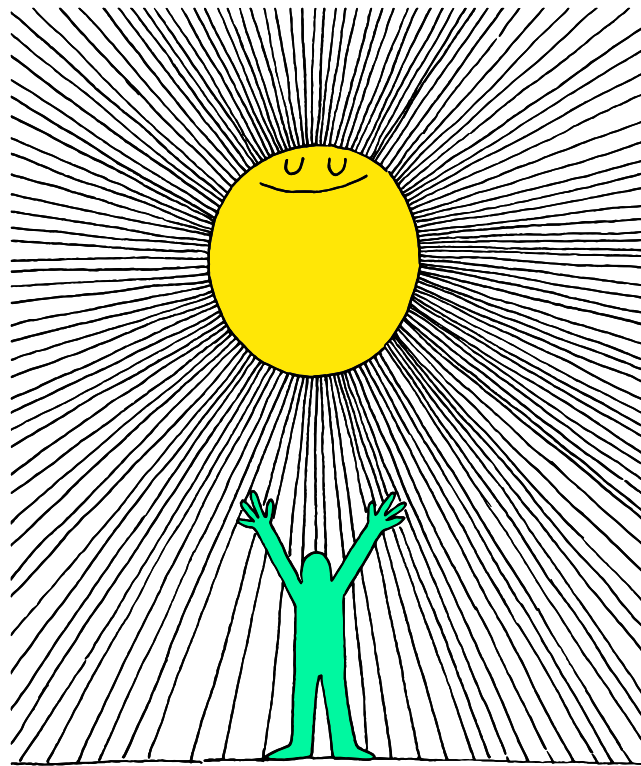


**WELL-BEING CANADA CURRICULUM**  
**Learning**  
**About Altruism**



**GRADES 4 TO 6**

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**Lessons 10 to 13**

# WELL~ BEING CANADA

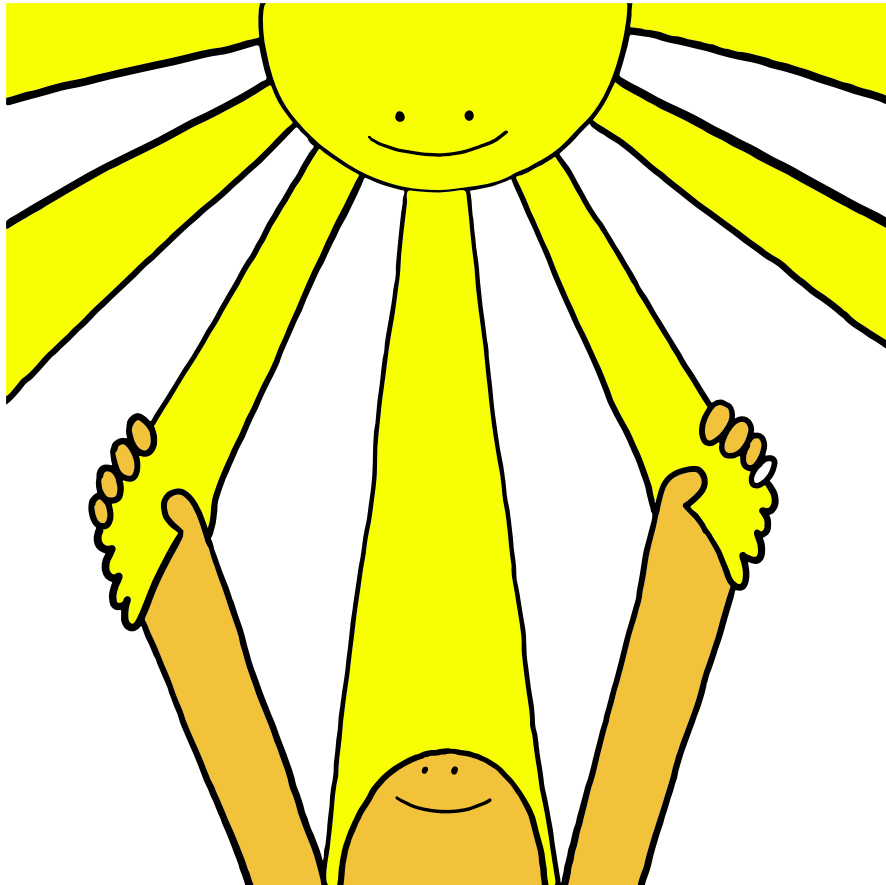


**Well-being Canada is an educational program that uses evidence-based tools, resources and everyday actions to nurture and promote positive well-being in students of all ages.**

**This resource is focused on supporting 4-6 grade level to build the foundation of social-emotional learning and support educators in the integration of well-being into your classrooms through exploring positive human qualities, deeper dives into brain development and mindful communication.**

**The collection of 15 lessons is easy to use, classroom friendly and provides tools and activities to nurture well-being in your students.**

# The Road to Altruism



## LESSON 10

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# Purpose

The purpose of this lesson is to introduce the positive human quality, altruism. Students will make connections between altruism, empathy and compassion in their community and the world.

## Objectives:

- Students investigate and learn about altruism.
- Students link knowledge from previous lessons on empathy and compassion.
- Students consider ways they can act with altruism at school, home and in their community.

## Skills Learned:



CRITICAL THINKING



COMMUNICATION SKILLS



REFLECTION SKILLS



SELF-CARE SKILLS



SELF-MANAGEMENT SKILLS



SOCIAL AWARENESS SKILLS



RESPONSIBLE DECISION-MAKING



SELF-AWARENESS SKILLS

## Differentiation by Grade Level:

### 4th Grade:

- **Part 2, Step 2:** If altruism is a new word for your students, you may want to have the word and definition posted in your classroom to help your students remember the word and what it means.

### 5th Grade:

- Keep this lesson as is, differentiating as needed for your unique group of students.

### 6th Grade:

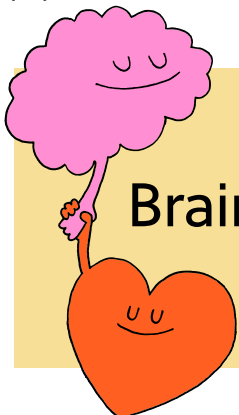
- **Part 3, Step 1:** Have students complete the Acting with Altruism sheet on their own first before sharing in small groups or as a class.

## Estimated Time:

40 minutes

## Materials:

Projector and screen or monitor; writing paper; chart paper, markers, whiteboard/chalkboard or SMARTboard



## Brain Bites

What's good for the body is good for the brain. What's good for the brain is good for the body! Throughout the lessons you will find brain icons with actions and facts about the brain. It is important for students to understand the importance of the brain and how it impacts our well-being.

## Review (optional)

Invite students to recap key words and concepts from previous lessons.

- Ask students the following questions:
- What is well-being?
- What is mindfulness?
- What is empathy?
- What is compassion?
- What is the difference between compassion and empathy?

After students have shared their answers, provide the following information to the class.

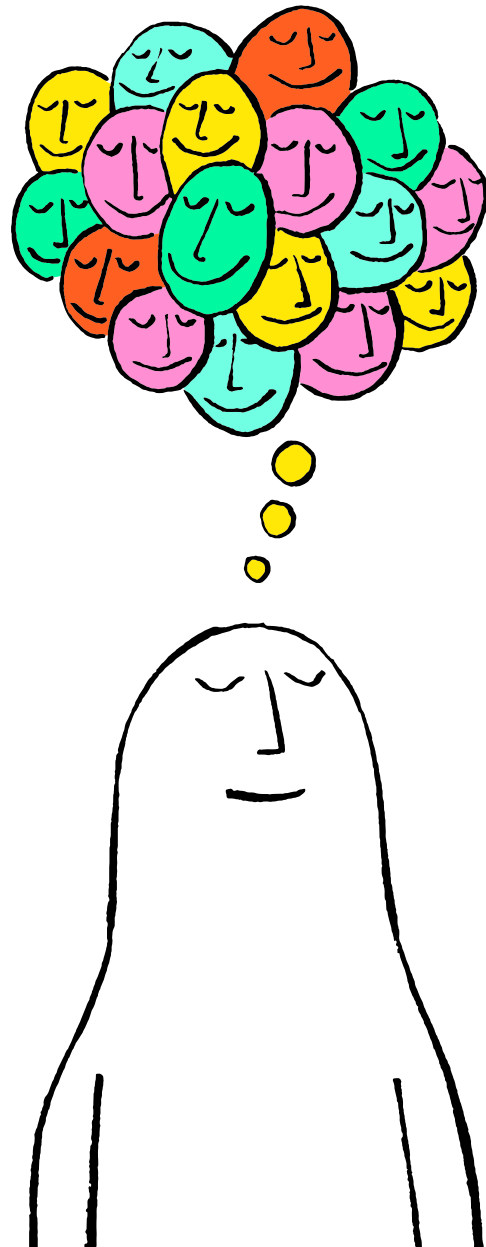
Well-being is the state of being comfortable, healthy or happy.

Mindfulness means to pay attention to what is happening in the moment without judgment.

Empathy is the ability to understand and share the feelings of one another.

Compassion is having concern for the well-being of someone in distress and includes a need or desire to alleviate that person's suffering.

The difference between empathy and compassion is that empathy refers more generally to our ability to take the perspective of and feel the emotions of another person. In comparison, compassion is using our feelings and thoughts of empathy to help others.



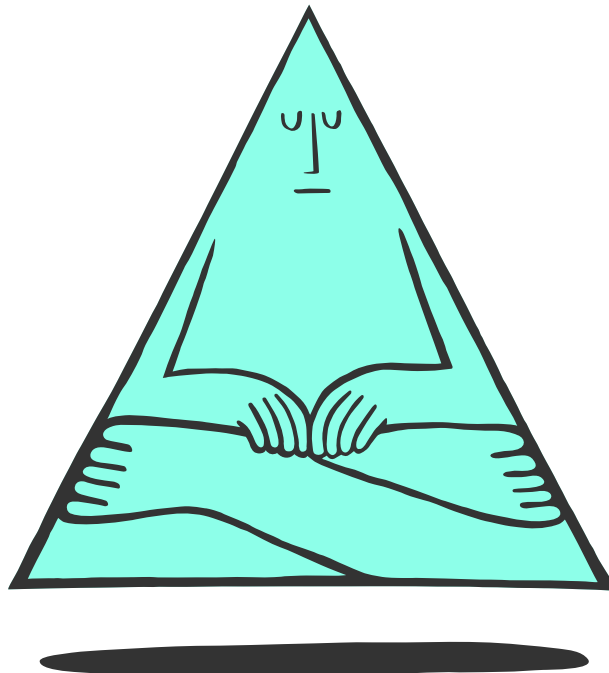
## Part 1: Reflect and Connect (5 minutes)

### Mindful Start and Setting an Intention (optional)

**Objective:** To prepare students for learning; to review lessons on mindful breathing and setting intentions.

Invite students to take a short mindful break.

- Let's begin by taking a short mindful moment.
  - First, find a comfortable seat in your chair. Place your feet flat on the ground. Rest your hands on your lap.
  - If it feels comfortable, you can close your eyes. If not, just look softly down toward your desk (or table).
  - Now, just begin by noticing how your body feels sitting here.
- No need to do anything but notice what you feel.
  - Now, see if you can turn your attention to your breath.
  - At your own pace, take three deep breaths, in through your nose and slowly out through your mouth.
  - Before we start our lesson today, reflect for a moment on our work on gratitude. Perhaps bring something to mind that you feel grateful for ... maybe a kind action from somebody or something in nature that made you happy.
  - Now, if you like, set an intention for today... maybe to be curious or to act with kindness. Choose an intention that best speaks to the attitude you'd like to have today.
  - When you are ready, you can open your eyes.



## Part 2: Investigate and Learn (20–30 minutes)

### Step 1: Experiential Learning: An Altruistic Memory

**Overview:** Invite students to recall an incident when someone showed kindness.

**Note:** This activity introduces the concept of altruism experientially. This allows a personal touchpoint as the lesson moves into learning about altruism.

- Today, we're going to begin remembering a time when someone did something kind for you. Take a moment to recall a memory of someone's kindness.
- Maybe someone helped you solve a problem.
- Perhaps someone cheered you up when you were feeling down.
- Maybe it was just a simple gesture, like holding a door open.
- Take your time finding your memory...
- Once you're settled on a memory, you can write or draw about it.
- Recall how you felt when that person acted with kindness toward you.

Give students a few minutes to write or draw their kindness memory.

### Step 2: Introduce the Concept: What Is Altruism?

**Overview:** Using the following guiding questions, lead the class in a discussion about the concept of altruism. Invite student ideas and write them on the board.

**Note:** This question helps students access their previous knowledge about the subject.

- You all just remembered a time when someone was kind to you. That person may have been showing altruism.
- Has anyone ever heard that word before? Altruism?

Invite student ideas.

Provide the following definition(s):

- The Cambridge dictionary describes altruism as: the attitude of caring about others and doing acts that help them although you do not get anything by doing those acts.
- The Cambridge dictionary describes kindness as: the quality of being generous, helpful and caring about other people, or an act showing this quality.

### Step 3: Reflection and Discussion

Now, project or write the definitions on the board. Select from the following guiding questions to prompt student thinking.

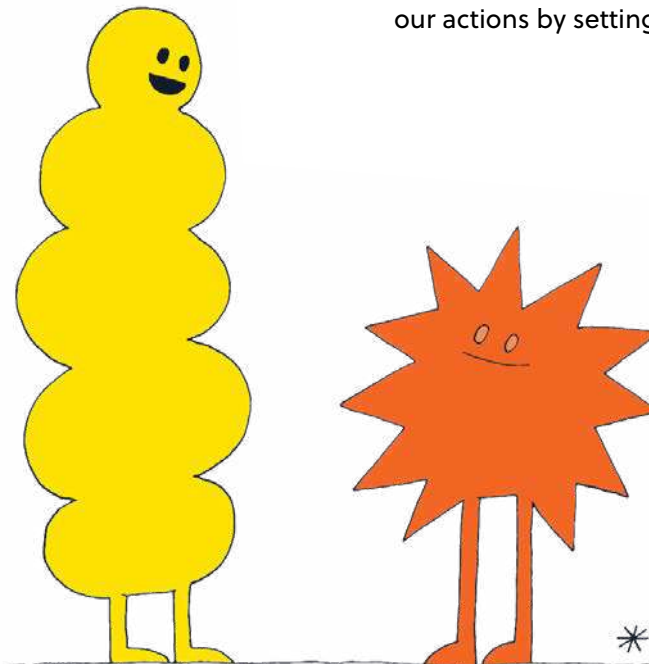
- With a partner, discuss altruism.
- What does altruism look like in you?
- How is altruism different from kindness?
- How are they the same?
- How do you think altruism is related to well-being?
- How might empathy and compassion be connected to altruism?
- Where have you heard about altruism?
- How does altruism help build a caring community?

## Step 4: Share Out

As a group, invite students to share out their thoughts about altruism. Write their ideas on the board.

Lastly, unpack the definitions a little more to ensure comprehension.

- Altruism is an important human quality that helps us build positive connections with others and communities.
- What are your thoughts about helping others without receiving anything in return?
- Research has found that when you help others, without expecting anything in return, like volunteering, you boost your own well-being and happiness.
- Is there anything I missed?
- What questions do you have?
- Ensure students have the key message:
  - Altruism is really about being kind to others, without expecting anything in return.



## Optional

### Movie Scenario

In this scene, Princess Tiana is a little child who loves to cook. Princess Tiana and her father dream of opening their own restaurant one day.

After explaining the background of the movie clip, play the following video for students: **The Princess and the Frog** (this video is from the movie *The Princess and the Frog* and is appropriate for ages 6+)

As a class reflect on the following questions:

1. How does princess Tiana show altruism in this clip?
2. How does the practise of altruism spread happiness in oneself and others?
3. At the end of the clip, Princess Tiana makes an intention, can you identify what that intention is?

Why is it important to set intentions?

What advice did her father give her in return?

Why is it important to set intentions but also focus on our actions by setting up first steps as goals?



## Part 3: Application (20–25 minutes)

### Step 1: Acting with Altruism

**Overview:** Students consider how they can act with altruism in their daily life at home, school and in their community.

**Note:** A companion worksheet can be found at the end of this lesson; there are two versions for differentiation, a Venn diagram that may be more challenging and a list-style version. Select the version that best suits your students.

Instructions for students:

- We are going to practise acting with altruism!
- To do this, we will think about how we might set intentions to act with altruism.
- First, let's brainstorm some scenarios where you might act with altruism.
- For example, opening the door for others, picking up a dropped pencil for someone else, etc.
- What are other ways we can act with altruism?
- What things are we already doing here in our classroom that look like altruism?
- At home?
- With a partner, write down some altruistic things you have done, witnessed or could do at home, school and in the larger community.

### Step 2: Discuss

Following the partner activity, debrief student ideas.

- What ideas did you think up with your partner?
- How do you think others feel when you act with altruism toward them?
- How do you feel when you act with altruism?
- How might altruism help our relationships with others?

End the lesson by giving students the following key messages:

- Altruism is important for our well-being! Altruism helps us make positive connections to others, and builds a strong, caring community!
- Now you have many ideas for ways you can bring altruism into your daily life. Try to act with altruism whenever you can and make a note of how it impacts how you feel.
- Next time, we'll work together as a class to make a plan for bringing altruism to our community.



### Our Changing Brains

The brain is always changing; shaped by actions and interactions. Exploring and practising healthy habits for mind and body can strengthen your brain and enhance your mental health. Try a gratitude meditation or a walk outside and see how it feels!

# Teaching to Diversity

**Optional:** Use the following ideas to help you to calibrate the lesson to your particular group of students.

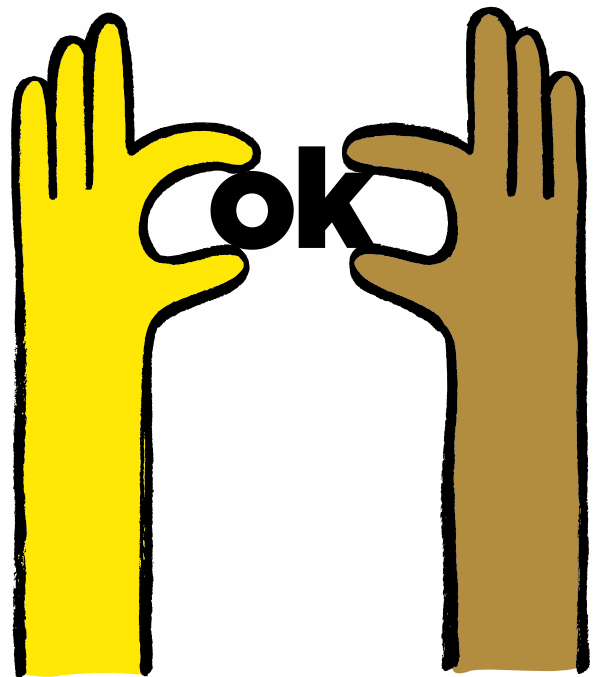
## Differentiation

- Provide students with written instructions for activities.
- Provide students with written definitions of new concepts/vocabulary in advance of the lesson.
- See simplified worksheet; for further simplification, have students give only one example for each category OR select one category.

## Challengers

- Instead of providing the definition of altruism, invite students to look up a definition online or in the dictionary.
- Making connections: Have students give an example of altruism from a movie or TV show they watched recently.
- Making connections: Invite students to write or draw about how they think empathy and compassion are connected to altruism.

- Making connections: Have students come up with an example of historical altruism. Have them describe the event and identify what aspects show altruism. Have students journal about this prompt:
  - If doing a good deed for others brings us joy and/or contentment, is doing something truly “selfless” even possible?



## The Pre-frontal Cortex

The pre-frontal cortex is the executive director of the brain. The centre of complex thinking, it is in charge of planning and organizing. It is the last part of the adolescent brain that develops and is in charge of calculating risks. What are some positive risks we can engage in? They might include participating in sports or trying something new that helps us to grow.

## Acting With Altruism

**With a partner, write down some altruistic things you have done, seen or could do at home, school and in the larger community.**

### Home

1.

2.

3.

### Community

1.

2.

3.

### School

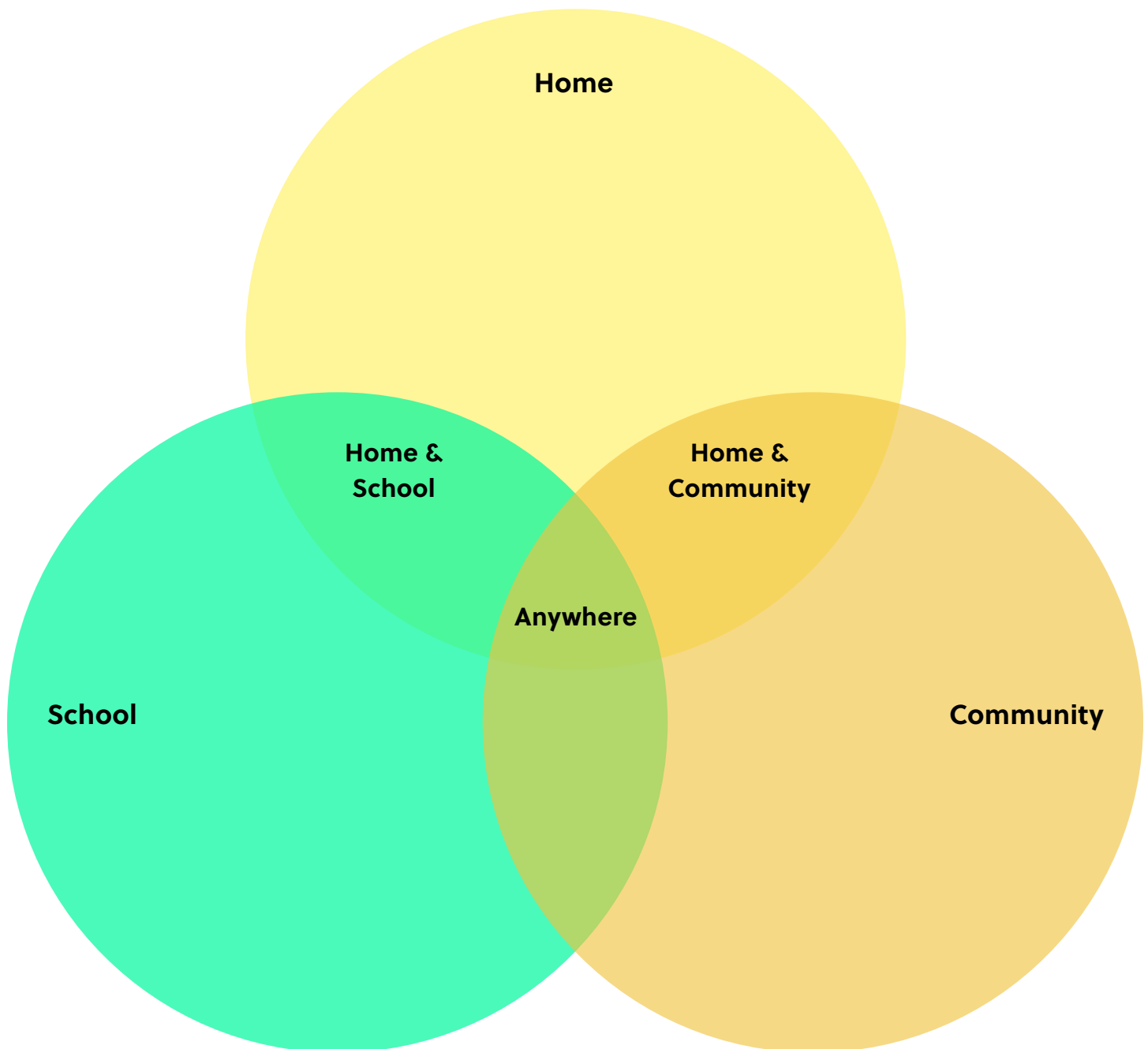
1.

2.

3.

## Acting With Altruism

**With a partner, write down some altruistic things you have done, witnessed or could do at home, school and in the larger community.**



## Altruism Book List

### Picture Books

*The Moccasins*, Earl Einarson

(also supports self-esteem, acceptance and love for ages 3-5)

[Access read aloud video](#)

*Have You Filled a Bucket Today?*, Carol McCloud

(also supports self-compassion and well-being for ages 4-7)

[Access read aloud video](#)

*The Gift Inside the Box*, Adam Grant

(also supports generosity and altruism for ages 5-8)

[Access read aloud video](#)

*The Water Walker*, Joanne Robertson

(also supports empathy, responsibility towards nature and altruism for ages 6-9)

[Access read aloud video](#)

*Ban This Book*, Alan Gratz

(also supports resiliency for ages 8-12)

[Access read aloud video](#)

*Random Acts*, Valerie Sherrard

(also supports altruism and compassion for ages 8-12)

*I Am Malala* (Young Reader's Edition), Malala Yousafzai

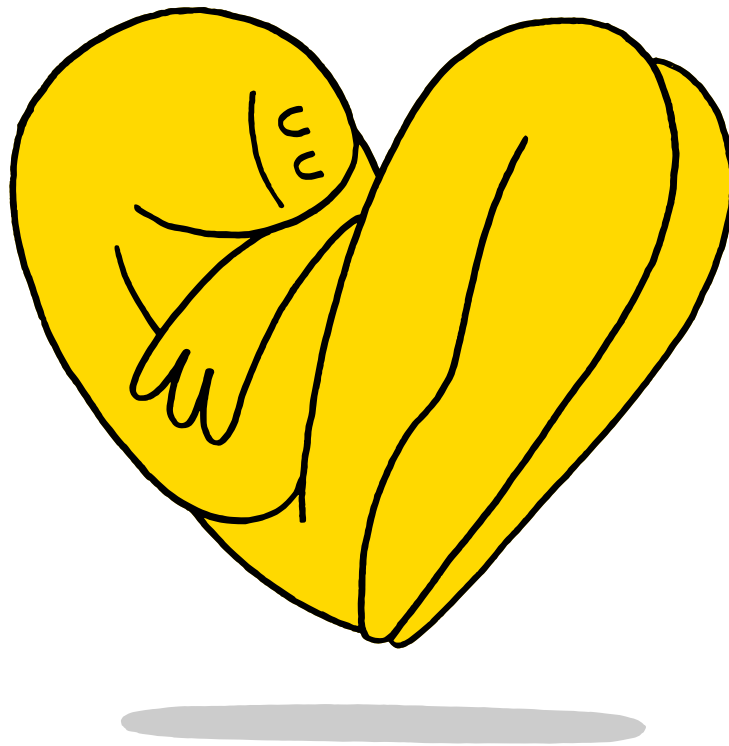
(also supports altruism, resilience and compassion/empathy for ages 10+)

[Access read aloud video](#)

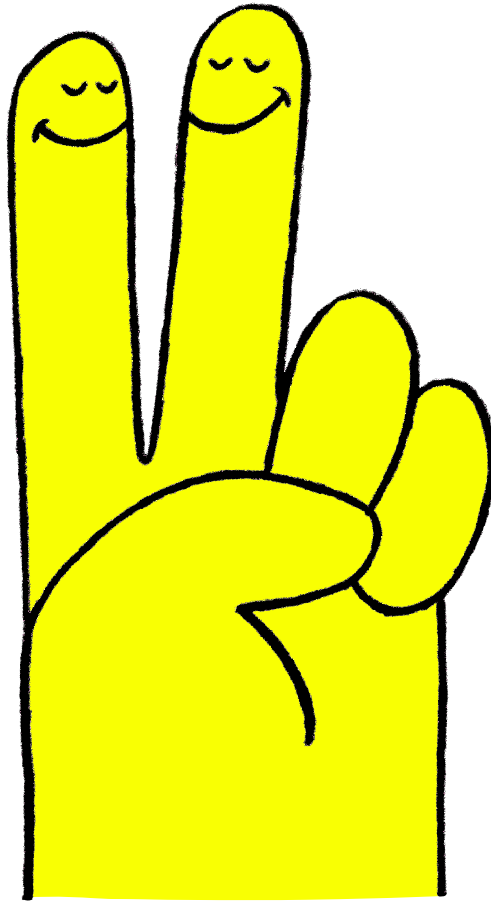
*Real Kids, Real Stories, Real Change: Courageous*

*Actions Around the World*, Garth Sundem

(also supports resiliency, well-being and making a difference in the world for ages 9-13)



# Acting With Altruism



## LESSON 11

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# Purpose

The purpose of this lesson is to engage students in planning a student-directed action of altruism within their school or greater community. This lesson offers an opportunity for students to practise the social-emotional skill of perspective-taking, when students consider what members of their community might need.

## Objectives:

- Students reflect on how their recent experience incorporating acting with altruism impacted their well-being.
- Together, students consider a need they might be able to address in their school or larger community.
- Students make a plan to take action with altruism.

## Skills Learned:



CRITICAL THINKING



COMMUNICATION SKILLS



SELF-CARE SKILLS



REFLECTION SKILLS



CREATIVE THINKING



SOCIAL AWARENESS SKILLS



RESPONSIBLE DECISION-MAKING



SELF-AWARENESS SKILLS



SELF-MANAGEMENT SKILLS

## Estimated Time:

Time will vary depending on the action plan; this lesson may take place over several days.

## Materials:

Materials may vary depending on the action plan.



## Brain Bites

What's good for the body is good for the brain. What's good for the brain is good for the body! Throughout the lessons you will find brain icons with actions and facts about the brain. It is important that we take the time to educate our students about the importance of understanding the brain and how it impacts our well-being.

## Differentiation by Grade Level:

### 4th Grade:

- **Part 2, Step 1:** If you think your students may struggle to think of people that need altruism, scaffold the discussion by listing who they should be kind to and why. Then, identify from there who is in need of that kindness the most and why.
- **Part 2, Step 2:** Students may need support in keeping altruistic action ideas truly focused on what the receiver needs. For example, a drawing for a substitute/supply teacher may not be as powerful as a pledge to help them have a good day.

### 5th Grade:

- Keep this lesson as is, differentiating as needed for your unique group of students.

### 6th Grade:

- **Part 2, Step 2:** Really encourage your students to get creative in their ideas of spreading altruism. Allow them time to collaborate or conduct research to come up with unique ideas.

## Part 1: Reflect and Connect (5–15 minutes)

### Step 1: Mindful Start and Setting an Intention (optional)

**Objective:** To prepare students for learning; to review lessons on mindful breathing.

Invite students to take a short mindful break.

- Let's begin by taking a short mindful moment.
- First, find a comfortable seat in your chair. Place your feet flat on the ground. Rest your hands on your lap.
- If it feels comfortable, you can close your eyes. If not, just look softly down toward your desk (or table).
- Notice how your body feels sitting here now.
- Feel your feet on the ground.
- Notice how the chair supports you sitting here now.
- Now, turn your attention to your breath.
- Feel the air moving in and out of your nose.
- At your own pace, take three deep breaths, in through your nose and slowly out through your mouth.
- Before we start our lesson today, perhaps set an intention ... maybe to bring kindness and altruism. Choose an intention that best speaks to the attitude you'd like to have today.
- When you are ready, you can open your eyes.

### Step 2: Review Acting with Altruism

**Objective:** Invite students to share their personal experience with altruism. Select from the following guiding questions to facilitate a discussion.

- What did you notice with your altruistic action?
- Did you find any daily actions for altruism?
- Did you witness any acts of altruism? If so, what were they?
- Was it easy to find things?
- Did anyone act with altruism toward you? What did that feel like?
- What did you notice about your mood or how you felt?
- How else might we bring more altruism into our daily lives?

Invite student ideas and write them on the board.

- Any other things to share?



## Part 2: Caring for Others (35 minutes)

### Step 1: Investigate and Learn

**Overview:** As a class, invite students to consider a need that might be present in their school or greater community.

**Inspiration:** For inspiration you can watch the following video with your students. It is about a student club that performed anonymous acts of kindness for their school and larger community:

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=0Lj5pWWA\\_MY](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0Lj5pWWA_MY)

(In this video, we see a school's journey with their take on random acts of kindness and altruism—grade 3 and up)

Next, invite students to think about the types of altruistic action they would like to take as a class. As an option, select from the following guiding comments to lead the activity.

- Today, we're going to think about needs our school or larger community might have.
- For example, maybe new students in our school need help feeling connected.
- First, in partners you will brainstorm some ideas, and then we will brainstorm as a class.
- With your partner, take out a piece of paper and write down a need that you think might exist in our school or larger community (for example, new students feeling welcome; younger students feeling connected to older students; appreciation for office staff; animal shelter or food bank donations; litter removal from green space, etc.).
- After students have written down their ideas, brainstorm with the class.
- Now, let's hear your ideas on the needs in our community.

Invite students to share (popcorn style) and write their ideas on the board.

Next, prepare students for their action-planning activity.

- Now, as a class, we are going to choose an action we can take to act with altruism and help meet a need in our community.
- We will work together to make a plan and take action!

### Step 2: Action Plan

**Overview:** Together, students will make plans to act with altruism. This activity provides students with an opportunity to be altruistic, and also serves as a community-building opportunity by having students work together to plan and take action. This can be done in small groups depending upon the separation of tasks.

- Facilitate a brainstorming and planning session.
- Simple ideas for acting with altruism:
  - Create a welcoming activity for new students.
  - Work with a younger grade to teach them about altruism and do a collaborative project such as picking up litter.
- Provide students with guidelines for collaboration.
- First, foreshadow the next activity and ask students what skills they might need.
- Next, together we will make a plan to act with altruism toward a member of our school community or larger community.
- To do this, we are going to work collaboratively.
- Check understanding of the term "collaboration": Collaboration means to work together with others to make or produce something.
- What skills would you need to collaborate?
- Invite student ideas and write them on the board.

To increase the challenge, you could invite your students to plan and take action anonymously. This reinforces a primary aspect of altruism—acting for the benefits of others with no benefit for the self.

Allow time for your students to develop their altruism plan, which they will put into action next time.

**Note to Teacher:** You can find additional resources about collaborative learning in Lesson 2 of the Foundational Module.



## The Hippocampus

The hippocampus is sometimes referred to as the librarian of the brain, because it is responsible for new learning and memories. Try tapping into a happy memory or reflecting on something new you learned this week, and see how it feels; it might even give you a serotonin boost!

# Teaching to Diversity

**Optional:** Use the following ideas to help you to calibrate the lesson to your particular group of students.

## Differentiation

- Provide a copy of written definitions and/or instructions for students to reference during planning tasks.
- Student planning ideas can be transcribed by a peer or student aide OR students can use a recording mechanism to express their ideas orally.
- Break the activity down into smaller sections, e.g.:
  - Outline the altruism action plan, including materials needed, the time it will take and when you will be able to create it.
  - When that is completed, focus on the second part of the plan by outlining how, when and where students will complete their altruistic mission.

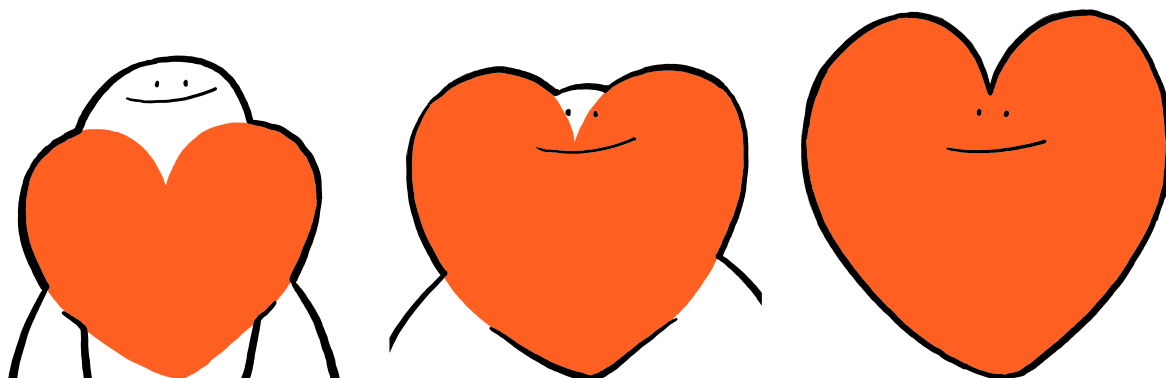
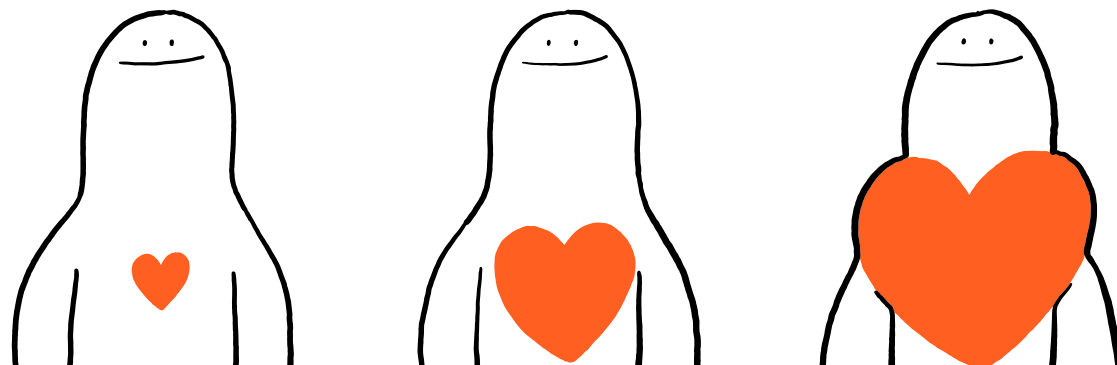
## Challengers

- Have students compare/contrast their altruistic action to one from another class subject, e.g., a book they're reading, something from social studies/history, etc.
- Have students drill farther down into how they go about choosing their expressions of altruism. Did they choose it because it was something they would like? Does that mean the recipient will like it? This task encourages students to further use their perspective-taking skills, and differentiate between kindness and altruism.
- Have students make separate plans for both their school community AND their greater community.



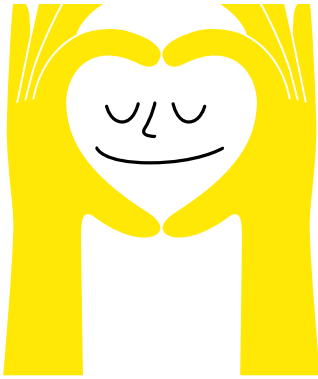
We know that sleep has the power to boost brain power, and young people should aim for about nine hours of sleep per night. What are some of the best ways to get a good night's sleep? Avoid screens, dim lights an hour before bed, lower the thermostat and try your best to stick to a routine.

# Altruism in Action



## LESSON 12

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# Purpose

The purpose of this lesson is to engage students in a student-directed action of altruism within their school or greater community.

## Objectives:

- Students set an intention prior to embarking on their action plan.
- Together, students participate in a collective act of altruism to address a need they have identified in their school or larger community.
- Teachers document students' action.

## Skills Learned:



CRITICAL THINKING



COMMUNICATION SKILLS



SELF-CARE SKILLS



SELF-MANAGEMENT SKILLS



SOCIAL AWARENESS SKILLS



RESPONSIBLE DECISION-MAKING



SELF-AWARENESS SKILLS

## Differentiation by Grade Level:

### 4th Grade:

- Keep this lesson as is, differentiating as needed for your unique group of students.

### 5th Grade:

- Keep this lesson as is, differentiating as needed for your unique group of students.

### 6th Grade:

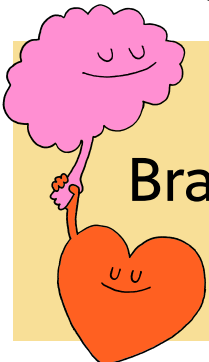
- Keep this lesson as is, differentiating as needed for your unique group of students.

## Estimated Time:

Time for this lesson may vary depending on particular action.

## Materials:

Materials will vary depending on the action plan.



## Brain Bites

What's good for the body is good for the brain. What's good for the brain is good for the body! Throughout the lessons you will find brain icons with actions and facts about the brain. It is important that we take the time to educate our students about the importance of understanding the brain and how it impacts our well-being.

## Part 1: Reflect and Connect (5 minutes)

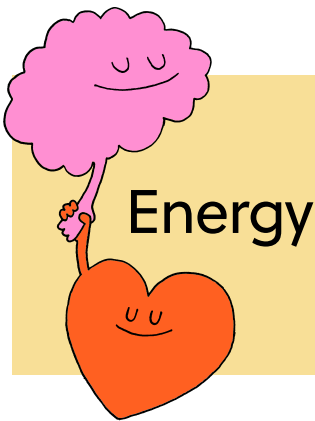
### Step 1: Mindful Start and Setting an Intention (optional)

**Objective:** To prepare students for learning; to review lessons on mindful breathing and setting intentions.

Invite students to take a short mindful break.

- Before we put our plan into action today, let us begin with a mindful moment.
- Find a comfortable seat in your chair.
- Place your feet flat on the ground. Rest your hands on your lap.
- If it feels comfortable, you can close your eyes. If not, just look softly down toward your desk (or table).
- Notice how your body feels sitting here now.

- Feel your feet on the ground or your back against your chair.
- Now, turn your attention to your breath.
- At your own pace, take three deep breaths, in through your nose and slowly out through your nose or mouth.
- Before we start our action today, please set an intention ... maybe to act with altruism. Choose an intention that best speaks to the attitude you'd like to have today.
- When you are ready, you can open your eyes.



What are some activities that you know give you an energy boost? Talking to a friend, going for a bike ride, reading a book you like, eating your favourite snack and playing games are all examples of healthy activities that give your brain and body a boost! Choose an activity to try this week and see how it feels!

## Part 2: Altruism in Action (time will vary)

**Overview:** As a class, students will carry out their altruistic plan to support a need that might be present in their school or greater community.

**Tips to support students:** If students are struggling to complete the assignment, here are suggestions for ways to scaffold their thinking to reach the goal:

- Use prompting questions:
  - "What should you do first, next, last?"
  - "It looks like you're stuck, can you identify the problem? Is it a time issue? A material issue?"
  - "It sounds like you've identified the problem. What element can you change to try and find a solution?"
- Encourage students to use their prior knowledge:
  - "Have you done an activity like this before? Can you remember any issues that came up that could be avoided by doing something differently?"
- Guide students to manage their resources
  - Time reminders
  - Flexibility about materials
  - Task assignment reminders

- Support disagreements by providing resolution-centred language
  - Offer communication repair prompts such as "I hear you saying \_\_\_\_\_. Is that correct?"
  - Encourage children to identify how they're feeling so they can name it and move on (e.g., "I see that your arms are crossed and your body is turned away. It looks to me like you're frustrated. Is that right?")

**Important Note to Teacher:** Document student action by taking pictures or video to show students during their reflection and celebration.

You may include students in the documentation of learning by inviting them to take turns taking pictures and video of their classmates. This will further support student agency as your class embarks in experiential learning!



### Get Active!

Physical activity delivers the following benefits to brain health: improved cognition, performance on academic achievement tests, memory, executive function and quality of life. It can reduce the risk of depression and short-term feelings of anxiety and improve sleep.

# Teaching to Diversity

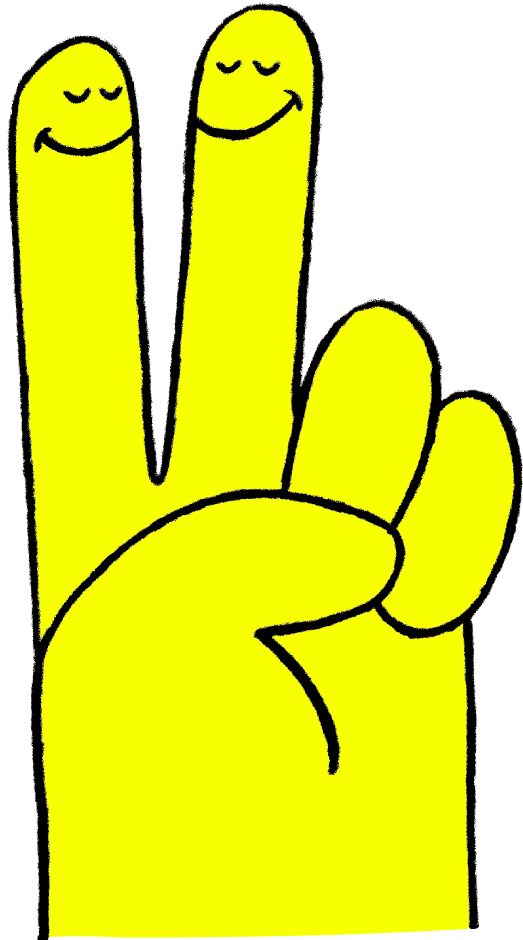
**Optional:** Use the following ideas to help you to calibrate the lesson to your particular group of students.

## Differentiation

- Provide a copy of written definitions and/or instructions for students to reference as they go to carry out their tasks.
- Break the activity down into smaller sections/tasks.
- Assign tasks with fewer steps/parts (e.g., 1–2 instead of 3–4).

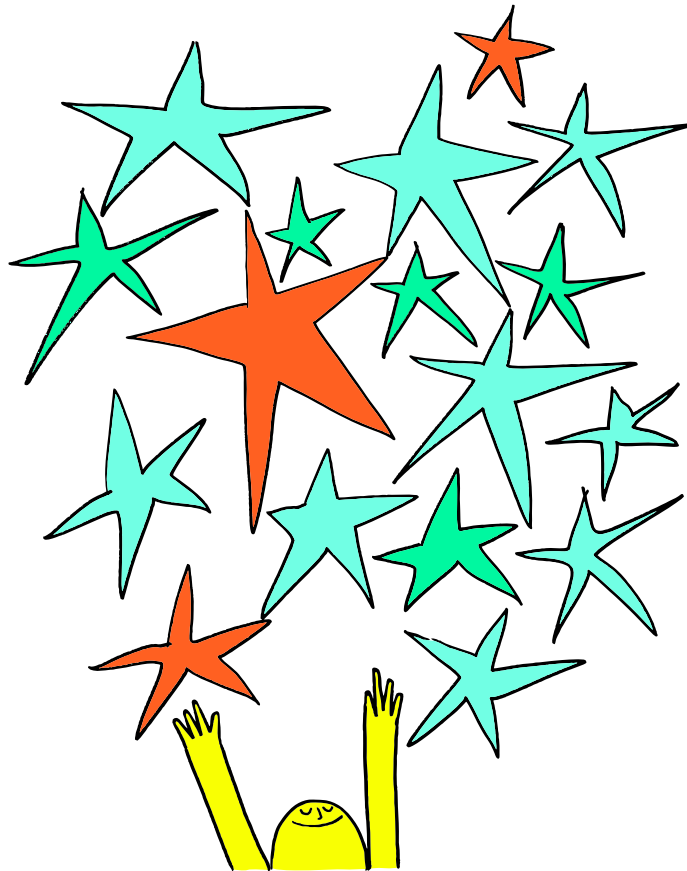
## Challengers

- Have students consider how their act of altruism could be extrapolated out to a bigger ring of the community (e.g., if their current plan is for the school, see if they can describe a future plan for their town/city). This can be done individually or in small groups, as a journal exercise or conversation/oral presentation.
- If students completed plans for both their school community and their greater community, have them execute both.





# Reflecting On and Celebrating Altruism



## LESSON 13

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## Purpose

Together, students reflect on their work acting with altruism within the school or greater community.

### Objectives:

- Students engage in self-reflection.
- Students listen to one another’s reflections on their shared experience acting with altruism within their community.
- Students consider how they can continue acting with altruism with daily actions.

### Skills Learned:

CRITICAL THINKING    COMMUNICATION SKILLS    RESPONSIBLE DECISION-MAKING    CREATIVE THINKING

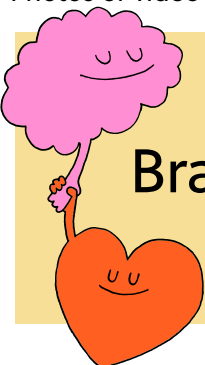
SELF-AWARENESS SKILLS    SELF-CARE SKILLS    SOCIAL AWARENESS SKILLS

### Estimated Time:

40 minutes  
This lesson can be separated by lesson parts and implemented across several days.

### Materials:

Photos or video of student action.



## Brain Bites

What’s good for the body is good for the brain. What’s good for the brain is good for the body! Throughout the lessons you will find brain icons with actions and facts about the brain. It is important for students to understand the importance of the brain and how it impacts our well-being.

### Differentiation by Grade Level:

#### 4th Grade:

- Keep this lesson as is, differentiating as needed for your unique group of students.

#### 5th Grade:

- Keep this lesson as is, differentiating as needed for your unique group of students.

#### 6th Grade:

- **Optional Extension:** Have students choose one of the types of daily actions for altruism (self, classroom/school, community, or home) and write a personal reflection on how they would like to take action in that area.

## Part 1: Reflect and Connect (5 minutes)

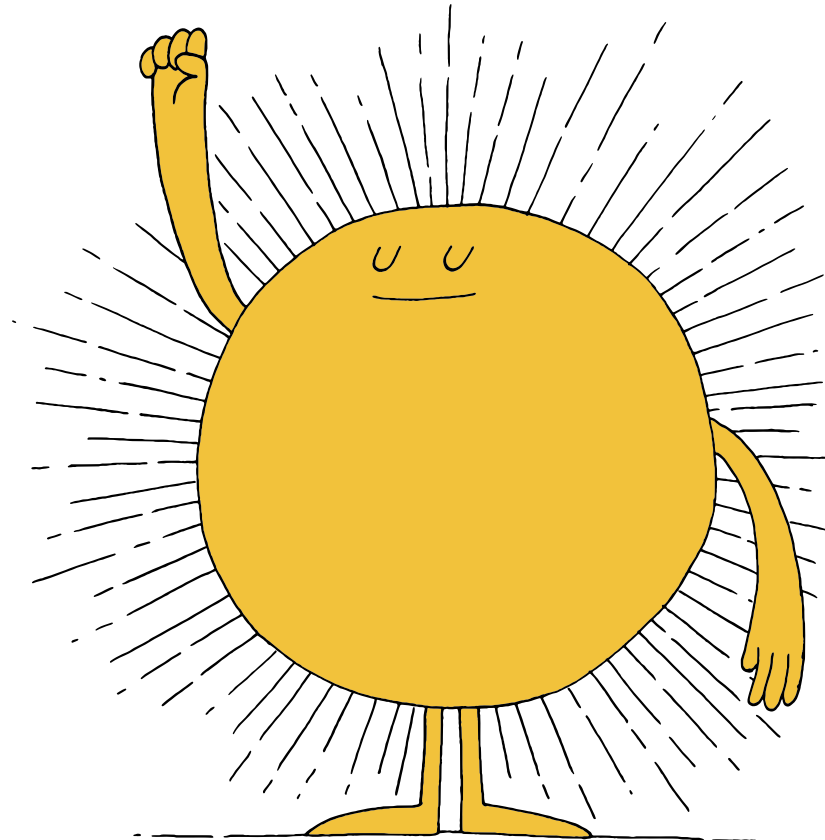
### Step 1: Mindful Start and Setting an Intention (optional)

**Objective:** To prepare students for learning; to review lessons on mindful breathing and setting intentions.

Invite students to take a short mindful break.

- Let's begin by taking a short mindful moment.
- First, find a comfortable seat in your chair. Place your feet flat on the ground. Rest your hands on your lap.
- If it feels comfortable, you can close your eyes. If not, just look softly down toward your desk (or table).
- Start by noticing how your body feels sitting here now...

- Your feet on the ground, your back against the chair...
- Now, notice your breath.
- At your own pace, take three deep breaths...
- Before we start our activity today, take a moment to remember our altruism in action. How do you think the recipient(s) of our action felt? How did you feel?
- Before we start our action today, please set an intention ... maybe to act with altruism. Choose an intention that best speaks to the attitude you'd like to have today.
- When you are ready, you can open your eyes.



## Part 2: Reflect and Celebrate (15 minutes)

**Purpose:** To provide time for students to reflect on their group action of altruism, how the experience may have impacted their well-being and how they think it might have impacted the recipient of their action.

### Step 1: A Walk Down Memory Lane

Choose one of the two following options to prompt student reflection.

#### Option 1: Reflecting on Documentation

Display the photos or videos that were taken during students' altruistic action. This can be accomplished with a slide show, video or photos displayed around the room for students to view as a gallery.

Instructions to students:

- As you look at the pictures (or video), notice how you feel as you remember our action meeting a need within our community.

#### Option 2: Making Memories

Place students in groups of three or four. Invite each group to share their favourite memory from their altruistic action with one another. Give groups about 10 minutes to share in their small groups. Then, invite each group to share out to the larger class.

### Step 2: Reflect

Invite students to take a few minutes to reflect on their own personal experience working with their classmates to build connection and care in their classroom.

Instructions to students:

- Take a few minutes to write down or draw a picture about your own experience with your action plan to bring altruism to your community.

- Some ideas to get you started:
  - How did it feel to work together as a class?
  - How are you feeling now, after our work together?
  - How did acting with altruism impact your own well-being?

Provide each with a copy of the Reflection worksheet found at the end of this lesson, to help frame their thinking. Students may write or draw about their experience.

**Option:** Create a gallery walk with student reflections on display. And/or invite students to bring their reflections home to share with their families and caregivers.

### Step 3: Connect

#### Shared Reflection

Facilitate a class discussion focused on sharing students' reflections with one another. Ensure students engage in respectful, active listening with one another.

Facilitate student discussion (popcorn style) and write student responses on the board.

- What did you notice about your experience with altruism?
- How did acting with altruism impact your own well-being? Was there a connection?
- How do you think the recipient of our altruism felt?

## Part 3: Daily Action (20 minutes)

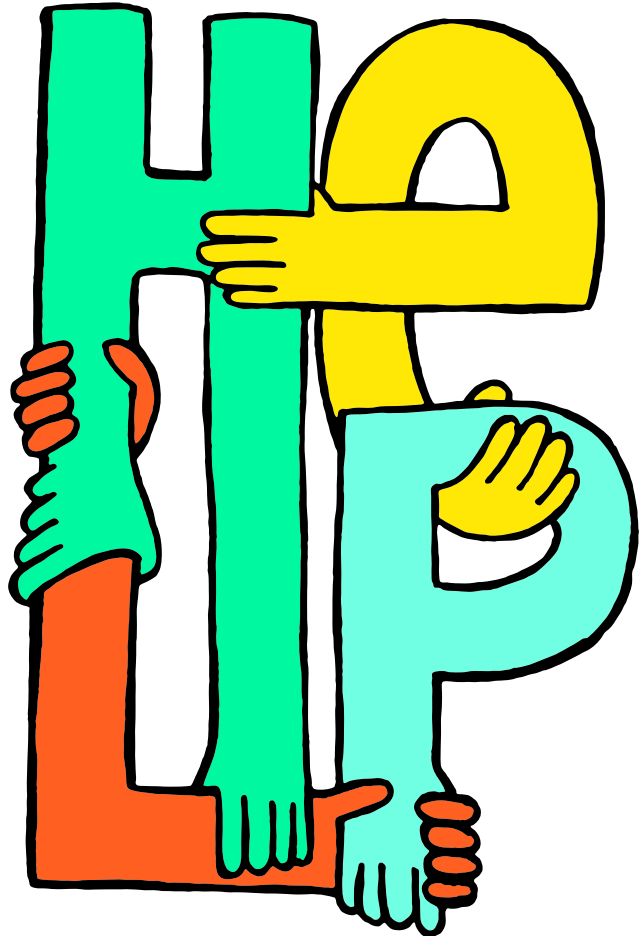
See the Altruism Daily Actions that are provided at the end of this lesson. Either use the suggested examples or invite students to generate their own ideas to promote altruism for self, school, community and home and to share these ideas with the rest of the class.

Ask students to consider Daily Actions that they could bring into their own life.

Guiding questions:

- Now that we have worked together to meet a need and act with altruism within our community, what would be some next steps to continue to act with altruism?
- Using the Daily Actions or your own ideas, think about how you can add more altruism in your life at school, in your community and at home.

**Note:** Remind students that being altruistic does not have to be complicated or take a lot of time—a simple kind action makes a big impact!



### Movement and Well-being

Studies have identified a meaningful link between movement and well-being. Exercising for 45 minutes three to five times a week was found to deliver the greatest benefits, and team sports were associated with the most powerful effects. But if you don't like to sweat, no problem! Walking just a few times a week can have a greater impact on your well-being than no movement at all. How can you incorporate a little bit of movement into your day?

# Teaching to Diversity

**Optional:** Use the following ideas to help you to calibrate the lesson to your particular group of students.

## Differentiation

- Instead of having students write down their ideas have them discuss with a partner.
- Provide a copy of written definitions for students to reference during reflection/planning tasks.
- Student reflections can be transcribed by a peer or student aide OR students can use a recording device to express their ideas orally.

## Challengers

**Have students reflect on an experience they can think of from their past that now, having had this experience, they would do differently to act MORE altruistically. Offer them the imaginary gift of time travel and have them outline:**

- What was the circumstance?
- What did you do?
- What would you have done differently?

**Have students write a magazine/blog article about altruism that includes:**

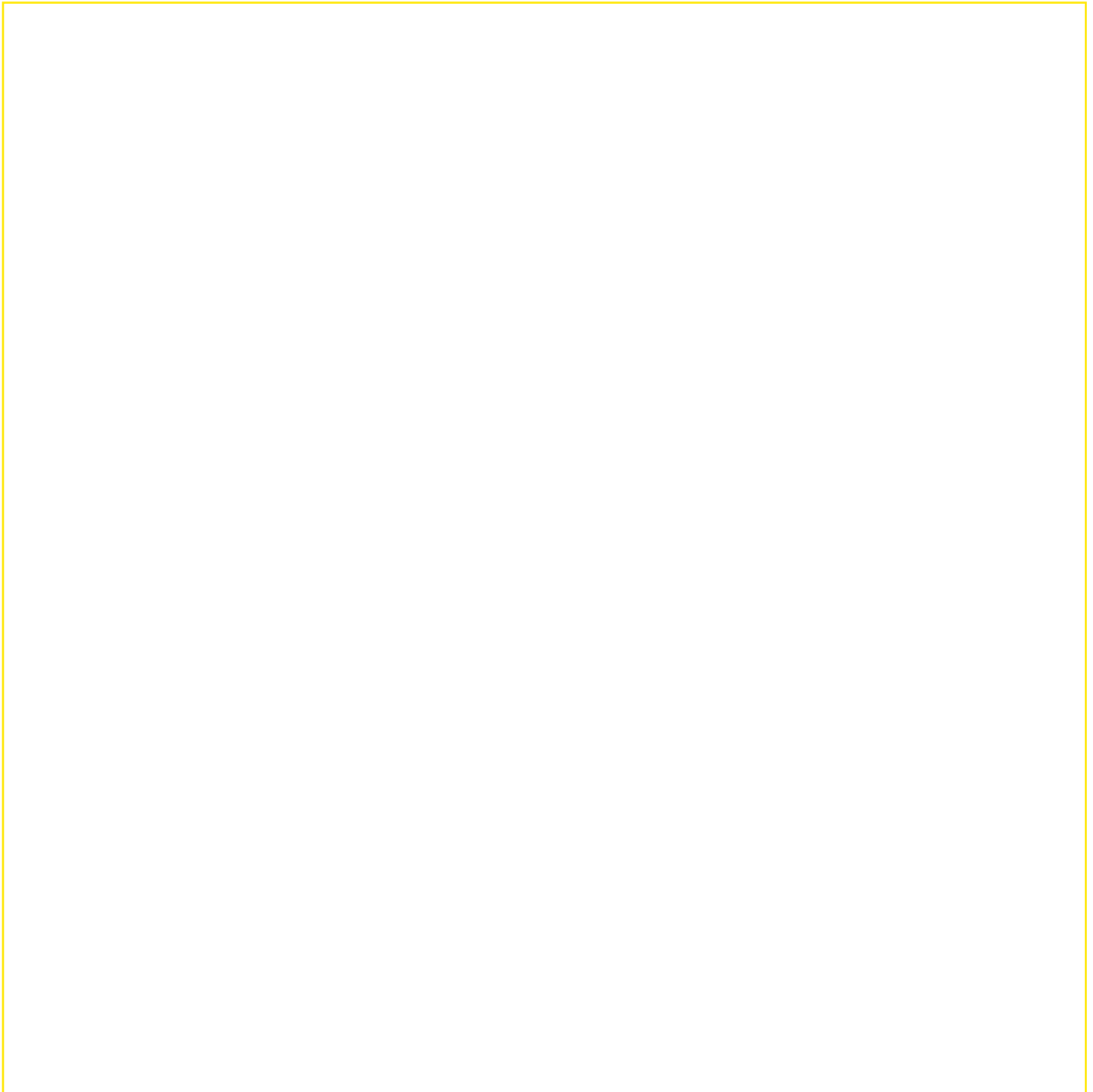
- An explanation of what altruism is.
- Why it's meaningful for the individual practising and those who receive the kindness.
- List five to 10 ways to act with altruism.



Brain imaging technology has revealed that listening to pleasurable music releases “feel-good” neurotransmitters. Dutch neuroscientist Jacob Jolij created a Feel Good Index that measures the number of positive references in a song, its tempo and its key. The songs on his list include “Walking on Sunshine” by Katrina and the Waves and “Living on a Prayer” by Bon Jovi. What are your favourite feel-good songs?

## **Reflecting on Altruism**

**Write or draw about your experience acting with altruism. How did you feel? How did others around you feel?**



# Daily Actions for Altruism

Daily actions are designed to promote transferable learning by inviting students to explore the module topics across four life domains: Self, School, Community and Home.

After implementing the altruism lesson, students can be provided time to explore each of the following related daily actions. When introducing these actions, you could explain the science behind them and perhaps provide examples to get students going. For example, research has shown that when you help others, you help yourself.

You might even experience “helper’s high”— a feeling of energy, inner warmth and calm created by a release of endorphins in the brain. The phenomenon was first identified by Allan Luks when he surveyed more than a thousand volunteers on the connection between altruism and health.

Following the exploration of daily actions, students are invited to write a personal reflection of their experience applying the daily actions.

**Self:** Try these three steps to “take in the good”:

- Think of a time when you helped someone who needed it. What was that experience like for you? How did you feel?
- Tap into those good feelings.
- Let the feelings sink in, noticing where you feel them in your body. See if you can stay with these feelings for 10, 20 or even 30 seconds in a row.

Neuroscientist Dr. Rick Hanson has found that taking in the good helps to turn positive events into positive memories and experiences, which is good for our brain and our overall well-being.

**Classroom/School:** Finish this sentence:

Today, I will help in my classroom/school by \_\_\_\_\_ .  
Write down one small thing. For example, open a door for someone (not only is it a simple way to help, research shows that good deeds inspire more good deeds).

**Community:** Be an undercover agent for good

Your mission, should you choose to accept it, is to do one small thing for someone else in your community without them knowing it was you. For example, you could leave a note of thanks on the bus driver’s seat or pick up some garbage you see in the schoolyard, making it a cleaner environment for everyone to enjoy.

**Home:** Invite your family to join in!

Identify something you can do together with your family to help someone out. Perhaps go through your clothes or books and donate something for someone else in need.



## Word Bank

**Active Listening** – To carefully listen and focus on what someone says and also pay attention to things like their body movement, facial expressions and tone of voice.

**Adversity** – Difficulties, challenges or hardships. In other words, a very hard, stressful or sad situation, that often lasts some time. For example, living through a global pandemic, living in poverty, experiencing discrimination or experiencing challenges at home.

**Altruism** – Wanting to help or helping others because you care about them or are worried for their well-being, without needing to get something in return (a reward).

**Angry** – A strong feeling of being upset or annoyed.

**Attention** – The act of carefully listening, watching and/or doing something.

**Attitude** – A feeling or way of thinking that affects a person's behaviour. For example, having a positive attitude means to expect good, be open to challenges, and to take care of your happiness and health.

**Bystander** – A person who is present at an event or incident but does not take part in it. For example, someone who watches a bully pick on or tease another child but does not get involved.

**Calm** – Feelings of peacefulness, quietness and lack of stress.

**Collaborate/Collaboration** – To work together with others to make or produce something.

**Community** – A group of people that are connected through liking the same things or having similar identities, values or cultures.

**Compassion** – Having concern for the well-being of someone in distress, and includes a need or desire to alleviate that person's suffering. In other words, a feeling of understanding or recognizing the suffering of a person and wanting to help them.

**Critical Thinking** – To analyze or think about something using logic, facts, reasoning and intellect.

**Disappointed** – To feel as if your expectations, wishes or hopes of something or someone were not met.

**Discouraged** – To lose confidence or enthusiasm about something. Feeling less willing to do something.

**Empathy** – The ability to understand and share the feelings of another person.

**Excited** – Feeling very happy and enthusiastic about something.

**Frightened** – To feel afraid, fearful or scared.

**Frustrated** – To feel annoyed and discouraged.

**Goal** – Something that you are trying to do or achieve, usually with a final achievement or destination in mind.

**Gratitude** – Feeling thankful for someone or something.

**Happy** – The emotion of feeling pleasure, enjoyment or joy for something or someone.

**Hope** – The feeling of expecting something positive to happen.

**Intention** – A determination to act in a certain way. In other words, setting your mind towards and committing to an aim or purpose that you plan to do or achieve. It is something you plan to do regardless of the outcome; it's more about the type of attitude to bring to an activity.

**Judgment** – An opinion or decision that something is good or bad.

**Kindness** – The quality of being generous, helpful and caring about other people, or an act showing this quality.

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