

Stand Up! Speak Out!

DO THE RIGHT THING: “When No One’s Watching and No One Can See...”

Guide for Discussion, Reflection or Role Play

How do we learn what it means to do the right thing? Who do we learn it from—family members, friends, teachers, clergy, heroes past and present, characters in books and movies? But they’re not always around. Even when we *can’t get caught*, do we do the right thing “when no one’s watching and no one can see”?

Vocabulary

conscience: the inner sense of right and wrong that guides us toward right actions
conscious: awake, aware; intentional, i.e. a *conscious choice* is one that we think about before making it
cut and dry: a metaphor meaning simple, absolutely clear, *black and white* with no *shades of gray*
ethics: beliefs or actions directed by a sense of right and wrong (ethical behavior: *doing the right thing*)
impulsive: without thinking; when we act *impulsively* we act without thinking of consequences
moral: (adj) based on a sense of right and wrong, i.e. moral action, moral courage
moral courage: the courage to do the right thing, especially when no one else is and you act alone
moral dilemma: a tough choice between two options you don’t like, one of which you *may* know is right
morals: the rules we make for ourselves, which guide how we live, and how we know right from wrong
righteous person: one with the moral courage to do the right thing, even when it’s difficult or dangerous

I’m making choices every day / in every situation / which role I’m gonna play

These are the roles we may choose to play at different times, as individuals, countries or businesses:

- perpetrator: a person who causes harm, a bully, a criminal
 - collaborator: a person who helps the perpetrator cause harm
 - silent bystander: a witness to something bad who doesn’t say or do anything to stop it
 - upstander: a person who *speaks out* or gets help to keep someone safe; an ally
 - ally: a person who *stands with* someone, so they don’t stand alone; an upstander
 - target: the person who is being bullied or hurt (one role no one *chooses* to play)
1. Research the roles played by individuals, countries, or businesses in historical events such as:
 - The African slave trade in the US
 - The MS St. Louis, a ship that carried Jews from Nazi Germany to the shore of the US
 - The Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fire of 1911
 2. Research a conflict going on in the world right now, an issue that concerns you or people in your community, or consider some of the issues listed below. Can you identify what roles individuals, countries or businesses play in each?
 - The debate over ‘fracking’ for natural gas in New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania
 - Global warming, climate change, air pollution
 - Gun violence
 - Bullying

It’s not so simple or cut and dry

3. Can you describe a choice that you have had to make that was *not so simple or cut and dry*?
4. Is there a difference between: a) lies intended to hurt someone, b) lies to keep someone safe from harm, c) lies that make people feel good, d) lies that don’t *seem* to hurt anyone? Consider these:
 - Your elderly aunt lies about her age
 - Your uncle takes you to the movies and lies about *your* age so he can buy you a cheaper ticket
 - You bought something at the store. The clerk gave you the wrong change: too much change.
 - What would you do? What might be the consequences of your actions, either way?
 - What would you do if the clerk gave you too little change? What’s the difference?
 - What if you were the clerk who gave the wrong change? What do you think would be the consequences of your mistake?

When no one’s watching and no one can see / I’m the one who’s got to live with me

5. Have you ever faced a moral dilemma? Describe it. What would you do, and why, if:
 - a. There’s been a lot of stress at home lately because money is tight. Just now, you saw a \$100 bill fall out of an elderly woman’s purse. You’re positive that no one else saw it.
 - b. You saw your friend Joe cheat on a test that pushed up his grade and got him on the honor roll. Now you’re taking a test in your worst subject. You have a chance to cheat. No one will know.
 - c. Your friend Liza told you she was one of three girls who put up a burn page on facebook that’s been tormenting Alicia. Liza swore you to secrecy. But Alicia is looking really depressed.