

CHOICES AND CONSEQUENCES

Name: _____

Date: _____



1.) What choices have I made in the past about setting fires?

2.) What actions did I take because of the choices I made?



3.) What were the consequences of my actions:

For me? _____

For my family? _____

For my community*? _____



4.) What did these consequences teach me about the choices I made?

5.) If I am in a similar situation, what choices will I make and why?

6.) When is the best time to think about consequences of choices? Why?

7.) If I don't know what choice to make, what should I do?

** community includes your town, your school, your church, your friends*



Choices, Consequences and Responsibility

In order to make good choices, you need to think before you act.

What do I think about?

- 1) Think about what you are being asked to do or want to do. (situation)
- 2) Think about what might happen if you do it. (action and reaction)
- 3) Think about how this action will affect you. (your future, your health, your safety)
- 4) Think about how this action will effect others (your family, your friends, your community)

Based on your thinking, what is the best way to act in this situation? (good choice or poor choice)

Based on your thinking, are you ready to take responsibility for your choice?

Accepting responsibility for oneself includes an understanding of how your choices have consequences and recognizing your responsibility for choices. Choices play a key role in shaping or defining your life. In a moment, an unwise choice can completely derail your best-developed goals and plans. An unwise choice can completely change your life.

The process of making choices is a learning experience that teaches responsibility for and control over your own behavior. The consequences of your actions are logical because they are clearly related to your behavior. With consequences, you can make the connection between your behavior and the results.

Good choices result from a level of self-knowledge and understanding, particularly related to your goals, values and beliefs. Knowing your values helps you make choices consistent with things that are important. Knowing your goals increases the likelihood of making wiser choices leading to achieving these goals.

Experiencing the consequences of your choices is one of the most effective ways you learn self-discipline. These lessons really last because they come from real life. Most success in life depends on making wise choices. Being able to think ahead about the positive or negative consequences of an action and choose accordingly is a skill we want to learn. People learn better from their own mistakes than from “preventive lectures.”

A willingness to avoid poor choices can motivate a person towards wiser choices. However, this reason requires an understanding of what actions contribute to poor choices.

Actions leading to poor choices arise when a person acts before thinking about what one is doing, thus forgetting to consider what is important or disregarding how the action can hinder one from achieving goals.

Poor choices also can occur when a person fails to consider different options in a

situation, avoids seeking useful information from people, denies possible negative consequences of one's actions, or violates the rights of others.

A poor choice can happen when a person allows people to influence one in the wrong way, feels pressure to go along with the group, or avoids saying, "No!" when appropriate.

Accepting responsibility further involves a willingness to admit to poor choices and to take responsibility for one's actions.

People make poor choices on the way to becoming responsible grown-ups. They must experience the consequences of their actions in order to learn from them.

At times you may not be aware of available options in different situations which could improve your chances of wise choices. Getting an opinion, information, or data from others can help a person select the best option.

Thus, acting responsibly after a poor choice requires a person to be honest or truthful with oneself. Being honest with yourself will involve accepting ownership of the poor choice by dealing with its consequences, understanding what contributed to the poor choice, seeing how the choice led to difficulties, and avoiding a repeat of this choice in the future.

If a person is not willing to admit mistakes, then they are prone to repeat poor choices in the future. If a person does not take ownership for poor choices, they deny responsibility by blaming their poor choice to reasons outside of their control.

Some Things to Consider

Sometimes, a person may be reluctant to seek information or input from others when contemplating a decision or choices.

Intense feelings or emotions can increase your vulnerability for poor choices. These feelings or emotions might include anger, disappointment, physical attractions, pleasure, frustration, rejection or humiliation. In the presence of strong feelings, desires, or emotions, you might need to pause for a moment, proceed with caution, or avoid reacting hastily.

The use of mind-altering substances like alcohol and drugs also can increase your vulnerability for poor choices.

Stubbornness or close-mindedness can also increase your vulnerability for poor choices since these views generally reflect an unwillingness to consider different perspectives or options.

There are times when people respond impulsively in a situation without thinking about possible consequences. In this situation, accepting responsibility involves admitting

your impulsive choice regardless of your awareness at the time of your choice. Your lack of full awareness of your choice does not diminish your responsibility. By accepting responsibility for your impulsive choice and related consequences, you are empowering yourself to be in a position to consider a different choice to a similar situation in the future.

It is important to remember that no human being is perfect. We will all make mistakes or poor choices. However, we differ in how we choose to deal or cope with these mistakes or poor choices. Frequently, the actions taken after the mistake can be equally important as the actual mistake.

Sometimes, your poor choice or mistake results in pain for someone. Addressing your poor choice will involve both the acknowledgment of your poor choice and the pain to someone due to this choice. You might have an opportunity to admit your poor choice and the pain caused directly to the person who experienced this pain. If this opportunity occurs, you need to accept that despite your level of remorse for your action(s), the person may or may not be ready to forgive you at that time. You cannot control when a person will be ready to forgive you, but you can hope that the person will forgive you in time.

Sometimes, a major part of dealing with a mistake or poor choice is forgiving yourself. This self-forgiveness for your mistake may take time. If you have a tendency to willingly forgive others rather than forgive yourself, you need to learn to offer yourself the same level of kindness or compassion that you freely offer others.

Young people will be confronted with options but might not recognize that there are options or be able to identify these options.

In general, accepting responsibility for oneself, being responsible for self, personal responsibility or self responsibility emphasizes people's responsibility for their actions and the course of their lives. Although others can help a person, this responsibility emphasizes things a person has to do for oneself.

Accepting responsibility for oneself also emphasizes the things a person has to face alone despite the support and presence of others throughout one's lifetime.

Accepting responsibility for self is a learned life skill requiring ongoing training, experiences and opportunities for both adults and youth.

Writings and Excerpts from the book:

"Accepting Responsibility for Oneself" By: Gloria Edmunds, Ph.D. Personal Development Publications 157 pages
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