



Changing the Inner Mirror's Voice

Lesson Summary

In this lesson, after viewing a selection of video clips, students will discuss the influence of both positive and negative media messages on their understanding of topics, as well as how positive and negative messaging can impact body image and self-esteem. Students will then write a reflective letter to themselves that considers some of their own positive and negative self-talk and identifies areas of negativity that are the basis of their goals to change into positive talk.

Teacher Message

Self-esteem refers to an individual's sense of their value or worth, or the extent to which a person approves of, appreciates, or likes themselves (Blascovich & Tomaka, 1991). Adolescents often need encouragement to recognize their unique qualities – rather than concentrating on their physical appearance or engaging in body talk about themselves or others. In this lesson, after examining positive and negative messaging in media texts and the influences of both on their own self-esteem, students will engage in a letter-writing activity that prompts them to focus on their capabilities and come up with positive self-affirmations.

Materials

Chart paper
Markers

Books and Articles

Ewald, W., 2001. *The Best Part of Me*. Little, Brown Books for Young Readers.

Myers, W.D., 2009. *Looking Like Me*. Egmont Books.

Media Clips

Prince Ea, Every Teenager NEEDS to Hear This! (Available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UB7nGT3egak>)

Prince Ea, Dear Future Generations: Sorry (Available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eRLJscAlk1M>)

Participant, Kid President Is Over It! (Available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ghk-nDJB3Tk>)

Nike, Unlimited Future (Available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=257JnYeo1dA>)

Learning Organizers

Learning Organizer 4-1 Framework for Positive Affirmation Letter

Assessment Tool

Assessment Tool Lesson 4 – Self-Assessment

Supporting Curriculum Outcomes

Available at <https://beyondimages.ca/6th-grade>

Lesson Outline

Inspiration: How will I engage the students?

1. **Post four quotes selected (see the attached page) from the Prince Ea video “Every Teenager NEEDS to Hear This” – one quote in each corner of the classroom.** Show the video to students. Before the students share any reactions to the video, read the four quotes out to students. Ask students to move to the quote that resonates with them.
2. **When students have gathered in groups at each of the four corners (ideally, fairly equally dispersed), ask them to discuss in their groups:** *Why did you choose this quote? What resonated with you about this statement from the video? Did you choose this quote because you identify with it, or because you disagree with it?*
3. **Reconvene students into a large group. Ask students to share which quotes they chose, and what was discussed within their groups.** You could explore what consensus was reached at the group around the quotes and/or differing opinions that might have been shared. Ask: *What were some of the key messages that Prince Ea conveyed in his video? What do you think his intent was with making this video? What was his message?*

Facilitation: How will students learn the concepts?

4. **Show the video from Nike, “Unlimited Future”.** Ask students to share their first reactions to the video. You could prompt with questions such as: *What did you like/dislike about the commercial? What do you think the main idea of the commercial is? What is the purpose of the commercial? Who do you think the intended audience is?*
5. **If the class is not already familiar with the “media triangle”, introduce and discuss the key elements of the media triangle (text, audience, production).** Using the Nike commercial, or the Prince Ea video, “Every Teenager NEEDS to Hear This”, discuss and dissect the elements of the media triangle. Prompts may include: *What type of media text is this (e.g., commercial, PSA), who is the intended audience? Whose voices are included in the media? Whose voices are missing? What techniques are used to help tell the story/message (e.g., camera angles, lighting, music, etc.)*
6. **Ask students to identify whether the videos’ messages are intended to be “positive” or “negative”, and to share their rationales as to why.** Then show either “Kid President is Over It!” or “Dear Future Generations: Sorry”, and ask students to identify the messaging in these two PSAs. As audience members, do “positive” messages or “negative” messages have more impact on what they think/feel about an issue? What resonates with them? How do “positive” and “negative” messages impact them – physically, mentally, emotionally?
7. **Briefly review the definitions of “body image” and “self-esteem” from Lesson 2 and ask the students to share their thoughts on how “body image” is often portrayed in the media.** Questions could include: *Are the majority of messages “positive” or “negative”? What examples can you think of that portray a positive or negative body image? What words/images are used? Who is the creator of the media? How does the media/text inform our opinions/ thoughts about the product or “body image”?*
8. **Facilitate a class discussion about reasons for engaging in negative self-talk and the influence of selfies on people.** Students’ responses to questions posed earlier in the lesson may lead naturally into these topics. They could also be directed towards discussion about these topics. You could prompt with questions such as: *What is negative self-talk? Why does it happen? Why do we do it? How do cameras/phones and use of selfies contribute to poor body image and self-esteem?*

Application: How will students demonstrate their learning?

9. **Display some of the quotes from celebrities as provided.** Ask the students to read individually and to choose one that speaks to them, but not to share out loud.
10. **Post the quote “Change your words, change your world” on the board or chart stand.** Ask the students to consider the quote individually first, and then with a partner or small group. Ask the students to consider the quote that they chose from a celebrity, and how this quote may affirm what the celebrity said, and/or change what they are thinking. After a few minutes of discussion time, ask students to share their thoughts and reactions to the statement – what it means to them, and how it might change/alter some of their daily thoughts/practices.
11. **Have students write a “positive affirmation letter” to themselves about all the great and positive things their bodies do for them.** (If time permits, you may wish to (re)read “*The Best Part of Me*” by Wendy Ewald or “*Looking Like Me*” by W.D. Myers). You may wish to use **Learning Organizer 4-1 Framework for Positive Affirmation Letter** to guide students.

Reflection: How will students reflect on their learning?

12. **Create a graffiti wall in the classroom.** Invite students to select one sentence/phrase/or short paragraph about themselves from their letters to post on the wall; note that they will post their statements anonymously. Ask them to respond to their classmates’ sentences/phrases/short paragraphs with positive affirmations. (Alternatively, this could be done online with a Jamboard or Padlet-type platform).

Assessment

Students’ positive affirmation letters, using **Learning Organizer 4-1 Framework for Positive Affirmation Letter** may serve best as a self-assessment piece for students. You and your students may determine together whether or not you read the letters that they have written to themselves. As these letters may be quite personal, you can gather some assessment information using the **Lesson 4 Assessment Tool – Self-Assessment** provided.

Related Resources to Extend Learning

Best Bets for Teachers:

Media Triangle – Media Literacy Clearinghouse (<https://www.frankwbaker.com/mlc/media-triangle/>)

This can be a helpful tool for teaching about deconstructing media texts.

Best Bets for Students:

Newark, A., 2020. *Chicken Soup for the Soul: Think Positive for Teens*. Chicken Soup for the Soul.

This collection of stories written by teens provides tips on issues such as making true friends, doing the right thing, facing challenges, and being grateful.

Quotes for Four Corners Activity

You were born an original, stop trying to be a copy.

Real diamonds have flaws.

The coolest people don't care about being cool.

True happiness is when you like you.

Quotes from Celebrities

"I love my body. I'm very much OK with it. I don't think artists are ever the ones who have the problem with their weight, it is other people." – **Kelly Clarkson**

"Before I made this record, I was doing everything to try and get my music heard," he said. "I tried to lose weight, and I was making awful music. It was only until I started to be myself that the music started to flow and people started to listen."
– **Sam Smith**

"I love MYSELF and if you could say the same, you wouldn't be sitting on your computer trying to hurt others." – **Miley Cyrus**

"Girls of all kinds can be beautiful – from the thin, plus-sized, short, very tall, ebony to porcelain-skinned; the quirky, clumsy, shy, outgoing and all in between. It's not easy though because many people still put beauty into a confining, narrow box... think outside the box... pledge that you will look in the mirror and find the unique beauty in you." – **Tyra Banks**

"I think there is so much masculinity in being vulnerable and allowing yourself to be feminine, and I'm very comfortable with that." – **Harry Styles**

"I always get asked, 'Where do you get your confidence?' I think people are well meaning, but it's pretty insulting. Because what it means to me is, 'You, Mindy Kaling, have all the trappings of a marginalized person. You're not skinny, you're not white, you're a woman. Why on earth would you feel like you're worth anything?'" – **Mindy Kaling**

Retrieved from:

https://www.huffpost.com/entry/celebrity-body-image-quotes_n_4647126

<https://www.pinterest.ca/pin/respect--389420699029635176/>

<https://www.bustle.com/articles/122251-9-male-celebrities-who-have-made-body-positive-statements>

Framework for Positive Affirmation Letter

Name: _____ Date: _____

Dear _____

Write an introductory paragraph that outlines some of the self-talk you have engaged in, in the past. This self-talk may be positive, or negative. Write down some of the things that you have most often said to yourself.

Reread the paragraph about how you have spoken to yourself in the past. What are some of the things that you *currently* say to yourself? Is there any focus on positive statements? Are there any negative self-talk statements that you wish to change? Write a paragraph that identifies some of these statements and how they have impacted you.

In your final paragraph, write some positive statements that you are committing to saying to yourself looking ahead. How will you change the negative self-talk that you may have used in the past?

Closing statement

Self-Assessment

Reread your letter to yourself. Consider how you have accomplished the following:

Name: _____

	Needs Improvement	Satisfactory	Good	Excellent
Content of letter: I thought carefully and included concrete examples of self-talk; and set some goals to work towards				
Personal voice: the information I provided reflects my personal experiences				
Writing format: I used the format of "letter writing" – including a salutation, three paragraphs, and a closing statement				
Use of conventions: I checked my work for spelling, grammar, and punctuation				

Comments I wish to share with my teacher about this writing experience:
