LIVING FROM THE INSIDE OUT
Leader Guide

Table of Contents

Introduction

The Living from the Inside Out Story
  Part I: Values and Principles
  Part II: Decisions, Decisions
  Part III: Connections
  Part IV: Life’s Amazing Journey
  Part V: Small Steps Toward Change

Discussion Questions and Activities

What We Need to Know

Vocabulary Words
Test scores. Team Sports. Technology. Today's teens face a competitive, complex, 24-7 existence. Perhaps it's no surprise that research from San Diego State University and the University of Georgia shows that kids exhibit four times greater the rate of depression and anxiety than the children of the 1930s.

Experts believe a cultural shift, with values placed by parents, school systems and communities on external outcomes and material success, may be the fuel for teen stress and anxiety. How can educators, parents and kids themselves redefine this race for reward?

The strength of an adolescent's inner life is often the best predictor of whether a child will be a happy, high-functioning adult and will make the healthy teen decisions about drug and alcohol use, bullying, and promiscuity – on and offline.

This Leader Guide, to accompany Living from the Inside Out, a DVD documentary, and the teen-authored text, Inside Out: Real Stories about the Inner Choices that Shape our Lives, can help guide the conversation in classrooms, in homes and in communities. Use these resources to refocus, recharge and learn to live from the inside out – with an emphasis on inner strength and timeless internal values.
Living from the Inside Out

Part I
Values and Principles

There’s a reality in everyday American life for teens today: The pressure of grades, test scores, extracurriculars like sports and dance and theater, volunteer work, college admissions – to name a few. And for kids, there’s another reality that did not exist for today’s adults. It’s a layer of competition that’s almost as important… Facebook. Twitter. YouTube. Social networks.

What are teens saying?

“Right, it’s like we’ve created a wormhole of reality, like it’s two separate dimensions almost, you have one life online and one life in person.”

“It’s real but it’s not real life. And that’s what people don’t understand. The pictures are real, the messages are real, but it’s not real life.”

“It’s just this little page that can change an entire perception of your relationship with other people.”

“If you go on Facebook and see a picture of four of your closest friends in this place that you have no idea where they were, what they were doing, you naturally think, “Where was I? Did they invite me? Like, what’s going on?”

“There’s not one minute where you’re not, where you’re not trying to measure up to something else, and how can you not be depressed if you’re so miserable with yourself and anxious be someone else?”

In fact, a study by San Diego State University finds that today’s high school and college students are more high-strung and stressed out than ever before -- that young people today report more anxiety and mental health problems than generations past.

“About two or three times as many college students now score very, very high on depression compared to students in the 1950s,” says Dr. Jean Twenge, Ph.D., San Diego State University psychology professor and the study’s lead author. “Students in college now score much higher on depression compared to students in a pretty difficult time in the 1930s and 40s when we had the Great Depression, significant economic problems, World War II, yet the students now seem to be saying that they feel more depressed and feel more anxiety compared to those students in the 1930s and 40s.”

Dr. W. Keith Campbell, Psychology Department Chairman at the University of Georgia, participated in the research, as well. He sees the role technology -- and the images people present online -- plays in teen depression.

“People are presenting the best images of themselves. When they’re kids, it’s going to be partying, it’s going to be stuff that’s cool, and you’re going to think, ‘I’m not doing that, everybody else is doing that but me.’ And that’s going to make you feel left out, it’s going to make you feel socially ostracized, and that leads to depression and dejection,” he says.

With 10 percent of the nation now taking anti-depressant medication, some experts see an “epidemic” of depression. But the question is… why? Some argue that the cause is a set of values that are now upside down.

On Facebook, for example, anybody can look rich, famous, and popular – with little effort required. In this world competition, materialism, and popularity reign supreme – a value system that appears to be invading the real world too.
“I think that somewhere in that kind of crazy, complex world, we’ve lost our way. We all care deeply about things like loyalty and trust and honor and friendship and connection and love and community. And... it’s funny, when we go out and talk to parenting groups, they use those words. But somehow we’re managing them to a very different outcome,” says Stacey DeWitt, founder and president, Connect with Kids.

Part II
Decisions, Decisions

“Basketball doesn't build character. It reveals it.”
-- Author Unknown

Basketball. It seems simple enough: a referee, a ball, and ten kids on a hardwood floor. But of course ... it isn’t.

For Chandler DeWitt. Basketball was a way of life. She started playing the game at the age of nine and loved it. Her mom remembers the excitement – and pride – of having Chandler’s talents recognized and pursued by coaches, even at a young age.

“When she was little and coaches began to say to me in both soccer and basketball, she needs to be in a competitive league, she has the opportunity to be really good at this sport. I was excited for her and wanted to give her that opportunity but I also have to admit that it felt pretty good, too,” says Stacey DeWitt, Chandler’s mom.

“I was playing JV basketball and I had to impress my varsity coach and I would be in the car on the way with my Mom and she would say ...’okay you know we’re not going to drive 30 minutes and pay all of this money if you are going to go out there and give it a half way effort. You have to go out there and give it your all,'” Chandler recalls.

And then Chandler got to high school, where expectations increased, competition intensified and coaches added early morning workouts.

“The practice started at 6 A.M. It was about the fourth one, and we were going through the stations of the exercises we were doing and we had just finished jump rope, and we were going to the basketball goal, and they had us hop onto three boxes and then jump up and touch the rim. I was so tired at this point that I could not get the rim, I was jumping as hard as I could, as high as I could, but I could not get that rim, and then my coach just started screaming at me and I just thought to myself, this is not where I want to be at all, at all, and I don’t want to be yelled at anymore.”

Chandler had a decision to make. She had spent six years of her life learning the game, perfecting her shot and trying to increase her speed. Her family, friends, coaches and teachers identified her as a basketball player. But Chandler was changing and learning to think for herself.

“I had lost the passion to do it. There wasn’t anything I was getting out of it that made it worthwhile. I wanted to branch out into other things, I had other interests, I was growing up as a person, and as you get older, you know, you see things you’ve never seen before that interest you and you say...’ooh, that looks kind of cool’ but I didn’t even have the option to get into that,” Chandler says.

The summer between high school graduation and the start of college, she wrote a book about her teen years, called Inside Out: Real Stories about the Inner Choices That Shape our Lives. The first chapter is about a turning point in her young life: The night, early in her sophomore year of high school, when she quit basketball.
“That night, I came home to my parents, and said, I can’t do this anymore. I’m tired, I don’t like it, I want to quit, and it was scary to go home and tell my parents that because we had invested so much time in it, and we had already quit soccer earlier,” Chandler says.

And how did her parents react?

“I was resistant all the way through, to be honest,” says Stacey DeWitt. “I struggled mightily with whether she would regret this decision, the time she had invested in it, whether or not she was old enough, whether or not she had the life experience to make this decision for herself, whether or not, um, it was going to be the beginning of a series of quitting.”

Chandler knows her parents were worried that just giving up and quitting was demonstrating the wrong value. Would it become a pattern?

“They wanted me to be a kid who would not stop at anything. No matter what you threw at her, she is going to work hard and she’s going to do the grunt work, and she’s going to get there because the outcome in the end is rewarding enough, but the thing is, that outcome in the end was not going to be rewarding enough for me,” Chandler says.

That question – when do you let kids quit? – is a challenge lots of parents face.

But ask a coach about kids who play for their parents… in time, the game becomes a wedge between the parent and the child.

“So maybe the back lash isn’t ‘I’m going to mess up on the court’ but ‘I’m not going to talk to you at dinner, I am not going to share with you dreams and ideas, we’re not going to have those good ol’ heart-to-hearts, we’re not going to do that,’” says Greg McClaire, a middle and high school basketball coach. “You know, I am going to be your employee, I am going to go score some points and we won’t have a relationship outside of that.”

Psychologists call it “boundary lines.” When a child walks out on the stage… or on the field… or onto the court… that’s not you out there… if they play well… or not… it is all about them, not their mom or dad. How many little kids… and older kids today are playing a sport… taking lessons…picking classes… making choices to please their parents… and not themselves? And, in the end, is that why some of them will fail?

“When we do things we don’t want to do that are extrinsic, that are sort of directed from the outside, we can do them. But they tire us out, burn us out and we don’t get that sense of enjoyment or joy,” says Dr. W. Keith Campbell.

Chandler was playing to meet other’s expectations. All of the external motivations simply would not sustain her.

But J.J. Mann, another teen, calls the gym his “happy place.” He plays for himself – his pursuit is not praise but passion.

“I wasn’t the most athletic. I wasn’t the strongest or the fastest and not the most talented. All the kids were better than me and I got down on myself very often. But I always worked hard. There’s not really a way to describe it. It’s just kind of the way you feel when you’re playing… it’s just that you’re happy… nothing else matters when you’re playing basketball, you’re just doing something you love,” J.J. Mann says about the time he spends on the basketball court. Now J.J. has earned a full scholarship to play basketball at a division one school.

The fact remains: The number of kids who are anxious and clinically depressed has tripled in recent years. Why? One answer may be the pressure to live a life not their own.

“I thought that you know, if I continue to do this, then four years from now, I’m going to be a wreck,” says Chandler DeWitt. “I know it because I’m going to start going other things to learn
how to cope with this stress of not being good enough, like alcohol and drugs, cause I have, I know tons of people who have done that, and I can honestly say that if I had not gotten out, I would have resorted to that just to get some sort of break mentally and emotionally.”

Chandler’s mom does not disagree.

“I think that if we had said no, I think we told Chandler that she couldn’t have quit, I think that we would have had a depressed and anxious child. I think we would have seen a downward spiral. I think that we would have been dealing with a kind of failure in our family, and a kind of failure of confidence for her,” says Stacey DeWitt.

After making the decision to quit basketball and try out other roles, the return of her confidence was one big benefit for Chandler.

“My self esteem was back because I was doing something that made me happy…that I felt that I was doing not for others, but for internal reasons,” she says.

Part III
Connections

“The strength of a nation derives from the integrity of a home.”
-- Confucius

Picture American life in the 1930s. The stock market fell by 90 percent. Over 25 percent of the nation was out of work. Almost half the banks in America failed. 3 million children quit school to find work.

It seems like a bleak picture, yet today, researchers have found that among young people, depression and anxiety are three times higher than the 1930s. What are teens saying about their existence?

“You’re always stressed out. You make achievements, but you never get to the top, because the bar just keeps rising,” says Meghan.

“I definitely feel like my parents don’t understand what my life is like and don’t have a concept of what an average day in my life is like,” says Josh.

“You’re competing with thousands of students nationwide,” says Charmaine.

The San Diego State University research finds teens believe that happiness comes with money, fame and material goods.

“Unfortunately, that is a formula for problems with mental health because people who have those extrinsic values and are thinking about gaining material wealth or fame those are difficult to obtain and you can never have enough, so those tend to lead to anxiety and depression,” says Jean Twenge, Ph.D., and professor at San Diego State University.

How best to guard against depression and anxiety? Dr. Twenge suggests it is the intrinsic values of social connectedness, too often missing in our online relationships of today.

“To have those close relationships that you value and that are very stable, and that seems to be what we’re missing now in modern life,” she says.
Experts say the best way to solve some of the challenges kids face today – bullying, drug and alcohol abuse, stress and anxiety, to name a few -- is to focus on internal values and help kids find a joy for learning.

“If you want a kid to be able to thrive through his or her whole life, to find something that will sustain him or her for the long haul, they’ve got to find something they love,” says W. Keith Campbell, Ph.D., University of Georgia. “Just go out in the community. Talk to every burned out attorney or accountant or professional… and there are lots of them out there, and they’re not living lives of joy. They might be socially successful, but it’s not necessarily life, lives of joy. Then think, do I want my kid to be that person?”

Where can kids find something they are “passionate about” …and develop “good relationships with other people?” One answer is in school.

PART IV
Life’s Amazing Journey

“Education is not the filling of a pail, but the lighting of a fire. “
-- W.B. Yeats

John is a big kid. He’s 6’3” tall, weighs in at 220 pounds … and yet he moves like a dancer. Of course, dancing wasn’t always the plan, not at first. When John was in elementary school he played a lot of sports.

“I think a big part of it was I was always the bigger kid in my class, and my parents were like play football, play basketball, play tennis, I mean I played every sport there was, I tried everything,” he says.

Some years John was named the most valuable player. Every year, he won trophies and awards.

“In seventh grade I was the all-star basketball player. Our coach voted that -- I had the most points per game. Then in eighth grade I guess I fell flat. My coach was like, ‘maybe he just peaked.’ But really, it was just that I didn’t care. I wasn’t trying at all,” John says.

John discovered something else. He loved to perform: acting, singing, dancing. And that exploration is exactly what is supposed to happen during the school years – the opportunity to explore.

“If you don’t let kids explore then you shut them down. It’s not uncommon, it’s actually normal and natural and very healthy for an adolescent to want to play trumpet for a couple of weeks, and then they want to play sports and then they’re into bugs, that’s what you’re supposed to do. And if they want something and will throw themselves into it and we allow them to go into that exploration process they alone will figure out a. what they’re good at and almost as importantly, b. what they’re not good at,” says Stacey DeWitt.

At one high school peer leadership training program, students are using Chandler Dewitt’s book Inside Out to help them think about values… and who they are. The training will help these seniors re-define how they will mentor freshmen… and change the culture of their school.

"I had my mom read the book and she said ‘Mikela, you definitely could’ve written this chapter yourself,’” Mikela says. She found Chandler’s experiences to be a reflection or her own experiences freshman and sophomore year.
“I’ve always kind of been like a sports guys,” says William, another peer leader participant. “I’ve always played a lot of sports but it wasn’t until probably this past year and the year before that I really found that from my English teachers… that I love words… I love poetry and writing.”

“I am a big science guy; on my own I developed a big passion for science and it just kind of went from there,” says Patrick.

Chandler DeWitt is now a college student at Highpoint University in North Carolina. Here and at many other universities educators are encouraging parents and students to re-assess the meaning of a good education. The president of Highpoint University, Dr. Nido Qubein, has been taking the lead, encouraging collegiates to do just that.

“When you come into an institution like High Point, and you learn and you follow the curriculum and you get the grades and then you graduate, great… that’s only training unless you change from the inside out. The word “education” comes from a Greek derivative “educo” which means to change from within,” says Dr. Qubein.

That’s an important point Chandler DeWitt hopes to convey to her readers.

“I think kids should live from the inside out, that’s the big message in the … you should live from your inner core, from your values, from what is true to you and project that everyone else,” Chandler says.

Plus, when it comes to managing stress and anxiety, we can’t discount the simple joy found in doing what we love.

“When I sing or dance or tumble or perform in anything… that’s the second home, that’s a home away from home… for me. You just live on stage… no pressures from school, no pressures from home… they just go away, they just melt,” says John.

PART V
Small Steps Toward Change

When examining teen stress and anxiety, what role does technology, with all of its benefits, play? On today’s social network, from the outside looking in, it all seems perfect: Smiling faces, pretty clothes, friends, fame and fun. It’s a virtual party – 24/7.

“New social networking websites are sort of very micro-level fame and micro-level celebrity for every kid. It’s just a very different world. It’s like reality TV. We watch and think it’s silly. A fourteen year old watches and thinks ‘that’s how the world is and that’s how I want it to be.’ So the age makes a big difference in these things," says W. Keith Campbell, Ph.D.

Technology can change a young person’s perceptions about what is real and what’s true. Kids don’t have the life experience … the emotional and social skills that adults have. How can they learn to navigate life? From the adults who care about them.

“If you want something that’s going to work in the long term, you focus on values, you focus on character, you focus on finding something you’re passionate about, finding something that you’re passionate about that helps society that makes the world a little better, that might not get them into Harvard though, so you’re, you’re taking a risk when you do that,” says W. Keith Campbell.

It may be risky but it’s critical, especially when we listen to kids talk about their future.

“I think our society can be happier in general, like a more elated kind of happiness where you’re not constantly anxious, and like, you’re happy now, but there’s something looming,” says Ellen.
“I think we might already be a society of mindless workers. I think, um, just like anxiety has increased among us, anxiety’s increasing among adults, too. I mean there’s a decline in family life, there’s a decline in happiness, I think there’s just so much pressure going back to the media,” says Alex.

Alex found a place where the pressure goes away -- in his love of music. For parents and teachers there is a challenge: To find a balance between external rewards, like grades and s.a.t. scores, and internal values… like character, resilience, curiosity, and a passion for learning.

“We’ve sent kids to Harvard, and Yale, and Dartmouth… but to me, that’s not the ultimate goal, the mission of the school. The mission of the school is to complete the whole person,” says Sharon Coheley, a teacher at The Marist School in Atlanta.

This shift in values is a mighty task. Cultural change can be small, and measured in very small ways – one person, one family at a time.

“When the parents and when communities begin to pull together around shared value systems and shared principles and common goals they can begin to change cultures. Are they going to change over night? Absolutely not, but the reality is that we have to try,” says Stacey DeWitt.
Discussion Questions

Part I
Values and Principles

• One of the teens in the documentary says that teenage life today is “like two separate dimensions… you have one life online and one in person.” Do you agree? Do you think that this perspective is shared by teens and adults, alike? How do your “online” and “in person” lives differ? In what ways are they the same?

• If you are on Facebook, how to you feel when you see others’ posts and photos? What do your online posts and photos say about you?

• The documentary refers to research from San Diego State University that finds that college students exhibit higher rates of depression compared to students in the 1930s, ‘40s and ‘50s. Think about what you know about your grandparents and parents. In what ways do you think teenage life has changed through the decades? What challenges are different? What challenges and problems are similar? How have the ways we deal with those challenges changed? What has remained the same?

• Stacey DeWitt talks about the seemingly universal hopes and aspirations parents have for their children. Parents, if asked to list the qualities or traits your child will have when he or she graduates from high school, what attributes would be on your list? Students, how do you hope to describe yourself upon your graduation from high school? How do the attributes on those lists compare?
Activity
The Rearview Mirror

Project and Purpose
Students will review undesirable behaviors and assess how attitudes about those behaviors and values have changed over the last 50 years. As part of the process, they will describe and assess their personal beliefs and values – and how they are demonstrated today.

Materials
How Is It Viewed Worksheet

Procedure

1. Divide the class into groups of three students. Distribute one copy of the How Is It Viewed? Worksheet to each student.

2. Write the following questions on the board or overhead, and ask students to use the questions as a guide for group discussion about the behaviors listed on their worksheets.
   - How does society view the behaviors today?
   - How do you think people viewed the behaviors 50 years ago?
   - Are the consequences of the behaviors different today than they were 50 years ago?

3. After allowing time for groups to discuss the behaviors, have students individually record their thoughts about each behavior by completing the How Is It Viewed? worksheet. While students’ answers might be similar, but they should not match word for word. It is important that each student lists his or her personal feelings about each behavior.

4. After students complete the How Is It Viewed? worksheet, compare their responses during a class discussion.

5. Instruct students to return to their original groups and write a summary of the group members’ feelings. Remind students to answer the following questions in their summaries:
   - Has our society become more relaxed in its views regarding certain behaviors, or has it become more critical? Explain.
   - Why do you think society’s reaction to certain behaviors might change over time?
   - Which individuals are affected by each behavior? Are the consequences they experience different now rather than 50 years ago? Explain.
How Is It Viewed?

Cheating, lying and stealing. While these concerns are timeless, the ways these behaviors are viewed have changed through the decades. How did society react to these behaviors 50 years ago? Discuss the ten behaviors listed below with your group members, and then record your own feelings in the space provided. Elaborate on your answers, and use complete sentences.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Behavior</th>
<th>Today</th>
<th>50 Years Ago</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Lying</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Cheating</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Shoplifting or stealing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Disrespecting an adult or teacher</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Teasing or taunting a peer at school</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Showing prejudice against someone</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Promoting a conviction</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Burning the American flag</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Smoking on school grounds</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Taking illegal drugs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Part II
Decisions, Decisions

Discussion Questions

• Chandler DeWitt shares her story about playing basketball and ultimately deciding that she just didn’t have the passion and commitment to play any longer. How does Chandler’s decision to quit relate to a decision that you have had to make? What can you learn from Chandler’s experience?

• Chandler’s parent, Stacey DeWitt, said she “struggled mightily with whether Chandler would regret her decision.” Why do you think parents are concerned about allowing their children to quit? What are the benefits of quitting? What are the risks?

• The documentary refers to external motivations versus internal motivations. How would you distinguish the two? What motivates you?

• The segment begins with the quote, “Basketball doesn’t build character. It reveals it.” (Author Unknown.) What does it mean to you? What experience has helped reveal your character?
Activity
My Cup Runneth Over

Project and Purpose
Living a life that is overflowing, bursting at the seams can be a constant challenge, but learning to adjust and enjoy the ride makes all the difference. Students will compare the overflow of a glass of water to the overflow of stress in daily life, think about the stress in their daily lives and offer healthy ways to deal with stress.

Materials
Black/white board or overhead projector
Empty drinking glass
Clear overflow container in which to place the glass
Pitcher of water
Sponge (should fit inside the glass)

Procedure
1. Introduce the term stress and have your students define it. Ask them to create a list of stressful situations or events and other causes of stress. They can be real or imaginary. Step away from the list, pick up the pitcher of water and ask: Which of these stressful events have you personally experienced?

2. As the students share each stressful event and/or activity, repeat what the child says and pour a little water into the drinking glass.

3. As the water reaches the rim of the glass, ask the following questions and emphasize the parallel between the water in the glass and the stress we encounter on a daily basis:
   - What has caused the water to reach this level?
   - What will cause this glass to overflow?
   - How can we avoid letting the water in our glasses get to this point?

4. As students continue sharing their daily stresses, add water to the glass until it begins to overflow.
   - Point out that just one big event did not cause the glass to overflow; it was the accumulation of many small events.
   - Many times, the water level may not reach the rim of the glass, but a major event like divorce, a death in the family or a major accident can push the water over the edge.

5. Ask the following questions:
   - While removing water from the glass would prevent it from overflowing, what could you remove from your life to keep it from "overflowing"?
   - What are some of the ways that you manage your everyday stressors so that you don’t reach the "overflowing" point?

6. With a sponge, soak up as much water out of the glass as you can. Explain: the water in the sponge is like stress in your body
   - What can you do in order to remove the water from the sponge?
   - How does this action parallel the elimination of stress?

7. Wring out the sponge, and ask students to answer the following questions:
   - How would it feel to wring the stress out of your lives?
   - What are some ways to wring the stress out of your life on a daily basis?

8. As an assignment, have the students write another journal entry on ways they can relieve stress in their lives.
Part III
Connections

Discussion Questions

• One of the teens in the documentary states, "You’re always stressed out. You make achievements, but you never get to the top because the bar just keeps rising." What causes you stress? Who do you look to for support?

• What do you deem important in life… material objects, popularity and fame or strength of character? Which you do think society values more?

• Dr. Jean Twenge, a professor at San Diego State University, states, “social connectedness is the best way to guard against becoming depressed… close relationships that are stable seems to be what we are missing in modern life.” Who do you feel connected to? What helps you feel connected? Who do you think feels connected to you? What are some ways you could become more connected to others – your friends? To your community? To your family?

• This segment begins with this quote from Confucius: “The strength of a nation derives from the integrity of a home.” What does this quote mean to you? What are the source(s) of your strength?
Part III
Activity

Connect the Dots

Project and Purpose
Participants will think about the person that they would like to become and the people, the connections, that have influenced – and will continue to influence them along the way.

Materials
Connect with Dots Worksheet

Procedure
1. Begin the activity by asking participates to list words that describe the kind of person you would like to become. Remind students to make a list of adjectives that could define who (not what) you would like to be!

2. Use the Connect the Dots worksheet to identify the people and important connections you have made – and want to continue to make – in order to achieve those goals. Who and what experiences will help you along the way. Connect the dots. What image have you created?
Part IV
Life’s Amazing Journey
Discussion Questions

• In the documentary, John describes his passion for acting. Patrick discovered a love for science. For William, it is poetry and writing. Have you found a passion? What might you like to try?

• What obstacles might you encounter on your journey to find your passion and motivation? How might those challenges be overcome?

• Chandler DeWitt spoke about living from “your inner core, from your values, what is true to you….” How would you define your inner core? How would you define “being true to you?”

• This segment begins with this quote: “Education is not the filling of a pail, but the lighting of a fire.” -- W.B. Yeats What does this mean to you? Do you believe that the environment at your school helps light your fire? What might you change?
Activity
A-Maze Me!

Project and Purpose
Working either in groups or individually, participants will think about the journey they have taken – and will continue to take – throughout their school years in order to become the person they hope to be.

Materials
A-Maze Me! Worksheet

Procedure
1. Ask participants to think about the challenges, the triumphs, the accomplishments and the failures they have experienced so far in their middle or high school years. Ask, who has helped you along the way? Who and what has challenged you along the way? Where else do you hope the maze will lead?

2. Divide participants into groups of three or four, or have participants complete the A-Maze Me Worksheet individually. Ask that they look at the maze and first identify and describe a beginning point and an ending point (i.e., the first day of freshman year and graduation day from high school). Then ask participants to populate the maze, with written descriptions and illustrations, of challenges and triumphs they have either experienced or anticipate to experience along they way. Be sure to include the roadblocks!
Activity
What’s Your Passion?

Project and Purpose
Participants will research, evaluate and report on opportunities in their community to try out new activities and learn about a personal passion.

Procedure
1. To begin this exercise, discuss with participants that when you believe in something strongly, it becomes your passion. Ask participants what topics they are – or might be – passionate about.

2. Assign students to individually research to find an issue about which they are passionate. Ideally, it should be an issue with global relevance. Examples of passions might be:
   - Preventing animal cruelty
   - Feeding the hungry
   - Working with those who are less fortunate
   - Working with the disabled or elderly
   - Preserving wildlife
   - Protecting a person’s right to vote

3. Have students write short reports about their passions. Each report must include these details:
   - Why students support this particular belief
   - What resources are out there
   - How students might help support the cause

4. Have students develop a slogan representing how they feel about their passions. They will need to incorporate their slogans with their research to create posters. On each poster, students will need to promote an organization they researched that supports their cause. They must include the following information on their posters:
   - Organization’s name
   - Physical address
   - Email address
   - Web address
   - Phone number
   - Founder
   - Organization’s history
   - How to get involved

5. Instruct students to present their posters and reports orally to the class. Remind them that they are advocating their beliefs in order to encourage others to become involved. Allow time for students to ask questions after each presentation.

6. Hang students’ posters around the room so that the whole class can learn about each cause.
Activity
Expand Your World: Community Service

Project and Purpose
Participants will research opportunities and create a community service project for the greater good.

Procedure
1. Divide the participants into groups of four students. Explain that they will work together within each group to form their own community-service program.
2. To start, have each group research an area either within its residential or school community that needs volunteer help in some way. Areas of improvement might include the following:
   - A littered local park or campus
   - A reading program for young children
   - A way to help keep the air clean
   - A way to help an elderly neighbor
3. After groups choose an area of service, they will need to generate initial service plans. Within this plan, students will need to include the service they will provide and how they will implement it. Note: Actually implementing the plan will come later and should have the approval of all associated parties, as well as the students’ parents.
4. Students’ plans must address the following questions:
   - What community service will you be providing?
   - Why is there a need?
   - How will you administer your plan?
   - What is the focus of your program?
   - Who will it help or benefit?
   - How will you acquire the support you need?
   - Who will volunteer their time?
   - What is the desired outcome of your program?
5. Have each group present its community-service program to the class. Tell students to treat their presentations as if they were pitching their ideas to an approval committee. Encourage them to use pictures, descriptions or drawings during their presentations.

Extension: Encourage groups to implement their community-service programs with the approval of all associated parties, as well as students’ parents. Each group must fulfill a total of at least 10 hours. Group members will need to keep a personal log of their time and service performed. After completing their service hours, students will summarize their outcomes and report to the class.
Part V
Small Steps

Discussion Questions

• Reality TV. Social networking sites. What messages does society send about life today? Who sends them to you?

• What does it mean to you to live life from the inside out?

• What small steps can you take – as a student, a teacher, a parent, a family, a class – to change today’s reward-driven culture in order to help “complete the whole person?” How would those changes help individuals? How would those changes benefit your community? How might they help society as a whole?
Activity
Pencil This In

Project and Purpose
Participants will step back and review their schedules to reassess priorities, the way time is spent and work to include down time, spent alone or with others, in their schedule.

Materials
Pencil This In Calendar Worksheet

Procedure
We have become a multi-tasking society – with cell phones, computers, schedules and activities that keep us on the go 24/7. Generally, most people use the word stress to refer to negative experiences that leave us feeling overwhelmed by this non-stop level of activity. One way to reduce stress and recapture control is to unplug… to simply take time to do nothing.

Take a look at your schedule to determine what you can eliminate. Pressure to do everything you "should" do can cause significant stress. Sit down and schedule some unscheduled blocks of time to spend with friends, with family or alone – with nothing in particular planned.
What We Need to Know

About Teen Decision-Making…
It is during the teen years – more than any other stage of life – that choices are made that will have more impact on how long you will live into adulthood and how well. According to the CDC Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance Survey, behaviors that contribute to the leading causes of morbidity and mortality include unintentional injuries and violence, tobacco use, alcohol and other drug use, sexual behaviors, unhealthy diets and inadequate physical activity. It is during the teen years that decisions and choices are made regarding those behaviors, forming lifestyle patterns that carry well into adulthood.

About Teen Depression and Anxiety…
Levels of teen depression and anxiety – and problems like drugs, alcohol and bullying -- are symptoms of a bigger issue. Researchers at San Diego State University examining reports on teenage mental health and personality traits dating back to the 1930’s, identified significant increases in mood-related mental health concerns among modern adolescents through the year 2007. The findings, published in the March 2010 Clinical Psychology Review, culled from responses to a popular psychological questionnaire used as far back as 1938, confirm what counselors on campuses nationwide have long suspected as more students struggle with the stresses of school and life in general.

Today, teens may have hundreds of Facebook friends and share hundreds of daily online text messages, yet teens are also more likely to report feeling sad, worried or disappointed with life in general than their predecessors – voicing a sense of emotional instability and personal isolation. Overall, an average of five times as many students in 2007 surpassed thresholds in one or more mental health categories, including stress, anxiety and depression, compared with those who did so in 1938.

Although the study does not provide a definitive correlation, Twenge and mental health professionals speculate that a popular culture increasingly focused on the external — from wealth to looks and status — has contributed to the uptick in mental health issues.

About Cultural Change and the Power of Peers… The Mutual Aid Model
The power of one’s peer group as a vehicle for solving problems is an identified approach that emerged from the field of social work known as the Mutual Aid Model. The peer group provides a forum for trying out new behaviors; giving and receiving feedback; providing positive support; and, most important, learning to help and support others through the aid of a trusted adult. It takes advantage of the positive roles that peers can play in working together to find new solutions to old problems.

An important component of the Mutual Aid Model is the realization that one is not alone in his or her thoughts, feelings, and emotions. There is something special in hearing others articulate similar feelings and experiences. While it is important for students to have support from their peer group and adults, it is not sufficient to create change in behavior or intention to change. Research shows behavior/attitude changes occur when students have information and learn new skills. Developing “new attitude and behaviors” may first need “old ideas and behaviors” to be questioned and evaluated. Adolescents are in a good position to confront and challenge each other’s thoughts and assumptions and create cultural change – one person at a time.

Resources
San Diego State University Study on Teen Depression -- http://www.usatoday.com/news/education/2010-01-12-students-depression-anxiety_N.htm
The Mutual Aid Model
CDC Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance Survey
Vocabulary Word List

1. Adversity
2. Aggression
3. Behavior
4. Challenge
5. Character
6. Choice
7. Commitment
8. Confident
9. Connection
10. Consequence
11. Courage
12. Defeat
13. Destiny
14. Empathy
15. Greed
16. Irresponsible
17. Motivating
18. Passion
19. Perseverance
20. Prestige
21. Resilience
22. Role model
23. Self-centered
24. Social network
25. Values
**Adversity**  
Definition: (n.) a situation in which a person has many problems that seem to be caused by bad luck; misfortune  
Context: The chess team had to overcome adversity after its star player developed pneumonia before the biggest competition of the year.

**Aggression**  
Definition: (n.) the state of exhibiting angry or threatening behavior or feelings that often result in fighting  
Context: Several studies suggest that watching violent acts on television shows encourages aggression in children.

**Behavior**  
Definition: (n.) the way that a person or animal does or says things; conduct  
Context: The students’ unacceptable behavior during the pep rally resulted in the cancellation of all future schoolwide assemblies.

**Challenge**  
Definition: (n.) something that by its nature or character serves as a call to battle, contest, special effort  
Context: Staying positive in difficult time offers a special kind of challenge.

**Character**  
Definition: (n.) the particular combination of qualities that makes someone a certain kind of person  
Context: Henry’s strong sense of honor, duty and responsibility define his personal character.

**Choice**  
Definition: (n.) a selection made between two or more things  
Context: Students have the choice of taking volleyball or weightlifting in order to satisfy their physical education requirements.

**Commitment**  
Definition: (n.) a pledge or promise to do something or to behave in a particular way  
Context: Many students make the commitment to volunteer a certain number of hours each month.

**Confident**  
Definition: (adj.) marked by assurance and success  
Context: Juan’s confident nature was evident when he delivered his campaign speech in front of the entire student body.

**Connection**  
Definition: (n) an act or state of connecting; an association, relationship, a circle of friends or associates or a member of such a circle  
Context: Lindsay needed to express her honest emotions in order to form a real connection with her parents.

**Consequence**  
Definition: (n.) something that happens as a result of a particular action or situation  
Context: The accident was the consequence or texting while driving.
**Courage**
**Definition:** (n.) the quality of being brave when facing danger, pain, difficulty, etc.
**Context:** It takes a lot of courage to stand up to a group of friends when you disagree with their opinions.

**Defeat**
**Definition:** (n) an instance of defeat; setback
**Context:** He considered his defeat a personal affront.

**Destiny**
**Definition:** (n.) a collection of events that will occur in the future, especially events that cannot be changed or controlled
**Context:** In *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy, Frodo Baggins cannot escape his destiny to destroy a powerful ring that allows the bearer to enslave the people of Middle-Earth.

**Empathy**
**Definition:** (n.) understanding; the ability to enter into another person’s feelings
**Context:** When a person demonstrates empathy, he puts himself in another person’s shoes to learn how that person feels or acts.

**Greed**
**Definition:** (n.) a strong desire for more money, power, possessions, etc., than a person needs
**Context:** The investor’s greed for money led to his ultimate downfall when the stock market crashed.

**Irresponsible**
**Definition:** (adj.) behaving carelessly without thinking or worrying about the possible bad results
**Context:** Allie’s irresponsible posting of inappropriate photos online had a negative impact on her reputation.

**Motivate**
**Definition:** (v.) to make someone want to achieve something and make him or her willing to work hard in order to do it
**Context:** Mr. Alderon’s unwavering patriotism and love for his country motivated his students to recite the Pledge of Allegiance with pride.

**Passion**
**Definition:** any powerful or compelling emotion or feeling, a strong or extravagant fondness, enthusiasm, or desire for something
**Context:** Lauren developed a passion for classical music.

**Perseverance**
**Definition:** (n.) the quality of sticking to a task, purpose or goal
**Context:** Cleo’s perseverance was the key to her success in learning how to ride a horse.
**Prestige**
**Definition:** (n.) the respect and importance that a person, organization or profession has, because of his or her high position in society or the quality of his or her work
**Context:** Some of the citizens are worried that the current scandal involving the vice president will damage his prestige and international reputation.

**Resilience**
**Definition:** the power or ability to return to the original form; ability to recover from adversity
**Context:** Justin showed resilience by joining another league when he didn’t make the team.

**Role model**
**Definition:** (n.) someone who has behaviors, attitudes, etc., that people try to copy because they admire them; a person who is worthy of imitation
**Context:** Many professional athletes serve as role models for school-age children who want to become successful athletes.

**Self-centered**
**Definition:** (adj.) interested only in oneself and not really caring what is happening to other people
**Context:** Jack’s friends think he is self-centered because he always chooses which movie they watch instead of asking for their opinions.

**Social Network**
**Definition:** (n.) a software-based community that shares common interests or activities, on which one can send, post or read online messages and images
**Context:** Maintaining my social network is a time-consuming task.

**Values**
**Definition:** (n.) principles about what is right and wrong; ideas about what is important in life; personal standards
**Context:** Trent’s strong sense of values helped him make the right decision when his friends asked him to spray-paint graffiti on the side of the grocery store.