



Living Values™
Education



RAINBOW LIBRARY VALUES ACTIVITY SERIES



Living Values Activities for Children

Ages 8-14 - Unit 7 - Happiness

For Educators, Parents and Principals Everywhere

Material and Activities in this Rainbow Values booklet are adapted from *Living Values Education Activities for Children Ages 8-14, Book 1* by Diane G. Tillman and educators around the world.

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Living Values™
Education

Activities for Children Ages 8-14 Book 1

Unit 7. Happiness

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LVE continues to be part of the global movement for a culture of peace following the United Nations International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-violence for the Children of the World.

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PLEASE REFER to the "Overview and Introduction" book for the full information of Living Values Education to maximise your classroom Values delivery and implementation opportunity.

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VALUES ACTIVITIES IN THIS BOOKLET SERIES

*Peace I - Respect I - Love and Caring - Tolerance -
Simplicity and Caring for our Earth and Her Oceans - Honesty
Happiness - Optional Unit on Substance Abuse - Responsibility*

A note from the author

I have had the privilege of being involved with Living Values Education (LVE) for 23 years, writing educational resource books and traveling around the world to conduct workshops and seminars – at UNESCO, schools, universities, retreat centers and refugee camps. When I initially became involved with LVE, I focused on developing a program that would help all young people explore and develop values. I wanted to develop something that would involve and inspire marginalized youth and also act to challenge privileged youth to look beyond their usual circles. I was yet to deeply understand the importance of values or values education. Twenty-two years later, I now see the world through a values lens. I am honored to be part of the global LVE family as we continue to co-create LVE.

I've often felt devastated, as I'm sure you have, when reading of violence and atrocities toward children and adults, the continuing plight of women and children in many parts of our world, the misery of refugees, and the horrors of violence in so many countries around the globe. I believe nurturing hearts and educating minds is an essential component in creating a sensible peaceful world of wellbeing for all.

A lack of basic education leaves young people incredibly vulnerable, apt to be taken advantage of and usually condemned to a life of poverty. They are susceptible to believing whatever those in authority tell them. For example, if you were a young person without an education and a powerful soldier handed you a rifle and offered wellbeing for you and your family if you killed.... Yet, in developed

countries where there are functional education systems, thousands of young people have traveled to join radical groups.

Many of these young people are marginalized and want to belong to a larger “family”, to be in a place where their courage and qualities are admired. The first instance decries the lack of basic education, the second the lack of providing safe nurturing, supportive environments and educating hearts. The importance of Education for All and the development of a values-based learning environment as an integral part of values education cannot be overstated.

If we were to expand this view outward, we could ask how humanity became embroiled in a state of seemingly continuous violence. What are the anti-values that create violence and war? What are the values, attitudes and communication skills that create peace, equality, dignity, belonging and wellbeing for all? What do we want in our world?

What young people learn is later woven into the fabric of society. When education has positive values at its heart, and the resulting expression of them as its aim, we will create a better world for all. Values such as peace, love, respect, honesty, cooperation and freedom are the sustaining force of human society and progress. Thank you for joining the Living Values Education family to help make a positive difference for children, educators, families, communities, and the world.

Diane G. Tillman



SETTING THE CONTEXT

Living Values Education is a global endeavor dedicated to nurturing hearts and educating minds. LVE provides an approach, and tools, to help people connect with their own values and live them. During professional development workshops, educators are engaged in a process to empower them to create a caring values-based atmosphere in which young people are loved, valued, respected, understood and safe.

Educators are asked to facilitate values activities about peace, respect, love and caring, tolerance, honesty, happiness, responsibility, simplicity, caring for the Earth and Her Oceans, cooperation, humility, compassion, freedom and unity to engage students in exploring and choosing their own personal values while developing intrapersonal and interpersonal skills to “live” those values.

The sixteen values units in the updated Living Values Education Activities books include other related universal values such as kindness, fairness, determination, integrity, appreciation, diversity, gratitude, inclusion and social justice. Students soon become co-creators of a culture of peace and respect. A values-based learning community fosters positive relationships and quality education.

The Need for Values and Values Education

The values of peace, love, respect, honesty, cooperation and freedom create a social fabric of harmony and wellbeing. What would you like schools to be like? What would you like the world to be like? Reflect for a moment on the school or world you would like....

Children and youth grow toward their potential in quality learning environments with a culture of peace and respect. Relatively few young people have such a values-based learning atmosphere. A culture of judging, blaming and disrespect is often closer to the norm and is frequently mixed with varying levels of bullying, discrimination, social problems and violence.

The challenge of helping children and youth acquire values is no longer as simple as it was decades ago when being a good role model and relating moral stories was usually sufficient. Violent movies and video games glorify violence, and desensitize youth to the effect of such actions. Youth see people who display greed, arrogance and negative behavior rewarded with admiration and status. Young people are increasingly affected by bullying, social problems, violence and a lack of respect for each other and the world around them. Social media often negatively impacts teens who are already emotionally vulnerable. Cyberbullying and sexting have been linked to the increase in the suicide rate of pre-teens and teens.

Marginalized and troubled young people rarely achieve their potential without quality education. Feelings of inadequacy, hurt and anger often spiral downward and meanness, bullying, drug use, drop-out rates, crime and suicide increase.

As educators, facilitators and parents, there are many things we can do to reverse this downward trend and create wellbeing ... for young people and our world. As Aristotle said, "Educating the mind without educating the heart is no education at all."

LVE's Purpose and Aims

The purpose and aims of Living Values Education were created by twenty educators from around the world when they gathered at UNICEF's headquarters in New York in August of 1996. The purpose remains unchanged. The aims have been slightly augmented as has our experience and understanding since that time.

LVE's purpose is to provide guiding principles and tools for the development of the whole person, recognizing that the individual is comprised of physical, intellectual, emotional, and spiritual dimensions.

The aims are:

- ◆ To help individuals think about and reflect on different values and the practical implications of expressing them in relation to themselves, others, the community, and the world at large;
- ◆ To deepen knowledge, understanding, motivation, and responsibility with regard to making positive personal and social choices;
- ◆ To invite and inspire individuals to explore, experience, express and choose their own personal, social, moral, and spiritual values and be aware of practical methods for developing and deepening them; and
- ◆ To encourage and support educators and caregivers to look at education as providing students with a philosophy of living, thereby facilitating their overall growth, development, and choices so they may integrate themselves into the community with respect, confidence, and purpose.

The Living Values Education Approach

After ten years of implementing Living Values Education, a team of LVE leaders around the world gathered together to describe what they felt LVE was ... and had become.

Vision Statement

Living Values Education is a way of conceptualizing education that promotes the development of values-based learning communities and places the search for meaning and purpose at the heart of education. LVE emphasizes the worth and integrity of each person involved in the provision of education, in the home, school and community. In fostering quality education, LVE supports the overall development of the individual and a culture of positive values in each society and throughout the world, believing that education is a purposeful activity designed to help humanity flourish.

Core Principles

Living Values Education is based on the following core principles:

On the learning and teaching environment

1. When positive values and the search for meaning and purpose are placed at the heart of learning and teaching, education itself is valued.
2. Learning is especially enhanced when occurring within a values-based learning community, where values are imparted through quality teaching, and learners discern the consequences, for themselves, others and the world at large, of actions that are and are not based on values.
3. In making a values-based learning environment possible, educators not only require appropriate quality teacher education and ongoing professional development, they also need to be valued, nurtured and cared for within the learning community.
4. Within the values-based learning community, positive relationships develop out of the care that all involved have for each other.

On the teaching of values

5. The development of a values-based learning environment is an integral part of values education, not an optional extra.
6. Values education is not only a subject on the curriculum. Primarily it is pedagogy; an educational philosophy and practice that inspires and develops positive values in the classroom. Values-based teaching and guided reflection support the process of learning as a meaning-making process, contributing to the development of critical thinking, imagination, understanding, self-awareness, intrapersonal and interpersonal skills and consideration of others.
7. Effective values educators are aware of their own thoughts, feelings, attitudes and behavior and sensitive to the impact these have on others.
8. A first step in values education is for teachers to develop a clear and accurate perception of their own attitudes, behavior and emotional literacy as an aid to living their own values. They may then help themselves and encourage others to draw on the best of their own personal, cultural and social qualities, heritage and traditions.

Exploring and Developing Values

The choices of young people are critically important, not only for their own happiness and wellbeing at this vulnerable time in their lives, but also for their future. If they are to resist the powerful messages of negativity ubiquitous in our society and on social media, and move toward a love for values and positive socially-conscious choices, they need positive role models and the opportunity to cognitively discern the difference between impact of values and anti-values on their lives, the community and the world.

LVE values activities are designed to motivate students, and to involve them in thinking about themselves, others, the world in relevant ways. The activities are designed to evoke the experience of values within, and build inner resources. They are designed to empower, and to elicit their potential, creativity and inner gifts. Students are asked to reflect, imagine, dialogue, communicate, create, write about, artistically express and play with values. In the process, personal social and emotional skills develop as well as positive, constructive social skills. This is done most effectively when there is a values-based atmosphere and when teachers are passionate about values.

The Living Values Education Activities resource books are arranged to present a series of skills that build sequentially. However, it is important for educators to integrate values throughout the curriculum; each subject opens a window to view the self and values in relation to the world.

Three Core Assumptions

LVE resource materials are built on three assumptions. The first assumption is drawn from a tenet in the Preamble of the United Nations' Charter, *"To reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person"*

◆ Universal values teach respect and dignity for each and every person. Learning to enjoy those values promotes wellbeing for individuals and the larger society.

- ◆ Each student does care about values and has the capacity to positively create and learn when provided with opportunities.
- ◆ Students thrive in a values-based atmosphere in a positive, safe environment of mutual respect and care – where students are regarded as capable of learning to make socially conscious choices.

Values-based Atmosphere

Feeling Loved, Valued, Respected, Understood and Safe

As values must be caught as well as taught, the adults involved are integral to the success of the program, for young people learn best by example and are most receptive when what is shared is experienced. The establishment of a values-based atmosphere is essential for optimal exploration and development. Such a student-centered environment naturally enhances learning, as relationships based on trust, caring, and respect have a positive effect on motivation, creativity, and affective and cognitive development.

Creating a “values-based atmosphere” is the first step in LVE’s Developing Values Schematic. During LVE Educator Workshops, educators are asked to discuss quality teaching methods that allow students to feel loved, respected, valued, understood and safe.

Why were these five feelings – loved, valued, respected, understood and safe – chosen? Love is rarely spoken about in educational seminars. Yet, isn’t it love and respect that we all want as human beings? Who doesn’t want to be valued, understood and safe? Many studies on resiliency have reinforced the importance of the quality of relationships between young people and significant adults in their lives, often teachers. What happens to the learning process when we feel loved, valued and respected? What happens in our relationships with educators who create a supportive, safe environment in the classroom?

Real Learning Comes Alive in a Values-Based Atmosphere

Achievement automatically increases as real learning increases. Real learning and motivation come alive in values-based atmospheres where educators are free to be in tune with their own values, model

their love of learning and nurture students and the development of cognitive skills along with values.

This is not to say that excellent teaching will always occur when there is a values-based atmosphere; a values educator must also be a good teacher.

Modeling the Values from the Inside

In LVE Workshops, educators are asked to reflect on the values in their own lives and identify which are most important to them. In another session, they are asked to share quality teaching methods they can use to create their desired class climate.

Modeling of values by adults is an essential element in values education. Students are interested in educators who have a passion to do something positive in the world and who embody the values they espouse, and are likely to reject values education if they feel teachers are not walking their talk. LVE educators have shared amazing stories of change with angry and cynical pre-teens and teens, when they were able to stick to their values in challenging circumstances.

Teaching values requires from educators a willingness to be a role model, and a belief in dignity and respect for all. This does not mean we need to be perfect to teach LVE; however, it does require a personal commitment to “living” the values we would like to see in others, and a willingness to be caring, respectful and non-violent.

Skills for Creating a Values-based Atmosphere

Showing interest in and giving respect to students while pointing out well-done relevant characteristics over time can be used to build the ability of students to analyze their own behavior and academic skills, and develop positive self-assessment and intrinsic motivation. In this approach, there is a focus on human relationships as well as sensitivity to the level of receptivity and needs of the students.

Skills for creating a values-based atmosphere also include: active listening; collaborative rule making; quiet signals that create silence, focus, feelings of peace or respect; conflict resolution; and values-based discipline. Active listening is useful as a method of acknowledgement with resistant, cynical and/or “negative” students.

If you are implementing LVE independently, it may be easier to focus on the values that fit best into your curriculum. A bit of reflection about values or an interesting discussion here and there, can help students become more engaged – and see the difference values make.

Do I need to do every activity?

No. While it is good to include a variety of values activities, educators may choose not to do some lessons or may wish to substitute material. In many of the lessons you will find scripted questions and content. This has been provided as many educators have requested such specificity. Please feel free to adapt the questions to your own personal style, the needs of the students, the culture, and your particular setting.

PLEASE REFER to the “Overview and Introduction” book for the full information of Living Values Education to maximise your classroom Values delivery and implementation opportunity.

We hope you and those with whom you work enjoy and benefit from Living Values Education.

Thank you for your dedication to young people and nurturing hearts as well as educating minds.

UNIT SEVEN: HAPPINESS

Happiness Lessons

I hope you enjoy this unit on happiness with your students. The lessons on happiness in this updated version also contain content on sadness, depression and dealing with our own feelings of

sadness and hurt. As sadness is the opposite of happiness, this felt like the most appropriate place to put in this material. I felt this was necessary given the increasing suicide rates of young people.

Several lessons are designed to help students explore how they are part of creating their own sadness and happiness as part of building social and emotion skills to create happiness for themselves and others. Thank you for being the keeper of a values-based atmosphere and providing a safe place for young people to be, share, explore and grow.

Happiness Reflection Points

- When I have love and peace inside, happiness just comes.
- Happiness is a state of peace in which there is no upheaval or violence.
- Give happiness and take happiness.
- When there is a feeling of hope, there is happiness.
- Good wishes for everyone give happiness inside.
- Happiness naturally comes with pure and selfless actions.
- Lasting happiness is a state of contentment within.
- When one is content with the self, happiness comes automatically.
- When my words “give flowers instead of thorns,” I create a happier world.
- Happiness follows giving happiness, sorrow follows giving sorrow.

Happiness Goals and Objectives

- **Goal: To enjoy the experience of happiness.**

- **Objectives:**

- To enjoy the music of happy songs.
- To enjoy playing a game.
- To participate in an exercise of imagining a world of happiness.
- To paint or dance the feeling of happiness.

- **Goal: To increase knowledge about happiness and what creates happiness and sadness.**

Objectives:

- To participate in discussions about Happiness Reflection Points and be able to talk about two or more of them.
- To reflect about when they are happy, and to write about their feelings.
- To think about words that create happiness and words that cause harm.
- To think about actions that contribute to the happiness of the self, others, and the world.
- To write down things they are grateful for.
- To reflect on lasting happiness versus happiness from material objects.
- To reflect on the relationship between happiness and trying to do our best.
- To reflect on their own self-talk and how to encourage the self more.
- To state discouraging thoughts and generate corresponding encouraging or empowering thoughts.

- **Goal: To increase knowledge about sadness and depression. Objectives:**

- To discuss sadness and feeling low as the opposite of happiness.
- To listen to a story about a parent being depressed and to

understand that sometimes people experience being sad or depressed; to understand that depression is not catching; to understand that we are not responsible for a parent's depression.

- For students 10 to 14 to discuss suicide and how necessary it is to inform a responsible adult if someone they know shares that they want to kill themselves; to know it is important to tell that person how important they are and to ask them to promise not to kill themselves.
- To participate in a relaxation/focusing exercise on taking care of the self when I feel sad.

- **Goal: To explore skills for giving happiness.**

- **Objectives:**

- To do at least three actions at school that give happiness to others.
- To make up a story on giving happiness as part of a group.

- To do at least four actions at home that give happiness to members of their family.
- To think about the effects of excluding versus including others.
- To generate their own secret for giving happiness.
- To be part of a class project creating a happiness tree or giving tree.

HAPPINESS LESSON 1

Happiness

Play a happy song as the students enter.

Say, "This month we're going to explore the value of "Happiness."

- **Discuss/Share**

Discuss the following Reflection Points:

- When I have love and peace inside, happiness just comes.
- When one is content with the self, happiness comes automatically.
- Happiness is a state of peace in which there is no upheaval or violence.

As the teacher, share something that makes you happy. Then ask:

- What makes you happy?
- Can we create our own happiness? How?
- When do you feel most content?
- What kinds of things do you think to increase the feeling of happiness?
- What kinds of things can you do alone that make you feel happy?

List the students' ideas on the board. Help them identify differences in feelings – for example, feelings that are exciting versus feelings that are deeper and more long-term.

➤ Great. Now, think of three especially positive or happy moments. . . . Perhaps there was a special moment at home that stands out for you . . . or a moment while you were out in nature . . . or doing a sport . . . or being with a friend. . . or in this school. . . . Think of just three moments. . . . (Pause for a full two minutes.)

➤ Now, I would like you to write down the quality or value that you were experiencing during that moment of happiness.

Eight to Ten Activity: Make a zigzag happy book, or write sentences, “I feel happy when_____.”

– *Contributed by Linda Heppenstall*

Eleven to Fourteen Activity: Invite students to write about some of the happiest moments in their life and the values and qualities they were experiencing in those moments, or to write in their journal an entry on “I feel happy when . . .”

Close with the “*I Am Lovable and Capable*” Relaxation/Focusing Exercise.

HAPPINESS LESSON 2

Giving Happiness and Unhappiness

Begin with a song.

- **Share a Story**

Read aloud or ask students to read tales about happiness. Think of your favorite childhood stories about happiness. The teacher may want to select folktales or old legends about happiness. Or, read the following stories.

Eight to Ten Story: Read “The Heart School” by Diana Hsu or “Finding the Magic.” The former can be found in the Appendix (Item 7). “Finding the Magic” is the published version of the same story, developed further by Barbara Ramsey.

Eleven to Fourteen Story: Read “The Boy Who Grew Flowers” by Jen Wojtowicz. The Joy of Reading Project kindly gave their permission to post this story on the international LVE site,

www.livingvalues.net. You will find it under For Schools /Children Ages 8-14 / Download Free Stories / Happiness 8-14.

Discuss the story afterwards, highlighting how giving and thoughtfulness generates happiness.

Discuss the following: It has been said that Aristotle did not include happiness in his original taxonomy of emotions, for happiness is a result of virtue.

- **Discuss/Share for Ages 8 to 10**

Say, “In ‘The Heart School’ story, Marc learns that it is important not to get upset with himself or anyone else.”

Allow them to discuss the story, then ask:

- What caused Marc unhappiness at school? (Pushing and kicking others, speaking harsh and hurtful words, thinking “I can’t do it” and being impatient.)
- What did the Bear tell Marc was the secret of being happy? (Be patient, say only kind words, help others, and always have good thoughts about yourself and others.)
- Are there other things that help us be happy and stay happy?
- What do you think about that?
- Are there other things that cause unhappiness/sorrow?

What are those? (Take one of their responses at a time and follow it up with one of the following questions.)

- What would be the opposite of that? Would the opposite thing give happiness?

- **Discuss/Share for Ages 11 to 14**

In “The Boy Who Grew Flowers” story, Rink was perceptive and thoughtful. Allow them to discuss the story, then ask:

- What do young people your age do to give happiness to each other? (Allow them to generate a long list.)
- When you give happiness to someone, how do you feel inside?
- What are things that give unhappiness or sorrow? (Allow them to generate a long list of the current reality of their setting.)
- When you give unhappiness or sorrow to someone, how do you feel inside?

Note to Educator: If one of the students shares that he or she feels happy after being hurtful or mean, respectfully actively listen to their responses, then conclude with: “It sounds like sometimes you are hurt inside so you want to hurt others.” Then leave it be and see if their tendency to be kind increases over time. Be kind to them. If their tendency to hurt others does not improve within three months, refer them for counseling.

Ask:

- Which do you prefer – receiving happiness or sorrow?
- If you want to receive happiness, what do you need to give? (Yes, that’s right, what comes around goes around.)

If students mention gossip or spreading negative comments or rumors as something that gives unhappiness, discuss the below antidote. If gossip is common, take time to allow them to discuss this in depth and role play positive responses.

Giving Sorrow: Gossip – either verbally or on social media

- ***Antidote if gossiped about:***
 - ❖ Know that the person gossiping is insecure and being mean.
 - ❖ Question yourself: Was your action toward the other

person okay? If it was, don't worry. Discuss a saying by John Wooden: "Never worry about your reputation, only worry about your character."

- ❖ If your action was not okay toward the other person, think about what quality or value you would like to use in a similar situation if faced with a similar situation.

Proactive choice if someone gossips to you: Use benevolent assertion and have the courage to mention one or more of the qualities of the person being maligned.

- **Activities**

Eight to Ten Activity: Ask the students if they would like to make individual Happy Boxes or one Happy Box for the class. Make the boxes. Ask the students to write cards for the Happy Box, putting on each card a practical suggestion that would make them happier. Some classes may wish to make individual boxes and take them home. Other classes may wish to have one box for the entire class.

Note to Educator: Many classes have discussion time during their "values time" at this point. You may wish to keep the Happy and Unhappy Boxes for your class if the students like them and appear to benefit from them. Either daily or weekly, take one card out of the Happy Box. Try this for at least four weeks. At least once a week, share your experiences and progress with each other, and also look for areas that need improvement. As the students discover new ways to be happy, ask them to write those down on new cards.

- ***Eleven to Fourteen Activity:***

Step 1. Divide students into small groups of four to six and ask them to generate rules of happiness.

Step 2. Ask each group to share their rules of happiness.

Step 3. Ask the entire group if they think it is possible to do this. As a class, invite them to choose three rules of happiness they would like to practice in the classroom.

Close with a relaxation/focusing exercises of their choice.

HAPPINESS LESSON 3

Happiness Is Sharing

Begin with a song.

Ask a few students who wish to share their “secrets of happiness” or ask the students to share one line from their gratitude homework.

Discuss the following Reflection Points:

- Happiness naturally comes with pure and selfless actions.
- Give happiness and take happiness.

Ask:

- What are pure and selfless actions?
- Can anyone think of examples? (This can be asked in relation to animals, the environment, family, friends, and strangers.)

- **Activities**

Make something to give: Ask the students to make something to give to someone or think of something they can do for someone else. Examples are a friendly card for someone, a card for someone who is ill, a meal for the senior volunteers at your school, a poem for a friend, a happy heart card for a child you are tutoring in a younger class.

Game: If there is time during the week, perhaps simply play a game or do something that creates a mood of happiness. Sometimes giving happiness is spending time together and sharing something you all like to do. For instance, play a game

that everyone loves, one that usually brings lots of laughter. Think of the games that you enjoyed as a child.

You may want to try an unusual version of musical chairs. Change the rules by allowing more than one person to sit in a chair. The students circle around the chairs when the music is playing, and then sit in the chairs when the music stops.

Each time the music stops, another chair is removed. In this version, when the music stops and there are not enough chairs, instead of that child being out of the game, he or she simply sits on the lap of someone already seated on a chair.

You may want to stop the game when there are four or five people seated on one chair! In many countries, it is important to play one round with girls, another with boys. There are many suitable games that are fun. Play one that you enjoy, too.

Close with a relaxation/focusing exercise.

HAPPINESS LESSON 4

The Opposite of Happiness: Sadness and Depression

Begin with a song.

- **Discuss/Share**

Actively listen to their responses.

- What do you feel like doing when you are happy?
 - What is the opposite of being happy? (Sad, feeling low)
 - Have you all felt sad?
 - What do you feel like doing when you are sad?
 - How can we make ourselves feel better when we are sad?
- (Reinforce concepts learned/presented previously, such as talking

to the self in an encouraging and kind way, knowing that you are lovable and capable, talking with a friend, doing relaxation/focusing exercises and surrounding yourself with love, telling a safe adult about the difficulty, eating healthy foods, etc.)

- Another thing we can do when we are feeling sad is to lovingly accept our emotions. When we accept what we are feeling, we are accepting the self. It is important to love the self and to accept the self. Would it be okay if we practice that at the end of the lesson? Great.

Say, “Usually people say the opposite of feeling happy is feeling sad. Sometimes people call feeling sad, feeling “low”. Everyone feels sad sometimes. We human beings are interesting. We all need to be loved. Sometimes children and adults can feel sad because they are afraid that they are not loved or respected. We all like to be loved and respected and we all like to be successful. Yes?”
“When people feel sad or low for a few weeks and don’t feel like they want to do their usual activities in life, that is usually called being depressed.”

Ask: Have you ever heard adults talk about depression or feeling depressed?

- **Share a Story**

If you think it is appropriate for your students, read “Can I catch it like a cold? coping with a parent’s depression” by the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health. The Joy of Reading Project kindly gave their permission to post this story on the international LVE site, www.livingvalues.net. You will find it under For Schools / Children Ages 8-14 / Download Free Stories / Happiness 8-14.

Read just the story to the students. The information which follows the story is only for adults.

Invite the students to discuss the story, ask any questions and share whatever they wish. Actively listen and validate as appropriate.

Ask: How would you like people to treat when you are feeling sad?

- Would you like to receive friendly smiles?
- Would you like them to listen to you if you wanted to talk?
- If you don't want to talk, do you want them to tell you that you must talk? (No)
- Would you sometimes like a hug from a special friend?
- Would you want people to include you and just act normal around you? (Yes)
- Is there anything else you would like people to do?

Additional Questions for Ages 10 to 14: Sometimes we hear about people who commit suicide.

Ask:

- What is important to do if someone tells you they want to kill themselves? (Tell a responsible adult so that that person can get help right away.)
- What would you want to tell the person who is thinking of killing themselves? (Please list all of their comments on the board, acknowledging and actively listening to each suggestion.)
- Would anyone like to share anything else?

Yes, it is very important for people to know that they are important, they are good, they are special to you, they are loved – and that it is very, very, very, very important to not kill themselves. If anyone

ever tells you that they want to kill themselves, please tell them how important they are, and ask them to promise not to kill themselves. Promise them that things will get better.

Ask: Can we change things for the better if we are alive?
(Yes)

Say the following, if you can say it from your heart: “Each one of you is important. You are all powerful and wonderful, you are positive lights for the world.”

- **Activity**

Ask the students to write a journal entry, essay or poem on “When I am feeling sad, it helps me to feel better to . . .” Invite those who wish to share their poems, or a few ideas from their journal or essay.

Play some relaxing music and close with the relaxation/focusing exercise below. You may wish to play this special healing music published by ZenLifeRelax on YouTube. It is a Solfeggio frequency of 528Hz. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tnKBUdVh02s>

- **Taking Care of Me When I Feel Sad Relaxation/Focusing Exercise**

“Let the body be relaxed and still. Slow down within. . . . Breathe in deeply . . . and as you exhale, begin to relax. . . . Be aware of how you are feeling. . . . Breathe in deeply. . . and relax as you exhale. . . . Are your arms tight or your chest? Is there a feeling of sadness or hurt inside? . . . Allow yourself to feel where you are holding emotion in your body . . . perhaps in your throat . . . perhaps in your chest . . . perhaps in your stomach . . . perhaps in your gut. . . . Breathe in deeply . . . and exhale slowly. . . . Lovingly accept your emotions. . . . Be in the present . . . and lovingly accept how you feel. . . . Pay attention

to that feeling . . . accept it with love . . . and it will quiet down a little. . . . Surround your sadness or hurt with the light of love. . . . Visualize the light of love surrounding that pain . . . and feel that love. . . . Breathe in love . . . and relax as you exhale hurt. . . . Let the mind be still . . . and absorb the light of love. . . . Perhaps that area of pain is getting smaller as you absorb the light of love. . . . Feel that light of love. . . . You are lovable and capable. . . . Breathe in love slowly and relax. . . . Know you are lovable and capable. . . . Exhale any sadness or hurt. . . . Breathe in love. . . . Think for a moment of what quality or value would help you now. . . . Imagine that quality or value taking the form of a jewel and let that jewel appear in front of you. . . . It may be a jewel of love . . . or courage . . . compassion for yourself . . . or others . . . patience . . . or fearlessness. . . . You are a beautiful jewel. . . . You have the courage to be kind to yourself . . . and to live your truth. . . . Be still . . . quiet within . . . focused . . . absorb the light of love and peace. . . . Gradually begin to bring your attention back to this place . . . Wiggle your toes and move your legs . . . and bring your attention fully back to this place.”

Close with a nurturing song of peace or love and invite everyone to stand up and move around the room with the song.

- *Note to Educator:*

An Additional Lesson on Depression and/or Suicide

If some of the students are concerned about depressed parents or friends, or the suicide of someone they know, perhaps take another period to allow them to draw a picture of what happened, discuss it, and ask any questions. You will need to lovingly and sincerely active listen to and/or validate their comments.

Creating a safe and understanding space for them to share is important.

Perhaps read the story again. Definitely repeat part of the lesson above, that is:

“Yes, it is very important for people to know that they are important, they are good, they are special to you, they are loved – and that it is very, very, very, very important to not kill themselves.

If anyone ever tells you that they want to kill themselves, please tell them how important they are, and ask them to promise not to kill themselves. Promise them that things will get better.”

Also, it is essential to tell a responsible adult so they can get help.”
Ask: Can we change things for the better if we are alive? (Yes)

Promise them that you will work with them with whatever the concern is to make it better. Know what resources are available and ask the school or organization for help from the school counselor, psychologist or social worker if needed – or an outside organization.

Expressive Activity: Invite them to paint their feelings. Allow them to share their artistic creations.

Close with the Taking Care of Myself When I Feel Sad Relaxation/Focusing Exercise.

HAPPINESS LESSON 5

Encouraging or Discouraging Self Talk

Begin with a song.

- **Discuss/Share**

“Today, let’s think about the things we say to ourselves. Our self-talk can be positive or negative, encouraging or discouraging.”

Ask:

- What do you say when you make a mistake?
- What tone of voice do you use when you say that?
- What do you say to yourself when you're afraid that you'll miss the ball during a ball game or fail a test?
- If you make a mistake, do you feel better if you call yourself "Stupid"?
- Does it help if you get angry at yourself? (No.)
- Why do you think getting angry at yourself makes it worse? (One explanation: You are pouring negative energy on top of negative energy.)
- Does it help to get angry at someone else for your mistake?
Is that fair?
- Does it help if you say, "It's okay to make a mistake, all I have to do is correct it"? There's no need to feel angry or sad – mistakes are simply things through which we learn.
- What happens to your feelings when you say, "I'll never be able to do it" or "I'll never make it"?
- Are the feelings different when you say, "This is a bit scary, but I'll do my best"?

Make two columns on the board. For younger students, head one column with a sad face, the other with a happy face. For older students, head one column with the word "Discouraging/Disempowering" and the other with the word "Encouraging/Empowering".

➤ Ask students to tell you what they say to themselves that makes them feel sad or unhappy; and what they say or could say to themselves to make them feel glad or happy.

Then ask:

- Can anyone think of anything discouraging to say when working on an assignment?
- What can you say to yourself that is encouraging

or empowering when working on an assignment?

- Can you think of something discouraging to say to yourself when you are getting ready to come to school?
- What can you say to yourself to create a happy feeling when you are getting ready to come to school?
- Which one makes you feel better?
- What can you say to create a happier feeling when you are working with others?
- What can you say to create a happier feeling when you are trying to understand something disappointing?
- What differences do you notice in the tone of voice you use with yourself when you say things to make you happy?

➤ Ask the students to call out Discouraging thoughts and write them down under the appropriate column. Then ask them to find an Encouraging thought to substitute and write that down in the appropriate column.

- **Activities**

Ask for a volunteer to come up to the front of the room and share a discouraging thought. After the person shares, ask the students to call out encouraging or empowering thoughts to him or her. The volunteer is to then repeat a thought or two that he or she finds empowering. Enjoy continuing this with several volunteers.

Eight to Eleven Activity: Write a note to yourself, giving yourself advice about how you should talk to yourself.

Twelve to Fourteen Activity: Think about the Reflection Point: When there is a feeling of hope, there is happiness. Write a note to yourself, giving yourself advice about how you should talk to yourself.

Consider situations when it is best to be encouraging, and tell

yourself to persevere.

Invite the students who wish to do so to share some of their advice.

When working in a different subject area, the teacher might ask students about their inner dialogue. Continue to discuss this in a natural way, adding adaptive responses to the happy face list on the board.

Close with a relaxation/focusing exercise.

HAPPINESS LESSON 6

Three Wishes

Begin with a song.

One of the classes at West Kidlington School in the UK discussed the Reflection Point; “ Lasting happiness is a state of contentment within.”

The students talked about how happiness is temporary when sought from outside sources, that is, from wealth, material possessions, status, and relationships. They decided that lasting happiness is a state of contentment within that does not need to be fed by outside wants.

Ask:

- What happens when our happiness depends on getting money from someone? Can that happiness be constant?
- What happens when our happiness depends on getting a new possession (game, dress, etc.)? Can our happiness be constant?
- How do you feel when you do not get something you want?
- How can you remain happy when you do not get something you want?

- How long does your happiness last when you get something new?
- What kinds of thoughts and actions create lasting happiness?
- **Activity**

You have just liberated a genie from a bottle you found. The genie gives you the right to ask for three wishes: one for yourself, one for your family, and one for the world. What are your three wishes? Create a drawing of your three wishes.

– *Activity contributed by Marcia Maria Lins de Medeiros*

Close with a relaxation/focusing exercise.

HAPPINESS LESSON 7

Happiness at Home

Begin with a song.

- **Discuss/Share**

Ask the students to share any thoughts or questions they have from the last lesson. Ask them about their gratitude homework. Ask:

- What do you do with your family that makes you happy?
- What other things make you happy about your family?
- What do your parents say that make you happy?
- What do your parents like to hear from you?
- How many of you have older brothers and sisters? What kinds of things did you like to do with them when you were little?
- Do you think your younger brothers and sisters would like to do that with you?
- What do you do to give happiness to your family?

- How can we contribute to the happiness of others?

Say, “Let’s list all the things people your age can do to give happiness at home. List their responses on the board as they call out answers. Group them in different categories, such as, Words, Activities with Sisters and Brothers, and Actions.

- *Additional questions for Ages 12 to 14:*
- What can you genuinely say to your parents that they would like to hear?
- If a person gave you several compliments, but you did not feel that person meant it, how would you feel?
- When a person gives you one compliment, but you feel that person really means it, how do you feel?
- Is it important to be genuine? Why?
- When you give a compliment and are genuine, how do you feel inside?

- **Needs and Wants Activity**

Each student is to create a list of 12 things that give him or her happiness in life. As a class, discuss the difference between needs and wants. The students can discuss their choices in groups of three or four.

Reduce the list to six items, then three items. Discuss it more to finally arrive at the one item on the list that gives the most happiness. The students can then write a letter of appreciation to the person connected with that item.

– *Contributed by Ruth Liddle*

Homework: Tell students their homework this week is to give happiness by doing three or four good deeds at home without telling anyone. As the week progresses, ask how their homework is going. (A lot of joy is created in the classroom with this activity.) The students may tell you that someone found out. Tell them that is okay, but to do another secret good deed.

Close with a relaxation/focusing exercise.

HAPPINESS LESSON 8

Quality

Begin with a song.

Concept: When you do your best, there is happiness. Quality thoughts lead to quality words. Quality words lead to quality actions.

Stimulus: Ask each student to choose a piece of work of which she or he is proud. Or, think about something which he or she does well.

- **Discuss**

Talk about the importance of doing our best in work and at play.

Twelve to Fourteen Additional Discussion: Ask the students to discuss this in relation to the Reflection Point: “ When one is content with the self, happiness comes automatically.”

Activity

Form small groups of students. Ask each student to go around the circle saying something he or she appreciates about each student.

– *Contributed by Linda Heppenstall*

HAPPINESS LESSON 9

Including and Excluding

Begin with a song.

- **Discuss/Share**
- How do people feel when they are left out?
- I think almost everyone in the world has felt left out one time or another. Does it feel good?

- What can we do when we see that someone has been left out?
- How can we be inclusive rather than exclusive?
 - Are you happy when others are successful? (If not, ask why.

Then, ask if they can think of another way to think about the situation – so they can be happy for the successful person.

Perhaps bring up self-respect points. Or think, “She is getting the success she worked for; I will get the success I am working for.”)

– *Contributed by West Kidlington School*

Discuss the following: *Reflection Points*

- *“Good wishes for everyone give happiness inside.”*
- *“Happiness follows giving happiness, sorrow follows giving sorrow.”*

- **Activity**

Group story game: Make up two stories, one in which everyone gives sorrow, and another in which everyone gives happiness. Start with the unhappy story first. Use the same beginning situation, and go around the room asking each student to add something to the story. Then, make up a story in which everyone gives happiness. Have a good time!

Close with a relaxation/focusing exercise.

HAPPINESS LESSON 10

The Three Rings – Keeping Balance

Begin with a song.

- **Activity**

Step 1. Collect 3 hoops of different sizes – large, medium and

small size. Or, draw three circles – large, medium or small – on paper for the wall.

Or, if outside, draw three large, medium and small circles on sand/earth.

Step 2. Ask: “What makes you happy?”

Write down your answers on individual Post It notes or the equivalent or draw on the soil/sand.

Step 3. Invite the students to pair up with a buddy or sit in small groups.

Ask:

- Which of your answers reflect, what I can do and do well?
- Which of your answers reflect, what can I give and share with others?
- Which of your answers reflect, what time I have for me?
- Which do you prefer? (The children will probably say all!)

Step 4. Invite the children to place each of their answers in the Display rings for all to view.

Step 5. Ask: “Is there an equal amount in each ring or more in some other rings?” Share.

Step 6. Ask: “Are you in balance for what you choose to do with time for yourself?” Accept all answers as okay, with a challenge to find more time for the self.

Reflection: It’s good to be quiet and do things just for yourself as well as doing well and giving and sharing with others.

- *Contributed by Batool Arjomand*

HAPPINESS LESSON 11

Enact Happiness

Begin with a happy song.

Dance/Draw Happiness: Divide the students into two groups: those who want to create happiness through dance and those who want to create happiness through drawing or painting.

Optional Activity: Do a skit on happiness or play games.

End with a happy song or a relaxation/focusing exercise.

HAPPINESS LESSON 12

More Secrets of Happiness

Begin with a song.

- **Discuss/Share**

Share the saying: Happiness begins with me. Ask: "What does this mean?"

Give each student a secret of happiness - then ask the students to share to with a friend their secret of happiness. Then ask them to think which is the one most important."

Then ask the students to illustrate or write their own secrets of happiness: the one they were given and the one they shared.

- **Activity Choices**

Poem: Happiness is when_____.

Design a Happiness Badge.

Write an essay: Making Others Happy Brings Us Happiness, too.

– Contributed by Linda Heppenstall

- **The Happiness Walk Community Project**

Make a Happiness Walk with members of the community. This original idea from the Al Nowair Happiness Project was submitted by Batool Arjomand.

Reflection:

“Share happiness and give happiness away. Bring hope to those who are feeling sad.”

Step 1. Find, write letters and get permission to use a community space to create a "Happiness Walk".

Step 2. Invite parents, members of the community to write/draw a Happiness quote/picture. Example: Write a simple message on a 'Post It' note.

Step 3. Invite them to add their writing/drawing to the "Happiness Walk" trail. Examples: In a shopping centre, a covered bridge between two buildings or a parkland.

Step 4. Invite the press to share the imagery and happiness for others to enjoy. Enjoy the walk with your class, and with family and friends.

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NOTES



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