

A Network of Friends

Goal: + To reinforce, by application, the concept of true friends as an important factor in enhancing self-concept development.

Objectives: + To learn that friends play a crucial role in affecting how we feel about ourselves; what our friends say and do affects how we act, dress, think, and talk.

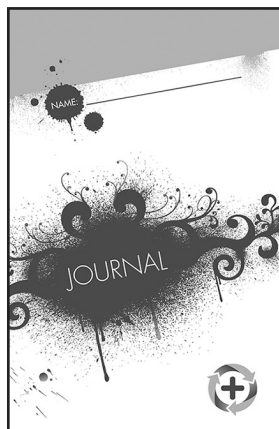
+ To learn that using positive actions to gain self-understanding also helps us see what kind of friend we are to others.

Materials Needed Pens

Materials Provided 30 *Positive Action Journals*; 30 *Self-Concept Scientist's Log Activity* Booklets: 3-1-7; 30 "Self-Concept Scales" 3-1-7

Procedure

Teacher *Direct the students to get out their Positive Action Journals and pens.*



Say Let's start today's lesson with some honest reflection. Please answer these questions in your journals. Are you a good and true friend? What are three ways you want to be treated by your friends?

Teacher *Allow time for students to journal. While they journal, write the following quotation on the board: "To a spider, a web, to a man, friendship."*

Say Friends play a big part in affecting how we think and feel about ourselves. What our friends say and do can affect the way we act, dress, think, and talk. The English romantic poet William Blake wrote, "To a spider, a web, to a man, friendship." What does that phrase mean to you?

Teacher *Wait for responses.*

Say A spider's web is a supportive network of strands that enables a spider to survive. A network of true friends can do that for you. How would you define a true friend?

Teacher *Wait for responses.*

Say Did you find it easy or difficult to define a true friend? Why?

Teacher *Wait for responses.*

Say Defining true friendship requires some thought because not everyone who claims to be your friend turns out to be a true friend. Being a true friend is wanting your friends to be the best they can be, and helping them become that. In the last episode of our radio play, Gary and Julie were not afraid to share their true feelings with Ann. They tried to give her self-confidence and make her realize that she is a valuable person. They wanted to help her be the best she can be.

You've already listed some ways you'd like to be treated by your friends. Now think of some ways you actually have been treated by your friends. On a new page, name some of the ways your friends have treated you that you liked, and some of the ways they have treated you that you didn't like.

Teacher *Allow time for students to journal.*

Say Have any of you ever had an experience when you responded to a friend or group of friends in a way that surprised you? Perhaps you laughed, cried, or became angry because your friends did?

Teacher *Wait for responses.*

Say This is a phenomenon that social scientists call social contagion. There are a few different types, but this **EMOTIONAL SOCIAL CONTAGION** describes the way that feelings—positive or negative or anywhere in between, happy or sad or both—spread throughout a group, crowd, or even an entire society. I would like you to break into small groups and share a time when you witnessed the phenomenon of social contagion—a time when you saw feelings travel through a group of friends. Relate a specific experience, but do not share names. Talking about these experiences will help us understand how important friends are in affecting the way we feel about ourselves.

Teacher *Direct students to break into groups of no more than five students, and then allow time for discussion. Circulate among the groups, making sure conversations are on track and encouraging students to relate their experiences.*

Say Our friends' feelings and opinions are important, aren't they? What is more important, though, is how we allow ourselves to be influenced by other people's actions. We can choose to make ourselves miserable or we can choose to take charge of our feelings. Good friends—real friends—want us to feel good about ourselves, and they will encourage us to be the best possible person each of us can be.

At the beginning of this lesson, you wrote about whether you are a true friend. You have written about how you would like to be treated by friends, and how your friends actually treat you. Now, think of how you actually treat your friends. Do not list only the good ways you've treated them. Make sure you list some of the bad or questionable ways you've treated a friend. Then, look back at your first response to "are you a good and true friend?" After all the journaling and discussion, what do you think now? Write a new answer to the question. Could you react to others more positively? Could you be a better friend?

Teacher *Allow time for students to journal.*

Say Sometimes it's hard to look so closely at our own actions, but when we use the positive action of self-understanding, we can learn and grow from what we discover about ourselves through self-evaluation. I think we all want to have friends and be good friends. So, let's learn and grow from what we've learned about ourselves today. Remember, to have a friend, you must be a friend. In fact, how good of a friend we are is another thing that affects our self-concepts. Let's take a measure and see how our self-concepts are looking today. On your scale, move the marker to the number that best describes your self-concept today. Then, record that number and write the date under Lesson 20.

Tracking My Total Self-Concept

Directions: Using your "Self-Concept Scale," move the marker to the number that best describes the degree of how you feel about yourself. Use 1-5. For Self-Concept, 6-10, and Action, 1-5. Then, write today's date under the appropriate number, and make a dot on the line to the current self-concept number. Connect the dots from left to right to see your progress.

Day	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Date										
Self-Concept										
Action										

Activity Sheet 20-1 © Copyright 2007 2010 by Pearson Education, Inc.



Teacher Allow time for students to complete the activity.

Say Now, let's see how you've been progressing lately. Connect the dots from left to right. Remember, if your self-concept isn't where you want it to be, you have the ability to improve it by doing positive actions.

Teacher's Toolbox

Vocabulary

Emotional Social Contagion: The way that feelings or emotions spread through a group, crowd, or society.