

And Who Are You?

Goal: + To apply the *Positive Action* philosophy to creating a self-concept.

Objectives: + To read and discuss the first act of a play, *Lives on the Line*.

+ To explore the issues of identity and how that impacts personal life decisions.

Materials Needed None

Materials Provided 31 *Lives on the Line* Playbooks; 30 *Positive Action* Journals

Procedure

Say All teens have the same quest: to figure out who they are and what to do with their lives. Why is this a tough task?

Teacher *Wait for responses.*

Say Our culture gives us mixed and partial information about our identities, and we often don't pay much attention to our thoughts, actions, and feelings. How might teens feel when they are drenched in negative thoughts?

Teacher *Wait for responses. Guide toward: A sense of failure, a disconnection with society, feelings of anger, anxiety, depression, distraction, and self-deception. Those mindsets can be the ignition point for negative behaviors.*

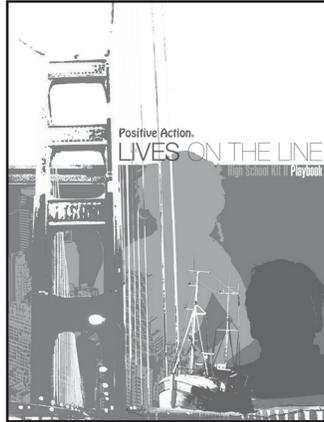
Say How might teens feel if they use positive thoughts and actions more often?

Teacher *Wait for responses. Ask the students to list these in their journals:*

- A feeling of success and happiness
- A positive connection with family and friends
- A sense of being on target and on time with your life
- The ability to do what you need to do when you need to do it
- Being centered, directed, and focused
- Being truthful with yourself and others
- Being confident and competent
- Being able to trust yourself with the big dreams and the big questions

*This kit uses a play entitled *Lives on the Line*. It's about eight very different, talented teens working together. The play was written as a readers' theater, so we will read it as if it was a play for radio.*

Distribute Lives on the Line Playbooks to all students.



Introduce the characters from the list on page 5. Then assign ten students: four girls (Ani, Ashley, Mira, and Rosie), five boys (Andy, Bus, Dr. Pos, Michael, and San), and a narrator to read the parts aloud. Distribute the Lives on the Line Playbooks to all students. Read the play, Act 1, “The Most Essential Question.”

Follow along in your copy of the Lives on the Line Playbook, prompting or correcting students as necessary. Keep an eye out for the vocabulary word, riff, and discuss it with your students if desired. When the play is finished, continue with the script below for a follow-up discussion.

Say Have any of you ever known an adult who is like Dr. Pos? If so, what did you learn from him or her?

Teacher *Wait for responses.*

Say How would your life be different if you could earn \$100,000 by thinking, acting, and feeling more positive? How would you think differently about yourself? Write down two or three sentences in your journals.

Teacher *Do the activity. Ask for responses.*

Say Your positive action for this week is to write about who you are. Write at least one paragraph, no more than a page. Think about who you are physically, intellectually, emotionally and socially. Use your journals, because we’re going to come back to this at the end of the curriculum.

Teacher *Do the activity or assign it as homework.*

Teacher’s Toolbox

Vocabulary

Riff: A solo musical improvisation, usually jazz.

Media Enrichment

(Continued next page)

Media Enrichment

Do an internet search for “Positive Psychology.” Visit two or three sites, enough to have an idea of the basis of that line of research and practice. Then search for “Positive Action, Inc.” and look through our site. Sift through some of the research and visit the What Works link. Reading about the parallels between *Positive Action* and Positive Psychology will help you gain a measure of understanding of the depth and effectiveness of the *Positive Action* program.

Here are three books (although there are many others) that will help you:

Mindset, Dweck (2006): How having a “growth” view of intelligence, artistic ability, love, and other areas impacts our willingness to try, our recovery from adversity, persistence, and, ultimately success and happiness.

The Happiness Hypothesis: Finding Modern Truth in Ancient Wisdom, Haidt (2005): It’s not just intelligences that are multiple! Try multiple brains! Or, at least, multiple relatively independent systems in the brain. Haidt’s metaphor of the rider and the elephant is worth reading the book. Great writer. Sound insights.

Authentic Happiness, Seligman (2002): This book is routinely cited in the literature. A foundational text.

If you intend to integrate these *Positive Action* lessons and this play with a Language Arts unit on drama, you might want to consult an excellent example of a recent high school drama curriculum: the Phoenix Union High School Performing Arts Guidelines for Drama, grades 9–12, available through the Internet at <http://artswork.asu.edu/arts/teachers/curriculum/drama&theatre2.htm>.

October Sky is a movie about adolescent Homer Hickham (who eventually becomes a NASA engineer) and his friends as they move from their small coalmining community into a life of science and success. The boys meet with resistance as they carve out dreams and ideals that not only serve themselves, but science and exploration as well. You’ll be able to track how their thoughts and actions developed sturdy, healthy self-concepts, and how they charted their own lives.