

# Bits About me

**Goal:** + To reinforce the importance of self-understanding for a healthy total self-concept, and to practice its application.

- Objectives:** + To learn that conducting self-evaluation in order to achieve self-understanding leads to a healthy total self-concept.
- + To learn that when we understand what motivates us and how to differentiate between different kinds of motivation, we are more apt to choose positive thoughts, actions, and feelings that build a healthy total self-concept.

**Materials Needed** Pens

**Materials Provided** 30 *Positive Action Journals*

## Procedure

**Say** We worked on trying to understand ourselves in our last lesson. Ann, in our radio play, isn't doing so well in understanding herself. What are the consequences, or results, of her negative choices?

**Teacher** *Wait for responses until you hear something like, "She is isolating herself from others, she's losing her friends, she feels badly about herself."*

**Say** Negative and positive consequences are real. They can harm or help our bodies, our self-concepts, our attitudes, and our relationships with other people. We make smarter, more positive choices when we understand our thoughts, actions, and feelings. We build our total self-concepts rather than harm them.

How well do you understand some of your basic opinions? Let's find out in a game called "Choose and Move!" I'll read a series of statements, each with two options. If you choose Option Number One, stand beside your seat; if you choose Option Number Two, remain seated. There is no right or wrong answer, but the way you respond may help you understand yourself better.

**Teacher** *Make sure students understand the directions, and then read the following statements. Pause 5 or 10 seconds after each, so that students can choose and move.*

### Choose and move statements

- For lunch, I would choose:
  1. pizza.
  2. a hamburger.
- I would rather read about:
  1. outer space.
  2. animals.

- To earn money, I would rather:
  1. baby sit.
  2. wash cars.
- I'd rather spend a Saturday evening:
  1. at home watching my favorite movies with my family or friends.
  2. at a birthday party with about 20 other people.
- If I had to do a project for science class, I would:
  1. first make an outline of what I needed to do.
  2. immediately begin working and take care of the details as I think of them.
- To design the cover for a notebook, I like to:
  1. use someone else's basic design, with some slight changes to make it my own.
  2. create my own design that's completely different from everyone else's.
- If a good friend has been a little moody lately, I would:
  1. ask, "What is wrong?"
  2. leave the friend alone until the mood changes.
- To meet people, I would rather:
  1. join a group or club.
  2. get to know people one at a time.
- Right after I graduate from high school, I think I'll:
  1. go to college or some other school.
  2. get a job or do something else.
- It's important that people see me as:
  1. popular.
  2. real.

**Say** Do you understand why you made your choices? Did you remain seated or stand because most everyone else did, or was it because your individual, personal choice was to remain seated or stand?

**Teacher** *Wait for responses.*

**Say** We are each unique, which means to be one of a kind. So, we all had different combinations of answers to those questions. However, sometimes we may not reflect our true, unique selves because we are influenced by other people's opinions or actions. This is called PEER PRESSURE. In a time when everyone wants to be accepted, but also be an individual, it is natural to experience some peer pressure throughout junior high. In fact, you will find as you grow older that you continue to experience varying degrees of peer pressure throughout your life. What matters is how you react to this peer pressure. If you can hold your ground by remaining true to your values and beliefs, to your own unique self, then you have successfully weathered peer pressure. However, if you find yourself constantly adapting who you are to fit the image of those around you, you have caved to peer pressure, and you need to take some steps to get back to the real you.

Let's consider a scientific example. Scientists who study society, or sociologists, call peer pressure CONFORMITY. A famous experiment was conducted by social scientists at Columbia

University during the 1930s. There were 12 people in the experiments. Eleven were paid to lie about the length of a clearly marked yardstick that read “36 inches.” Their job in the experiment was to convince a 12th person that the yardstick was only 24 inches long. They could use any intimidating verbal techniques possible (raising their voices, implying that only an idiot would think the yardstick was really 36 inches, etc.). How many individuals faced with that intense peer pressure eventually caved in?

**Teacher** *Wait for responses.*

**Say** An astonishing 65% of the men and 47% of the women convinced themselves that they must be wrong about the 36 inches, and the other 11 people must be right that it is only 24 inches. What do you think you would have done? What can you learn from this experiment that applies to your life now?

**Teacher** *Wait for responses. After a brief discussion, direct students to get out their Positive Action Journals and pens.*

**Say** In order to improve our self-understanding and help us resist peer pressure, let’s do another self-evaluation exercise to get to know our own, honest opinions. I’ll read an unfinished self-understanding letter called “Bits About Me.” I will read it and pause at different places so you can fill in the blanks with what you like and dislike. When I stop reading, write your own personal choices in your journal. For example, if I read, ‘The color (blank) is my favorite color,’ you should write the name of the color on your paper. We’ll get an idea of how well we know ourselves, and some of our basic opinions. Then I’ll re-read the letter and we can share our choices. Remember, listen carefully and answer honestly.

**Teacher** *Direct students to number 1 to 12 in their journals. Then, read the letter, giving them a few seconds to write each of their responses.*

## BITS ABOUT ME—A SELF-UNDERSTANDING LETTER

Who am I? Well, I am a (1)\_\_\_\_\_ person who enjoys (2)\_\_\_\_\_. One thing I like most about my personality is my (3)\_\_\_\_\_. One thing I like least about myself is my (4)\_\_\_\_\_. One food I enjoy is (5)\_\_\_\_\_, but I hate it when they serve (6)\_\_\_\_\_ in the school cafeteria! I often imagine what I will be like in the future, when I am an adult. When I grow up, I hope others describe me as being (7)\_\_\_\_\_. If I choose to get married, I would not like to have more than (8)\_\_\_\_\_ children. Where would I like to live? One location for my future house is (9)\_\_\_\_\_. Of course, my house isn’t complete without a car in the garage. What kind of car would I like to drive? One of my favorite models right now is a (10)\_\_\_\_\_. What kind of career interests me? I’m thinking of being a (11)\_\_\_\_\_. One word I would use to describe the kind of future I want is (12)\_\_\_\_\_.

When you have completed the letter one time through, re-read the letter aloud, pausing to allow several volunteers to share their responses for the same blank. Students will hear how well they understand themselves.

**Say** Was it easy or difficult to write your choices? Some of us are better able to understand ourselves than are others, but we’re all going to improve this year. Use self-understanding the next time you choose negative thoughts, actions, and feelings. Try to understand your MOTIVATION for acting that way. What is motivation?

**Teacher** *Wait for responses until you hear something like, “The force within us that moves us to act in certain ways.”*

**Say** *When we understand our motivation, we can analyze our negative actions. Then we can break the negative cycle that harms our self-concepts, flipping from a Failure Circle into a Success Circle. Switching to positive actions makes us proud to be ourselves. Turn to a new page and write, “I Understand My Motivation.” Describe something you do—either a positive or a negative action. Then, write why or what causes you to choose to act that way—or your motivation. Be ready to share your comments in our next class.*

**Teacher** *Allow time for students to journal.*

### Teacher’s Toolbox

**Vocabulary**

**Conformity:** Acting in socially acceptable ways; acting in ways similar to those around us.

**Motivation:** The force within us that moves us to act in certain ways.

**Peer Pressure:** Pressure from our peers to act in ways similar or acceptable to them.

**Buzz Word**

**Unique:** To be one of a kind.