

**THE FIVE LIFE
STRATEGIES FOR
SUCCESSFUL TEENS**

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TEACHER'S RESOURCE BOOK

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THE FIVE LIFE STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESSFUL TEENS

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With so many distractions in today's world, achieving success and living up to one's full potential can be difficult tasks for teens. The first step to realizing goals is to put together a detailed, specific action plan. Deciding how to proceed with goals in a step-by-step manner helps keep teens on track and provides crucial practice for dealing with the kind of tough choices that inevitably arise in any teen's life. In addition to deciding upon and developing long-term goals, teens need to juggle an assortment of more immediate concerns, such as how best to prepare for school assignments while balancing extracurricular and social activities.

Goal setting is often a tricky proposition for many adults, so the process can be particularly daunting for teens. However, having goals is a key step in becoming a responsible adult. Studies have shown that teens who operate without clear goals are more likely to take risks and make dangerous choices. These include experimenting with drugs and alcohol and risky sexual behavior. According to a study by the National Youth Anti-Drug Media Campaign, (www.drugabuse.gov/MeetSum/CODA/Critical.html), teens who are engaged in goal-oriented activities such as sports and music are less likely to become involved with alcohol, drugs or other self-destructive choices. So there is more at stake here than simply teaching kids how to achieve.

Identifying goals and dividing them into easily managed categories such as long-term and short-term goals makes the process easier. Although they may not realize it, most teens already have practice with goal setting on a daily basis. (Working on a favorite video game until they complete a new level is one such example.) Without discipline and organization, however, setting goals becomes a meaningless exercise.

Discipline can take many different forms, such as practice, perseverance, regimentation, and self control. Simply put, discipline gives us the ability to follow up on the goals that we've set. On the other hand, organization will allow the benefits of discipline to come shining through. For example, when considering a difficult puzzle, first taking the time to organize the pieces—say, by color—will make the discipline involved in completing the puzzle yield faster results. It will create the proper environment for achieving the goal of completing the puzzle.

Another important life strategy, developing communication skills, has an immense impact on a teen's ability to move successfully through life. Surveys have shown that clear communication skills reduce the risk that children will develop anti-social tendencies or become the victims of crimes. The National Crime Prevention Council (NCPC) has found that 80 percent of teens have witnessed some violent altercation at school (www.ncpc.org/ncpc/ncpc/?pg=2088-9078). Many of these altercations were found to have been the result of poor communication.

When considering communication skills, teens may not realize that the key to being an effective communicator is being an effective listener. Easy-to-follow tips for good listening will improve their overall communication skills and help them succeed and avoid dangerous

situations. Later in life, these skills will remain key when students join the workforce and deal with supervisory and team member responsibilities.

Young people are frequently warned about the dangers of unhealthy risk taking. Yet they are rarely reminded that there are many benefits to taking *positive* risks. In order to excel, teens must learn to operate out of their comfort zones. This might take the form of auditioning for the school play or saying no to peer pressure. Whatever the case, the ability to take a deep breath and dive into new situations is an important step on the road to realizing one's full potential.

The *Five Life Strategies for Successful Teens* video and accompanying Teacher's Resource Book will first encourage teens to identify their dreams and goals. It will also provide them with the tools necessary to develop their own action plans in order to realize these dreams and to avoid the pitfalls that are certain to arise in the process of achieving them. These tools come in the form of specific strategies—set goals, be disciplined, communicate, get organized, and take positive risks. Used correctly, these strategies will be lifelong assets that will enhance the life of any young person.

After watching the video *The Five Life Strategies of Successful Teens* and participating in the class activities included in this Teacher's Resource Book, your students will be able to:

- understand how goal setting impacts present and future success
- tell the differences between long-term and short-term goals and small, medium, and large goals
- properly use time management strategies and tools / better prioritize tasks
- identify the qualities of a good listener
- implement good communication skills to solve conflicts and communicate needs
- understand the difference between positive and negative risks
- develop strategies for dealing with peer pressure as it relates to discipline and the achievement of goals
- gain inspiration from hearing from teens who have utilized the five life strategies to succeed despite the presence of obstacles in their lives

The Five Life Strategies for Successful Teens video begins with shots of teens sitting on bleachers at school and in a circle talking. One teen girl declares, “I want to be a sideshow performer or maybe a kindergarten teacher.” The sounds of other disembodied teens’ voices are also heard. They are talking about their hopes and dreams for the future: “I want to be...” “I want to go...” “I want to have...” “I want to do...” As the teens voice these dreams, shots continue of them sitting in a circle, interacting. The number of voices increases and they begin to merge, one on top of the other.

Next, the program’s two teen hosts are shown, superimposed over the school hallway and classroom. These hosts address the audience, asking questions such as “What are your dreams?” and “What are you doing to make them happen?” The male host declares, “Whatever your goals are, you can achieve them!” With this, the video’s title fades up. The female host explains that viewers are about to meet five teens who are making their dreams come true. “Each of them,” she notes, “will offer a unique strategy to help you achieve your goals and become the person that you want to be.”

The title *Strategy 1: Set Goals* appears. The first interview features Jennifer Howitt, who recounts her story of learning to excel at sports despite a hiking accident that left her paralyzed from the chest down at age nine. Currently a Georgetown University student, Howitt was introduced to wheelchair basketball by her father. By setting goals, Howitt was able to become a successful member of the U.S. Paralympics basketball team, winning gold at the 2004 Athens Paralympics Games. However, starting out in the sport was not so easy. “When I first started out in the sport, I wasn’t that strong. All that mattered was trying to achieve the goal of that game—scoring points, etc.” Howitt also speaks to the importance of differentiating between goals. “What I had to learn was how to set the little goals that build up to the big goal.” She also reminds students “the journey should be fun.”

Following Howitt’s interview, the teen hosts talk about the importance of setting goals and offer a specific example of how setting goals would be useful to a student who is trying to make the track team. Setting a goal of practicing one hour a day and four days a week is offered as a reasonable schedule to meet this goal. “When you set realistic goals,” the male host offers, “you have a much better chance of achieving them.” The hosts speak while superimposed over shots of students practicing lacrosse.

Next, the title *Strategy 2: Be Disciplined!* appears onscreen. The female host explains that, while we can all achieve and set goals, “You won’t get anywhere without discipline.” The male host points out that “being disciplined means training regularly to improve your skills.” This leads into an interview with Jesse Laslovich. Laslovich speaks about how discipline helped him become one of the two youngest individuals ever elected to the Montana House of Representatives. “Discipline, I think, has gotten me where I am today,” he says. Currently serving his first term as a State senator in Montana, Laslovich offers further

examples of how discipline serves him. “Discipline as a senator is staying seated when you want to talk. There comes a point in time where you pick and choose your battles and as a result of that you’re more effective,” he says. Shots of Laslovich in session and interacting with colleagues follow. Then, the teen hosts are shown superimposed over a shot of a student studying and resisting his friends’ efforts to distract him. “Sometimes being disciplined requires some sacrifice,” says the male host, explaining the value behind the studying student’s focus. “Persistence always pays off.”

For the third life strategy, *Communication*, Aja Monet Bacqui tells how communication was key when it came to her win in the 2005 National Slam Poetry Competition. The sequence opens with shots of the teen hosts speaking over shots of a student communicating with her math teacher as they solve a difficult problem. Monet Bacqui is then shown performing her poetry to an audience. “When you communicate, opportunities and doors open,” she says. Monet Bacqui goes on to tell students how this strategy aided her in overcoming challenges while growing up in Harlem and led to winning the competition. Communicating her needs and feelings made it all possible.

After the interview featuring Monet Bacqui, the teen hosts appear once again. This time, they indicate how important it is to consider ahead of time the goal of a conversation. The female host says, “Always aim for being clear and expressing what you think or feel.”

Following the communication strategy, the *Strategy 4: Get Organized!* title card appears. While superimposed over shots of a messy room, the hosts speak about the importance of this particular life strategy. This segues into an interview with Clayton Lilliard, a young entrepreneur who recounts how organization helped him to start his own philanthropic group, Clayton’s Backyard Crew. Lilliard’s group is dedicated to donating bikes to kids with parents in prison. “The main key for success for Clayton’s Backyard Crew has been organization,” he notes. “We have to organize each bike by gender, by size, by color sometimes.” Next, the hosts offer examples of specific organizational tools such as file folders, Palm Pilots and calendars. To demonstrate an example of this strategy, shots are shown of teens cleaning and organizing the messy room that was shown at the segment’s opening.

The final life strategy discussed is *Taking Positive Risks*. This segment opens with shots of teen photographers approaching strangers to seek permission to photograph them. “When you try something for the first time, no matter how big or small, it’s bound to feel a little scary,” viewers are told. An interview with Liz Murray, who went from being homeless in New York City to Harvard ensues. She tells how taking positive risks helped her on her way to one of the nation’s most illustrious universities. “Risk for me,” Murray says, “came in looking beyond the immediate and learning to always make an investment in the future. I think that one of the biggest risks that I have taken is living a life that you dream up.”

At this point, our teen hosts elaborate on the advantages of taking positive risks. “The more positive risks you take,” one explains, “the more confident you’ll feel about yourself. You owe it to yourself to try.”

The program concludes with a recap of each of the five strategies. “These were powerful stories,” says the male host. “Whatever your story, you should know that you can be the person you want to be.” Each of the five titles is again shown, over shots from that teen’s segment. With this, the intro reprises. Teen voices are again heard expressing their dreams: “I want to be...” “I want to build...” “I want to own...”

STUDENT ACTIVITIES

Name: _____

Pre/Post Test

1. **TRUE or FALSE:** Where goals are concerned, as long as you concentrate on the big goal, the smaller ones will fall into place. _____
2. **TRUE or FALSE:** Risk-taking is always a dangerous activity for teens. _____
3. **TRUE or FALSE:** An old-fashioned calendar is a great organizational tool. _____
4. **TRUE or FALSE:** Sacrifice is an important part of achieving goals. _____
5. **TRUE or FALSE:** Persistence is the ability to wait patiently for something to happen. _____
6. **TRUE or FALSE:** Listening is an important aspect of good communication. _____
7. **TRUE or FALSE:** One good way to organize is to keep track of your schedule and other important information in your head. _____
8. **TRUE or FALSE:** Trying something small for the first time should feel easy. _____
9. **TRUE or FALSE:** Risk-taking means always taking care of your immediate needs, and worrying about future needs in the future. _____
10. **TRUE or FALSE:** People succeed more easily when they have clear goals. _____

Answers to this quiz appear on the next page.

Name: _____

Answers to Pre/Post Test

- | | |
|--|--------------|
| 1. TRUE or FALSE: Where goals are concerned, as long as you concentrate on the big goal, the smaller ones will fall into place. | FALSE |
| 2. TRUE or FALSE: Risk-taking is always a dangerous activity for teens. | FALSE |
| 3. TRUE or FALSE: An old-fashioned calendar is a great organizational tool. | TRUE |
| 4. TRUE or FALSE: Sacrifice is an important part of achieving goals. | TRUE |
| 5. TRUE or FALSE: Persistence is the ability to wait patiently for something to happen. | FALSE |
| 6. TRUE or FALSE: Listening is an important aspect of good communication. | TRUE |
| 7. TRUE or FALSE: One good way to organize is to keep track of your schedule and other important information in your head. | FALSE |
| 8. TRUE or FALSE: Trying something small for the first time should feel easy. | FALSE |
| 9. TRUE or FALSE: Risk-taking means always taking care of your immediate needs, and worrying about future needs in the future. | FALSE |
| 10. TRUE or FALSE: People succeed more easily when they have clear goals. | TRUE |

Name: _____

Put your memory to the test by answering the following questions, which are based upon the strategies that you saw utilized in *The Five Life Strategies for Successful Teens* video.

- 1.** What important goal-setting strategy did Jennifer Howitt use to make the achievement of her large goals less overwhelming?

- 2.** How does discipline serve Jesse Laslovich in his role as a United States senator?

- 3.** According to Aja Monet Bacqui, what happens when you communicate effectively?

- 4.** In what ways does Clayton Lilliard use the organization strategy in running Clayton's Backyard Crew?

- 5.** What did Liz Murray risk by deciding to pursue her education?

Answers to this test appear on the next page.

Name: _____

ANSWER KEY

1. What important goal-setting strategy did Jennifer Howitt use to make the achievement of her large goals less overwhelming?

Answer: She learned how to break her large goals into smaller, more manageable goals.
2. How does discipline serve Jesse Laslovich in his role as a United States senator?

Answer: He has learned how to “stay seated” and not argue every point. It’s more effective to pick and choose his battles on the Senate floor.
3. According to Aja Monet Bacqui, what happens when you communicate effectively?

Answer: Opportunities and doors open.
4. In what ways does Clayton Lilliard use the organization strategy in running Clayton’s Backyard Crew?

Answer: They organize schedules and when the bikes will be worked on. They also separate the bikes by color, gender and size to make distribution easier.
5. What did Liz Murray risk by deciding to pursue her education?

Answer: Liz risked becoming detached from her peer group. Her friends were not on the same path, so she took a chance by going it alone.

Name: _____

Long-term and short-term goals are both equally important. To remind yourself of this, list three of your long-term goals (like becoming captain of the debate team or being elected student body president) across the top columns of the worksheet below. Next, list five to ten short-term goals below that will help you achieve each larger goal. Be sure to break your short-term goals into bite-sized pieces. Big goals will never be achieved by biting off more than you can chew!

| GOAL 1 | GOAL 2 | GOAL 3 |
|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| _____ | _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ | _____ |

| Short-term goals | Short-term goals | Short-term goals |
|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |

Name: _____

PART ONE:

Setting priorities and managing time are important parts of realizing your goals. Prioritize the following list of activities, assuming that your aim is to successfully submit an article to the school newspaper, The High School Gazette. Rank each activity according to how useful it will be to help you reach your goal. An activity ranked “1” indicates your top priority, while an activity ranked “10” is your least important priority. Refer to the *So Many Priorities, So Little Time* fact sheet if you find yourself confused about an activity’s rank.

| | PRIORITY from 1 - 10 |
|--|---------------------------------------|
| Hang out at the mall (news happens everywhere, right?) | |
| Research potential topics for your article | |
| Clean your room | |
| Compile a list of interviewees | |
| Return your best friend’s phone call | |
| Read up for your history exam | |
| Practice that tricky passage on the trombone | |
| Express your interest to a newspaper staff member | |
| Read the current Gazette and a few back issues | |
| Pick your little brother up from school | |

PART TWO:

When you are done, read your list to the class, starting with the activity that you ranked as “1.” Discuss your choices with the class and your teacher. Did you and your classmates prioritize your activities in the same order? Were classmates’ lists ranked in a manner that reflected completely different priorities? What does this tell you about the fine art of prioritizing?

Name: _____

How many times have you been on track with a goal, only to be distracted by some outside influence? In response to the scenarios below, list positive ways to respond to these distractions, whether the distraction is friends, pets, TV or family members.

- 1.** Mai is practicing the violin in order to prepare for her high school orchestra concert. She sits first chair and so has set a goal of one hour of practice every night. Susan, her best friend and next-door neighbor, stops by in the middle of Mai's allotted practice time with "exciting news" about some kids at school. What can Mai say to her good friend in order to stay on schedule?

- 2.** Tom's grandmother is staying with the family for a few weeks, right around exam time. He hasn't seen her in over a year because she lives across the country, so it's a rare treat. In order to stay on the football team, however, Tom must make at least a B on his Biology final. He has been trying to hit the books hard. But space is tight in the apartment and Grandma Grace squawks almost as loud as the family's parrot. What are Tom's options for solving his dilemma in a positive fashion?

- 3.** It's Sunday night. Marta knows that all the kids at school are going to be talking about the latest episode of this hot reality show that will air tonight. She also suspects that Mr. Jones is going to spring a pop quiz in English class. So she is trying to concentrate on reading her weekend assignment while watching the show, but it's not going so well. What choices might Marta consider in order to stay on track with her goals?

Name: _____

ACTIVITY 6

**NOTHING VENTURED,
NOTHING GAINED**

Identify the following actions as positive risks or just plain risky.

| | |
|--|--|
| <p>Fighting crime in his neighborhood is Jordan’s thing. He wants to be either a police detective or a lawyer. He sees some thugs rob his neighbor on the street and chases after them.</p> | |
| <p>Liz’s friends are constantly wondering when the next party is. None have plans to finish high school, much less attend college, but life on the streets is hard and they’re the closest thing to a family that she has. Liz pulls away from this “family” and risks isolation by pursuing her goal of furthering her education.</p> | |
| <p>A budding model, Simone sees a “Models Wanted” ad in her local paper. She calls the number and agrees to meet with a man who says that he’ll tell her all about the business and shoot some photos of her on the beach “if things go well.”</p> | |
| <p>Shawn is outraged that his city council has voted to close down his favorite skateboarding park. He spends his Saturday morning approaching strangers at the mall asking them to sign a petition to keep the park open.</p> | |
| <p>Even though she loves musicals, Vivian has never been too confident in her own vocal abilities. The fact is she’s terrified to even take a stab at singing in front of others so her performances have been limited to the shower. When her school announces auditions for her favorite musical, she decides to throw caution to the wind and audition.</p> | |
| <p>Flying has always been a huge fear for Carl. No matter how many people tell him that it’s the safest way to travel, he can’t help but think of the potential dangers. At the beginning of the school year, it’s announced that the school band, of which Carl’s a member, will be flying to a competition in Canada. Carl agrees to go, despite his fear, and white knuckles his way through the five-hour flight in order to showcase his tuba skills.</p> | |
| <p>John’s older brother is a star on the diving team at school. A year younger, John decides to attempt a swan dive from the high dive one Saturday to see if this talent runs in the family. As he plummets towards the water, he’s hoping to make a big splash in front of his girlfriend who waits poolside.</p> | |

Name: _____

Match each strategy below to the positive step taken towards the achievement of a goal. Use *The Five Life Strategies Cheat Sheet* fact sheet as a reference.

- 1. Set Goals**
- 2. Be Disciplined**
- 3. Communicate**
- 4. Get Organized**
- 5. Take Positive Risks**

| | |
|---|--|
| Kaitlyn cancels her date in favor of studying for her biology exam. | |
| Tom approaches a frazzled-looking mom at the grocery store. She has been struggling to keep her toddler in the shopping cart while waiting in line at the deli. He asks if she'd be interested in babysitting help. | |
| Gisele wants a Palm Pilot from her parents in order to organize her extra-curricular activities. She writes up a list of the benefits she'll gain from the Palm Pilot before initiating the discussion. | |
| In order to settle a dispute between two of his good friends, Jonathan suggests that the three of them meet and talk after soccer practice. | |
| After completing his paper route each week, Rahim takes time out to file each customer's invoice in his file folder to track billing. | |
| Instead of playing basketball after school with his buddies, Bill devotes one hour a day to sharpening his archery skills. | |
| Math has never been Marta's strongest subject. She resolves to take a summer math course offered at her high school in order to improve her skills. | |
| Sissy wants to lose ten pounds by the end of the summer. She talks to her doctor and makes a list of what must be done to accomplish this. | |
| Speaking in front of groups terrifies Jill. Despite this, she volunteers to read a difficult passage in French for her Introduction to French class. | |
| Before beginning her homework, Sam clears her workspace of her favorite teen magazines and makes a list of that night's most important subjects. | |

Name: _____

Putting your dreams and goals on paper is a great first start to accomplishing them. The teens you've met in *The Five Life Strategies for Successful Teens* video dreamed big. Do you? Use the activity below to express your biggest dream or goal in life. Try to be specific and remember: the sky's the limit!

For this activity, you will create the United States of Me. Start by identifying your biggest dream. This will be your **DESTINATION**. Along the way, there are sure to be distractions —major things like drugs or maybe less-obvious obstacles like procrastinating or watching too much TV. Think of what your personal distractions are likely to be. These are your **OBSTACLES**. They should be placed along the road. Give your obstacles names like “Swamp of Forgotten Dreams” or “Dead End Canyon.” Finally, list the smaller goals that will lead to your destination. Each **STOP** along the way should be a step that will lead you a bit closer to your final destination.

Using the template below, create your own roadmap on a separate sheet of paper, complete with images clipped from magazines or hand-drawn illustrations.

Pack your bags—your journey begins today!



First stop: _____



Second stop: _____



Obstacle: _____



Third stop: _____



Obstacle: _____



Fourth stop: _____



Obstacle: _____



Fifth stop: _____



Destination: _____

Congratulations, you've arrived at your destination!

Name: _____

The difference between positive and negative risks can be tricky for teens—or even adults—to grasp. Below is a list of some positive risks:

- Taking your fear of performing head-on by volunteering to sing a solo in the church choir.
- Though you know no one in your new school, making the rounds of available clubs to find one that fits for you.
- Despite being shy, you agree to tutor younger students in your favorite subject.
- You don't know how to swim and you're afraid of the water, yet you sign up for swimming lessons in order to conquer your fear.
- In order to complete an assignment for government, you approach strangers at the mall and survey their voting habits.
- You apply to several different colleges, including a few that seem out of your reach.
- It's International Day in the school cafeteria. You sample several dishes that you've never tried before.

As you can see from this list, some risks are positive for teens to take. Operating outside of your comfort zone is a great way to expand your horizons. In the space below, write at least five positive risks that you would be willing to take with this goal in mind.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

PART ONE:

Read the following excerpt from a *Teens Today* 2004 report, detailing the benefits of positive risk taking.

POSITIVE RISK-TAKING CUTS ALCOHOL AND DRUG USE AMONG TEENS

National study links adolescent risk profiles to substance use, academic performance, and mental health.

BOSTON (November 29, 2004) – Teenagers who challenge themselves by taking positive risks, such as joining an athletic team or volunteering to perform community service, are more likely than those who don't to avoid alcohol and other drug use, according to the *Teens Today* 2004 report released today by SADD and Liberty Mutual Group. Teens' "Risk Profiles" (Risk Seekers and Risk Avoiders) are also linked to their academic performance and overall emotional well-being.

For years, parents and educators have steered young people toward activities they believe will help prevent poor decision-making. Now we have 'proof positive' it works," said Stephen Wallace, chairman and chief executive officer of the national SADD organization. "Although teens are hard-wired to take risks, this research makes clear that those risks don't have to be dangerous ones."

The Myth of Risk

While many adults have long linked risk-taking with negative behavior, a majority of young people (52 percent) believes that risk-taking refers to positive activities. Significantly, the *Teens Today* 2004 report reveals that teens who take positive risks (Risk Seekers) in their lives, their schools, and their communities are 20 percent more likely than teens who do not take positive risks (Risk Avoiders) to avoid alcohol and other drugs and 42 percent more likely to avoid drinking because of concerns about academic performance.

Positive Risk-Taking by Teens

"This important new research suggests that we can help teens to reframe risk-taking as potentially positive and redouble our efforts in encouraging them to test their limits in constructive ways, as opposed to destructive ways," stated Paul Condrin, Liberty Mutual executive vice president, Personal Market.

This activity is continued on the next page.

Name: _____

The Teens Today 2004 research identified three broad categories of positive risk-taking for young people.

Life Risks

Social – e.g. joining a club or group

Emotional – e.g. asking someone on a date or sharing feelings with friends

Physical – e.g. rock climbing

School Risks

Academic – e.g. taking an advanced placement course

Athletic – e.g. trying out for a sports team

Extracurricular – e.g. running for student council

Community Risks

Volunteering – e.g. helping the elderly or homeless

Mentoring – e.g. working with younger children

Leading – e.g. starting a business or charity

Parents and peers can help teens to take positive risks by:

- Modeling inclusive social behavior and coaching positive peer-to-peer social skills
- Identifying and discussing emotional reactions to issues or events
- Encouraging a focus on academics and consideration of higher level courses
- Supporting club or activity membership and/or athletic participation
- Involving family and friends in community-service project(s)

*Source: <http://www.saddonline.com/teens today.htm>
SADD, Inc. (Students Against Destructive Decisions)*

PART TWO

On a separate sheet of paper, write a brief essay in which you identify ways that you could take more positive risks. Use the three categories mentioned in the article, and explain how you currently DO or potentially COULD increase your positive risk-taking choices. Explain what you think the benefits of your risk-taking will be.

FACT SHEETS

Name: _____

**SO MANY PRIORITIES,
SO LITTLE TIME**

Most activities can be identified as belonging to one of these three different types of priorities:

High:

These must get done now, whether or not they relate to the particular goal at hand. There is no time to spare. Putting them off might jeopardize your success.

Medium:

Priorities that are listed as “medium” are necessary for the completion of your goal, but their immediate completion isn’t quite as urgent as high priorities. Starting them as soon as possible is a good idea.

Low:

Low priorities may or may not even affect the outcome of your goal. If they are necessary to complete, they can be done sometime in the future.

Name: _____

1. **Set Goals**

Setting goals involves thinking about what it is that you wish for out of life. Whether you want to go to a concert or want to run for national office, setting goals is the first step towards achieving what it is that you're after. When you set realistic goals and break large goals into smaller goals, you have a much better chance of getting what you're after. Prioritizing goals is another important step. All goals are definitely not created equal! Having the ability to divide them into low, medium, and high priority is key.

2. **Be Disciplined**

Discipline is what carries us along towards the realization of a goal. This means training regularly in order to improve your skills, even in the face of distractions.

3. **Communicate**

Effective communications skills allow us to let our needs be known. At the same time, it's important to understand the perspective of the person with whom you're communicating. In other words, listening is a key part of this strategy. Good communicators consider ahead of time the conversation's goal. Think about what you want to achieve out of the exchange.

4. **Get Organized**

Though it often gets a bad rap as tedious and boring, organization is actually a way to give your brain a break. When your environment, thoughts, and tools are organized, it makes your work easier and more effective. The right tools can make getting organized a breeze. Organizational tools might include any of these items: a Palm Pilot, a computer, file folders, a calendar, a bulletin board or a desk.

5. **Take Positive Risks**

Risk taking may seem out of place as a strategy for teens. For the most part, however, taking positive risks simply means being willing to operate outside of your comfort zone. Trying something new can be scary, but such activities are often fertile ground for personal growth. Sometimes this will mean following your own path, and separating yourself from the pack. Because it turns out that the pack is not always the safest place to be.

LISTENING STRATEGIES

Pay attention to a speaker's non-verbal clues.

These can tell a lot about what is going on in their head.

Put yourself in the speaker's shoes.

The ability to empathize will always make for smoother communication.

Make eye contact with the speaker.

Let them know that you're really paying attention and that you care about what they have to say.

Form questions to ask about the information you're hearing.

This will help you process information as the conversation progresses. Make sure that the time is right to ask the question, however. Don't interrupt, but rather save the question for an appropriate time.

Try to anticipate what the speaker will say next.

Anticipating what the speaker will say next helps you track the conversation and where it's headed.

If you are having trouble staying focused, try jotting down notes.

Jotting down notes during a conversation is not always possible or appropriate. However when it is you'll find that it's a great way to stay focused on what you're hearing.

SPEAKING STRATEGIES

Maintain eye contact with your audience.

Eye contact will show that you're engaged with the audience and invested in sharing information.

Have a goal in mind for what you're trying to communicate.

Formulating a goal for a conversation beforehand will force you to give careful thought to what you want to communicate.

Practice the key points you want to get across in advance.

Practice makes perfect in all things, and communicating is no exception. This will help lessen your nerves when the time comes to actually let your needs be known.

Speak in simple terms.

Big words may make you sound like a brainiac, but if your point is lost on the listener, then the big words are useless. Using overly-complicated language may only serve to confuse the listener.

Name: _____

FACT SHEET

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