but because the idea is unfounded or trivial. So, if you want your voice to matter, put your mind and heart into it!

Having an opinion - a rationale and sound one - is a sign of a maturing individual. It is helpful for young people like yourself to start learning about your position on important issues and concerns such as environmental degradation, media immorality, and government corruption. Many young people with solid opinions about global problems have become advocates and changemakers influencing policy and action.

*Freedom to socialize.* One of the areas in an adolescent's life that expand with age is the social circle. With our "old" and trusted friends from childhood, we open our world to new acquaintances that hopefully

bloom into long-lasting friendships. These two worlds can coexist and support the many changes and challenges you are going through.

*Do these freedoms sound daunting or exciting? What other “rewards” are you most looking forward to experiencing in your teenage years?*

### **ACTIVITY 2: What can I do now?**

After contemplating the rewards of being an adolescent, it is also meaningful to discover and affirm the many things you can now do as an adolescent, which you probably did not have the ability nor the freedom to explore as a child.

Work on this short sentence completion activity by illustrating your answers and sharing your sketches with your seatmate.

	<b>Then</b>	<b>Now</b>
A	When I was a child, I could only go _____.	Now, I can be _____.
	Draw it here...	Draw it here...
B	When I was a child, I could only say _____.	Now, I can speak _____.
	Draw it here...	Draw it here...
C	When I was a child, I could only do _____.	Now, I can make _____.
	Draw it here...	Draw it here...
D	When I was a child, I could only understand _____.	Now, I can make sense of _____.
	Draw it here...	Draw it here...

### **DISCUSSION 3: Challenges of Adolescence**

Peter Parker's Uncle Ben famously said, "With great power comes great responsibility!" The same can be said about growing up. In Discussion 2, we discussed the rewards of being an adolescent - the new "powers" you have gained as a maturing person. But with these new freedoms come certain expectations. In this discussion, you will think about the responsibilities you need to be conscious of as you navigate this new stage in your life.

*The challenge of figuring out who you are.* As we previously discussed, an important task of adolescence is forming one's identity. And while adolescents must be able to do this, it does not mean that first, they will achieve it right away and, second, that by the end of adolescence, this task will be completed. Figuring out who we are is a lifelong process.

When we are children, we associate who we are with who are family is, what our favorites are (e.g., games, food, friends), and what we like to do. As we grow older, we still have our likes and dislikes to indicate what kind of people we are. But the search for this identity becomes a much more complex mission. You will start discovering how you think and learn, your emotional reactions to happy and sad events, your decision-making process, the circumstances that trigger your response, the kinds of people you feel genuinely connected with, and many more. These bits and pieces will form the person that you are.

*The challenge of getting along with others.* It is a natural desire to want to be liked by many, by all. We do not wish to have enemies or to find people saying mean things about us. This transition from childhood to adolescence can put pressure on you to determine what makes you likable or appealing to your peers. Will they like you just as you are? Do you need to change anything to gain more friends? These can be challenging questions to answer since you are only still trying to figure out who you are (as we discussed beforehand!).

The truth of the matter is that every person cannot be your friend. You can be friendly to many, but it is normal not to be friends with and

have close ties with all of them. An important attribute that you may need to acquire, to survive in a world where people have differing opinions and diverse personalities, is to learn to accept these differences without being easily offended or offending anyone. Respect is a universal human value that will allow you to form meaningful connections with individuals, whoever they may be and wherever they may be from.

*The challenge of choosing wisely.* In Discussion 2, we looked into the advantage of having freedom of choice now that you are older. Many aspects of your life require you to make a decision. How much time should you allot for schoolwork and relaxation activities? Which group of friends will influence you positively? What kinds of shows or books will contribute to your improvement?

There is, however, a limitation to this freedom. Having the freedom of choice does not mean choosing everything that favors only yourself. The opportunity to select necessitates choosing what will benefit you without harming others and yourself. As you develop maturity and wisdom, you will also acquire better decision-making skills that will lessen the risk of choosing something detrimental to your personal development. Sometimes, we have to choose something inconvenient or unpopular, but which is good for us. An example would be giving up too much time on social media or lounging around to do one's chores or start on school work even though it is not needed urgently. Some older people say that being an adult is about making hard choices, and teens can experience this dilemma too.

*The challenge of thinking about the future.* Once you crossover to the teenage stage, there is no stopping people from expecting more from you, as if you are already practicing to be an adult. That's how some people refer to adolescence, a practice for adulthood. And part of this adulting process is charting your future and knowing how to get there.

This can be a pretty daunting task for a young person. In your head, you are just a child trying to survive high school and all the new experiences you will undoubtedly face. And then here comes the very tough task of needing good answers to questions like "What are you going to do with your life?" and "What's your plan?". What can you do to



deal with pressure-filled situations like this? Well, the most straightforward response is the most authentic and honest one: "I haven't figured it out yet, but I will." Your job as a growing teen is to collect as many productive and meaningful experiences to help you decide where you will bring your future. You must optimize your education and learn as many things as possible from your teachers and mentors. Your task is to open your eyes, ears, mind, and heart to the many opportunities life offers you.

At this point, there is absolutely nothing wrong with not having a concrete plan yet. But there is also no harm in thinking about setting your sights on some goals and objectives. Balance and taking little steps are essential.

### **ACTIVITY 3: *What's the most challenging part about being a teen?***

Form yourselves into small groups. In these groups, collect your thoughts to give one answer to this question: *"What's the hardest part about being a teen?"*

After you have arrived at an answer, one the whole group agrees with, think of a scenario where this applies. Then, prepare a short skit (a maximum of five minutes) that presents the realistic situation you have thought of. End your role-play with one or more possible resolutions to the challenge you identified. After presenting, ask your classmates to guess the adolescent challenge you were acting out and see if they have other ideas to add to the resolution you presented.

### **Wrap-Up**

It can be challenging to completely capture what you feel as a growing teen. Many things are going on in your day-to-day life - in what you are thinking, in what you are feeling, in what you are doing. Have you tried slowing down and taking stock of your experiences now that you are in high school and genuinely living a teen's life?

Together, let's read and reflect on the poem [Seeking Adulthood](#) by Maysie Stott Morrison. You can also listen to a recording of this poem [here](#).

I'm getting older now,  
No longer a child,  
Not yet an adult,  
But a girl trying to carve a path for herself.

I'm learning to make my own choices,  
Molding a future with my bare hands,  
Learning how to step out,  
Despite the shaky ground.

I no longer need to be held tight in your embrace  
But crave an independence,  
One that lets me explore my hunger for this world,  
A world full of hidden meanings.

But sometimes I fall,  
As I struggle to take in the world before me,  
Overwhelmed by the bigger picture  
The adulthood that lies ahead.

And it must be hard for you to accept  
That I'm building a life for myself,  
Making mistakes that you cannot cure,  
Choices you never dreamed I'd make.

How much of what you are going through is similar to the sentiments shared in the poem? Adolescence may be rife with changes and challenges but remember that you have gifts and capabilities that you can use to succeed, and you are not alone in this journey.

## MOVING FORWARD

This lesson explored the world of adolescence – a world of both predicted and unexpected transitions. While it can sometimes be challenging, tricky, and perplexing, adolescence is a fascinating developmental period full of changes. The individual goes through momentous transformations that can determine the course of his life as

he grows into an adult. Understanding your life as a young person and the many happenings that occur is interesting and ultimately crucial.

The next lesson will allow you to see how you can take care of yourself, given the many changes you are experiencing, in the many different dimensions of your life. As a growing person, we need to be sensitive to the needs of our body, mind, and heart, so self-care – the theme of Lesson 2 – should be an essential part of our routine.

## LEARNING RESOURCES

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## Lesson 2

### *Handle with Care:* *Taking Care of My Adolescent Self*

## GETTING STARTED

### Overview

"I lied and said I was busy.  
I was busy;  
but not in a way most people understand.

I was busy taking deeper breaths.  
I was busy silencing irrational thoughts.  
I was busy calming a racing heart.  
I was busy telling myself I am okay.

Sometimes, this is my busy -  
and I will not apologize for it."  
— *Brittin Oakman, Anxiety doesn't knock first*

The #selflove and #selfcare movements are controversial in many ways. On the one hand, some may find it indulgent that individuals spend significant time and resources to first attend to their personal needs (and sometimes wants). On the other hand, this is a growing advocacy for many people who understand that *we cannot give what we do not have*. We must be doing well to be persons for others, good students, and helpful sons and daughters. This is what we will talk about in Lesson 2.

In Discussion 1, we will define what self-care is and what its aims are. Self-care is not only a response to stressful situations. It is an even more powerful preventive and proactive approach to healthy and stable well-being. In Discussion 2, we will venture into the various dimensions of self-care, addressing the different aspects of our well-being: physical, mental, social, emotional, and spiritual. In this section, you will find helpful examples of applicable self-care practices. Finally, in Discussion

3, you will find simple steps to help you create your self-care plan, the final output of this lesson.

While this lesson is primarily informative, we hope you also find going through these pages comforting and reassuring that you are making the right decision to prioritize caring for yourself in all the ways that matter.

## Objectives

*At the end of this lesson, you should be able to:*

1. Realize the importance of practicing habits of self-care as an adolescent;
2. Manage adolescent transitions through the implementation of a meaningful and practical self-care plan.

## DISCUSSIONS AND ACTIVITIES

### Warm-Up

Let us start this lesson with this [Tense and Relax](#) exercise for stress and anxiety relief. Relaxation exercises can help you cope with everyday and long-term and health-related stress (Mayo Clinic, [2022](#)). There are several kinds of relaxation techniques, and this *progressive muscle relaxation* approach will force you to focus on the physical sensations that come with the tensing and relaxing movements in the muscles. Relaxation techniques have many benefits, including boosting focus and mood, improving sleep quality, lowering fatigue, reducing anger and frustration, and enhancing confidence to handle problems.

If you find this exercise useful, do it on your own as you start each day or when you feel overwhelmed by stress. Share this technique with your family and friends so they can experience its benefits, too.

## DISCUSSION 1: *Well-being and Self-Care*

The World Health Organization (1998) defined self-care as

...what people do for themselves to establish and maintain health and to prevent and deal with illness. It is a broad concept encompassing hygiene (general and personal), nutrition (type and quality of food eaten), lifestyle (sporting activities, leisure, etc.), environmental factors (living conditions, social habits, etc.), socio-economic factors (income level, cultural beliefs, etc.) and self-medication. (pp. 2-3)

Another helpful definition from Mindful (2020) views it as

the practice of taking an active role in protecting our own well-being, pursuing happiness, and having the ability, tools, and resources to respond to periods of stress so that they don't result in imbalance and lead to a health crisis.

Finally, an excellent integrative definition of self-care by Dorociak et al. (2017) defines it as

a multidimensional, multifaceted process of purposeful engagement in strategies that promote healthy functioning and enhance well-being. (p. 326)

This final definition highlights the essential characteristics of self-care (Dorociak et al., 2017). First, self-care is a broad, *multi-faceted*, and *multidimensional* concept as it addresses the individual's holistic needs, not only the practices that maintain physical health. Second, it is purposeful since it involves a deliberate plan to maintain one's well-being, banking on the person's knowledge of what his needs are and how best to address them. Lastly, self-care aims for *healthy functioning and well-being* so people build resilience against stress and flourish in all aspects of their lives.

Self-care has long been associated with the helping professions (i.e., mental health professionals like counselors and therapists). Professionals

in this discipline are highly encouraged to have consistent and sound self-care practices to effectively attend to their clients' needs. However, this concept is not exclusive only to this field. If you noticed, conversations on self-care rose during the pandemic. As people were dealing with both the physical and psychological impact of COVID-19, the desire for self-care increased. People became more conscious of the need for self-care to cope with the stresses brought by the pandemic. The global health crisis - as is any illness - was a massive trigger for self-care and illustrated that it can be an effective proactive and preventive approach to maintaining one's well-being.

For young people like you, self-care should be part of your routine. Its impact will be significantly felt if self-care is consistently and regularly practiced. Why, then, should we practice self-care? Let's look at some important reasons:

*Maintaining energy for all your activities.* As a proactive measure, self-care affords you the energy, enthusiasm, and vigor to attend to all your responsibilities. How can self-care do this? It can prompt you to set healthy boundaries by involving yourself only in activities you have time for and a genuine interest in. A self-care plan can help you gauge if you are stretching yourself too thinly over too many engagements that you do not have time to take care of yourself. In the end, if you get sick from being overly zealous about everything, you might not be able to participate in any of the endeavors you are excited to pursue.

*Being aware of what you need.* The busyness of day-to-day life might find us just going through the motions without realizing that we have neglected certain areas of our lives. Schoolwork can take over your lives, you might forget to connect with your friends or spend time with your family. You get so enthralled by your friends' stories and thrilled by their adventures that you fail to allot time for some quiet moments by yourself. A comprehensive self-care routine is like a helpful checklist that reminds you to maintain that much-needed balance in the different areas of your life.

*Managing stress and anxiety.* Our daily activities and responsibilities can bring unusual pressure and trigger unhealthy stress. The piling of schoolwork, the examination period looming around the corner, and arguments causing rifts in your *barkada* can be worrisome. Self-care practices, like the relaxation technique we did earlier, help you cope with the adverse effects of stress and anxiety. It gives you the space to breathe and let go momentarily of the negativity caused by problems. Afterward, you can think more promptly and clearly about resolving these issues, not just avoiding them.

### **ACTIVITY 1: Self-Care Myth Busters**

Many people dismiss the idea of self-care because they have been led to believe false truths about it. In the table below, you will find a list of self-care myths. Discuss debunking these myths with your seatmate by providing a brief and convincing explanation. You can also try researching more about self-care if you want your myth-busters to be very comprehensive.

<b>Myth</b>	<b>Myth Buster</b>
Self-care is an excuse to pamper yourself.	
Self-care is only for people with mental health issues.	
Practicing self-care means spending money.	
Self-care is something you must do alone.	
You will always have good mental health if you observe regular self-care practices.	
Self-care is time-consuming.	
Self-care is anything that makes you feel good.	



## **DISCUSSION 2: *Dimensions of Self-Care***

Since self-care is defined as a multidimensional concept designed to address the various aspects of a person's well-being, it also comes in different forms and techniques. As you read in Discussion 1, it is not enough that only a person's physical health is preserved. This can lead to an imbalance concerning the other aspects of life. That is why self-care should be comprehensive. What, then, are the different dimensions of self-care?

*Physical self-care.* Can you think of what use a car has if it does not have gasoline? The same can be said about our bodies. For it to function well, we need to nourish, maintain, and protect it. Physical self-care is considered the most crucial among all self-care areas because the other dimensions are hinged on the capacity of the body to perform well. Physical well-being is necessary to maintain the other aspects of well-being. Examples of physical self-care include:

- Eating balanced and healthy meals
- Integrating physical activity and movement into your routine
- Hydrating sufficiently
- Getting enough sleep
- Spending time in nature
- Receiving necessary healthcare (e.g., vitamins, doctor's visits)

*Psychological/mental self-care.* This dimension of self-care ensures that your cognitive abilities are finetuned to allow you to focus, understand, and process information. The goal of mental self-care is brain functionality and mental health. Examples of this type of self-care include:

- Learning a new language or skill
- Reading self-help or personal growth books
- Committing to a social media detox
- Journaling
- Making time for relaxation
- Doing mindfulness breathing exercises

*Emotional self-care.* Attending to your emotional self-care means becoming more aware of your feelings and understanding their origin. This dimension of self-care is also meant to help you constructively express your emotions. Even uncomfortable or unpleasant emotions such as frustration or grief must be acknowledged and, more importantly, dealt with. Examples of emotional self-care include:

- Doing acts or expressing words of self-compassion
- Setting aside time for leisure activities
- Talking to a friend
- Finding creative outlets
- Laughing

*Spiritual self-care.* Spiritual self-care does not necessarily equate to religious practices. If physical self-care entails nurturing your body, taking care of your spiritual dimension involves nourishing your soul and finding a deeper purpose. This also implies cultivating a reflective and hopeful attitude. Examples of this type of self-care include:

- Advocating for important causes
- Consuming inspirational materials (e.g., books, music)
- Identifying your values

*Social self-care.* To maintain our well-being, we need to forge meaningful relationships with others. Social self-care is about making time and putting in the effort to cultivate friendships and nurture relationships. Examples of social self-care include:

- Reaching out to others for support
- Evaluating relationships with toxic or overly negative people
- Writing letters to a friend
- Respecting family time
- Avoiding distractions when spending time with family and friends

Apart from the examples above, technological tools and applications (e.g., Calm for breathing and stretching exercises, sleep stories, and meditation; Day One for journaling) have also already been developed to help you track your well-being and stick to your self-care practices. *Do you know of other strategies to add to the list?*

## **ACTIVITY 2: Stress and Self-Care Check**

When was the last time you genuinely answered the question, “How are you?” When you are very busy or are going through a tough time, it can be challenging to respond to this question. In this activity, you will answer two brief surveys that can show you how you are really doing: how much stress you have been experiencing lately and how you have been taking care of yourself every day.

### **Stress Level Check<sup>1</sup>**

As you may know, a good kind of stress, healthy stress, can motivate you to do better and better every day. However, there is also unhealthy stress that can hinder you from functioning properly and inhibit you from thriving. This checklist will help you determine your symptoms of stress, indicating that your stress level is something that you should be concerned about and need help dealing with.

If you have been experiencing any of these signs of unhealthy stress, please tick the circle before the item.

- Frequent headaches
- Chest pain
- Shortness of breath
- Feeling overly tired
- Difficulty sleeping
- Trouble concentrating
- Irritability
- A decline in school performance
- Issues in family and peer relationships

If you checked four items or more, you should assess the causes of your stress and then find a way to manage the stress by activating your self-care routines. You may also chat with your teachers, counselors, or mentors about your experiences.

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<sup>1</sup> This checklist is adapted from the reference: PMDhealth. (2015, November 4). *Is your stress level unhealthy? A stress symptoms checklist*. PartnerMD. [https://www.partnermd.com/blog/is\\_your\\_stress\\_level\\_unhealthy\\_a\\_stress\\_symptoms\\_checklist](https://www.partnermd.com/blog/is_your_stress_level_unhealthy_a_stress_symptoms_checklist)

## Self-Care Routine Check<sup>2</sup>

Now that you have a clearer idea of how your stress can affect you, you also need to see if you have the necessary self-care practices to help you prevent or resolve your stressors. You can also use this activity as a reference for Discussion 3 and Activity 3.

Read through the different routines and activities listed below and rate the items according to how well you are doing each one:

- 3 I do this well (e.g., frequently)
- 2 I do this OK (e.g., occasionally)
- 1 I barely or rarely do this
- 0 I never do this
- ? This never occurred to me

<b>Physical</b>	<b>Mental / Psychological</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> Eat meals regularly <input type="checkbox"/> Maintain a healthy diet <input type="checkbox"/> Get regular preventive medical care <input type="checkbox"/> Get medical care when needed <input type="checkbox"/> Take time off when sick <input type="checkbox"/> Do some fun physical activity <input type="checkbox"/> Think body positive thoughts <input type="checkbox"/> Exercise <input type="checkbox"/> Get enough sleep <input type="checkbox"/> Get fresh air / go outside regularly <input type="checkbox"/> (Other) _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Take technology breaks <input type="checkbox"/> Read something unrelated to school <input type="checkbox"/> Notice my thoughts, beliefs, attitudes, and feelings <input type="checkbox"/> Engage my intelligence in a new way or area <input type="checkbox"/> Try new things <input type="checkbox"/> Make time for self-reflection <input type="checkbox"/> Make space for downtime <input type="checkbox"/> Be curious <input type="checkbox"/> Work toward life balance <input type="checkbox"/> (Other) _____
<b>Emotional</b>	<b>Spiritual</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> Stay in contact with important people in my life	<input type="checkbox"/> Be aware of non-material aspects of life

<sup>2</sup> This checklist is adapted from the reference: Sonoma State University Counseling and Psychological Services. (n.d.). *Self-care checklist*. <https://caps.sonoma.edu/sites/caps/files/selfcarecovid-19checklistssucaps2020.pdf>

<input type="checkbox"/> Re-read favorite books, re-watch favorite movies <input type="checkbox"/> Listen to/play favorite music <input type="checkbox"/> Express myself creatively <input type="checkbox"/> Find ways to healthily express my negative feelings (e.g., anger) <input type="checkbox"/> Allow myself to experience sadness or to cry <input type="checkbox"/> Give myself affirmation or praise <input type="checkbox"/> Find things that make me laugh <input type="checkbox"/> Share my honest feelings <input type="checkbox"/> (Other) _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Identify what is meaningful to me <input type="checkbox"/> Seek out reenergizing or nourishing experiences <input type="checkbox"/> Contribute to causes I advocate <input type="checkbox"/> Read or listen to something inspirational <input type="checkbox"/> Cherish my optimism and hope <input type="checkbox"/> Practice mindfulness <input type="checkbox"/> Find time for prayer or reflection <input type="checkbox"/> (Other) _____
<b>Social / Relationships</b>	<b>School</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> Communicate regularly with my family <input type="checkbox"/> Connect with relatives <input type="checkbox"/> Make time to be with friends <input type="checkbox"/> Stay in contact with faraway friends <input type="checkbox"/> Practice healthy boundaries in relationships <input type="checkbox"/> Show and receive care and love <input type="checkbox"/> Ask for help when I need it <input type="checkbox"/> Practice honesty in relationships <input type="checkbox"/> (Other) _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Take time to chat with classmates <input type="checkbox"/> Engage in projects I am passionate about <input type="checkbox"/> Balance my work load so that nothing is "way too much" <input type="checkbox"/> Arrange my study space to be conducive and comfortable <input type="checkbox"/> Get regular mentoring or guidance <input type="checkbox"/> Set aside quiet time to work <input type="checkbox"/> Take a break during the day <input type="checkbox"/> Have a support group among my friends <input type="checkbox"/> (Other) _____
<b>Overall Balance</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/> Strive for balance in all areas of my life on a daily and long-term basis <input type="checkbox"/> Strive for balance among my family, friends, and relationships <input type="checkbox"/> Strive for balance between study and personal time <input type="checkbox"/> Strive for balance in looking forward to the future and acknowledging the moment	

After answering this survey, reflect on the following questions:

- Which among the categories do you have the most/least self-care routines?
- Which of the self-care routine categories do you find the most personally effective? Why do you say so?
- Which of the self-care routine categories do you find the most challenging to implement? Why do you say so?

*Remember:* Keep your responses to this activity since they will be useful in completing Activity 3.

Note: In this activity, you may notice that a special “school” category has been added to the Self-Care Check on top of the various dimensions identified in Discussion 2. This is to respond to your specific self-care needs as you fulfill your duties as a student.

### **DISCUSSION 3: Creating a Self-Care Plan**

Now that you know what self-care is and what different practices and techniques you can do to protect all dimensions of your well-being, it is time to put all this information together. Your self-care strategies will be more effective when they are organized into a cohesive plan and when this plan is habitually practiced. The idea behind creating a self-care plan is that you do not only apply these strategies because you are already getting sick. A self-care plan ensures that you take care of yourself daily to maintain optimal health *and* avoid getting overly stressed or unwell.

A **self-care plan** is a collection of strategies organized to address your well-being needs. Some people refer to self-care as a *routine* to emphasize the need for regularity and consistency. Let’s take the example of fitness. If you want to maintain a certain level of fitness, you embark on your physical fitness plan and do it daily or weekly. You will not get to your ideal shape and health if you only choose the days you want to exercise or eat right. The same is true with self-care. It should be done habitually if you want stability in your well-being.

## How do you prepare a self-care plan?

Getting started on your self-care plan is similar to going through the activities you have already accomplished in the lesson. Here are some simple steps that you can follow:

- *Situate yourself and assess your needs.* List the various roles you play and the activities you participate in every day. Identify the interests and pursuits that occupy your time and require effort. This can include your family life, student involvement, *barkada* activities, and so on. A good reference to accomplishing this portion is your daily schedule or the dimensions of well-being used in Discussion 2.
- *Check your stressors and responses.* Using the abovementioned list, identify the aspects of your life that cause (unnecessary) stress. Evaluate how you respond to these stressful situations, especially when you get overwhelmed by negative emotions and react unhealthily or destructively.
- *Check your current self-care strategies.* Review the usual ways you cope with the stressful and challenging experiences that you face regularly or even in extraordinary circumstances. The list you read through in Activity 2 - Self-Care Check is a good reference.
- *Write down a plan.* Read through your current self-care practices and assess if the techniques you use are effective in reducing stress or negative feelings and realistic in terms of time and resources. If some of these techniques have already worked, include them in this new list. If you think there are better and more reasonable practices to adopt, be open to incorporating them. Some people organize their self-care plans into periods instead of well-being categories. For example, they indicate daily (e.g., walking), weekly (e.g., reading), monthly (e.g., reunion with friends), and yearly (e.g., travel) self-care activities. If you feel that system will work for you, try it out.

- *Spot the barriers.* Carefully consider the possible obstacles you may face when implementing your plan. Will this be your own motivation? Will your schedule and responsibilities in the coming months be too hectic to attend to your self-care needs? Knowing these barriers beforehand will allow you to think of ways to avoid or resolve them.

### **How do I sustain my self-care plan?**

It may be obvious, but the best part about a self-care plan is that you made it...for you. With your best interest in mind, you carefully assessed what would work best for your needs, available time, and resources. However, the most crucial part of having a plan is doing it and sustaining it. What good is your self-care plan if you just prepared it without intending to commit to it?

A realistic and practical plan is easier to sustain than a highly ambitious plan. When you prepare your self-care plan, be honest about your feelings, resources, and ideas so that your output is as authentic and relevant to your current circumstances. Start with a few (five to seven) self-care practices that you can realistically accomplish on a regular basis. If you also have a trusted friend or mentor with whom you are comfortable sharing your plan, seeking their feedback might be helpful and valuable. If they know you well enough, they should be able to gauge if your plan suits your needs and interests.

Remember that each self-care plan is unique to the person who created it. Own it, embrace it.

### **ACTIVITY 3: My Self-Care Plan**

This last activity for Lesson 2, putting together all the learning from the three discussions, is creating your self-care plan. Use the steps indicated in Discussion 3 to guide you in preparing your self-care plan. Here are some broad questions to help you get started:

- What does your daily schedule look like?



- In your daily activities, what causes you stress or discomfort?
- How do you respond to these stressful situations?
- Which self-care strategies will be effective and helpful for you to respond to these challenging situations healthily?
- What will get in the way of you following or applying these strategies?

After going through the steps, design your self-care plan into a simple infographic or digital poster to be much more appealing to remember and follow. You can find some samples [here](#) and [here](#).

## Wrap-Up

Let us end this lesson with another self-care and mindfulness technique - the Five Senses Exercise<sup>3</sup>.

- Look around you. Notice **five** things that you can see. Focus on the things that you would not usually pay attention to.
- Activate your sense of touch. Notice **four** things that you can feel. Describe the texture of the things you can touch.
- Listen attentively. Notice **three** things you can hear. What sounds can you hear from around you?
- Sniff, sniff. Notice **two** things you can smell, whether pleasant or unpleasant.
- Notice **one** thing you can taste right now. Is it the cookie you just bit into or the juice you just drank?

The goal of this exercise is to make you present in the moment. Exercises such as this one, and all the other self-care strategies, make us relax, focus, and appreciate the things around us.

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<sup>3</sup> This exercise is adopted from the reference: *The five senses worksheet*. (n.d.) Positive Psychology. <https://positive.b-cdn.net/wp-content/uploads/The-Five-Senses-Worksheet.pdf>

## MOVING FORWARD

This lesson emphasized the discovery and understanding of the concept and practice of self-care. You debunked myths on self-care, the most important of which is that self-care is not about being selfish or self-indulgent. Self-care is looking out for oneself so that you can competently fulfill your responsibilities and care for others who need your help. You also found examples of helpful self-care practices that address the different dimensions of well-being. Finally, you created your self-care plan that will hopefully be part of your routine. For adolescents like you, who can feel the pressure of growing up and the demands of schoolwork, introducing habits of self-care into your daily routine will help make you more hopeful, optimistic, and appreciative of the many gifts you have been given and the many experiences you are fortunate to savor.

Lesson 3 will now focus on two learning habits that will complement your self-care plan and allow you to attend to your duties as a student. Understanding order and diligence will hopefully be valuable to make your school life more rewarding and meaningful.

## LEARNING RESOURCES

- 5 self-care myths I unlearned while earning my MSW. (n.d.). Boston University School of Social Work. <https://www.bu.edu/ssw/5-self-care-myths-i-unlearned-while-earning-my-msw/>
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## Lesson 3

### Call to Order: Practicing Habits of Order and Diligence

## GETTING STARTED

### Overview

The Greek poet Hesiod, in 800 B.C., wrote:

Do not put your work off till to-morrow and the day after; for a sluggish worker does not fill his barn, nor one who puts off his work: industry makes work go well, but a man who puts off work is always at hand-grips with ruin.

- *Works and Days*

To succeed in any endeavor – scholarship, art, profession – individuals must imbibe certain characteristics that can help them reach this desired destination. Two of these crucial attributes are a sense of order and diligence.

Discussion 1 will cover what it means to be an orderly student and include practical strategies and techniques to maintain organization. Order fuels productivity and balance. In Discussion 2, we will tackle the idea of diligence as both a mindset and a habit. Diligent students commit to doing good work from start to finish. Finally, in Discussion 3, we set aside some time to uncover procrastination – its causes and possible solutions.

Order and diligence are helpful learning habits you can practice as you manage your new role as a high school student. Hopefully, you have already acquired the characteristics of an organized and diligent student from your primary school experiences. This lesson will be a good reminder about their value and importance.

## Objectives

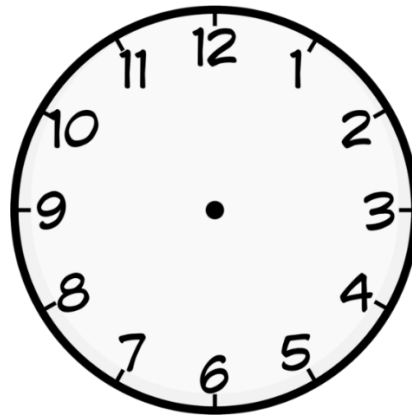
*At the end of this lesson, you should be able to:*

1. Analyze behaviors and habits that lead to disorder and procrastination, compromising your school and home life;
2. Manage adolescent transitions through the understanding and practice of diligence and orderliness.

## DISCUSSIONS AND ACTIVITIES

### Warm-Up

Do you follow a routine? Fill in the clock below with how you spend your time throughout the day.



Source: [Needpix](#)

As you work on this brief activity, take the time to also reflect on the following questions:

- How long have you had this routine? Did you have help in creating it?
- Is having a daily routine important to you? Why do you say so?
- Can you imagine your life without some form of routine or schedule? What do you think it will look like?

## DISCUSSION 1: *Order versus Disorder*

Any work that must be done, and done well, requires a person to be organized and have a sense of order. Each person can have their standard of order. An artist can argue for “order in disorder” in creating a masterpiece. A military man operates best following a rigid schedule. A sense of order affords an individual regularity and stability in schedule and routine with the goal of producing good work.

As you enter high school as a freshman, being organized and orderly is an even more crucial trait. You will have several new responsibilities to act on, a new campus to familiarize yourself with, and unique personalities to forge relationships with. With all these novelties to juggle, you will need a system and routine to survive and thrive in high school.

You may consider some of these organization strategies and see what will work for you (or has already worked for you):

- *Maintain a to-do list.* In whatever form this comes in – a planner, a simple notebook or piece of paper, or an app on your gadget – a to-do list will make you accountable for the tasks you need to accomplish. You can also organize your list into the items that have to be prioritized. Not everything on that list may need your urgent attention so they can be allotted another slot in your already packed schedule.
- *Pick your peak hours.* When are you most motivated to perform? When do you work best? Are you more efficient in the mornings, or do you produce better work in the afternoon or at night? Once you figure this out, you can schedule the more complex tasks to be completed then. This will ensure the efficiency and quality of your work.
- *Set personal rules and rewards.* Being organized and orderly demands a lot of self-discipline. When you say you have apportioned only an hour for completing a particular homework, this means working intensely to keep to this schedule. The

organization you have set for yourself will only be effective if you stick to it. To sustain your motivation, you can decide on certain rewards you can gift yourself if you have achieved your to-dos. For example, you can reward yourself with a few more minutes of rest or play if you have completed a task before the deadline. Small as these incentives may be, they can maintain your enthusiasm and momentum in being organized.

- *Share the load.* Not everything needs to be done by you, and you alone. Identify the project or task that is best done with others to optimize time. For example, at home, multiple family members can share some chores at home to save time and ensure that the work is done well. In school, you need to engage all the members when doing group work. It will teach each one responsibility and be efficient in getting things done.
- *Sort your stuff.* The order in your environment and material things contributes to how organized you will think and behave. Therefore, sorting your documents, materials, and even mementos is important. When your things are organized, it will be easier to locate them when needed. As they say, a place for everything and everything in its place.

Being an organized student has many benefits. Your productivity can improve because you know exactly how much time you have to complete a particular task. You can streamline your tasks because you know which projects require focus and effort and which are not necessary or valuable to pursue. You will also have a more balanced life since your schedule keeps you conscious about attending to work (i.e., schoolwork) and leaving time for leisure and self-care. Keeping an organized plan and an orderly routine allows you to take control of your life.

Conversely, being disorderly can be detrimental to your productivity as a student. Because you have yet to organize your tasks and responsibilities, you will be led to believe that you always need more time to attend to each of these duties. Feeling pressed for time, you will hurriedly work on assignments and projects, producing mediocre work. Ultimately, being disorganized can be pretty stressful to a person

because you sense that you have very little control of your world. You will end up overwhelmed by your work and lose the opportunity to cherish and value your experiences as a high school student and a growing adolescent.

Quoting Henri Frédéric Amiel, *“Order means light and peace, inward liberty and free command over one’s self; order is power.”*

### **ACTIVITY 1: Decluttering My Life**

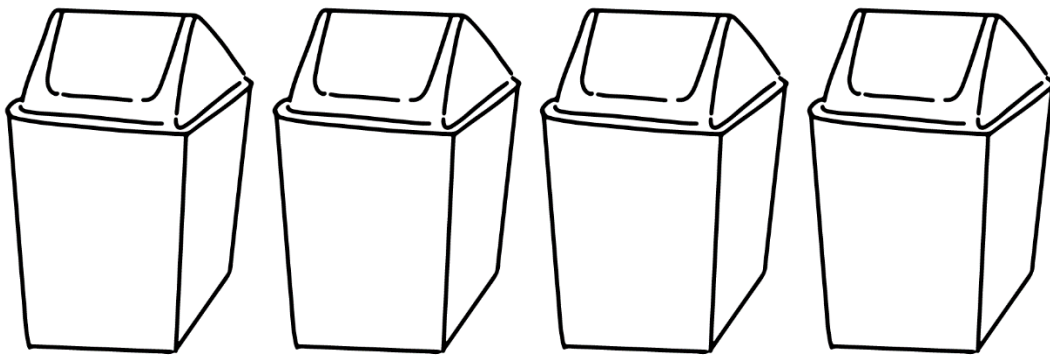
Speaking of sorting your stuff, part of maintaining organization and order is also ridding yourself and your space of the unnecessary elements that do no good for your productivity and overall well-being. We refer to this process as *decluttering*.

When did you last clean your room or a section of your house? Would you agree that it is a rather tricky task to accomplish? For some specific things, it is hard to decide whether you will throw them out or keep them just in case you will still need them one day. We also associate most things with memories and sentiments, and it gets very hard to part with them. Thus, the task of decluttering can be pretty challenging. Sometimes, it can also be embarrassing to think of the “junk” we keep that hinders us from genuinely flourishing and moving forward.

In this activity, you will “declutter” the different unnecessary aspects of your life that prevent you from being an organized and orderly person. For example, in terms of physical clutter, you can stop purchasing excessive things you do not need. When it comes to digital clutter, you can unfollow accounts that seem to be spreading fake news or negativity.

What other clutter are you willing to let go of? “Dump” them in their corresponding trash bins.





**Physical**

**Digital**

**Mental**

**Social**

## **DISCUSSION 2: *Practicing Diligence in School: Mindset and Habits***

Stop and think about these questions:

- Do you have a place where you write all your class assignments?
- Are you able to be on time when attending meetings or appointments - whether face-to-face or online?
- When participating in group work, do you know the exact task assigned to you, and can you submit your part on time?
- Are you conscientious of the responsibilities given to you by your teachers that you deliver or perform without being reminded?
- When given feedback and a chance to revise your work, do you take advantage of this opportunity and improve?

The questions above reflect some characteristics that point toward a diligent student. The dictionary defines diligence as “steady, earnest, and energetic effort; devoted and painstaking work and application to accomplish an undertaking.” This definition emphasizes that being a diligent person requires consistent hard work toward a goal.

Diligence as a mindset implies an understanding and acknowledgment that studying is your “work.” When you intend to be good at this work, you should channel your available energy, resources, and heart into this. It is a commitment to remain motivated and to keep

on going despite moments of frustration and failure. It is an obligation to demand excellence from yourself in the little and big things.

Diligence as a learning habit implies consistently observing certain practices that will lead you to attain your academic goals. These concrete actions reflect your belief in your capacity as a student and your understanding of your responsibility towards yourself, your parents, and your school. Reinforcing our discussion on order, diligence means:

*Keeping physical and mental order.* An organized space makes way for orderly thinking. If you own a tidy workspace, you can minimize the distractions (e.g., scrolling through social media, chatting with a friend, or tinkering with the things on your desk) that deter you from finishing your work. More importantly, you can maintain focus throughout the time you allocate for a specific task.

*Starting and finishing work.* Starting work is battling our tendency to procrastinate (we will discuss this in Discussion 3). Sometimes, this can be the hardest thing to do: to begin. But sometimes, it is also quite hard to complete our work because we can be easily distracted and complacent that there is always more time. We are reminded: start well and end well.

*Catching distractions and excuses.* We can be very creative in naming excuses to prevent us from starting or finishing work. There are also various reasons that we can conveniently raise so that we get away with lousily or hurriedly delivering work. Being a diligent student is being honest in accepting our limitations and persevering in avoiding distractions and excuses.

*Being patient and trusting the process.* Learning is a process that takes time and effort, even if you already consider yourself to be very intelligent or competent. Masters were once apprentices and novices, too. If we set our sights on noble goals, we will surely achieve them - in time.

*Not being afraid of doing it the "hard" way.* Diligent students are not afraid to work hard. Choosing the "easy" way is giving in to

laziness and mediocrity. The “hard” way can sometimes be painful, arduous, or stressful. It is meant to provide you with all the possible learning you can gain from an experience. The recent rise in the use of artificial intelligence in education is a great example. You can use many AI tools to write your paper for you. While using digital tools may be acceptable up to a certain point, using them to do your work robs you of the opportunity to discover the new things you should have gained from doing the assignment.

*What other qualities do you think characterize a diligent student?*  
Please share them in class.

### **ACTIVITY 2: How to be Orderly and Diligent 101**

In small groups, think of strategies that you can apply in your routine to practice order and diligence at home and in school. List five practical tips or suggestions you would like to share with your peers.

- 1 \_\_\_\_\_
- 2 \_\_\_\_\_
- 3 \_\_\_\_\_
- 4 \_\_\_\_\_
- 5 \_\_\_\_\_

After completing the list, create and design five simple flash cards that will make it easy for others to remember your recommended strategies. You can use the template provided below.

<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>

### DISCUSSION 3: Understanding Procrastination: Causes and Solutions

A concrete indicator of a disorganized person is procrastination. *Procrastination* “involves knowing that one is supposed to perform an activity (such as reading a novel for a literature course), and perhaps even wanting to do so, yet failing to motivate oneself to perform the activity within the desired or expected time frame. Procrastination typically involves delaying the start of a task until one experiences distress about not having performed the activity earlier” (Senecal et al, 1995, p. 607-608).

This definition highlights three essential aspects of procrastination. The first is that procrastinators are fully aware of the task ahead. It is this awareness that leads them to creating or experiencing impediments to starting the task. This is the second aspect: there can be several reasons why procrastinators fail to begin an assignment or project. We will talk about these shortly. The third aspect of procrastination is the distress and anxiety that comes from not having started on the required task. This is why we refer to procrastination as an unhealthy attribute, especially for students who really need to attend to many roles and responsibilities.

Why do we procrastinate, and how can we try to avoid this? Let’s look at the table<sup>4</sup> below that lists possible explanations for procrastination and their corresponding solutions.

<b>Explanation</b>	<b>Issues Related to Procrastination</b>	<b>Response</b>
You see the scope of the work ahead of you and view it as something unmanageable.	Task appears too big	Break down the assignment into smaller, achievable tasks. For example, divide the parts of your paper and do one section at a time.
You are unaware of and do not understand how	Not knowing what to do	Clarify the details of the task with the teacher or

<sup>4</sup> The contents of this table are based on this reference article: The University of Adelaide. (2014). *Procrastination and how to beat it*. Writing Centre Learning Guide. <https://www.adelaide.edu.au/writingcentre/ua/media/74/learningguide-procrastination.pdf>

<b>Explanation</b>	<b>Issues Related to Procrastination</b>	<b>Response</b>
to start on an assignment.		adult who gave you the assignment.
You juggle many obligations and desires, competing for your attention and time, that you are not sure which one to do first.	Inability to set priorities	Set your priorities by listing down the tasks in order of importance and see how much time in a day or week you can allot to accomplish them.
You demand too much from yourself (i.e., perfectionism) that you hesitate to do it, knowing you might not always get the result you want (e.g., getting a perfect grade).	Having unrealistic expectations	Set realistic targets and goals when you begin a task (e.g., Since I will give my best effort in this assignment, I will expect to receive a fair grade and feedback I can always use to improve).
You would rather not start on a task that, when finished, you think might be judged poorly or will demonstrate your lack of ability (i.e., low self-esteem).	Fear of failure	Do not be so tough on yourself. Every task or responsibility is a chance to learn. There are many opportunities to bounce back from a disappointing performance.
You are concerned that doing well in one thing might increase the expectation that you are supposed to do just as well in other tasks (i.e., "success breeds success").	Fear of success	View success from one task as motivation to do well in the succeeding tasks. Celebrate each success with humility and gratitude.
You struggle with managing yourself	Lack of self-discipline	Create a system where you can reward yourself

<b>Explanation</b>	<b>Issues Related to Procrastination</b>	<b>Response</b>
amid a new environment, such as transitioning from grade school to high school.		for being productive and accomplishing your tasks.
You do not see the importance, to you and to your goals, of doing a particular job.	Unclear relevance of task to results	The value of a task is not only in the result but on the skills and values you also develop while you work on it.

While procrastination is a tendency that we can beat with the right mindset and a strong support system, it is not something that we expect to overcome immediately. There are days when it is a bit harder to be tough on ourselves and to do work with immediacy. With a sense of order and diligence, we can persevere in combatting the urge to procrastinate in small and big things.

### **ACTIVITY 3: Procrastination Reflection**

This activity is a quick reflection task that is meant to help you see if you tend to procrastinate on particular tasks. Be honest in your personal assessment so that you can take this opportunity to find ways to be an even better student.

<b>What is that one task that you always delay starting?</b>
<b>What are the usual reasons or excuses you give as to why you hesitate to start on this task?</b>
<b>What do you gain from procrastinating?</b>

**If you asked someone for advice to help you in this situation, what do you think will they tell you?**

**What will be an effective “reward” for yourself when you fight against the tendency to procrastinate?**

When this task comes up again, try to recall the insights you shared in this activity so that you can try combatting procrastination one step at a time.

## Wrap-Up



Source of Image: [Famous Campaigns on Twitter](#)

This famous advertisement from Nike sends a very strong message. It likewise underscores the essential ideas we covered in this lesson.

What is that one thing you keep putting off but you know exactly will be good for you? What's stopping you from starting on it now?

## MOVING FORWARD

This lesson is all about understanding the values of order and diligence as essential ingredients in being a successful scholar. These two are not only conceptual but practical. Being orderly and diligent means forming the right mindset and applying the appropriate habits to be an engaged student.

In the next module, you will explore with greater focus your life as a high school student and a member of your new school. In *Belongingness*, you will discover how being an active part of a community of learners can contribute to your growth as a young person. More importantly, you also have a significant role to play in creating an environment where every person feels accepted and valued.

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## MODULE 3

# Belongingness

### Overview of Module 3

How do you feel now that you have spent some months in Pisay? Do you feel at home? Do you feel you belong? You have a sense of belonging when you feel very much a part of your school. People know you. You partake of your homeroom's togetherness. You have made friends and you enjoy each other's company. Because you feel you are in a good place - a place that's just right for you - you learn better, you get to relax and worry less.

How does a school become a place where students feel they belong? The answer is: it's the students who build the school atmosphere (also called "school culture"). A class, batch, or school has its particular ways of seeing and doing things, of being with each other. Students can be friendly or formal, welcoming or reserved, fend for themselves or help each other. A school culture can be a culture of friendly cooperation or a culture of fierce competition, a culture of sincerity and cordiality or a culture of cliques and snobbishness, a culture of respect and esteem or a culture of divisiveness and hostility.

In Lesson 1, "Building a School Culture of Learning", we consider what students can do to help each other learn better. We encourage you to avail of the support that the administrators and teachers are happy and committed to give you. It's not only the school's culture of learning that you can help build, but also each other's positive and constructive outlook to learning and to life.

In Lesson 2, "Building a School Culture of Sincerity and Cordiality", we will see that sincerity and cordiality are not only about the visible "good manners and right conduct". They are a reflection of one's basic, good regard toward persons. We will see that more than strengthening friendships through "bonding", it is through the heart where friendships

are strengthened: when the heart knows the other, is present to the other, is loyal and truthful.

In Lesson 3, “Building a School Culture of Safety and Respect”, we face the possible reality that students create barriers that impede others to belong and to make friends. To you, we say: even as you keep and enjoy your friends, it is alright to go out of your circle. You will find that you can cooperate and work well with many other students, enriching your lives. People are so different from each other, but differences shouldn’t be a hindrance to people working together toward a common goal. In fact, there is so much to learn from others who are different from you.

During your first of six years in Pisay, your batch’s culture is still unfolding. We are hopeful that you will create in and for each other a strong sense of belonging that will nurture your and your classmates’ learning and growth.

### **What You Should Be Thinking About**

*In this module, you will reflect on the following essential questions:*

1. Am I at ease in class and when studying with my classmates? How do my classmates and I help each other in our studies?
2. What are my thoughts and feelings about the challenges of learning? How do my classmates and I help each other in keeping a positive outlook toward studying?
3. How are my classmates and I supposed to treat one another so that school life becomes pleasant and welcoming?
4. What are the qualities of a true friend? Does school sometimes feel like a lonely place to me or to some students?
5. How do I make friends and how do my classmates make friends with me? Is it sometimes difficult to make friends in school?
6. Do my classmates and I respect all students regardless of who they are to us? Does school sometimes feel like an uncomfortable and unsafe place?

## **At a Glance**

**Lesson 1** *Building a School Culture of Learning*

**Lesson 2** *Building a School Culture of Sincerity and Cordiality*

**Lesson 3** *Building a School Culture of Respect and Safety*

## LESSON 1

# Building a School Culture of Learning

## GETTING STARTED

### Overview

You are in Pisay to get an education. Trust that in the many years that the PSHS system has been existing and with what the administrators and teachers have to offer, you will be getting the best education. The “best”, however, remains but a vision unless your batch work together to build a school culture conducive to learning. Learning happens in a social milieu where you engage not only with concepts in books but with fellow learners. You learn from each other not only lessons in your subjects, but also lessons in life, along with practical tips. Your positive reactions to things and constructive ways of behaving will make your learning adventures worthwhile and joyous.

### Objectives

*At the end of this lesson, you should be able to:*

1. Examine a school culture where students are supportive of each others’ learning;
2. Examine your engagement in school and grow in your confidence as a learner.

## DISCUSSIONS AND ACTIVITIES

### Warm-Up

In your first days in Pisay, what was it that you were excited about? What was it that you were nervous about? Now that you have spent a

quarter in Pisay, what is it about Pisay that you like? What is it about Pisay that helps you learn and grow?

Think of your first impressions of your school and how these impressions have now changed. Share your experiences and views with your classmates and listen to theirs.

### **DISCUSSION 1: *What Makes a School What It Is***

You must have had mixed emotions and conflicting thoughts on your first days in Pisay. I am no longer a kid, I am now in high school! I am excited to be in a new place and meet new people. But will I find it easy to make friends? What if I have no one to eat lunch with?

My parents are proud that I am studying in Pisay. I tell myself I will study hard so I can get high grades. But what if I get overwhelmed by the demands of school? What if I find myself struggling to understand what my classmates find easy?

These feelings and thoughts are natural and even reasonable. Your classmates must have also felt and thought like these. Some things that bother you will pass away or you will learn to handle them. In time you will be more sure of yourself. You will feel that Pisay is your school, that you belong.

### **Your Teachers are There to Support You**

Know that the school administrators and teachers are there to support you in your learning. To teach is their job. They set high standards and give feedback on your schoolwork; they do so to challenge you to give your best effort. Moreover, they are able to share with you their love for learning and their feeling of satisfaction over work finished and done well.

Know that the administrators and teachers want you to be at home in Pisay. They care about you and want you to live some of your best years in Pisay. Your guidance counselor, homeroom teacher, and values

education teacher are available when you have questions or concerns or when you need someone to listen and understand. Don't hesitate to approach your teachers. They can offer a lot of practical help and wise suggestions.

## **Your School Is What You Make It to Be**

Any anxiety or doubt that you experienced during your first days in Pisay was due to your being in a new and unfamiliar environment. You may have felt you needed to blend and not appear strange. Your school environment, however, is not something built by the students who have come ahead of you, something finished and unchangeable, and all you can do is to accept and adapt to it. Rather, your school becomes what you and your classmates make it to be. Things in school remain the same through the years because students accept and sustain them. Things in school change, for good or for ill, because students begin to do things differently.

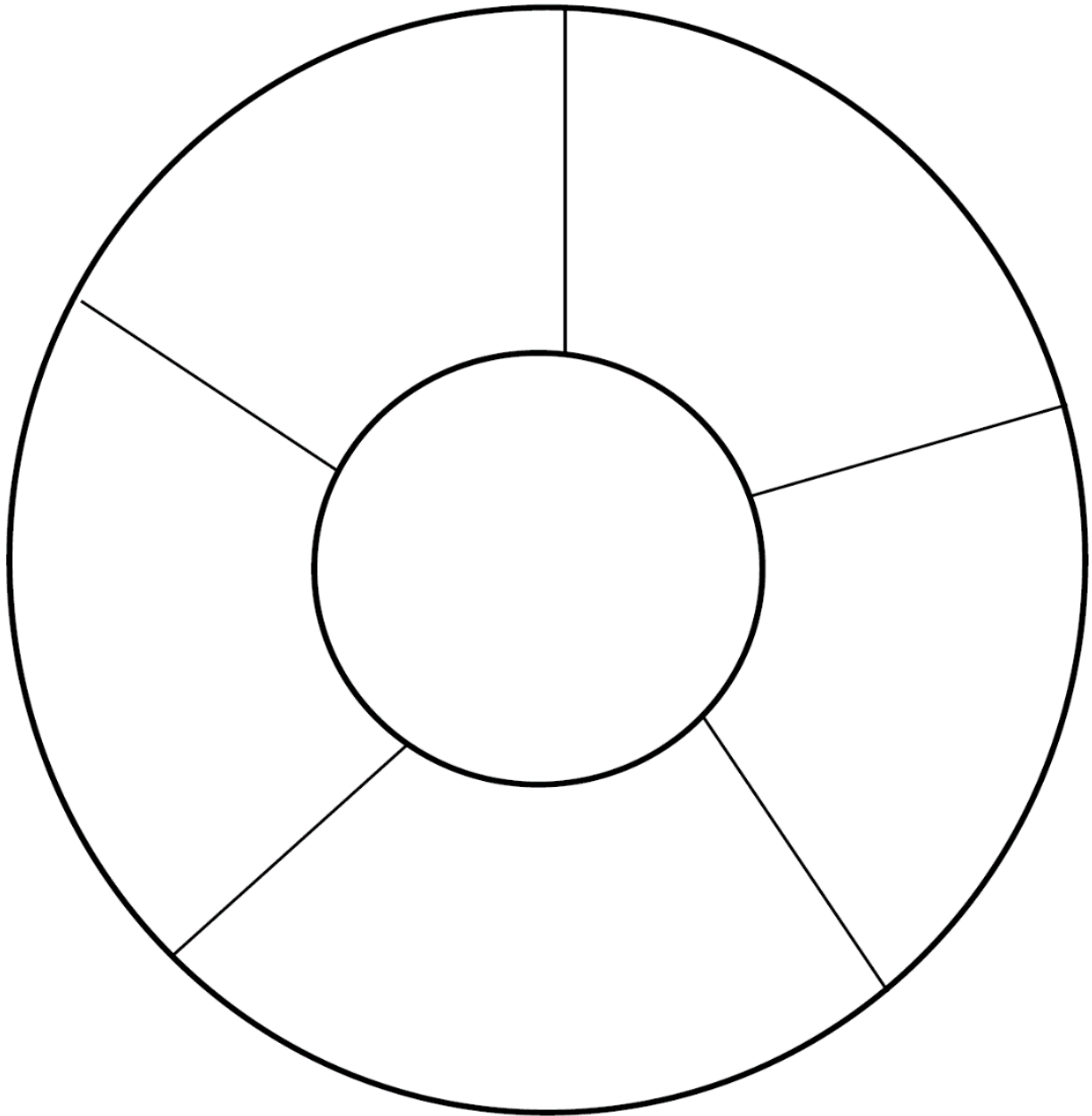
You build your school and there is much that you can do. For example, you can decide to do your job well and to help your classmates do the same thing. Building your school is all about the little things of everyday life like explaining challenging lessons to your classmates or asking them to explain these to you, initiating and leading a group activity or following the leader, encouraging your friends and receiving their encouragement.

### **ACTIVITY 1: Build Your Wheel, Build Your School**

On the following page is a wheel with spokes. The wheel symbolizes your school and the spaces between spokes symbolize the different aspects of your school.

*Fill each space with words or drawings to show what the space is. You can add more spokes to have more spaces or erase some spokes to have fewer. Then, write some keywords on the center of the wheel to summarize what all the spaces mean to you.*

You can let the spaces be peoples, activities, experiences. You can let the spaces be what you do and what others do, what you give and receive. You can use the spaces to show what your days are like, what makes your school days meaningful, engaging, special. These details to fill in the wheel are only suggestions. Let your wheel be as you wish it to be. Be creative. There are no right or wrong answers.



## **DISCUSSION 2: *Learning is a Social Situation***

### **Learning Is Not Only about You and Your Books**

We guess everyone agrees that your job in school is to learn. Learning is not only about books and lectures, exams and grades. It does not only happen at your desk and laptop. During the COVID-19 pandemic, teachers and students realized how hard it was to learn in a bubble where there was only oneself. Thus, during the pandemic, many teachers and students reached out to one another as best they could. Of course, a lot of alone time is needed and silence helps in studying. Nonetheless, it is true that many times you and your classmates learn more and are able to do more together.

In the coming high school years, your studies will be more demanding. Demands come from the outside - lessons, teachers, parents, peer competition. You may find yourself accepting these demands, even freely setting demands on yourself. But as we said earlier, there is support in school - from your teachers and from your peers.

### **Learning Is about You and Your Fellow Learners**

Learning is a social situation. Think of yourself as an apprentice. Learn from your teachers not only the lessons, but also of how they think, speak, and write. You also are an apprentice to your classmates; learn from them. What are the competences, motives, and values of the people you interact with? What moves and interests them? How do they make things work? In the future, you will apprentice with more mentors - professors, supervisors, senior colleagues, talented peers. Be used to dealing with others and learning from them. Observe, participate, interact.

Learning extends beyond the classroom. You can't separate learning from what you do outside the classroom, you can't compartmentalize. You learn from good conversations at the dinner table, in the dorm with friends, in research meetings with groupmates, in leisure and sports. You learn from the good and the bad that people



think or do. You learn from misunderstanding or differences in opinions. You learn by being with others.

Admit learning in your life as you do a good friend.

### **ACTIVITY 2: Class Wish List for Academic Success**

Persons come up with their personal or group wish lists. They keep the wish lists as reminders of their dreams, or share them with loved ones and friends hoping to receive these as gifts.

*Make a wish list for you and your classmates consisting of items that will help you in your schooling. What would you like to have in your classroom, dorm, school? A wish list typically contains material things like devices, or supplies, or air-conditioning, but let this wish list consist of non-material things, like people (you and others), activities, projects, and ideas.*

*After making your wish list, share each other's lists with a group of classmates or with the entire class. By consensus come up with one wish list. Which of the items in the final list can your group or class achieve by working together as a team, by each member giving and receiving?*

What items are in your group or class wish list? Does this wish list include something like, "helpful and supportive classmates", "perseverance in self"? You can be an effective "agent" or "bringer" of good things such as these.

### **DISCUSSION 3: Thinking, Feeling, and Behaving toward Learning**

As you engage in your classes and activities, various thoughts and emotions will come to you. These thoughts and emotions are triggered by people and happenings and by the changes you experience in adolescence. At times, these thoughts and emotions form an overwhelming, confusing spiral. You can harness thoughts and emotions toward understanding yourself and your world.

The way you rise to the challenges of learning depends on how you sort out your thoughts and feelings. We said in Discussion 2 that learning is a social situation, it is also (and very much so) governed by your self. Many students are quick to judge the limitations of their intelligence and efforts, thus, undermining their confidence. You can find in you the confidence to do well in school. You will learn and grow from both your successes and failures. Regardless of the situation, you will know that you are capable of navigating learning. Engage your mind and feelings in your learning.

**Be positive.** Think of a problem not as a problem but as a challenge. Build that mindset of always trying and not giving up. When feeling negative or overwhelmed, pause, rest, and recharge yourself. Immerse yourself with people and things that motivate and inspire you. Acknowledge your negative reactions to school, teachers, and classmates and ask yourself what you can do to change these.

**Focus on the task at hand.** Plan your study time; make a list of tasks to do and allot a time for each task. Don't write in the list more than you can handle, but whatever is in your list commit to them and focus on them during the allotted times.

Many things compete for your attention, some good and some not-so-good. What things distract you, dissipate your energy, and are a waste of time? What things give you a good break from studying, allow your mind to focus, help you go back to the routine of studying with renewed optimism?

Create the "markers" of your day. These are your day's beginnings and ends. Getting up in the morning and getting ready for school, lunch breaks with friends, the end of classes, leisure, hobbies, family time before homework, giving thanks at the end of the day. During a "marker", pause for a few seconds to be aware of what is finished and what is to come.

You do things other than studying. Don't think about schoolwork all the time. If you do, you will tire yourself before you have even begun

to study. If you acknowledge that other things in your life also deserve your attention and you give these things due attention, you will be able to focus on your studies when it's time to study.

***It's okay. Just try.*** Do not demand from yourself instant, easy success. Ask yourself instead to be earnest and willing in the things that you do. Monitor your efforts, when you've made the mark or when you're short of it. It's not to give yourself a low or high grade, it's to notice what works or what does not. Make a habit out of effective practices; notice points for improvement and work on them. In times of failures, retreat as soldiers do, pull back and go away to see how you can better the situation or your strategy.

You are not good in everything and you don't have to be; what is important is to keep trying. Sometimes, there is the stress and fear of failure. Sometimes, there is satisfaction and gratitude because of accomplishments. Relax. Be kind to yourself.

***You are never alone. Connect.*** In Discussion 2 (Learning is a Social Situation), we acknowledge the people who help us learn through their constructive support. Don't hesitate to approach them if you need help, if you have questions. Don't ask so as to follow what they think or say. Ask, ponder on their advice, decide, then act.

Your peers contribute a lot to your learning. Help each other be diligent and at the same time honest. There will always be classmates who can help you and classmates who you can help. Friendly, healthy competition can be motivating, but self-focused competition, that is, always wanting to outdo others and be first, will zap the life out of you.

Your teachers and classmates are your partners in the learning enterprise. Welcome these people in your life.

Be positive. Focus. Try. Connect. The more you work on these four principles, the more confident you will be as a learner, the more you will help others be more confident. Then you are set for six years of adventures (and misadventures) of learning and growing.

### **ACTIVITY 3: To Be Somebody**

Remember this: you matter. Take your rightful place in school. Grow in the confidence that this school is where you belong, that there are places in school where you are comfortable and you can be yourself. Don't mind so much the feelings of self-doubt even as they don't seem to go away. Set your sight on hopeful things yet to come. Enjoy yourself. Don't think you will one day be somebody. At present, at this time, you are somebody.

Share with us through a short piece of writing what you think it means "*to be somebody*"?

### **Wrap-Up**

We hope that as you and your classmates build a school culture of learning, you will find values, and appreciate and live them. Take control of your school's atmosphere of learning. Create a good one. Support each other, participate, help and accept help. Engage your mind and feelings in your learning. Always focus, always try, always connect. Build each other's confidence. You belong.

Values found! Proactiveness, cooperation, focus and attention. These help you and others belong.

## **MOVING FORWARD**

The world of the intellect is an inner world of ideas and thoughts. In this world, you may often be immersed in yourself, but there is always someone, some fellow learners who are with you, beside you. Sometimes, you would like to study alone; other times, you would like to study in company with others. How much you would like to engage others is up to you, but know that you are never alone and that support is there when you need it.

In Lesson 2, we will consider that you and your classmates are there for each other not only to help each other learn, but to help each other grow as persons. Your school friends will enrich your life as you enrich theirs.

There are school days that can be burdensome, but are made lighter when you know that in your school, persons matter to each other. Through the quaint qualities of sincerity and cordiality, you build belonging in and for each other.

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## LESSON 2

# *Building a School Culture of Sincerity and Cordiality*

### GETTING STARTED

#### Overview

Good relations and friendships in school are not only instrumental in your learning, more importantly, they are valuable in themselves. The different gradations of friendships are all wonderful, all are cause for being grateful, all are affirming of the richness and the vibrancy we bring to each others' lives.

Sincerity and cordiality matter: being honest with your intentions and words; showing openness to others in the way you listen and talk; being polite and showing little kindnesses; being warm and approachable. On sincerity and cordiality are built enduring and true friendships.

The intimacy of friendship is exclusive to those who partake of it. A friendship, however, should not constrain you from entering into other friendships. You are free to move in wider circles and your friend is free to move as well.

What of others, of us, when there are feelings of loneliness, of not belonging, of feeling like a stranger in a school that has nothing but coldness and indifference? We dare to reach out to others and help them belong. What magical things happen when persons belong - they relax, they learn, they become better persons.

## Objectives

*At the end of this lesson, you should be able to:*

1. Examine the human qualities of sincere and cordial persons and why these qualities make a friendship endearing and true;
2. Recognize and practice some ways to help fellow students experience belongingness in a school community.

## DISCUSSIONS AND ACTIVITIES

### Warm-Up

"Bonding" has been and still is a word that Filipinos of all ages use. *"Mag-bonding tayo."* *"Para naman makapag-bonding sila."* We use the word "bonding" to refer to going out of our usual routine and schedule to spend time with others - family, friends, classmates, teammates. We also use the word "bonding" to refer to activities where people spontaneously - not having planned to nor meant to - have become close to each other.

Family and friends do not always have a chance to spend time together. "Bonding" enables them to catch up on each other's life, to renew the ties that unite them. They "bond" by getting together, doing things together, visiting places.

After a "bonding" activity, people who do not know each other well, or who encounter each other in only one area of activity, start becoming close to each other. When classmates and teammates have bonded, they are able to work together well and harmoniously.

"Bonding" is experiencing togetherness among friendly people. "Bonding" is enjoying oneself and others in a fun, relaxed, and warm atmosphere. It is a time of feeling at ease with people. "Bonding" is to form ties of friendship, of family.



“Bonding” is humanness. It is a time of being human to humans.

*Think of the events and situations in your life when you have “bonded” with others. What does “bonding” mean to you? In your point of view, when and how does “bonding” happen? Who does one “bond” with? What purpose does it serve?*

## **DISCUSSION 1: Friendships Start with Sincerity and Cordiality**

### **Sincerity and Cordiality**

“Bonding” activities build, strengthen, and sustain friendships, but there are quieter, subtler things residing in the mind and the heart on which friendships thrive. Let’s consider the quaint, delicate things of sincerity and cordiality.

Sincere persons are honest and true to themselves. They speak what is in their hearts and minds and nothing more. They act on good intentions. They are open to others and take the time to listen. They receive and accept people as they are. You will find sincere persons to be worth your trust.

Cordial persons are polite and their politeness embody many endearing traits. Cordial persons are agreeable. They show kindness and acknowledge the kindness of others. They show warmth and affection, always in a way befitting the other person and the occasion. They are simple and not intimidating; they are approachable. People are at ease with cordial persons.

Sincere and cordial persons bring joy and cheer to the world. They are firm in their goodness and believe in other persons’ goodness as well.

Sincerity and cordiality are the warmth emanating from the heart.

## The Endearing Qualities of a True Friend

Sincerity and cordiality are not only good manners but are manifestations of the endearing qualities of a true friend.

**Knowing.** A friend knows you and shares one's life and thoughts with you. Friends know each other, accept each other, open up their feelings and thoughts to each other. A true friend knows your true self.

**Presence.** To be there is to be a true friend. A friend supports you in word and in deed. Many times, the support is an abiding, silent presence; it is not seen, you just know it's there. A true friend cares and listens to your problems. A friend gives advice but is never domineering.

**Loyalty.** A true friend is loyal when you are not around. A true friend will not make fun of you or, worse, speak ill of you behind your back. A true friend will defend you and protect your honor when others say mean things about you or make you the butt of the joke when you are not around.

A true friend is loyal, guarding the privacy and intimacy of your person. A true friend will not tell others your secrets, whether big or small. A true friend will not tell things that only you have the right to tell or that you yourself should be telling.

You and your friends will not be together all the years of your lives. Circumstances change, people move. Young people grow, enter wider circles, take on more roles, find new friends. With a loyal friend, the fondness for each other will always be there. The friendship with a loyal friend endures; it will always be special.

**Forthrightness.** A true friend is forthright with you. When others are critical about your behaviors, with just and objective reason, a true friend will be the first to directly tell you these things. Your true friend will do so not to hurt you nor to sow intrigue, but to allow you to think about these matters and to act on things as necessary.

A true friend has the courage to be honest with you especially when difficult things need to be said. Your friend will not criticize you just to be dismissive or judgmental. You will always get from a true friend an honest opinion when you ask for it. A true friend will say with kindness what may hurt. A true friend will correct you when you go off course.

A true friend will not always agree with your opinion but will always respect it. Sometimes, a true friend may not agree with your decisions and actions in life but will respect your autonomy and freedom.

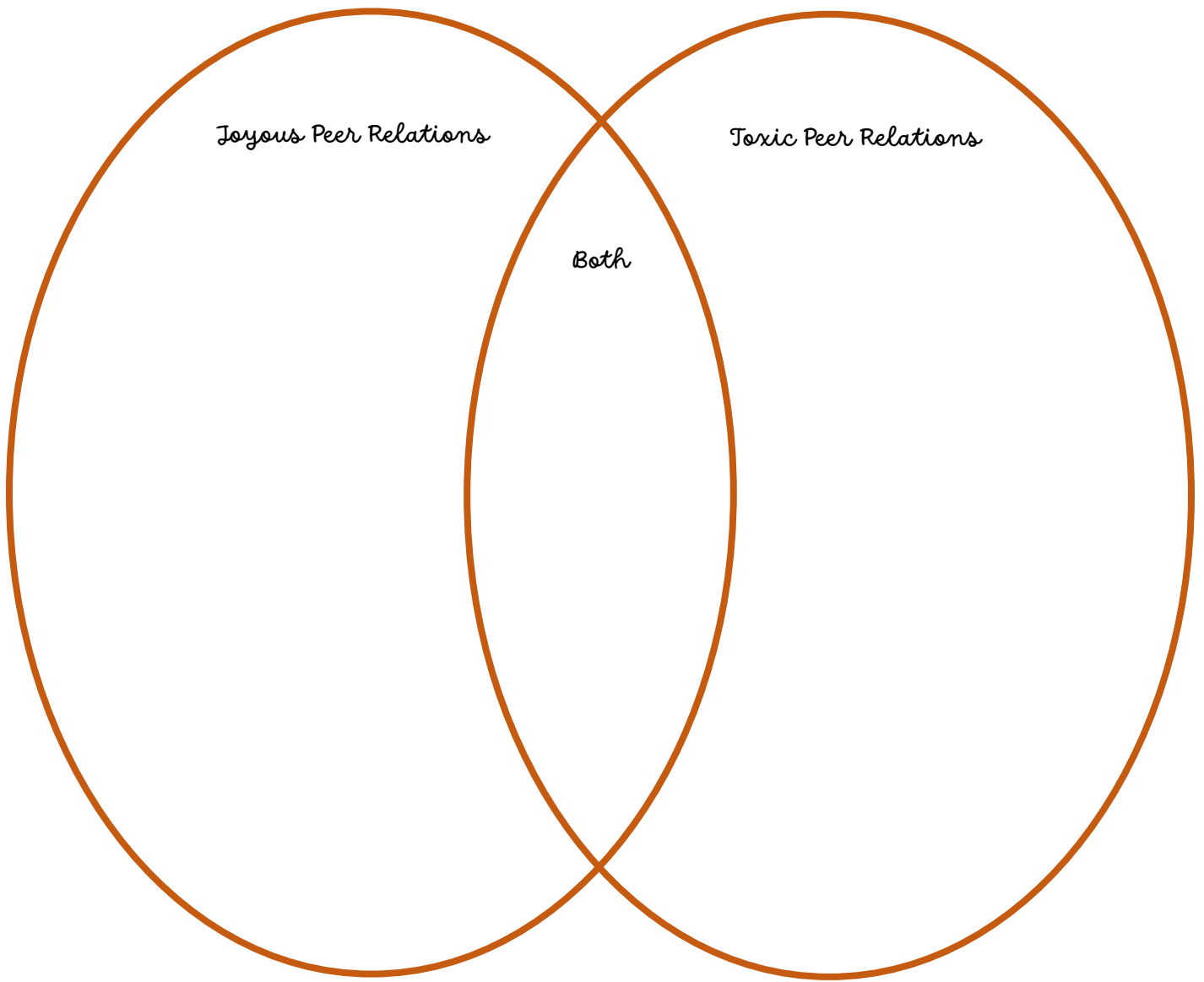
**Happiness.** People become friends because they like each other and enjoy each others' company. Friendship is happiness and this happiness is sweeter and deeper between true friends.

### **ACTIVITY 1: Peer Relations**

In your point of view, what makes a relationship among peers "joyous" and what makes it "toxic"? Define "joyous" and "toxic" as you wish. Don't you agree that there are similarities and differences between the two?

On the next page is a Venn diagrams for you to fill in.

- 1. List the unique qualities of "joyous" and "toxic" peer relations in their respective exclusive (non-intersecting) sectors. List the common qualities in their intersection.*
- 2. How does the Venn diagram help you delve into your views about friendships?*
- 3. In your opinion, why is it important to be mindful of the Venn diagrams' intersections?*



## **DISCUSSION 2: *Exclusivity in Friendships and Expanding Circles of Acquaintances***

### **Not Everyone Becomes Your Close Friend**

Not everyone in school becomes your close friend. There are many more students than there are opportunities to really get to know others. Some students will remain strangers to you because you will not have a chance to be together in a class or a school activity (students from other year levels, for example). Some students you will encounter only in a single occasion and no more. Some students you will know only from afar or will only hear about. Some students are your friendly acquaintances but you have your respective intimate circle of friends. Moreover, even though there are people you talk to regularly and even as some friendships can be easy and instantaneous, many friendships take time to build. Friendship is a process.

You are under no obligation to be a close friend to everyone nor can you demand friendship from another person. You and your fellow students have your individual preferences for and inclinations toward others becoming your friends; these, you must respect. For various reasons, it is understandable that you do not admit everyone into your intimate, private self.

### **Friendship Is Only among Friends, but....**

Friendship is particular in that you regard your friend in a special way, distinct from how you regard others. But you don't constrain your friend's other friendships. You respect the friendships that your friend has with others. Sometimes, a friend of your friend will turn out to also be your friend. Nonetheless, it is well to understand that you do not have to partake of your friend's other friendships.

Friendship is exclusive - between the two of you - but it should not be a zealously guarded, prized possession. A true friend is not jealous.

## **Being a Good Person to Others**

In the few months that you have spent in Pisay, have you gotten to know many students? Are you getting to know more of them? Are you now friends with some of your classmates? Do you get to know the students that your friends know? Do you introduce your friends to others? Do you try to engage in small talk with others and not find it a waste of time?

Do you help others and accept the help that others offer you? Do you reach out to others and acknowledge it when people reach out to you? Do you harbor no enmity toward another person? Do you let moments of irritation among classmates pass?

You and your fellow students belong to the same homeroom, or the same batch. All of you belong to the same school; this much you share with them. You can always find a common thing between you and a person - the same hometown, the same interests or hobbies, the same brand of humor, the same way of looking at things. Having some things in common enable students to feel familiar and at ease with one another. The goal is for everyone in school to feel secured.

To socialize with others is not only a matter of acquiring skills and etiquette, a set of do's and don'ts, what to say or not to say, what to do or not to do. A person's sociability is rooted in being interested in others and desiring to know them. Friendship is special and particular, but everyone can all belong. You are a good to everyone. You are open to everyone.

Earlier we said that sincerity and cordiality are qualities of a good friend; these also are qualities of a good person. Try to be a good person to others.

## **ACTIVITY 2: Narratives of Budding Friendships**

A budding friendship is a beginning, developing friendship. Often, it is a joy, it shows promise. Some budding friendships you don't expect to happen and come as a pleasant surprise.

*Write a short narrative about a budding friendship. It can be a true story or a work of fiction, a story in Pisay or elsewhere, a story about you or about another person. What ever you fancy. Whatever you are willing to share to others. Enjoy the storytelling.*

## **DISCUSSION 3: Loneliness versus Belongingness**

### **Comfort Zones**

We are in our comfort zone when we are with people we know and like, with people who like and accept us. It can be rather discomfoting to approach or talk to people who are different from us, or who we hardly know. It's discomfoting because we're not really sure what they think of us. Will they like us or will they find us strange?

Do you think you have classmates who can't find a comfort zone in Pisay, who feel they don't belong anywhere in Pisay? Think of who and where, possibly, these students are. Why do you think they feel out of place? Maybe, they are unique and different. Maybe, they are quiet and shy. Maybe, they find it hard to find classmates to be with. Or, because of a host of other things we don't know of.

### **Not to Belong Can be Rather Lonely**

Many young people want to belong and fear being excluded. Not to belong means feeling unimportant and excluded. Some get used to this feeling, some don't mind at all, but many times not to belong can be painful. Not to belong can be rather lonely. It is true that solitude is not loneliness, that one can always belong to oneself, that some people seek and relish "alone" time; but that is not what we mean here.

Everyone has a need to belong, to be acknowledged and greeted, to be sought and to be invited. To be smiled at and talked to, to receive a kind and friendly word - these little acts help a lot in fulfilling the human need to belong.

How do we regard people who don't feel they belong in the place where we belong? How much do we know them, spend time with them? We don't snob them outright but, perhaps, we are indifferent to them. They hardly cross our mind. Do we exclude them from our circle because our friends don't think much of them? Others' cold indifference can be more painful than the angry words of an enemy.

"Bonding" reaffirms our knowing that we belong to someone, to a group, to others. "Bonding" reaffirms our and our classmates' humanness. Invite classmates of yours who have not "bonded" to your "bonding". "Bonding" can be inclusive, it can be expansive.

### **Magical Things Happen When One Belongs**

A place where everyone is neighborly and gracious is a magical place. Many magical things happen when one feels one belongs. A person becomes drawn to others, dares to express oneself more, feels bighearted enough to share both the burdens and successes of others. A person experiences calm and peace, gets inspired, gains confidence. A student who has a sense of belonging can think to oneself, "Now, I can relax, I can enjoy free times, I can focus on my studies. I know things are going to be fine." A person who feels a sense of belonging in school becomes a better student, a better person.

Belongingness enriches one's person and one's life.

Earlier we said that sincerity and cordiality are qualities of a good person. These also are qualities that help others feel they belong. Good persons help others belong. Good persons make the world a less lonely place.



### **ACTIVITY 3: Loneliness on the Internet**

Young persons of today have both the physical and online social worlds to navigate. You may even be spending more time in your online than in your physical social world. In social media and messaging sites, you maintain your contacts with classmates and friends, meet new people, form new ties.

You can receive insensitive or negative messages and comments on the internet. There can be misunderstanding because you have misinterpreted a message sent out of context, or others imputed from your message an intention that you really didn't have. These misunderstandings can be magnified through series of posts made public and permanent. On the internet, you can be vulnerable, you are more exposed.

But still, in what seems to be a cold and impersonal place, you may find yourself sharing with others some intimate, personal details, or reaching out to others who have shared theirs. By sending and receiving affirming and uplifting messages, you may find yourself being more sure of yourself. The internet can be a warm, nurturing place.

*Watch the Johnny Sun's 2019 TED Talk "[You are not alone in your loneliness](#)" (11 minutes). Discuss with your classmates your reactions to this talk.*

Johnny Sun shows that sometimes it is easier to fit in a virtual community than in the physical social world. In the virtual world, one can be protected by the kindness of people one has not even seen. Would the invitation to belong that people extend to others on the internet also extend to others in the physical world?

If you have experienced the spreading of belongingness online, learn to spread it, too, face-to-face in school.

## Wrap-Up

We hope that as you and your classmates build a school of culture of sincerity and cordiality, you will find values, and appreciate and live them. Take control of your school's atmosphere of sincerity and cordiality. Be honest; be true to yourself and loyal to others. Bond with the students in your school. Keep old friends and make new ones. Reach out to that someone who feels out of place and lonely in school.

Values found! To have esteem for everyone, whether they are your friends, acquaintances, or just one of the many students in school. Being there for your friends. Spreading cheer and joy to everyone. These help you and others belong.

## MOVING FORWARD

Don't we learn things by contrasts? We learn what is by learning what is not. We learn what belonging is by touching loneliness.

Sometimes, it's enough to be a good person. To be a good person is to be sincere and cordial, to extend a welcoming gesture to a sad soul. Belonging is the story of unfolding friendships. It is not only among friends it is for everyone, it is for that sad soul.

In the next lesson, we consider belonging further as being born out of the esteem we have for one another and out of concern that no one will be harmed, no one will be left alone in the sideline.

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## LESSON 3

# Building a School Culture of Respect and Safety

## GETTING STARTED

### Overview

All students are entitled to their place in school. But how well do students regard each other, give each other their rightful place? Students will find it harder to belong when there are formidable barriers separating cliques of friends, when students do not dare cross over these barriers. Students from different backgrounds, with different personalities, who move in different circles can come together and work together. Students who do help fellow students belong.

What assurance do students have that in school they will not be placed in situations where their psyche, esteem, and well-being are injured? Students make their school unsafe for others when they judge meanly, when they give out remarks of indifference, when they are dismissive of persons. It need not be this way with you and your classmates.

In this lesson, we envision a school where students are respected regardless of who they are, where students freely interact with and work with all types of students to pursue common interests or goals, where students care enough to make sure that everyone in school is protected from ridicule, shame, and malice.

### Objectives

*At the end of this lesson, you should be able to:*

1. Appreciate the value of getting to know and reaching out to classmates who are not in your immediate circle of friends;

2. Examine how students who are different in their qualities, preferences, and opinion can work toward shared goals, respect each other, and contribute to the school being a welcoming place.

## DISCUSSIONS AND ACTIVITIES

### Warm-Up

In some co-existing circles of friends, what may be operative is the "*sila-sila, kami-kami*". Some young persons find themselves feeling like, "*Wala, parating sila-sila na lang.*"

Define and describe the principle or practice of "*sila-sila, kami-kami*".

What do you think about the following?

1. What are the things that lead young people to practice "*sila-sila, kami-kami*"?
2. What are the things that lead young people to reject the principle of "*sila-sila, kami-kami*"?
3. What do young people do to show that for them it cannot be "*sila-sila, kami-kami*"?

### DISCUSSION 1: *In-Group, Out-Group*

#### **Birds of a Feather Flock Together**

We find it easier to deal with people who are like us and think like us, people who see things and react to things as we do. We tend to stick to them.

"Birds of a feather flock together."

A group of like-minded students may find themselves to be “birds of a feather” and their other classmates to be “birds of a different feather”. It can happen that a hierarchy exists among different “flocks”. Some “flocks” readily stand out because of their shinier plume (or others see their plume as shinier). These “flocks” can be the tall, pretty, and made-up girls; popular boys whose coolness and smartness are widely talked about; neat-looking, intelligent students always landing on the honor roll and set as role models in class. A few flocks dominate while many more flocks with matted plume remain in the fringes.

Do you think it will happen that, in your six years in Pisay, the “flocks” of your batch, for the most part, will become segregated from each other, leading non-intersecting lives?

### **It's Okay to Stay Awhile**

We're not saying here that there should only be one flock of birds, one group of friends the same way that we haven't said that you have to be a close, intimate friend to everyone in school.

It is great that there are several peer groups in school: larger *barkadas*, as well as smaller, intimate circles of friends. Diverse groups reflect the richness of students' personalities and talents. They are a source of school pride, a cause for celebration, a proof that the studentry is dynamic and vibrant.

What we're saying is that groups can coexist harmoniously, that belonging to one group doesn't mean ignoring and being indifferent to others. You should be able to mingle and form ties with others outside your *barkada* without having to be judged by your *barkada* as unloyal. The borders between groups do not have to be impenetrable. Groups may keep their walls, but how good it is if they open the door to kind and friendly visitors. Why can't one stay awhile in another group? It's okay to stay awhile.

Just because your friend dislike some particular students does not oblige you to also dislike them. Just because you associate with the less popular groups does not make you uncool. Who you like and mingle

with is your choice, not your friend's. Besides, if your friend disapproves of your associations, picks a fight with you, then ostracizes you, stop and think: is this friendship worth keeping? (Caveat: You should know the underlying reason of your friend's disapproval of the others you hang out with. Is there same disturbing or grave reason why? Does your friend think that you will put your safety and welfare at risk by associating with them? Your friend may see the danger that you don't and may actually mean well. Nonetheless, your friend should communicate with you one's reservations with civility.)

### **Everyone Benefits from Cooperation**

It's not only birds of the same feather that flock together. Mixed-species flocking has been observed among different species of birds (also among species of other animals and different species of different animals). Birds of different species flock together, because they have the same needs or their needs can be supplied by the other species. By being together different species gain strength in numbers and are able to use differing, complementary abilities when protecting themselves from a common predator. Birds with different food preferences flock together; they benefit from each other's foraging techniques but do not compete with each other for food. Birds with the same diet also flock together; searching for food together, each species knows which places the other species has already foraged.

Mixed-species flocking is a good analog of cooperation among different peer groups and circles of people. You are all in Pisay to get an education. Together, you have a wide array of abilities and talents, ideas and visions, projects and initiatives. You can learn from each other, delegate tasks, trade resources and know-how, get helpful feedback. Cooperation is key. Areas of cooperation are broad and involve many people. Who you cooperate with cannot be limited only to the friends you now have. In cooperation, birds of a different feather can flock together.

Try not to spend your high school years dividing people into the in-group (those with you) and the out-group (those not with you). Learn how to work with people regardless of their group.

Try not to admit into your projects and engagements only those with the same “feather” or “species” as yours. Learn how to deal with people regardless of “feather” or “species”.

You choose who to deal with and work with. When choosing, try not to keep a narrow and exclusive outlook. Not only will you isolate yourself, you will also stunt your growth.

When you are older and move in more and wider circles, you cannot belong to only one group. You will encounter and mingle with different people, pursue plans and projects together, likely, forge friendships along the way.

Groups help groups thrive. Cooperation is the key.

### **ACTIVITY 1: Healing Powers**

Watch Michelle Kuo’s TED talk on [“The Healing Power of Reading”](#).

*“And then to ask, ‘how do we diminish the distance between us?’ ”*

*“Close the distance, a quiet universe that we can share together.”*

A deep, unlikely friendship was forged between the Asian American teacher-lawyer-writer Michelle Kuo and the African American prisoner Patrick who grew up in an impoverished town inhabited by those who did not have the wherewithal to leave it.

Michelle introduced Patrick to poetry and literature and helped Patrick discover his sensitivity to words and talent in writing. Patrick found in the craft of writing a beautiful inner life, the courage and hope to think and to live, and an endearing way to tell his young daughter he loved her.



With almost nothing in common but their shared joys in reading and writing, Michelle and Patrick had become equals, they had become friends.

## **DISCUSSION 2: Diversity and Unity**

### **Respect among Diverse Peoples**

People are not made from the same mold. They have different personalities, preferences, ways, and perspectives. Must people all be the same to get along well? Despite differences, people can learn to understand, appreciate, and support each other. People can live harmoniously with each other.

In Pisay, your batch does not need uniformity to be able to learn well, to be sincere and cordial with each other. What is needed is for all students to give respect to each and everyone regardless of physical attributes: whether tall or short, slim or stocky; academic achievements, whether honor or average students; personalities: whether introvert or extrovert, conscientious or laidback; personal qualities: whether impressive or ordinary, outgoing or shy; the family's position in the community and society, whether rich or poor, politically well-positioned or not.

It is good to be exposed to different peoples - of differing genders, intelligence and abilities, preferences and opinions, personalities and temperaments, religion and upbringing, ways of speaking and demeanor, leadership qualities, region of origin, language being spoken.

Let it be that in Pisay, among your batch, everyone matters, everyone is respected.

What is respect and how is it shown?

Respecting others start in the mind: you think well of people and esteem them. You see the goodness in them. You are not suspicious, you do not impute ill motives to their actions. Respecting others start

with good manners: you are cordial, there is no rudeness in your words and gestures.

You respect others if you are aware of, and give due consideration to, their feelings, interests, and well-being. You respect others if you choose your words carefully so they don't hurt, you pay attention to what others say, you do not disregard their contributions to groupwork, you acknowledge others' right to their opinion even as theirs is contrary to yours, you are refined in speech even as you assert your position.

You must respect people even when they rub you the wrong way, even when they are loud and arrogant. You give people room to grow. People bloom when they receive respect, when they are treated well.

Treat people well regardless of who they are.

## **What Unites Us**

Respecting diverse peoples should not be reduced to tolerating them and keeping them at a distance.

In Pisay, your batch shares the goal of getting an education. You are peers in learning. You all want to be challenged, to do well. So, there is among you the common ground of being earnest learners. There can be more if, as a batch, you all work toward being sincere and cordial with each other. Sincerity and cordiality among earnest learners are a promising beginning of professionalism, a quality that will put you in good stead.

On a bigger stage, the common ground you share with all peoples is your humanity. You do not have to be everyone's intimate friend, you will not be able to know intimately every person you encounter. What is simply asked of you is to be a decent fellow human being to others.

## **ACTIVITY 2: Wholeness of You and I**

How “whole” are you? You can think of “wholeness” of self as having and keeping your entire self, a self that’s complete, in one piece.

*Read this short article on [“Wholeness”](#).*

In the article, “wholeness” is contrasted to the “professional self”. A professional self is what you show to others in the workplace (in your case, in the classroom). You show others only what you need to show to get the work done well (or what people expect you to be as a good worker or student). For example, you show that you are level-headed and focused, but you don’t reveal the problems at home that preoccupy you.

Showing only your “professional self” in the workplace has its merits. Indeed, a big part of being professional is not letting other things in your life interfere with your delivery of work. You are able to set aside personal concerns in the meantime.

But then the article asks whether we really should be “leaving much of our selfhood”. In your case, can’t you show up in the classroom with the “wholeness” of you? There are benefits to showing and sharing your whole self with others, but there also are risks.

*After reading the article, discuss with a group of classmates the following questions:*

- 1. Do you agree that in the classroom and in school, it is good for students to show to others their whole self?*
- 2. What ground rules in the classroom and in school should be in place so students will be willing to share their “wholeness” and so that students benefit from this sharing of selves?*

## **DISCUSSION 3: *Safety and Belongingness***

### **Feeling Unsafe**

Can it happen that a classroom and the school be “unsafe spaces”?

An unsafe space is where people bully people, physically or verbally, where they are discriminated, where they can be assaulted, physically or sexually. An unsafe place is where people are judged unjustly by indifferent or uncaring people. An unsafe place is where people feel unloved or alone.

An unsafe space is where people experience harm to their psyche, their good name, their image, their very self. An unsafe space is hostile to young people’s growth toward being socially competent and confident adults.

People instinctively know when a space is unsafe. People who feel unsafe in the place where they study, work, or live will withdraw from it lest they be rejected or demeaned by others.

### **When People Grow in Safe Spaces**

People wield power over others by choosing who they will exclude. In a safe space, no one wields that power over you.

Can it happen that a classroom and the school be “safe spaces”?

A space is safe where people affirm each other’s goodness and help each other be good. People accompany each other in their search for what’s good for them.

A space is safe where the privacy and intimacy of what’s in one’s mind, heart, and person are respected and protected. People become vulnerable when they reveal their whole self. They can be at the mercy of gossipers’ idle and wicked minds and tongues.

You are a beautiful, whole package. In a safe space, you will not be pigeonholed into “categories” and be regarded solely as a categorized commodity. There is more to you, for example, than being female, male, or gay; rich or poor; disabled or whole. In a safe space, you are, first and foremost, a person.

In a safe space, people care enough to protect you from being ridiculed and shamed. They will not tolerate things or people who will transgress your self. You will not be hurt. You will not be the object of malice or ill intent.

You grow and thrive in safe spaces. In safe spaces, you can go about your day-to-day activities in peace. You can just focus on what you need and want to do. You don’t worry about others thinking or wishing ill of you, or whether you are good enough to others. Even when you fail or are not in the best condition, you know you will be okay in that safe space.

The adolescent self is a work in progress. It is beautiful, but is still raw, tentative, unfinished. The adolescent self is delicate. In safe spaces, you will be secure, you can be who you are. You have the freedom to grow.

## **Give Yourself Your Own Safe Space**

Are you safe within yourself?

Does your valuing of yourself rest on whether you are better than others? Do you value yourself only when you are noticed, liked, and admired by others? Don’t trust your judgment of yourself when it is based on comparing yourself to others. Sometimes, this judgment reveals not so much who you really are but who others are.

Seeing yourself relative to others can be good to you. You learn how others do things, you learn by emulating others. In very personal matters, however, where persons have their own particular circumstances, judging oneself in comparison to others can be damaging. You become your own harsh, unforgiving critique.

Sometimes you have to be the very first person to affirm yourself. You must be a best friend to yourself, your best advocate. Are you a good and loyal friend to yourself?

Be true to yourself, belong to yourself.

### **ACTIVITY 3: Taking Turns**

*Take turns completing these phrases into sentences:*

- 1. I feel out of place when... I feel I belong when...*
- 2. I feel afraid when.. I feel safe when...*

*From the sentences that you've formed, discuss how you think classmates should be treating classmates.*

### **Wrap-Up**

We hope that as you and your classmates build a school culture of respect and safety, you will find values, and appreciate and live them. Take control of your school's atmosphere of respect and safety. Enjoy your close friends and your *barkada* and cherish your times with them. Still, dare to venture out to work with many more of your classmates and schoolmates. Appreciate the uniqueness of peoples, the richness in their diversity. In this diversity, find and build on what unites. Let no one feel disrespected or unsafe because of what you say or do. Be safe within yourself.

Values found! Knowing that respect is not something earned, it is rightfully the possession of each and every person. Guard and protect each other's spaces, each other's person - including your own.

## MOVING FORWARD

Belongingness is a two-way. Ask yourself: do I belong? What have others done to make me feel that I belong? Then ask yourself: do others belong? What have I done to make me feel they belong?

As you grow old and come to know people more, you will acquire the sad realization that people can be indifferent and insensitive, pretentious and arrogant, grudging and vindictive. Sad to say, the world can be grim and mean. Uplift those who are at the receiving end of the line of such grimness and meanness. In the next lesson, we will consider the quality of kindheartedness and why it makes a whole lot of good for the school and for the world.

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## MODULE 4

# Kindness

### Overview of Module 4

In the previous modules, we discussed beginning an academic journey (Module 1) and exploring transitions in life (Module 2). We then delved into the theme of belongingness (Module 3), an integral aspect of familiarizing yourself with new surroundings. It's clear that fostering a sense of belonging hinges on our commitment to cultivating kindness.

Kindness is a fundamental quality that can have a significant impact on the culture of any school. By cultivating kindheartedness, students can create a positive environment where everyone feels valued and supported. In this module, we will explore three valuable lessons on *kindheartedness*. *Lesson 1* explores the power of kindness. By understanding the importance of kindness, you can create a culture of kindheartedness within your school. By developing a strong sense of kindness, you can learn to respond to the feelings of others and develop the skills to be kind and compassionate to those around you. Through this lesson, you enrich the lives of others and experience a profound transformation of your own, becoming an inspiring beacon of hope and love in an often unkind world.

*Lesson 2* tackles the power of politeness, focusing on principles of good manners and right conduct. By learning and practicing good manners, you can create an environment of respect and consideration for others and develop the skills to communicate respectfully and tactfully. Learning and practicing good manners can create a friendly and respectful school environment where everyone feels valued and appreciated.

In *Lesson 3*, we examine the power of words and actions. Kind words and empathetic actions build positive relationships with others, allowing you to create a sense of community within your school and contribute to a strong social fabric that supports and uplifts everyone. You can

promote a supportive and caring school culture among community members through kind words and actions.

This module on kindness will help students develop the skills and qualities necessary to create a positive school culture where kindness and empathy are valued. You can create a space where kindness flourishes by understanding the importance of kindness, practicing good manners, and creating a culture of kind words and actions.

### **What You Should Be Thinking About**

*In this module, you will reflect on the following essential questions:*

1. How do you think acts of kindness can influence the atmosphere in your school?
2. How might showing kindness instead of reacting negatively in challenging situations lead to a better outcome?
3. What are some polite ways to express disagreement or different opinions without disrespect?
4. What steps can we take to ensure that our school culture is one where everyone feels valued, appreciated, and uplifted?
5. How do the lessons on kindness, politeness, and the power of words and actions relate to one another? How can they work together to create a positive school culture?
6. How might we consistently encourage and support each other in practicing kindness, politeness, and empathy?

### **At a Glance**

**Lesson 1** *The Power of Kindness: Unravelling Empathy and Compassion*

**Lesson 2** *The Power of Politeness: The Art of Good Manners and Right Conduct*

**Lesson 3** *The Power of Words and Actions: Nurturing a Culture of Kindness*

## Lesson 1

# The Power of Kindness: Unraveling Empathy and Compassion

## GETTING STARTED

### Overview

In a world where kindness often takes a backseat to self-interest and is viewed as “*plastic*,” you sometimes feel you are the lone voice in the wilderness. In this lesson, we will explore the nature of kindness to understand it better and practice it in our everyday lives.

In Discussion 1, *Knowing Kindness*, we will explore the science of kindness and will uncover fascinating research that shows how acts of kindness trigger the release of “feel-good” and “helper’s-high” chemicals in our brains, such as dopamine and oxytocin. These chemicals boost our mood and reduce stress and anxiety, making us feel happier and more connected to others.

In Discussion 2, *Understanding Kindness*, you will learn that kindness enables us to step into the shoes of others and experience their emotions. It involves not only recognizing and understanding the feelings of others but also actively responding with care and compassion. Empathy empowers us to forge meaningful connections, build trust, and create a supportive environment where everyone feels seen, heard, and valued.

In Discussion 3, *Practicing Kindness*, we will explore strategies and techniques that enable you to develop and hone this kindness. These include active listening, perspective-taking exercises, engaging in dialogue, and seeking to understand diverse viewpoints. You will gain practical insights into how kindness turns into kindheartedness through engaging activities and reflections.

All the lessons aim at encouraging acts of kindness. As you develop a heightened sense of kindness, you will naturally feel compelled to extend a helping hand, provide support, and demonstrate compassion. By highlighting the power of small acts of kindness, you will foster a culture where acts of empathy and kindness become ingrained in your everyday interactions, creating a positive ripple effect throughout the school community.

## Objectives

*At the end of the lesson, the student should be able to:*

1. Develop a deeper understanding of kindness, helping them recognize and experience the emotions of others;
2. Cultivate a culture of kindness that extends beyond the classroom, promoting acts of kindness throughout the school community.

## DISCUSSIONS AND ACTIVITIES

### Warm-Up

#### **Compliment Circle**

You sit in a circle and take turns complimenting the person on your right. *Compliment Circle* warm-up is a way to practice and express kindness through specific and meaningful compliments. Remember that we did an *Appreciation Circle* in Module 1 (Beginnings), showing appreciation for the people around us as we navigate changes in our transition. This time, we aim to share kindness to build a supportive atmosphere within the class.

Be specific in your compliments and avoid general statements like "you're nice." You can always say something more than that. Focus on pointing out specific qualities, actions, or achievements you genuinely admire or appreciate about your classmate. For instance, you can say, "I

*compliment you on how you always listen attentively during class discussions and offer insightful contributions. It shows your dedication and intellectual curiosity."* Encourage the receiver of the compliment to actively listen and express gratitude by saying "thank you" or responding with a kind gesture. Be sincere. Don't flatter. You can have at most 10 seconds per compliment.

## **DISCUSSION 1: Knowing Kindness**

Why are some people kind? Why is it easy for them to show kindness? Are they born kind? Is there a science to kindness? Let's try to answer these questions by watching these two videos: [The Science of Kindness](#) and Simon Sinek's [The Scientific Power of Kindness](#).

### **The Neuroscience of Kindness**

The two videos have shown that acts of kindness, whether spontaneous or intentional, profoundly impact our brains and overall well-being. The release of positive neurotransmitters like dopamine, serotonin, endorphins, and oxytocin creates what is commonly known as the "helper's high." This rush of feel-good chemicals benefits not only the giver and receiver of kindness but also anyone who witnesses the act of kindness.

### **The Science of the "Helper's High"**

Understanding the chemistry behind kindness helps us comprehend why these acts make us feel good. The activation of dopamine receptors in our brains, when we help others, mirrors the sensation of receiving rewards. While the effects are short-lived, the regular practice of intentional kindness can lead to lasting changes in our brain chemistry (Noon, 2022). Cultivating a habit of intentional kindness can significantly impact our mental and physical health. Regular acts of kindness have been linked to reduced pain, stress, depression, anxiety, and lower blood pressure. By being kind, we become healthier and experience increased well-being (Boulter et al., 2023).

Our *vagus* nerve, known as the "*rest and digest*" system, is crucial in causing positive connections (Gilbert, 2020). Acts of kindness activate this nerve, slowing our heart rate and reducing inflammation.

Strengthening connections through kindness can improve overall health and increase our chances of living longer, happier lives.

The neuroscience of kindness reveals that acts of compassion make us feel good now and have far-reaching effects on our mental and physical well-being. By nurturing a culture of intentional kindness in our lives and teaching future generations the value of compassion, we can build a world where the "*Helper's High*" becomes a way of life.

### **ACTIVITY 1: "What Would You Do?" Scenario Game**

Given the following scenarios, how would you show *kindness*?

1. What would you do if you saw someone crying alone in the hallway?

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2. What would you do if a student is new to the school and needs help finding their way around?

---

3. What would you do if you witnessed a family member having a difficult day?

---

4. What would you do if you noticed a classmate sitting alone at lunch?

---

5. What would you do if you saw a teacher or staff member looking stressed or overwhelmed?
- 

## **DISCUSSION 2: Understanding Kindness: Wired to Be Kind**

Kindness forms the foundation of strong, meaningful relationships. But are we wired to be kind? The answer: [We Are Built To Be Kind](#). This discussion will deepen your understanding of kindness and explore the different opportunities to be kind to others. By discussing specific behaviors such as offering a helping hand, being considerate of others' feelings, apologizing when making mistakes, refraining from gossip, and standing up for others, we will understand the value of being kind in your daily lives. Here are the opportunities to display kindness:

- *Offering a helping hand to others in need.* Extend a helping hand to others when they are in need. Whether offering a listening ear, lending a helping hand, or volunteering our time, these acts of kindness inspire others to do the same. Moreover, helping others boosts your well-being, allowing you to experience the joy and fulfillment of making a positive difference in someone else's life.
- *Being considerate of others' feelings.* We foster healthier relationships and stronger connections by actively listening, showing empathy, and considering the impact of our words and actions. Being considerate benefits others and enhances our emotional intelligence and communication skills, leading to more meaningful and fulfilling interactions.
- *Apologizing when you make a mistake.* Recognizing and admitting our mistakes is an admirable behavior. When we apologize sincerely, we show humility, respect, and a willingness to make amends. Apologizing demonstrates our understanding of our actions' impact on others and our commitment to growth and learning.

- *Refraining from gossiping or speaking ill of others.* Engaging in gossip or spreading negativity can be harmful and undermine the trust and respect within a community. We promote a culture of kindness, trust, and fairness by consciously avoiding gossip and negative talk.
- *Standing up for someone who is being treated unfairly.* By advocating for those who are marginalized, bullied, or facing injustice, we promote a culture of equality, compassion, and empathy. Taking a stand against unfair treatment sends a clear message that we value and respect the dignity of every individual.

Practicing acts of kindness and courtesy not only benefits others but also enriches our own lives. By offering a helping hand, being considerate of others' feelings, apologizing when we make mistakes, refraining from gossip, and standing up for others, we create a culture of respect, empathy, and fairness. Through these behaviors, we cultivate meaningful connections, strengthen relationships, and contribute to a more compassionate and harmonious community.

### **ACTIVITY 2: Time for Reflection: Stepping on Someone Else's Shoes**

Here are situations where you are asked to step into someone else's shoes and take your perspective. Think deeply about the emotions, thoughts, and experiences of the persons involved, encouraging understanding, and compassion in their reflections. Write your thoughts in your journal.

1. A student has recently moved to a new school. Reflect on their challenges in making new friends, adjusting to a different environment, or dealing with academic expectations.
2. A student is struggling with a learning disability. Consider the frustrations, self-doubt, or the additional effort and perseverance required to overcome obstacles and succeed academically.



3. A student has recently lost a loved one. Explore the grief, sadness, and loneliness they may be experiencing and reflect on how their life might be impacted and the challenges they might face in coping with their loss.
4. A student comes from a low-income background. Imagine the financial constraints and limited resources they may encounter. Reflect on the potential feelings of stress, pressure, or the need to overcome societal stereotypes.
5. A student who is experiencing bullying or discrimination. Consider the emotions of fear, sadness, anger, or isolation they may feel. Reflect on how such experiences can impact their self-esteem, mental well-being, and overall sense of belonging.

### ***DISCUSSION 3: Practicing Kindness! Promoting Kindness in the Digital Age***

In today's digital age, technology has become integral to our lives, influencing how we communicate and interact with others. However, it has also brought about unique challenges and opportunities for promoting kindness. In this discussion, let's explore how we can harness the power of technology and promote kindness in our digital interactions. How can we spread kindness in the digital age?

#### **The Impact of Digital Interactions**

How does technology affect our ability to connect with others more deeply? How can it sometimes lead to misunderstandings or conflicts? In today's interconnected world, digital interactions have become a significant part of our lives. It is essential to examine how these interactions impact our well-being and relationships.

Digital interactions offer convenience and ease of communication but can sometimes lead to shallow connections. Technology like social media and instant messaging often encourages surface-level interactions

focused on brief updates or reactions. This may hinder our ability to form deep, meaningful relationships and connections.

The constant stream of curated content on social media can contribute to *Fear of Missing Out* (FOMO) and a sense of comparison. Scrolling through social media feeds can create a distorted perception of others' lives, leading to feelings of inadequacy or envy. Excessive digital consumption can affect self-esteem, relationships, and overall well-being. Digital interactions can also give rise to cyberbullying and online harassment, significantly impacting individuals' mental and emotional well-being.

While digital interactions can present challenges, they also provide opportunities for connection and empathy. Digital platforms can facilitate meaningful connections and provide support during difficult times. Online communities rally together to spread kindness and support those in need. By being aware of the limitations of digital interactions and actively working towards deeper connections, empathetic communication, and combating cyberbullying, we can mitigate the negative impacts and promote a healthier digital environment.

### **Practicing Digital Kindness**

The digital age presents us with both challenges and opportunities when it comes to promoting kindness. By acknowledging the impact of digital interactions, combating negativity and cyberbullying, practicing digital kindness, utilizing social media for positivity, and balancing online and offline interactions, we can create a culture of kindness in the digital world. As responsible digital citizens, it is essential to spread kindness online, making the digital age a space where empathy, respect, and compassion thrive.

Our digital connections should not replace genuine human connections. Face-to-face interactions, empathy, and active listening are important in fostering kindness. We should find a healthy balance between our digital lives and the real world.

We need to practice politeness and kindness in online interactions. Using appropriate language, refraining from cyberbullying, and treating others with respect and empathy in digital spaces should be widely practiced. Engaging in meaningful conversations, supporting others in digital communities, and being mindful of others' feelings in virtual environments is important.

### **ACTIVITY 3: Digital Kindness Pledge**

Formulate your digital kindness pledge by setting clear and actionable goals. Write down specific actions or behaviors you commit to practicing in your online interactions. Ensure that your goals are realistic and achievable. Make your pledge specific and positive. Instead of focusing on what you won't do, frame your commitments in a positive manner. For example, rather than saying *"I won't engage in cyberbullying,"* say *"I will use kind and respectful language when interacting with others online."*

Your digital kindness pledge is a personal commitment to fostering a positive and respectful online environment. By staying true to your pledge, you can make the digital world a kinder and more inclusive place.

#### **Digital Kindness Pledge:**

I, [Your Name], commit to practicing digital kindness online. I pledge to:

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## Wrap-Up

Here are some heartwarming quotes on kindness:

- No act of kindness, no matter how small, is ever wasted. - *Aesop*
- Kindness is a language that the deaf can hear and the blind can see. - *Mark Twain*
- "Be kind, for everyone you meet is fighting a battle you know nothing about." - *unknown*
- "Kindness is the thread that connects hearts, heals wounds, and brings joy to the world." - *unknown*
- Be kind. Always." - *Brad Meltzer*

These quotes remind us of kindness's power and importance in our lives. Let them inspire you to spread kindness

## MOVING FORWARD

Our discussion taught us that kindness is a powerful force that can shape our lives and the world around us. We can create a more compassionate and inclusive society by embracing kindness as the new cool, spreading kindness through simple acts and genuine connections, and promoting kindness in the digital age. Let us remember that kindness is not just a trend but a timeless virtue that can transform lives and make a lasting impact. Together, we will work towards creating a school community that thrives on kindness. As we move forward, let kindness guide our actions, interactions, and choices, making the world better for everyone.

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We are Built to be Kind from

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## Lesson 2

# The Power of Politeness: The Art of Good Manners and Right Conduct

### GETTING STARTED

#### Overview

As we find ourselves bombarded by a ceaseless barrage of intrusions - from spam messages infiltrating our inboxes to strangers encroaching upon our personal space in crowded public transport - it begs the question: Has the moral landscape of modern etiquette shifted? Has the world always been this way, or are we witnessing a gradual deterioration of our collective decorum? Do the individuals around us harbor the same frustrations toward us as we do towards them? Amidst this chaotic backdrop, let us strive for a revival of good manners, politeness may seem like a small and inconsequential act, but its impact reaches far beyond mere manners. Politeness embodies respect, consideration, and empathy toward others. We appreciate one another's presence and worth when we interact politely.

*Rocking Self-Control: Acing Your Behavior Game* explores the importance of behavior and conduct in our interactions with others. We delve into the significance of positive behavior, respect, and self-control. By understanding the impact of our actions and words, we can cultivate an environment of mutual respect and consideration. Through practical tips and insights, we aim to empower individuals to navigate social situations with grace, making choices that reflect their best selves.

In *Watch Your Manners: Polishing Your Social Skill*, we delve into the art of good manners and social skills. We recognize that manners go beyond simple etiquette; they are the building blocks of positive and meaningful connections. From basic courtesies to active listening and empathetic communication, we explore the essential elements of polite and respectful interactions. By honing these social skills, individuals can

confidently navigate various social settings, fostering stronger relationships and leaving a lasting positive impression.

*Busting the Bullying Blues: Taking a Stand* confronts the issue of bullying and its impact on individuals and communities. It aims to empower grade 7 students to recognize, address, and prevent bullying. Students can become active agents of change in their school and community by deepening their understanding of bullying, recognizing its impact, and developing strategies to address it.

## **Objectives**

*At the end of the lesson, the student should be able to:*

1. Develop a deeper understanding of the importance of good manners and right conduct in building positive relationships and creating a respectful and inclusive school environment.
2. Learn and practice practical skills and techniques for exhibiting good manners and right conduct in various social situations, including greetings, introductions, conversations, and conflict resolution.

## **DISCUSSIONS AND ACTIVITIES**

### **Warm-Up**

#### **Good Manners Warm-up Quiz**

You will answer this 7-item warm-up multiple-type quiz that will test your knowledge of good manners and right conduct in school.

1. What should you say when you enter a classroom?
  - a. Nothing.
  - b. Hello!
  - c. Good morning/afternoon.

2. How should you behave when a teacher is speaking?
  - a. Talk to your seatmate.
  - b. Raise your hand if you have a question.
  - c. Interrupt the teacher if you have something to say.
3. What should you do if you need to leave class early?
  - a. Just leave.
  - b. Raise your hand and ask for permission.
  - c. Wait until the class is over.
4. How should you behave during class discussions?
  - a. Don't participate.
  - b. Listen attentively and contribute to the discussion.
  - c. Talk over your classmates.
5. What should you do if you finish your work early?
  - a. Wait for the teacher to give you more work.
  - b. Read a book or work on something else quietly.
  - c. Get up and leave the classroom.
6. What should you do if you're absent from school?
  - a. Forget about it and catch up later.
  - b. Check in with your teacher and classmates to get caught up on missed work.
  - c. Don't worry about it and hope you didn't miss anything important.
7. What should you do if you see someone being bullied or mistreated?
  - a. Ignore it and mind your own business.
  - b. Join in and make fun of the person too.
  - c. Report it to a teacher or trusted adult.

### **DISCUSSION 1: *Maxing Your Behavior Game***

Hey there, 7th graders! How do you ace your manners game? Welcome to the ultimate guide on good manners and right conduct - the



secret weapon to rocking your social life with style! 😎 You might wonder, "Why should I bother with manners?" Well, let me tell you, it's not just about impressing your teachers or parents; it's about leveling up your cool factor and positively impacting the world! Here are some basic manners makeover:

- *The Magical "P" Word: Politeness!* ✨ Picture this: you walk into a room, flash a dazzling smile, and say "please" and "thank you" like a pro. Bam! Instant charm! Politeness is like a magical wand that opens doors and wins hearts. Whether you're asking for the last slice of pizza or seeking help with homework, a sprinkle of politeness will take you places!
- *The Dance of "Excuse Me"* 😊: "Excuse me" is the dance move you need! When you need to pass or want to speak, "excuse me" is the charm to unleash. It ensures you glide through any situation with grace and politeness!
- *The Charm Against Interrupting* 😊 🙅: Ah, resist the temptation to interrupt others' spells of speech. Let them finish their incantations, and then it's your turn to weave your magic. This charm creates a harmony of conversation that's delightful to all!
- *The Enchanting "I'm Sorry"*: 😊 We all make mistakes; it's part of our magical journey. But fear not, for the enchanted words "I'm sorry" possess the power to mend any mishap. A sincere apology is a potent spell that brings peace and forgiveness!
- *The Art of the "Ear Emoji"*: 🙄 Picture this - you're talking to your bestie about your grand adventures, but she's texting the entire time. Not cool, right? Show your superpower listening skills by giving your full attention to others. Listening is a superpower! Being genuinely interested in what others have to say shows you care and are totally tuned in. Put on your "ear emoji" and hear people out. It's like giving them a virtual high-five for their thoughts and feelings!

- *Disarming Handshakes and High-Fives* 🤝👐 Mastering handshakes and high-fives is like having a secret handshake club. Whether meeting new people or celebrating victories, a confident, friendly handshake or high-five sets the tone for awesome interactions! When you meet someone new, offer your hand with confidence and enthusiasm - but not too tight, we don't want to cast a spell of discomfort.
- *The Jedi Mind Trick: Empathy* 🌀 Step into someone else's shoes and become a Jedi master of empathy! Understanding how others feel helps you be a super supportive friend and avoids those awkward moments when you accidentally crush someone's dreams with a careless comment. #NoMoreFootInMouth
- *Dealing with Villains (read: bullies)* 😈: Sometimes, we encounter real-life villains who try to bring us down. But fear not! Stand tall, speak up for yourself and others, and remember, you're stronger than any evil plot they throw your way!
- *The Secret Identity of Table Manners* 🍴🔮: The dining table is like a secret lair for good manners. Elbows off the table, chew with your mouth closed, and be a food ninja! Mastering table manners is your secret identity to impress grown-ups.

Let me present to you situations where you can max your behavior game.

1. *Situation*: Someone accidentally spills their drink on your new shirt at a social gathering.  
*Initial outburst*: Surprised and shocked, you make a scene and shout at the person for ruining your OOTD.  
*Try this instead*: Stay calm and composed. Instead of getting angry or upset, graciously accept their apology and reassure them that accidents happen. Show empathy and understanding, letting them know that it's not a big deal and that you appreciate their concern.

2. *Situation:* A classmate consistently takes credit for your ideas during group meetings.  
*Initial outburst:* You get annoyed and disappointed that you demanded fair recognition to address the situation.  
*Try this instead:* Take a proactive approach. Schedule a private conversation instead of confronting the classmate publicly or harboring resentment. Assertively express your concerns, emphasizing the importance of fair recognition. Propose a collaborative approach to ensure everyone's contributions are acknowledged and valued.
3. *Situation:* Someone repeatedly bumps into you in a crowded public transport setting without apologizing.  
*Initial outburst:* You acted aggressively and demanded that the person apologize publicly.  
*Try this instead:* Practice patience and understanding. Instead of reacting with frustration or aggression, recognize that the crowded environment can make navigation challenging. Politely address the situation by saying, "Excuse me, I understand it's crowded, but could you please be mindful of your movements? Thank you."  
Maintain a calm demeanor and focus on promoting mutual respect.
4. *Situation:* Someone repeatedly interrupts and talks over you during a group discussion or meeting.  
*Initial outburst:* Feeling undermined at the constant interruptions, you confronted the person angrily and said, "Hey, you've been interrupting me all the time. Why, do you think you know it all?"  
*Try this instead:* Stay composed and assertive. Address the issue politely but firmly. Wait for a pause in the conversation and calmly state that you would appreciate speaking without interruption. If the interruptions persist, consider discussing the matter privately with the person to ensure everyone has a fair chance to contribute.
5. *Situation:* You witness someone being verbally harassed in a public setting.  
*Initial outburst:* Ignore the situation; it doesn't affect you anyway.  
*Try this instead:* Stand up against injustice. Instead of turning a blind eye, approach the situation with empathy and a commitment

to creating a safe environment. Assess the situation and, if appropriate and safe to do so, intervene by calmly addressing the harasser, offering support to the victim, or seeking assistance from authorities or nearby individuals.

It is important to approach challenging situations with empathy, respect, and assertiveness to resolve conflicts and maintain positive interactions. By mastering the art of good conduct, we can improve our lives and positively impact the world around us. Let's commit to rocking our behavior game and making a positive difference in the lives of those around us.

### **ACTIVITY 1: Gauging Your Good Manners: What Would You Do?**

Let us explore practical ways to practice good conduct daily by knowing how to be respectful to others, communicate effectively, and show kindness and empathy.

1. *Situation:* Imagine waiting patiently in a long line to purchase movie tickets when a well-dressed person suddenly cuts in front of you.  
*Initial Reaction:* I will instantly get angry. I have been waiting for hours, and nobody dares cut me in line!

*Try this instead:*

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2. *Situation:* You receive a text message containing rude or offensive language from a classmate.

*Initial Reaction:* Shock or anger. You may feel insulted or disrespected by the tone of the email.

*Try this instead:*

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3. Situation: A friend consistently cancels plans at the last minute without providing a valid reason.

*Initial Reaction:* Disappointment and frustration. You may feel let down by your friend's lack of consideration.

*Try this instead:*

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4. *Situation:* You witness someone being treated unfairly or discriminated against based on their race, gender, or any other characteristic.

*Initial Reaction:* You are shocked, angry and sad. You may feel a strong emotional response to the injustice unfolding before you.

*Try this instead:*

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5. Situation: You've been waiting to be served at a busy restaurant for a long time, but the waitstaff seems to ignore you.

*Initial Reaction:* You are frustrated, irritated, and annoyed. You may want to make a scene and shout at the manager for being ignored.

*Try this instead:*

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6. Situation: You discover that a classmate has been spreading false rumors or gossip about you behind your back.

*Initial Reaction:* Feelings of hurt, betrayal, and anger. You will confront your friend with your emotions running high for betraying you. You may feel shocked and wonder why your friend would do such a thing.

*Try this instead:*

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7. Situation: You lend a valuable item to a classmate, but they return it damaged or in a worse condition than before.

*Initial Reaction:* Feelings of frustration, disappointment, and even anger. You might feel upset that your prized possession was not taken care of as you had expected.

*Try this instead:*

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After completing the quiz, your teacher will discuss the correct answers and provide additional explanations and examples to reinforce the importance of good manners and right conduct in and outside school.

## **DISCUSSION 2: Watch Your Manners: Polishing Your Social Skills**

In today's world, having good manners and social skills are essential qualities that can open doors to success. This discussion will help you polish your social skills and etiquette by giving you the tools and techniques to navigate social situations gracefully and confidently. So, watch your manner:

- *Holding the door:* Students should be encouraged to open the door for others, especially when someone is behind them. This small act of kindness shows consideration and respect for others.
- *Using polite words:* Students should be aware of using polite words and phrases in everyday interactions. This includes saying "please," "thank you," "excuse me," and "sorry" when appropriate. Using polite language demonstrates respect and consideration for others' feelings.
- *Offering assistance:* Students should be encouraged to offer help to those in need. Whether it's carrying someone's books, assisting a classmate with a task, or helping a teacher with a task, these acts of kindness show empathy and willingness to lend a hand.
- *Be punctual:* Value other people's time by being punctual. Arrive on time for meetings, appointments, and social engagements. If

unforeseen circumstances cause a delay, inform others promptly and apologize for the inconvenience caused.

- *Practice active listening:* Be present and engaged in conversations. Show genuine interest in what others have to say. Listen actively, ask questions, and provide thoughtful responses. Avoid distractions such as mobile phones and other devices that may hinder your ability to listen attentively.
- *Respecting others' opinions:* Students should learn to listen to and respect others' opinions, even if they differ from their own. They should practice active and attentive listening, refrain from interrupting, and engage in constructive conversations that promote understanding and empathy.
- *Being inclusive:* Students should try to include others in their activities and conversations. They should be mindful of those feeling left out and try to involve them. By being inclusive, students foster a sense of belonging and create a welcoming environment.
- *Giving sincere compliments:* Students should understand the power of compliments and practice giving genuine compliments to their peers. Compliments should focus on specific qualities or actions, and they can help boost others' self-esteem and foster positive relationships.
- *Practice Digital Etiquette:* Show respect and consideration when communicating online. Use proper grammar and language, avoid excessive capital letters (which can be interpreted as shouting), and refrain from offensive or derogatory language. Think before posting or commenting, considering the potential impact of your words.
- *Respecting personal belongings:* Students should respect others' personal belongings and ask for permission before using or borrowing them. They should understand the importance of taking care of shared resources and returning borrowed items promptly.

- *Respecting personal boundaries:* Students should understand the importance of respecting personal boundaries. They should ask for permission before touching or hugging others and be mindful of personal space. Avoid standing too close, especially in crowded areas. Be aware of cultural differences in personal space preferences and adjust your behavior accordingly. Respecting boundaries shows respect for others' comfort and autonomy.

It is important to remember that good manners and social skills are not just about following rules and conventions. They are about cultivating empathy, kindness, and respect for others. Treating others with consideration and compassion can build strong relationships and establish a positive reputation that will serve you well throughout your life.

### **ACTIVITY 2: Manners Makeover**

Here are real-life social situations where you would like to improve your manners and right conduct. Plan how you will improve your manners in this situation, including specific actions and strategies you will use.

1. Situation: *Communicating with a difficult family member.* Your cousin often makes critical comments and belittles you during family gatherings. You want to improve your manners and conduct when interacting with them. *What would you do?*

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2. Situation: *Being more polite to a teacher.* You often speak rudely or show a lack of respect towards one of your teachers. You want to improve your manners and conduct in this specific classroom setting. *What would you do?*



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3. Situation: *Practicing good sportsmanship in competitive activities.* You participate in a competitive sports team and have noticed instances where you or your teammates displayed poor sportsmanship, such as belittling opponents through disrespectful gestures and engaging in unsportsmanlike celebrations after scoring or winning. You want to improve your manners and conduct during games and practices. *What would you do?*

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4. Situation: *Enhancing table manners during lunchtime.* During lunch breaks, you notice that your table manners could use improvement, as you are talking with food in your mouth, elbows on the table, reaching across others, and double-dipping. You want to practice better manners and conduct while eating with your classmates. *What would you do?*

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5. Situation: *Showing respect for personal space in crowded areas.* You often find yourself in crowded areas, such as hallways or public transportation, where people's personal space is invaded, such as pushing or shoving, blocking pathways in high-traffic areas, or taking up excessive space across seats or tables. You want to be more mindful and respectful of others in these situations. *What would you do?*

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### **DISCUSSION 3: *Busting the Bullying Blues: Taking a Stand***

Let's talk about bullying, dear 7<sup>th</sup> graders. It is a not-so-fun issue, but you need to know it to learn how to stand tall and strong against it! You must defeat the bullying blues and create a safe and supportive community for everyone, for you have the power to shed light on this issue and create a brighter, kinder world. Get ready to take a stand against bullying – let's bust those blues!

#### **Understanding Bullying**

Bullying is when someone picks on others, tries to make them feel small, or acts like the playground's big, bad boss. It is the repetitive and intentional use of power to harm or control others physically, verbally, or emotionally (Berger & Caravita, 2016). They will explore different forms of bullying, such as physical aggression, verbal insults, social exclusion, and cyberbullying. The signs of bullying include aggression, exclusion, and intimidation.

#### **Recognizing the Impact of Bullying**

Just imagine the profound impact bullying can have on individuals' mental, emotional, and physical well-being. They will explore the consequences that victims may experience, including lowered self-esteem, anxiety, depression, academic decline, and social isolation. By empathizing with the experiences of those who have been bullied, you will develop a stronger motivation to take a stand against such behavior.

#### **Busting the Bullies**

Taking a stand against bullying requires empathy and respect among students. Here, you will learn the importance of treating others with kindness and understanding their feelings and experiences. This understanding will enable you to develop a supportive and inclusive mindset, where everyone is treated with respect (Steer et al., 2020). Let's have practical strategies to address bullying and learn how to intervene safely and effectively when witnessing bullying.

- *Wear the invisible empathy glasses!* Imagine empathy as a superhero's secret power. It's like wearing invisible glasses that help you see the world through others' eyes. By understanding how others feel, you can connect deeper and spread kindness everywhere.
- *Be a Bystander Champion!* When you see bullying happening, it's like witnessing a real-life superhero movie - you get to be the hero! Be a bystander champion and stand up for the person being mistreated. A simple act of kindness can change the course of someone's day - or even their life!
- *Use the Power of Words.* Words are like magical spells - they can hurt or heal. So, let's choose our words wisely and sprinkle them with kindness. Compliments, encouragement, and positivity can create an enchanting world of compassion!
- *Be cyber superheroes.* The internet can be a wild ride, like a rollercoaster with twists and turns. But remember, what we do online affects real people. Let's be cyber superheroes by spreading positivity, not rumors or negativity!
- *Reach out:* A strong support system is like a safety net - it catches us when we stumble. Build a circle of trust with friends, teachers, or family who have your back, and be there for them too. The power of collective action can prevent and reduce bullying incidents.
- *Speak out.* If you're a bullying target, it takes courage to speak up. If you won't, the bullies will forever threaten you for you are viewed as an easy target.
- *Stand up.* Promote a culture of upstanders. You need to stand up for others who may be targeted. Be an upstander rather than a bystander. You will learn that taking a stand against bullying can create a culture of empathy, kindness, and respect.

So, 7th graders, remember this: you have the power to be kind, empathetic, and supportive. Stand tall against bullying and create a world where everyone feels safe, valued, and loved.

### **ACTIVITY 3: Role-playing Scenarios**

Divide students into pairs and have them act out scenarios in which one student is being bullied, and the other is either the bystander or the one who intervenes. Allow students to practice different ways of standing up to the bully, such as using assertive communication or seeking help from a teacher or other authority figure.

1. *Verbal bullying*: A student is constantly teased and insulted by their classmates because of their appearance.
2. *Social exclusion*: A student is consistently left out and isolated by their peers during group activities and lunchtime.
3. *Cyberbullying*: A student receives hurtful and demeaning messages on social media, targeting their personal life.
4. *Physical bullying*: A student is repeatedly pushed and shoved by a group of classmates in the school hallway.

Conclude the activity by emphasizing each student's role in creating a safe and supportive environment and encouraging them to be active upstanders against bullying. This activity allows students to step into the shoes of someone who has been bullied, promoting empathy and understanding.

### **Wrap-Up**

The power of politeness highlights different aspects of how politeness can positively influence our behavior, social skills, and our ability to combat bullying. By acing our behavior game, polishing our social skills, and taking a stand against bullying, we can create an

environment where respect, empathy, and kindness thrive. Through these discussions, we hope you have been inspired to embrace the power of politeness and make a difference in their interactions, relationships, and communities.

## MOVING FORWARD

As we move forward, we explore the *Power of Words and Actions* in nurturing a culture of kindness. *The* power of words and actions inspires us to envision a kinder world – a world where empathy, compassion, and understanding prevail. They motivate us to actively shape such a world by embodying kindness daily. Kind words and actions evoke positive emotions, fostering a sense of joy, empathy, and connectedness. Experiencing these emotions motivates us to share them with others, propelling us to be kind in return.

All that and more, in the next lesson.

## LEARNING RESOURCES

Berger, C., & Caravita, S. C. S. (2016). Why do early adolescents bully? Exploring the influence of prestige norms on social and psychological motives to bully. *Journal of Adolescence*, 46, 45-56. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.adolescence.2015.10.020>

Steer, O. L., Betts, L. R., Baguley, T., & Binder, J. F. (2020). "I feel like everyone does it"- adolescents' perceptions and awareness of the association between humour, banter, and cyberbullying. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 108, 106297. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2020.106297>

## Lesson 3

# The Power of Words and Actions: Nurturing a Culture of Kindness

## GETTING STARTED

### Overview

The power of words and actions extends far beyond mere expressions and gestures; they have the ability to shape our lives and the lives of those around us. Uplifting, inspiring, and heart-warming, they profoundly impact people's emotions and overall well-being. When harnessed to maintain and sustain kindness, words and actions become potent in nurturing relationships and cultivating compassion.

In this lesson, we explore how the artful selection of words and the weight of thoughtful deeds can perpetuate a world where kindness thrives and empathy flourishes. We need to normalize kindness—infusing it into every facet of our lives. Our mission is clear: cultivating a world where kindness is the norm and compassion knows no bounds.

Be inspired; kindness knows no boundaries, and its currency holds infinite value.

### Objectives

*At the end of the lesson, you should be able to:*

1. Promote empathetic communication by creating a culture where active listening, validation, and empathy become integral to communication, fostering deeper connections and nurturing kindness in relationships.

2. Cultivate a culture of positive affirmation and appreciation through words and actions by offering encouragement and support.

## DISCUSSIONS AND ACTIVITIES

### Warm-Up

#### The Power of Words

Words are a potent tool in maintaining and sustaining kindness. By using kind language, expressing encouragement and acknowledging the goodness we see in others, we create an inspiring atmosphere that nurtures human relationships. The video, [The Reflection in Me](#), strongly illustrates how powerful words are to change one's view of oneself. Let's watch it.

#### DISCUSSION 1: *Regretting Not Being Kind*

We all have moments when we fail to do kindness, haunted by memories of missed opportunities to be there for others. The nagging echoes of "*Why weren't you kind?*" confront you, urging you to examine yourself. In this discussion, we examine these instances of unkindness, facing our regrets, and uncovering the invaluable lessons this regretful unkindness holds.

#### The Burden of Unkindness

A single act of unkindness or a missed opportunity to be compassionate can reverberate throughout our lives. Ignoring a friend's call for help or neglecting to reach out to a loved one in distress can weigh heavily on our hearts, making us feel guilty. As we replay those moments of unkindness in our minds, we wish we could rewrite the script to change the course of events. Yet, the echoes of unkindness persist.

Here is an excerpt from the book, *"Congratulations, By The Way"* (Saunders & Cardinal, 2014). The video link is here: [The Importance of Kindness](#).

In seventh grade, this new kid joined our class. In the interest of confidentiality, her name will be "Ellen." Ellen was small, shy. She wore these blue cat's-eye glasses that, at the time, only old ladies wore. When nervous, which was pretty much always, she had a habit of taking a strand of hair into her mouth and chewing on it.

So she came to our school and our neighborhood, and was mostly ignored, occasionally teased ("*Your hair taste good?*" – that sort of thing). I could see this hurt her. I still remember the way she'd look after such an insult: eyes cast down, a little gut-kicked, as if, having just been reminded of her place in things, she was trying, as much as possible, to disappear. After a while, she'd drift away, hair strand still in her mouth. At home, I imagined, after school, her mother would say, you know: "*How was your day, sweetie?*" and she'd say, "*Oh, fine.*" And her mother would say, "*Making any friends?*" and she'd go, "*Sure, lots.*"

Sometimes I'd see her hanging around alone in her front yard, as if afraid to leave it. And then – they moved. That was it. No tragedy, no big final hazing.

One day she was there, next day she wasn't.  
End of story.

Now, why do I regret that? Why, forty-two years later, am I still thinking about it? Relative to most of the other kids, I was actually pretty nice to her. I never said an unkind word to her. In fact, I sometimes even (mildly) defended her.  
But still. It bothers me.

So here's something I know to be true, although it's a little corny, and I don't quite know what to do with it:



What I regret most in my life are failures of kindness. Those moments when another human being was there, in front of me, suffering, and I responded ... sensibly. Reservedly. Mildly.

*End of quote.*

This story is soul-piercing, an earnest plea to be more mindful of the impact of our unkindness. The story whispers in haunting echoes, pleading us to be kinder, for there are still many other Ellens out there nagging us, *"If you have been kind enough."*

### **Exploring Highs and Lows of Kindness**

So, why do we fail to be kind?

High kindness and low kindness periods refer to periods of time when acts of kindness are more prevalent and abundant (high kindness) or when they are less common or seem scarce (low kindness) (Saunders & Cardinal, 2014).

During high kindness periods, there is an increase in acts of kindness in various contexts. These moments often occur during times of celebration, such as holidays or special events, where the spirit of giving and compassion is heightened. People may be more inclined to extend gestures of kindness, generosity, and support to others. Some factors that can contribute to high kindness periods include festive seasons like Christmas, times of crises, or celebrations of birthdays, anniversaries or personal achievements.

In contrast, decreased acts of kindness may characterize low kindness periods. These periods can be challenging, as people may be less inclined to display kindness due to various factors. Some reasons for low kindness periods include stress, emotional distress, or personal struggles.

Understanding the dynamics of high and low kindness periods can help us examine our own behavior. It reminds us to be aware of the

factors that influence our (in)ability to show kindness, both to ourselves and to others.

### **ACTIVITY 1: *The Kindness Wave: Navigating Highs and Lows***

In this activity, you will explore moments of "high kindness" and "low kindness" periods in your life.

- *High Kindness Moments* (5 minutes): Take a few moments to reflect on experiences in your life when you felt genuinely generous, empathetic, and positively engaged with others. These are the moments when you radiated kindness. Write down these experiences in your journal, noting how they made you feel and their impact on those around you.
- *Low Kindness Moments* (5 minutes): Now, shift your focus to moments when you might have struggled to be kind towards others or yourself. These could be times of stress, negative emotions, or challenging circumstances. Be honest and explore any patterns or recurring situations where kindness may have been lacking. Note these reflections in your journal.
- *Triggers and Situations* (5 minutes): Examine the experiences you've written down in both "high kindness" and "low kindness" moments. Look for common triggers or situations that contributed to each state. These could include external factors like stress, feeling appreciated, or having time for self-care. You may also consider internal factors such as your emotional state or self-perception.

I hope you find this activity a journey of self-awareness, not a judgment of your ability to be kind or unkind. Allow yourself to study your emotions and experiences with openness and sincerity.

## DISCUSSION 2: Addressing Failure at Kindness

Why can't we be kinder? What holds us back to show we care?

Why are people afraid to be kind? As Popova mentioned, "kindness has become our 'forbidden pleasure' (Popova, 2015). The fear of normalizing kindness and the notion of it being a "forbidden pleasure" can be attributed to various societal and psychological factors. Let us study them:

- *Vulnerability and fear of rejection:* Kindness often involves opening oneself up emotionally, making people feel vulnerable. They fear being taken advantage of, ridiculed, or rejected by others, leading them to avoid displaying kindness openly.
- *Perceived weakness:* Kindness may be misinterpreted as a sign of weakness. People might fear being seen as gullible or easily manipulated if they openly display kindness.
- *Cultural norms and competition:* Societal norms, especially in competitive environments, sometimes emphasize assertiveness and self-interest over kindness. As people learn to be self-protective, they feel pressured to prioritize individual success at the expense of being kind to others.
- *Emotional Baggage:* Negative past experiences, such as betrayal or hurt when showing kindness, can lead individuals to become guarded and hesitant to exhibit kindness. It's self-preservation; it's maintaining one's sanity. *Once scarred, always scarred.*
- *Fear of Judgment:* People might fear being judged or labeled as "too nice" or "overly sentimental" if they openly express kindness, particularly in settings where cynicism or individualism prevails. Also, kindness may be misconstrued as an attempt to gain something from others, leading people to avoid expressing kindness openly.

- *Fear of Exploitation*: Some individuals may worry that others might take advantage of their good nature if they display kindness openly. Kind people are portrayed as easy targets of exploitation.

Let us not forget that kindness, in all its simplicity, holds the key to combating the innate loneliness that comes with being human. It is the most potent antidote to bridge the gaps and heal the souls, reaffirming our shared humanity and fostering genuine connections. In a society that sometimes feels driven by self-interest and divisiveness, we must remind ourselves of the enduring power of kindness. (adapted from Popova, 2015).

## ACTIVITY 2: Kindness Bingo

**Kindness Bingo**

give someone a compliment	write letters to send to grandma & grandpa	leave a nice note in a library book	ask someone new to play during recess	write a thank you note to your mom and dad
leave happy note around the house	hug a member of your family	leave a nice note for a sibling or a friend	make a card for your teacher	clean up a room without being asked
make a card for your elderly neighbor	help someone before they ask		write a kind note to a classmate	give a silent wave
leave a thank you note for the mail carrier	say hi to someone new	make a handmade gift for someone	make a card for someone at school who helps you	bring mom or dad breakfast in bed
pick up trash without being asked	hold the door for someone	let someone go in before you in line	say something nice to a worker at a store	donate some of your unused toys

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As an experiment, for one continuous month, do this kindness bingo. When you complete an act of kindness listed on your bingo card, you can mark the corresponding square using a marker. You should strive to complete tasks by achieving a horizontal, vertical, or diagonal line of marked squares, just like in traditional bingo. Better yet, fill out all the squares if you can.

Give it a shot for a month—test it out and observe how it resonates with you. If you don't experience that heartwarming sense of generosity or the joy of brightening someone's day, or even the relief of momentarily escaping self-centeredness or even selfishness, you can always return to your old ways. Regardless of the outcome, that month will not be in vain. It will be a valuable period of self-discovery and introspection.

### **DISCUSSION 3: Normalizing Kindness: Taking Kindness Initiatives**

Normalizing kindness is a powerful societal shift that involves making acts of kindness and empathy an integral part of everyday life. It goes beyond isolated acts of charity and compassion, aiming to create a culture where kindness becomes the default response in human relationships.

- *Challenge Your Biases:* Recognize and challenge your own biases and preconceived notions. Be open to questioning your assumptions and willing to change your perspective when presented with new information (Agarwal, 2020).
- *Seek Diverse Experiences:* Engage in activities and events that expose you to diverse communities and cultures. Attend cultural festivals, join clubs or organizations that celebrate diversity, and interact with people from different backgrounds (Long-Frost, 2021).
- *Encourage Open Dialogue:* Create a safe and inclusive space where people feel comfortable sharing their thoughts and experiences without fear of judgment. Encourage open dialogue

and respectful discussions that promote understanding (Buus et al., 2021).

- *Empathize with Others*: Put yourself in others' shoes and practice empathy. Try to understand their feelings, experiences, and challenges, even if they differ from your own (Lodge, 2022).
- *Embrace Cultural Differences*: Celebrate and appreciate cultural differences rather than viewing them as barriers. Learn about and respect various customs, traditions, and practices (Chamberlain, 2005).
- *Foster Inclusive Practices*: In your personal and professional life, promote inclusive practices. Encourage diversity in hiring, team-building, and decision-making processes (Long-Frost, 2021).
- *Be Patient and Open*: Embrace the idea that learning and growing in inclusion and open-mindedness is an ongoing process. Be patient with yourself and others as you navigate this journey (Cotney & Banerjee, 2019).
- *Lead by Example*: Be a role model for inclusion and open-mindedness. Your actions and attitudes can inspire others to embrace diversity and create a more inclusive world.

When kindness is normalized, it becomes a natural thing to do.

In a world that seems too cool for compassion and too guarded to be kind, we need daring souls who defy the norm and embrace their empathy unapologetically. So, who cares? YOU do! While others shy away from their tender side, I hope you can march to the beat of your heart, fearlessly showing kindness and affection. Be a caring renegade, a rebel of empathy, and wear your compassion as a badge of honor. Remember that being kind is not a sign of weakness but a testament to your strength.

### **ACTIVITY 3: Kindness Flash Mob: Operation Kindness Blitz**

As the last activity for this semester, organize a "Kindness Flash Mob" in a public place, where you perform spontaneous acts of kindness, such as handing out flowers, offering compliments, or sharing uplifting quotes. Prepare to spread joy like wildfire in a public place near you. To motivate you to do kindness, watch this: [The Extraordinary Power of Kindness](#).

And here's your mission:

- *Gear Up:* Gather your team of kindness warriors and arm yourselves with flowers, uplifting quotes, and an ocean of compliments. Remember, a little kindness goes a long way!
- *Choose Your Location:* Find the perfect public spot to unleash our kindness tsunami. It could be a park, a bustling street corner, or a shopping center. Let's brighten up people's day wherever they may be!
- *Flash Mob Ready:* Dress in colorful and quirky attire to stand out. Let your creativity shine, but remember, we're all united in the name of spreading smiles!
- *Unleash the Kindness:* At the designated time, synchronize your watches, take a deep breath, and launch your spontaneous acts of kindness! Hand out flowers, compliment strangers, share uplifting quotes - let kindness rain down like confetti!
- *Capture the Magic:* Have some stealthy videographers among you to record the heartwarming reactions of passersby. We want to capture every ear-to-ear grin and teary-eyed moment of joy.

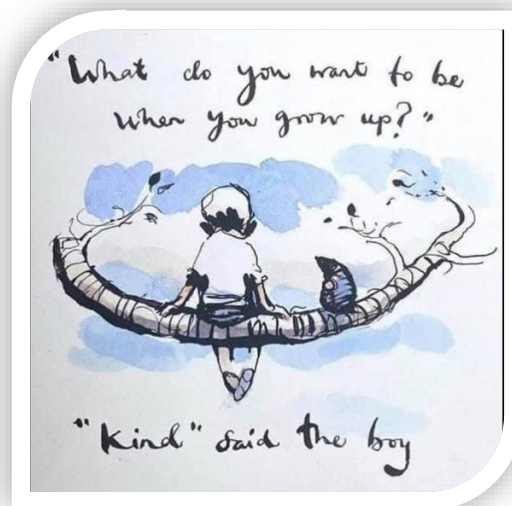
Remember, we may not change the world in a day, but we can change someone's world with a simple act of kindness. So, let's band together, flash mob style, and show the world the power of kindness. It's time to make kindness the new cool, one smiling face at a time! Let's go, team! 🌟 😊

## Wrap-Up

What does kindness look like?

Watch this short video, [Random Acts of Kindness That Will Make You Cry!](#) and get ready to be moved by a collection of touching and inspiring stories that will surely tug at your heartstrings. These moments of kindness captured on camera will show you what kindness looks like.

And from the book, [The Boy, the Mole, the Fox and the Horse](#) (Mackesy, 2019), this:



## MOVING FORWARD

In a world that often prioritizes material possessions and outward appearances, the true mark of style is how we treat others. Kindness is a fashion statement that never goes out of style. It transcends fleeting trends and leaves a lasting impression on those we encounter. A person who radiates kindness displays politeness, and nurtures connections exudes a timeless elegance and grace that captivates hearts. Kindness enhances our well-being and inspires others to embrace compassion and spread its influence throughout society.



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