


○

DEAR ABBY...

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EASEL
lab



SEL KERNELS



What are SEL Kernels?

Kernels are activities or strategies used by effective prevention programs that have been shown to effect specific behavior changes. Drawing from a content analysis of 25 leading social-emotional learning (SEL) programs, we pulled strategies and practices common to programs and designed them to fit the Kernels model. These kernels of practice represent a **smaller scale, personalized approach to SEL**, and aim to provide teachers with a menu of needs- and preference-based strategies that are quick, targeted, effective, and easy to integrate into everyday classroom practice.

CREATED BY

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ILLUSTRATIONS BY

Willa Peragine

WITH GENEROUS SUPPORT FROM

Chan-Zuckerberg Initiative

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ABOUT

These Dear Abby scenarios are meant to provide a **starting point** for you to discuss some of the deeper and more complex topics in social emotional learning with your students.

Topics in this set of scenarios include caring for others, celebrating differences, taking responsibility, courageous decision-making, trying your best, being a good citizen, gratitude and appreciation, facing challenges, having a positive attitude, and self-respect and self-compassion.

We encourage you to **adapt these scenarios as you see fit** in order to make them relevant for your students and their context. We also encourage you to **check out the resources on the back of this card** for more ideas.

OTHER RESOURCES

THE CENTER FOR PHILOSOPHY FOR CHILDREN is an academic research center that is dedicated to empowering young people to think for themselves through introducing them to philosophy. The center is involved in both research and practice in philosophy for children and philosophy of childhood, and it serves as a national and international resource in the field of philosophy for children:

<https://www.philosophyforchildren.org/lessonplans/ethical-dilemmas/>

GoodCharacter.com provides an archive of moral and ethical discussion starters, called THE DAILY DILEMMA ARCHIVE. The site presents a variety of age-appropriate, real-life dilemmas to ignite student discussions:

<http://www.allkindsofminds.org/put-it-into-practice>

MORAL DILEMMA SCENARIOS FOR CHILDREN is a short webpage of example scenarios for children:

<https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/FWW>



DEAR ABBY...

CARING FOR OTHERS

K-2

Dear Abby,

Recess is one of my favorite parts of the day. We have so many fun toys to play with in the classroom. The only problem is that sometimes I just don't feel like sharing. The other day, I saw a puzzle I really wanted to play with, but it was in someone else's hands! I knew I shouldn't grab it from my classmate, but I couldn't help it. I grabbed it anyway and my classmate started crying. I ran away before the teacher could see what happened, so at least I didn't get in trouble for it. I didn't feel bad at the time, but I'm really starting to now.

What should I do?

Sincerely,
Alex

QUESTIONS:

- What makes this situation tricky?
- How do you think Alex feels? How do you think their classmate feels?
- What are some options Alex has?
- What are some possible positive or negative outcomes of these options?
- What choice would you make and why?

DEAR ABBY...

CARING FOR OTHERS

WHAT IS IT?

Showing care and concern for others' wellbeing through courtesy, kindness, respect, forgiveness, and consideration of their feelings.

OTHER WAYS TO DESCRIBE IT:

"Being kind to others," "Being mindful of others," "Paying attention to others," "Respecting others," "Responding to others," "Comforting others," etc.

HOW DO WE DO IT?

- Ask others how they are doing
- Listen to others
- Respect others' space
- Be patient with others
- Compliment others

WHAT'S HARD ABOUT IT?

- Putting yourself in someone else's shoes
- Understanding someone else's feelings
- Remembering to show care
- Showing care in the right way

RELATED BOOKS:

- "A Chair for My Mother" by Vera B. Williams
- "The Mine-O-Saur" by Sudipta Bardhan-Quallen

OTHER RESOURCES

- <https://www.philosophyforchildren.org/lessonplans/ethical-dilemmas/>
- <https://www.goodcharacter.com/the-daily-dilemma/>



DEAR ABBY...

CARING FOR OTHERS

3-6

Dear Abby,

My classmate Tracy likes to sit by herself at lunchtime. Nearly every day the class bully, Julian, comes over to her table to tease her and take her food. Julian tries to embarrass Tracy in front of the whole cafeteria. Other students often laugh at her. Tracy doesn't want Julian to make fun of her anymore, but she's afraid to stand up to him. I think I should try and help stand up for Tracy, but I'm also worried about being bullied or made fun of by Julian and the other kids.

What should I do?

Sincerely,
Jordyn

QUESTIONS:

- What makes this situation complicated?
- How do you think Jordyn feels?
How do you think Tracy feels?
- What are some options Jordyn has?
- What are some possible positive or negative outcomes of these options?
- What choice would you make and why?

DEAR ABBY...

CARING FOR OTHERS

WHAT IS IT?

Showing care and concern for others' wellbeing through courtesy, kindness, respect, forgiveness, and consideration of their feelings.

OTHER WAYS TO DESCRIBE IT:

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HOW DO WE DO IT?

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- Listen to others
- Respect others' space
- Be patient with others
- Compliment others

WHAT'S HARD ABOUT IT?

- Putting yourself in someone else's shoes
- Understanding someone else's feelings
- Remembering to show care
- Showing care in the right way

RELATED BOOKS:

- "The Mine-O-Saur" by Sudipta Bardhan-Quallen
- "Loser" by Jerry Spinelli

OTHER RESOURCES

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- <https://www.goodcharacter.com/the-daily-dilemma/>



DEAR ABBY...

CELEBRATING DIFFERENCES

K-2

Dear Abby,

There's a new kid in our class – Xander. I really like him. We like all the same animals, games, and books. I think we could be best friends! The thing is, my old friends said I shouldn't be friends with Xander because he's a little different from us – all because he uses a wheelchair. But I don't think that's anything strange. Xander told me about how his muscles work a little differently, and his wheelchair helps him to move around, just like my legs help me. That makes sense to me, and I really want us all to be able to play together. But my other friends don't seem to get it yet. I feel like they're not being very nice.

What should I do?

Sincerely,
Ayesha

QUESTIONS:

- What makes this situation tricky?
- How do you think Ayesha feels?
How do you think Xander feels?
- What are some options Ayesha has?
- What are some possible positive or negative outcomes of these options?
- What choice would you make and why?

DEAR ABBY...

CELEBRATING DIFFERENCES

WHAT IS IT?

Showing acceptance and appreciation of differences in ourselves and others, in relation to gender, ability, learning, race, ethnicity, culture, age, etc.

IN OTHER WORDS:

“Accepting ourselves for who we are,” “Accepting others for who they are,” “Celebrating the things that make us different from one another,” “Affirming others,” “Welcoming others with differences in x, y, and z,” etc.

HOW DO WE DO IT?

- Share the things that make you unique
- Ask respectful questions about others’ differences
- Be mindful of if others want to talk about their differences or not
- Value perspectives or opinions that differ from yours

WHAT’S HARD ABOUT IT?

- Being sensitive to another person’s differences
- Accepting the things that make you different
- Sharing your differences with others
- Embracing differences in yourself and others

RELATED BOOKS:

- “Just Ask!” by Sonia Sotomayor
- “Whoever You Are” by Mem Fox

OTHER RESOURCES

- <https://www.philosophyforchildren.org/lessonplans/ethical-dilemmas/>
- <https://www.goodcharacter.com/the-daily-dilemma/>



DEAR ABBY...

CELEBRATING DIFFERENCES

3-6

Dear Abby,

I'm really proud of my Indian heritage, but it's not something that I talk about school, because there's no other Indian kids like me. Next week my class is doing show and tell, and I was thinking I could bring in some photos of my family's trips to India and tell a really cool folktale that my grandmother used to tell me. I think my classmates will be interested, but I'm also a little worried they'll think it's weird. They might think my family is different from theirs, and then they might start to think that I'm different from them – or even that we shouldn't be friends anymore because of my background.

What should I do?

Sincerely,
Bivadi

QUESTIONS:

- What makes this situation complicated?
- How do you think Bivadi feels? What are some options Bivadi has?
- What are some possible positive or negative outcomes of these options?
- What choice would you make and why?

DEAR ABBY...

CELEBRATING DIFFERENCES

WHAT IS IT?

Showing acceptance and appreciation of differences in ourselves and others, in relation to gender, ability, learning, race, ethnicity, culture, age, etc.

IN OTHER WORDS:

“Accepting ourselves for who we are,” “Accepting others for who they are,” “Celebrating the things that make us different from one another,” “Affirming others,” “Welcoming others with differences in x, y, and z,” etc.

HOW DO WE DO IT?

- Share the things that make you unique
- Ask respectful questions about others’ differences
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- Value perspectives or opinions that differ from yours

WHAT’S HARD ABOUT IT?

- Being sensitive to another person’s differences
- Accepting the things that make you different
- Sharing your differences with others
- Embracing differences in yourself and others

RELATED BOOKS:

- “Just Ask!” by Sonia Sotomayor
- “The Day You Begin” by Jacqueline Woodson

OTHER RESOURCES

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DEAR ABBY...

TAKING RESPONSIBILITY

K-2

Dear Abby,

I was throwing a ball around at home when it bounced a little too far and broke my mom's favorite table decoration. She hasn't noticed yet, and I don't know whether to say something about it or to keep quiet. I know that when she finds out she's going to be really sad, and I don't want to see her sad. I could tell the truth and say it was an accident and that I'm really sorry... or maybe it would be easier to try and blame it on our dog instead.

What should I do?

Sincerely,
Mira

QUESTIONS:

- What makes this situation tricky?
- How do you think Mira feels? How do you think their mom feels?
- What are some options Mira has?
- What are some possible positive or negative outcomes of these options?
- What choice would you make and why?

DEAR ABBY...

TAKING RESPONSIBILITY

WHAT IS IT?

Accepting personal responsibility for our words, actions, and behavior through honesty and integrity.

IN OTHER WORDS:

“Understanding your part/role,” “Admitting mistakes,” “Telling the truth,” etc.

HOW DO WE DO IT?

- Keep our promises
- Be reliable to others
- Be honest with others, even when we’ve made a mistake
- Be aware of our own words, actions, and behavior
- Don’t blame others for our own words, actions, and behavior

WHAT’S HARD ABOUT IT?

- Admitting when you made a mistake
- Understanding when it is your fault
- Being aware of our own words, actions, and behavior when we feel strong emotions

RELATED BOOKS:

- “I Just Forgot” by Mercer Mayer

OTHER RESOURCES

- <https://www.philosophyforchildren.org/lessonplans/ethical-dilemmas/>
- <https://www.goodcharacter.com/the-daily-dilemma/>

DEAR ABBY...

TAKING RESPONSIBILITY

3-6

Dear Abby,

I was in the cafeteria at lunch time and was walking to my table when my friend Victor called my name. I turned around suddenly—not realizing he was right behind me—and accidentally bumped into him. His lunch tray went flying, and the food went splat on the ground. I apologized again and again. I also cleaned up the mess and even offered him half of my lunch. Still, though, Victor didn't believe it was an accident. I still feel bad about what happened, but I'm also a little mad that Victor won't forgive me.

What should I do?

Sincerely,
Sam

QUESTIONS:

- What makes this situation complicated?
- How do you think Sam feels? How do you think Victor feels?
- What are some options Sam has?
- What are some possible positive or negative outcomes of these options?
- What choice would you make and why?

DEAR ABBY...

TAKING RESPONSIBILITY

WHAT IS IT?

Accepting personal responsibility for our words, actions, and behavior through honesty and integrity.

IN OTHER WORDS:

“Understanding your part/role,” “Admitting mistakes,” “Telling the truth,” etc.

HOW DO WE DO IT?

- Keep our promises
- Be reliable to others
- Be honest with others, even when we’ve made a mistake
- Be aware of our own words, actions, and behavior
- Don’t blame others for our own words, actions, and behavior

WHAT’S HARD ABOUT IT?

- Admitting when you made a mistake
- Understanding when it is your fault
- Being aware of our own words, actions, and behavior when we feel strong emotions

RELATED BOOKS:

- “But It’s Not My Fault” by Julia Cook

OTHER RESOURCES

- <https://www.philosophyforchildren.org/lessonplans/ethical-dilemmas/>
- <https://www.goodcharacter.com/the-daily-dilemma/>



DEAR ABBY...

COURAGEOUS DECISION-MAKING

K-2

Dear Abby,

Last week, a new student joined our class, and I feel like he's not fitting in very well so far. On his first day, he brought a stuffed bunny to school and carried it around with him all day. No one else brings stuffed animals to school, so some people were laughing at him. Then, he fell down at recess and spilled his orange juice at lunch, so people *kept* laughing at him. I feel bad and want to try to be his friend. I worry, though, that if I do, people might start making fun of *me*.

What should I do?

Sincerely,
Seth

QUESTIONS:

- What makes this situation tricky?
- How do you think the new student feels? How do you think Seth feels?
- What are some options Seth has?
- What choice would you make and why?

DEAR ABBY...

COURAGEOUS DECISION-MAKING

WHAT IS IT?

Showing courage through making hard choices during challenging situations – whether that means resisting temptations, sharing your opinion about right and wrong, or doing the right thing in the face of difficulty.

IN OTHER WORDS:

“Doing the right thing, even when it’s not the popular option,” “Thinking and reflecting before making a hard decision,” etc.

HOW DO WE DO IT?

- Think critically before making a decision (e.g., “What are my options? Who is this helping? Who is this hurting? What are the consequences of doing this?”)
- Resist peer pressure to do something wrong
- Stand up for our beliefs
- Reflect on our values

WHAT’S HARD ABOUT IT?

- Doing something no one else is doing
- Knowing what the right thing is
- Understanding our own values

RELATED BOOKS:

- “What Do You Do with a Chance?” by Kobi Yamada
- “The Berenstain Bears and the Truth” by Stan and Jan Berenstain

OTHER RESOURCES

- <https://www.philosophyforchildren.org/lessonplans/ethical-dilemmas/>
- <https://www.goodcharacter.com/the-daily-dilemma/>

DEAR ABBY...

COURAGEOUS DECISION-MAKING

3-6

Dear Abby,

Last week, a new student joined our class, and I feel like he's not fitting in very well so far. On his first day, he wore really fancy clothes. A lot of students wear t-shirts and jeans, so some people were laughing at him. Other people thought he was trying to be better than everyone else. Then, he fell down at recess and had no one to sit with at lunch, so people *kept* laughing at him. I feel bad and want to try to be his friend. I worry, though, that if I do, people might start making fun of *me*.

What should I do?

Sincerely,
Young-min

QUESTIONS:

- What makes this situation complicated?
- How do you think Young-min's new classmate feels? How do you think Young-min feels?
- What are some options Young-min has?
- What are some possible positive or negative outcomes of these options?
- What choice would you make and why?

DEAR ABBY...

COURAGEOUS DECISION-MAKING

WHAT IS IT?

Showing courage through making hard choices during challenging situations – whether that means resisting temptations, sharing your opinion about right and wrong, or doing the right thing in the face of difficulty.

IN OTHER WORDS:

“Doing the right thing, even when it’s not the popular option,” “Thinking and reflecting before making a hard decision,” “being an ally for others,” etc.

HOW DO WE DO IT?

- Think critically before making a decision (e.g., “What are my options? Who is this helping? Who is this hurting? What are the consequences of doing this?”)
- Resist peer pressure to do something wrong
- Stand up for our beliefs
- Reflect on our values

WHAT’S HARD ABOUT IT?

- Doing something no one else is doing
- Knowing what the right thing is
- Understanding our own values

RELATED BOOKS:

- “The Berenstain Bears and the Truth” by Stan and Jan Berenstain
- “Where the Mountain Meets the Moon” by Grace Lin

OTHER RESOURCES

- <https://www.philosophyforchildren.org/lessonplans/ethical-dilemmas/>
- <https://www.goodcharacter.com/the-daily-dilemma/>



DEAR ABBY...

TRYING YOUR BEST

K-2

Dear Abby,

Two of my best friends recently joined the school art club. They both love it and talked me into joining too. I never really liked art before but was excited to give it another try. My excitement didn't last very long, though. The first week, the art teacher had us paint flowers; mine looked like I did it with my eyes closed. The second week, we were supposed to make model animals out of clay, but everything I created looked like a rock. Our club meets tomorrow, and I'm thinking about skipping it and quitting the club. I'm obviously terrible at art and will never get better.

What should I do?

Sincerely,
Priya

QUESTIONS:

- What makes this situation tricky?
- How do you think Priya feels?
- What are some options Priya has?
- What are some possible positive or negative outcomes of these options?
- What choice would you make and why?

DEAR ABBY...

TRYING YOUR BEST

WHAT IS IT?

Putting in your best effort, and continuing to try no matter how challenging the task, by following through with your work, setting goals, and sticking to commitments.

IN OTHER WORDS:

“Persevering through challenges,” “Not giving up,” “Giving it your all,” etc.

HOW DO WE DO IT?

- Keep trying when we fail
- Ask for help when we need it
- Remember our goals
- Focus on improvement
- Don't compare ourselves to others

WHAT'S HARD ABOUT IT?

- Being embarrassed when we fail
- Being bored or uninterested
- Knowing when or who to ask for help

RELATED BOOKS:

- “Jabari Jumps” by Gaia Cornwall
- “The Empty Pot” by Demi

OTHER RESOURCES

- <https://www.philosophyforchildren.org/lessonplans/ethical-dilemmas/>
- <https://www.goodcharacter.com/the-daily-dilemma/>



DEAR ABBY...

TRYING YOUR BEST

3-6

Dear Abby,

Two of my best friends have played basketball since they were little. They both love it and talked me into joining our school's basketball club a few weeks ago. I had never played before but was excited to learn. My excitement didn't last very long, though. The first week, the coach had us run up and down the court while dribbling the ball, and I kept losing track of the ball. The second week, we practiced making baskets, and I didn't make a single one. Our club meets tomorrow, and I'm thinking about skipping it and quitting the club. I'm obviously terrible at basketball and will never get better.

What should I do?

Sincerely,
Angel

QUESTIONS:

- What makes this situation complicated?
- How do you think Angel feels?
- What are some options Angel has?
- What are some possible positive or negative outcomes of these options?
- What choice would you make and why?

DEAR ABBY...

TRYING YOUR BEST

WHAT IS IT?

Putting in your best effort, and continuing to try no matter how challenging the task, by following through with your work, setting goals, and sticking to commitments.

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RELATED BOOKS:

- “The Empty Pot” by Demi

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DEAR ABBY...

BEING A GOOD CITIZEN

K-2

Dear Abby,

I was on my way to the cafeteria when I found an envelope on the ground. I picked it up and opened it to see what was inside. It was someone's lunch money! First I thought I should bring it back to a teacher, but then I got another idea in my head. What if I kept the money and bought myself my favorite snack. No one would ever find out; I'm the only one who would know.

What should I do?

Sincerely,
Millie

QUESTIONS:

- What makes this situation tricky?
- How do you think Millie feels?
- What are some options Millie has?
- What are some possible positive or negative outcomes of these options?
- What choice would you make and why?

DEAR ABBY...

BEING A GOOD CITIZEN

WHAT IS IT?

Understanding and doing one's part in a group or community, through participation, volunteering to help, understanding the need for rules, and striving to make the community a better place.

IN OTHER WORDS:

"Being a team player," "Having civic responsibility," etc.

HOW DO WE DO IT?

- Follow the rules of our community
- Contribute to making new rules for our community
- Share our opinions respectfully
- Listen and respect others' opinions
- Help members of the community when they need it

WHAT'S HARD ABOUT IT?

- Respecting others' opinions
- Following rules you disagree with
- Stopping to help others
- Participating in class

RELATED BOOKS:

- "The Great Kapok Tree" by Lynne Cherry
- "The Can Man" by Laura E. Williams

OTHER RESOURCES

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- <https://www.goodcharacter.com/the-daily-dilemma/>



DEAR ABBY...

BEING A GOOD CITIZEN

3-6

Dear Abby,

My friends always drop their trash all over the school. This creates a lot of extra work for our janitor and it makes the school dirty. I feel bad for the janitor, who works so hard to keep the school clean for us. I want to say something to my friends, but I don't know how. I don't want them to hate me or make fun of me for being a goody two-shoes.

What should I do?

Sincerely,
Dani

QUESTIONS:

- What makes this situation complicated?
- How do you think Dani feels? How do you think the janitor feels?
- What are some options Dani has?
- What are some possible positive or negative outcomes of these options?
- What choice would you make and why?

DEAR ABBY...

BEING A GOOD CITIZEN

WHAT IS IT?

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DEAR ABBY...

GRATITUDE AND APPRECIATION

K-2

Dear Abby,

I saw the coolest toy airplane at the store the other day, and I really hoped my mom would buy it for me. I begged, but she said I didn't need it, because I already had enough toys. I got really mad and told her it wasn't fair. My mom said it wasn't fair how many more toys I had compared to other kids. My mom said that if I donated some of my old toys that I don't play with as much anymore, she would consider buying the new airplane. I still don't think it's fair – I don't want to give away any of my old toys either.

What should I do?

Sincerely,
Michael

QUESTIONS:

- What makes this situation tricky?
- How do you think Michael feels?
- What are some options Michael has?
- What are some possible positive or negative outcomes of these options?
- What choice would you make and why?

DEAR ABBY...

GRATITUDE AND APPRECIATION

WHAT IS IT?

Being grateful for relationships, resources, and life circumstances through reflection and appreciation.

IN OTHER WORDS:

“Being thankful,” “Acknowledging and appreciating what one has,” “Readiness to return kindness,” etc.

HOW DO WE DO IT?

- Take moments to reflect on things/people we are grateful for
- Share our gratitude for another person to that person
- Say “thank you” and “I appreciate you”
- Don’t compare ourselves to others

WHAT’S HARD ABOUT IT?

- Not comparing ourselves to others
- Remembering to share gratitude with others
- Finding the time to reflect

RELATED BOOKS:

- “Last Stop on Market Street” by Matt de la Peña
- “Sylvester and the Magic Pebble” by William Steig

OTHER RESOURCES

- <https://www.philosophyforchildren.org/lessonplans/ethical-dilemmas/>
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DEAR ABBY...

GRATITUDE AND APPRECIATION

3-6

Dear Abby,

My grandfather is in the hospital and my parents say we're going to go visit him this weekend. I love my grandfather – he plays with me, takes care of me, and cooks me the most delicious food. But I really wanted to go to my friend's house this weekend to play. Besides, I don't like hospitals anyway; they're depressing and they always make me feel uncomfortable. I think I want to skip going to the hospital. I can see my grandfather when he's all better and back at home, right? My parents disagree. They say I need to show my grandfather that I love and support him by visiting him at the hospital.

What should I do?

Sincerely,
Imani

QUESTIONS:

- What makes this situation complicated?
- How do you think Imani feels? How do you think their grandfather feels?
- What are some options Imani has?
- What are some possible positive or negative outcomes of these options?
- What choice would you make and why?

DEAR ABBY...

GRATITUDE AND APPRECIATION

WHAT IS IT?

Being grateful for relationships, resources, and life circumstances through reflection and appreciation.

IN OTHER WORDS:

“Being thankful,” “Acknowledging and appreciating what one has,” “Readiness to return kindness,” etc.

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- Take moments to reflect on things/people we are grateful for
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- Say “thank you” and “I appreciate you”
- Don’t compare ourselves to others

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- Remembering to share gratitude with others
- Finding the time to reflect

RELATED BOOKS:

- “Sylvester and the Magic Pebble” by William Steig

OTHER RESOURCES

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- <https://www.goodcharacter.com/the-daily-dilemma/>



DEAR ABBY...

FACING CHALLENGES

K-2

Dear Abby,

A group of my classmates have been working on writing a story together the last few days. It was going really well until yesterday. I noticed that every time I had an idea, everyone ignored me. I used to think that I was a smart person and had good ideas; but now, I'm starting to think that maybe I'm not as creative as everyone else. Maybe I should stop participating and just do what the other people say.

What should I do?

Sincerely,
Ruthie

QUESTIONS:

- What makes this situation tricky?
- How do you think Ruthie feels?
- What are some options Ruthie has?
- What are some possible positive or negative outcomes of these options?
- What choice would you make and why?

DEAR ABBY...

FACING CHALLENGES

WHAT IS IT?

Working through difficult situations through positivity and belief in oneself.

IN OTHER WORDS:

“Persevering through hard situations,” “Having a growth mindset,” “Focusing on improvement,” etc.

HOW DO WE DO IT?

- Acknowledge when something is challenging
- Remember that everyone has strengths and weaknesses
- Make a plan for improvement – take small steps towards your goal!
- Know when to ask for help

WHAT'S HARD ABOUT IT?

- Feeling like a failure
- Comparing yourself to others
- Knowing where to start
- Feeling embarrassed
- Keeping up with your goal or persevering through the challenge

RELATED BOOKS:

- “How to Catch a Star” by Oliver Jeffers
- “Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day” by Judith Viorst

OTHER RESOURCES

- <https://www.philosophyforchildren.org/lessonplans/ethical-dilemmas/>
- <https://www.goodcharacter.com/the-daily-dilemma/>

DEAR ABBY...

FACING CHALLENGES

3-6

Dear Abby,

In science class, a group of us have been working on a class project the last few days. It was going really well until yesterday. I noticed that every time I had an idea about what we should do, everyone ignored my ideas. I used to think that I was a smart person and had good ideas; but now, I'm starting to think that maybe I'm not as smart as everyone else. Maybe I should stop participating and just do what the other people say.

What should I do?

Sincerely,
Jaden

QUESTIONS:

- What makes this situation complicated?
- How do you think Jaden feels?
- What are some options Jaden has?
- What are some possible positive or negative outcomes of these options?
- What choice would you make and why?

DEAR ABBY...

FACING CHALLENGES

WHAT IS IT?

Working through difficult situations through positivity and belief in oneself.

IN OTHER WORDS:

“Persevering through hard situations,” “Having a growth mindset,” “Focusing on improvement,” etc.

HOW DO WE DO IT?

- Acknowledge when something is challenging
- Remember that everyone has strengths and weaknesses
- Make a plan for improvement – take small steps towards your goal!
- Know when to ask for help

WHAT’S HARD ABOUT IT?

- Feeling like a failure
- Comparing yourself to others
- Knowing where to start
- Feeling embarrassed
- Keeping up with your goal or persevering through the challenge

RELATED BOOKS:

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DEAR ABBY...

POSITIVE ATTITUDE

K-2

Dear Abby,

I am terrible at spelling. I don't like it and I don't do well on my spelling tests. My teacher offered to spend extra time practicing with me during recess. If I practice with my teacher, I won't be able to play outside with my friends, which is the best part of my day. If I don't practice during recess, though, I'm afraid I'll fall behind even more.

What should I do?

Sincerely,
Ben

QUESTIONS:

- What makes this situation tricky?
- How do you think Ben feels?
- What are some options Ben has?
- What are some possible positive or negative outcomes of these options?
- What choice would you make and why?

DEAR ABBY...

POSITIVE ATTITUDE

WHAT IS IT?

Having a positive mental attitude or optimistic outlook in general.

IN OTHER WORDS:

“Looking at the glass half full,” “Seeing the good,” “Shifting mindset towards the positive,” etc.

HOW DO WE DO IT?

- Recognize accomplishments
- Reframe challenges as opportunities for growth
- Remember things you are grateful for
- Use positive words in your conversations

WHAT'S HARD ABOUT IT?

- Strong negative emotions? What could we do when these get in the way of a positive attitude
- When you're having a bad day and nothing is going your way
- When you don't feel confident in your ability to do something

RELATED BOOKS:

- “Grumpy Monkey” by Suzanna Lang
- “Your Fantastic, Elastic Brain: Stretch It, Shape It” by JoAnn Deak

OTHER RESOURCES

- <https://www.philosophyforchildren.org/lessonplans/ethical-dilemmas/>
- <https://www.goodcharacter.com/the-daily-dilemma/>



DEAR ABBY...

POSITIVE ATTITUDE

3-6

Dear Abby,

I am terrible at math. I don't like it and don't do well on my math tests. My teacher loves math and started a math club after school to help students who need a little bit more practice. If I go to math club, I won't be able to play outside with my friends, which is the best part of my day. If I don't go to math club, though, I'm afraid I'll fall behind even more.

What should I do?

Sincerely,
Tam

QUESTIONS:

- What makes this situation complicated?
- How do you think Tam feels?
- What are some options Tam has?
- What are some possible positive or negative outcomes of these options?
- What choice would you make and why?

DEAR ABBY...

POSITIVE ATTITUDE

WHAT IS IT?

Having a positive mental attitude or optimistic outlook in general.

IN OTHER WORDS:

“Looking at the glass half full,” “Seeing the good,” “Shifting mindset towards the positive,” etc.

HOW DO WE DO IT?

- Recognize accomplishments
- Reframe challenges as opportunities for growth
- Remember things you are grateful for
- Use positive words in your conversations

WHAT'S HARD ABOUT IT?

- Strong negative emotions
- Doing something when negative emotions get in the way of a positive attitude
- When you're having a bad day and nothing is going your way
- When you don't feel confident in your ability to do something

RELATED BOOKS:

- “Your Fantastic, Elastic Brain: Stretch It, Shape It” by JoAnn Deak

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DEAR ABBY...

SELF-RESPECT AND COMPASSION

K-2

Dear Abby,

I love karate. I've been taking classes for a while and I'm getting really good at it. At my new school, a lot of the girls take ballet class together. My new friends even thought it was weird when I told them I like karate and I don't like dance. That made me feel bad – like I don't fit in with the rest of the kids. Maybe they're right – maybe I am weird for liking karate. I wonder if I should just quit karate and go take ballet with the other girls.

What should I do?

Sincerely,
Jackie

QUESTIONS:

- What makes this situation tricky?
- How do you think Jackie feels?
- What are some options Jackie has?
- What are some possible positive or negative outcomes of these options?
- What choice would you make and why?

DEAR ABBY...

SELF-RESPECT AND COMPASSION

WHAT IS IT?

Extending kindness and respect to ourselves in order to have a healthy physical and mental lifestyle.

IN OTHER WORDS:

“Self-care,” “Loving yourself,” “Taking care of yourself,” “Forgiving yourself for mistakes,” “Being kind to your body and mind,” etc.

HOW DO WE DO IT?

- Notice what makes you feel good, and what doesn’t
- Set aside time in your day to do the things that make you feel good
- Think of yourself as a role model to younger students
- Acknowledge mistakes and make amends when necessary – while remembering that you are human!

WHAT’S HARD ABOUT IT?

- Feeling confident in your own skin
- Learning the things that make you feel good
- Remembering to take care of yourself when you’re busy
- Forgiving yourself for mistakes

RELATED BOOKS:

- “The Book of Mistakes” by Corinna Luyken
- “The Girl Who Never made Mistakes” by Mark Pett

OTHER RESOURCES

- <https://www.philosophyforchildren.org/lessonplans/ethical-dilemmas/>
- <https://www.goodcharacter.com/the-daily-dilemma/>



DEAR ABBY...

SELF-RESPECT AND COMPASSION

3-6

Dear Abby,

In my family, everyone is really funny. They like to tell jokes to make everyone laugh. My brother is especially funny, and the kids at school think he's funny, too. When I try to tell jokes, though, he tells me that I'm not funny and that I should stop trying to be like him. I want to be a comedian when I'm older, so I'm just practicing—I'm not trying to be like him, but he doesn't believe it. This whole time, I thought people found my jokes funny, but maybe they were just laughing *at* me instead. Maybe he's right, and I should stop telling jokes.

What should I do?

Sincerely,
Ivi

QUESTIONS:

- What makes this situation complicated?
- How do you think Ivi feels?
- What are some options Ivi has?
- What are some possible positive or negative outcomes of these options?
- What choice would you make and why?

DEAR ABBY...

SELF-RESPECT AND COMPASSION

WHAT IS IT?

Extending kindness and respect to ourselves in order to have a healthy physical and mental lifestyle.

IN OTHER WORDS:

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- Learning the things that make you feel good
- Remembering to take care of yourself when you're busy
- Forgiving yourself for mistakes

RELATED BOOKS:

- “The Girl Who Never made Mistakes” by Mark Pett
- “Wonder” by R. J. Palacio

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- <https://www.goodcharacter.com/the-daily-dilemma/>