

Accept the Specialty You Are

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You - One of A Kind

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Remember sonder a few lessons ago?

So if we are so much alike and there are so many of us, it can be hard to see how each of us can be so special and unique too, right?



What's unique about you?

Make a list of 10 things you do differently than others or ways about you that makes you different.

Choose one thing on the list and write a paragraph about why that makes you special and valuable.

“ All your dreams can come through if you have the courage to pursue them. ”

Walt Disney (Starting with \$40 in his pocket and a sketchbook, Disney created a multi-billion dollar empire of entertainment from Mickey Mouse to theme parks).

Jamal, Caleb and James - a Team of Personalities

All the boys in Jamal's neighborhood met at the park after school just about every day to play ball. They liked to play baseball, and today was no different, only today James hit the ball so that it flew way out of the their playing field and barely missed a lady pushing her baby in a stroller.

"You guys need to watch what you are doing," she said half upset, but not really looking at any of them.

"Ma'am, I'm so sorry. James and all of us are usually really good at hitting the ball."

He very much wanted her to be ok with it. He kept eye contact and waited.

The lady was quiet, and just looked at Jamal. He couldn't make out what she was thinking.

"Yeah, ma'am, we all really like little kids. Hey there baby. I hope you'll play with us soon."

Caleb cracked up grinning at his own joke. He was doing a little dance too.

The lady was beginning to smile. She still didn't say anything.

"Maybe you have an older kid we can teach to play baseball? We want to make it up to you," James said. He sat down on the grass and folded up his legs. He waved to the baby; they were at eye height now.

The woman seemed frozen. Finally she spoke:

"You are fine young boys. Don't worry. These things happen. I am glad you are practicing so seriously to be good at playing. And I do have another son. He is a little younger than you. His name is Michael. What are your names?"

"I am Jamal. This is Caleb and that is James." Jamal was proud of his friends.



"I can tell that each of you are pretty special. I can tell how your different personalities make you such a good team. I will tell Michael about the three of you and we will come by some afternoon to see you play and see if Michael wants to learn a trick or two from you." The lady smiled pretty big now.

"That would be nice. We could use another person." Jamal was happy it all worked out so well. He was looking forward to meeting a new kid.

- Why do you think the lady was so quiet for a while?
- What can the lady tell about each of the boy's personalities after just this interaction?
- Why does different personalities make a better team rather than a group of people with the same ways about them?

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Shy Or Not? It's Your Choice

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Being shy is a way to respond to others and the world, a way that takes you inside rather than out front.

Most people feel shy at some point in their life, either for a length of time or in certain situations. Even the people who seem most comfortable in every situation, those who speak up first, those who can stand in front of a group and not feel uneasy, those who sing aloud around others, etc., even they have shyness around something. Many famous actors and performers are terrified of being on stage.

Being shy is ok, and yet it can exclude us from things.

Here are some tricks to practice if you would like to be less shy:

Accepting Yourself:

1. Get to know and like yourself
2. Spend time with yourself
3. Don't criticize yourself
4. Try not to depend on others' approval
5. Allow yourself to be involved with things that matter to you, and worry less about what others might expect.

Accepting Others:

1. We often think of other people as strangers – learn to like other people.
2. Don't criticize others. It separates you.
3. See others as friends.
4. Help or join others.

Exercises:

1. Spot opportunities to have exchanges with others – everyone is an opportunity.
The Internet and social media do not count, those interactions allow you to not be seen, and we are talking about being face to face with someone.
Feel your fear and do it anyway.
Be aware of your body and what messages it is sending to you.
2. Observe outgoing people. Watch how they interact
3. Practice smiling – it connects people instantly
4. Don't choose to sit in the back of the class or stand in a corner of a room
5. Practice saying hi to others – first
6. Practice complimenting others
7. Ask someone you don't know at school a question
8. Make a positive comment or ask an interesting question about something someone is doing



Challenge yourself:

think of what you feel shy about. Decide on one thing you want to be less shy about this week, at least once.

Answer these 3 questions:

This week I want to try to be less shy about

This is what usually happens

This is what I think will be different if I can be less shy

This question is for next week:

What do you feel was different when you were less shy?

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What Is Important To You

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What are Values?

Just like we all have things we like and things we like less, people we gravitate towards and others we don't, so do we all have things and ways we believe in that represent what is meaningful to us and the way we go about things.

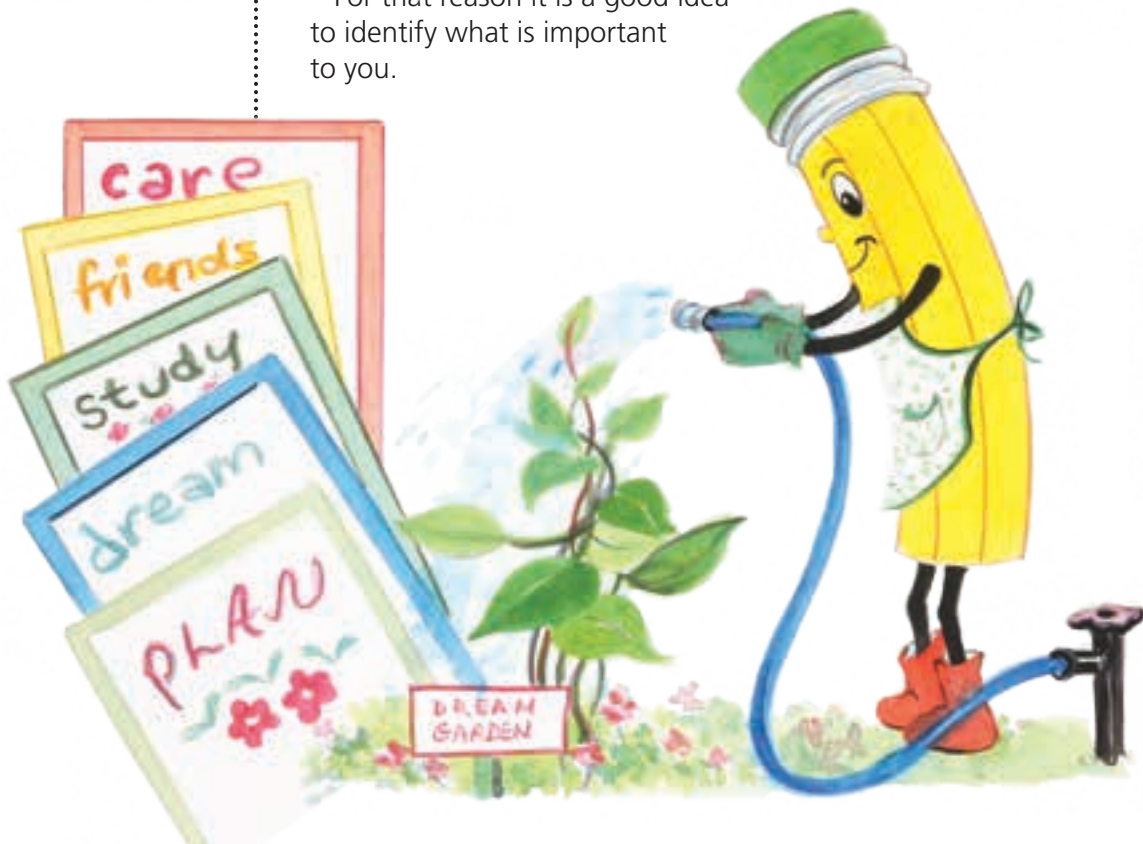
Some people value being on time and hate being late. Others value learning or adventure or physical fitness. Hard work, caring for others, peace, fairness, independence, courage, intelligence, commitment, honesty, order, fun, loyalty, responsibility and *integrity* are other values.

People can learn values from a very early age.

Every person has his or her own personal set of values. We can't tell what someone else's values are unless they talk about it or it shows in something they do or say.

And even though we are not always aware of our own values, we know when we are not in tune with them. When things go well and life is good and you are happy, you are in sync with your values. When you are not, things feel wrong and you might be unhappy.

For that reason it is a good idea to identify what is important to you.



Discover Your Own Values



Mountains and Valleys

This exercise is hard. Try to be honest with yourself and see if you can identify your values. Use the sheets of paper your teacher gives you as scratch paper to make notes on. Follow the directions below. You might write down a number of situations you remember before you pick the one you want to work with. When you have picked a situation, try to really feel it and see if you can break it down and decide the reasons it made you happy, proud or fulfilled.

Step 1: Think of times when you were happy

- What were you doing?
- Were you with other people? Who?
- What other factors contributed to your happiness?

Step 2: Think of the times when you were most proud

- Why were you proud?
- Did other people share your pride? Who?
- What other factors contributed to your feelings of pride?

Step 3: Think of the times when you were most fulfilled and satisfied

- What need or desire was met?
- How and why did the experience give your life meaning?
- What other factors added to your feelings of fulfillment?

Step 4: See if you can figure out what your values are based on those experiences of happiness, pride, and fulfillment

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What are Your Dreams?

Do you dream of someday being able to be something special or do something in particular? What are your dreams?

Sometimes dreams and goals change over time as you change. But every great achievement starts as a dream.

With everything we do there is effort involved and results. The bigger the effort, the stronger is the result. Whatever you dream of comes to you not by chance, but by your effort. Whatever you dream of, you can build and become. It starts with a seed, just like a tree that grows to be magnificent and ancient was once only a tiny seed. Plant your seed and water it with your continued attention and effort, and it will grow into a beautiful reality in front of your eyes.

Try - And Fail If You Have To

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If something is important to you, it's hard to ignore, right?

As we have learned, our values tell us what is important to us, but sometimes there is just something we want or something we want to do.

As we have seen, courage is a great skill to develop or have. It will open up doors and opportunities to grow. On the other side of courage is fear. Most people are fearful sometimes.

Sometimes it takes courage just to be honest about how you feel and tell someone.

And it starts with making a decision.

Learning to make good decisions is an important skill. A good decision is a decision that supports your values - what you think is right and what will be good for you and not hurt others.

Sometimes a courageous decision comes with the risk of failing to do what you set out to do the way you wanted it.

There are many stories of famous people who have made incredible lives for themselves because of their tireless trying over and over again for something they wanted and believed in. For every time they were turned down or failed, they just got up and did it again.

Winston Churchill was the Prime Minister of Britain. He failed 6th grade. He was defeated in every election for public office until he was 62 years old and became Prime Minister. He wrote:

“

Never give in, never give in, never, never, never, never - in nothing, great or small, large or petty - never give in except to convictions of honor and good sense. Never, never, never, never give up.

”



Discover Your Own Values



Discover your own balance between courage and fear.

- Think of a time you were afraid of something or of doing something that you later regretted you didn't do.

- Now think of a time you did something that took a bit of courage to do, and you did it. Write it in your journal.

See if you can answer these questions on the form below.

What was the difference in these two situations –

1. ...in the way you felt *before* you were choosing to do it or not?
2. ...in the way you felt *while* you were choosing to do it or not?
3. ...in the way you felt *after* you had chosen to do it or not?

	WHEN I WAS AFRAID TO DO SOMETHING	WHEN I HAD THE COURAGE TO DO SOMETHING
BEFORE		
WHILE		
AFTER		

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After you have filled in the spaces, study your chart. This is a tool for you to become more aware of your own balance between being afraid of doing something and feeling ok with doing something.

Courage Is Good For You

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When you were real little you had no fear. You didn't need to know about courage because you had all the courage in the world. Very young kids are not concerned with what others think about them. They are not afraid to make mistakes because they don't know what that is. They are not afraid of making a fool of themselves because they only know that they are little stars whatever they do, etc.

As we grow older and learn about the world, we become more reserved, more fearful and more concerned about our image and behavior.



What is courage?

1. Courage is doing the right thing even when it is difficult or unpopular or others won't
2. Facing your fears and trying to overcome them
3. Trying new things even if you don't know if you can do it
4. Tell the truth no matter what the consequences are
5. Learn from your mistakes
6. Not giving in to what others want you to do
7. What else?

While fear can be helpful in alerting us to danger, fear can also get in our way of opportunities to meet other people and trying new things.

Sometimes what we are afraid of is only in our imagination. We can make ourselves afraid when there is nothing to fear.

Courage also has two sides. It is not courageous to do something that is not safe or represents danger to yourself or others.

When you are courageous, you do what is right even if you are afraid to do it.

*Look at the list below.
Decide if each action represents courage?*

If it doesn't, what is it?

- Skateboarding down the stairs
- Walking away from a fight
- Ignoring a new student at school
- Doing what everyone else is doing to not be labeled a coward
- Walking away if you see someone being bullied
- Helping someone who has a hard time





Research Successful People

At home do some research and find a person who did something or became something important after much failure or with a lot of odds against him or her. Write something that you have learned about this person. Think about what decisions this person made and write them down.

For each decision you can think of, see if you can answer these questions:

1. Was it a "good" decision? _____

2. Why or why not? _____

3. Was it a hard decision? _____

4. Why or why not? _____

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Just Imagine

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Just like the little seed you put in the ground is the beginning of the tree, the seed for the dream comes from the imagination.

Everything that ever happened started in someone's imagination.

Imagination helps us bend our brains and snap them out of the slumber.

Imagination is a muscle. The more you exercise it, the stronger it gets.

Just remember that made up stories are made up and not the truth.

Telling stories and telling the truth are two different things.



Storytelling

You will spin a story or two from your collective imagination. This is an old game, but it is still valuable and fun. Your teacher will start with a line and you will take turns continuing the story. You may add no more than three sentences each. Each of you should try to make it as goofy or colorful or interesting or crazy or surprising or suspenseful as you can. Each of you must leave your sentence so that there is an open situation to solve or suspense of some kind. Only the last person can end the story.

Remember to flex your imagination muscle often.

Ayana's Imagination Goes Flying

When Austin came home from school and told Ayana how they had learned about imagination in class today, she got all excited. Austin wanted to try the story telling with her, so he explained to her how to do it. Ayana loved stories of any kind, and was pretty good at coming up with some amazing stuff herself.



"Let's go, let's go," Ayana yipped, jumping up and down.

"Hang on, I have to come up with a beginning." Austin was thinking hard.

"Ok, I've got it. Here goes:

"A chicken was crossing the street. She looked up because the noise was getting louder and louder. Above her was a massive container with wings like her own, zooming through the air down towards her. Your turn."

Austin looked at Ayana with a "see if you can top that" expression.

Still jumping up and down, Ayana squealed with delight.

"The airplane flapped its wings because it wanted to be a chicken too. Because of that it lost its balance and hit the real chicken. The chicken got up and grabbed a stick so it could walk with a cane since its leg was broken. Your turn."

Ayana laughed out loud.

Austin shook his head. Silly stuff. What next?

"But the airplane was sliding on its belly across the pavement. The wings couldn't flap like that. The belly was getting all bloody.

The chicken put her wingtips in her beak and

whistled loudly. Suddenly there were chickens coming from everywhere. Your turn."

Austin wasn't sure about this story. But with Ayana, anything was ok. With her age and imagination, there was no sense stopping her when she was having fun.

"The chickens held each others' wings and danced around the airplane to make it feel good. Then they all got underneath and lifted it up to go fly again. When they were all underneath, they started running with the airplane and then they ran away. The airplane flew

You have
now finished
Chapter 3.



up on its own. End of story.”

Ayana was happy with herself.

“That’s funny, Ayana. But you ended it way too soon,” Austin said disappointed and amused at the same time.

“But that’s what happened,” Ayana stated. “It was over. Do you want to do another one? Let’s do this every day. You want to?”

Ayana was still jumping up and down. Austin just smiled.

We have learned that each of us is unique. We learned that we all have different experiences, and that it is our differences that make things interesting and sometimes even possible. Remember how Jamal, Caleb and James became a team, who with their combined but different ways of being impressed the mother of the baby?

You were probably surprised to learn that shyness can be changed with a little practice if you want to.

Knowing what makes you happy and proud is not always that hard, but understanding your personal values behind those feelings are not always obvious.

You discovered how making smart decisions and courage are related, and you tried to figure out where you are yourself when making decisions.

We showed you how courage can open up your world, but how it is important to make sure you and others are not getting hurt or in danger.

And then we tried to imagine silly things to show you the power of imagination – to make you laugh or think up creative ideas. Ayana showed us just how silly it is ok to be, how laughter is impossible to resist, and how wonderful it makes you feel to laugh out loud. Keep it up for yourself!

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IN THE LESSONS IN THIS CHAPTER WE HAVE LEARNED:

- That each of us has our unique talents and preferences
- That being shy is ok, but that it can leave us out of fun and interesting experiences and opportunities
- That it is when our personal values are satisfied we experience happiness and pride
- That making good decisions takes courage
- That courage paired with healthy caution makes your world bigger
- That imagination is a powerful muscle that needs regular exercise

Now that we have looked at the many building blocks that makes you who you are, and elements that help us have personal strength and self esteem, we will now start looking at ways to develop ourselves into strong and healthy individuals.

Congratulations! You have completed the first three chapters and learned about self-awareness in many different ways and situations.