



Positive Values

By Dr Andrew Wicking

'Positive Values' is one of 9 domains measured by Resilient Youth Australia's Resilience Survey.

Developing and deepening personal positive values is a crucial aspect of a young person's development, eventually leading to deep commitments that guide how they think and act and live their life. Values play a powerful role in our reputation and relationships.

Key values such as trust, forgiveness, integrity, hope and compassion can help us to think more deeply about who we are and how we live up to our own expectations.

Model optimism and positivity

Use the language of optimism and empathy, for example:

- a) Listen;
- b) Show you are listening (paraphrase back);
- c) Show you are hearing (respond with an empathic statement – show you understand how the student feels).

Show students that you believe in them

Show students that you believe in them by calling on them regularly; asking challenging questions; delving into their responses more deeply; smiling more; making more eye contact; engaging in playful or light dialogue. Do not reward them for less rigorous responses.

“Two Stars and a Wish”

This is a good way to think about providing feedback. Find two positive things about the student's work and highlight one thing to work on.

Focus on service

Assist the shift from egocentrism by valuing service to others. Value not only the service activities within the school but also those outside of school such as surf lifesaving, charity support, support for the elderly and those with disabilities. Practise and promote the value of acts of kindness to other students without recognition or reward.

Reflection

Encourage students to think and talk about people who have made a difference to them, and how their life would have been different if that person hadn't been involved.

Establish a Karma Club

Facilitate students to develop a Karma Club with the aim of increasing wellbeing and happiness in the world. Members of the club may do small acts of kindness or large acts of charity. These are acknowledged publicly by the school.

Embrace differences

Discuss various aspects of discrimination: race, colour, national origin, gender, religion, age, disability.

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Explore values

Explore personal values such as trust, forgiveness, integrity, hope and compassion. Discuss the values of your school. Introduce the 'Golden Rule' to students: "Do unto others as would have them to do unto you". and the 'Hippocratic Oath' "First do no harm".

Problem solving – practicing hopefulness

When a student has a problem teach them about hope by asking questions of them such as:

- What's another way of doing that?
- Has someone you know overcome a similar challenge?
- Can I help you solve the problem in some way?
- Who else can help you solve the problem?
- Is there a recent problem you have successfully overcome?

Shared Values

Divide the class into smaller groups. Ask each group to develop a list of shared values and report back to the whole class. Ask students to comment how hard it sometimes is to live up to the values. Allow time for the class to discuss the values that come from each group.

Heroes

Ask all students to choose one of their heroes, (famous or not), or a character from literature or a movie, and to think about and/or research what personal values they exhibit and how these values guide who they are. Then ask students to report to the whole class the 'hero' they chose and their values. Ask for two student volunteers to keep a list of values and report back to the class a master list of values.

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www.linkedin.com/in/andrew-wicking-52354b28

Dr Andrew Wicking is the Founding Director of Resilient Youth Australia Pty Ltd, Adjunct Research Associate at the University of South Australia and alumnus of the Stanford Business School Executive Non-profit Leaders Course.

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