

**World Youth Alliance  
Human Dignity Curriculum**

**Grade 9**

# Introductory Questionnaire

*Please fill in the Introductory Questionnaire before the first lesson.*

## A. Expectations

1. What do you think this curriculum is all about? Explain in three sentences.

2. Circle the topics you would like this curriculum to cover.

Human Dignity	Improving relationships with classmates	Creativity
Critical thinking	Finding my personal mission	Heroism
Gaining respect from others	How to improve in school	Great personalities
Art and culture	Treating others with respect	True friendships
Developing good habits	Becoming the best person I can be	What makes us special

3. What do you expect to learn from this curriculum? What skills do you hope to gain?

# Introductory Questionnaire

4. How would you rate your level of motivation for attending this curriculum from 1 (lowest) to 10 (highest)?

Strongly disagree			Do not agree, nor disagree					Strongly agree		
-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5

5. What do you hope the curriculum will not contain? What do you hope will not be present in the classes?

## B. Competencies

Do you agree with the following statements? Circle the number from -5 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree), depending on how much you agree with the statements.

### B.1. Opinions and values

6. Freedom means being able to do what I want without others interfering.

Strongly disagree			Do not agree, nor disagree					Strongly agree		
-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5

7. All people have human dignity.

Strongly disagree			Do not agree, nor disagree					Strongly agree		
-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5

8. Humans and animals do not differ in any significant way.

Strongly disagree			Do not agree, nor disagree					Strongly agree		
-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5

# Introductory Questionnaire

9. Heroes exist in real life.

Strongly disagree			Do not agree, nor disagree					Strongly agree		
-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5

10. I think art is important.

Strongly disagree			Do not agree, nor disagree					Strongly agree		
-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5

11. No one should tell others what to do.

Strongly disagree			Do not agree, nor disagree					Strongly agree		
-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5

12. Humans have a special place in the world compared to non-living beings, plants and animals.

Strongly disagree			Do not agree, nor disagree					Strongly agree		
-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5

13. I believe that life has meaning.

Strongly disagree			Do not agree, nor disagree					Strongly agree		
-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5

14. I think I have the potential to become excellent.

Strongly disagree			Do not agree, nor disagree					Strongly agree		
-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5

# Introductory Questionnaire

## B.2. Behaviors

15. I choose friends because I enjoy spending time with them or because I can get something from them.

Strongly disagree			Do not agree, nor disagree					Strongly agree		
-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5

16. When I make decisions, I consider how they will affect my well-being and the well-being of others in the long-term.

Strongly disagree			Do not agree, nor disagree					Strongly agree		
-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5

17. I sometimes use others to gain something from them.

Strongly disagree			Do not agree, nor disagree					Strongly agree		
-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5

18. When I make a mistake about things that are important to me, I tend to despair.

Strongly disagree			Do not agree, nor disagree					Strongly agree		
-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5

19. When I share something that I have heard, I tend to consider whether it is true.

Strongly disagree			Do not agree, nor disagree					Strongly agree		
-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5

20. I act as if I have a significant purpose in life.

Strongly disagree			Do not agree, nor disagree					Strongly agree		
-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5

# Introductory Questionnaire

21. I treat people with disabilities or those who are poor as though they have less dignity than those who do not have disabilities and are not poor.

Strongly disagree			Do not agree, nor disagree					Strongly agree		
-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5

C. Final considerations

22. Do you have anything else you would like to share regarding the curriculum, the classes, etc.?

# Lesson 1: Hierarchy of Being and Human Dignity

## PURPOSE

To understand the special place human persons have in the world.

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of the lesson, students will be able to:

1. Understand the powers humans share with animals and other living beings, and recognize the powers to think and choose as specifically human powers.
2. Understand human dignity as the universal, intrinsic and inalienable value of human persons.

## MATERIALS & RESOURCES

- Introductory Questionnaire
- Hierarchy of Being table
- [Video](#): What distinguishes humans from other animals? | Ken Miller

## VOCABULARY

- Human dignity: the universal, intrinsic, and inalienable value of human persons
- Universal: every person has dignity
- Intrinsic: it is within each person, simply because they are human
- Inalienable: dignity cannot be given or taken away from a person
- Power: the ability of a living being to do something on its own
- Power to Think: the human ability to know and connect ideas about oneself, others, and the world
- Power to Choose: the human ability to knowingly select between options

## PRELIMINARY ACTIVITY

Ask the students to fill out the [Introductory Questionnaire](#) before the first class. If you consider it helpful, discuss some of the questions to learn more about the students' opinions on some of the most critical issues the course deals with.

**PROCEDURE**

**Step 1:** Introduce the purpose of the course.

Ask students what they expect to learn in the course.

Explain that the course will primarily deal with the following questions:

Who am I?

What am I capable of?

What can I become?

In academic courses, the students are mostly learning about the world around them. In this course, they have the opportunity to learn about themselves. Knowing oneself is the first step in determining how to live a good life, how to have authentic friendships, how to deal with problems, and how to give and receive respect.

Knowing oneself is the basis of understanding what one is capable of and what one can become. If someone can achieve excellence in what they do, they can become excellent as a person. One purpose of this class is to learn how to become excellent people. During the course of the following lessons, the students will learn what this means.

**Step 2:** Explain that the core concept the students will explore in this curriculum is called human dignity. Only humans have a special value called human dignity. This dignity makes them worthy of respect and gives them certain rights, but also responsibilities; and demands that all people behave in a certain way to nurture and protect this dignity.

Engage students by asking questions:

Do all people have dignity? [Yes, without exception.]

Who gives it to them? [No one, each person has it simply by being human.]

Can it be taken away from someone? [No, it is always with each person, it is intrinsic.]

Do some people have it less or more? [No, it is the same in everyone.]

Do people in comas, persons with disabilities, etc. have it? [Yes, everyone has it.]



After initial discussion, explain that the word “human” in “human dignity” means that all humans have it and that they have it simply by being human. Even though people differ in many ways, they all possess human dignity regardless of any differences. It is important to note that no one gives people human dignity – it is not granted by the society, political community, family, etc. Every person has it simply by being human and no one can take this value away from people. Human dignity does not exist in degrees – one cannot say that some people have more or less than others--each person is equal in dignity.

Then, define human dignity and its three characteristics. Write on the board:

Human dignity: the universal, intrinsic, and inalienable value of human persons

Universal: every person has dignity

Intrinsic: it is within each person, simply because they are human

Inalienable: dignity cannot be given or taken away from a person

**Step 3:** Divide students into groups and hand them the [Hierarchy of Being table](#). Have them come up with three powers all living beings share, three which only animals and humans share, and two which only humans possess.

Write the following definition on the board:

Power: the ability of a living being to do something on its own

If the students have difficulty understanding the exercise, help them by asking the question: “Are plants able to move on their own from one place to another?” Explain that since the answer is no, that means they do not have this power. Obviously, someone could move the plant from one place to another, but the plants cannot do that by themselves without outside help. Of course, sometimes plant seeds disseminate, but this is not the same as moving on one’s own. The seed is usually taken to another place by the wind or by an animal, and not by the plant itself. Then, after the seed is taken to another place, a new plant grows. Point out how, on the other hand, animals and humans can move on their own, which means they do have this power. From these examples, help them to understand that the power to move from one place to another is the power of animals and humans, and not of plants. Follow the same approach to explain the other powers.

**Step 4:** Ask all groups to share their answers. Write an empty table on the board and fill it in as the students provide correct answers. The correctly filled table should look like the following:

	Plants	Animals	Humans
POWERS			
Eat	x	x	x
Grow	x	x	x
Reproduce	x	x	x
Move from place to place on their own		x	x
Use the senses		x	x
Feel emotions		x	x
Think			x
Choose			x

Explain that all living beings have powers to eat, grow and reproduce. Non-living beings like rocks can be divided into pieces by an outside force (e.g. if someone smashes them) but this is quite different from reproduction in living beings. Reproduction means creating a new member of one's species. When the rock is smashed, nothing new is created, but only the existing piece is divided into smaller pieces. Power to eat means that living beings are able to take in nutrients from the environment in order to sustain themselves. With the sufficient intake of nutrients and by receiving the needed support from the environment (e.g. warmth, parental support, etc.), living beings can grow and develop. Notice that the support from the environment helps living beings to grow, but it does not generate this growth. The growth is generated "from within" and each living being grows and develops following specific instructions coded for by their genes. These genes provide instructions and direction for growth.

Animals and humans share the extra powers which plants do not have. First, this is the power to use the senses, such as smell, touch, sight, sound and taste. With the senses, animals and humans gather information from the environment. Senses are the powers which help humans and animals to gather different kinds of information from the outside world or within ourselves. This is done through sensory organs (e.g. nose, eyes, ears, etc.) which means senses are connected to our bodies. Plants too receive stimuli from the environment (e.g. the flower being directed towards sunlight) but it is hard to say that they sense it, i.e. that they perceive the stimulus when being exposed to it. The third is the already mentioned power to move from one place to another.

Power to feel emotions is connected to the power to use the senses, both internal and external ones. After gathering information through the senses, animals and humans can experience reactions to the things that affect them through emotions. For example, an animal can see a predator approaching which can trigger the emotion of fear. A human person can hear someone making fun of him or her, and feel the emotion of sadness. On the other hand, when plants receive stimuli from the environment, they do not experience it emotionally. If someone cuts a tree, the tree does not feel pain.

Finally, humans alone have the power to think and choose. Plants and animals do not share this power. Animals, and especially higher animals like chimpanzees, do have some form of cognition and decision-making. However, this is always strictly connected to the basic survival instincts. For example, an animal can learn how to escape different mazes or use tools in order to reach food. A dog can learn how to respond to basic commands such as “sit”, “stay”, “go”. However, these are not, strictly speaking, the powers to think and choose. Humans are not just able to use more complex tools to reach food, but they can also decide to temporarily give up on food to pursue higher goals. Humans alone can think about complex concepts, such as solving a math problem, making new inventions, inventing jokes, or creatively expressing themselves through art. Humans are also fundamentally free from their environment. Whenever an animal is exposed to the same stimulus from the environment for a prolonged period of time, it will develop the same response to this stimulus (e.g. when exposed to pain, it will run away or attack back). But humans can freely decide how to respond to stimuli. For example, when someone hits us, we can decide neither to flee nor to fight back, but to forgive the person and try to reconcile with them.

Highlight once more that the powers to think and to choose are specifically human powers and write the definitions of those powers on the board:

Power to Think: the human ability to know and connect ideas about oneself, others, and the world  
Power to Choose: the human ability to knowingly select between options

**Step 5:** To reinforce the idea that humans are fundamentally different from other living beings, show the [video](#) What distinguishes humans from other animals? by Ken Miller and invite students to share their comments.

Then, ask the students for examples of the situations in which we use human powers most visibly. Students will likely come up with different examples, but make sure to highlight the following:

Science  
Technology  
Education  
Arts and creativity  
Morality  
Important life decisions

Lead the class discussion to show how only humans can do these things, such as going to space, painting the Mona Lisa, choosing between right and wrong actions, etc.

**Step 6:** Summarize. Today's lesson focused on the three powers which all living beings share (eat, grow, reproduce), three which only humans and animals share (move, use senses, feel emotions) and two which distinguish humans from all other beings: powers to think and choose. The class mentioned some examples of where these powers are most explicitly used. The most important thing distinguishing humans from other creatures is their special value, human dignity. The lesson defined three characteristics of human dignity: that it is universal, intrinsic and inalienable.

**HIERARCHY OF BEING TABLE**

In the left column write:

- 3 powers all living beings share
- 3 which only animals and humans share
- 2 which only humans have

**Power:** ability of a living thing to do something on its own

	Plants	Animals	Humans
POWERS			
	x	x	x
	x	x	x
	x	x	x
		x	x
		x	x
		x	x
			x
			x

Note: be ready to explain what each power entails.

## Lesson 2: Subject vs. Objects

### PURPOSE

To enable students to accurately recognize when their human dignity and that of others is respected and when it is not respected, both on an individual and a social level.

### LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of the lesson, students will be able to:

1. Understand that persons should always be treated as subjects, and never merely as objects.
2. Understand that societies violate human dignity when they treat persons as mere objects and recognize the historic violations of human dignity and rights, such as slavery, racism, antisemitism, caste system, etc.
3. Learn about two examples of persons who stood up in defense of human dignity: Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King, Jr.

### MATERIALS & RESOURCES

- Mahatma Gandhi: excerpt from the Speech at Tanjore
- Martin Luther King, Jr.: I Have a Dream
- Violations of human dignity in the school table

### VOCABULARY

- Treating persons as subjects: valuing persons for their intrinsic worth
- Treating persons as objects: using persons for personal pleasure or benefit

### PROCEDURE

**Step 1:** Review the previous lesson. Show students the empty [Hierarchy of Being](#) table and ask them to recall the powers all living beings share, those only animals and humans share, and those which only humans have. Highlight the powers to think and choose and mention in which situations they are most explicitly used. Recall the definition and three characteristics of human dignity.

**Step 2:** Introduce the subject-object distinction. Explain that objects are used as means to achieve specific goals or ends. On the other hand, subjects cannot be used as mere means. Objects are used, while subjects are valued for their dignity.

All non-living beings can be classified as objects (things, technology, tools, etc.), and to a certain extent, plants and animals as well (even though not in the same way as things). Human persons are in the category of subjects rather than objects.

Introduce the idea that because persons have dignity, they should always be treated as subjects, and never merely as objects. Persons should never be treated merely as objects and valued simply for their usefulness or the enjoyment they may bring. Highlight that whenever a person is treated as an object, this violates their dignity.

Write on the board:

**Treating persons as subjects: valuing persons for their intrinsic worth**

**Treating persons as objects: using persons for personal pleasure or benefit**

To treat another person as an object is to use them for personal pleasure, advantage, or benefit. Rather than recognizing what would be good for that person, when people treat others as objects, they focus on what the person can do for them. When people use other people merely to get what they want rather than caring for their well-being, they are treating them like tools, such as cell phones and hammers. This way of treating human beings goes against their dignity.

To help students reflect on concrete examples of treating others as subjects and objects in their immediate surroundings, divide students into groups and ask them to fill [Violations of human dignity in the school table](#). Afterwards, ask the groups to share their conclusions with the rest of the class and lead the discussion with the whole class.

**Step 3:** Highlight that human dignity, as a special value of each human being, should be a foundation of a free and just society. A society, to be truly just, needs to respect human dignity. In terms of importance, human dignity comes before society. For this reason, no human community can grant or rescind that dignity. [Human dignity is not given to people by society, people have it because they are human persons](#). For this reason, no society can take away dignity or decide that some groups don't have human dignity.

Nevertheless, it sometimes happens that societies do not respect human dignity. Explain the subject-object distinction in the context of social systems:

Societies that treat persons as objects...	Societies that treat persons as subjects...
Treat them only for their use	Respect and value them for their dignity
Use persons as means for the goals of society	Use the society to serve the good of the persons
Manipulate	Ask for their opinion
Dispose of elderly, sick, vulnerable	Care for elderly, sick, vulnerable
View human life in economic terms	Understand that human life is priceless
Own, buy and sell them	Understand that persons cannot be owned
Get rid of when no longer useful, productive	Protect when they can't do it themselves
Treat some groups as having less dignity than others	Recognize that everyone has equal dignity
Separate persons from the communal ties needed for their flourishing (family, friends, Church, associations)	Support the communal ties needed for human flourishing (family, associations, Churches...)

Some social systems treat persons as objects and in this way, violate their dignity. Ask the students if they know of historical situations when a society disrespected human dignity by treating certain people as objects. Human dignity cannot be granted or rescinded by society. Nevertheless, has a society ever tried to rescind human dignity from a certain group of persons?

After students share their opinions, have them recognize some of the biggest historical injustices:

Slavery  
 Racism  
 Anti-Semitism  
 Eugenics  
 Caste system, etc.



Through the discussion, have the students recognize why each of these systems was unjust, i.e. because it treated the persons as objects by:

Owning, buying and selling them and viewing human life in economic terms (slavery)  
Treating some groups as having less dignity than others (Black people, Jews, lower castes in India)  
Disposing of elderly, sick, vulnerable, viewing human life in economic terms (eugenics)

Lead the students to conclude once more that human dignity must be a foundation of every society which aims to be free and just.

**Step 4:** Ask the students if they know some of the great persons who stood up to the mentioned injustices of slavery, racism, caste system etc. Explain that today they will learn about two such persons:

Mahatma Gandhi (1869–1948) was an Indian lawyer and political and spiritual leader who was leading an anti-colonialist movement fighting for India's independence from British rule. He led non-violent protests to advance his cause.  
Martin Luther King Jr. (1929–1968) was an American Christian minister and activist for the rights of African Americans. He was among the leaders of the Civil Rights Movement from 1955 until his assassination in 1968. He advanced civil rights through nonviolence and civil disobedience, inspired by his Christian beliefs and the nonviolent activism of Gandhi.

Divide the students into an even number of groups. Half of the groups will receive a [speech from Mahatma Gandhi](#) and the other half will receive one from [Martin Luther King Jr.](#) Students should read the speeches and discuss their questions in groups.

After all groups finish reading and discussing, they should present the conclusion to the rest of the class. The teacher should highlight the most important points from the texts.

**Step 5:** Summarize. Recall the subject-object distinction and highlight that persons should always be treated as subjects, never merely as objects. Recall how societies can treat persons as objects and how they can treat persons as subjects. Recall some historical violations of human dignity on the social level. Highlight most important ideas expressed by Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King Jr.

## Mahatma Gandhi: excerpt from the Speech at Tanjore<sup>1</sup>

*Delivered on 16 September 1927.*

I had hoped on coming to Tanjore today to discuss the Brahmin–non–Brahmin<sup>2</sup> question here and I had the pleasure of having a brief discussion with some of the friends this afternoon. [...]

They seemed to think that I had identified myself with the notion of inherited superiority and inferiority. I assured them that nothing was farther from my thought and told them that I would gladly explain my meaning of *varnashrama*<sup>3</sup> more fully than I have done in order to remove the slightest misunderstanding as to this question of superiority. In my opinion there is no such thing as inherited or acquired superiority. I believe in the rock-bottom doctrine of Advaita<sup>4</sup> and my interpretation of Advaita excludes totally any idea of superiority at any stage whatsoever. I believe implicitly that all men are born equal. All – whether born in India or in England or America or in any circumstances whatsoever – have the same soul as any other. And it is because I believe in this inherent equality of all men that I fight the doctrine of superiority which many of our rulers arrogate to themselves. I have fought this doctrine of superiority in South Africa inch by inch, and it is because of that inherent belief that I delight in calling myself a scavenger, a spinner, a weaver, a farmer and a labourer. And I have fought against the Brahmins themselves wherever they have claimed any superiority for themselves either by reason of their birth or by reason of their subsequently acquired knowledge. *I consider that it is unmanly for any person to claim superiority over a fellow-being.* And there is the amplest warrant for the belief that I am enunciating in the Bhagavad Gita<sup>5</sup>, and I am therefore through and through with every non–Brahmin when he fights this monster of superiority, whether it is claimed by a Brahmin or by anybody else. He who claims superiority at once forfeits his claim to be called a man. That is my opinion.

But in spite of all my beliefs that I have explained to you, I still believe in *varnashrama dharma*. [...] *Varnashrama dharma* is humility. Whilst I have said that all men and women are born equal, I do not wish therefore to suggest that qualities are not inherited, but on the contrary I believe that just as everyone inherits a particular form so does he inherit the particular characteristics and qualities of his progenitors. [...]

1 Mahatma Gandhi: The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, 1958.

2 Brahmins were the highest of the four social classes in Hinduism, specialising as priests, teachers, and protectors of sacred learning

3 The organization of society into four castes, and the division of life into four stages

4 The view that the *atman*, the self in man, is not distinct from the Brahman, the Absolute; literally, 'non-dualism'

5 Holy book of Hinduism, part of Mahabharata

And if you accept what I have ventured to suggest to you, you will find that the solution of the Brahmin and non-Brahmin question also, insofar as it is concerned with the religious aspect, becomes very easy. As a non-Brahmin I would seek to purify Brahminism insofar as a non-Brahmin can, but not to destroy it... I would not touch his great learning wherever I see it. And whilst he may not claim superiority by reason of learning I myself must not withhold that need of homage that learning, wherever it resides, always commands. But I must not go deeper into the subject before a large audience of this kind.

After all I must fall upon one sovereign remedy which I think is applicable for all the ills of life. And that is, in whatever fight we engage, the fight should be clean and straight, there should not be the slightest departure from truth and ahimsa<sup>6</sup>. And if we will keep our carriage safely on these two rails you will find that our fight even though we may commit a thousand blunders will always smell clean and will be easier fought. And even as a train that is derailed comes to a disastrous end, so shall we, if we be derailed off these two rails, come to a disaster. A man who is truthful and does not mean ill even to his adversary will be slow to believe charges even against his foes. He will, however, try to understand the viewpoints of his opponents and will always keep an open mind and seek every opportunity of serving his opponents. I have endeavoured to apply this law in my relations with Englishmen and Europeans in general in South Africa as well as here and not without some success. How much more then should we apply this law in our homes, in our relations, in our domestic affairs, in connection with our own kith and kin?

**Mahatma Gandhi (1869–1948) was an Indian lawyer and political and spiritual leader who was leading an anti-colonialist movement fighting for India's independence from British rule. He led non-violent protests to advance his cause.**

### QUESTIONS FOR A DISCUSSION:

Does the doctrine of inherited superiority recognize persons as subjects or as objects? Why does Gandhi not accept it?

How would Gandhi resolve the Brahmin and non-Brahmin question?

What kind of approach does he advise when defending or promoting some cause?

<sup>6</sup> Principle of avoiding violence towards all living beings.

**Answer Key for the teacher**

1. **Does the doctrine of inherited superiority recognize persons as subjects or as objects? Why does Gandhi not accept it?** This doctrine treats some persons (non-Brahmins) as objects because it treats them as having less dignity than others (Brahmins) simply for the reasons of birth or acquired knowledge. Gandhi believes that there is no such thing as inherited or acquired superiority. He believes that all men are born equal. All – whether born in India or in England or America or in any circumstances whatsoever – have the same soul as any other. And because he believes in this inherent equality of all men, he fought the doctrine of superiority in South Africa and he has fought against the Brahmins themselves wherever they have claimed any superiority for themselves either by reason of their birth or by reason of their subsequently acquired knowledge. Gandhi believed that he who claims superiority at once forfeits his claim to be called a man.
2. **How would Gandhi resolve the Brahmin and non-Brahmin question?** Gandhi believes that we should reject the doctrine of superiority of some people over others, but at the same time pay respect to someone's learning when he or she deserves it: "As a non-Brahmin I would seek to purify Brahminism insofar as a non-Brahmin can, but not to destroy it... I would not touch his great learning wherever I see it. And whilst he may not claim superiority by reason of learning I myself must not withhold that need of homage that learning, wherever it resides, always commands."
3. **What kind of approach does he advise when defending or promoting some cause?** Gandhi says: "After all I must fall upon one sovereign remedy which I think is applicable for all the ills of life. And that is, in whatever fight we engage, the fight should be clean and straight, there should not be the slightest departure from truth and ahimsa. And if we will keep our carriage safely on these two rails you will find that our fight even though we may commit a thousand blunders will always smell clean and will be easier fought. And even as a train that is derailed comes to a disastrous end, so shall we, if we be derailed off these two rails, come to a disaster. A man who is truthful and does not mean ill even to his adversary will be slow to believe charges even against his foes. He will, however, try to understand the viewpoints of his opponents and will always keep an open mind and seek every opportunity of serving his opponents."

**Martin Luther King (Jr.): I Have a Dream<sup>7</sup>**

*Delivered on 28 August 1963, at the Lincoln Memorial, Washington D.C.*

I am happy to join with you today in what will go down in history as the greatest demonstration for freedom in the history of our nation.

Five score years ago, a great American, in whose symbolic shadow we stand today, signed the Emancipation Proclamation. This momentous decree came as a great beacon light of hope to millions of Negro slaves who had been seared in the flames of withering injustice. It came as a joyous daybreak to end the long night of their captivity.

But one hundred years later, the Negro still is not free. One hundred years later, the life of the Negro is still sadly crippled by the manacles of segregation and the chains of discrimination. One hundred years later, the Negro lives on a lonely island of poverty in the midst of a vast ocean of material prosperity. One hundred years later, the Negro is still languished in the corners of American society and finds himself an exile in his own land. And so we've come here today to dramatize a shameful condition.

In a sense we've come to our nation's capital to cash a check. When the architects of our republic wrote the magnificent words of the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence, they were signing a promissory note to which every American was to fall heir. This note was a promise that all men, yes, black men as well as white men, would be guaranteed the "unalienable Rights" of "Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness." It is obvious today that America has defaulted on this promissory note, insofar as her citizens of color are concerned. Instead of honoring this sacred obligation, America has given the Negro people a bad check, a check which has come back marked "insufficient funds."

But we refuse to believe that the bank of justice is bankrupt. We refuse to believe that there are insufficient funds in the great vaults of opportunity of this nation. And so, we've come to cash this check, a check that will give us upon demand the riches of freedom and the security of justice.

But there is something that I must say to my people, who stand on the warm threshold which leads into the palace of justice: In the process of gaining our rightful place, we must not be guilty of wrongful deeds.

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7 Martin Luther King (Jr.): "I Have a Dream" Speech, 1999.

Let us not seek to satisfy our thirst for freedom by drinking from the cup of bitterness and hatred. We must forever conduct our struggle on the high plane of dignity and discipline. We must not allow our creative protest to degenerate into physical violence. Again and again, we must rise to the majestic heights of meeting physical force with soul force.

The marvelous new militancy which has engulfed the Negro community must not lead us to a distrust of all white people, for many of our white brothers, as evidenced by their presence here today, have come to realize that their destiny is tied up with our destiny. And they have come to realize that their freedom is inextricably bound to our freedom. We cannot walk alone.

Let us not wallow in the valley of despair, I say to you today, my friends.

And so even though we face the difficulties of today and tomorrow, I still have a dream. It is a dream deeply rooted in the American dream.

I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal."

I have a dream that one day on the red hills of Georgia, the sons of former slaves and the sons of former slave owners will be able to sit down together at the table of brotherhood.

I have a dream that one day even the state of Mississippi, a state sweltering with the heat of injustice, sweltering with the heat of oppression, will be transformed into an oasis of freedom and justice.

I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character.

I have a dream today!

I have a dream that one day... one day right there in Alabama little black boys and black girls will be able to join hands with little white boys and white girls as sisters and brothers.

And when this happens, and when we allow freedom ring, when we let it ring from every village and every hamlet, from every state and every city, we will be able to speed up that day when all of God's children, black men and white men, Jews and Gentiles, Protestants and Catholics, will be able to join hands and sing in the words of the old Negro spiritual:

Free at last! Free at last!

Thank God Almighty, we are free at last!

**QUESTIONS FOR A DISCUSSION:**

How were black persons treated as objects in America? Why does Martin Luther King believe America has failed its promise?

How does he advise his people to conduct the struggle they are facing?

What is his dream about?

**Answer Key for the teacher**

1. **How were black persons treated as objects in America? Why does Martin Luther King believe America has failed its promise?** Black persons were treated as objects in America by the denial of certain fundamental rights (such as the right to vote and of election to public office) and by being treated as unequal to white people. Martin Luther King says:

“When the architects of our republic wrote the magnificent words of the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence, they were signing a promissory note to which every American was to fall heir. This note was a promise that all men, yes, black men as well as white men, would be guaranteed the “unalienable Rights of `Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness`. It is obvious today that America has defaulted on this promissory note, insofar as her citizens of color are concerned. Instead of honoring this sacred obligation, America has given the Negro people a bad check, a check which has come back marked ‘insufficient funds.’”

2. **How does he advise his people to conduct the struggle they are facing?** King was a strong believer in non-violence and hatred toward none. He says:

“But there is something that I must say to my people, who stand on the warm threshold which leads into the palace of justice: In the process of gaining our rightful place, we must not be guilty of wrongful deeds. Let us not seek to satisfy our thirst for freedom by drinking from the cup of bitterness and hatred. We must forever conduct our struggle on the high plane of dignity and discipline. We must not allow our creative protest to degenerate into physical violence. Again and again, we must rise to the majestic heights of meeting physical force with soul force.

The marvelous new militancy which has engulfed the Negro community must not lead us to a distrust of all white people, for many of our white brothers, as evidenced by their presence here today, have come to realize that their destiny is tied up with our destiny. And they have come to realize that their freedom is inextricably bound to our freedom. We cannot walk alone.”

3. **What is his dream about?** King describes his dream in the following words:

“It is a dream deeply rooted in the American dream.

I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: ‘We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal.’”



I have a dream that one day on the red hills of Georgia, the sons of former slaves and the sons of former slave owners will be able to sit down together at the table of brotherhood.

I have a dream that one day even the state of Mississippi, a state sweltering with the heat of injustice, sweltering with the heat of oppression, will be transformed into an oasis of freedom and justice.

I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character.”

I have a dream today!

I have a dream that one day... one day right there in Alabama little black boys and black girls will be able to join hands with little white boys and white girls as sisters and brothers.”

**Violations of human dignity in school**

Think about one example in which persons are treated as objects or their dignity is disrespected. Explain why this situation is not respectful of their dignity. Propose a solution for how the class should deal with this situation.

Description of the situation	Why is it not respectful of human dignity?	Possible solutions

## Violations of human dignity in school – Example

Think about one example in which persons are treated as objects or their dignity is disrespected. Explain why this situation is not respectful of their dignity. Propose a solution for how the class should deal with this situation.

Description of the situation	Why is it not respectful of human dignity?	Possible solutions
A student who is not very outgoing and who studies hard is often called a “weirdo” and teased by other students. A group of “cool” guys from our class and some other classes are often making fun of him in front of others. Sometimes this also turns into bullying and some form of physical violence (e.g. slapping him, throwing his things around). Most of the other students are usually just standing by not doing anything. Some laugh, some definitely feel uncomfortable but nobody says anything.	Because the person who is studying hard is not treated as a subject with dignity but as an object: he is used as an object of making fun, his feelings are disrespected and he is not shown empathy by others, but the group of “cool” kids doesn’t care how he feels. They are also not talking to him, but at him, and are not trying to develop a relationship with him.	<p>Those who stand by and watch a student being bullied should stand up and say that what’s happening is not right.</p> <p>They should also report to educators if the situation continues to happen.</p> <p>Those in the group of “cool” kids who feel that what they are doing is not right, should motivate the group to find another kind of amusement which will not be disrespectful of anyone’s human dignity (e.g. sports, dance, physical exercise etc.).</p>

## Lesson 3: Power to Think about Speech

### PURPOSE

To always strive to acquire truth in speech and to acquire excellent thinking habits.

### LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of the lesson students will be able to:

1. Understand the importance of using our power to think in an excellent way.
2. Learn about and apply Socrates' triple filter rule.
3. Distinguish between habits of excellent and non-excellent thinking.

### MATERIALS & RESOURCES

- Socrates' Triple Filter Test
- Conversation: Do we need laws?
- Mahatma Gandhi: "Devotion to Truth"

### VOCABULARY

- Power to Think: the human ability to understand and connect ideas about oneself, others, and the world

### PROCEDURE

**Step 1:** Review the previous lesson. Recall the subject-object distinction and highlight that persons should always be treated as subjects, never merely as objects. Reemphasize the ways in which some societies treat persons as objects and how some treat them as subjects. Discuss some historical violations of human dignity on a social level. Highlight the most critical arguments expressed by Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King Jr..

**Step 2:** Discuss how the power to think is a specifically human power which distinguishes humans from all other beings. Human beings use this power in different capacities: in education, work, personal decision making, action, etc.

Write the definition on the board:

Power to Think: the human ability to understand and connect ideas about oneself, others, and the world.

One of the most important uses of the power to think is speech, and it is critical that people use their power to think to inform their speech. This lesson will explore how to best use the power to think when communicating through speech.

Introduce [Socrates' Triple Filter Test](#) and ask a volunteer to read it out loud. Explain that Socrates was one of the first Greek philosophers and a teacher of Plato. Most of the information about Socrates that exists today is drawn from Plato's writings. One of Socrates' most famous statements was: "I cannot teach anybody anything. I can only make them think." Encouraging people to think deeply was one of the signature aspects of Socrates' work as a philosopher, and the Triple Filter Test is an example of that. Once, a student of Socrates wanted to tell him something negative that he had heard about Socrates from another person. Before listening to his student, Socrates wanted the message to go through a "Triple Filter Test". He argued that if the message did not pass the test, it wasn't worthy of being heard.

Ask the students to comment on how Socrates advises people to think about what they are saying and if they agree with it.

After listening to the initial comments, explain that Socrates' triple filter encourages people to use the power to think and to communicate through speech in a way that respects other people's dignity.

a) To have the **truth** in speech, people should check if:

The message is based on facts (or mere opinions, prejudice, appeal to emotions etc.)  
 The message is from a relevant authority.  
 The conclusion follows logically.

b) To check whether it is **good** people should:

See if it respects human dignity (or it wants to humiliate, offend...)  
 See if it promotes excellence or not (for example, if it does not help the person to become better)

c) To check whether it is **useful**, people should:

Determine whether it helps in any way (or if it will make things worse for the person)  
 Determine if it will bring any benefit to the other person or myself (or if it will do harm)

**Step 3:** To have truth in speech, people should responsibly use their power to think. The best way to use one's power to think is to acquire the habit of thinking in an excellent way. Just as one's power to choose can be used in an excellent or a non-excellent way, one can use their power to think in an excellent or non-excellent way.

Display the following notions on the board one by one and ask the students to identify which represent habits of thinking in an excellent way and which represent habits of thinking in a non-excellent way:

Listening to different points of view.  
 Using stereotypes.  
 Judging based on prejudice.  
 Making a judgment based on good reasons.  
 Gathering enough evidence.  
 Rushing to conclusion.  
 Considering if I might be wrong.  
 Being open-minded.  
 Discarding valid criticism because it makes one feel bad.  
 Disregarding some opinion because I don't like a person who is saying it.  
 Being curious.  
 Being interested in the truth more than in being right.  
 Taking things for granted.  
 Asking advice from wise people.  
 Thinking about the consequences of your ideas and actions.  
 Being consistent in your positions.  
 Letting anger blur your judgement.  
 Arguing that something is true simply because you say so.  
 Distorting someone's argument.  
 Accepting valid criticism.  
 Attacking the person's character to discredit their argument.  
 Being intentionally ambiguous.  
 Providing arguments for your positions.  
 Avoid answering a legitimate question.

When analyzing each example one by one, group them into two columns, like in the table below. Ask the students to explain why they think a habit is excellent or non-excellent.

Habits of excellent thinking	Habits of non-excellent thinking
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Listening to different points of view.</li> <li>» Making a judgment based on good reasons.</li> <li>» Gathering enough evidence.</li> <li>» Considering if I might be wrong.</li> <li>» Being open-minded.</li> <li>» Being curious.</li> <li>» Being interested in the truth more than in being right.</li> <li>» Seeking advice from wise people.</li> <li>» Thinking about the consequences of your ideas and actions.</li> <li>» Being consistent in your positions.</li> <li>» Accepting valid criticism.</li> <li>» Providing arguments for your positions.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Using stereotypes.</li> <li>» Judging based on prejudice.</li> <li>» Rushing to conclusion.</li> <li>» Discarding valid criticism because it makes you feel bad.</li> <li>» Disregarding some opinion because I don't like a person who is saying it.</li> <li>» Taking things for granted.</li> <li>» Letting anger blur your judgment.</li> <li>» Arguing that something is true simply because you say so.</li> <li>» Distorting someone's argument.</li> <li>» Attacking the person's character to discredit their argument.</li> <li>» Being intentionally ambiguous.</li> <li>» Avoid answering a legitimate question.</li> </ul>

Explain that some bad ideas have very serious consequences. One such example is slavery (the practice of attempting to own other people under forced servitude). Another example is racist ideology, such as National Socialism, racial segregation in the United States or the apartheid in South Africa (these abide by the idea that some races are inferior or superior to others). Historical examples of these injustices include the Rwandan genocide (based on the idea of ethnic cleansing) or different totalitarian regimes such as the Soviet Union (based on the idea that the individual can be used as means for the state).

Aristotle argues that a small error in the beginning leads to a large error in the end. The practical application of this idea to the habit of thinking in an excellent way is that each person should start practicing habits of excellent thinking in everyday life, in discussions with friends, and on social media. Practicing habits of excellent thinking in small things (even though no excellent thinking is small) naturally leads to great ideas and achievement in the future.

**Step 4:** Divide students into groups. Have the groups read [Conversation: Do we need laws?](#) and identify each habit as either excellent or non-excellent thinking. The students should point out the specific good or bad habit they recognize in each scenario. After each group has finished analyzing the conversation, ask them to share their analyses with the class. Lead a class discussion about the excellent and non-excellent habits of thinking present in these conversations.

**Step 5:** Summarize. Focus on [Socrates' triple filter test](#) and its main "ingredients". Remind the students of the importance of developing habits of excellent thinking and repeat once more some of excellent and non-excellent thinking habits.

## SUPPLEMENTARY ACTIVITY

Divide students into groups and ask them to read the speech [Devotion to Truth by Mohandas \(Mahatma\) Gandhi](#). Each group should highlight two or three important ideas from the speech and share their thoughts. Each group should then present their conclusions to the rest of the class.

During the class discussion, the teacher should provide the following quotes:

"All our activities should be centered in Truth. Truth should be the very breath of our life."

"Without Truth it would be impossible to observe any principles or rules in life...There should be Truth in thought, Truth in speech, and Truth in action."

Explain that the goal of thinking is to reach the truth, or that which corresponds to reality. Using the power to think in the best way possible allows people to distinguish between what is true and what is simply apparent, what are decisions and actions we should take, how we should organize society, etc. Using the power to think properly will result in learning new things, solving problems, and making good decisions for oneself and for the larger community (family, class, country, etc.). These habits of thinking in an excellent way will lead to breakthroughs in science and the development of new technologies that can be used to improve human life and development.

Gandhi argues that truth should be the center of our lives, and that it should be found in speech, thought and action. For this reason, this curriculum will focus on how to reach the truth through thought, speech, action, and emotions (which have a real influence on what we think, say, or do).



### Socrates' Triple Filter Test<sup>8</sup>

This story tells that, one day, one of Socrates' disciples was quite agitated. He told Socrates that he had met one of Socrates' friends and that he had spoken badly of him.

Socrates asked the man to calm down. After thinking for a moment, he asked him to wait a minute. Before listening to what he had to say, the message had to go through a triple filter test. If the message didn't pass the test, it wasn't worthy of being heard.

As he always did, the Greek philosopher asked his anxious disciple a question: "Are you absolutely sure that what you're going to tell me is true?" The disciple thought for a moment. In fact, he couldn't be sure if what his friend had told him was actually malicious. It was a matter of perspective. "So you do not know if everything he said about me is true or not," said the philosopher. The disciple had to admit that he didn't.

Then, Socrates asked him a second question: "Is what you're going to tell me good or not?" The disciple replied that, evidently, it wasn't good at all. In fact, it was quite the opposite. He believed that what he was going to share with the philosopher would cause him discomfort and distress. Thus, Socrates said to him: "You're going to tell me something bad, but you're not completely sure it's true". The disciple admitted that this was the case.

Then, Socrates asked the third and final question: "Is what you have to say about my friend going to help me?" The disciple hesitated. He really didn't know if that information was useful or not. Maybe it would distance him from his friend, but considering that he wasn't sure whether it was true or not, maybe it wasn't useful at all.

In the end, the philosopher refused to listen to what his disciple wanted to tell him. "If what you want to tell me isn't true, isn't good, and isn't even useful, why would I want to hear it?" he finally told his disciple.

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<sup>8</sup> Socrates' Triple Filter Test, *Exploring your mind*, available at <https://exploringyourmind.com/socrates-triple-filter-test/> (last visited Nov 8, 2022).

## Conversation: Do we need laws?

[Instructions: read the conversation and recognize the habits of excellent and non-excellent thinking. Highlight which excellent or non-excellent habit you recognize next to the sentence in which this habit was displayed. You can apply habits from the table below:

Habits of excellent thinking	Habits of non-excellent thinking
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Listening to different points of view.</li> <li>» Making a judgment based on good reasons.</li> <li>» Gathering enough evidence.</li> <li>» Considering if I might be wrong.</li> <li>» Being open-minded.</li> <li>» Being curious.</li> <li>» Being interested in truth more than in being right.</li> <li>» Asking advice from wise people.</li> <li>» Thinking about the consequences of your ideas and actions.</li> <li>» Being consistent in your positions.</li> <li>» Accepting valid criticism.</li> <li>» Providing arguments for your positions.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Using stereotypes.</li> <li>» Judging based on prejudice.</li> <li>» Rushing to conclusion.</li> <li>» Discarding valid criticism because it makes you feel bad.</li> <li>» Disregarding some opinion because I don't like a person who is saying it.</li> <li>» Taking things for granted.</li> <li>» Letting anger blur your judgment.</li> <li>» Arguing that something is true simply because you say so.</li> <li>» Distorting someone's argument.</li> <li>» Attacking the person's character to discredit their argument.</li> <li>» Being intentionally ambiguous.</li> <li>» Avoid answering a legitimate question.</li> </ul>

Note: some habits may occur more than once. Not all habits from the table are necessarily present in the conversation.]

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### CONVERSATION:

Mike, John and Lucy were on their way to school when Lucy started talking about the documentary she saw last night.

**Lucy:** Last night I saw what horrible things Nazi Germany did to people they didn't like. All people are equal in their worth, I don't see how they could think anything different.

**John:** I agree. Something like that should have never happened.

**Lucy:** Yes, it all happened because one man enforced a law and made other people act that way. People were punished if they refused to cooperate. Laws don't do us any good. I wish there weren't any laws.

**Mike:** I don't think this conclusion is right.

**Lucy:** What? So, you don't mind that laws tortured people?

**Mike:** That's not what I am saying. Let me explain. I just think the situation is more complex than that. Although those were really bad laws, laws, in general, are not useless. For example, given that we are vulnerable and the altruism of others is limited, we cannot survive without rules prohibiting the free use of violence; so such rules are necessary.

**John:** Why do you always have to stand out and be special? Can't you agree with everyone just once?

**Lucy:** I see what you mean by that, Mike, but how do you explain that precisely the laws didn't protect people, but they incited violence?

**Mike:** Yes, you are right. As I said, laws are not without flaws, but I don't think the idea that all laws should not exist is something we should agree with. The laws should be made in a way that persons are put before the laws. Laws exist for the persons and not the other way around. It's not that people exist to follow the laws.

**John:** Ok, so you are saying that each person should act according to his or her private standards. In that way, no one can impose their standards through laws.

**Mike:** I think there should be a consensus which standards we should implement as laws. That's why we have different declarations which say that the human dignity of every person is to be respected in every way. Therefore, laws should be made in a way that recognizes human dignity and protects each person's rights.

**John:** You are just trying to be smart in front of us. We are not in school yet. You can't get an A from us.

**Lucy:** Ok, I know what I said and what I saw yesterday, but how can we guarantee that leaders of countries will follow some objective standards and not their private ones?

**John:** I think that everyone should follow their own standards. There is no one truth that everyone should follow. Everyone who doesn't think this way obviously needs to educate himself more and stop being so rigid and try to impose their opinion. Great philosophers would all agree.

**Mike:** Aren't the subjective moral standards the most problematic thing here? Isn't relativizing objective standards such as human dignity, the reason why these laws passed in the first place?

**John:** I know what I believe and this is that laws only limit people, they prevent us from being truly free.

**Mike:** Lucy, to be honest, I don't have all the answers. I think we should ask our history or ethics professor to help us with this problem.

**John:** I don't see a need for that, I believe I am right and nothing can change it.

**Lucy:** I thought of another problem with your opinion on this, Mike. What should the people do once this or any other immoral or unjust standard is enforced as law? For example, laws allowing slavery or racial segregation.

**Mike:** I know this is a problem. I guess what we should do is practice habits of excellent thinking in order to determine which laws are just before bringing them. But, if our leaders enforce unjust laws which don't respect human dignity, then I believe we shouldn't follow them, but we should work to change them.

**Lucy:** OK, maybe this makes sense. Maybe a complete absence of laws could lead to chaotic behavior. So maybe my views are wrong, but still, I can't say I completely agree with you. I definitely need to do more research. I think there is a potential of misuse in all of this.

**Mike:** Definitely, but it can't be any better if there are no laws. I think that just laws can help us to know what is right and wrong. They also hold us responsible for our actions. And they protect the most vulnerable among us, those who cannot protect themselves. These are all good things we shouldn't easily discard.

**Lucy:** I guess you are right, I will think about it more thoroughly to consider everything that you were saying.

**John:** Ok, our class starts in one minute. We can finish the discussion later.

**Conversation – Answer Key for the teacher**

Mike, John and Lucy were on their way to school when Lucy started talking about the documentary she saw last night.

**Lucy:** Last night I saw what horrible things Nazi Germany did to people they didn't like. All people are equal in their worth, I don't see how they could think anything different.

**John:** I agree. Something like that should have never happened.

**Lucy:** Yes, it all happened because one man enforced a law and made other people act that way. People were punished if they refused to cooperate. Laws don't do us any good. I wish there weren't any laws.

**Mike:** I don't think this conclusion is right.

**Lucy:** What? So, you don't mind that laws tortured people? [Rushing to conclusion.]

**Mike:** That's not what I am saying. Let me explain. I just think the situation is more complex than that. Although those were really bad laws, laws, in general, are not useless. For example, given that we are vulnerable and the altruism of others is limited, we cannot survive without rules prohibiting the free use of violence; so such rules are necessary. [Providing arguments for your positions. Making a judgment based on good reasons.]

**John:** Why do you always have to stand out and be special? Can't you agree with everyone just once? [Disregarding some opinion because I don't like a person who is saying it.]

**Lucy:** I see what you mean by that, Mike, but how do you explain that precisely the laws didn't protect people, but they incited violence? [Being open-minded. Being curious.]

**Mike:** Yes, you are right. As I said, laws are not without flaws, but I don't think the idea that all laws should not exist is something we should agree with. The laws should be made in a way that persons are put before the laws. Laws exist for the persons and not the other way around. It's not that people exist to follow the laws.

**John:** Ok, so you are saying that each person should act according to his or her private standards. In that way, no one can impose their standards through laws. [Distorting someone's argument.]

**Mike:** I think there should be a consensus which standards we should implement as laws. That's why we have different declarations which say that the human dignity of every person is to be respected in every way. Therefore, laws should be made in a way that recognizes human dignity and protects each person's rights. [Being consistent in your positions.]

**John:** You are just trying to be smart in front of us. We are not in school yet. You can't get an A from us. [Attacking the person's character to discredit their argument.]

**Lucy:** Ok, I know what I said and what I saw yesterday, but how can we guarantee that leaders of countries will follow some objective standards and not their private ones? [Listening to different points of view. Being interested in truth more than in being right.]

**John:** I think that everyone should follow their own standards. There is no one truth that everyone should follow. Everyone who doesn't think this way obviously needs to educate himself more and stop being so rigid and try to impose their opinion. [Letting anger blur your judgment. Arguing that something is true simply because you say so.] Great philosophers would all agree. [Being intentionally ambiguous.]

**Mike:** Aren't the subjective moral standards the most problematic thing here? Isn't relativizing objective standards such as human dignity, the reason why these laws passed in the first place?

**John:** I know what I believe and this is that laws only limit people, they prevent us from being truly free. [Avoiding to answer a legitimate question. Discarding valid criticism because it makes you feel bad.]

**Mike:** Lucy, to be honest, I don't have all the answers. I think we should ask our history or ethics professor to help us with this problem. [Seeking advice from wise people.]

**John:** I don't see a need for that, I believe I am right and nothing can change it. [Arguing that something is true simply because you say so.]

**Lucy:** I thought of another problem with your opinion on this, Mike. What should the people do once this or any other immoral or unjust standard is enforced as law? For example, laws allowing slavery or racial segregation.

**Mike:** I know this is a problem. [Accepting valid criticism.] I guess what we should do is practice habits of excellent thinking in order to determine which laws are just before bringing them. But, if our leaders enforce unjust laws which don't respect human dignity, then we probably shouldn't follow them.

**Lucy:** OK, maybe this makes sense. Maybe a complete absence of laws could lead to chaotic behavior. [Thinking about the consequences of your ideas and actions.] So maybe my views are wrong, but still, I can't say I completely agree with you. [Considering if I might be wrong.] I definitely need to do more research. [Gathering enough evidence.] I think there is a potential of misuse in all of this.

**Mike:** Definitely, but it can't be any better if there are no laws. I think that just laws can help us to know what is right and wrong. They also hold us responsible for our actions. And they protect the most vulnerable among us, those who cannot protect themselves. These are all good things we shouldn't easily discard. [Being consistent in your positions.]

**Lucy:** I guess you are right, I will think about it more thoroughly to consider everything that you were saying. [Being open-minded.]

**John:** Ok, our class starts in one minute. We'll have to finish this later.



**Mohandas Gandhi: Devotion to Truth<sup>9</sup>**

The word Satya (Truth) is derived from Sat, which means “being”. Nothing is or exists in reality except Truth. That is why Sat or Truth is perhaps the most important name of God. In fact it is more correct to say that Truth is God, than to say that God is Truth.

Devotion to this Truth gives us the sole justification for our existence. All our activities should be centered in Truth. Truth should be the very breath of our life. When once this state in the pilgrim’s progress is reached, all other rules of correct living will come without any effort, and obedience to them will be instinctive. But without Truth it would be impossible to observe any principles or rules in life.

Generally speaking, observation of the law of Truth is understood merely to mean that we must speak the truth. But we in the Ashram should understand the word Satya or Truth in a much wider sense. There should be Truth in thought, Truth in speech, and Truth in action.

But Truth is the right designation of God. Hence there is nothing in everyone following Truth according to their own lights. Indeed, it is their duty to do so. Then if there is a mistake on the part of anyone following Truth, it will automatically be set right. For the quest of Truth involves tapas – self suffering, sometimes even death. There can be no place in it for even a trace of self-interest. In such Selfless search for Truth nobody can lose their bearings for long. When they take the wrong path and stumble, they are redirected to the right path. Therefore the pursuit of Truth is true bhakti (devotion). It is the path that leads to God.

How beautiful it would be, if all of us, young and old, men and women, devoted ourselves wholly to the Truth in all that we might do in our waking hours, whether working, eating, drinking or playing, till dissolution of the body makes us one with Truth? God as Truth has been for me a treasure beyond price. May God be so to every one of us.

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<sup>9</sup> Truth by M.K. Gandhi, *Mahatma Ghandi Center*. At James Madison University, available at [https://www.jmu.edu/gandhicenter/wm\\_library/gandhiana-truth.pdf](https://www.jmu.edu/gandhicenter/wm_library/gandhiana-truth.pdf) (last visited Nov 8, 2022).

## Lesson 4: Power to Choose: Freedom for Excellence

### PURPOSE

To motivate students to live freedom for excellence in their lives.

### LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of the lesson, students will be able to:

1. Identify and distinguish between freedom for excellence and freedom of indifference.
2. Recognize Harriet Tubman as an example of a person who lived freedom for excellence.

### MATERIALS & RESOURCES

- [Video](#) Harriet Tubman: Fearless Freedom Fighter who Liberated Hundreds of Slaves | Biography
- Two Ideas of Freedom
- [Movie](#) HARRIET | Official Trailer
- [Freedom Center](#) resources

### VOCABULARY

- Freedom for excellence: using one's freedom to make excellent choices and become excellent oneself
- Freedom of indifference: choosing carelessly by failing to consider whether one's actions are excellent or non-excellent

### PROCEDURE

**Step 1:** Review the previous lesson. Recall the [Socrates' triple filter test](#) and its main "ingredients". Recall the importance of developing habits of excellent thinking and discuss any examples of excellent and non-excellent thinking habits.

**Step 2:** In the first lesson, the class learned that the power to choose is one of the most important human powers which distinguishes them from all other living beings. Introduce the students to the topic of freedom by asking the following questions:

What is freedom? How would you define it?

Is freedom the ability to do whatever you want? To not have to listen to anyone?

How is freedom linked to responsibility? Do we have a duty to make good choices or are our choices irrelevant?

Write the student responses on the board. Before providing the vocabulary definitions, ask the students to read the text [Two Ideas of Freedom](#). Divide the students into groups and ask them to read the text and discuss associated questions.

The text covers two ideas of freedom. The first is called freedom of indifference. Someone who lives by freedom of indifference may say: "If my teacher wasn't out to get me, I'd have better Grades"; "You can't tell me what to do. I don't care!"

The second is called freedom for excellence. Someone who lives by freedom for excellence may say: "I don't have to practice, I choose to practice because I want to get better"; "I'm upset, but I just need to cool off, since I don't want to say or do something that will hurt others and that I'll regret later."

After the groups finish discussing, ask them to share their conclusions with the rest of the class. Lead the class discussion on the basis of the Answer Key provided with the text.

Write the definitions on the board:

Freedom for excellence: using one's freedom to make excellent choices and become excellent oneself

Freedom of indifference: choosing carelessly by failing to consider whether one's actions are excellent or non-excellent

**Step 3:** Freedom for excellence is possible for everyone to achieve, regardless of their age, sex, skin color, or any other circumstances. In this lesson, we will learn about the example of Harriet Tubman, a woman who used her freedom in an excellent way.

Harriet Tubman (1822 – 1913) was born into slavery by the name Araminta Ross, which she changed to Harriet after escaping slavery. She was beaten and whipped by various slave masters as a child. Early in life, she suffered a traumatic head wound when an irate slave owner threw a heavy metal weight intending to hit another slave, but hit her instead. The injury caused dizziness, pain, and spells of hypersomnia, which occurred throughout her life. After her injury, she began experiencing strange visions and vivid dreams, which she ascribed to premonitions from God.

In 1849, Tubman escaped to Philadelphia, only to return to Maryland to rescue her family soon after. Subsequently she made some 13 missions to rescue approximately 70 enslaved people using the Underground Railroad, a network of secret routes and safe houses established in the United States during the early to mid-19th century, and used by enslaved African-Americans to escape into free states and Canada. Traveling by night and in extreme secrecy, Tubman (or “Moses”, as she was called) never lost a passenger. After the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850 was passed, she helped guide fugitives farther north into British North America (Canada), and helped newly freed slaves find work.

When the Civil War began, Tubman worked for the Union Army, first as a cook and nurse, and then as an armed scout and spy. The first woman to lead an armed expedition in the war, she guided the raid at Combahee Ferry, which liberated more than 700 enslaved people. After the war, she retired to the family home on property she had purchased in 1859 in Auburn, New York, where she cared for her aging parents. In her later years, Tubman was an activist in the struggle for women’s right to vote until illness overtook her. After her death in 1913, she became an icon of courage and freedom.

Show the [video](#) Harriet Tubman: Fearless Freedom Fighter who Liberated Hundreds of Slaves | Biography. After watching the video, lead the class discussion by asking the following questions:

After Harriet achieved her own freedom, was she indifferent to the sufferings of other black people or did she use her freedom to promote their dignity?  
What did it require of her to use freedom for excellence? Would it be easier for her to be indifferent to her people’s suffering?

After hearing the comments from students, explain that Harriet Tubman acquired freedom for herself, but that did not make her indifferent to the suffering of other black people. She made around 13 missions to rescue approximately 70 enslaved people after she herself became free. She was among the people who created the Underground Railroad, a network of secret routes and safe houses established in the United States during the early to mid-19th century, and used by enslaved African-Americans to escape into free states and Canada.

Using her freedom for excellence and promoting the dignity of black people required a great deal of sacrifice from Tubman. To help slaves escape, she was making many long trips at night, in difficult and dangerous terrain, often followed by slave hunters. At one point, she was a fugitive from the law with a large bounty on her head. It would definitely have been easier for her to remain indifferent to the suffering of others and to keep herself safe. Nevertheless, she understood that freedom for excellence is worth any sacrifice.

**Step 4:** Ask the students if they can recall some examples of freedom for excellence and freedom of indifference from their surroundings. Help them to recognize what an excellent choice would entail in each situation and motivate them to strive for freedom for excellence.

**Step 5:** Summarize. Recall the definitions of freedom for excellence and freedom of indifference. Highlight the example of Harriet Tubman and how she used her freedom for excellence.

### SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIALS

[Movie](#) HARRIET | Official Trailer

[Freedom Center](#) resources

## Two Ideas of Freedom<sup>10</sup>

An American author, George Weigel, popularized the idea of two ideas of freedom, even though the concept of different types of freedom dates back much further in history. The first idea of freedom was championed by William of Ockham in the 13th century, and it is very popular still today. In this understanding, to be free simply means that I should be able to do whatever I want. I am free as long as I have the power to choose. Whether I make a good or a bad choice, it does not really make a difference. According to this view, the choice itself does not matter so much as the fact that I have the ability to make that choice. Freedom is considered to be the mere capacity to choose. Choice can be anything, good or bad, excellent or non-excellent. This idea can be called freedom of indifference.

We know from experience that it is possible to use freedom to make both good and bad choices. It is true that people have the power to choose the good and the bad, but are they truly free if they make bad choices? Weigel, following the tradition of another 13th century thinker, St. Thomas Aquinas, argues that they are not.

“Freedom, for St. Thomas, is a means to human excellence, to human happiness, to the fulfillment of human destiny. Freedom is the capacity to choose wisely and to act well as a matter of habit...”

In other words, true freedom is the means to achieve human excellence. This means that I can only be truly free when I learn to choose what is true and good, and even more, what is excellent. Personal choices matter and each person should develop the habit of considering what is the excellent choice in each situation. Every day is full of opportunities to choose between excellent and non-excellent choices. For example, if someone has the choice to either read a book and go to bed early or to stay up late drinking alcohol, choosing the latter will not make them free in the long-term. In fact, it could end up making that person addicted and miserable. People can achieve true freedom only if they make good choices. Weigel calls this type of freedom “freedom for excellence.”

Freedom of indifference claims that people are free if they have the ability to choose any option they want while freedom for excellence claims that people are truly free if they choose what is excellent.

<sup>10</sup> A Better Concept of Freedom by George Weigel, available at <https://www.firstthings.com/article/2002/03/a-better-concept-of-freedom> (last visited Dec 2, 2022).

Now, it is clear that choosing the good is not always easy. It often requires sacrifice and self-determination. Because of the challenge involved, freedom for excellence can only be achieved if people educate themselves in freedom and develop habits of excellence, or as Weigel calls them, virtues:

“Thus virtue and the virtues are crucial elements of freedom rightly understood... It’s a bit like learning to play a musical instrument. Anyone can bang away on a piano; but that is to make noise, not music, and it’s a barbaric, not humanistic, expression of freedom. At first, learning to play the piano is a matter of some drudgery as we toil over exercises that seem like a constraint, a burden. But as our mastery grows, we discover a new, richer dimension of freedom: we can play the music we like, we can even create music on our own. Freedom, in other words, is a matter of gradually acquiring the capacity to choose the good and to do what we choose with perfection.”

An important aspect of human actions is that they, so to speak, remain in the person who performs them. If people make bad choices, they make themselves worse (remember the example of addiction). On the other hand, if people make good choices, they become better versions of themselves and if they persist in making excellent choices, they can become excellent! Just as the person who practices playing the piano regularly can eventually become a great pianist, the person who makes excellent choices in important situations in life can achieve greatness as a person.

Thus, only the freedom for excellence can satisfy the deepest yearnings of the human heart, can make people truly free, and can help them to become the best version of themselves.

**QUESTIONS FOR A DISCUSSION:**

What is the difference between freedom for excellence and freedom of indifference? Give an example to illustrate this difference.

How is freedom for excellence connected to developing habits of excellence or virtues? Give an example.

**Answer Key for the teacher**

- 1. What is the difference between freedom for excellence and freedom of indifference? Give an example to illustrate this difference.** Freedom of indifference is the idea that to be free means simply that people can choose whatever they want. The choice that they make does not really make a difference. According to this idea, the choice itself does not matter so much as the fact that each person has the ability to make that choice, to “will it” on their own. Freedom is considered to be the mere capacity to choose. Choice can be anything, good or bad, excellent or non-excellent. While freedom of indifference claims that people are free if they have the ability to choose any option, freedom for excellence claims that people are free if they choose what is excellent. Personal choices matter and each person should develop the habit of considering what is the excellent choice in each situation. Here, the power to choose is closely tied to the power to think. Freedom for excellence is the capacity to choose wisely and to act well as a matter of habit. Freedom is the means by which, exercising both our reason and our will, we act on the natural longing for truth, for goodness, and for happiness that is built into each person as a human being. This means that people can be truly free only if they choose the true and the good.  
For example, if someone has the choice to either read a book and go to bed early or to stay up late drinking alcohol, choosing the latter will not make them free in the long-term. In fact, it could end up making that person addicted and miserable. People can achieve true freedom only if they make good choices.
- 2. How is freedom for excellence connected to developing habits of excellence or virtues? Give an example.** It is clear that choosing the good is not always easy. It often requires sacrifice and self-determination. Because of the challenge involved, freedom for excellence can only be achieved if people educate themselves in freedom and develop habits of excellence, or as Weigel calls them, virtues: “Virtue and the virtues are crucial elements of freedom rightly understood”.  
An example that Weigel gives is that of learning to play a musical instrument. Anyone can bang away on a piano; but that is to make noise, not music, and it is a barbaric, not a humanistic, expression of freedom. At first, learning to play the piano is a matter of some drudgery as one toils over exercises that seem like a constraint, a burden. But as mastery grows, one discovers a new, richer dimension of freedom: they can play the music they like, they can even create music on their own. Freedom, in other words, is a matter of gradually acquiring the capacity to choose the good and to do what one chooses with perfection.



## Lesson 5: The Power of Creativity

### PURPOSE

To help students appreciate art and creativity for their power of communicating the transcendent dimensions of reality.

### LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of the lesson, students will be able to:

1. Understand creativity as a specifically human power enabling people to move beyond themselves and shape the world in which they live.
2. Recognize that art and creativity help people transcend limits of human existence and personal circumstance.

### MATERIALS & RESOURCES

- Viktor Frankl: Creativity in a Concentration Camp (excerpt from Man's Search for Meaning)
- Picasso's [painting](#) "Mother and Child"
- The Shawshank Redemption Opera [scene](#)
- [Video](#): You Can't Quarantine Music
- Group Exercise: Erasure Poem Samples
- Interim Quiz 1

### VOCABULARY

- Creativity: the human power to use one's imagination and ideas to shape the world.
- Transcendent: the intangible dimensions of reality, beyond the physical or material level
- Art: a means of communicating what would otherwise remain hidden; to reach beyond oneself towards the transcendent.

### PROCEDURE

**Step 1.** Review the previous lesson. Recall the definitions of freedom for excellence and freedom of indifference. Highlight the example of Harriet Tubman and how she used her freedom for excellence.

**Step 2.** In the previous lessons, we learned that humans possess two powers which are uniquely theirs and which no other living beings have. These are the powers to think and choose. These powers are closely related to another power which arises from them, creativity.

To begin the lesson, ask the students the following questions:

How would you define creativity? Is it the same as problem-solving?

Is creativity simply an emotional expression or it is connected to the power to think?

How is creativity related to freedom?

After listening to the students' comments, explain that human creativity can be expressed in problem-solving, but it is not restricted to it. For example, art is an important field of creative expression, but one would not say that art is primarily directed at solving problems (even though, as the class will see, it may help people overcome challenges in life).

We can see human creativity all around – in buildings, gardens, toys, technology, poetry, film, music, etc. Human creativity is indeed the world's greatest resource. Think about it: almost anything one can name has human creativity and the ingenuity of problem-solving behind it. Whether it is devising a way to water the plants more effectively (irrigation!) or expressing unspeakable happiness through instruments with strings (orchestra!), that's creativity at work.

While creativity as expressed in arts both expresses the emotion of an artist and stirs the emotions of other people, it is not limited to that. Artists need to think creatively about how to communicate meaning to those who engage with their art. If it did not convey some meaning or purpose, the art would cease to be art. In order to convey meaning, the artist needs to use their power to think. In the same way, those who enjoy the arts need to use the power to think in order to understand the meaning behind the artwork. Problem solving itself requires "thinking outside the box", which is another direct example of how creativity is connected to the power to think.

Now, to think "outside the box" people need to be free to "exit the box", so to speak. In order to do this, each person needs to be able to see reality from a perspective other than that which is immediately perceptible. The importance of depth and a critical analysis of reality for creativity is another example of how creativity is specifically a human power. While animals are constrained by their surroundings and can only engage with that which is immediately perceptible through their senses and instinct, humans are free to shape the world in a deeper way according to their ideas and imagination.

To finish, write the definition of creativity on the board:

**Creativity: the human power to use one's imagination and ideas to shape the world.**

As discussed, one of the most important expressions of creativity are the arts. Write the definition of art on the board:

Art: a means to communicate what would otherwise remain hidden; to reach beyond ourselves towards the transcendent.

To examine this definition, show Picasso's [painting](#) "Mother and Child" to students and ask them to share what they think the painting communicates.

After hearing the comments from students, explain that art has the special power to express those parts of reality which are almost impossible to express in words, definitions, theories and scientific formulas. For example, it is clear that this painting conveys gentleness and love between mother and a child. If one were to provide the dictionary definition of gentleness and motherly love, it would express a lot less than this painting shows us.

This painting itself is a visible expression of the freedom of an artist. The colors and shapes that Picasso used are different from those one would find in reality, but at the same time, it is precisely this freedom to portray reality in a different way that allows Picasso to creatively communicate a deeper meaning of reality. For example, the shape of the mother's clothes and the length of her arm are not necessarily realistic, but they convey a strong bond and deeper meaning behind the mother's embrace of her child as well as her protective, gentle love for him.

**Step 3:** To demonstrate the power of art and creativity to help people transcend their present circumstances, read aloud the text by [Viktor Frankl: Creativity in a Concentration Camp](#). One may not think of art or even humor as necessary. Sometimes art is described as frivolous, impractical or even useless! But that's not what Viktor Frankl, a holocaust survivor, wrote about the presence of art – even in a concentration camp.

If the time permits, discuss the questions related to the text from the Teacher's Answer Key provided.

Highlight Frankl's idea that creativity and art give people the "ability to rise above any situation". Ask the students to reflect on this idea while watching The Shawshank Redemption Opera [Scene](#). Explain that The Shawshank Redemption is the all-time number one movie on IMDB's list. The movie is about how "two imprisoned men bond over a number of years, finding solace and eventual redemption through acts of common decency." The opera which is played in the scene is a duet entitled "Sull'aria" from Mozart's "The Marriage of Figaro".

After playing the video, ask the students to reflect on how the opera song helped the prisoners to rise above their situations.

After hearing the comments from students, explain that art has the power to elevate people above and beyond their immediate surroundings (in this case, the prison) and communicates a deeper and greater dimension of reality, which is difficult to reach otherwise. The narrator, Morgan Freeman, says in the scene that he liked to believe that the opera was about "something so beautiful which can't be expressed in words and makes your heart ache because of it".

This "something so beautiful" for the prisoners was freedom. Indeed, in prison it is almost impossible to feel free. Yet even though the prisoners were shackled from the outside, what the opera enabled them to experience is the deep truth that human beings always remain spiritually free regardless of outside circumstances. As the narrator says: "For the briefest of moments every man in Shawshank [the prison] felt free."

To describe the deeper and intangible dimensions of reality which art can convey, people use the word "transcendent". Write the definition on the board:

**Transcendent: the intangible dimensions of reality, beyond the physical or material level**

**Step 4:** Ask the class: *Is there a time when art helped you transcend a difficult situation in your life?* Maybe it was reading a certain book, hearing a song, or playing an instrument...

Have each student write one sentence in response to this question on a plain piece of paper. (Note to students that sentences will be respectfully shared.) Divide the class into three groups:

*Group 1:* Students will work together to combine their individual sentences into one group poem. Challenge them to try to make the text funny or humorous. Add words and sentences as needed to change the meaning of a particular sentence and connect ideas between sentences.

*Group 2:* Students will work together to combine their individual sentences into one group poem. Students will all need to copy this group poem on a piece of paper. On their own copy of the group poem, students can erase or black out/cover/cross out as many words as they like, creating a poem through only the words remaining. (See Examples of Erasure poetry in Materials).

*Group 3:* Students will share their sentences in the group and see if they can find a “thread” or single idea that links all of their sentences together. Is there one shared experience? For example, overcoming sadness, finding happiness, hope, etc. Use all of the pieces of paper to make a sculpture that represents the group’s chosen emotion. Students may crease, fold, crumple, rip, twist, stack, weave or tear parts as needed to represent their chosen emotion.

**Step 5:** Have the groups present their work. Ask the students the following questions:

Was it easy or hard to express yourself through words, using paper and pencil?

How did you feel when we read the poems?

Were you surprised with what you can do with words?

Was it easier or harder to work alone versus as a group?

Note that from this experiment, everyone’s individual creativity is evident. This creativity brings different ideas to the group and leads to collaborative problem solving. The purpose of this exercise is to see the “intangible dimensions of reality” as one transcends the space of the classroom by speaking about ideas, memories, and feelings, and trying to convey them through written words.

**Step 6:** Summarize. Recall the definitions of creativity and art, as well as their power to communicate the transcendent, intangible dimensions of reality. Highlight the examples of Picasso's painting "Mother and Child" as well as the Shawshank Redemption opera scene, and how each communicates the deep meaning of compassion and the power to go beyond one's present situation.

### SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIAL

Recall that in recent history, when many parts of society were shut down and people were asked to remain in their homes to lessen the spread of the virus COVID-19, humans creatively found a way to still play music together. Humans have a very real need for music and art to transcend our situation and relate to others also in need of the transcendent.

Show [Video](#): You Can't Quarantine Music to further reinforce this idea and ask the students to reflect on which deeper idea this playing of music in times of quarantine communicated.

After watching the video and hearing the reflections from students, propose that the music amidst the COVID quarantine communicated the idea of solidarity between all people. Even though people were physically apart, the music communicated that they all stand in solidarity with each other, and especially with those who are sick and are in the first line of defense against the virus (doctors, nurses, etc.). Music enabled people to move beyond their present situation and to shape the world in which they live in order to make it more humane and compassionate.

### FOLLOW-UP & HOMEWORK

ASK THE STUDENTS TO FILL IN [INTERIM QUIZ 1](#) AT HOME AND BRING IT TO THE NEXT CLASS. LET THEM KNOW THAT SOLVING THE INTERIM QUIZ WILL HELP THEM IN THE FINAL QUIZ WHICH WILL HAPPEN DURING THE LAST CLASS.

## Viktor Frankl: Creativity in a Concentration Camp<sup>11</sup>

Earlier, I mentioned art. Is there such a thing in a concentration camp? It rather depends on what one chooses to call art. A kind of cabaret was improvised from time to time. A hut was cleared temporarily, a few wooden benches were pushed or nailed together and a program was drawn up. In the evening those who had fairly good positions in camp—the Capos and the workers who did not have to leave camp on distant marches—assembled there. They came to have a few laughs or perhaps to cry a little; anyway, to forget. There were songs, poems, jokes, some with underlying satire regarding the camp. All were meant to help us forget, and they did help. The gatherings were so effective that a few ordinary prisoners went to see the cabaret in spite of their fatigue even though they missed their daily portion of food by going. During the half-hour lunch interval when soup (which the contractors paid for and for which they did not spend much, was labeled out at our work site, we were allowed to assemble in an unfinished engine room. On entering, everyone got a ladleful of the watery soup. While we sipped it greedily, a prisoner climbed onto a tub and sang Italian arias. We enjoyed the songs, and he was guaranteed a double helping of soup, straight “from the bottom”—that meant with peas!

To discover that there was any semblance of art in a concentration camp must be surprise enough for an outsider, but he may be even more astonished to hear that one could find a sense of humor there as well; of course, only the faint trace of one, and then only for a few seconds or minutes. Humor was another of the soul’s weapons in the fight for self-preservation. It is well known that humor, more than anything else in the human make-up, can afford an aloofness and an ability to rise above any situation, even if only for a few seconds. I practically trained a friend of mine who worked next to me on the building site to develop a sense of humor. I suggested to him that we would promise each other to invent at least one amusing story daily, about some incident that could happen one day after our liberation. [...]

Sometimes the other men invented amusing dreams about the future, such as forecasting that during a future dinner engagement they might forget themselves when the soup was served and beg the hostess to ladle it “from the bottom.” The attempt to develop a sense of humor and to see things in a humorous light is some kind of a trick learned while mastering the art of living. Yet it is possible to practice the art of living even in a concentration camp, although suffering is omnipresent.

### QUESTIONS FOR A DISCUSSION:

How was human creativity manifested in the concentration camp?

What was the function of art and humor in a concentration camp? Why did prisoners practice it?

11 Viktor E. Frankl: A Man’s Search for Meaning, 1946.

**Answer Key for the teacher**

1. **How was human creativity manifested in the concentration camp?** Human creativity was manifested in the concentration camp through art and humor. Frankl explains how

"[...] a kind of cabaret was improvised from time to time. A hut was cleared temporarily, a few wooden benches were pushed or nailed together and a program was drawn up. In the evening those who had fairly good positions in camp—the Capos and the workers who did not have to leave camp on distant marches—assembled there. [...] During the half-hour lunch interval when soup (which the contractors paid for and for which they did not spend much, was labeled out at our work site, we were allowed to assemble in an unfinished engine room. On entering, everyone got a ladleful of the watery soup. While we sipped it greedily, a prisoner climbed onto a tub and sang Italian arias."

Frankl explains how, in addition to art, there was a sense of humor as well. He suggested to a friend that they should:

"[...] promise each other to invent at least one amusing story daily, about some incident that could happen one day after our liberation. [...] Sometimes the other men invented amusing dreams about the future, such as forecasting that during a future dinner engagement they might forget themselves when the soup was served and beg the hostess to ladle it `from the bottom.'"

2. **What was the function of art and humor in a concentration camp? Why did prisoners practice it?**

Frankl explains why people came to see the cabarets:

"They came to have a few laughs or perhaps to cry a little; anyway, to forget. There were songs, poems, jokes, some with underlying satire regarding the camp. All were meant to help us forget, and they did help."

This statement describes how art in the concentration camp helped people to go beyond their immediate suffering and ease it, if only just a bit. This was indeed so effective that

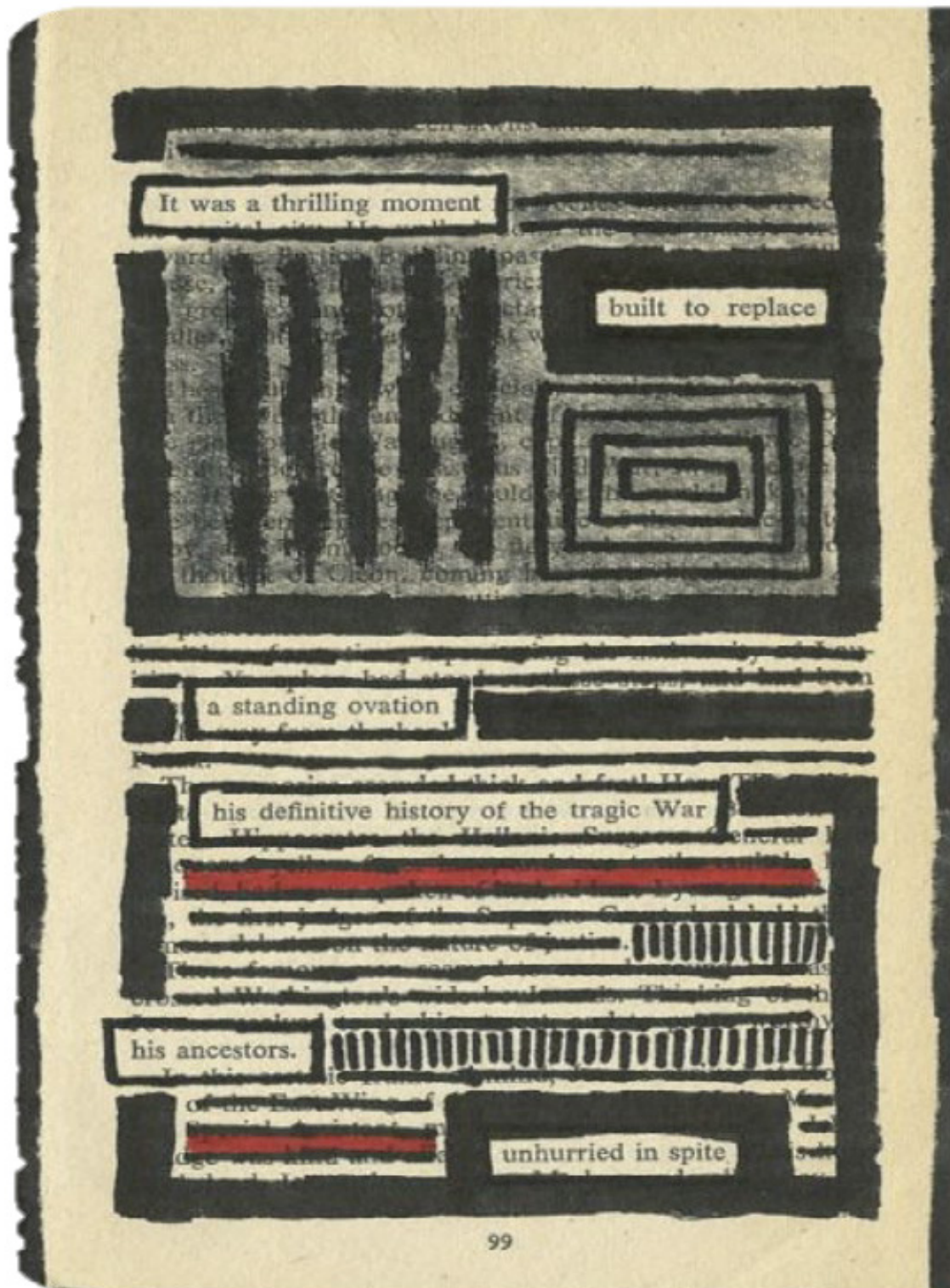
"[...] a few ordinary prisoners went to see the cabaret in spite of their fatigue even though they missed their daily portion of food by going."



Humor had a similar effect in the camp. It helped prisoners to survive their difficult circumstances and rise above the situation in which they found themselves:

“Humor was another of the soul’s weapons in the fight for self-preservation. It is well known that humor, more than anything else in the human make-up, can afford an aloofness and an ability to rise above any situation, even if only for a few seconds.”

## Erasure Poem Samples



why the nervous system after a certain time is in tune with the vibrations of the subtlest music and is eventually somehow lastingly modified by it. Above all we must agree that acting is a delirium like the plague, and is communicable.

The mind believes what it sees and does what it believes; that is the secret of fascination. And in his book, St. Augustine does not doubt the reality of this fascination for one moment.

Yet conditions must be found to give birth to a spectacle that fascinate the mind. It is not just a matter of art.

For if theatre is like the plague, this is not just because it acts on large groups and disturbs them in one and the same way. There is both something victorious and vengeful in theatre just as in the plague, for we clearly feel that spontaneous fire the plague lights as it passes by is nothing but a gigantic liquidation.

Such a complete social disaster, such organic disorder over-whelmed with vice, this kind of wholesale exorcism constricting the soul, driving it to the limit indicates the presence of a condition which is an extreme force. In such times all the powers of nature are newly rediscovered the instant something fundamental is about to be accomplished.

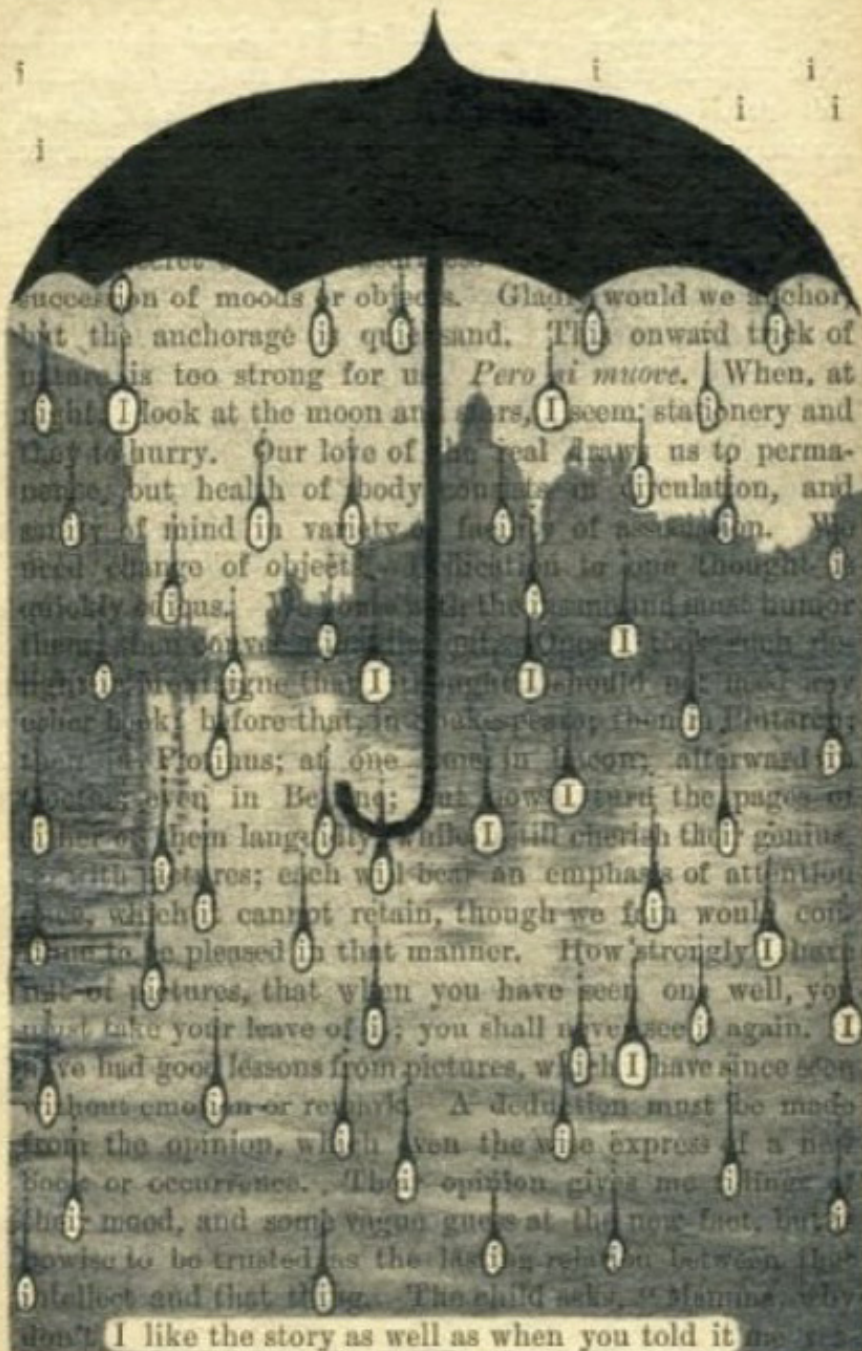
The plague takes dormant images, latent disorders and suddenly carries them to the point of the extreme gestures. Theatre also takes gestures and develops them to the limit. Just like the plague, it reorges the links between what does and does not exist in material nature. It rediscovers the idea of figures as archetypal symbols which act like sudden silences, fermata, heart stops, adrenalin calls, images surging into our abruptly woken minds. It restores all our dormant conflicts and their powers, giving these powers names we acknowledge as signs. Here a bitter clash of symbols takes place before a hustled one against the other in an inconceivable way. For theatre can only happen the moment the inconceivable really begins, where poetry taking place in a language of symbols and shapes created symbols.

These symbols are symbols of full-blown powers held in bond.

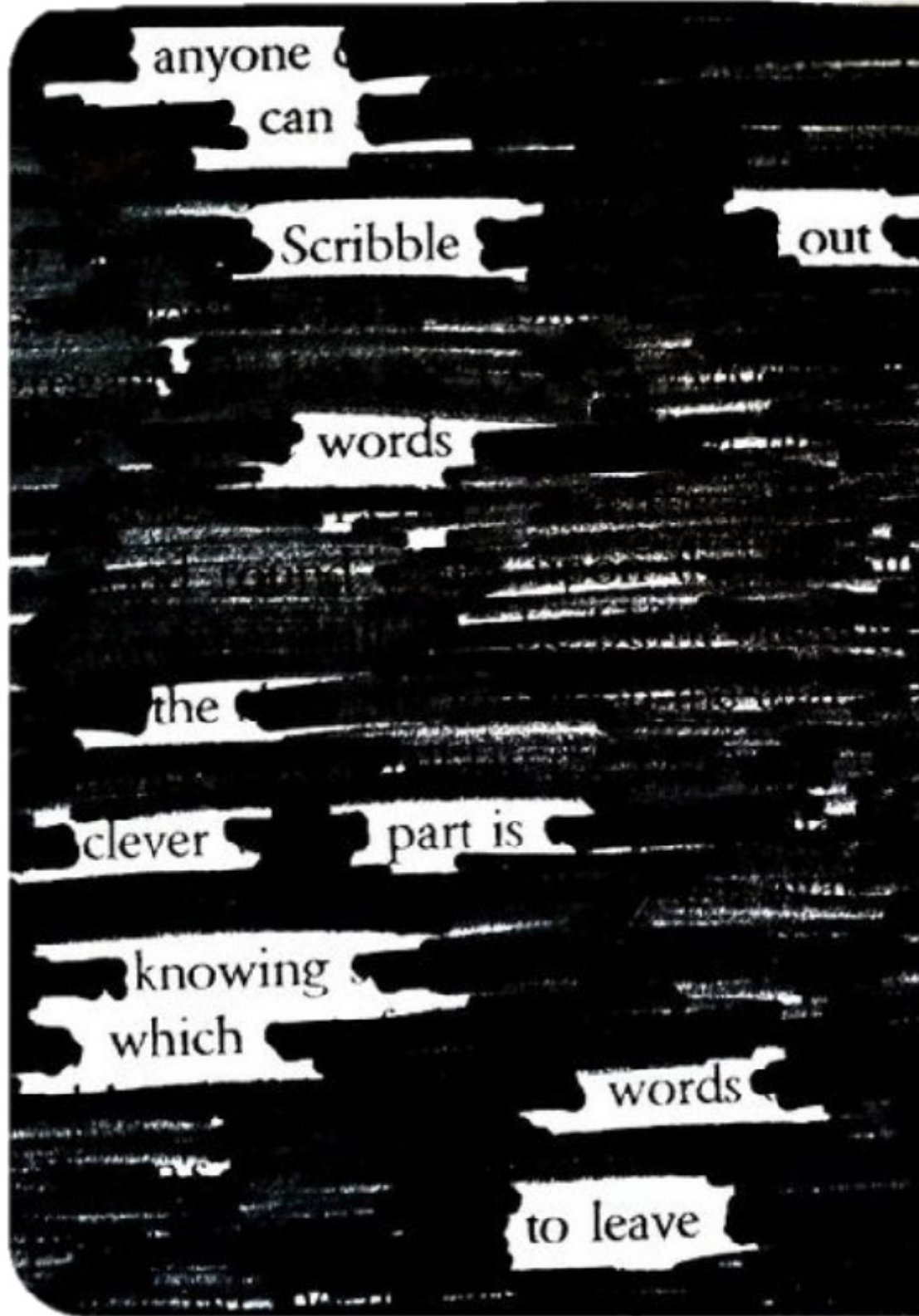


## EXPERIENCE.

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succession of moods or objects. Gladly would we anchor,  
 but the anchorage is quicksand. The onward tick of  
 nature is too strong for us. *Pero si muove.* When, at  
 night, I look at the moon and stars, I seem stationary and  
 they to hurry. Our love of the real draws us to perma-  
 nence, but health of body consists in circulation, and  
 sanity of mind in variety of faculty of association. We  
 need change of objects, distraction to one thought,  
 quickly eludes. We know the human mind must humor  
 them, than convey a fixed thought. Once I took such  
 night, I thought I should not meet any  
 other book before that, in books read; then in Plutarch;  
 then in Plinius; at one time in Plinius; afterward in  
 Plinius; even in Plinius; but now I turn the pages of  
 Plinius, then languidly, while I still cherish their genius  
 with pictures; each will bear an emphasis of attention  
 which I cannot retain, though we find would con-  
 tain to be pleased in that manner. How strongly I have  
 met of pictures, that when you have seen one well, you  
 must take your leave of it; you shall never see it again. I  
 have had good lessons from pictures, which I have since seen  
 without emotion or remark. A deduction must be made  
 from the opinion, which even the wife express of a new  
 book or occurrence. The opinion gives me a glimpse  
 of that mood, and some vague guess at the new fact, but I  
 know to be trusted as the lasting relation between the  
 intellect and that thing. The child asks, "Mamma, why  
 don't I like the story as well as when you told it me?"



## Interim Quiz 1

**A. True/false questions**

1. T/F True freedom means being able to do what you want.
2. T/F Animals and humans do not differ in any significant way.
3. T/F “Intrinsic” means that human dignity is within us and it is with us our entire life.
4. T/F Creativity is the power to use imagination and ideas to shape the world, shared by both animals and humans.
5. T/F Socrates developed a five filter test.
6. T/F Harriet Tubman was fighting for the rights of indigenous people in Latin America.

**B. Essay questions**

7. What is the difference between freedom for excellence and freedom of indifference?

**C. For each answer, make a correct question.**

*For example, if the answer is “The first letter of the alphabet”, the question is “What is the letter A?”. Or, if the answer is “A paste or gel used in conjunction with a toothbrush to help clean and maintain the aesthetics and health of teeth”, the correct question is “What is toothpaste?”*

8. The human ability to knowingly select between options.
9. To eat, grow, and reproduce.
10. A means to communicate what would otherwise remain hidden; to reach beyond ourselves towards the transcendent.
11. A network of secret routes and safe houses established in the United States during the early to mid-19th century, and used by enslaved African-Americans to escape into free states and Canada.
12. The characteristic of human dignity is that it cannot be given to us or taken away from us.

13. Being consistent in your positions, being curious, open-minded, accepting valid criticism or listening to different points of view.

#### D. Multiple choice questions

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <p>14. Something we use to achieve an end is called:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Achievers</li> <li>b) Means</li> <li>c) Subjects</li> <li>d) Non-ends</li> </ul>  | <p>18. Universal means that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) All persons have dignity</li> <li>b) No one can take dignity away from us</li> <li>c) Dignity is with us our entire life</li> <li>d) Dignity is not earned</li> </ul>                                   |
| <p>15. Transcendent dimensions of reality are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Intangible</li> <li>b) Beyond physical level</li> <li>c) Not easily visible</li> <li>d) Not accessible at all</li> </ul>  | <p>19. Art and creativity have the power to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Help us go beyond our present situation.</li> <li>b) Communicate intangible dimensions of reality.</li> <li>c) Stir up our emotions.</li> <li>d) Convey some deeper meaning.</li> </ul> |
| <p>16. We violate human dignity, when:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) We use a person merely as an object.</li> <li>b) When we don't sacrifice an older person in order to save a younger one.</li> <li>c) When we treat a person as means.</li> <li>d) When we refuse giving money to a beggar.</li> </ul> | <p>20. Which of the following questions is not a part of Socrates triple filter test:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Is what I want to say good?</li> <li>b) Is there financial interest in it?</li> <li>c) Is it helpful?</li> <li>d) Is it true?</li> </ul>       |
| <p>17. Which of the following are habits of excellent thinking?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Rushing to conclusion</li> <li>b) Seeking advice from wise people</li> <li>c) Considering other viewpoints</li> <li>d) Gathering enough evidence</li> </ul>  | <p>21. The "I have a dream" speech was given by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Mahatma Gandhi</li> <li>b) Stephen Covey</li> <li>c) John Lennon</li> <li>d) Martin Luther King, Jr.</li> </ul>   |

**Interim Quiz 1 – Answer Key**

1. F – true freedom means doing what is excellent.
2. F – humans differ from animals in having the powers to think and choose.
3. T
4. F – creativity is specifically human power.
5. F – he developed a three filter test.
6. F – Harriet Tubman fought for the rights of slaves in the USA.
7. Freedom for indifference says that to be free means simply that we can choose whatever we want. Which choice we make does not really make any difference. We are truly indifferent to which choice we will make as long as we can make the choice. Freedom is equated with the mere capacity to choose. Choice can be anything, good or bad, excellent or non-excellent. While freedom of indifference claims that we are free if we can choose whichever option, freedom for excellence says that we will be truly free only if we always choose what is excellent. Freedom for excellence is the capacity to choose wisely and to act well as a matter of habit. Freedom is the means by which, exercising both our reason and our will, we act on the natural longing for truth, for goodness, and for happiness that is built into us as human beings. This means that we can be truly free only when we constantly choose that which is true and good.
8. What is the power to choose?
9. What powers do all living beings share?
10. What is art?
11. What is the Underground Railroad?
12. What is inviolable?
13. What are habits of excellent thinking?
14. b
15. d – they are accessible, and one means to access them is art.
16. a and c
17. b, c, d
18. a
19. a, b, c and d
20. b
21. d



## Lesson 6: Friendship and Solidarity

### PURPOSE

To motivate students to pursue friendship of excellence in their daily lives.

### LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of the lesson students will be able to:

1. Understand and explain the three types of friendship as described by Aristotle.
2. Identify William Wilberforce and The Clapham Circle as a historical example of friendship of excellence.

### MATERIALS & RESOURCES

- Three Types of Friendship
- William Wilberforce [Documentary](#)
- The Clapham Circle Discussion Guide
- Amazing Grace [movie](#)

### VOCABULARY

- Friendship of excellence: a bond of mutual affection between people who pursue excellence for themselves and others

### PROCEDURE

**Step 1:** Review the previous lesson. Recall the definitions of creativity and art, as well as their power to communicate the transcendent, intangible dimensions of reality. Highlight the examples of Picasso's [painting](#) "Mother and Child" as well as the Shawshank Redemption opera [scene](#), and how they both communicate the deep meaning of compassion and the power to go beyond one's present situation.

Ask the students if they have completed the [Interim Quiz 1](#). Ask them if some of the questions were difficult and help clarify the answers.

**Step 2:** Introduce the topic of friendship. Ask the students what they think distinguishes excellent and non-excellent friendships? Write their ideas on the board.

Introduce Aristotle's types of friendship and their defining traits:

**Friendship based on utility:** being friends with someone to gain an advantage from them (e.g. someone is popular in school, so I want to become friends with them to become popular myself, etc.). Friendship of utility is the lowest type of friendship, disagreements happen easily and it is very unstable – it lasts only as long as the utility lasts.

**Friendship based on pleasure:** being friends with someone because they make us laugh, feel good or because we like being in their company. Friendship based on pleasure is a higher type of friendship than that based on utility and there is less discord in it, but it is still unstable since it ceases to exist when the other person stops being funny, charming, or fun to be around, or if someone else becomes more pleasant to us. It is more similar to true friendship, but still not identical to it.

**Friendship of excellence:** being friends with someone because we want to pursue excellence with them. In a friendship of excellence, we always respect the dignity of the other, and don't merely use them for our advantage or pleasure. It is more lasting – we stay friends even if we meet someone funnier or more charming. We support the other person even if we do not get any advantage from it. We love a person because of who they are, not because of something they can give us. Although friendship of excellence is enjoyable, the enjoyment itself is not the main motive--the pursuit of excellence is. Friendship of excellence is true friendship.

Give the students the [Three Types of Friendship](#) handout and ask if they can give some examples for each type of friendship. Obviously, in real-world friendships, more than one ideal type can exist.

Ask the students to describe how the person is treated in each type of friendship, using the language of the subject-object distinction. Highlight that in a friendship of utility and friendship of pleasure, the friend is treated as an object for personal advantage or pleasure. In friendship of excellence, the other person is treated as a subject since our final goal is always the good of that person. For friendship of excellence, pleasure or utility can be a part of the friendship, but they are not the main motives.

**Step 3:** Introduce the story of William Wilberforce and his circle of friends as an example of friendship of excellence.

William Wilberforce (1759 – 1833) was a British politician, philanthropist, and a leader of the movement to abolish the slave trade. He headed the parliamentary campaign against the British slave trade for twenty years until the passage of the Slave Trade Act of 1807. Wilberforce championed causes and campaigns such as the Society for the Suppression of Vice, British missionary work in India, the creation of a free colony in Sierra Leone, the foundation of the Church Mission Society, and the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. In later years, Wilberforce supported the campaign for the complete abolition of slavery, and continued his involvement after 1826, when he resigned from Parliament because of his failing health. That campaign led to the Slavery Abolition Act of 1833, which abolished slavery in most of the British Empire. Wilberforce died just three days after hearing that the passage of the Act through Parliament was assured.

But Wilberforce was not alone in his struggle against slavery. He was surrounded by a circle of friends called “The Clapham Circle” or “The Clapham Sect”, named after the village of Clapham where they were meeting. It is believed that the Circle started coming into being when Wilberforce and his friend and banker John Thornton purchased an estate in Clapham and other friends started joining them there for discussions, strategizing, planning, and prayer (they were all Christians). Some even moved to Clapham with their families. A part of the circle was one of Wilberforce’s best friends William Pitt, who later became the Prime Minister of Britain. They and a dozen other politicians, bankers, scholars and clergymen formed a circle inspired by Christian faith which aimed to promote and support different social causes.

Surrounded by such a group of friends, William Wilberforce was able to lead the parliamentary campaign against the slave trade, a crusade which he gave his whole life to. Although the abolition of slavery was the central Clapham concern and demanded the bulk of their energies, the Circle also engaged in a variety of other social and philanthropic concerns. Their public philanthropic efforts were many, including relieving the suffering of the manufacturing poor as well as French refugees and foreigners in distress. Wilberforce and the circle made major financial contributions to at least seventy philanthropic societies. History records Wilberforce as an active member of numerous reform movements, including reform in hospital care, fever institutions, asylums, infirmaries, refugees and penitentiaries. He supported religious publications and education, especially the schools of Hannah More, a close friend and leading reformer of British education.

One historian wrote on the strength of friendship of the Clapham circle:

“It was a remarkable fraternity — remarkable above all else, perhaps, in its closeness, its affinity. It not only lived for the most part in one little village; it had one character, one mind, one way of life. They were mostly rich, living in large roomy houses; but they all were generous givers to the poor. Thornton indeed gave away as much as six-sevenths of his income till he married, and after that at least a third of it. They could mostly have been of leisure; but they all devoted their lives to public service.”<sup>12</sup>

Before forming the Clapham circle, another friend of Wilberforce had a great influence on him. That was John Newton, the author of the hymn “Amazing Grace”. Newton had been the captain of a slave ship and engaged in slave trading for many years before changing his views dramatically, renouncing slavery as an inhuman practice. He became a clergyman and wrote “Amazing Grace” as an expression of grief over his past life as a slave trader. Wilberforce himself thought of becoming a priest at a certain point in his life, and sought the advice of Newton, who encouraged him to remain a layman and to fight for the abolition of slavery in Parliament.

Show students the William Wilberforce [Documentary](#) to learn more about Wilberforce, his friends, and their common fight against slavery in the British Empire.

**Step 4:** After watching the video, divide the students into groups and ask them to discuss questions from [The Clapham Circle Discussion Guide](#).

After groups finish discussing, ask them to share their conclusions with the rest of the class.

Conclude by writing the definition of friendship of excellence on the board:

Friendship of excellence: a bond of mutual affection between people who pursue excellence for themselves and others

<sup>12</sup> Os Hillman: William Wilberforce – Joining a Network Was Vital to His Success, available at <https://www.christianpost.com/news/william-wilberforce-joining-a-network-was-vital-to-his-success.html> (last visited Dec 2, 2022).

Elaborate on the definition of friendship of excellence by highlighting the following:

It is hard to achieve, only people who strive to be excellent can practice it.  
It brings a much deeper fulfillment than any other type of friendship  
It is necessary to lead a happy and fulfilled life  
Those who possess it become better people through it  
It helps people achieve great things together

**Step 5:** Summarize. Review once more the three types of friendships according to Aristotle and their defining traits. Recall William Wilberforce and the Clapham circle as an example of friendship of excellence. Finish by emphasizing the importance of developing friendships of excellence in our daily lives.

#### **SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIAL**

Inform the students that there is a [movie](#) called Amazing Grace which features the life of William Wilberforce and his striving to end slavery in Britain. Consider organizing a movie session with the students to watch the movie together as a class.

### Three Types of Friendship

	Friendship of utility	Friendship of pleasure	Friendship of excellence
<b>What we value in a friend</b>	Usefulness and benefits the friend can provide us	Pleasure or enjoyment the friend brings us	Human dignity and friend's habits of excellence
<b>Motive or purpose of friendship</b>	To get some advantage or benefit	To enjoy	To strive for excellence
<b>Durability</b>	Not lasting, easily dissolved when the friend is no longer useful to us	More lasting than friendship of utility, less than friendship of excellence – dissolves when pleasure lessens	Very durable, does not break easily
<b>Disagreements</b>	Can arise easily	Arise less than in friendship of utility, more than in friendship of excellence	Can happen, but friends work to overcome them
<b>Problem</b>	Treating persons as objects for our advantage	Treating persons as objects for our pleasure	It is hard to achieve
<b>Quality of friendship</b>	Lowest type of friendship	Higher than friendship of utility; similar to true friendship, but still not identical to it	True friendship
<b>Number of friends</b>	Possible to have as many such friends as needed, they come and go	Possible to have many such friends, friendships develop quickly	Not possible to have many such friends, it takes time to build close friendship
<b>Who can establish such friendship</b>	Person who doesn't strive for excellence can establish them, but they can use you for bad things	Person who doesn't strive for excellence can establish them, but this likely leads to problems	Only people who strive for excellence
<b>Examples</b>	<p>Being friends with someone because he is popular or has money;</p> <p>Being friends with someone to get to someone else;</p> <p>Being friends with someone to get a promotion in the workplace</p>	<p>Being friends with someone because he makes jokes all the time;</p> <p>Being friends with someone because we both like partying;</p> <p>Being friends with someone because they flatter us</p>	<p>Studying hard with a friend;</p> <p>Friends who challenge each other to be better;</p> <p>Friends who make excellent projects together;</p> <p>Friends who really take care of each other</p>

**The Clapham Circle Discussion Guide****AFTER WATCHING THE DOCUMENTARY, DISCUSS THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS IN GROUPS:**

What role did friends play in Wilberforce's life? Could he achieve what he did without them? Give examples.

Why was the friendship of the Clapham Circle friendship of excellence?

Do you know of some other examples of friendship for excellence in history or in your surroundings?

Do you practice friendship for excellence in your relationships with others? If not, why not? If yes, describe how you practice it.

**Answer Key for the teacher****1. What role did friends play in Wilberforce's life? Could he achieve what he did without them?**

**Give examples.** Friends played an extraordinary role in Wilberforce's life and were essential to his achievement of ending the slave trade in the Commonwealth. Wilberforce's story is the story of a man with good friends who encouraged him to work for the good throughout his life. William Pitt was his life-long friend and later, Prime Minister. Wilberforce had no greater friend in fighting the slave trade. Pitt urged Wilberforce to remain in politics after his great "change", which was a religious conversion that he had during his career. Another friend of his was John Newton, a former slave trader who later became a pastor. Newton had great experience and wisdom – Wilberforce came to him for advice on how to proceed with his life. Newton supported Wilberforce in his religious conversion and challenged him to fight against the slave trade in Parliament and in public life. When Wilberforce returned to political life at the urging of his friends, Thomas Clarkson encouraged Wilberforce to take political action against the slave trade. After that, he brought a bill to Parliament proposing the abolition of the slave trade and after 20 years of hard work, along with the support of his friend John Wesley, the bill was passed.

**2. Why was the friendship of the Clapham Circle friendship of excellence? Do you know of some other examples of friendship for excellence in history or in your surroundings?** The friendship of the Clapham Circle was truly a friendship for excellence because each of them supported one another in the pursuit of excellence and of working for different social causes. William Pitt, John Newton, Thomas Clarkson, and John Wesley supported Wilberforce in his pursuit of the good. While the abolition of slavery was the central Clapham concern and demanded the bulk of their energies, they engaged in many other causes as well, such as working for the relief of the working poor, French refugees, and foreigners in distress. Wilberforce and his circle made major financial contributions to at least seventy such societies.



## Lesson 7: Habits of Excellence: Self-determination

### PURPOSE

To help students understand and practice habits of excellence, and especially the habit of self-determination in their daily lives.

### LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of the lesson students will be able to:

1. Understand what habits of excellence are as well as their characteristics.
2. Understand the habit of self-determination.
3. Practice self-determination in their lives.

### VOCABULARY

- Habits of excellence: behaviors acquired through regular practice which help people achieve excellence as persons
- Self-determination: to take charge of one's emotions and behaviors in order to strive for human excellence in both actions and decisions

### MATERIALS & RESOURCES

- [Video](#): Matt Cutts – Try something new for 30 days
- Seven Days Challenge worksheet
- [Video](#) “I Quit Social Media For 1 Month — And It Was The Best Choice I Ever Made”
- [Video](#) of The speech “Quit social media” by Dr. Cal Newport
- [Video](#): Marshmallow test

### PROCEDURE

**Step 1:** Review the previous lesson. Discuss once more the three types of friendship according to Aristotle along with their defining characteristics. Remind the students of the story of William Wilberforce and the Clapham circle as an example of friendship of excellence. Finish by highlighting the importance of developing friendships of excellence in daily life.

Remind the students of the definitions of habit and freedom for excellence that they learned in earlier lessons.

**Step 2:** Ask students if they can name some excellent and non-excellent habits. Write a table with two columns on the board, one for excellent and one for non-excellent habits. Write down the students' examples.

Write the definition on the board.

Habits of excellence: behaviors acquired through regular practice which help people achieve excellence as persons.

Highlight that these are the excellences of a person as a person, not skills, abilities or gifts. For example, some important habits to develop are:

- self-determination
- courage
- wisdom
- justice
- truthfulness
- kindness
- generosity
- humility

Mention some of the characteristics of habits of excellence:

They lead to excellence of the person as *person*.

While being good at sports, arts or science is indeed great, it is even more important to develop habits of excellence as a person. Each person is first and foremost a human being and should primarily become excellent as a person.

Since habits of excellence are excellent for the whole person, they are reflected in all aspects of one's life: study, friendship, work, love, career, athletics and more. A wise person can make better career choices, a generous person will be a better friend, a person with self-determination will be better at studying or sports, etc.

**They can be acquired through practice and learning.**

No one is born with any of these habits of excellence. One can acquire them over the course of a lifetime. It is possible to do this by using one's powers to think and choose in an excellent way, for example, by always choosing what is excellent.

It is also the case with these habits that at first it is hard to develop them, but through regular practice, living them becomes easier. People need effort and patience to develop these habits, so many give up early. However, with more and more practice, they become natural and one can achieve them with less and less effort.

**They are all connected.**

All habits of excellence are connected, so by developing one of them, one also develops the others. The person who is generous will find it easier to be kind; the truthful person will be more wise; the person who is genuinely courageous will be more humble.

After highlighting each of the characteristics, ask the students to give examples of how they play out in daily life.

**Step 3:** Explain that in this class, the main focus is one of the habits of excellence: self-determination. Write the definition of self-determination on the board:

**Self-determination: to take charge of one's emotions and behaviors, in order to strive for human excellence in our actions and decisions.**

If time permits and you consider it beneficial, add the [Supplementary activity](#) no. 1.

Highlight that self-determination is a habit of excellence that drives all other habits of excellence. Since each habit is acquired through regular practice, which is often difficult, self-determination is necessary to be able to persevere through difficulties. Often, one wants to choose what is excellent, but fails to actually choose it. Self-determination helps people to strive for excellence when it is difficult.

Ask students if they can think of examples of people who embody self-determination in their surroundings. Ask them to explain how these people live by self-determination.

**Step 4:** Show the [video](#) and explain the idea behind it: the research shows that it takes 30 days of repeating some practice to develop or change a habit.

Suggest that students start with a small goal and try a “seven days challenge”. [Give a Seven days challenge worksheet](#) to each student and have them fill it out. Explain that they should think of a daily practice which can help them to develop self-determination. Provide an example of the “seven days challenge” by showing the [video](#) “I Quit Social Media For 1 Month – And It Was The Best Choice I Ever Made” and discuss the benefits which can come from a “social media fast” to inspire them with reasons for why it could be helpful.

If the time permits, consider adding the [Supplementary activity](#) no. 2.

To take on the challenge effectively, it is important to think about the motive or the reason why they should develop self-determination. Having sight of a higher purpose will help them stay set in their goals when things get hard. It is helpful to think ahead of time about the challenges which may await them and brainstorm ways to overcome them.

Finally, having a friend, teacher, or family member who can support them in their goals will make it easier for them to overcome obstacles. Each student should think of one person who can support them and the ways in which this person could support them.

Explain that the students should not worry about struggling or failing, and that the only problem is if they do not struggle, if they give up, or if they choose not to try at all. Tell the students that with greater challenges come greater potential benefits, but also a greater likelihood of failure. Smaller challenges are easier to achieve, but they bring smaller potential benefits.

**Step 5:** Summarize. Recall the definition of habits of excellence and their most important characteristics. Highlight the importance of self-determination and motivate students to persist in their “seven days challenge”. Note that in the next class, there will be a discussion on how everyone did.

#### SUPPLEMENTARY ACTIVITY

1. Show the [video](#) explaining the Marshmallow test from Stanford University and ask students about their conclusions. Explain that the purpose of the Marshmallow test is to show that the power to delay gratification for a greater future benefit is an important predictor of one’s ability to self-determine. And self-determination is necessary for achieving one’s goals in life.
2. For a longer discussion on the issue of “social media fast” you can also show the [speech](#) “Quit social media” by Dr. Cal Newport on TEDxTysons, where he elaborates in more depth on its benefits.

## Seven days challenge: Self-determination

1. In order to develop the habit of self-determination, every day I will practice:

2. My main motive or the reason why I want to develop self-determination is:

3. Challenges I will likely face:

4. How I will counteract the challenges:

5. Overcoming challenges is easier with support. My support person (friend, family member, teacher, etc.) will be:

6. This person will support me by: (e.g. checking up on me every day, asking if I need help, sending me motivational videos, etc.)

## Seven days challenge - example 1

- a) In order to develop the habit of self-determination, every day I will practice:

Getting up in the morning on the first ring of the alarm.

- b) My main motive or the reason why I want to develop self-determination is:

To be better at school and to be more successful later in life.

- c) Likely challenges I will face:

Snoozing the alarm  
Trying to give up  
Wanting to skip some days

- d) How I will counteract the challenges:

Disabling snooze option  
Talk to my brother if I want to give up  
Write a note in my room not to give up

- e) Overcoming challenges is easier with support. My support person (friend, family member, teacher, etc.) will be:

My brother

- f) This person will support me by: (e.g. checking up on me every day, asking if I need help, sending me motivational videos, etc.)

By not letting me give up or skip some days. Asking me if I'm thinking about it.



## Seven days challenge - example 2

- a) In order to develop the habit of self-determination, every day I will practice:

Not checking my social media accounts (FB, Insta, Snapchat) by deleting them.

- b) My main motive or the reason why I want to develop self-determination is:

To have more time for studying and spending time with my family. To be more focused.

- c) Likely challenges I will face:

Trying to reactivate the account.  
Checking social media for school assignments.  
Being bored in the evening and wanting to reconnect.

- d) How I will counteract the challenges:

Use Block page software.  
Transfer school communication to Whatsapp/e-mail.  
Give the password to my best friend and ask them to change it.

- e) Overcoming challenges is easier with support. My support person (friend, family member, teacher, etc.) will be:

My best friend Kate.

- f) This person will support me by: (e.g. checking up on me every day, asking if I need help, sending me motivational videos, etc.)

By changing my password and not telling me my new one. By helping me to find out about school assignments. Talking to me in the evening when I'm bored.

**Seven days challenge Checklist**

Challenge:

Support person:

Day	Tick box if challenge was accomplished*	Message
1		"What would life be if we had no courage to attempt anything?" - Vincent Van Gogh
2		"Our greatest weakness lies in giving up. The most certain way to succeed is always to try just one more time." - Thomas Edison
3		"Perseverance, the secret to all triumphs." - Victor Hugo
4		"You must do the things you think you cannot do." - Eleanor Roosevelt
5		"It's hard to beat the person who never gives up." - Babe Ruth
6		"The best view comes after the hardest climb."
7		"As long as we live, we fight, and as long as we are fighting, that is a sign that we are not defeated. And if death does not find you as a victor, he should find you as a warrior." - Augustine

\*The support person by its signature verifies that the ticked boxes are true:

## Lesson 8: Heroism

### PURPOSE

To motivate students to embody heroism in their daily lives.

### LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of the lesson, students will be able to:

1. Understand that heroism means thinking and choosing to embody habits of excellence.
2. Recognize Mahatma Gandhi as a person who embodied heroism of self-determination.
3. Recognize heroic people from their surroundings, culture, history etc.

### VOCABULARY

- Heroism: embodying habits of excellence

### MATERIALS & RESOURCES

- [Video](#) Gandhi – Human Rights Activist | Mini Bio | Biography
- Mohandas Gandhi: Satyagraha: Not Passive Resistance
- Portrait of Heroism worksheet

### PROCEDURE

**Step 1:** Review the previous lesson. Recall the definition of habits of excellence and their most important characteristics. Recall the definition and the importance of self-determination.

Ask the students if they have persisted in the “seven days challenge”. Ask volunteers to present their results from the challenge, whether they managed to practice what they decided to, the biggest challenges they faced and how they counteracted them, the role of their support person in the process, and other similar details. For those who persisted in the challenge, ask if they have experienced some benefits.

Explain that it is not a problem if they struggled and failed, especially if they set a bigger challenge for themselves. The greater challenge also brings a greater likelihood of failure. Smaller challenges are easier to achieve, but they bring smaller benefits. The only real problem is if they did not struggle or try due to the challenge involved.

**Step 2:** Explain that today's topic is heroism and that during the class, students will explore what heroism is and how they can embody it. In the lesson, the class will try to recognize some people from their surroundings, history, and culture who embody heroic traits. Ask the students to share what they think are characteristics of a heroic person. Write the characteristics the students come up with on the board.

After hearing the students' comments, highlight some important traits of heroism:

- » Heroes are not born, heroism is developed through the everyday practice of excellent choices.
- » Heroism is about embodying different habits of excellence (they are all connected).
- » To develop heroism, one needs to have a strong sense of meaning and purpose, or a deep conviction that one needs to do what is right.
- » Heroism is oriented towards helping others, not primarily improving oneself (even though improving oneself also happens in the end).
- » Heroism is not about never making mistakes, but rather, always trying to get on the right track after making them.
- » Heroism is enhanced by excellent friendships. We need others to hold us accountable.

Conclude the discussion by writing a definition of heroism on the board:

Heroism: embodying habits of excellence

**Step 3:** Explain that, in this class, students will learn about the example of a person who embodied heroism of self-determination. His name is Mohandas (Mahatma) Gandhi. Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi (1869 – 1948) was an Indian lawyer, anti-colonialist, and political ethicist, who led a nonviolent civil resistance movement to lead the campaign for India's independence from British Rule. Independence was finally achieved in 1947. His movement inspired subsequent movements for civil rights and freedom across the world. The title Mahātmā, which in Sanskrit means "great-souled" or "venerable" was first applied to him in 1914 in South Africa and is now used throughout the world.

Play the [video](#) Gandhi - Human Rights Activist | Mini Bio | Biography to introduce students to basic information about Gandhi.

The movement that Gandhi inspired was based on the practice of solidarity with all people, including their oppressors. The main principle of the movement was captured under the term *satyagraha*. Satyagraha can be used both by individuals and by communities.

Divide the students into groups and ask them to read the “[Satyagraha: Not Passive Resistance](#)” text by [Gandhi](#) to learn more about the animating principle of his movement. The term satyagraha is usually translated as passive resistance. However, in the text, Gandhi explains that satyagraha is not the same as passive resistance. In fact, Satyagraha demanded a high degree of self determination from the person practicing it. The class will try to recognize what satyagraha really is and what made it so effective in achieving lasting social change.

The groups should discuss the questions associated with the text. After group discussions, ask each group to share their conclusions with the rest of the class. Lead a discussion based on the Answer Key associated with the text to show how Gandhi motivated others to join his civil resistance movement, animated by the principle of satyagraha.

**Step 4:** Ask the students to think individually about examples of heroism they know from their surroundings, culture, or history. Ask them to think about the habits of excellence these heroes embody and to fill out the [Portrait of Heroism](#) worksheet.

**Step 5:** Summarize. Highlight some of the things that constitute heroism, recall the definition of heroism and Mahatma Gandhi as an example of someone who embodied heroism of self-determination. Conclude by highlighting some important traits of heroism:

- » Heroes are not born, heroism is developed through the everyday practice of excellent choices.
- » Heroism is not about never making mistakes, but rather, always trying to get on the right track after making them.
- » Heroism is enhanced by excellent friendships. We need others to hold us accountable.

## Mahatma Gandhi: Satyagraha – Not Passive Resistance<sup>13</sup>

The force denoted by the term ‘passive resistance’ is not very accurately described either by the original English phrase or by its Hindi rendering. Its correct description is satyagraha. ‘Passive resistance’ conveyed the idea of the Suffragette Movement in England. Burning of houses by these women was called ‘passive resistance’ and so also their fasting in prison. All such acts might very well be ‘passive resistance’ but they were not satyagraha. It is said of ‘passive resistance’ that it is the weapon of the weak, but the power which is the subject of the article can be used only by the strong. This power is not ‘passive’ resistance; indeed it calls for intense activity. The movement in South Africa was not passive but active. The Indians of South Africa believed that Truth was their object, that Truth ever triumphs, and with this definiteness of purpose they persistently held on to Truth. They put up with all the suffering that this persistence implied. With the conviction that Truth is not to be renounced even unto death, they shed the fear of death. In the cause of Truth, the prison was a palace to them and its doors the gateway to freedom.

Satyagraha is not a physical force. A satyagrahi does not inflict pain on the adversary; he does not seek his destruction. A satyagrahi never resorts to firearms. In the use of satyagraha, there is no ill will whatever. Satyagraha is pure soul-force. Truth is the very substance of the soul. That is why this force is called satyagraha. The soul is informed with knowledge. In it burns the flame of love. If someone gives us pain through ignorance, we shall win him through love. ‘Non-violence is the supreme dharma’ is the proof of this power of love. Non-violence is a dormant state. In the waking state, it is love. Ruled by love, the world goes on. In English there is a saying, “Might Is Right.” Then there is the doctrine of the survival of the fittest. Both these ideas are contradictory to the above principle. Neither is wholly true. If ill-will were the chief motive-force, the world would have been destroyed long ago; and neither would I have had the opportunity to write this article nor would the hopes of the readers be fulfilled. We are alive solely because of love. [...]

[Satyagraha] brings good both to the satyagrahi and his adversary. It is ever victorious. For instance, Harishchandra was a satyagrahi, Prahlad was a satyagrahi, Mirabai was a satyagrahi. Daniel, Socrates and those Arabs who hurled themselves on the fire of the French artillery were all satyagrahis. We see from these examples that a satyagrahi does not fear for his body, he does not give up what he thinks is Truth; the word ‘defeat’ is not to be found in his dictionary, he does not wish for the destruction of his antagonist he does not vent anger on him; but has only compassion for him.

13 Rudrangshu Mukherjee. The Penguin Gandhi Reader. Satyagraha – Not Passive Resistance. September 1917 by Mahatma Gandhi.

A satyagrahi does not wait for others, but throws himself into the fray, relying entirely on his own resources. He trusts that when the time comes, others will do likewise. His practice is his precept. Like air, satyagraha is all-pervading. It is infectious, which means that all people – big and small, men and women – can become satyagrahis. No one is kept out from the army of satyagrahis. A satyagrahi cannot perpetrate tyranny on anyone; he is not subdued through application of physical force; he does not strike at anyone. Just as anyone can resort to satyagraha, it can be resorted to in almost any situation.

People demand historical evidence in support of satyagraha. History is for the most part a record of armed activities. Natural activities find very little mention in it. Only uncommon activities strike us with wonder. Satyagraha has been used always and in all situations. The father and the son, the man and the wife are perpetually resorting to satyagraha, one towards the other. When a father gets angry and punishes the son, the son does not hit back with a weapon, he conquers his father's anger by submitting to him. The son refuses to be subdued by the unjust rule of his father but he puts up with the punishment that he may incur through disobeying the unjust father. We can similarly free ourselves of the unjust rule of the Government by defying the unjust rule and accepting the punishments that go with it.

The question is asked why we should call any rule unjust. In saying so, we ourselves assume the function of a judge. It is true. But in this world, we always have to act as judges for ourselves. That is why the satyagrahi does not strike his adversary with arms. If he has Truth on his side, he will win, and if his thought is faulty, he will suffer the consequences of his fault.

What is the good, they ask, of only one person opposing injustice; for he will be punished and destroyed, he will languish in prison or meet an untimely end through hanging. The objection is not valid. History shows that all reforms have begun with one person. Fruit is hard to come by without tapasya [suffering]. The suffering that has to be undergone in satyagraha is tapasya in its purest form. Only when the tapasya is capable of bearing fruit do we have the fruit. [...]

Then it is said that much suffering is involved in being a satyagrahi and that the entire people will not be willing to put up with this suffering. The objection is not valid. People in general always follow in the footsteps of the noble. There is no doubt that it is difficult to produce a satyagrahi leader. Our experience is that a satyagrahi needs many more virtues like self-control, fearlessness, etc., than are requisite for one who believes in armed action. The greatness of the man bearing arms does not lie in the superiority of the arms, nor does it lie in his physical prowess. It lies in his determination and fearlessness in face of death.

[...] the strength of a warrior is not measured by reference to his weapons but by his firmness of mind. A satyagrahi needs millions of times more of such firmness than does a bearer of arms. Not only India but the whole world awaits the advent of such a man. We may in the meanwhile prepare the ground as much as we can through satyagraha.

**QUESTIONS FOR A DISCUSSION:**

Why is the term passive resistance not an adequate translation of satyagraha? What is satyagraha?  
What historical evidence in support of satyagraha does Gandhi provide?  
How can satyagraha produce a social movement?



**Answer Key for the teacher****1. Why is the term passive resistance not an adequate translation of satyagraha? What is satyagraha?**

“The force denoted by the term ‘passive resistance’ is not very accurately described either by the original English phrase or by its Hindi rendering. Its correct description is satyagraha. ‘Passive resistance’ conveyed the idea of the Suffragette Movement in England. Satyagraha is not a physical force. A satyagrahi does not inflict pain on the adversary; he does not seek his destruction. A satyagrahi never resorts to firearms. In the use of satyagraha, there is no ill will whatever. Satyagraha is pure soul-force. Truth is the very substance of the soul. That is why this force is called satyagraha. The soul is informed with knowledge. In it burns the flame of love. If someone gives us pain through ignorance, we shall win him through love. ‘Non-violence is the supreme dharma’ is the proof of this power of love.

Burning of houses by Suffragette women was called ‘passive resistance’ and so also their fasting in prison. All such acts might very well be ‘passive resistance’ but they were not satyagraha. It is said of ‘passive resistance’ that it is the weapon of the weak, but the power which is the subject of the article can be used only by the strong. This power is not ‘passive’ resistance; indeed it calls for intense activity. The movement in South Africa was not passive but active. The Indians of South Africa believed that Truth was their object, that Truth ever triumphs, and with this definiteness of purpose they persistently held on to Truth. They put up with all the suffering that this persistence implied. With the conviction that Truth is not to be renounced even unto death, they shed the fear of death. In the cause of Truth, the prison was a palace to them and its doors the gateway to freedom.

Non-violence is a dormant state. In the waking state, it is love. Ruled by love, the world goes on. In English there is a saying, “Might Is Right.” Then there is the doctrine of the survival of the fittest. Both these ideas are contradictory to the above principle. Neither is wholly true. If ill-will were the chief motive-force, the world would have been destroyed long ago; and neither would I have had the opportunity to write this article nor would the hopes of the readers be fulfilled. We are alive solely because of love.

Satyagraha brings good both to the satyagrahi and his adversary.”

**2. What historical evidence in support of satyagraha does Gandhi provide?**

“People demand historical evidence in support of satyagraha. History is for the most part a record of armed activities. Natural activities find very little mention in it. Only uncommon activities strike us with wonder. Satyagraha has been used always and in all situations. The father and the son, the man and the wife are perpetually resorting to satyagraha, one towards the other. When a father gets angry and punishes the son, the son does not hit back with a weapon, he conquers his father’s anger by submitting to him. The son refuses to be subdued by the unjust rule of his father but he puts up with the punishment that he may incur through disobeying the unjust father.”

**3. How can satyagraha produce a social movement?**

“A satyagrahi does not wait for others, but throws himself into the fray, relying entirely on his own resources. He trusts that when the time comes, others will do likewise. His practice is his precept. Like air, satyagraha is all-pervading. It is infectious, which means that all people—big and small, men and women can become satyagrahis. No one is kept out from the army of satyagrahis. A satyagrahi cannot perpetrate tyranny on anyone; he is not subdued through application of physical force; he does not strike at anyone. Just as anyone can resort to satyagraha, it can be resorted to in almost any situation.”

“History shows that all reforms have begun with one person. Fruit is hard to come by without tapasya [suffering]. The suffering that has to be undergone in satyagraha is tapasya in its purest form. Only when the tapasya is capable of bearing fruit do we have the fruit.”

“Then it is said that much suffering is involved in being a satyagrahi and that the entire people will not be willing to put up with this suffering. The objection is not valid. People in general always follow in the footsteps of the noble. There is no doubt that it is difficult to produce a satyagrahi leader. Our experience is that a satyagrahi needs many more virtues like self-control, fearlessness, etc., than are requisite for one who believes in armed action. The greatness of the man bearing arms does not lie in the superiority of the arms, nor does it lie in his physical prowess. It lies in his determination and fearlessness in face of death... the strength of a warrior is not measured by reference to his weapons but by his firmness of mind. A satyagrahi needs millions of times more of such firmness than does a bearer of arms. Not only India but the whole world awaits the advent of such a man. We may in the meanwhile prepare the ground as much as we can through satyagraha.”

## Portrait of Heroism

One person who embodies heroism:

What makes this person heroic?

What inspired me to choose this person?

Which habits of excellence does this person embody?

In which actions or situations are these habits of excellence most visible?

Which challenges did this person face?

What can I do to become more heroic like this person?

## Lesson 9: The Mission

### PURPOSE

To help students to pursue a mission of excellence and to respect human dignity in their lives.

### LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of the lesson, students will be able to:

1. Understand their lives as a long-term mission to strive for excellence and to respect human dignity.
2. Recognize their personal mission more easily.

### VOCABULARY

- Mission: one's purpose or higher goal

### MATERIALS & RESOURCES

- The Mission Statement
- [Video](#) lecture "Finding a purpose in your life" Robert Quinn
- Interim Quiz 2

### PROCEDURE

**Step 1:** Review the previous lesson. Highlight some of the things that constitute heroism, recall the definition of heroism and the example of Mahatma Gandhi as a person who embodied heroism of self-determination. Conclude by highlighting the important traits of heroism.

**Step 2:** Remind students that one of the most important "ingredients" necessary for becoming a hero is having a mission, a motivating purpose, or a reason "why" behind everything one does. Explain that, in this lesson, the class will explore more of what this mission entails.

Show the [video](#) lecture "Finding a purpose in your life" by Robert Quinn to introduce the topic. Ask students to write down their key takeaways after watching the video. Begin the discussion with the students by asking them to share what they consider the most important ideas.

Ask the following questions to facilitate the discussion:

- » Does everyone have a mission?
- » Is there a type of a common mission that everyone shares?
- » Why is having a mission important?

Explain that our common mission in studying this curriculum is to respect the human dignity of ourselves and others, as we strive for excellence. Explain that each person also has a personal mission, which helps them to find their own reasons why they make the choices they make. Understanding our meaning and purpose in life is essential to giving up short term satisfactions or enduring hardship for the sake of our pursuit of excellence.

Write the definition of a mission on the board:

**Mission:** one's purpose or a higher goal

**Step 3:** Continue by asking how each person can discover their mission. After gathering initial insights from students, explain that in order to discover one's personal mission, it is helpful to answer the following questions:

- » Who am I? What are my strengths and weaknesses? What do I enjoy doing?
- » Who do I want to become? What are my life goals? How can I help others or contribute to solving the problems of the world?
- » How can I get where I want to be? What habits of excellence am I missing to get there?
- » What are the obstacles I will likely face? What will keep me going after I fall?

In this class, the students will craft their own personal mission statement. A mission statement is an inspiring statement, usually one or two sentences long, which can guide one's actions and answer the question why one does what they do.

Some examples of personal mission statements:

"To do well by doing good while supporting and elevating those around me." – Scott Shuda, Chairman of Infusystem, Inc.

"I shall not fear anyone on Earth. I shall fear only God. I shall not bear ill will toward anyone. I shall not submit to injustice from anyone. I shall conquer untruth by truth. And in resisting untruth, I shall put up with all suffering." – Mahatma Gandhi

"To be a teacher. And to be known for inspiring my students to be more than they thought they could be." – Oprah Winfrey

### **FOLLOW-UP & HOMEWORK**

Ask the students to Fill in [Interim Quiz 2](#) at home and bring it to the next class. Let them know that solving the Interim Quiz will help them in the Final Quiz, which will be administered during the final class.

## The Mission Statement

a) Who am I?

My strengths are:  
My weaknesses are:  
I enjoy doing:  
I consider important:

b) Who do I want to become?

In 10 years, I would like to be:  
My life goals are:  
I can help others by:  
My talents which can help the world are:

c) How can I become what I want?

To get where I want to be in the future, I need to:  
Habit of excellence I need to develop:  
Obstacles I will likely face:  
A person who can help me:

## Personal Mission Statement:



## Interim Quiz 2

**A. True/false questions**

1. T/F There is a common mission all humans have.
2. T/F Habits of excellence are inherited.
3. T/F True friendship aims at enjoyment.
4. T/F To become a hero, it is not a problem to fall occasionally if we get up afterwards.
5. T/F The Clapham Circle supported slavery.
6. T/F If I spend time with someone because I can get something from that person, that's a friendship of utility.

**B. Essay Questions**

7. What is the difference between friendship of utility and friendship of excellence?

8. What is satyagraha?

**C. For each answer, make a correct question.**

*For example, if the answer is "The first letter of the alphabet", the question is "What is the letter A?". Or, if the answer is "A paste or gel used in conjunction with a toothbrush to help clean and maintain the aesthetics and health of teeth", the correct question is "What is toothpaste?"*

9. Behaviors acquired through regular practice which help us achieve excellence as persons
10. The Stanford University test which shows that delaying gratification in children leads to bigger success in their adult life.

11. An Indian lawyer, anti-colonialist, and political ethicist, who led a nonviolent civil resistance movement to lead the campaign for India's independence from British Rule.

**D. Multiple choice questions. There can be more than one correct answer.**

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <p>12. If I grow in courage, my wisdom will have the tendency to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Grow</li> <li>b) Stay the same</li> <li>c) Shrink</li> <li>d) There is no correlation between them</li> </ul>  | <p>16. Which of the following is not a habit of excellence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Wisdom</li> <li>b) Humility</li> <li>c) Knowing all the latest gossip</li> <li>d) Watching fun TV shows a lot</li> </ul>                                   |
| <p>13. Which of the following is among Aristotle's three types of friendship:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Friendship of greatness</li> <li>b) Friendship of heroism</li> <li>c) Friendship of excellence</li> <li>d) Friendship of respecting human dignity</li> </ul> | <p>17. To take charge of our emotions and behaviors, in order to strive for human excellence is called:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Self-denial</li> <li>b) Self-determination</li> <li>c) Self-insistence</li> <li>d) Self-empowerment</li> </ul> |
| <p>14. Satyagraha is not:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Passive resistance</li> <li>b) Pure soul-force</li> <li>c) Conquering the adversary with love</li> <li>d) Inflicting violence on others</li> </ul>   | <p>18. Heroes are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Born as exceptional</li> <li>b) Not easily found</li> <li>c) Persistent in what they do</li> <li>d) Oriented towards self-fulfillment</li> </ul>  |
| <p>15. How many days does it take to develop a new habit?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) 7</li> <li>b) 14</li> <li>c) 30</li> <li>d) 100</li> </ul>   |  |

**Interim Quiz 2 – Answer Key**

1. T
2. F – they are acquired through practice and learning.
3. F – true friendship aims at excellence.
4. T
5. F – it was opposed to slavery.
6. T
7. Friendship of utility happens when we are being friends with someone to gain some advantage from them. This is the lowest type of friendship, where disagreements happen very easily and it is very unstable. Friendship of excellence happens when friends are pursuing excellence for themselves and the other. In it we always respect the dignity of the other, and don't merely use him or her for our advantage or for our pleasure. It is more lasting than the other types of friendship. Friends' authentic wellbeing is our primary concern. It is what we call a true friendship.
8. Satyagraha is not a physical force. A satyagrahi does not inflict pain on the adversary; he does not seek his destruction. A satyagrahi never resorts to firearms. In the use of satyagraha, there is no ill will whatever. Satyagraha is pure soul-force...The soul is informed with knowledge. In it burns the flame of love. If someone gives us pain through ignorance, we shall win him through love. 'Non-violence is the supreme dharma' is the proof of this power of love. Non-violence is a dormant state. In the waking state, it is love. Ruled by love, the world goes on... We are alive solely because of love. Satyagraha brings good both to the satyagrahi and his adversary.
9. What are habits of excellence?
10. What is the Marshmallow test?
11. Who is Mohandas (Mahatma) Gandhi?
12. a
13. c
14. a and d
15. c
16. c and d
17. b
18. b and c – Heroes are not born but made. They are oriented towards helping others, not primarily their own self-fulfillment.

## Lesson 10: Final Quiz

### PURPOSE

To review the content of the whole curriculum with students and evaluate their learning.

### LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of the lesson students will be able to:

1. Identify and further refine their knowledge of the core contents of the curriculum.

### VOCABULARY

- No new vocabulary.

### MATERIALS & RESOURCES

- Final Quiz
- Final Evaluation

### PROCEDURE

**Step 1:** Ask the students if they have completed the [Interim Quiz 2](#). Ask them if some of the questions were difficult and help clarify the answers.

**Step 2:** Announce to the students that the main part of the class will be the [Final Quiz](#) and give instructions for the quiz. Have a volunteer assist in handing out the questions and help calculate the points of all groups.

Divide the rest of the students into a maximum of four groups and have them play the quiz. Students should name their groups. The groups will compete against one another to answer the questions correctly. Lead the quiz by using the Final Quiz worksheet. The objective of the quiz is to review the main ideas from previous lessons.

After all four rounds of the quiz are completed, calculate the points of each group and announce the winners.

**Step 3:** Ask students to fill out the [Final Evaluation](#). Offer closing remarks and thank students for participating in the Human Dignity Curriculum.

**Final Quiz****A. Mark sentences as true or false. Each correct answer gives 1 point.**

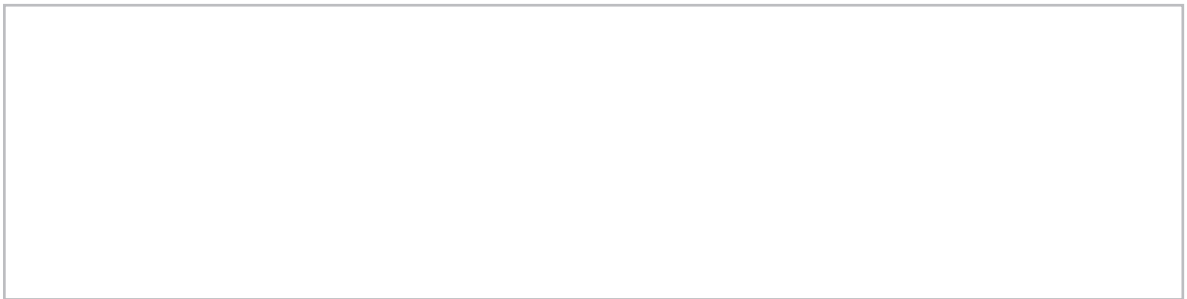
Instructions: Give printed questions to each group. The groups get 3 minutes to answer all questions. After all groups finish, pick up the sheets with answered questions. With the help of the volunteer, read aloud the correct answers and calculate the number of points for each group. Write the points of each group on the board.

1. T/F True freedom means being able to do what you want.
2. T/F There is a common mission all humans have.
3. T/F Habits of excellence are inherited.
4. T/F Animals and humans do not differ in any significant way.
5. T/F “Intrinsic” means that human dignity is within us and it is with us our entire life.
6. T/F Creativity is the power to use imagination and ideas to shape the world, shared by both animals and humans.
7. T/F True friendship aims at enjoyment.
8. T/F To become a hero, it is not a problem to fall occasionally if we get up afterwards.
9. T/F Socrates developed a five filter test.
10. T/F The Clapham Circle supported slavery.
11. T/F If we spend time with someone because I can get something from that person, that’s a friendship of utility.
12. T/F Harriet Tubman was fighting for the rights of indigenous people in Latin America.

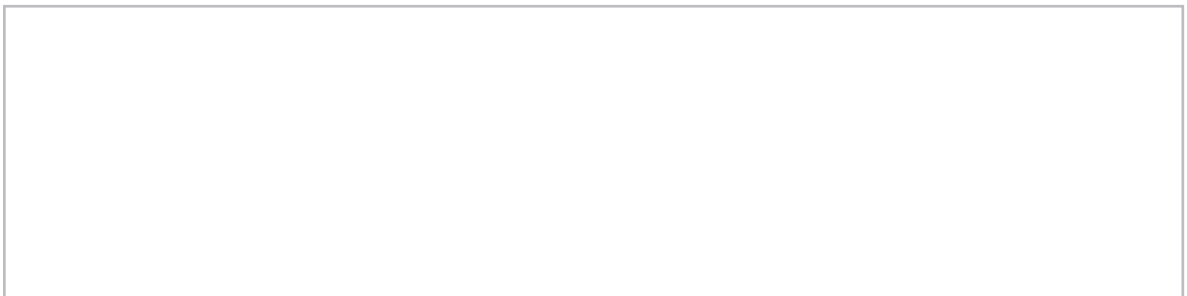
**B. Write the answer to the essay questions. Each correct answer gives 3 points.**

Instructions: Give printed questions to each group. Groups get 7 minutes to answer all three questions. After all groups finish, pick up the sheets with answered questions. Read aloud the answers of each group on the following scale: 3 – the answer is comprehensive enough and explains the main point, 2 – the answer is correct but it is missing some important elements, or it is partially true and partially false, 1– the answer provides very limited accurate explanation, 0 – no answer is provided or it is completely false. Calculate the number of points for each group and write them on the board.

13. What is the difference between friendship of utility and friendship of excellence?



14. What is the difference between freedom for excellence and freedom of indifference?



15. What is satyagraha?

**C. For each answer, make a correct question. Each correct answer gives 1 point, each wrong answer gives -2 points.**

Instructions: After hearing the question, the groups get 20 seconds to react by raising their hand. The group which reacts the fastest gets to answer the question. If they answer wrong, the next group gets to answer.

- 16. The human ability to knowingly select between options.
- 17. Behaviors acquired through regular practice which help us achieve excellence as persons.
- 18. Being consistent in your positions, being curious, open-minded, accepting valid criticism or listening to different points of view.
- 19. A means to communicate what would otherwise remain hidden; to reach beyond ourselves towards the transcendent.
- 20. A network of secret routes and safe houses established in the United States during the early to mid-19th century, and used by enslaved African-Americans to escape into free states and Canada.
- 21. The Stanford University test which shows that delaying gratification in children leads to greater success in their adult life.
- 22. The characteristic of human dignity that it cannot be given to us or taken away from us.
- 23. An Indian lawyer, anti-colonialist, and political ethicist, who led a nonviolent civil resistance movement to lead the campaign for India's independence from British Rule.

**D. The Chase: Choose the correct answer. There can be more than one correct answer.**

Instructions: There will be two games: A and B. In each game there will be a Chaser from one group and the Contestant from the other group.

If there are 4 groups, write on two papers "Chaser" and on two other "Contestant" without students seeing it. Have each group choose one paper. In both games one group will chase and one will be chased.

There are 7 questions for each round. The Contestant starts with +1 point from the Chaser. Each correct answer brings +1 points. Both the Chaser and the Contestant are answering simultaneously. After the question is shown on the screen and read out loud by the teacher, both the Contestant and the Chaser have 15 seconds to write the answer on a sheet of paper. After the time is up, they hand out the answers to the teacher who gives points for correct answers and writes the points on the board. After all seven questions are answered, the total number of points is calculated for both the Chaser and the Contestant.

If the Contestant wins, the winning group gets +2 points. If it ends up tied, Chaser's group gets +2 points and the Contestant's group gets -1 point. If the Chaser wins, his group gets +5 points and the losing group -2 points.



## GAME A:

24. Something we use to achieve an end is called:
  - a) Achievers
  - b) Means
  - c) Subjects
  - d) Non-ends
25. If I grow in courage, my wisdom will have the tendency to:
  - a) Grow
  - b) Stay the same
  - c) Shrink
  - d) There is no correlation between them
26. Which of the following is among Aristotle's three types of friendship:
  - a) Friendship of greatness
  - b) Friendship of heroism
  - c) Friendship of excellence
  - d) Friendship of respecting human dignity
27. Satyagraha is not:
  - a) Passive resistance
  - b) Pure soul-force
  - c) Conquering the adversary with love
  - d) Inflicting violence on others
28. Transcendent dimensions of reality are:
  - a) Intangible
  - b) Beyond physical level
  - c) No easily visible
  - d) Not accessible at all
29. I have a dream speech was said by:
  - a) Mahatma Gandhi
  - b) Stephen Covey
  - c) John Lennon
  - d) Martin Luther King, Jr.
30. Which of the following is not a habit of excellence:
  - a) Wisdom
  - b) Humility
  - c) Knowing all the latest gossip
  - d) Watching fun TV shows a lot

## GAME B:

31. To take charge of our emotions and behaviors, in order to strive for human excellence is called:
  - a) Self-denial
  - b) Self-determination
  - c) Self-insistence
  - d) Self-empowerment
32. We violate human dignity, when:
  - a) We use a person merely as an object.
  - b) When we don't sacrifice an older person in order to save a younger one.
  - c) When we treat a person as means.
  - d) When we refuse giving money to a beggar.
33. Which of the following are habits of excellent thinking:
  - a) Rushing to conclusion
  - b) Seeking advice from wise people
  - c) Considering other viewpoints
  - d) Gathering enough evidence
34. Universal means that:
  - a) All persons have dignity.
  - b) No one can take dignity away from us.
  - c) Dignity is with us our entire life.
  - d) Dignity is not earned.
35. Art and creativity have the power to:
  - a) Help us go beyond our present situation.
  - b) Communicate intangible dimensions of reality.
  - c) Stir up our emotions.
  - d) Convey some deeper meaning.
36. Which of the following questions is not a part of Socrates triple filter test:
  - a) Is this good what I want to say?
  - b) Is there financial interest in it?
  - c) Is it helpful?
  - d) Is it true?
37. Heroes are:
  - a) Born as exceptional
  - b) Not easily found
  - c) Persistent in what they do
  - d) Oriented towards self-fulfillment

**Final Quiz – Answer Key**

1. F – true freedom means doing what is excellent.
2. T
3. F – they are acquired through practice and learning.
4. F – humans differ from animals in having the powers to think and choose.
5. T
6. F – creativity is specifically human power.
7. F – true friendship aims at excellence.
8. T
9. F – he developed a three filters test
10. F – it was opposed to slavery.
11. T
12. F – Harriet Tubman fought for the rights of slaves in the USA.
13. Friendship of utility happens when we are being friends with someone to gain some advantage from them. This is the lowest type of friendship, where disagreements happen very easily and it is very unstable. Friendship of excellence happens when friends are pursuing excellence for themselves and the other. In it we always respect the dignity of the other, and don't merely use him or her for our advantage or for our pleasure. It is more lasting than other types of friendship. Friends' authentic wellbeing is our primary concern. It is what we call a true friendship.
14. Freedom for indifference says that to be free means simply that we can choose whatever we want. Which choice we make does not really make any difference. We are truly indifferent to which choice we will make as long as we can make the choice. Freedom is equated with the mere capacity to choose. Choice can be anything, good or bad, excellent or non-excellent. While freedom of indifference claims that we are free if we can choose whichever option, freedom for excellence says that we will be truly free only if we always choose what is excellent. Freedom for excellence is the capacity to choose wisely and to act well as a matter of habit. Freedom is the means by which, exercising both our reason and our will, we act on the natural longing for truth, for goodness, and for happiness that is built into us as human beings. This means that we can be truly free only when we constantly choose that which is true and good.

15. Satyagraha is not a physical force. A satyagrahi does not inflict pain on the adversary; he does not seek his destruction. A satyagrahi never resorts to firearms. In the use of satyagraha, there is no ill will whatever. Satyagraha is pure soul-force...The soul is informed with knowledge. In it burns the flame of love. If someone gives us pain through ignorance, we shall win him through love. 'Non-violence is the supreme dharma' is the proof of this power of love. Non-violence is a dormant state. In the waking state, it is love. Ruled by love, the world goes on... We are alive solely because of love. Satyagraha brings good both to the satyagrahi and his adversary.
16. What is the power to choose?
17. What are habits of excellence?
18. What are habits of excellent thinking?
19. What is art?
20. What is the Underground Railroad?
21. What is the Marshmallow test?
22. What is inviolable?
23. Who is Mohandas (Mahatma) Gandhi?
24. b
25. a
26. c
27. a and d
28. d they are accessible, and one means to access them is art.
29. d
30. c and d
31. b
32. a and c
33. b, c, d
34. a
35. a, b, c and d
36. b
37. b and c – Heroes are not born but made. They are oriented towards helping others, not primarily their own self-fulfillment

**Final Evaluation****A. Curriculum**

1. After finishing the curriculum, how would you describe its purpose?

2. Which topics did you like the most among the ones listed: human dignity, treating persons as subjects and objects, power of excellent thinking (Socrates' three filters), freedom for excellence and freedom of indifference, art and creativity, three types of friendship, habits of excellence (self-determination), heroism, the mission statement. Pick your top three.

1.

2.

3.

3. Rate the quality of each lesson on a scale of 1 to 10:

- Hierarchy of being and human dignity: \_\_
- Treating persons as subjects and objects: \_\_
- Power of excellent thinking (Socrates' three filters): \_\_
- Freedom for excellence and freedom of indifference: \_\_
- Art and creativity: \_\_
- Three types of friendship: \_\_
- Habits of excellence (self-determination): \_\_
- Heroism: \_\_
- The mission: \_\_

4. What, generally, did you like the most about the curriculum?

5. What do you think you learned from the curriculum?

6. Did you change any opinions you held before? If so, which ones?

7. Did you think you gained any new skills? Which ones?

8. Were the examples and materials (videos, readings, discussion guides) interesting and illustrative of the content? Explain.

9. What did you find most useful about the curriculum? Do you find it relevant for your life?

10. Is there anything you disliked?

11. Did the curriculum meet your expectations? How?

12. Would you recommend it to a friend? Why?

## B. Competencies

Do you agree with the following statements? Circle the number from -5 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree), depending on how much you agree with the statements.

### B.1. Opinions and values

13. Freedom means being able to do what I want without others interfering.

Strongly disagree			Do not agree, nor disagree					Strongly agree		
-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5

14. All people have human dignity.

Strongly disagree			Do not agree, nor disagree					Strongly agree		
-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5

15. Humans and animals do not differ in any significant way.

Strongly disagree			Do not agree, nor disagree					Strongly agree		
-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5

16. Heroes exist in real life

Strongly disagree			Do not agree, nor disagree					Strongly agree		
-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5

17. I think art is important.

Strongly disagree			Do not agree, nor disagree					Strongly agree		
-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5

18. No one should tell others what to do.

Strongly disagree			Do not agree, nor disagree					Strongly agree		
-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5

19. Humans have a special place in the world compared to non-living beings, plants and animals.

Strongly disagree			Do not agree, nor disagree					Strongly agree		
-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5

20. I believe that life has meaning,

Strongly disagree			Do not agree, nor disagree					Strongly agree		
-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5

21. I think I have the potential to become excellent.

Strongly disagree			Do not agree, nor disagree					Strongly agree		
-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5



## B.2. Behaviors

22. I chose friends because I enjoy spending time with them or because I can get something from them.

Strongly disagree			Do not agree, nor disagree					Strongly agree		
-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5

23. When I make decisions, I consider how they will affect my well-being and the well-being of others in the long-term.

Strongly disagree			Do not agree, nor disagree					Strongly agree		
-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5

24. I sometimes use others to gain something from them.

Strongly disagree			Do not agree, nor disagree					Strongly agree		
-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5

25. When I make a mistake about things that are important to me, I tend to despair.

Strongly disagree			Do not agree, nor disagree					Strongly agree		
-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5

26. When I share something that I have heard, I tend to consider whether it is true.

Strongly disagree			Do not agree, nor disagree					Strongly agree		
-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5

27. I act as if I have a significant purpose in life.

Strongly disagree			Do not agree, nor disagree					Strongly agree		
-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5

28. I treat people with disabilities or those who are poor as though they have less dignity than those who do not have disabilities and are not poor.

Strongly disagree			Do not agree, nor disagree					Strongly agree		
-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5

## C. Teacher

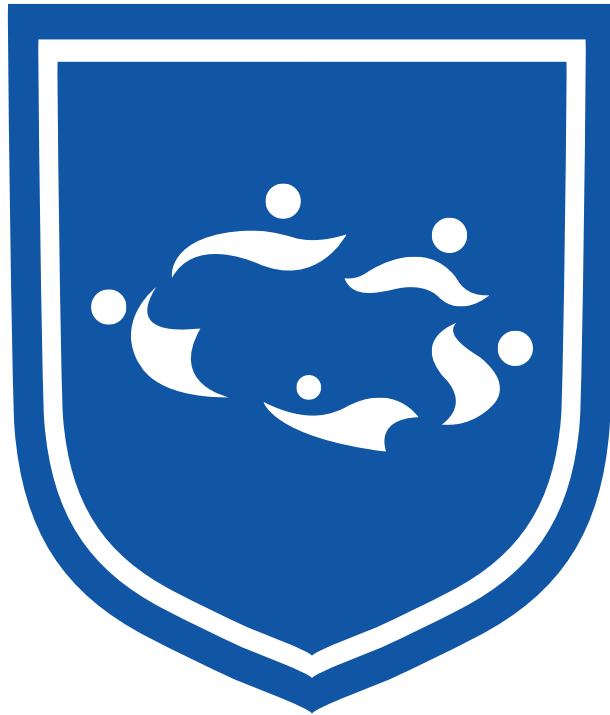
29. Did the teacher explain the content in a clear and effective way?

30. Did the teacher give examples that made the content more interesting and relevant to your life?

31. Did the teacher summarize the previous lesson at the start of each new lesson to help you recall the main ideas?

## D. Final considerations

32. Do you have anything else you would like to share regarding the curriculum, the classes, etc.?



# **World Youth Alliance Human Dignity Curriculum**

[humandignitycurriculum.org](http://humandignitycurriculum.org)