

RESPONSIBILITY

Personal accountability. Willingness to keep promises, fulfill obligations, and acknowledge mistakes without resentment or complaint.

Responsibility is sometimes considered boring, the opposite of excitement, spontaneity, or even fun. The truth is that all of these qualities can co-exist in perfect harmony, and responsibility actually enhances fun by minimizing guilt, anxiety, and negative consequences. For example, a day at the beach can be a blast, but it's easier to enjoy every moment if that unfinished science project isn't weighing on your mind and you won't face punishment for missing dinner.

Being responsible means people can count on you to keep your promises, fulfill your obligations, and generally do the right thing. When we think of our most trusted friends, admired colleagues, and respected leaders, they often share a common trait: responsibility.

Little temptations have a tendency to nibble away at one's sense of responsibility, but some forethought and discipline can make a big difference. If you know it will be hard to study while your favorite show is on, maybe the TV-free library would be a good place to spend the evening. You might even promise yourself small rewards for sticking to your plan and resisting the allure of other options. Sure, earning a reward may not seem as pure as relying on willpower alone, but there's something to be said for knowing your limits and working around them.

Beyond being accountable for your actions and choices, it is also vital to consider your potential. It's easy to see a problem and sympathize. What's truly admirable is when someone notices a need or discovers room for improvement and accepts the challenge personally. Maybe you never offered to fight pollution and don't know anyone who gets meals from a soup kitchen, but if you have the ability, time, and opportunity to help...

It's when you make the shift from personal dependability to a broader sense of your role and power in the world that responsibility truly becomes second nature. Instead of worrying about what you must or should do, you start recognizing what you can do. One person's efforts may not seem significant, but if each of us does all we can, it won't take long to accomplish what we once considered impossible.

RESPONSIBILITY ENCOMPASSES:

CITIZENSHIP

Willing and positive community involvement. Embracing the duties of freedom.

RESTRAINT/SELF-CONTROL

Winning the battle against temptation. Acting on reason and good judgment rather than whim or want.

TRUSTWORTHINESS

You give honesty, caring, and kindness; you get confidence, gratitude, and esteem.

DEPENDABILITY

A reputation for reliability. Defying expectations only to go beyond them. Giving your word only when you can keep it.

INITIATIVE

Discovering needs or opportunities and taking action to address them. Starting something worthwhile.

ECONOMY/THRIFT

Knowing the difference between needs and wants. Making do with the minimum.

EXAMPLE ACTIONS



SELF

- Whether you accept or decline a responsibility, do so willingly and without resentment. If you catch yourself complaining or feeling self-pity, remind yourself the obligation was a choice and/or a duty important to fulfill.
- Rather than repressing negative thoughts or wallowing in guilt, let them pass right through your mind. Accept that we all face temptation and have ignoble moments, but what matters is that we stay on track, focus on the good, and keep trying.
- Instead of thinking "It's not my problem," practice asking yourself "What can I do to help?" Don't stop until you have an answer. Even if your impact is minor, positive action adds up fast.



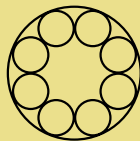
RELATIONSHIPS

- When you make a mistake, own up to it, apologize, and work to make things right. It's hard, but you'll minimize the impact of your error, feel better in the long run, and maybe earn respect from those you've let down.
- Be willing to say "no." We all want to do favors or help out, but it's better to explain why you can't than to make a promise you may not be able to keep.
- Strive to consider your contributions to an argument, tension, or other relationship trouble. Focus on what you could do better instead of what someone else did wrong, and your relationship will likely heal much faster.



WORLD

- It may seem boring or difficult, but get involved in the political process. Learn about the issues, consider the candidates, and decide whom you would vote for. Read about legislation or executive decisions under consideration, form opinions, and let people in power know what you think.
- Look for ways to conserve energy, water, and other resources. Something as simple as turning off the water while brushing your teeth or buying products in recycled containers can make a huge difference over time.
- Service organizations, local recreation programs, public clubs, and volunteering are great ways to get involved in your community. Find ways to participate and help make your town a better place.



RESPONSIBLE RESPONSES

Following are a number of situations. Rank the responses that follow in order of responsibility, with "1" being the most responsible, "2" the next most responsible, etc.

1. You agreed to baby-sit your kid brother while your parents are out. He's being grounded and shouldn't watch TV or leave the house, but you just found out your favorite wrestler has a grudge match scheduled, your friends are all getting together, and you know your parents will be gone for hours.

- ___ Stay home and play board games with your brother, but tape the match.
- ___ Watch the match with your brother, but make him fix you a snack for the privilege.
- ___ Take your brother to your friend's house, but don't let him watch TV.
- ___ Go to your friend's house, watch the match with your brother, then practice the most bone-crushing moves on him.

2. You're running late for badminton practice when you see a woman drop a thick envelope, then hurry off. You pick up the envelope and read "Charity Drive Donations" above today's date, the address of a local service organization, and a meeting time a half hour from now. The envelope feels like it's full of money, and no one is in sight.

- ___ Return the envelope to the address, then ask the woman to write a note to your coach.
- ___ Rush to practice, and call the organization later about the envelope.
- ___ Try to find the woman, then give up and decide since you're already late, it's better to skip practice and hit the arcade.
- ___ Rip open the envelope and use the money to buy pizza for the whole team.

3. Your school is collecting food and donations. Your mom gave you four cans of pickled beets and a five-dollar bill to contribute, but you forgot your lunch and the town library is also accepting canned goods in place of overdue fines. While searching for crumbs in your locker, you find a copy of Moby Dick you checked out seven months ago.

- ___ Borrow lunch money, give your beets to the school, and return Moby later.
- ___ Use Mom's money for a delicious cafeteria meal, give the beets and book to the library, and bring replacement cash and cans to school tomorrow.
- ___ Eat the beets, give the book to the food drive, and pay the library with the money.

- ___ Skip school, sell the beets and Melville's classic, and spend everything on tacos and candy bars.

4. You meant to study, but a great made-for-TV movie was on, and you ended up with a bad grade on a history quiz. You can earn extra credit by staying after school with your teacher, but your parents have threatened to unplug the TV if your grades slip. Of course, if you work hard you could pull up your final grade by report card time...

- ___ Tell your parents, promise to study books instead of the TV screen, and go for extra credit.
- ___ Cut your TV time, beg your teacher for study help, and work hard the rest of the semester.
- ___ Watch the History Channel, and study during commercials.
- ___ Decide you're beyond hope, watch a cartoon marathon, and be sure to "lose" your report card later.

5. Your friend tells you a scandalous secret about the shoe-in candidates for Homecoming Court. You have a crush on the editor of the school paper, and a scoop like this could earn you big points. Of course, your sister is also hoping to be on the Homecoming Court, and a scandal could ruin the whole event.

- ___ Treat the secret as unfounded gossip and ask your crush to the Homecoming dance.
- ___ Give the candidates a chance to tell their side, then decide if you need to alert school administrators.
- ___ Leave an anonymous note about the secret in the newspaper office, then help your sister campaign.
- ___ Tell the candidates you'll spill the secret unless they withdraw (leaving your sister alone on the ballot), then trade your info for a date with the editor.

Answer Key:

For each situation, the best response is first, with each subsequent response less responsible. In other words, the ideal order is always 1, 2, 3, 4.

RESPECT

Treating people the way you would hope to be treated in their place, and recognizing that their ideas, practices, and needs may be just as valid and important as your own.

Respect has two forms, really. One form includes the initial respect you might offer a new acquaintance, authority figure, or older person. Through politeness, you show that you appreciate the dignity of all people and the customs of civilized society. Common courtesy with strangers and acquaintances can make our

interactions smooth and mutually agreeable. This kind of consideration can also strengthen even the closest relationships, showing friends and loved ones the many small ways that you care.

The second form of respect is deeper and stronger. This respect must be earned, and it arises when you can count on someone to be honorable, dependable, honest, or consistently exceptional in some way. Mutual respect is the basis for the strongest relationships of every kind. Winning someone's respect is a great honor, but it can also be a great responsibility. Deep respect involves trust and some degree of loyalty, which means our acts and statements may carry more meaning and need to be considered more carefully.

An important variation is respect for yourself. Self-respect includes recognizing your own inherent worth, holding yourself to high standards, and taking responsibility for your actions. Respecting yourself can be a strong defense against self-destructive behavior, making poor choices, and succumbing to negative peer pressure. On the other hand, having unrealistic expectations can also be harmful. Part of self-respect is allowing yourself to make mistakes and realizing you are human, imperfect, and deserving of a second chance—just like everyone else.

RESPECT ENCOMPASSES

TOLERANCE

Valuing, or at least accepting, differences in opinion, background, lifestyle, etc. Sometimes, agreeing to disagree.

EMPATHY/UNDERSTANDING

Appreciating another's situation as if it were your own by using your heart (empathy) and mind (understanding).

COMPASSION

When empathy and understanding grow into a desire to help.

CARING

Taking the hopes, needs, and concerns of others seriously; considering what's best for others as well as yourself.

KINDNESS

Caring in action.

COURTESY

Kindness on a small scale

DEDICATION

Commitment to a person, pursuit, or ideal, often despite hardships, setbacks, or the temptation of other opportunities.

Talent is nice, but the real key to success is dedication. Ask any top athlete, artist, businessperson, or other successful individual, and he or she will likely admit that years of hard work went into the “effortless” achievements that dazzle us today. What lies between promising young prospects and the fulfillment of their potential? What separates the crowds of ambitious novices from the few, admired experts and award-winners? Dedication. Pure and simple.

Dedication can be difficult, especially when we’re confronted by unexpected challenges, major setbacks, or the allure of an easier path. Still, honoring your commitments and maintaining your focus are ultimately worth the price. Devoting your time and energy is like investing in your own future, whether you’re working toward a concrete goal or simply building strength of character and a positive reputation.

Keeping your word, fulfilling your obligations, and following through on tasks you undertake are all forms of dedication. It’s possible to be dedicated to a person, as when you respect and trust a relative, friend, or leader. You can also be dedicated to an ideal, such as democracy, human rights, the value of education, or the importance of kindness. The most common form of dedication is to an activity or job. An athlete who trains in the off season, a scholar who reads all he can about a subject, and a politician who spends her free time in the community all demonstrate this kind of dedication.

It’s also important to impose some limit on dedication. Without a sense of perspective and an open mind, dedication can become a flaw rather than a virtue. An athlete can over-train to the point of injury, an artist can withdraw from friends and family in pursuit of inspiration, and blind or absolute loyalty can easily be abused. Maintaining a commitment in the face of struggle or doubt is to be admired, but it’s crucial to know the difference between toughing out the hard times and foolishly refusing to change.

DEDICATION ENCOMPASSES

DILIGENCE

Persistent, painstaking, and willing devotion to a task or goal.

DUTY

A passion for keeping promises, honoring obligations, and doing what’s right or required.

DISCIPLINE

A mixture of self-control, courage, and diligence. Doing what you should rather than what you can get away with.

LOYALTY

Personal commitment to an individual, group, or principle. Duty someone has earned, often based on respect, integrity, or kindness.

PERSEVERANCE

Diligence despite difficulty.

EXAMPLE ACTIONS



SELF

- Choose a word or phrase that will remind you of your commitment(s), and write it in your agenda. You could also use post-it notes in your locker, textbooks, or other places you'll see daily.
- When deciding how to spend your time, consider not only what appeals to you this moment, but what you'll be happy you did in a day, in a week, or years into the future.
- Think of your personal commitments as promises you make to yourself. Honor these promises like any other.



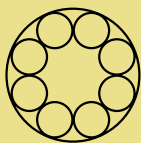
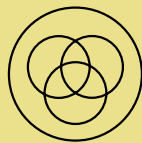
RELATIONSHIPS

- Think about how your actions and words might affect people you care about, even when they're not around. Are you truly being loyal, or just treating friends and family well to their faces?
- Balance your dedication to an activity or ideal with respect for your relationships. Talk with friends and family about your goals and why they may interfere with socializing, but be willing to sacrifice the occasional work session for some quality time with people close to you.
- Force yourself to stop and think before making a promise. We all want to please friends and family, but it's better to say "no" up front than to fail in our commitments.



WORLD

- Find a cause to get passionate about. Learn all you can, share your knowledge with others, and find ways to make a difference.
- Be aware of your role in society. Your education and future plans may seem strictly personal matters, but they ultimately impact the community.
- When evaluating politicians, celebrities, etc., consider not just whether you like them or agree with them, but how dedicated they are. Someone devoted to a position you disagree with may deserve more respect than a person who shares your views for the moment.



DEDICATION DILEMMAS

For each question below, choose the answer that is not a good example of dedication.

1. Your sister's graduation is scheduled for the same time as your track meet. What do you do?
 - a. Explain to your coach that this is a once-in-a-lifetime family event and ask for advice.
 - b. Compete in your scheduled events, then hurry to see your sister receive her diploma (attending part of each event).
 - c. Ask your mom to take pictures of the graduation, and say you may catch them after for cake.
 - d. Work with teammates to find a substitute for each event, then go to graduation.
2. You're talking with some classmates who start making fun of a close friend. What do you do?
 - a. Tell them to stop talking trash and try a positive outlook.
 - b. Listen closely to see if you learn anything surprising.
 - c. Defend your friend against the slander/accusations.
 - d. Walk away and refuse to listen to their bad-mouthing.
3. You planned to study an hour each night until your Biology grade improves, but your friends are getting together to watch NASCAR and eat nachos. What do you do?
 - a. Study, but ask someone to tape the race so you can watch it this weekend.
 - b. Study for an hour right after school, then spend the evening with your friends.
 - c. Ask your friends to study as a group for an hour before the race.
 - d. Decide that observing the effects of nacho cheese on the adolescent digestive system is a form of studying biology.
4. Your favorite singer wears a sealskin coat to the video awards, and you're a die-hard animal rights supporter. What do you do?
 - a. Turn up the volume and order a similar coat (fake, if your conscience demands).
 - b. Write a critical letter to the artist, her record label, and your local paper.
 - c. Continue enjoying the music, but realize the person creating it is no one to look up to.
 - d. Sell your albums, cancel your cable, and donate the money to animal protection groups.

5. You're treasurer of a school club whose president has earned your loyalty, but now he wants to use club money for a personal party. What do you do?
- Call an emergency meeting and report his activities to the other club officers.
 - Meet with him privately and explain that you can't allow him to use the funds.
 - Ask him what time to show up and if you should bring your famous 7-Alarm Chip Dip.
 - Meet with the club advisor and ask for advice.

ATTITUDE

Attitude is Feelings and Thoughts that combine to produce Behavior. Attitudes can be general (your outlook) or specific (your attitude toward a person or topic).

Attitude is our most powerful tool to pursue success, learn from failure, and make the most of every experience. When circumstances seem darkest, attitude offers a ray of hope. When we're on top of the world, attitude is the anchor that keeps us from floating into space. Even when everything else seems out of control, attitude is always a choice—and it's vital to make the right one!

Emotions can be difficult to manage, and some beliefs and behaviors are ingrained from an early age. Still, with a little effort and awareness, we can shape the way feelings and thoughts combine to form attitudes.

It's often easier to change our thoughts or feelings separately rather than tackling both at once. When you lose a game or do poorly on an assignment, you may feel terrible even though you know the results don't mean much. Or maybe you feel excited about an opportunity but can't stop thinking up potential problems. In such cases, try to focus on the positive side. When you're nervous or upset, keep telling yourself, "I know I can do this. I know everything will be fine." If you feel great but can't stop dreaming up worries, try to build up your enthusiasm even more and overwhelm your negative thoughts.

The first step in developing positive attitudes is awareness. Think about what you believe, why you hold those beliefs, and possible ways to adjust your attitude. For example, maybe you're afraid of roller coasters because of a bad experience as a child, but you see friends having lots of fun on them, know the rides are safe, etc. You might think the newspaper is boring but find you enjoy the comics and columns your friends clip out, articles your teachers share in class, and weekend movie reviews.

Don't get discouraged if your progress is slow. Attitudes

take years to develop; they won't change overnight. If nothing else, it's important to be aware of your attitudes and the way they affect your perceptions and choices. At least in this case, knowledge really is power!

ATTITUDE ENCOMPASSES:

HUMILITY

Opening your eyes and mind. Seeing past pride and selfishness to recognize the dignity and potential of every person—including yourself.

PATIENCE

Enduring setbacks or slow progress with optimism and resolve. A vaccine for boredom and irritation.

OPTIMISM/HOPE

Acknowledging risks while expecting the best. Finding the positive in any situation. Refusal to despair; constant willingness to try.

TEAMWORK

Sacrificing personal priorities to work toward a group goal.

FORGIVENESS

Letting go of resentment, anger, and hurt feelings in order to let a relationship heal and grow.

FAITH/SPIRITUALITY

Belief that life has meaning, every experience has a purpose, and our efforts ultimately matter.

GENEROSITY

Willingness to give, share, or help. Assuming the best of people.

DIGNITY

Recognizing the fundamental worth of every person's life, rights, and abilities.

EXAMPLE ACTIONS



SELF

- Practice thinking “I can” rather than “I can’t.” Look for opportunities rather than obstacles.
- Refuse to succumb to boredom, frustration, or despair. Take deep breaths, calm your mind, and stop focusing on what’s standing in your way. Instead, work at finding as many “silver linings” as you can, visualize an upcoming event as a form of “mental practice,” etc.
- Play with perspective. For example, instead of “waiting in line,” think of it as “participating in a common social ritual,” “observing people in their daily routine,” or “creatively occupying space.” Take a new look around and see what you notice differently.



RELATIONSHIPS

- See what a difference you can make with these easy giveaways: a smile, a compliment, a thoughtful note, a small gift, a willingness to listen, an invitation to spend some time together.
- Challenge your assumptions about people. Look at classmates with new eyes and try to see the best in them. Try to understand the reasons for people’s behavior. How could you reach out to someone new?
- Instead of comparing yourself to others, try to appreciate them as unique individuals. Don’t look down on people to build yourself up, and don’t place anyone on a pedestal—relate to others as equals, and you’ll do everyone a favor.



WORLD

- Rather than ignoring global issues or feeling powerless to help, consider ways you can make a difference. You may not follow through on every plan, but the key is to recognize how much one person can do and decide where your efforts matter most.
- Evaluate media messages with a critical eye. What attitudes are apparent in the message? What does the writer/presenter want you to think or do? How would different attitudes affect the way the message is delivered or received?
- Consider the small implications of big events. International issues always have some local impact, and we can relate to the struggles and triumphs of people around the globe.

ATTITUDE ASSESSMENT

Take the Attitude Assessment below, then consult the Scoring Guide to check your results.

Answer True or False to the following questions.

1. _____ I acknowledge my mistakes and focus on making things right and improving for the future.
2. _____ I get frustrated by my high expectations and find it hard to move on without a perfect result.
3. _____ When I’m upset, I go on the offensive and get confrontational immediately.
4. _____ I try to prepare for disappointment and spend a lot of time worrying.
5. _____ I consider risks but focus more on the positive. It’s better to aim for success than dread failure.
6. _____ I tend to blow off mistakes, blame someone else, or feel guilty for a long time after.
7. _____ When I fail somehow, I consider what I learned from the experience and focus on the positive.
8. _____ I work hard but know when stop, accept my results, and move on to something new.
9. _____ I get bored, frustrated, or upset easily, and it takes a long time for me to calm down or be content again.
10. _____ When people apologize, I forgive readily and try to strengthen the relationship again.
11. _____ I fight boredom and irritation by considering another person’s point of view, brainstorming benefits of the experience, etc.
12. _____ When someone is thoughtless or rude, I consider it a personal attack.
13. _____ When a plan doesn’t work out, I avoid thinking about it and steer clear of risks or new pursuits for a while.
14. _____ I assume careless people don’t mean to hurt my feelings or cause problems.
15. _____ I try to calm down and reflect rather than acting in the heat of emotion.

16. ____ I hold grudges and expect perfect treatment from everyone.

Scoring Guide:

Give yourself one point for each of these questions you answered "True": 1, 5, 7, 8, 10, 11, 14, 15

Give yourself one point for each of these questions you answered "False": 2, 3, 4, 6, 9, 12, 13, 16

Interpret your Score:

0-3: Do you want the bad news or the bad news first? Try to be more positive and get your attitudes to work for you rather than against you.

4-7: Not too bad, but there are areas where more attention to your attitude could be a big boost.

8-11: Way to be! You have a natural eye for silver linings and the hint of possibility. Try to share your positive outlook with others.

12-16: Astounding! You could probably admire an ocean sunset while your ship goes down or humbly accept the Nobel Prize. Keep up the great work!

INTEGRITY

Doing what you say, admitting what you do, and striving to do right.

Integrity is the foundation of good character. It means the difference between merely knowing what's right and actually doing what's right. It means backing up your beliefs with appropriate action. It means being the kind of person people can depend on and respect, even if they happen to disagree.

Developing integrity can be a challenging lifelong project. On the other hand, integrity is also a natural trait that can spring from close attention to our feelings. If you do something and feel guilty, if you say something that strikes you as "wrong" or unfair, or if you find yourself constantly reconsidering a decision and trying to justify it, you're probably confronting an integrity issue. Behaving with integrity doesn't ensure you'll feel great all the time, but rather than a nagging conscience, you're more likely to wish a situation were different or regret individual aspects of your choice. The "big picture" should remain clear.

Challenges to our integrity usually arise from one of two sources: fear or desire. We might act against our beliefs out of fear of negative consequences. For example, peers may encourage behavior we normally wouldn't consider, but the thought of standing out or earning dislike can change our minds. The other main threat to integrity occurs when we want something badly enough to compromise our principles. Whether the object of desire is a possession, an experience, or something less tangible such as popularity or pride, what we want often conflicts with what we ought to do.

Becoming a person of integrity requires vigilance and willpower, but the rewards are ultimately worth the

hard work. Character colors everything we do, shapes our relationships with others, and helps determine our place in the world. If we have nothing else, our character remains, and—it's worth repeating—integrity is the foundation of good character.

INTEGRITY ENCOMPASSES:

FAIRNESS

Treating others the way you would want to be treated. Justice with a human face.

JUSTICE

When the right thing happens; when consequences match behavior. Fairness in principle.

PEACE

Cooperation, not conflict. Fairness and justice for everyone.

HONESTY

Speaking, showing, and living the truth. Refusing to mislead others by word, deed, or implication. Keeping it real.

COURAGE

Doing what's right rather than what's easy or safe; acting in spite of fear, pain, or opposition.

EXAMPLE ACTIONS



SELF

- Practice moral thinking. Ignore what's expected or required for a moment and imagine how you'll feel about an action or decision in the future. Looking back, will you be proud or ashamed of your choices? What action best matches your beliefs and priorities?
- Be honest with yourself. Make an effort to see past pride, anger, fear, and even hope, which are important and motivating but can also cloud our judgment.
- Opportunities for courageous behavior arise all the time. Challenge yourself to overcome fear and doubt, accept reasonable risks, and take action even when it's not easy.



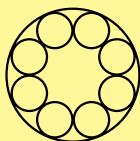
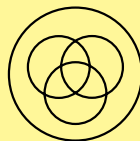
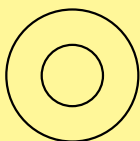
RELATIONSHIPS

- One's feelings and relationships can overcome a sense of fairness. In an argument, make an effort to listen to people objectively and form an opinion based on the merits of their statements.
- Tell the truth even when it isn't popular. People may not be happy, but they will likely respect you and truly value your input.
- Relationships involve risk. Have the courage to reach out to someone who isn't very approachable. Be the first to apologize after a disagreement. Share your feelings even if it means you could be hurt.



WORLD

- Have the courage to fight a losing battle. When you see a need in the community, step up to the opportunity, even if your efforts alone appear to have little impact or cause a negative reaction.
- Explore justice as a concept and an institution. Observe a court session, read about historic Supreme Court decisions, or even interview judges, lawyers, law enforcement agents, and politicians.
- If a politician, celebrity, or other notable figure does or says something you object to, write him/her a letter. On the other hand, don't forget to express your support when people take a stand you believe in.



INTEGRITY INDEX

The statements below can help you consider whether a particular act or decision reflects strong integrity. Simply answer each question in light of a situation and your possible responses to it. There is no "grading scale" or "passing score." The more "yes" answers you give, the better off you'll likely be, but only you can decide what it takes to maintain your integrity.

- _____ I would not mind seeing a story in the local paper with the details of my action/decision.
- _____ I would not be ashamed to explain my choice to others.
- _____ If they understood all the details of the situation, my close friends and family would likely support my decision.
- _____ I will probably look back on this experience in five or ten years and feel I made a good choice.
- _____ If my best friend were in this situation, my advice would be to do the same thing.
- _____ If I have children and grandchildren someday, I would be comfortable explaining my choice to them.
- _____ People who know me well would not be surprised by my decision.
- _____ If my story were in a book or movie, I would root for myself and consider my character the "good guy."
- _____ My choice is in line with the values of my religion, my parents, authority figures I respect, and/or other important moral guidelines.
- _____ This decision/action is in line with other positive choices I've made in the past.