

**MAKING GOOD  
CHOICES:**  
Keys to Good Decisions

MAKING GOOD CHOICES:  
KEYS TO GOOD DECISIONS

CREDITS

EXECUTIVE PRODUCER

Anson W. Schloat

PRODUCER

John G. Young

TEACHER'S RESOURCE BOOK

Barbara Christesen

Copyright 2006  
Human Relations Media, Inc.

# MAKING GOOD CHOICES: KEYS TO GOOD DECISIONS

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	1
Learning Objectives	2
Program Summary	3
Student Activities	
1. Pre/Post Test	5
2. Class Debate	7
3. Investigative Reporting	8
4. Research Project	10
5. Self-Assessment	12
6. What Are Your Values?	14
7. Role Plays	15
8. Crossword Puzzle	16
9. Predicting Outcomes	18
10. Illustrating You	20
11. What Will You Decide?	21
12. Know Your Own Mind	23
13. Taking Positive Risks	24
Fact Sheets	
1. Characteristics of a Good Decision	25
2. What Are Values?	26
3. Pros and Cons of Peer Pressure	27
4. How Peer Pressure Works	28
5. Strategies for Dealing with Peer Pressure	29
6. Assertiveness	30
7. Internet Safety Tips	31
8. Teen Drug Facts	32
9. Bibliography	34
Other Programs from Human Relations Media	35

Decision-making plays a major role in all our lives, but it is especially critical for students in their teen and pre-teen years. The decisions that young people make during these formative years will affect their future in ways they often cannot even imagine at present. The ability to make wise personal choices which show awareness of the possible consequences is not only a true gauge of maturity, it is a necessity if young people are to avoid getting themselves into unpleasant and even dangerous situations.

Peer pressure plays a major role in teenage decision-making. It is not uncommon for people to seek acceptance by their peers, but for adolescents and pre-teens, peer pressure is stronger than at any other time in their lives. At the same time they are beginning to work toward independence from their parents, they are struggling to be part of a group that will help provide security and give them a sense of their own identity. Although peer pressure can often be a positive influence, it is also a major cause of bad decision-making by teens.

Why do kids give in to peer pressure and make unwise or unsafe decisions? Some do it because they want to be liked and to “fit in” or because they worry that other kids might make fun of them if they don’t go along with the group. Some may go along because they are curious to try something new, or because they believe “everyone is doing it.” Being called a “nerd” or a “wimp” by others in their peer group will often influence kids to go against their own values, ignore the risks involved, and jump into a situation they may later regret.

All through our lives, we have to make decisions about whether or not to engage in certain activities. The key to making good choices is to think about these activities before an actual situation occurs. It helps a great deal to stay true to one’s own values, beliefs and goals. Decisions that can change someone’s life—such as whether to use drugs, skip classes or connect with a stranger on the Internet—should never be made in the heat of the moment. Such decisions should be anticipated and carefully weighed, and the answer should come from a person’s own self-knowledge.

The program *Making Good Choices: Keys to Good Decisions* and its accompanying Teacher’s Resource Book were created to help young people understand that the desire to fit in with a peer group can sometimes lead to making bad decisions. The program helps students recognize that there are strategies they can follow to help them avoid making choices they might later regret. The video provides an in-depth description of the four characteristics of a good decision, with vignettes that illustrate these characteristics. Both the video and the activities in this Teacher’s Resource Book encourage students to get to know what their own values are, to think about the decisions they will probably have to face, and to make up their minds in advance.

After viewing the video *Making Good Choices: Keys to Good Decisions* and participating in the activities included in this Teacher's Resource Book, your students will be able to:

- understand the four characteristics of a good decision
- accept that making a bad decision can affect the course of their lives
- understand what peer pressure is
- recognize that peer pressure can be both a positive and a negative force
- anticipate some of the decisions they will eventually have to make and think about what they will do when the time comes
- learn how to gauge the potential consequences of a decision
- understand the necessity of considering the consequences of their decisions
- examine their own values, beliefs and goals
- examine their own attitudes toward alcohol and other drugs
- recognize that it is not always safe to trust someone they meet on the Internet

As *Making Good Choices: Keys to Good Decisions* begins, four young people are together in a parking lot. Steve and Ken are smoking marijuana. They offer the joint to Jenna, who thinks about it for a minute and then takes it. But when the joint is offered to Tanya, she immediately turns it down. After the boys leave, Tanya asks Jenna why she accepted the marijuana. Jenna cannot give a reason, except that she “didn’t have time to think.”

Two narrators, a male and a female, appear on-screen. They speak to the viewers about the importance of thinking about major decisions before you actually have to make them. The narrators introduce the four characteristics of a good decision, which appear on the screen:

1. A good decision has good consequences.
2. A good decision lets you be you.
3. A good decision supports your goals.
4. A good decision hurts no one.

The two narrators explain that peer pressure often affects the choices that teens make. They wonder how Tanya was able to make the right choice under pressure. The scene returns back to the schoolyard, and Tanya explains to Jenna that she had thought about the whole question of drug use beforehand and was mentally prepared to say no. The narrators agree that it is important to prepare ahead of time for crucial decisions.

In the next scene, Ken and Steve tell Paolo that they are cutting class and going to Ken’s house to watch videos. They ask Paolo to come with them, but Paolo is worried about getting caught. He tries to discuss his concerns with the other boys. What if they get suspended? What will his parents think? Will he be grounded and have to miss Jake’s party?

The narrators interject comments on how Paolo is using a healthy decision-making process: He is thinking about the consequences of cutting school, he knows that it would go against his values, and he knows it would interfere with his goal of going to a party that weekend. As for the last characteristic, “A good decision hurts no one,” Paolo concludes that missing class time could hurt him by messing up his final grade. He decides to turn down Ken and Steve’s invitation. They make fun of him and call him a teacher’s pet, but Paolo stands his ground.

The narrators agree that Paolo made the right choice based on the four characteristics of a good decision. Then they introduce another scene between Jenna and Tanya, the two girls who were faced with a decision about smoking pot when the video opened. The girls are skating in the park when they see some kids smoking cigarettes. They recognize

Rita, the older sister of their friend Dana, and discuss the fact that she is with a group of kids that are always in trouble, always “wasted.” Tanya says that she doesn’t talk to those kids anymore because she cares about different things than they do, and Jenna agrees that she really doesn’t like smoking pot and does not want to hang out with them either.

The narrators follow this scene by pointing out that a decision about smoking, drinking or using other drugs can say a lot about the kind of person you want to be. These things can all affect your future—your health, academic success and your reputation for trustworthiness. Decisions of this type define who you are and what your values are, so it’s important not to wait until a peer pressure situation arises before thinking about your values and your choices.

The next scene illustrates a dangerous situation. Erica and Dana are coming out of school when they meet Dana’s older sister, Rita. Erica smells alcohol on Rita’s breath and sees her take a swig from a friend’s flask. Rita offers to drive Dana and Erica home. Erica tells Dana that she is worried about getting into the car with Rita because they could get stopped by the police or have an accident. Dana doesn’t believe that her sister is really drunk and calls Erica a nerd.

The narrators agree that Erica is right to worry because half of all teens who die each year are killed in car accidents, most of which involve alcohol or drugs. This is a decision which could definitely result in someone getting hurt, and this is not the time to make an impulsive choice. In the end, Erica makes the right choice and tells Rita and Dana that she cannot go in the car with them because her mother is picking her up.

Peer pressure is not always a negative force. Sometimes friends can have an important and positive effect on a major decision. In the next scene, Justin tells his friend Chris that he met a really cool guy online named Kent who shares his passion for baseball. A few days later Justin says that he is going to meet Kent at the park on Saturday. Chris is concerned. He asks Justin if he ever actually talked to Kent and if he knows anyone who has met him. Justin says no, and Chris says that Kent might be a sexual predator pretending to be Chris’ age just to lure him into a meeting. He suggests that Chris invite Kent to his house when his parents are home. Justin takes his advice, but Kent refuses to come to this house and accuses Justin of not trusting him. This sends up a red flag to Chris, who pleads with Justin not to go to the park alone.

The narrators explain that this is a dangerous situation. They agree that Chris is being a good friend by trying to convince Justin not to do something that could potentially be disastrous. At last Justin sees the logic in Chris’ arguments and decides that he is not going to the park to meet Kent. As the program draws to a close, the narrators reiterate the importance of taking advice from friends who have your best interests in mind and not listening to those who try to involve you in something risky. They then conclude by summarizing the main points made in the video, including the characteristics of a good decision.

# STUDENT ACTIVITIES

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## Pre/Post Test

Decide whether the following statements are true or false.

1. TRUE or FALSE: Decisions that you make without thinking too much usually turn out to be the best decisions. \_\_\_\_\_
2. TRUE or FALSE: The degree to which your parents trust you will depend largely on the kinds of choices you make. \_\_\_\_\_
3. TRUE or FALSE: Young teens rarely have to make any really important decisions. \_\_\_\_\_
4. TRUE or FALSE: Many bad decisions made by young people are the result of peer pressure—doing what their friends want them to do. \_\_\_\_\_
5. TRUE or FALSE: Peer pressure is not always a bad thing. \_\_\_\_\_
6. TRUE or FALSE: It doesn't pay to spend time thinking about what you should do until you actually have to deal with the problem. \_\_\_\_\_
7. TRUE or FALSE: Any choice you make that hurts someone else is a bad choice. \_\_\_\_\_
8. TRUE or FALSE: A good decision will always reflect the person you truly are. \_\_\_\_\_
9. TRUE or FALSE: If you find that a friend does not share your values, it is probably wise to end the friendship. \_\_\_\_\_
10. TRUE or FALSE: If you think your friend is about to do something risky, the best thing to do is mind your own business. \_\_\_\_\_

*Answers to this test appear on the next page.*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## Answer Key

- |     |  |       |
|-----|--|-------|
| 1.  | TRUE or FALSE: Decisions that you make without thinking too much usually turn out to be the best decisions.                      | FALSE |
| 2.  | TRUE or FALSE: The degree to which your parents trust you will depend largely on the kinds of choices you make.                  | TRUE  |
| 3.  | TRUE or FALSE: Young teens rarely have to make any really important decisions.   | FALSE |
| 4.  | TRUE or FALSE: Many bad decisions made by young people are the result of peer pressure—doing what their friends want them to do. | TRUE  |
| 5.  | TRUE or FALSE: Peer pressure is not always a bad thing.  | TRUE  |
| 6.  | TRUE or FALSE: It doesn't pay to spend time thinking about what you should do until you actually have to deal with the problem.  | FALSE |
| 7.  | TRUE or FALSE: Any choice you make that hurts someone else is a bad choice.  | TRUE  |
| 8.  | TRUE or FALSE: A good decision will always reflect the person you truly are.   | TRUE  |
| 9.  | TRUE or FALSE: If you find that a friend does not share your values, it is probably wise to end the friendship.                  | TRUE  |
| 10. | TRUE or FALSE: If you think your friend is about to do something risky, the best thing to do is mind your own business.          | FALSE |

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Choose one of the following debate statements about making good choices. Write a paper arguing for or against your chosen statement. Then use your paper to debate the topic with other classmates. If possible, use newspaper, magazine and Internet articles to back up your opinions.

1. Teenagers should not have any restrictions on the way they use the Internet.

OR

Parents have a right to monitor their teenager's use of the Internet, including the web sites visited and the people he/she is chatting with online.

---

2. Nearly all teens are bound to experiment with alcohol or tobacco at some point during their youth. Parents should understand this and not punish their kids for trying these things.

OR

Parents are wise to impose strict rules banning use of drugs, tobacco or alcohol. If their kids prove they cannot be trusted to obey the rules, they should expect some form of punishment from their parents.

---

3. Students who are caught cheating on a test or copying someone else's homework have proven themselves to be dishonest and should receive a failing grade.

OR

A teacher who suspects a student of cheating should always give the student the benefit of the doubt.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

PART ONE

Ever hear the expression, “Learn from your mistakes?” Here is your chance to learn from someone else’s mistakes. Imagine that you are a newspaper reporter writing an article about youthful decisions that a person may later regret. Interview an older friend or family member about some decision he or she made as a teen that the person now regrets. Think of five questions to ask the person, and write them in the boxes below. Use the space below each question to write the person’s answer. If you need more space, use the back of this sheet.

Question 1:

---

---

---

---

---

Question 2:

---

---

---

---

---

Question 3:

---

---

---

---

---

*This activity is continued on the next page.*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Question 4:

---

---

---

---

---

Question 5:

---

---

---

---

---

### PART TWO

Evaluate your subject’s answers carefully and write a brief report or newspaper-style article based on what you have learned. (Remember to give a false name to the person you interviewed—do not reveal his or her true identity.) Use a separate sheet of paper to write your report. Make up a snappy headline for your article—and don’t forget your byline!

### PART THREE

With your teacher’s permission, class members may organize all their interviews into a booklet or “newspaper” to be shared with others. Students can work together to come up with a title for the publication, as well as illustrations for the cover and inside pages. If possible, each class member can be given a copy of the book.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Research one of the news topics below and write a brief paper on your findings. You can gather information at your school or local library or on the Internet. Use a *Resource Tracker* (Activity 4b) to keep track of your information.

### THE DEVELOPING BRAIN

At what age is the human brain fully developed? What have researchers discovered about how underage drinking affects the growing brain of a teen? Is the brain of a teenager capable of making sound and rational decisions? How can marijuana and other drugs affect the development of a young person's brain?

### PEER PRESSURE: HOW IT AFFECTS TEENS

Peer pressure is a contributing factor in many problems facing young people today. What are the major problems related to peer pressure? How can young people learn to cope with pressure and use their own judgment to define what is right and wrong? What advice would you give to help teens resist negative influences and lead healthier lives?

### DRUGS AND JUVENILE CRIME

How do alcohol, marijuana and other drugs affect the risk of a juvenile crime being committed? What types of crimes are committed most often by young people who decide to drink or use illegal drugs? What are the consequences of these crimes?

### TEENS AND ALCOHOL

What percentage of teens and pre-teens try alcoholic beverages? What percentage of teens drink alcohol on a regular basis? What is the connection between drunk driving and teen death and accident rates? What can be done to lower the incidence of drinking among teens?

### THE LEGAL SYSTEM

There is an ongoing debate in our society about whether or not youths should be charged as adults in certain types of crimes. On one side there is the argument that teens do not have the maturity, mental capacity or decision-making ability of an adult. Those on the other side argue that everyone knows it is wrong to commit a violent crime. Investigate this debate, including current articles in newspapers and magazines among your sources.

### POSITIVE RISK-TAKING

What does "positive risk-taking" mean? Why is positive risk-taking good for teens? What does it help them to develop? What are some of the great human accomplishments that have resulted from positive risk-taking? What studies have been done to assess the value and/or necessity of taking risks to achieve desirable and beneficial goals?

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Title of book or article:	Title of book or article:
Author(s):	Author(s):
Published by / URL:	Published by / URL:
Copyright date:	Copyright date:
Subject covered:	Subject covered:
Quote(s):	Quote(s):
Notes:	Notes:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

How likely are you to make the right choice in a really important matter? If you are not sure, this self-assessment might help you get a handle on your decision-making skills. Use the following scale to answer each question below:

1 = NEVER      2 = SOMETIMES      3 = USUALLY      4 = ALWAYS

1.	When you are with your friends, do you feel like you have to prove your value as a person or a friend?	
2.	Do your friends or family members express concern about your actions?	
3.	Would you neglect your school work if you had an opportunity to do something you find more enjoyable?	
4.	Do you enjoy doing things you know to be dangerous?	
5.	Are you afraid of being left out of group activities?	
6.	Do any of your close friends ever behave in a way that makes you uncomfortable?	
7.	Do you buy clothes that are very similar to what the other kids in school are wearing?	
8.	Do you confide in strangers on the Internet?	
9.	Do you change your mind about something whenever you hear a different viewpoint?	
10.	Do you ever find yourself doing things you really don't want to do?	

### SCORING

**If your score is between 10-20,** you are probably a good decision-maker.

**If your score is between 20-30,** you need to think more carefully about the decisions you are making.

**If your score is between 30-40,** you are most likely making some very poor decisions and engaging in potentially risky behavior.

Use the *Characteristics of a Good Decision* fact sheet to evaluate your response to each situation and how you might improve it. Then complete the next page of this activity.

*This activity is continued on the next page.*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Based on the questions you answered with 4-Always, write a paragraph about the problems you have when it comes to making choices. Include at least one step you can take toward solving each problem. Continue on a separate sheet if you need more space.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Do the same for the rest of the questions, based on the way you answered.

3-Usually

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

2-Sometimes

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

1-Never

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**WHAT ARE YOUR VALUES?**

Below is a list of values. Choose the ten that are most important to you right now. Number these from 1 to 10 in the order of their importance to you.

- |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Making new friends      | <input type="checkbox"/> Preparing for my future | <input type="checkbox"/> Getting along with my parents |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Being good in sports    | <input type="checkbox"/> Making money            | <input type="checkbox"/> Being popular                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Having good morals      | <input type="checkbox"/> Getting good grades     | <input type="checkbox"/> Being respected               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Being creative/artistic | <input type="checkbox"/> Helping others          | <input type="checkbox"/> Protecting the environment    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Standing up for myself  | <input type="checkbox"/> Being honest            | <input type="checkbox"/> Respecting differences        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Having a healthy body   | <input type="checkbox"/> Living by my religion   | <input type="checkbox"/> Being trusted by my parents   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Family life             | <input type="checkbox"/> Having a good time      | <input type="checkbox"/> Being compassionate           |

Discuss your choices with the rest of the class. Try to get an idea of which things your classmates value the most. Then write your answers to the questions below.

1. What are the five things that seem to be most highly valued by the students?

---

---

---

2. Does everyone have the same values as you? Is there anything wrong with that? Why do you suppose different people have different values?

---

---

---

3. What are some problems that could arise when your values conflict with someone else's? How would you handle such problems?

---

---

---

4. Have you ever been in a situation where two or more of your values were at risk? For example, your team is scheduled to play this Friday night, your friend is having a huge party on Friday, and your family is having its annual reunion out of town. All three are important to you. How would you resolve this situation?

---

---

---

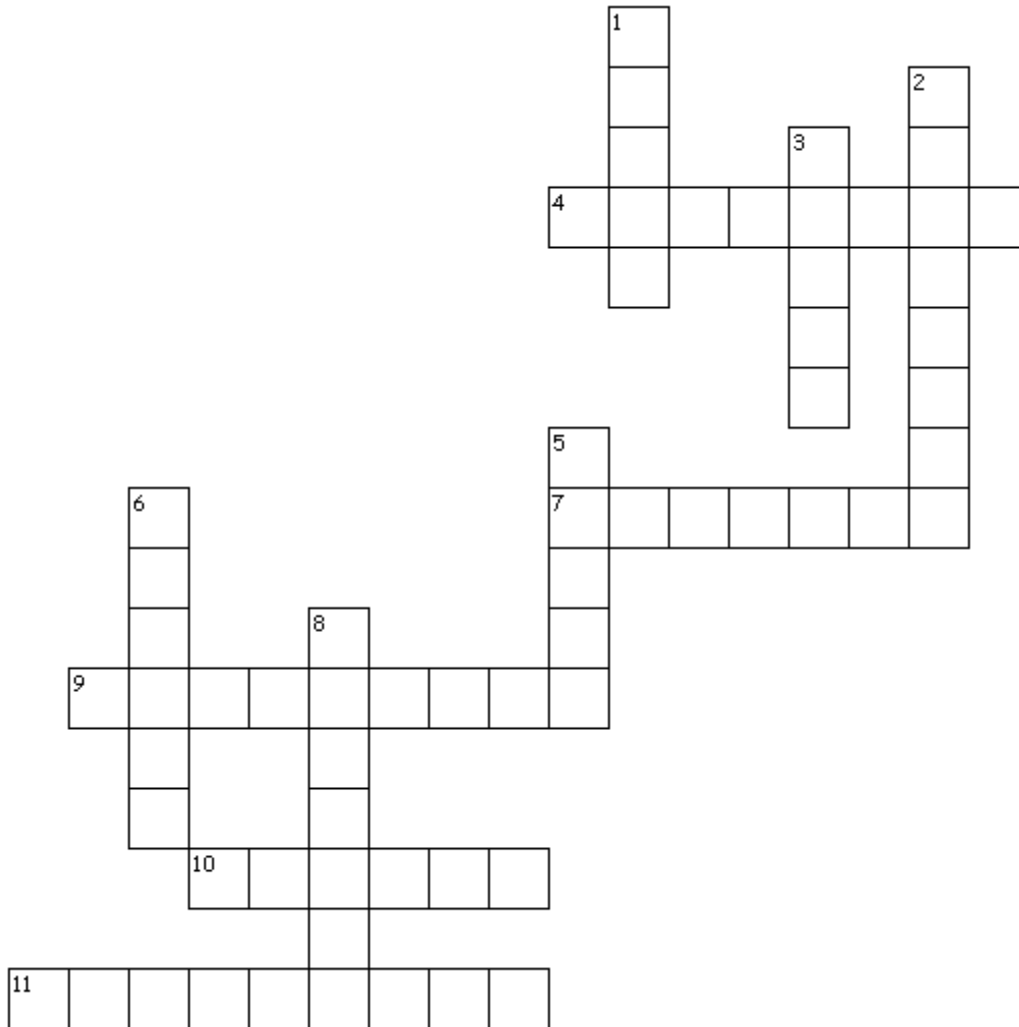
Name: \_\_\_\_\_

To illustrate how peer pressure can be both good and bad, divide the class into teams of three to role play the following situations. In each situation, one person must try to make a choice about what to do, and two other people must try to convince him or her which option to choose. The decision-maker listens to each side, weighs the consequences of that choice and finally makes a decision.

1. Cara is trying really hard to lose some weight so she can be more popular in school. She has been following a diet that her doctor gave her and is very happy that she has lost ten pounds. One day some of the kids ask her to go out for pizza with them after school. Cara is happy to be invited, but pizza is not on her diet. What will she do?
2. Dirk is with some friends at the mall. One of the guys suggests that they have some fun by seeing who is the best shoplifter. He proposes that they split up, go to different stores and steal something from that store. The person who comes back with the most valuable stolen object gets to keep all the stolen goods. Everyone except Dirk is enthusiastic about the idea, but Dirk doesn't want to look like a wimp. What will he do?
3. Glenda is invited to a birthday party and sleepover at her friend Karen's house. When she arrives she learns that Karen's parents have gone out and that her 18-year-old sister, Pam, is in charge. When the birthday cake comes out, Pam puts a bottle of vodka on the table next to it and asks everyone if they're cool enough to make a "real" toast to Karen. She tells them that since they're all sleeping over, their parents won't find out. Glenda is really curious about how it feels to drink alcohol and this is her chance to find out. What will she do?
4. Cal plays the clarinet in the school band. Their annual spring concert is coming up, and the teacher asks Cal to play a solo in one of the numbers. Cal is thrilled but also very nervous. The night of the concert, Cal has such stage fright that his hands start to shake. One of the band members tells him that he needs something to calm him down, and he hands Cal a small green pill and some water. Cal is shocked at the idea of taking drugs, but he is also afraid that he will mess up his solo number and be embarrassed. What will he do?

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

CROSSWORD PUZZLE



ACROSS

- 4. Connecting with someone you meet on the \_\_\_\_\_ is very risky.
- 7. A good decision will have a good \_\_\_\_\_.
- 9. Teenage drinking can be very \_\_\_\_\_.
- 10. If something goes against your \_\_\_\_\_, it is wrong for you.
- 11. Making an \_\_\_\_\_ decision can often lead to trouble.

DOWN

- 1. Thousands of accidents each year are caused by \_\_\_\_\_ drivers.
- 2. Sometimes peer \_\_\_\_\_ can cause you to make bad choices.
- 3. The choices you make will determine how much your parents \_\_\_\_\_ you.
- 5. A good decision supports your \_\_\_\_\_.
- 6. Many choices that you make can have a long-term \_\_\_\_\_.
- 8. You have to live with the \_\_\_\_\_ of your choices.

*Answers appear on the next page.*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## Answer Key

### ACROSS

- 4. Internet
- 7. outcome
- 9. dangerous
- 10. values
- 11. impulsive

### DOWN

- 1. drunk
- 2. pressure
- 3. trust
- 5. goals
- 6. impact
- 7. results

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

“If I make a choice and the worst happens, can I live with the results?” This is the question you have to ask yourself whenever you are faced with a difficult decision. Read the situations below, and then write the worst possible outcome you can think of for each. Use your imagination, but make sure your outcomes are realistic.

1. Helene has been chatting online with a girl named Fran. Fran is the same age and seems to like all the same things as Helene. One day, Helene mentions to Fran that her parents have gone out for the day and she is alone in the house. Fran writes back and says that her dad is willing to drive her over to Helene’s house so the two can finally meet and spend some time together. She asks Helene for her address. Helene is hesitant at first because she knows her parents don’t want her to have friends over when they are out, but she really wants to meet Fran, so she finally gives Fran her address.

Outcome:

---

---

---

---

---

---

2. Tony is 14 and already dreaming about getting his driver’s license. One day his dad catches him sitting in the driver’s seat of the family car and warns him not to get any ideas about starting the engine. Tony goes to school and boasts to his friends that his dad let him drive the car around the block. His friends don’t believe him, but Tony insists. When the school bus stops in front of Tony’s house, his friends get off with him and dare him to take them for a ride in the car. Tony knows he can’t drive, but he doesn’t want to be embarrassed in front of his friends. He tells them to get in and he’ll drive them around the block.

Outcome:

---

---

---

---

---

---

*This activity is continued on the next page.*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

3. Nayda’s class gets out early one day and she has to wait for her mom to pick her up. She hears crying and sees some older kids beating up a young boy in the schoolyard. Nayda wants to do something to help the boy, but the older kids look pretty menacing. She finally decides not to get involved.

Outcome:

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

4. Jack is babysitting his little sister, Tanya, until his parents get home from work. Jack is watching Tanya play in the yard when his friend Will stops over. Will has a new CD with him and asks Jack if he can use his computer for a few minutes. Jack doesn’t mind, except that he will have to go in the house to show Will where the computer is. He finally decides that Tanya will be fine if he leaves her for just a minute, and he runs into the house with Will.

Outcome:

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Think of a creative way to illustrate the person you are: your values, your goals, your beliefs, your ideals, likes and dislikes, etc. Here are some suggestions:

Go through old magazines and journals and cut out pictures of things that are important to you. Make a collage out of the pictures, with a photo or drawing of yourself in the center.

Write a poem about yourself. Print the poem on a sheet of paper and illustrate it with either hand drawings or computer graphics.

Compose your own personal motto—the belief that you wish to live by. Design a poster, tee shirt, button or bumper sticker that illustrates your motto.

Make up a title for a book about yourself. Think of what some of the chapters in the book might be about. Then make up a Title Page and Table of Contents for your book, in which you identify the different chapters.

Imagine that you are 65 years old and have recently retired. Write a one-page essay on your most important accomplishments over the course of your life thus far. Explain what your goals are for the future.



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

3. Your friend asks you to help her cheat on the math midterm. She says that if she fails, her parents won't let her go on the class trip to Philadelphia. You really want her to go on the trip. You ask yourself:

If I do this, what might happen as a result?

---

Would doing this go against any of the things I believe in? If so, which beliefs?

---

Will this keep me from achieving any of my goals? Which ones?

---

Will anyone be hurt if I do this? Who will be hurt?

---

Will I do this?                      \_\_\_ YES                      \_\_\_ NO

4. There's a new kid in school who is having a rough time making friends. The other kids think he's "geeky" because he's very smart, he stutters a lot, and he's extremely small for his age. One day he asks you if you will sit with him in the cafeteria. You know all your friends will see you. You ask yourself:

If I do this, what might happen as a result?

---

Would doing this go against any of the things I believe in? If so, which beliefs?

---

Will this keep me from achieving any of my goals? Which ones?

---

Will anyone be hurt if I do this? Who will be hurt?

---

Will I do this?                      \_\_\_ YES                      \_\_\_ NO

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

We sometimes have to make important decisions in a hurry, with no time to give the matter serious thought. For that reason, it is a good idea to think about important issues before you have to deal with them and decide how you feel about these issues. Think about the following questions before writing your answers on a separate sheet of paper.

1. What kind of relationship do you want to have with your parents?
2. How do you feel about smoking?
3. What kind of reputation do you want to have among your friends?
4. How important is honesty to you? Are you a person who would lie, cheat or steal?
5. How do you feel about meeting people on the Internet?
6. Do you think it is okay for teens to have sex? When do you think you will be ready to have sex?
7. How do you feel about taking drugs? Is marijuana more acceptable to you than heroin, cocaine or any of the “major” drugs?
8. What are some of the dangers of alcohol? How do you feel about underage drinking?
9. How important is education to you? How much education, if any, do you want to get after high school?
10. What are your future career goals?
11. Apart from your career, what other goals do you have for the future?
12. How do you feel when you know you’ve hurt someone else, including your parents?

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:

- You take 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, you make 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 school, 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.

---

# FACT SHEETS

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**CHARACTERISTICS OF  
A GOOD DECISION**

As you saw in the program, there are four characteristics of a good decision. Here they are:

1. A good decision has good consequences.

*Think through what might happen, and decide if it is good or bad.*

2. A good decision lets you be you.

*If something goes against your values, it is a bad choice.*

3. A good decision supports your goals.

*Stay away from actions that could get you in trouble or hurt your academic record.*

4. A good decision hurts no one.

*And that includes you!*

TIP:

*A good way to decide if you are making a good choice is to ask yourself:*

*“If I make this choice and the worst happens, can I live with the results?”*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

VALUE (noun): val-yoo

That which is important to you or that which you regard highly; the worth or importance of something.

- Values help us to set priorities and decide what is important about life, including relationships.
- Not everyone shares the same values.
- We learn values in many different ways—at home, at school, at a place of worship or a community group.
- Most often, we learn values in subtle ways, such as following the example of someone we respect and admire.
- Values are very personal. No one can force us to adopt a particular value system.
- Values can serve as a personal guidance system for making decisions and choices that we can be happy with.
- Explaining values is not always easy.
- Many times we may not have a clear idea of what we value until a situation leaves us feeling uncomfortable or hurt.
- Although values are an individual thing, there are some values that we, as a society, have agreed to and written into our laws.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**PROS AND CONS  
OF PEER PRESSURE**

Peer pressure can be positive as well as negative. Here are some examples of each type.

**NEGATIVE**

- Negative peer pressure can cause you to do things you don't really want to do.
- Negative peer pressure is strongly associated with drug and alcohol abuse.
- Negative peer pressure can cause you to engage in risky and often dangerous behavior.
- Giving in to peer pressure can lower your self-esteem.
- Giving in to peer pressure can cause you to lose the trust of your parents and other family members.

**POSITIVE**

If enough kids get together, peers can pressure each other into doing what's right, such as:

- saying no to drugs, tobacco or alcohol.
- studying harder to make the honor roll.
- taking part in a Midnight Run to help the homeless.
- trying out for a sport.
- stopping a bully from picking on someone.
- creating a really great science project.
- making friends with a new kid at school.
- joining a club after school.
- planning ahead for college.
- tutoring someone who needs help in math.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**HOW PEER  
PRESSURE WORKS**

Have you ever given in to pressure? Like when a friend begs to borrow something you don't want to give up or to do something your parents say is off limits? Chances are you probably have given in to pressure at some time in your life.

How did it feel to give in to pressure? If you did something you wish you hadn't, then most likely you didn't feel too good about it. You might have felt...

- sad
- anxious
- guilty
- like a wimp or pushover
- disappointed in yourself

Everyone gives in to pressure at one time or another, but why do people sometimes do things that they really don't want to do? Here are a few reasons:

- They are afraid of being rejected by others.
- They want to be liked and don't want to lose a friend.
- They want to appear grown up.
- They don't want to be made fun of.
- They want something so badly that they don't care what they have to do to get it.
- They don't want to hurt someone's feelings.
- They aren't sure of what they really want.
- They don't know how to get out of the situation.

When you face pressure you *can* stand your ground. Remember, you have a right to resist.

Source: [www.thecoolspot.gov/peer\\_pressure5.asp](http://www.thecoolspot.gov/peer_pressure5.asp)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**STRATEGIES FOR DEALING  
WITH PEER PRESSURE**

Teens often recognize peer pressure after the fact, when the damage has already been done. If you can recognize it up front, when it is happening, you have won half the battle. As you heard in the program, there are five basic strategies to help you deal with peer pressure:

1. **Recognize peer pressure.**  
Recognize when you are being manipulated. Keep your antenna up for signs that someone is trying to make you feel guilty for not going along with something.
2. **Listen to your inner voice.**  
Consider the effect the group is having on you. Listen to your conscience—the voice inside of you that tells you how you really feel about something. It's almost never wrong.
3. **Talk to someone outside the group.**  
Talking to someone who is not involved in the situation will help you get a clearer picture of what's going on.
4. **Imagine your parents can see you.**  
Think about what your parents would say or do or how they would feel if they knew what you were doing. Imagining their reaction might be enough to stop you in your tracks.
5. **Consider the risks.**  
Think it through and consider the possible consequences. Ask yourself if it is worth the risks involved.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

When you are being pressured to do something you do not want to do, you need to be assertive. Being assertive means standing up for yourself and expressing your feelings clearly, firmly, and respectfully.

An assertive person:

- feels free to make choices and is not afraid to say no.
- takes responsibility for getting his/her needs met, and will ask questions without being afraid of seeming ignorant or stupid.
- does not take responsibility for the behavior of others or for situations beyond his/her control.
- wants to have his/her opinions heard.
- does not allow himself/herself to be intimidated by status or age.
- works to get his/her needs met and does not let a situation grow into a crisis.
- projects a positive self-image by maintaining good posture and a calm, firm tone of voice.

### Assertive Communication

It's not just what you say that counts, it is the way your message comes across to others. It helps to:

- be honest with yourself about your own feelings.
- keep calm and stick to the point.
- be clear, specific and direct.
- ask if you are unsure about something.
- use appropriate body language.
- keep repeating your message while also listening to the other's point of view. Try to offer alternative solutions if you can.
- always respect the rights and point of view of the other person.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

- Be careful who you trust online. Remember that online friends are really strangers. No matter how friendly they are, or how long you have been talking to them, they may not be who they say they are.
- Keep your personal information secret when chatting online. Never give out personal information (such as name, address, phone number, school, town, password, schedule, your picture) even if your online friend asks for this. Never fill out questionnaires or any forms online.
- Be careful that your e-mail address is not in any online profile. Only give your e-mail address to people you already know and trust.
- Respect your friends. Do not give out their addresses—or any information about them—without their permission.
- Let your parents know who you are chatting with. Do not enter a chat room without your mom or dad’s supervision and approval.
- Be suspicious of anyone who tries to turn you against your parents, teachers or friends. They may be using you for some questionable action that they are engaged in.
- Never meet in person with someone you have only been in touch with online. If you feel that meeting this person is really important to you, you must tell your parents or guardian and take them with you. Be sure you arrange to meet in a public place in daytime. Never allow the person to come to your home if your parents are not around.
- Tell someone if you receive a message that is bullying or that makes you feel uncomfortable or in danger. If you are worried in any way by an online message, tell a parent, a teacher or a counselor at school.
- Learn how to block senders. If you find that you are receiving emails from someone you do not want to communicate with, the best thing to do is to block that person’s email address.

## ALCOHOL

- Alcohol use among young people under 21 is the leading drug problem in the United States.
- Every day 5,400 young people under 16 take their first drink of alcohol.
- In 2005, one out of six eighth-graders, one in three tenth-graders, and nearly one out of two twelfth-graders were current drinkers.
- In 2004, more than seven million underage youth, ages 12 to 20, reported binge drinking—having five or more drinks on at least one occasion in the past 30 days—according to data released in 2005.
- Every day three teens die from drinking and driving. At least six more youths under 21 die each day of non-driving alcohol-related causes, such as homicide, suicide and drowning.
- Recent studies have found that heavy exposure of the adolescent brain to alcohol may interfere with brain development, causing loss of memory and other skills.

Source: Georgetown University's Center on Alcohol Marketing and Youth, 2006 report on underage drinking, <http://camy.org/>

## MARIJUANA

- Kids use marijuana far more than any other illicit drug. Among kids who use drugs, 60 percent use only marijuana.
- Marijuana use can lead to a host of significant health, social, learning and behavioral problems at a crucial time in a young person's development.
- Kids can get hooked on pot. Each year more kids enter treatment with a primary diagnosis of marijuana dependence than for all other illicit drugs combined.
- Getting high impairs judgment, which can lead to risky decision making on issues like sex, criminal activity or riding with someone who is under the influence of drugs or alcohol.
- Marijuana can hurt academic achievement and puts kids at risk for depression and anxiety.
- Memory, attention and verbal fluency appear to suffer among regular, long-term marijuana users.

Source: [www.jointogether.org/news/research/summaries/2006/long-term-marijuana-use-may.html](http://www.jointogether.org/news/research/summaries/2006/long-term-marijuana-use-may.html)

*This fact sheet is continued on the next page.*

## TOBACCO

- 21.7 percent or 3.5 million high school students are current smokers.
- 4,000 kids (under 18) try smoking for the first time each day.
- 1500 kids (under 18) become new regular, daily smokers each day.
- 400,000 people in America die each year from their own cigarette smoking.
- Between 38,000 and 68,000 people die each year from other people's smoking
- Six million kids under 18 alive today will ultimately die from smoking (unless smoking rates decline).
- 8.6 million people in the U.S. currently suffer from smoking-related illnesses.

**FACT: Tobacco damages your health.** Smoking is the most common cause of lung cancer. Smoking is also a leading cause of cancer of the mouth, throat, bladder, pancreas and kidney. Smokeless tobacco can cause mouth cancer, tooth loss and other health problems.

**FACT: Tobacco affects your body's development.** Smoking is particularly harmful for teens because your body is still growing and changing. The 200 known poisons in cigarette smoke affect your normal development and can cause life-threatening diseases, such as chronic bronchitis, heart disease and stroke.

**FACT: Tobacco is addictive.** Cigarettes contain nicotine—a powerfully addictive substance. Three quarters of young people who use tobacco daily continue to do so because they find it hard to quit.

**FACT: Tobacco can kill you.** Smoking is the leading preventable cause of death in this country. More than 400,000 Americans die from tobacco-related causes each year, and most of them began using tobacco before the age of 18.

**FACT: Smoking kills more people than alcohol, AIDS, car accidents, illegal drugs, murders and suicides combined.** Of the roughly 545,000 kids who become new regular, daily smokers each year, almost a third will ultimately die from it. In addition, smokers lose an average of 13 to 14 years of life because of their smoking.

*Source: Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids, [www.tobaccofreekids.org](http://www.tobaccofreekids.org), Eric Lindblom & Katie McMahon*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

### On the Web

[www.choicesforteens.com](http://www.choicesforteens.com)

Telling it like it is on the top issues facing teens today.

[www.sadd.org](http://www.sadd.org)

Official website of Students Against Destructive Decisions.

[www.safeteens.com](http://www.safeteens.com)

A place for teens to learn how to use the Internet safely.

[www.teenadviceonline.org](http://www.teenadviceonline.org)

Provides support for teens through a network of peers from around the globe.

[www.teencentral.net](http://www.teencentral.net)

Teen help for teen problems.

### In the Library

Cooney, Caroline B. Driver's Ed. New York: Delacorte Press, 1994. FICTION

Fitzpatrick, Elyse, Jim Newheiser, and Laura Hendrickson. When Good Kids Make Bad Choices. Harvest House Press, 2005.

Gallo, Donald R, editor. No Easy Answers: Short Stories about Teenagers Making Tough Choices. New York: Delacorte Press, 1997.

Gowen, L. Kris. Making Sexual Decisions: The Ultimate Teen Guide. NetLibrary, Inc., 2003.

Pendharkar, Sumant S. Raising Yourself: Making the Right Choices. Cahners Business Information, Inc., 2001.

Seymour, Tres. The Revelation of Saint Bruce. New York: Orchard Books, 1998. (FICTION)

Tomey, Ingrid. Nobody Else Has to Know. New York: Delacorte Press, 1999. (FICTION)

Underwood, Stacy L. Challenges and Choices: A Teen's Personal Guide for a Successful Progression Into Adulthood. iUniverse, Incorporated, January 2001.

Wickert Koubek, Christine. Friends, Cliques and Peer Pressure: Be True to Yourself. Enslow Publishers, Inc., 2002.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

HUMAN RELATIONS MEDIA

OTHER PRODUCTS

OTHER PROGRAMS  
FROM HUMAN RELATIONS MEDIA

<i>Drama Queens and Tough Guys: Helping Teens Handle Emotions</i>	video/print or DVD/print
<i>Coping with an Emotional Crisis</i>	video/print or DVD/print
<i>How Rude: 10 Rules of Common Courtesy</i>	video/print or DVD/print
<i>The Power Trip: Bullying in School</i>	video/print or DVD/print
<i>Connect the Dots: How School Skills Become Work Skills</i>	video/print or DVD/print
<i>What Type of Person Am I? Personality and Careers</i>	video/print or DVD/print
<i>In Search of Character (10 part series)</i>	video/print or DVD/print
<i>The Real Character/Real People Series: Profiles in Citizenship</i>	video/print or DVD/print
<i>The Real Character/Real People Series: Profiles in Courage</i>	video/print or DVD/print
<i>The Real Character/Real People Series: Profiles in Empathy</i>	video/print or DVD/print
<i>The Real Character/Real People Series: Profiles in Honesty</i>	video/print or DVD/print
<i>The Real Character/Real People Series: Profiles in Perseverance</i>	video/print or DVD/print
<i>The Real Character/Real People Series: Profiles in Respect</i>	video/print or DVD/print
<i>The Real Character/Real People Series: Profiles in Responsibility</i>	video/print or DVD/print
<i>Surviving Peer Pressure: You Can Do It</i>	video/print or DVD/print

**Visit our website for detailed descriptions of the above programs.**

Available from  
Human Relations Media  
41 Kensico Drive  
Mount Kisco, NY 10549

Phone: 800 / 431-2050  
Fax: 914 / 244-0485  
Web: [www.hrmvideo.com](http://www.hrmvideo.com)