

HEALTHY WAYS TO APPROACH LIFE

Thinking of yourself as a work in progress is a healthy way to approach life. It makes it easier to accept difficult times, to make mid-course directions when necessary or desired, and to celebrate the things you are thankful for.

1. List twelve skills, habits, beliefs, or attitudes that you and your family possess and that you are truly thankful for.

_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

2. Why is it so important to fully appreciate yourself as you are?

3. Learning to like yourself and to appreciate your uniqueness begins at a young age. What resources in your community give children opportunities to feel good about themselves as they move toward adolescence?

4. Pretend that you are a second-grade teacher. You've noticed that some of your students do not like themselves very much. On separate paper, create two activities that will help students learn to accept themselves just as they are. Explain how you will get across the idea that we are all works in progress.

It is now the end of the school year. You have decided to write a letter to each of your second graders, letting them know how special each one is. Write a sample letter on separate paper.

TAKING HEALTHY RISKS

Throughout your life, you'll struggle with things that you like and don't like about yourself. Part of feeling good about yourself is liking yourself right now, even though there are things you'd like to change.

Taking healthy risks is one way to feel good about yourself. Healthy risks come in all shapes and sizes. You can take healthy intellectual, emotional, social, and physical risks.

For example, Marvin's dad signed up for an adult literacy class at a local community college. It was a huge risk that took great effort and dedication on his part. Now he has a good job and feels proud of himself every day for taking that first big step.

1. What kinds of healthy risks did your parents or grandparents take in their lives? What do you think they learned about themselves as a result?

2. Can you imagine taking any of the same risks your parents or grandparents took? Why?

3. Name three healthy risks you have taken personally. Put a star by the one that was your greatest risk.

4. What kinds of healthy risks *could* you take this year? Put a star by the risk that would be the most challenging for you.

- Intellectual

- Physical

- Social

- Emotional

- Moral

Fear of Failure

You may be thinking, "But what if I fail?" Remember, you don't have to face all obstacles at once. Just take small steps and make mid-course corrections as you go. Think about how you learned to ride a bicycle. No one "succeeds" or "fails" at it. You simply get better over time. How much better you get and how fast you improve depends in large part on how much you practice.

Select one item on your list. Figure out how you will take the first step. Then congratulate yourself. Your self-esteem has probably risen a couple of notches already!

◇ Unit 5
Personal Development

Family & Community Involvement

UNDERSTANDING LIFE LESSONS

Have you seen the poster “Everything I Need to Know I Learned in Kindergarten”? The author of this list believes that he learned the most important lessons for living as a five-year-old.

1. What specific lessons about living did you learn as a young child, maybe in kindergarten? List them in the first column below. When you finish, read over your list as you think of your life as a teen. In the second column, describe how each of the lessons you listed is important to remember now.

Things I Learned as a Young Child	How That Lesson Applies to Me Now
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.
4.	4.
5.	5.

How Morals Are Passed Down

2. You may be a parent someday. List the morals you think are most important for your children to learn.
 - a. _____
 - b. _____
 - c. _____
 - d. _____

Moral Development Through Generations

Besides kindergarten, where and from whom do people learn important moral lessons and rules for living? Families, teachers, clergy, and coaches may play essential roles. Ask older family members where they learned important moral lessons. Have each person write a list of people or institutions on separate paper. Opposite each item, list the most important lesson learned from that person or in that place.

3. When you’re done, compare lists. Which people or places appear on everyone’s list? Which lessons were the same but were learned in different places? Can you think of a time that you, or someone in your family, was grateful to have those teachings to fall back on? Write your answers on separate paper.

Take the time to write a letter to someone on your list. Describe what that person taught you. Thank the person for the positive influence he or she has had on your life.

IN YOUR OWN BACKYARD

Does your neighborhood have a “Neighborhood Watch” program? Neighborhood Watch programs train people to watch out for each other and report any suspicious activity to the police. Neighborhood Watch programs have decreased crime rates in many areas. They make neighborhoods safer and more pleasant for everyone.

There are many other kinds of neighborhood programs. In some areas, neighbors have come together to:

- clean up vacant lots
- start a tool-lending library
- collect and recycle aluminum cans
- plant a community garden
- plan social events
- start a neighborhood soccer team
- enter a neighborhood float in a city parade
- help elderly people

Find out if there is any kind of “program” in your neighborhood. If not, maybe there is an interest in starting one. The first step might be to find out the needs of people in your neighborhood. Talk to your parents or guardians. Talk to your neighbors. Don’t forget to include your own ideas! What do people see as problems? What do they think would make their neighborhood a better place? Encourage them to suggest fun as well as practical ideas. What would they put on a neighborhood “wish list”? List those ideas below.

Neighborhood Wish List

Don’t let those good ideas go to waste. You can make a difference now, right in your own backyard. Select one idea and figure out how to make it happen. Is it something that you and your family can work on together? What about you and some friends? Use the outline below to put your plan into action.

Neighborhood Action Plan

- The idea
- Why it is a good idea
- Who will benefit
- Who will be involved in planning
- Who needs to approve the idea
- The first step we need to take in order to make this idea happen