



BREAK THE CYCLE

Lesson 7: Dealing with the Ups and Downs of Life

Learning Intention

Students understand that it is rarely the events in our lives that cause emotional pain, rather our **thoughts** about those events.

'There is nothing good or bad, but thinking makes it so.'
Shakespeare

<p>Evaluation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rain falls, lightning strikes and volcanoes erupt. When an event happens that we label 'good' or 'bad' we sometimes need to pause and step back before reacting. There is a difference between reacting and responding. The exercise that follows will help students to reflect on their thoughts and actions and how they can defuse the negative and pivot towards the positive.
<p>Awareness</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Start the class with five minutes of mindfulness. Teacher may use an app such as smiling mind or headspace. Students write down three things they are grateful for that has happened to them, since the last class.
<p>Intervention</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hand each student a piece of paper. Request them to fold the paper in half. They then have to label one half of the paper "Most Meh," and the other half "Most Excellent." Request students to write on the "Most Meh" side the three worst things that happened to them in the last few weeks. Then have them write the three best things that happened to them on the "Most Excellent" side of the piece of paper. Have students share some of the things they wrote under each heading either individually or in small groups. • Explain to students that sometimes bad and good things happen that are completely beyond the bounds of our control, like an accident, or a bereavement. How there are occasions that we can do or say things knowingly or unknowingly that can contribute to the events that happen to us. For example,

	<p>drinking too much coffee late in the evening and not being able to sleep. Not studying for an upcoming test, etc.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As a class, go over some examples of good and bad things that happened and some possible actions, thoughts or behaviors that contributed to these events. Really try to get students to think of any possible behaviors, feelings or thoughts that could have contributed in any way. • Next, direct students to look again at the things they listed on their paper. Have them determine if there was any action on their part that may have directly or indirectly contributed to the event. Was there an alternate course of action they could have chosen? Could they have responded differently? Have them list anything they can come up with. If you have time, you may capture some of what they mentioned on the board.
<p>Reflection</p>	<p>What are some of the “most meh” things you listed?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In what way did you directly play a part in that event happening? Indirectly? • Can you do anything to prevent this from happening again? • What can you learn from this experience that will make you better the next time that you face it? • What are some of the “most excellent” things you stated? • In what way did you directly play a part in these events? Directly? Indirectly? • What went well today? • To get more of this I will..... • What can you do when something bad happens that you cannot control? How can you respond in a positive way? <p>Watch https://youtu.be/AdAkyHEYsxY Write down the three major lessons, or takeaways from this Ted talk that speak the strongest to you, and share with the rest of the class.</p>