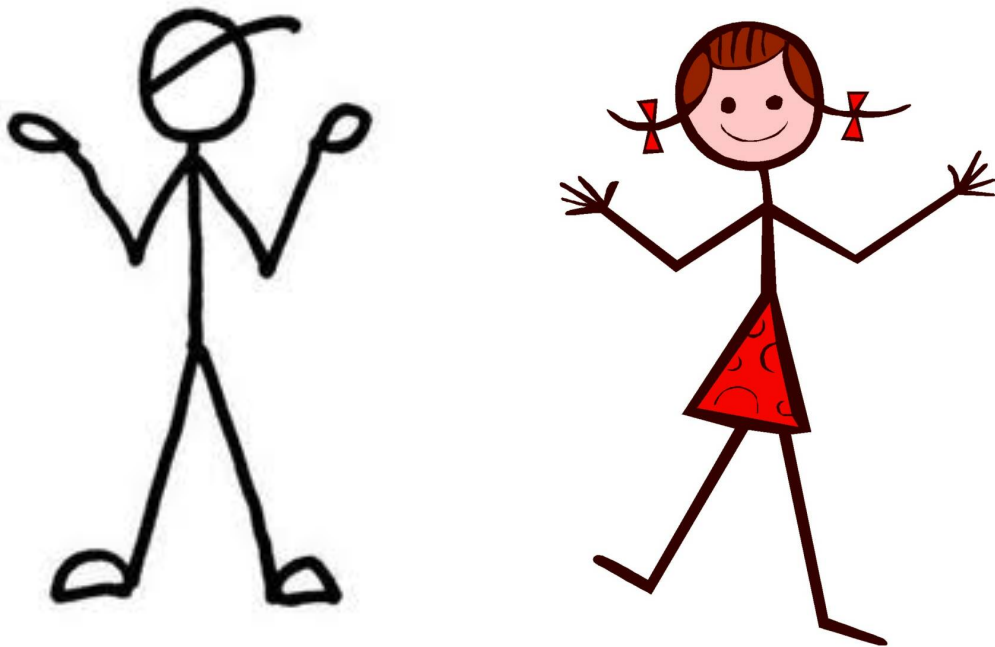


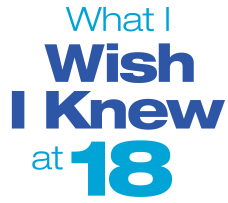
What I  
**Wish**  
**I Knew**  
at **18**

Middle School  
Leader's Guide



LifeSmart  
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*Empowering the Next Generation™*



***What I Wish I Knew at 18: Life Lessons for the Road Ahead – Middle School Leaders Guide***

Middle School Leaders Guide, 2013

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Published by LifeSmart Publishing, LLC. Gig Harbor, WA 98332.

The *What I Wish at 18* book and student guide can be purchased through LifeSmart Publishing.  
To Order:

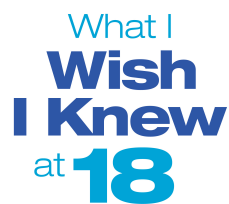
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## Special Message from the Authors

There is no greater calling than guiding a child to become an honorable and productive person. Whether you're a teacher, parent, mentor, or coach, the impact of your efforts is profound. We honor you for your dedication, tireless effort, and perseverance in preparing our next generation of leaders.

Statistics (and observation) indicates that many high school graduates are not fully prepared for adulthood and are struggling to find their way. While arguably any number of societal factors are contributing to what many are calling a "life skills deficit" among today's young people, most educators and parents agree we must find solutions. This deficit is taking its toll on both an individual and societal basis and comes at a time when our world economy has become increasingly competitive. The stakes are higher, and fixing this problem has become a societal imperative.

These challenges inspired us to offer a solution—a comprehensive and innovative leadership and life skills course based on the success principles covered in *What I Wish I Knew at 18: Life Lessons for the Road Ahead*. It describes the qualities and methods of honorable leaders while instilling practical, before-the-fact wisdom in key life decision arenas. Through its emphasis on (and opportunities for) personal reflection, peer interaction, and practical application, this course inspires, equips, and empowers students to reach their full potential.

While we originally designed the course for use in high schools, many educators want to use it in middle school settings and asked us to develop a middle school leader's guide. This guide is in response to these requests. While some of the content is quite specific to the high school years, much of it can be translated to the middle school setting and preparing for the transition to high school (rather than the transition to college, career, or service).

May this course help you achieve your organizational mission of preparing young people for a successful high school career and a fulfilling life journey with lasting impact!

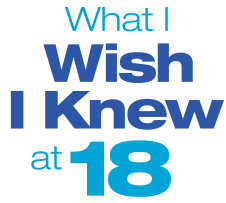
Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dennis Trittin". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end.

Dennis Trittin

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Arlyn Lawrence". The signature is cursive and elegant, with a long, sweeping tail.

Arlyn Lawrence



## Middle School Leader's Guide

*leadership \* empowerment \* impact \* confidence \* integrity \* wisdom \* success \* purpose*

### What's So Important about Leadership and Life Skills Development?

*"...preparing young people for success in life is not just a moral obligation of society but also an economic imperative."  
Arne Duncan, U.S. Secretary of Education*

In an increasingly competitive world, our nation and economy depends on leadership from our young people. Not only is this important on an individual level, but it also has societal and economic implications. The stakes are high. We owe our next generation(s) the vision and practical guidance to achieve their full potential. That is precisely what this course is all about.

We hope this unique leadership and life skills program, based on the book, *What I Wish I Knew at 18*, will prove to be one of the most valuable and personally relevant course your students will ever take. In it, they will gain important skills and perspectives that go beyond academic knowledge, equipping them to *use* that knowledge for maximum impact in the real world. In this course, students will learn to:

- develop a personal leadership foundation that models the qualities of honorable people
- successfully transition to a high school (and eventually) college academic environment
- develop the qualities employers value
- succeed in a well-matched career and reach their full potential
- become a masterful decision-maker and time manager
- build a winning competitive edge and market it strategically
- manage their money wisely and achieve their financial goals
- build enduring relationships and prepare for a healthy family
- use their time, talent, and treasure to positively impact the world

Students will learn valuable skills and life principles via personal reflection/self assessments, as well as through dynamic group discussions and role playing where they will collaborate in teams—in some cases, leading discussions and in other cases providing valuable feedback to their classmates.

In the *What I Wish I Knew at 18* course, students will discover the behaviors and ways of honorable and productive leaders, and gain the confidence that they, too, can be one! They will learn that “leadership” is not simply for the chosen few. Every person can be a leader in his or her sphere of influence and express leadership qualities in a host of different situations.

### How to Lead this Course

One of the greatest aspects of the *What I Wish I Knew at 18* program is that you don't have to be a rocket scientist to teach it. Nor do you need to be a psychologist, a therapist, a child development expert or any other kind of expert! You simply need to be someone with the desire and relational skill to help teens learn the foundational principles necessary for a successful launch into adulthood. All the tools you need are right here in this curriculum.

As you proceed, here are some things to keep in mind:

- First and foremost—have FUN! Be sure to share your stories too! Students will remember your life lessons and be more inspired to share their thoughts and experiences.
- Each day's lesson (based on one or more success pointers from the *What I Wish I Knew at 18* book) is divided into five sections, each marked by a distinctive icon:



**Prepare** – advance reading (note: for middle school students we recommend using the “Prepare” section at the end of the unit rather than at the beginning)



**Consider** – large group teaching/discussion of the success pointer(s) covered in that lesson



**Discuss** – small group activities reinforcing the concepts presented in the “Consider” section



**Apply** – after-class assignments and challenges for life application



**Journal** –opportunities for students to record notes, thoughts, impressions, etc.

- You can use the Lesson Planning Charts provided in this leader's guide to plan your class time(s). These may be photocopied for your personal use. A blank planning sheet is also included to provide extra space if needed.
- Have students utilize the chart found in the "Prepare" section of each chapter of the student guide at the END of the unit rather than at the beginning, as directed. NOTE: IF YOU ARE NOT USING THE BOOK WITH YOUR COURSE AND ARE USING WORKBOOKS ONLY, OMIT THIS SECTION.)
- After the opening discussion, read together (or permit students to either read silently or take turns reading aloud) that day's reading in the "Consider" section of the student guide. If there are personal reflection or application questions in the reading, allow a few minutes for students to record their answers before engaging in group discussions.
- Following the larger group time, direct students to the "Discuss" section of that day's lesson. Have them form groups of three to five people (you may wish to keep the same groups, for continuity, or change them up periodically, depending on your classroom dynamics). Assign an activity or discussion topic from the "Discuss" section of that day's lesson.
- Keep in mind that some activities may require more than one day to complete. For example, the "Career Selection and Advancement" section directs students to make a Career Binder to help them in their college search and career selection. Also, the "Managing Your Finances" section provides opportunities to create sample Cash Flow Statements and offer recommendations to an imaginary "Spendthrift" family that is in financial trouble. Consider these kinds of sections as you plan how to allocate course time to specific subject areas in your class.
- As much as possible, get the students to interact with one another and the class through discussion, activities, and opportunities for speaking in front of the larger group. In addition to helping students to absorb valuable content, this will help them develop their confidence, relational skills, and public speaking ability.
- Invite in guest speakers who have experience or expertise in various areas of subject matter covered by *What I Wish I Knew at 18*.
- Use the "Apply" section for homework or follow-up assignments for the students to do outside of class, if desired.
- The "Journal" section is provided at the end of each chapter for in-class notes and

personal reflection for future reference.

## The Leader's Role

- Be personal! Share your own journey and experiences as you teach the principles and exercises in the course. Rather than simply imparting information, your role is to serve as a discussion facilitator and mentor in guiding your students into meaningful conversation and understanding/application of the principles. The more you share, the more your students will, too.
- Understand that in most cases, there are no “right” or “wrong” answers to the discussion questions. Students should feel free to share their thoughts, ideas, and feelings without feeling pressured or judged to come up with a correct, objective answer.
- During the discussion times, monitor the groups to make sure they are making progress on the assignment and that the tone of the group is positive and cooperative. Middle schoolers are not always mature enough to handle the responsibility of conducting their own small group discussions; if this is the case, you may wish to keep the discussions within the larger group setting.
- Be flexible. Choose your priority topics but be willing to spend more (or less) time on a particular subject area depending on the students' interest. If something turns out to be a “hot topic” and you feel the students would benefit from additional discussion or exploration on that subject, go with it.
- Recognize that this course facilitates self-discovery. Since it focuses on leadership and life skills development, it will be less “academic” in nature. That's by design!

## Preparing to Teach

- Students sometimes become bored with school because they don't see how they'll use the information in “real life.” Assure them that this class WILL be different! (And, after having completed it, they will likely agree.) By mentioning this fact up front, this will motivate them to engage in the course, take it seriously, but still have fun.
- The structure of the student guide, when used as originally written, is designed to provide enough material for a *daily class for nine weeks*. This middle school leader's guide suggests adapting and/or omitting some lessons to accommodate younger students. That being the case, simply space out the discussions and activities accordingly. The lessons do not build on each other, so you can feel free to shorten, lengthen, or rearrange the order as you see fit.

- Where possible, put the students in scenarios of leadership. For example, in the Career chapter, have them pretend they're the store manager who needs to hire one person out of a group of 40 applicants. Ask them to list the qualities they will look for in the person they hire and finally, ask if they would they hire themselves!
- **When teaching this material to middle schoolers, you will want to gauge the age-appropriateness of the subject matter.** You will want to reduce/eliminate the marriage component and increase the time allotted to other subjects (e.g., their upcoming high school transition).
- Teachers should feel free to supplement this course with other resources on subject matter where additional detail/perspective is desired. For example, within the "Managing your Finances" chapter, teachers could train students on subjects like personal banking.
- Feel free to title the course as you see fit. Some suggestions include "Leadership for Life," "Leadership and Life Skills," or "Transitions."

### Media Resources

We highly recommend you utilize any technical or media resources available to further student engagement. If you have the capacity for showing film clips or YouTube® videos, or for creating and using Power Point slides to emphasize key points, take advantage of these opportunities. Any visual and audio supplements you can add will only serve to inspire the students more actively in the learning process (not to mention it makes it much more fun and interesting!).

For example, for Chapter One, "Life Perspective," to illustrate the pointer, "Don't Define Success by Riches," you could show the final scene from the movie *Mr. Holland's Opus*, starring Richard Dreyfuss. The YouTube link below connects to a clip of approximately ten minutes portraying a dramatic example of the reward of living a life invested in others, and reaping their gratitude and admiration as a result.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ng3l4vEN3Dk>

In this clip, Mr. Holland's former student and current state governor addresses Mr. Holland in front of a crowd of townspeople, school staff, and former students from throughout his 30-year teaching career. She says of him, "He has achieved a success far beyond riches and fame." And then directly to him, she adds, "Look around you. There is not a life in this room that you have not touched, and each one of us is a better person because of you. We are your symphony. We are the melodies and notes of your opus, and we are the music of your life."

Sometimes a song serves as a good illustration or discussion starter. The following You Tube® link will connect you to the Switchfoot song "The Shadow Proves the Sunshine" and might be a good choice for Chapter Nine, "Adversity and Spirituality." Ask students to identify what they



think the artist is saying about difficult times, and how this relates to what they learn in the pointer "Accept that Adversity Is Part of Life."

It is beyond the scope of this leaders' guide to comprehensively provide media resource suggestions for every pointer in the *What I Wish I Knew at 18 Student Guide*. We have provided a section starting on page 11 to help you identify clips or resources you can find and assign to particular pointers. Following are some helpful websites for locating clips:

<http://www.youtube.com>

<http://www.bluefishtv.com>

<http://www.wingclips.com>

### Grading

**NEW!** We have recently added a pre- and post-course survey to help you measure your students' progress and perceptions pertaining to their understanding and application of the leadership principles they will learn in *What I Wish I Knew at 18*. The survey can be accessed on our website as a free download at

<http://www.dennistrittin.com/resources/WIWIKStudent%20Survey.pdf>.

The *What I Wish I Knew at 18* course is best graded on effort and participation. You may choose to develop quizzes/tests, but the focus should be on honest reflection and effective group participation. One way to assess this is to gather the students' workbooks for periodic evaluations and grading/assessment purposes. Another is to incorporate peer evaluations by students as part of grading the participation component. Finally, we encourage you to require summary papers at the end of each chapter that reflect students' key observations: new insights, areas they can model to others, and areas they will commit to for self-improvement. By the end of the course, students can be encouraged to keep these papers for future reference.

### Expanding the Curriculum

We encourage you to supplement this curriculum to best suit the needs of your students, and further concentrate in the subject matters most beneficial. For example, the finance chapter especially lends itself to further supplementation. You can:

- teach the students how to write, endorse, and cash or deposit a check, and how to balance a check book/bank account
- teach them how to use online banking
- have students pick a stock (or a portfolio of three stocks) and follow them, have contests, etc.
- take the students on field trips or invite guest speakers in the financial arena

## For Special Consideration

*Following are some extra thoughts and notes you may wish to consider as you plan your lessons with middle schoolers:*

### Recommended Sequence of Chapters

You may elect to cover the material in *What I Wish I Knew at 18* sequentially. You may also pick and choose which chapters you want to cover, depending on the length of your course and the desired subject matter. All the chapters and pointers are “stand alone” and can be used individually as well as being part of a series. Another recommended sequence that lends itself well to Middle School instruction is:

1. Life Perspective (Chapter 1)
2. Character (Chapter 2)
3. Relationships and Communication (Chapter 5)
4. Miscellaneous Life Skills (Chapter 3)
5. Handling Adversity/Spirituality (Chapter 9)
6. Academics (Chapter 4)
7. Career (Chapter 7)
8. Love and Marriage (Chapter 6)
9. Finances (Chapter 8)

## Lesson Adaptations for Middle School Use

Below we have listed certain pointers (lessons) in each chapter that can be adapted to make them more appropriate/applicable for middle schoolers. Other activities and lessons can be used as originally written in the *What I Wish I Knew at 18 Student Guide*.

### Chapter One – Life Perspective

The opening chapter to *What I Wish I Knew at 18* is a foundational one. For many reasons, pre-teens and teenagers often do not have a clear sense of their own self-worth. The teen years are tumultuous at the best of times, and many lack the social support necessary to build self-confidence, self-esteem, and a strong sense of purpose and direction. That's where this course can help (and is especially key for students who are at risk of dropping out of school).

In addition to the principles and exercises included in Chapter One of the student guide, here are some additional ideas you may wish to utilize in this section:

- have students start an “All about Me” journal in which they will incrementally record their self-discoveries throughout the course. Start by having them ask a few adults close to them to write down what attributes they see in them – character qualities, talents, skills, aptitudes, etc. Students can paste these into their journals for encouragement.

- find online assessments (there are a number of free ones, just use Google) students can take for personality and aptitude. An example of a free personality test can be found at <http://www.123test.com/disc-personality-test/> and an example of a free aptitude test can be found at <http://career.missouri.edu/students/majors-careers/skills-interests/career-interest-game/>
- Request a copy of the LifeSmart Personal Balance Sheet supplement to the *What I Wish I Knew at 18* course. This supplement helps educators, parents, and mentors working with young people offer insight and encouragement personally tailored to identifying and encouraging teen's unique sense of self-worth. Contact us through [www.dennistrittin.com](http://www.dennistrittin.com) ("Contact") to order.

### Suggested activities:

- At the end of the chapter, assign students to write a paper on what they think are the most important/best qualities they have to offer, as well as the things they think they need to work on.
- Consider having the students write a brief paper about their dreams and goals...where do they see themselves in five years? Ten?
- Based on the results of any personality and/or aptitude testing they did, have them share with the rest of the class (public speaking opportunity) what they learned about themselves. Surprises? Confirmations?

### **Pointer 4 - Diversify Your Life**

- You will want to modify this pointer for middle schoolers, as they really are not in charge of their lives yet and may have little choice about their activities. Instead of the listed activity, give students the opportunity to discuss what kinds of activities they'd LIKE to participate in, if they had their choice. What are some things they'd be interested in if there was no time or money limitation, for example? What are some skills and talents they'd like to acquire (play an instrument, a sport, learn to draw, etc.)? If they could travel, where would they like to go, and how would they like to get there? Who are people they'd like to visit or spend more time with?

### **Pointer 5 - Commit to Being a Lifelong Learner**

#### Alternate activity:

- Do you like to read? Why or why not? What kinds of things/subjects do you like to read about?
- What are ways you can learn about new interests besides reading? How can you explore new interests on the Internet? TV? What are some ways to get positive learning on TV?

## Chapter 2 -Character

Relationships, integrity, and bullying: Your *What I Wish I Knew at 18* course can be a great opportunity to talk with students about some of the darker sides of the high school social scene and how they can set a higher bar for themselves and others around them when they get there. Kids are so focused on peer groups, what they wear, how they fit into the pecking order, etc. If there's a way that can be channeled positively, school culture as a whole can be influenced tremendously.

Recommended vocabulary: (Students should know the meaning of these words; think of creative ways to use them. Have a pop oral quiz and see if students can define them? Spelling words? Flash cards? Word search puzzles?)

- Moral
- Ethical
- Character
- Values
- Temperament
- Priorities
- Judgmental
- Compromise
- Intrinsic
- Legacy
- Conscience
- Integrity

### **Pointer 1 – Cultivate a Servant's Heart**

What does it mean to be you? (Emphasize the Albert Einstein quote).

- Consider having each team do a community service project helping those less fortunate. How did it change their perspective?
- Assign a writing assignment to describe how students have lived this principle and how it changed their perspective.
- What does it mean to be a "servant" in every day life? Why is "serving" an admirable quality? How can you surprise someone by serving him or her unexpectedly?
- Emphasize the joy of giving over receiving.

### **Pointer 2 – When Facing Risky Situations, Preserve Your Values, Reputation, and Integrity**

Discuss the need to protect your reputation, not compromising to fit it in, and having the courage to stand up for your values. Add new discussion scenarios to the small group exercise: 1) leaving someone out when you're getting pressure from a group not to invite him/her to your party 2) bullying – someone is being pressured/excluded/"punished"/tormented and you are being pressured not to come to their defense.

### **Pointer 3 – Stand up for Your Beliefs and Values with Conviction**

- find *The Wonder Years* clip on YouTube of Kevin and Margaret Farguart
- on page 28, choose some different role plays that might be more appropriate to middle schoolers, such as 1) a bullying scenario in the lunchroom, 2) someone is ridiculing another person for their clothes or a speech impediment, 3) kids are ostracizing another student because their parents won't let them watch certain movies (e.g. PG-13)
- ask students to share: "When have I been challenged about my beliefs or values?" and "When have I teased someone else about their values?"
- Discuss: Are you able to respect people who are living out their values and honor their decisions (even if you don't agree?).
- How about your own parents? When you can't do something because someone else says you can't (e.g., a parent or teacher), can you respect his or her wishes without getting mad about it?

### **Pointer 4 – Be an Encourager Rather than a Critic and Always Look for the Best in People**

- Include evaluating people according to what they wear.
- On page 30, have students share times where they were an encourager, when someone was down and out and they came alongside (or someone did that for them; how did that make them feel?).

### **Pointer 6 – Don't Say Something about Someone Else You'd Regret if They Heard**

Take the "Integrity Challenge!" (This can be found online on our blog, [http://dennistrittin.com/view\\_blog.aspx?blog\\_id=18](http://dennistrittin.com/view_blog.aspx?blog_id=18) ) For one week, see if everyone in your class (or school) can take the challenge to not say anything about someone else they'd regret if that person heard. Encourage them to hold one another accountable (the person who gets called out has to apologize and ask for forgiveness!). See how the culture in your classroom or school changes. Imagine the possibilities!

#### Bullying Blogs

This principle also extends to the issue of bullying. Refer to our blogs on bullying below for additional information:

Part One - [http://dennistrittin.com/view\\_blog.aspx?blog\\_id=89](http://dennistrittin.com/view_blog.aspx?blog_id=89)

Part Two - [http://dennistrittin.com/view\\_blog.aspx?blog\\_id=90](http://dennistrittin.com/view_blog.aspx?blog_id=90)

Part Three - [http://dennistrittin.com/view\\_blog.aspx?blog\\_id=91](http://dennistrittin.com/view_blog.aspx?blog_id=91)

Game Suggestion: Students will probably be familiar with the "telephone game" where one person whispers a sentence in the next person's ear, that person repeats to the next person, and so on to the end of the line. It's often funny and surprising what comes out at the end! Here's a variation: each person must deliberately change one and ONLY ONE word each time the sentence is repeated. Of course what comes out at the other end will be completely convoluted! Point out to students that this is often what happens when we talk about other people—and how damaging the results can be.

## Chapter Three – Relationships and Communication

It is important to frame this section in the context of HEALTHY relationships and communication. Teens tend to be focused on peer evaluations based on what they wear, where they fit in the pecking order of high school culture, comparisons and competition, and who's in/who's out. In this unit, we want to emphasize the worth of the individual, relationships over things, avoiding labels, and cultivating inclusive social groups. The goal of this section is to help students build and maintain healthy relationships at school and at home.

Note: You may wish to view our AAFCS Webinar for more content on this topic, "Life Is about Relationships: Learn How World Class Leaders Build and Sustain Them."

<http://events.r20.constantcontact.com/register/event?oeidk=a07e8em2eft78f7c3c7&llr=kql6x9dab>

### **Pointer 1 – Put Relationships before Things**

- Have students identify what things people are being judged on in their particular high school culture (either fairly or unfairly). Do they agree or disagree? Why?
- Ask the question for class or small group discussion, "How can we help create a culture in our school that doesn't judge on that basis?" Or, "How can we demonstrate respect, understanding, and empathy to others who aren't our closest friends?"
- Discuss the emphasis that is placed on possessions and appearance. Does this really tell you about who a person really IS? Why or why not? What are some ways evaluate other people that are a truer measure? (e.g., character, personality, interests, talents, etc.)

### **Pointer 2 - Get Connected with Others Who Share Your Interests and Values and Steer Clear of Destructive People**

Consider taking more than one day on this lesson, and using it in preparing for the transition to high school. Many of the situations encountered by high schoolers moving on to college are experienced in some degree by middle schoolers moving on to high school.

Note: a version of this lesson is available as a free download through Nasco at

[http://www.enasco.com/page/FCS/lessons/fcs\\_lesson27/?utm\\_source=fcs&utm\\_medium=Banner&utm\\_campaign=lesson27](http://www.enasco.com/page/FCS/lessons/fcs_lesson27/?utm_source=fcs&utm_medium=Banner&utm_campaign=lesson27)

For further discussion: Point out to students that if they tend to be shy, especially with transitions, these periods can be more challenging. It may just be who they are, and that's ok. But, it may also stem from a lack of self-confidence. Regardless of the source, they need to know they are worth knowing. Point out that when they withhold themselves from others—whether from natural reserve or from fear of looking foolish, etc.--they are depriving others (and themselves) of a potentially great friendship! At the same time, *encourage* those who are on the shy side. What are the virtues of those who are more reserved? Better listeners. Easy to be around. These are great qualities in a friend!

**Pointer 3 – Recognize that First Impressions Are Huge, Be Inquisitive When Meeting Others, and Notice How Others React to You**

We suggest you take more than one class period for this lesson. These are essential skills that will be especially tested after high school when friends scatter.

- reframe the scenarios as happening in middle school (e.g., in scenario two, make it high school freshmen)

Ask students: “What clues do you offer when you’re bored in a conversation? How good are you at picking up the signs when others are bored with you? Remember that 70 percent of communication is body language. We all bore others and are bored. How do you communicate that you’re engaged?” It’s very important to discern how you’re coming across to an audience.

**Pointer 4 – How You Say It Can Matter More than What You Say**

- Refer to previous lesson in Chapter Two: “Be an Encourager Rather than a Critic “
- New Apply Activity: What do you think about people who post negative comments about other people on social media like Facebook and Twitter? Has this ever happened to you or someone you know? Write a letter to an imaginary person who has written something discouraging and posted it. What would you say to him or her?

**Pointer 5 - Regularly Show Appreciation and Gratitude for Others**

- Conduct a class exercise on how to write thank you notes
- Talk about the importance of writing thank yous – after a gift, after an outing, after someone helps you, after an interview, etc.

## Chapter Four - Miscellaneous

**Pointer 1 – Set and Periodically Assess Your Goals**

Here’s a great YouTube clip from an Olympic athlete that illustrates how making small incremental changes can help you accomplish goals that might otherwise seem impossible.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DfLLNksZmoY>

**Pointer 4 – Don’t Let Technology Rule Your Life**

Communication used to be more intermittent and easier to manage than it is today. These days, we get notified EVERY TIME we get an incoming communication. The question is, “How do we decide whether we want to respond to that?” In this day and age, controlling our time is becoming the most important issue for a productive person. We need to learn to block our time: blocking time leads to greater productivity. Here are some suggestions beyond what are provided in the *WIWIK@18 Student Guide*:

- When you do your homework, do you have your phone close by? How does that affect the length of time you can work/study undistracted?
- How do you respond when you receive an incoming call? (Point out they don’t need to “jump” to answer it)
- Understand how being on your phone all the time when with others diminishes

relationships because you're disengaged (and shows disrespect to speaker/other person).

**Role-playing scenarios:** 1) you're a speaker and you see people texting; 2) you're confiding a serious personal problem to someone and they're texting while you're talking

### **Pointer 5 – Learn to Speak Comfortably in Groups**

This is a great lesson to apply to academics:

- Ask students, "What are the elements of a great talk?" Write their answers on the white board for every one to see/comment on.
- Have students come up with a one-minute speech, just to give them a bit of experience. Have class members give positive feedback.
- Talk about the difference between an extemporaneous vs. a prepared speech. Practice both using the list of possible topics offered in the student guide.
- Encourage your students to *give themselves permission to feel nervous/fail*. Remember, no matter how old you are, it's harder when it's in front of your peers (and easier when you don't know people!) That's important to keep in mind.

### **Pointer 6 – Be a Discerning Skeptic of All You See and Hear**

In this chapter, take time to focus on advertising messages and distortions of reality found in media/marketing. Here are two extra assignments you might use:

1. Look at an assortment of magazines and commercials. Identify what the advertiser is trying to message to you.
2. You now work for an advertising agency. You are developing ads of skin products for girls and athletic gear for guys. What would *you* put in an ad; what would *you* try to do in your magazine article to get that person to buy your product?

## **Chapter Five – College Academics**

You may elect to skip this section entirely or use the lesson to teach the Rainbow Highlighter Study Method, which can be as helpful in Middle School as in High School or college!

## **Chapter Six – Career Selection and Advancement ("Would you hire you?")**

While middle school students might not be actively planning their future careers at this point in their lives, there are ways to get them to *imagine* themselves in different careers and in the workforce. This is a healthy thing! Before you start this lesson, ask your students what career arenas they think they might be interested in, and how they might go about finding out about those fields.

- They can record their thoughts about this in the Prepare section on page 81 of the student guide
- See how their thoughts change after they do the assessments in this lesson. At the end of



the chapter, encourage them go back to the Prepare section and see if their opinions have changed!

**Pointer 1 – Choose Your Career after Conducting a Comprehensive Self-Assessment**

You may wish to modify the opening list of questions according to the level of your students.

Encourage students:

- Interview your parents/relatives. Why did they choose the career they chose? How did it evolve? If they had to do it over again, would they have done it differently?
- Look at the drop out chart on page 84. Reinforce the necessity of staying in school.
- Develop lists of the aspects they'd like best in a job, and those they'd like least.

**Pointer 2 – Build a Winning Competitive Edge/Demonstrate the Qualities Employers Value**

Ask students to take the one or two careers they identified in the Pointer One lesson of this chapter:

- What can you start doing now to prepare yourself to get a job in that career? To help differentiate yourself from others?
- Plant a seed that when they're in high school, they'll have more opportunities for volunteering, part-time jobs, etc.

Talk about the value of building references and referrals (babysitting, mowing lawns), repeat customers calling you back again. Always work with excellence, go above and beyond, go the extra mile, etc.

- Encourage earning certifications (life guarding, Red Cross babysitting, CPR training, Eagle Scout, sports refereeing, etc.)
- Emphasize the value of networking, ambassadorship, cultivating people who know you and are willing to introduce you to others

**Pointer 3 – Learn to Persuasively Market Yourself**

For middle schoolers, this lesson will not be so much "career" focused, but more along the lines of, "How do you land the job at Burger King?"

- For the mock job interviews, use sample jobs that the average student in your class might best understand (focus on jobs, not careers, that junior high schoolers might relate to ... barista, lawn care, childcare, fast food, tutoring, etc.). A fun example would be to pretend they're a parent who is interviewing babysitting candidates. What would they look for?

**Pointer 4 – Diversify Your Contributions to Build Your Value and Win Promotions**

How well you do on a job will determine how much you get paid, your promotions to higher responsibility, and how good your resume looks when you're looking for new jobs.

- What are the good qualities the person needs to work on? (Remember contrast is an effective teaching method: what you DO want to see; what you DON'T want to see)
- Give them specific scenarios they can act out (e.g., you're the Burger King manager and you need to pick an employee for an award and one for discipline for bad work habits). How do you respectfully but firmly communicate that they're not measuring up? How do you identify and motivate star qualities?

- Practice role-playing an interviewer and interviewee. Ask the interviewers to tell what they will you LOOK FOR in a candidate to decide whom to promote.

## Chapter Seven – Love and Marriage (or “Love and Friendship”)

Additional perspectives the instructor can offer:

- Not everyone is meant to be your friend
- The world doesn't end if you and your girlfriend/boyfriend break up
- You don't NEED to work it out
- The value of perspective that most teen relationships aren't going to last
- Why it's important to have a healthy perspective—that your self esteem should not be driven by whether you're in a relationship with someone
- Planting seeds of self-worth, intentionality, and boundaries help students to avoid behaviors that can wreck lives

Note: You may wish to move the “Love Takes Time and Timing” lesson to Chapter Three: Relationships and Communication.

## Chapter Eight – Managing Your Finances

Finances, to middle schoolers, are generally more about who's wearing what and “I want that,” versus really thinking about the future. In this section, we want to start instilling a proper sense of responsibility about money. These lessons provide a number of opportunities to teach values when it comes to money and the proper use/management of it. Point out that, in life, the most important way they'll use math is in handling their money.

### Pointer 2 – Live within your Means and Generate Positive Cash Flow

Alternate budgeting exercise:

Tell students, “Here's how much you make \_\_\_\_\_.” (Give them an amount, either figuratively or use play money). “Now, we're going to give some to charity. Then we're going to give some to savings/investment. What's left is what we can spend (budget), 20% of which is going to go to groceries. Use this amount, not focusing on the whole budget but using it to frame a grocery/clothing exercise. Now they need to go:

- **grocery store shopping** – they have to go into a grocery store with \$\_\_\_\_\_ (amount of money). They will have different kinds of categories of groceries to buy; how will they spend that money? Point out, “Look at the different meats; they all cost differently (i.e., prime rib versus round steak). If you buy hamburger for \$4.69, how long are you going to make that last? What's the payoff of making it yourself versus going to McDonalds? What will you buy, name brand or generic?” Give them a real sense of the responsibility. (i.e., “If you spend all your money for expensive meat, you're not going to have money for the daily staples or the bun!”).
- **back to school shopping** – Mom gives you \$500 but your clothes need to last the whole

year (and you live in a climate that has all seasons, hot and cold). “What items do you need to buy so you have enough for the whole year?” Give them a sense of the responsibility (i.e., If you buy expensive jeans and boots for the fall, you may not have enough for shorts and t-shirts in the spring.)

**Pointer 3** – Ask students to identify the things they will want to save up for. They may think of things like a cell phone, basketball shoes/specialty clothing items, prom, car, laptop/tablet, techno gadget, video games/Play stations, skis/snowboard, etc.

## Chapter Nine – Adversity and Spirituality

This unit is included in the course because it is an important life topic and involves real choices young people need to make:

*How are you going to handle it when things don't go your way?  
What will you do with the spiritual side of life?*

This unit is optional (although, at a minimum we suggest including the Adversity component). However, we hope you will use it to provide students with an objective forum in which to explore this facet of life. The idea is not to be at all directional (i.e., not to tell students what or how to deal with their spirituality), merely to acknowledge that this component of life is real and something about which they will want to make their own personal decisions.

The Search Institute®, a national research-based organization and leading global innovator in adolescent development, has identified the 40 building blocks of healthy identify formation—known as Developmental Assets®—that help young people grow up healthy, caring, and responsible.

<http://www.search-institute.org/content/40-developmental-assets-adolescents-ages-12-18>

The assets are grounded in extensive research in youth development, resiliency, and prevention. They represent the relationships, opportunities, and personal *qualities that young people need to avoid risks and to thrive*. **We note that one of the 40 developmental assets of healthy development is the consideration of a spiritual life.** The goal of this lesson is not to be directional in any way, but rather to simply communicate that many successful leaders consider this an important part of their lives.

The bottom line is that middle school is a time when student do experience a great deal of change, and yes, often adversity. This can include (but not be limited to) such life issues as: relationships

- relationships
- not making the team/getting play time/getting the part in the play or first chair in the

- school orchestra (learning that life isn't always fair; things don't always go my way)
- parents' divorces
  - financial instability
  - illness/health
  - feelings of rejection, loneliness, abandonment
  - death of someone close to them

**Pointer 1 – Accept that Adversity Is a Part of Life and Can be Preparation for Greater Things**

For discussion: Ask students to think about a difficult time they've faced and how they dealt with it. They don't need to share it aloud; they should just identify it in their own mind. Now, going back, would they have done things differently? Point out that time heals and you can learn life lessons from hard time and turn adversity to something that makes you a better person. You can also learn from those lessons how to respond differently (and better next time). This is part of growing as a person.

Point out that if they haven't experienced much adversity, they will in high school. They may find that things just start to matter more, and not to be surprised by that—but to be ready to experience it. Adversity DOES happen to everyone; it's just part of life!

**Pointer 2 – Release Your Pain, Take Charge of Your Worries**

Substitute the following scenario for the one given:

*You have just experienced a string of unfortunate and discouraging events. Your house was recently broken into and all your electronic equipment was stolen—including your favorite movies and video games. You tried out for a select soccer team but you didn't make it and most of your friends did. Your best friend from elementary school has found a new group of friends in middle school and you are feeling left out and without someone to talk to.*

Suggested discussion and activities:

- Ask students, "How might you respond to these situations? How would you advise a friend who was going through these things?"
- Have them draw a play-by-play illustration, comic-strip style, of the events and their reactions.
- Write each adversity scenario on a card, add a few of your own, and have groups of students draw one to role-play.
- Point to students that they should *know when to talk to an adult*. If they are in abusive situations, or in situations where they feel pressured or intimidated (or they know someone else is in an abusive situation)... *don't* handle it alone.

**Other pointers** - You may elect to skip the remaining pointers in this section when working with middle school students.

## Summary Session

At the end of the course, consider having a summary session (or paper) in which students have the opportunity to recap their own (personal) highlights and take-aways from the course.

- what stood out the most to them?
- what are the most significant things they will remember?
- is there anything about which they feel differently than when they started the course?
- How will it impact their thinking, actions, attitudes, and decisions?

Take this opportunity to reinforce that they have the tools to be successful and to live a life of significance and impact if they will believe in themselves and apply what they've learned!

Success Pointers	Media Resource
<b>Chapter 1 – Life Perspective</b>	
Discover your purpose and inspiration	
Live life without regrets	
Don't define success by riches	
Diversify your life	
Commit to being a lifelong learner	
<b>Chapter 2 – Character</b>	
Cultivate a servant's heart	
When facing risky situations, ask how your conscience will feel tomorrow	
Stand up for your beliefs and values with conviction	The Wonder Years – Kevin and Margaret Farquart
Be an encourager rather than a critic and always look for the best in people	
Solicit and embrace constructive feedback	
Don't say something about someone else that you wouldn't mind them overhearing	
<b>Chapter 3–Relationships &amp; Communication</b>	
Put relationships before things	
Get connected with others who share your interests and values/Steer clear of destructive people/First impressions are huge/Be inquisitive when meeting others/Notice how others react to you	

How you say it can matter more than what you say/Talk it out, don't write it out	
Regularly show appreciation and gratitude to others	
<b>Chapter 4 - Miscellaneous</b>	
Set and periodically assess your goals	
Time is precious...use it wisely	
Become a masterful decision maker	
Don't let technology control your life	
Learn to speak comfortably in groups	<i>The King's Speech</i>
Be a discerning skeptic of all you read and hear	
<b>Chapter 5 – College Academics</b>	
Excel by planning, preparing, and performing	
Consider the rainbow highlighter study method	
<b>Chapter 6 – Career Selection/ Advancement</b>	
Choose your major and career after conducting a comprehensive assessment of yourself and potential career matches	
Build a winning competitive edge/Demonstrate the qualities that employers value	
Learn to persuasively market yourself /Likeability in the interview is huge	
Diversify your contributions to build your value and win promotions	
<b>Chapter 7 – Love and Marriage</b>	

Take a "3D approach" to dating	
Love Takes Time and Timing	
Choose your spouse as a forever decision/Fully explore your compatibility before committing	
Key words for a successful marriage	
<b>Chapter 8 – Managing Your Finances</b>	
Strive to become a wise steward, disciplined saver, prudent consumer, cautious debtor, and cheerful giver	
Live within your means and generate positive cash flow/Create regular cash flow statements; analyze your spending/Use credit sparingly and wisely	
Develop a financial plan that reflects your short- and long-term goals	
Invest early, regularly, and as much as you can in a diversified, long-term strategy	
Grow your wealth patiently	
<b>Chapter 9 – Adversity and Spirituality</b>	
<b>Adversity</b>	
Accept that adversity is a part of life/ It can be preparation for greater things and often makes sense in retrospect	
Release your pain/Take charge of your worries	
<b>Spirituality</b>	
Invest in your spiritual growth/Reserve time for daily reflection	
Connect with a worship center/Develop an accountability relationship with a trusted friend	