

LEADER'S GUIDE



Stepping on UP with Michael Pritchard

STEPPING UP TO CHARACTER

Lesson 1

The Power of Respect

Lesson 2

Making Responsible Choices

Lesson 3

Using Good Judgment

Lesson 4

Being True to Yourself



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Series Overview

Stepping On Up with Michael Pritchard is a four program series designed to instill the necessary social and emotional skills to successfully navigate the challenges and changes of elementary school and the pre-teen years. With well-developed social and emotional skills, students will be more aware of their feelings and more capable of managing them. They will be better able to set goals, make decisions, solve problems, and relate to other people effectively. In school, these skills can increase motivation, lessen anxiety, improve study skills, and boost academic achievement. The overarching goal of *Stepping On Up* is to help students build character and develop the social and emotional skills they need to become responsible, caring, and successful people. The series covers a broad range of skills and attributes: self-knowledge, self-control, resiliency, empathy, problem solving, developing interpersonal relationships, building character, respect, responsibility, and working towards success. Each of these skills and attributes is an important component of social and emotional intelligence.

Each program includes four lessons presenting real-life problems in a warm-hearted skit performed by Michael Pritchard and our lovable puppet characters, Dieter and Zazi. Each lesson includes two video segments and this leader's guide and is designed to spark student discussion in guided brainstorming sessions. Used together, this three-part lesson will bring valuable new insights for educators and a powerful array of tools for guiding students through this challenging period of rapid change. The four programs in the *Stepping On Up* series are:

Stepping Up To Bullying

- Lesson 1 Dealing with Bullies
- Lesson 2 Standing Up, Not Standing By
- Lesson 3 Reaching Out to Victims
- Lesson 4 Building Bully-Free Schools/Communities

Stepping Up to Cyber Bullying & Web Safety

- Lesson 1 Being Safe and Secure on the Web
- Lesson 2 Protecting Yourself from Cyber Bullying
- Lesson 3 Online Rumors, Texts, and Gossip
- Lesson 4 Helping and Caring in a Digital World

Stepping Up to Character

- Lesson 1 The Power of Respect
- Lesson 2 Making Responsible Choices
- Lesson 3 Using Good Judgment
- Lesson 4 Being True to Yourself

Stepping Up to Life Skills

- Lesson 1 Controlling Your Anger
- Lesson 2 Resolving Conflicts Creatively
- Lesson 3 Learning to Bounce Back
- Lesson 4 Choosing to Do Your Best

The foundation of the *Stepping On Up* curriculum is a six-step problem-solving strategy. This strategy is demonstrated in each program and provides students with a flexible, practical approach to managing the social and emotional challenges they face every day. The six steps are:

1. **Stop and calm down**
2. **Name the problem**
3. **Understand others**
4. **Brainstorm solutions**
5. **Evaluate and choose**
6. **Make a plan**

Although each program has unique objectives, they all share the goal of providing students with the above important life skills. The *Stepping On Up* approach can help students think through difficult situations and make good choices.

Stepping On Up is an interactive video series which models and promotes research-based strategies. Video instruction is an effective instructional strategy for prevention education.¹ Fifty-seven percent of public school teachers use video to demonstrate educational concepts to their students.² The violence prevention strategies used in *Stepping On Up* are cited as effective by organizations such as the National Institute of Justice³, the National Education Association (NEA)⁴, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP)⁵, and the comprehensive report issued by DRUG STRATEGIES, *Safe Schools, Safe Students*⁶. Strategies demonstrating effectiveness in reducing youth violence include:

- Using interactive methods such as peer discussion groups
- Enhancing protective factors such as creating strong interpersonal bonds
- Raising student awareness
- Creating a climate of ownership and school pride
- Emphasizing personal responsibility
- Implementing peer counseling and peer mediation programs
- Fostering school norms against bullying, aggression and violence
- Encouraging thinking, social, and resistance skills education for students
- Instituting school-wide communication campaigns to influence school norms about violence
- Building empathy and perspective taking, social problem solving, communication, and character/belief development

¹ U.S. Department of Education (1996) *Making it Happen, National Technology Plan: Benefits of Technology Use*. www.ed.gov/Technology/Plan

² U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Educational Statistics, Teacher Follow-up Survey 1994-95; *The Condition of Education 1997*.

³ National Institute of Justice (1998) *Preventing Crime: What Works, What Doesn't. What's Promising*. Washington DC. www.preventingcrime.org

⁴ National Education Association (1996) *Safe Schools Manual: A resource on making schools, communities and families safe for children*. Washington DC.

⁵ Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (1995) *Guide for Implementing the Comprehensive Strategy for Serious, Violent and Chronic Juvenile Offenders*. Rockville, MD. Call 800-638-8736 for a copy.

⁶ Drug Strategies (1998) *Safe Schools, Safe Students: A Guide to Violence Prevention Strategies*, 2445 M, Street NW, Suite 480 Washington DC 20037.

How to Use this Program

This program is designed for use in classrooms, community centers, youth organizations, camps, libraries, or for children at home. Although upper elementary students are the target audience, parents, teachers, school administrators, school support staff, counselors, social workers, youth workers, peer counseling trainers, mentors, and anyone else who has regular contact with, and a commitment to, young people can benefit from the program. This Leader's Guide is aimed at teachers, but it can be used by any group leader who wants to get the most out of *Stepping On Up*. This program is intended (as are all programs in the *Stepping On Up* series) for use as part of a learning experience that begins before viewing the program and ends beyond the classroom walls. The discussion questions and activities are intended to focus and enhance this learning experience.

Before Viewing

Before presenting the lessons included in this program to your students, you may find these steps helpful:

- Screen each lesson at least once, noting areas of instruction you would like to highlight and issues you think would particularly benefit your class or group.
- Read through this guide to get a sense of how you can use the program, what discussion questions would work best, and what follow-up activities would be most productive.
- Ask the students questions to get them thinking about some of the key issues presented in each lesson. Be sure to review the questions in advance to make sure they are clear to you and appropriate for your students. You might want to write some of the discussion questions on your board before you begin. While they are intended to guide an instructional discussion between Act 1 and Act 2, it may help your students to have them in mind while watching the first video segment.

Peer education, rather than frontal teaching, is the technique that underlies the entire *Stepping On Up* series. Because we believe that young viewers will more easily learn the skills and attitudinal changes proposed if they are taught by their peers, each lesson is structured in a problem-solving format designed to spark student discussion in guided brainstorming sessions. To further this goal, it is suggested that the discussion of the programs take place, whenever possible, in smaller groups so that students have the opportunity to more easily participate. Individual questions can be assigned to different sections which then report their answers to the whole group for further discussion.

To use these lessons as designed, please use the following approach:

- Introduce lesson
- **Present Act One** of lesson
- Lead group discussion
- **Present Act Two** of lesson
- Extend lesson through follow-up discussion and activities

This sequence may be completed in a single session or segmented in two, three or four installments. This format is designed to provide maximum flexibility for presenters.

Stepping Up to Character

Stepping Up To Character, the third program in the Stepping On Up series, promotes an essential set of character traits and skills which will help students navigate the turbulent pre-teen years. It contains four lessons that review and extend our curriculum to present a comprehensive program of research-based solutions to the many aspects of character development. The four lessons in the program are:

- Lesson 1** The Power of Respect
- Lesson 2** Making Responsible Choices
- Lesson 3** Using Good Judgment
- Lesson 4** Being True to Yourself

This program focuses on the development of positive character traits and the process of problem solving and ethical decision-making. In it, students will learn that personal decisions have a moral dimension and are an expression of their values. Our approach augments traditional character education with key aspects of social-emotional learning (SEL) as students learn that good character is dependent on the development of such essential emotional and social skills as empathy, self-control, and self-knowledge.

The content of this program follows a unified, theory-based approach. Our social, emotional and ethical problem solving framework integrates four prominent social science theories: social learning theory, social control theory, youth development theory, and social strain theory. More specifically it is drawn from the emotional intelligence and learning research of Gardner, Goleman, and Elias (et al), the resiliency research of Werner, Garmezny and Benard, the character education framework outlined by Lickona, Reed and Kohlberg, and the developmental asset approach of the Search Institute and others. In addition, the series integrates many of the guidelines identified in *Promoting Social and Emotional Learning* published by ASCD (Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development) and written by CASEL (The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning).

Why Character Education?

The direct teaching of core values and ethical behavior has many positive outcomes in the classroom and other youth group settings. Aside from the widely accepted social benefits of teaching core moral concepts such as the *Golden Rule*, students gain a variety of personal skills which aid in their social-emotional development. By asking students to reflect on their decision making process, character education helps students develop more self-awareness and self-knowledge, learn more about who they are and the type of person they would like to become. By asking students to think of the consequences of their actions, not only for themselves but for others as well, character education instills a key set of values and skills: empathy, compassion, caring, thoughtfulness and inclusion – all elements of a positive school culture. And by focusing on the core values of respect and responsibility, character education helps students understand the need for both self-control (anger management and impulse control) and active participation (social responsibility) in the life of their school and the broader community.

Not surprisingly, a positive relationship has been found between character education and the direct teaching of core values with both academic success and the reduction of at-risk behaviors. A study of elementary schools by the Character Education Project (CEP), prepared by Schwartz, Beatty and Dachnowicz, found that schools with the strongest character education programs also had higher academic scores.

A paper by the CEP (*What Works In Character Education: A research-driven guide for educators* -- Berkowitz, Bier, University of Missouri-St. Louis) outlines the impact of character education on a wide range at risk behaviors and the development of ameliorating social-emotional skills, citing positive outcomes in the following areas:

1. Sexual Behavior
2. Character Knowledge
3. Socio-moral Cognition
4. Problem-solving Skills
5. Emotional Competency
6. Relationships
7. Attachment to School
8. Academic Achievement
9. Communicative competency
10. Attitudes toward teachers
11. Violence and Aggression
12. Drug Use
13. Personal Morality
14. Knowledge/Attitudes about Risk
15. School Behavior
16. Pro-social Behaviors and Attitudes

It is widely accepted that for character education to be effective, a comprehensive approach to its adoption and teaching is needed. This understanding informs every aspect of the *Stepping On Up* series. Character Education is taught not only in this program but throughout the series, underpinning our lessons on bullying, cyber bullying and social-emotional learning (SEL). And in each of our programs, the importance of a positive school-community culture is underlined and concrete ways students can contribute to one are outlined. It is the responsibility of the whole community to encourage this positive environment for learning -- administrators, teachers, counselors, parents and community members alike. Guidelines for effective, comprehensive character education are contained in the *CEP's Eleven Principles of Effective Character Education*.

1. Promotes core ethical values.
2. Teaches students to understand, care about, and act upon these core ethical values.
3. Encompasses all aspects of the school culture.
4. Fosters a caring school community.
5. Offers opportunities for moral action.
6. Supports academic achievement.
7. Develops intrinsic motivation.
8. Includes whole-staff involvement.
9. Requires positive leadership of staff and students.
10. Involves parents and community members.
11. Assesses results and strives to improve.

Lesson 1: The Power of Respect

This program outlines the key issues and strategies for the development of respect, one of the twin foundations of character. Respect is the basis of a range of skills and attributes -- empathy, caring, conflict resolution, violence prevention and the ability to get along with others. An awareness of cultural differences is fostered as well as sensitivity to physical differences and vulnerabilities. The potentially hurtful nature of teasing and jokes is explored as the line between appropriate and inappropriate humor is delineated.

Objectives

- To develop the skills and attributes of respect
- To identify common types of disrespect, such as teasing and kidding
- To identify barriers to respect, such insensitivity to cultural differences
- To demonstrate when humor crosses the line and becomes offensive
- To encourage a respectful, caring and inclusive school/community culture

Synopsis

Act One opens with Dieter surveying his April Fools' Day paraphernalia. It is one of his favorite holidays and he has elaborate plans to celebrate it, including an *All Student April Fools' Day Edition* of the school newspaper, of which Zazi is student editor. After he shows Zazi all of the practical jokes he has gathered, they review the articles he has prepared for the paper. Things start out promisingly with two humorous articles about this year's spaghetti harvest and the cell phone fairy. However, Dieter's next set of ideas are problematic and it soon becomes clear to Zazi they violate the school's motto, *A Place of Respect*. The articles involve a new student at school who is overweight and a native Spanish speaker, named Alberto, who posed for pictures in Dieter's "Ripped Pants" gag as well as a mock athletic event dubbed "The Double-Wide Derby." Dieter is unaware that these photos and articles would be hurtful to Alberto or considered offensive. (not [Understanding others](#)) When Zazi points this [out \(Naming the problem\)](#), a conflict ensues and, since they do not have time to discuss it with their teacher advisor, they decide talk with Michael about it. ([Evaluate and choose](#)) The act closes with Zazi swearing revenge for a practical joke Dieter has just pulled on her.

Act Two

After Zazi plays her practical joke on Dieter (pretending a sport shop is giving away free bobble heads) and Dieter returns disheveled but undaunted, the group turns to the issue of respect and the problem articles. Michael reviews the articles and agrees that the spaghetti harvest and cell phone fairy pieces are fine. However, he shares Zazi's concerns about the other two and asks Dieter about their likely effect on Arnold and the school in general. ([Understanding others](#)) When Dieter suggests the articles aren't offensive since Alberto didn't object to them, Michael points out that he might just be going along with the gags because he is new at school -- and Zazi reminds him that Alberto might not have understood them because of his limited English. After Michael asks whether or not the articles could cause students to make fun of Alberto, Dieter relents and understands that they should live up to the school motto, "*A Place of Respect: Treating Others as You Want To Be Treated.*" (The Golden Rule) and cut the articles.



Introduction to Lesson

Before presenting Act One to your students, you might want to introduce it along these lines:

Today we are going to watch a short video about respect. It involves two characters, Dieter and Zazi, who are having a problem and don't know how to solve it. It is our job to help them figure it out and, after we finish watching, we will brainstorm solutions for them. While you are watching, I would like you to think about:

- *How you would feel if you had this problem*
- *What you would do about it if you did*

Discussion Questions Following Act One

After Act One, please conduct a group discussion of the problems presented. The following questions will help you lead that discussion.

1. Dieter is very excited about April Fools' Day. What do you do on the day? Is there a special prank you like to play? Have you ever been tricked? Tell us about good tricks and pranks you know about. Have any of the pranks and tricks gone badly or caused problems? Why do you think we have a day like this? Do you know anything about the history of April Fools' Day? If so, tell us about it.
2. Zazi thinks that the *glued coins* trick could be a little mean. Do you understand why she might feel that way? How would you feel if that trick was played on you? Do you think it is an okay trick to play on April Fools' Day? Why or why not?
3. Dieter's uncle says, "*Looking foolish does the spirit good.*" What do you think he means by that? Do you think it is a good thing to look foolish? Why or why not? Do you think it is a good thing not to be afraid of looking foolish? Why or why not?
4. The school's motto is "*A Place of Respect: Treating Others as You Want To Be Treated.*" Do you think this is a good motto? Why? What does the motto mean to you? Do you think having a motto like this would help make their school a kinder, more caring place? Why or why not? Does your school have a motto? If it does, what does it mean to you? If not, what motto would you like it to have?
5. Dieter has prepared two sets of articles. The first two are about the spaghetti harvest and the cell phone fairy. Do you think they would be good articles to run in the school newspaper? Why or why not? Dieter also has a second set of articles, *The Ripped Pants* and the *Double-Wide Derby*, which include photos of Alberto. Do you think they would be good articles to run in the school newspaper? Why or why not? What is the difference between the two sets of articles and the humor in each?
6. How do you think Alberto will feel if these articles were run in the school newspaper? (**Understanding others**) Do you think he would be embarrassed? Do you think they would hurt his feelings? Why or why not? Why do you think he did not object to the gags when Dieter suggested he be part of them? How do you think these articles would affect the school in general? Would they encourage students to be kinder and more caring? Why or why not? Would they make the school a more respectful place?

Introduction to Act Two

When you decide to view Act Two, you can simply introduce it by saying, “*Let’s see how Zazi, Dieter and Michael decide how to deal with all this.*”

Discussion Questions Following Act Two

After viewing Act Two, please consider using this outline for an optional follow up discussion.

1. Zazi plays a trick on Dieter to get back at him for his at the end of Act One. What do you think of this trick? Do you think it is fair that Zazi got back at Dieter? Michael wonders if Zazi put a banana peel on the sidewalk so Dieter would slip. She says she would never do that. Do you think she did? Would it be a mean thing if she did? When do harmless tricks cross the line and become mean. Let’s think of a set of rules for tricks so they don’t become mean.
2. When Michael asks Dieter why the jokes with Alberto might be offensive, he suggests it is because they make fun of Alberto’s weight. Do you think making fun of someone because of their weight is an okay thing to do? Why or why not? Have you ever been made fun of because of the way you look? How did it make you feel? Would you like to have pictures making fun of you spread all over school?
3. Do kids make fun of other kids at school and call them names? What are some common ways kids are made fun of here at school? Let’s list the things kids tease other kids about. Do you think it is fair to make fun of people because of their appearance and things they cannot change? Why or why not? If you have been teased or made fun of in this way, what would you like to say to the people who teased you in this way? When do jokes cross the line and become offensive and mean? Let’s make up some rules about jokes and humor so they don’t become mean and hurt people’s feelings.
4. Zazi and Michael suggest two different reasons why Alberto may have gone along with the jokes. Do you remember what they were? Do you think he might not have objected because he is new at school and wanted to be friend with Dieter? Why would he do that? Do you think his difficulty with English could have contributed? How? It is very hard to translate jokes from one language to another. Do you think Alberto might not have understood the jokes?
5. Do you think Dieter wanted to hurt Alberto’s feelings or just didn’t think clearly about what he was doing? Explain your answer. Is it easy sometimes to hurt someone’s feelings without meaning to? Explain how that can happen. Have you ever hurt someone’s feeling without meaning to? How did you feel about it afterwards? What did you do about your mistake?
6. What does respect mean to you? How do you show that you respect someone? Tell us about someone you respect a lot. What is it that you respect about them? How do people show disrespect? What are common ways kids disrespect each other? Let’s think of ways we can make our school and community a more respectful place. What are the benefits of being a respectful, understanding and caring person?

Lesson 2: Making Responsible Choices

This program outlines the benefits of responsibility, the second fulcrum of character. Students will choose between completing a major group project and a unique opportunity for fun -- and will learn the importance of honoring commitments and keeping their word, even when it is difficult. Problem solving techniques are developed as students brainstorm positive solutions to the dilemma and the related character traits of honesty, trustworthiness, persistence, discipline and doing your best are instilled.

Objectives

- To develop the skills and attributes of responsibility
- To identify the benefits of being responsible, even when it is difficult
- To instill the character trait (and social-emotional skill) of empathy
- To reinforce honesty, trustworthiness, persistence, discipline and doing your best
- To demonstrate the following steps in the *SOU* problem-solving strategy:
 1. Stop and calm down
 2. Name the problem
 3. Understand others
 4. Brainstorm solutions
 5. Evaluate and choose
 6. Make a plan

Synopsis

Act One begins with Zazi preparing to complete an important school project, the *Spring History Poster Contest*. As she waits for Dieter to arrive, we learn that she has been trying to win the contest for several years, but is confident she and Dieter have a real chance in this year's competition since they have partnered with the two best artists in the school and have a terrific topic, a portrait of the largest of the California's historic missions: The Mission San Juan Bautista. However, once Dieter arrives, things become sticky when he reveals that he has two tickets to the best seats at the ballpark for the weekend series versus the St. Louis Cardinals. Zazi is an ardent fan of The Cards and their star player, Albert Pujols, so is terribly torn between her desire to attend the games and her determination to be responsible, complete the poster and come through for their partners Josh and Emma (who have already finished their portion of the project). After a valiant attempt to finish the poster that afternoon, Zazi and Dieter determine that they will need help if they are going to figure out how complete the poster and have a chance at going to the games to watch Zazi's beloved star. The scene ends as they prepare to head over to Michael's house for a brainstorming session.

Act Two

After Zazi and Dieter outline their dilemma, Michael leads them through a problem solving session. He asks them to **name their problem** and **state their goals**, which they identify as being responsible and seeing both games. Keeping in mind their obligations to their partners (**Understand others**), they **brainstorm** times when they could work which would not interfere with the games and come up with more than enough to complete the project well. They **evaluate and choose** between different options, **make a plan** to complete their work and come up with a **plan B**, just in case everything doesn't work out. As the act ends, our dynamic duo happily scurries off to continue their work.



Introduction to Lesson

Before presenting Act One to your students, you might want to introduce it along these lines:

Today we are going to watch a short video about being responsible. It involves two characters, Dieter and Zazi, who are having a problem and don't know how to solve it. It is our job to help them figure it out and, after we finish watching, we will brainstorm solutions for them. While you are watching, I would like you to think about:

- *How you would feel if you had this problem*
- *What you would do about it if you did*

Discussion Questions Following Act One

1. Zazi is very excited about the project she is working on, the *Spring History Poster Contest*. Can you understand why she feels this way? ([Understanding others](#)) Have you ever worked hard to achieve a big goal, at school or in sports: a championship game, a science fair project, a big test or an important report? Tell us about it. Did you have to overcome obstacles like Zazi has, who has tried and lost for several years? How did you overcome your obstacles and disappointments? How did you help yourself have the patience and dedication to stick to it and persevere? Did you achieve your goal? How did it make you feel knowing you worked hard and did your best? What did you learn about yourself from the experience?
2. When Zazi says goodbye to her partners Josh and Emma, as she is waiting for Dieter, she seems a little worried. Why do you think she might be feeling this way? Would you be a little worried if you had a big project with a tough deadline and your partner was late? Would you be a little worried if you had to do a project like this with Dieter? Why or why not? Have you ever worked on a project with someone who easily got distracted and off track? How did it make you feel working with this person? How did the project go? Josh and Emma have already finished their part of the project and Zazi thinks they did a wonderful job. Does this increase the pressure on Dieter and Zazi to do a good job on their part? Why or why not?
3. When Dieter arrives, he explains why he is so late. Do you understand why these things could have caused him to be late? Can you understand why Zazi seems to be getting impatient with her friend?
4. Dieter has tickets for incredible seats at the ballpark and Zazi's favorite team is coming to town. She has a really tough choice to make between working hard on this project and this great opportunity to see a hero of hers play the sport she loves. Let's assume that she will not be able to do both. What would you do if you had to make this choice? Why? Let's make a list of the benefits of devoting all of her time to the project. Let's make a list of benefits of going to the games. Let's compare the lists and decide which would be the best thing to do.
5. Have you ever had to make a tough choice like this between two things you really wanted to do? How did you decide? Did you talk to people when making this choice? Who did you talk to? Was it helpful to talk to someone about this big decision? Tell us about the steps you took in making your choice. What did you learn about yourself in the process?

Introduction to Act Two

When you decide to view Act Two, you can simply introduce it by saying, “Let’s see how Zazi, Dieter and Michael decide how to deal with all this.”

Discussion Question Following Act Two

After viewing Act Two, please consider using this outline for an optional follow up discussion.

1. After learning what is going on, Michael suggests that Zazi and Dieter need a problem solving session. Do you know what that is? Michael asks a number of questions and guides Dieter and Zazi through steps of problem solving. Can you remember what they are? Let’s list the steps they do (**name the problem, understand others, brainstorm solutions, evaluate and choose, make a plan**) Do you think working through these steps helped Dieter and Zazi solve their problem?
2. The first step is **name the problem**. Tell us in your own words what Zazi and Dieter’s problem is. Michael also asks them to state their goals. What do you think their goals are? Why do you think it is helpful to state the problem when you are trying to make a tough choice or figure out a plan of action? Would it make it easier or harder to solve the problem once they are able to state it clearly? Why or why not?
3. It is always important to understand others when solving a problem. Why do you think that is? Who are the most important people Dieter and Zazi need to think about as they make their decisions? Why? Why do you think **understanding others** is such an important part of being responsible? What is trustworthiness and why is it important? Why is it important for us to follow through on our promises? How do you think Josh and Emma would feel if Dieter and Zazi blew off the project?
4. Dieter and Zazi **brainstorm solutions** and come up with several options to work on the poster and still go to the game. Can you name them? Why is it important to spend time thinking of a lot of different solutions to a problem? What is the advantage of being able to choose between several good options? Have you ever been able to brainstorm a solution to tough problem? Tell us about how you did that.
5. Dieter and Zazi have a lot of options to choose from when solving this problem. Let’s list all of them. How do they **evaluate and choose** between all these different choices? Do you think they do a good job making their decisions? Why or why not?
6. Zazi and Dieter **make a plan** to do get their work done well. Do you think it is realistic? Why or why not? They also come up with a plan B, in case their main plan does not work out. Why is it important to have a plan B? Have you ever had a plan that didn’t work out and had to go to a backup plan? Tell us about what happened.
7. What does it mean to be a responsible person? Do you know someone you would describe as a responsible person? Why do you describe them that way? Tell us about a time when you chose to be responsible, even though it was the hard thing to do. Why did you make that choice? How did you feel about yourself afterwards? What did you learn about yourself as a result? What are the benefits of being responsible? How important is responsibility to maintaining good friendships?
To trust?

Lesson 3: Using Good Judgment

As the horizons of life expand during the elementary school years and students face a growing set of complicated choices, good judgment becomes a critical life skill. In these programs students explore the complicated dynamics of growing up: rules, freedom, choices, risk assessment, safety and good judgment -- learn that with freedom comes responsibility -- and to gain the independence they want, they must first earn it by making good choices.

Objectives

- To identify common issues of safety
- To teach methods of good judgment
- To show the key role risk assessment plays in making good decisions
- To identify obstacles to good judgment, such as impetuosity and boredom
- To demonstrate the relationship of freedom, responsibility and rules

Synopsis

Act One opens with Zazi and Dieter having trouble deciding what to do on a hot and endless summer afternoon. As they **brainstorm solutions** to overcome their boredom, they consider a number of ideas which involve questionable activities which, not coincidentally, also violate several rules Zazi's father has established for her safety. These include crossing freeways and railroad tracks, walking through desolate sections of the riverfront and taking bus lines with a reputation for trouble. After **evaluating and choosing** among these options, they **make a plan** to head up to the skateboard park. This solution has many attractive elements to it: the park is up the hill and gets a nice cooling breeze late in the afternoon, it is easy and safe to get to, and Zazi is very familiar with the park, since she is a championship skateboarder. However, Zazi's father has warned her not to go up there without him or take anyone inexperienced up there at any time. Dieter attempts to convince Zazi that he is an experienced skater, but since she is so familiar with the sport, she soon realizes that he is not. In the end, Dieter is able to goad Zazi into overriding her better judgment and violate her father's rules by agreeing to a competition at the park. The act ends as they decide to get their gear and meet at Michael's house, since it is right on the way to the hilltop park.

Act Two begins with Michael learning of the numerous activities Zazi and Dieter considered doing that afternoon and reinforcing Zazi's father's guidance against them. Michael suggests that, "*you guys might be a little young,*" for the proposed activities and that Zazi's father has a good reason for all those rules -- her safety. (**Understanding others**) After Dieter complains that they are "*too young for everything,*" a discussion ensues about the relationship between rules, freedom, safety and responsibility. Michael uses the analogy of bicycle training wheels to teach our pair that rules do not go away all at once, but are removed gradually as we learn to make good choices -- just as training wheels are raised as we learn how to ride a bike. "*As you learn good judgment, the wheels come up a bit. You get more freedom. Make more of your own choices.*" Dieter's ruse that tricked Zazi into skating is revealed and we learn that Dieter has forgotten both his pads and his helmet. The program ends as Dieter and Zazi apply the principals of good judgment (**Evaluate and choose**) to their situation and decide not to skate up at the park, but to go up with Michael to watch and enjoy the cool afternoon breezes.

Introduction to Lesson

Before presenting Act One to your students, you might want to introduce it along these lines: *Today we are going to watch a short video about good judgment. It involves two characters, Dieter and Zazi, who are having a problem and don't know how to solve it. It is our job to help them figure this out and, after we finish watching, we will brainstorm solutions for them. While you are watching, I would like you to think about:*

- *How you would feel if you had this problem*
- *What you would do about it if you did*

Discussion Questions Following Act One

1. Zazi and Dieter are having a hard time filling their summer afternoon. As they try to think up fun things to do, they go through a number of emotions. Can you identify all of them (boredom, exhaustion, excitement, disappointment, frustration, etc.)?
2. Have you ever spent a long, hot summer afternoon looking for something fun to do? Tell us about it? Did you **brainstorm** ideas for things to do? What were they? What are your favorite things to do on a summer afternoon? What was the best thing you ever did while on summer vacation? Why is this your favorite activity? Why is it easy to get bored sometimes during the summer? What things do you do to cheer yourself up and stay busy when you get bored?
3. Dieter and Zazi are frustrated because they are too young to do a lot of the things they would like to do. Have you ever been frustrated like this? Tell us about a time you were frustrated by not being able to do something you wanted to do because you were too young. What did you do instead? Was that fun also?
4. Zazi's father has a lot of rules that keep her from doing things. What do you think of these rules? Are they fair or unfair? Why do you think her father has so many rules? Dieter and Zazi get frustrated because most of their ideas break one of Zazi's rules. Have you ever felt frustrated by rules that your parents or guardians give you? Tell us about a time when you felt frustrated like this? What did you do?
5. Dieter and Zazi come up with a bunch of ideas for things to do. Let's list all of them. Do you think they are good ways to spend a hot summer afternoon? Why or why not? For each of the ideas, let's list the good things about it as well as problems it might cause. Using the list, decide if you would do them. If you were friends with Dieter and Zazi, what advice would you give? What would you suggest they do?
6. Dieter and Zazi decide to go up to a skateboarding park nearby. Do think this is a good idea or not? Zazi has some rules about the skate park as well. Do they seem like fair rules? Why or why not? Dieter is not very experienced at skateboarding. Do you think it is a good idea for him to go skateboarding? Why or why not?
7. Dieter tells Zazi that he thinks he could be a better skateboarder than she is. Do you think he really believes that? If not, why would he say that?

Introduction to Act Two

When you decide to view Act Two, you can simply introduce it by saying, “*Let’s see how Zazi, Dieter and Michael decide how to deal with all this.*”

Discussion Questions Following Act Two

After viewing Act Two, please consider using this outline for an optional follow up discussion.

1. As Zazi and Dieter tell Michael about the different ideas they had, he points out why it was good that they did not do them. Can you list all the things Michael says could be problems? Do you agree with his opinion?
2. Michael compares rules to training wheels. Explain what you think he means by that. Do you think rules train us to make good choices or just keep us from doing fun things? Explain your answer. Tell us what you think Michael’s explanation says about the relationship between rules, freedom and good choices?
3. Do your parents or guardians have a lot of rules? Why do you think they have established these rules? Have you ever talked to your parents or guardian about the reasons behind a rule? If so, tell us about your conversation. Do you think it is a good conversation? Do you have the same number of rules you had when you were younger? Describe how things have changed over time. Have you ever had a conversation with your parents or guardians about a rule that you thought was unfair or too restrictive? Tell us what happened. Was it a good conversation?
4. Have your parents or guardians given you more freedom as you have grown older? Give us an example of choices you can make now that you couldn’t before. Why do you think you are given more freedom now that you are older and more mature?
5. Tell us about a time when you handled a new freedom or responsibility well -- a time when you used good judgment and made a good choice. Tell us about the decision you made and how you made it. What things did you think about as you were making your decision? How did your parents or guardians react to your good choice? Do you think they trusted you more after you demonstrated good judgment? Why? What do you think is the relationship between good judgment, trust and freedom?
6. All of the activities Zazi and Dieter thought about involved some amount of risk. Let’s list these activities and assign a level of risk to each using a scale of one to ten. Skateboarding is a risky sport but it is much more risky for Dieter than for Zazi. Why is that? What is the relationship between experience and risk? Do you think about levels of risk when you are deciding about things to do with your friends? What is the benefit of thinking about risk when you are making choices?
7. What do you think good judgment is? Tell us about a time you used good judgment. How did you feel about yourself afterwards? What did you learn as a result? Tell us about a friend you think has good judgment. Is this friendship important to you? Why? Do you feel more comfortable and safe with this person than with other friends? What is the benefit of using good judgment when making choices?

Lesson 4: Being True to Yourself

Self-knowledge is considered by many to be the most fundamental character trait and essential skill in social-emotional learning. (As Shakespeare says, “*This above all*”) This program encourages student to understand who they are and stay true to their values and identity. Students learn the skills of self-awareness and self-respect, the difference between true and false friends and the importance of sustaining nurturing, positive relationships.

Objectives

- To demonstrate the importance of self knowledge
- To identify core values that serve as the foundation of personal choices
- To encourage a strong sense of self throughout the maturation process
- To develop methods of self-awareness and instill self-respect
- To demonstrate the difference between true and false friends

Synopsis

Act One opens with Dieter rehearsing for a drama piece he is doing with Zazi as part of the school *Family Day Celebration*. They are playing a scene from Shakespeare’s Hamlet and Dieter is Polonius, the father of Zazi’s character Ophelia. Zazi is very late, suggesting something is going on that is out of the ordinary. Her entrance confirms the change: she has just come from the mall, is dressed fashionably and wearing a hair braid, jewelry and perfume. We soon learn that she has a new group of friends, an older, faster group of eighth grade girls. Zazi is flattered to be part of the group but Dieter notes some of the troubling aspects of Zazi’s newfound popularity -- she used to think these girls were shallow, she has abandoned old friends and her attitude towards school has changed dramatically: she is skipping rehearsals, isn’t studying and her grades are falling. However, the most troubling thing is that she is lying to her father in order to go to a party hosted by a high school boy with a wild reputation. When Dieter tells Zazi he is worried about her and her sudden change of character, she resorts to sarcasm and coolly tells him that she has changed and so has their friendship. Dieter is shaken but suggests they continue their rehearsals at the park next to Michael’s house on Saturday.

Act Two

As Zazi is waiting for Dieter, she recounts the second thoughts she is having about her new friends and the party she planned to attend that evening. Once Dieter arrives, they coolly begin rehearsing but are soon interrupted by Michael who has been watching from the sidelines. Zazi is diffident towards Michael (and may suspect that Dieter has set up this encounter) and then goes out of her way to insult him. Sensing her defensiveness, Michael begins to leave, but after Dieter challenges Zazi about her rude attitude, she asks him to stay. She then fills Michael in on the complications she has experienced in her new group: they have started treating her badly and pressured her to lie to her father and attend the party. When Michael asks what she is going to do, she replies that she doesn’t know and begins to cry. Dieter comically suggests that she “flip the test” and tell her friends she can’t go to the party to see if they are true friends. Zazi cheers at Dieter’s comic antics and good advice and apologizes for treating him badly. Dieter comforts his friend with his constancy and as the segment ends, our troupe sums up the lesson by again quoting Polonius, “*To thine own self be true. This above all*”



Introduction to Lesson

Before presenting Act One to your students, you might want to introduce it along these lines:

Today we are going to watch a short video about being true to yourself. It involves two characters, Dieter and Zazi, who are having a problem and don't know how to solve it. It is our job to help them figure it out and, after we finish watching, we will brainstorm solutions for them. While you are watching, I would like you to think about:

- *How you would feel if you had this problem*
- *What you would do about it if you did*

Discussion Questions Following Act One

1. Zazi appears to be different here from her normal self. In what ways is she different? Let's list the different ways she looks and acts as she and Dieter rehearse for the play. (Appearance: different clothes, hairstyle, jewelry, perfume. Attitude: is late, doesn't care about school work, is not very nice to Dieter, and is getting bad grades.) Why do you think she has changed so much? Do you think these are good changes or maybe not so good changes? Why? Do you think this is the *real* Zazi, or do you think she is playing a role to fit in with her new friends? Explain your answer.
2. Zazi has made some new friends at school, named Jennifer and Becky. Describe these new friends and why Zazi might be excited about being their friend. Jennifer and Becky seem to be very different from the Zazi we know. Do you think these differences will make for a good friendship or lead to conflicts? Explain your answer. What do you think of Jennifer and Becky? Would you want to be friends with them? Why or why not?
3. Jennifer and Becky are older than Zazi. Do you think it is a good idea to have older friends? What are the good things about having friends that are older? What are some problems that can result from having older friends? Do you have friends that are older? Tell us about these friendships. Friendships with older kids can be both fun and difficult. Do you think Zazi's friendship with Jennifer and Becky is going to more fun or more difficult? Why?
4. Becky and Jennifer are "*the most popular girls in middle school.*" Tell us what you think it means to be popular. Are there groups and cliques here at school? Are some groups considered more popular than others? Why? Sometime people change to be more popular, like Zazi is doing here. Do you know people like this? Do you think it is more important to be yourself or to be popular? Explain your answer.
5. When Dieter tells Zazi he is worried about her she says that nothing is wrong, she is just changing and growing up. Do you think this is true? Why or why not? Dieter responds that some things, like honesty and friendship, don't change as we grow up. Who is right, Dieter or Zazi? Could they both be right? Tell us why you think one is right or both (or neither). We all change as we grow up, but there are basic things about who we are that don't change. List the things about yourself you would like to keep as you grow up, meet new people and do new things.
6. Do you think Zazi should go to the party? Why or why not?

Introduction to Act Two

When you decide to view Act Two, you can simply introduce it by saying, “Let’s see how Zazi, Dieter and Michael decide how to deal with all this.”

Discussion Questions Following Act Two

After viewing Act Two, please consider using this outline for an optional follow up discussion.

1. Zazi is having second thought about her new friends and the party. What are they? Do you think she should be troubled by these things? Zazi says that she can handle this by herself. Do you think that is true? Even if it is, would it be a good idea?
2. Michael is at the park and soon joins them at the park bench. Do you think this is an accident or do you think Dieter asked him to come? Why would Dieter do that? Do you think it is a good idea if he did? Why or why not? Is Dieter being a good friend?
3. Zazi is being mean to Michael. Why do you think she is doing that? Let’s list the reasons she is acting this way. ([Understanding others](#)) Zazi suddenly changes and asks Michael to stay. Why? Do you think she understand why she was acting rudely or why she changed? Do you sometimes do things you don’t understand? Why do you think that happens? What can we learn about ourselves at those moments?
4. Zazi talks to Michael about all the good and bad things that have been happening with Becky and Jennifer. Let’s list all good things. Let’s list all the bad things. Do you think Zazi should stay friends with them? Why or why not?
5. Dieter suggests Zazi *flip the test* to see if they are true friends. Is this a good idea? Why? How would you define a true friend? Let’s list the things that are part of true friendship. Do true friends ask us to do things that we think are wrong? Do they pressure us to be like them or do they make it easy for us to be ourselves. Explain.
6. There is a lot of role playing in this program. Dieter and Zazi are playing roles in Hamlet and Zazi is playing a role with her new friends so they will like her more. Do you ever feel like you are playing a role in public that is not quite who you really are? Explain. Zazi seems to be trying out a *new Zazi* for a while. Do you think this a good thing? Why is it important for us to make new friends and try new things? Does it help us figure out who we are? How? What can we learn from occasionally trying on new roles like Zazi did? What do we have to remember when we do?
7. Why is it important to know our values and who we are? How does it help us when we make important decisions like who we want to be friends with or whether to study or to play? Tell us about a time knowing your values and who you are helped you make a good decision. What did you learn about yourself in the process?
8. Dieter quotes Polonius at the end of the program about why it is important to be true to yourself: “*And it must follow, as the night the day, Thou canst not then be false to any man.*” What do you think this quote means? What does it mean to be true to yourself? What is the relationship between being true to yourself and being true to others? What are the benefits of being true to yourself and to others?

Extension Activities

Use the lessons you have learned from Dieter and Zazi to create your own school and/or community-wide campaign about good character and why it is important. Brainstorm your plan in class. Here are some starter ideas:

Write a pledge to make your class, school/community a “*Place of Respect*”. Put it on a large piece of butcher paper and have students sign it.

Hold essay writing contests on respect, caring, responsibility and true friendship, and publish the results on your school website.

Create a series of posters for your group, classroom or school/community center on each of the topics of the programs. Possible themes:

- Illustrate different types of disrespect you see in your school/community
- Illustrate different ways students can be more responsible and make their school/community a cleaner, friendlier and nicer place to be
- List the many different ways to be responsible: to ourselves, to other students, to our families, our community, the environment and the country
- Encourage students to use good judgment and keep themselves safe
- Illustrate risks and risky behaviors in the larger community
- Encourage students to be true to themselves and be true friends to others
- Illustrate ways your school/community can be more caring and inclusive

Debate these questions in your group, class or at a school/community-wide assembly:

- True or false: Disrespect is the most common cause of conflicts.
- True or false: Jokes are always fun and we should not have to worry if they occasionally hurt someone’s feelings.
- True or false: In order to respect others, we must first respect ourselves.
- True or false: Being responsible is just hard work and is never fun.
- True or false: It is always important to keep our promises and follow through.
- True or false: Rules are things adults use to keep young people from having fun.
- True or false: Our school and community is a very safe place, so we don’t need to be afraid of risks or dangers.
- True or false: To make good decisions, we need to think of ourselves, not others.
- True or false: It is more important to be true to yourself than to be popular.

Have the students make simple sock puppets and mime puppets movements to the audio of the programs. Teams of students can perform Act One of the skits for other classes and lead problem-solving discussions based on their performances. You can find simple instructions for making puppets on the Internet by entering *sock puppets* or *making puppets* in your browser or search engine.

Please visit www.SteppingOnUp.com for more resources and extension activities





About Michael Pritchard

Michael Pritchard is a youth educator, humorist, actor, former probation officer, and Public Television host who is known by audiences across the United States for his ability to help young people gain real insight into themselves and the choices they make. For over 30 years, Mr. Pritchard has traveled the country, thrilling his youthful audiences while spreading his message of good choices, personal responsibility, and respect for others. Featured in *Time* magazine and on *CNN*, Pritchard has the unique distinction of winning the *San Francisco International Comedy Competition* while he was *California Probation Officer of the Year*. He keeps a demanding schedule visiting schools and universities across the country, while finding time to bring his inspiring message to parent, civic and professional groups, community organizations and corporations.

Michael's award-winning series include: *LifeSteps*, *Saving Our Schools*, *PeaceTalks*, *You Can Choose*, *The Power of Choice* and *Big Changes, Big Choices*. A nationally acclaimed motivational speaker, Michael serves on the boards of directors for The Guardsmen, The Giants Community Fund, the Special Olympics, the California Association of Peer Programs, the Chinese-American Educational Institute, Ronald McDonald House, and the Salvation Army.

About Jim Watson

Jim Watson is an award-winning writer, producer and director of educational television and video programs. He has produced a wide range of nonfiction films and videos in his thirty year career. He has produced and directed six critically acclaimed Public Television series, including: *Saving Our Schools*, *PeaceTalks*, *You Can Choose!*, *Big Changes - Big Choices* and the current *LifeSteps*. These series have been highly acclaimed in the educational press and received more than 100 major awards including: the *CINE Golden Eagle*, the *Parents' Choice Gold Award*, the *Teachers' Choice Award*, and the *Golden Camera Award* at the US International Film and Video Festival. Since the early eighties, he has produced a number of educational programs, including: *The Yosemite Institute*, narrated by Robert Redford; *Classrooms Without Borders*, a six-part series on bilingual education for elementary schools; and co-produced *Finding the Solutions*.





A Four-Part Guidance Series for Elementary Students on
Bullying, Cyber-Bullying, Character and SEL

Stepping Up To Bullying

- Lesson 1 Dealing with Bullies
- Lesson 2 Standing Up, Not Standing By
- Lesson 3 Reaching Out to Victims
- Lesson 4 Building Bully-Free Schools/Communities

Stepping Up to Cyber Bullying & Web Safety

- Lesson 1 Being Safe and Secure on the Web
- Lesson 2 Protecting Yourself from Cyber Bullying
- Lesson 3 Online Rumors, Texts, and Gossip
- Lesson 4 Helping and Caring in a Digital World

Stepping Up to Character

- Lesson 1 The Power of Respect
- Lesson 2 Making Responsible Choices
- Lesson 3 Using Good Judgment
- Lesson 4 Being True to Yourself

Stepping Up to Life Skills

- Lesson 1 Controlling Your Anger
- Lesson 2 Resolving Conflicts Creatively
- Lesson 3 Learning to Bounce Back
- Lesson 4 Choosing to Do Your Best

Stepping On Up developed by
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Kathleen Harriman
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