

Activity 1

Make a list of some things you couldn't do last year but you can do now because you are older.

Have your parents given you new privileges or responsibilities?

Are you allowed to do some things now that you couldn't do before? Go to more places on your own or with friends?

Do you get more pocket money or perhaps earn money for the first time?

Are you better at a sport, or a hobby, or an activity?

Has your writing or artistic ability improved?

Activity 2 A

Read and think about this.

'Habit'

I am your constant companion. I am your greatest helper or heaviest burden.

I will push you onwards or drag you down to failure. I am completely at your command. Half the things you do you might just as well leave to me and I will be able to do them quickly and correctly.

I am easily managed—all you have to do is be firm with me. Show me exactly how you want something done and after a little practice I will do it for you. I am the servant of all great men; and alas, of all failures as well. Those who are great, I have made great. Those who are failures, I have made failures.

I am not a machine, though I work with great precision and have the intelligence of a man. You may use me for profit or run me for ruin—it makes no difference to me.

Take me, train me, be firm with me, and I will place the world at your feet. Be easy on me and I will destroy you. WHO AM I? I AM HABIT!

Anonymous

Activity 2 B

1. Part of taking responsibility is working out how much you can and can't do in a given period of time. Have you ever 'bitten off more than you could chew'? Even grown-ups do this sometimes.
2. Why was Alice uncomfortable about having to go to adults (her teacher and her aunt) and admit that she was doing more than she could do well? Were the adults kind to her?
3. Was Alice's decision about how to spend the money she'd earned a wise one?
4. Did you think Alice's parents were too easy on her when her marks went down? Were they too harsh? Or just about right?
5. Was the student uncomfortable asking the famous Professor Van Allen to let her drop out of his course? Was he kind to her?

Activity 2C—King Alfred the Great

Read and find out more about Alfred the Great.

King Alfred is considered one of the greatest kings ever, earning the epithet 'the Great'. When the Danes were attacking England, though, he suffered great defeats. His army scattered, and he himself escaped to an island to hide. He sought shelter in a farmer's cottage. The farmer was not at home, but the wife agreed to give him dinner if he would watch the 'cakes' on the stove while she went outside briefly. (These are likely to have been something like pancakes, cooked directly on the hob.) While watching the cakes, Alfred became absorbed in his worries about the kingdom. Soon the cakes started burning, and the cottage filled full of smoke. The farmer's wife came in, shouting and scolding. Then the farmer came in and recognised the King. He told his wife to stop scolding the King, but the King said she was right to do so—he had said he would watch the cakes and had failed to carry out his responsibility. King Alfred went on to win many battles and the respect of future generations.

The moral of this story is that no responsibility, once undertaken, is too insignificant to ignore. The person who is faithful in small things will be faithful in

large things, too. King Alfred's acceptance of the farmer's wife's scolding shows that he believed in this too. That was probably part of his greatness.

Activity 3A

What do you think?

A karate instructor who was a twelfth-degree black belt once told his students, "The hardest thing I ever did was walk away from a fight." He had grown up in a tough neighbourhood and had been fighting all his life. When he discovered karate, he realised that fighting should only be for self-defence. The tough guys from his neighbourhood did not realise that, though. What do you suppose they thought of him when he wouldn't fight? Would they have thought him a 'wimp'? What kind of strength does it take not to fight?

Activity 3B

Try saying only nice things for just one hour—nothing sarcastic or complaining, or critical of someone else. Is it easy or difficult? If it was easy, try it for two hours or a whole day. You might want to write a small report about this or make an entry in your journal.

Activity 4

Some fears are natural—fear of being in an accident, fear of getting hurt, getting ill, losing someone you love. Others are more in the mind—speaking in public, for instance.

What are some of your fears?

How do you handle them?

Do you think an adult might help you face up to your fears with wise advice and encouragement?

Do you go to such adults when you are frightened?

Activity 5

Charlie had to sacrifice his own personal success for the good of others. Have you ever had a personal goal that seemed at odds with something you were asked to do for others—the needs of your family perhaps? What did you do? How did things turn out?

Activity 9

Do students like Mary and Rosa in this story?

Do they like Alice, Charlie and Tiffany?

What did they think of the girls who followed whatever Mary and Rosa said, even if they didn't agree with them?

What did Charlie think of these other girls?

Activity 11

Honesty	regard for the standards of one's position, profession, or calling
Honour	loyalty; stability; firmness
Integrity	fairness; conformity to truth
Steadfastness	incorruptibility; ability to be true to a trust, responsibility or pledge
Justice	reliability; trustworthiness
Dependability	a refusal to lie, steal, or deceive

Activity 13

Think of some better ways of asking people to do the following things:

"Do the dishes!"

"Stop pestering the dog—now!"

"Turn the TV off this instant!"

"Get off the phone!"

"Stop standing in the doorway!"

Activity 14

1. Have you ever pre-judged an old person based on their physical weaknesses? Did you discover that there was more to the person than met the eye?
2. Has an old person ever played an important role in your life, giving you love and/or advice?
3. How does Charlie's attitude towards old people change over the course of the story?

Activity 15

Are you a loyal friend? Take this test and see.

(Answer Yes/No)

1. I stand up for my friend even if it means bucking the crowd and risking my own 'cool' image.
2. I never tell my friend's secrets to others (unless my friend or someone else is in danger or trouble because of those secrets).
3. If I say I am going to do something with or for my friend, I try very hard to do it, even if it's not what I want to do at that moment.
4. I'm honestly happy when something good happens to my friend.
5. I'm honestly sad if something bad happens to my friend.
6. I try to forgive my friends their shortcomings.
7. My friends and I can disagree about something and still respect each other's opinions.
8. I stand up for my friends if they're criticised or when they are not there to defend themselves.
9. If my friend needs me, I put my own interests aside to help him or her.
10. I've had the same friend or friends for years.

Activity 18

Where in the story in Chapter 18 can you find these virtues?

Kindness

Understanding

Trust

Self-sacrifice

Helping others

Consideration

Hope

Belief that things can change

Belief in each other's goodness

Responsibility

Duty

Commitment

Activity 19

How Good Are You at Keeping Promises?

1. Your third-best friend asks you to go bowling. You've got nothing to do, so you agree. Then your best friend asks you to go to a cool movie at the same time. Do you:
 - a. Call your third-best friend and say you are sick.
 - b. Call your third-best friend and say something has come up and you can't go on Friday night.
 - c. Tell your first-best friend that you'd love to go, but that you already promised to do something with someone else that evening.

2. Your teacher is staying late, and you have told her that you will go home and fetch your comprehension test. When you get home, though, your favourite TV programme is on. Time ticks away until it is almost too late to get back to school with your test. You:
 - a. Call the teacher and tell her your mum won't let you walk back to school.
 - b. Run to the school as fast as you can.
 - c. Call the teacher and apologise and accept the consequences.

3. You said you would clean your room before going to the park. You put it off, though, and now your friend is at the door, ready to go to the park. You:
 - a. Tell your friend you need to clean your room.
 - b. Figure you'll do it quickly after the park, before your mum sees it.
 - c. Think your mum will understand why you put it off.

Activity 21

Good luck? bad luck? Who knows? Have you ever found that what looked like bad luck wasn't, after all?

There was once a wise man in ancient China. He was poor, but he had a beautiful horse. Everyone admired his horse and said how fortunate he was to have it. One night, the horse ran away. Oh, how unfortunate, everyone said. Not necessarily, the wise man thought—let's see.

In fact, the next day the horse came back with a whole stable-full of horses, all as beautiful and strong as he was.

Everyone said that this was great good fortune, but the wise man kept an open mind. His wisdom showed when his son broke his leg after falling off one of the horses as he was riding.

Everyone said that this was terribly bad luck, but the wise man said it might not be so unlucky after all. In fact, war came to China and all the young men went off to fight and died except the wise man's son, who was excused because of his broken leg.

Activity 22

Situation A: Every time Jenny watched figure-skating on TV, she wanted to be an Olympic figure-skater. But she was already fifteen and she had never skated before. Given that most Olympic stars have been practising since they were much younger than fifteen and that Jenny had no talent for skating, was her dream realistic?

Situation B: Jamie wanted to be a lawyer. He loved the idea of helping make sure justice was done. His teachers said he had great comprehension and speaking skills and a real eye for detail. He found out about scholarships and tried to get the necessary grades. He went to a local firm of solicitors and asked what he needed to do. He got a part-time job to save up for law school. Given Jamie's talents, his strong desire and his willingness, do you think his is a realistic dream?

Activity 23

Have you noticed any of the signs of puberty Alice and Charlie are experiencing in this chapter in yourself? Do you feel the same way they did about those changes? Reflect on similarities and differences, drawing a Venn diagram between yourself and Charlie, for boys, and yourself and Alice, for girls. You might draw one for physical similarities and differences, and one for emotional similarities and differences. (This is for your eyes only!)

Activity 24

Keeping a diary or journal is a wonderful way to keep track of the changes you are going through day by day and month by month, and to articulate your feelings about them. It is useful for self-reflection. Sometimes, in writing, things come out more clearly, and you understand yourself better.

Activity 25

Enforcing Boundaries

What could Mary have said to the boys the first time they teased her?

1. "Say that again, and I'll go to the Headteacher."
2. "Keep your distance, or I'll report you."
3. "Why don't you grow up?"

Some of these things may seem a little rude, but there is a difference between being rude and being assertive.

Sometimes assertiveness alone can stop someone from crossing the line into our personal boundaries. Being alone with someone of the opposite sex in a dark place is a potentially explosive situation. While Mary defended herself from her aggressors, she could have done more to avoid the problem in the first place.

Activity 26

From the story, find the correct answers:

1. A hormone secreted by the brain that starts the process of puberty is called:
 - a. luteinizing hormone
 - b. follicle-stimulating hormone
 - c. gonadotropin-releasing hormone
 - d. testosterone
2. All of the following are characteristics of puberty except:
 - a. voice changes in boys
 - b. acne
 - c. increased weight
 - d. rheumatoid arthritis
3. Exercise during puberty is
 - a. undesirable
 - b. dangerous
 - c. healthy and helpful.
 - d. too much of a strain on an already over-tired body
4. Puberty may begin as early as:
 - a. five years old in girls; seven years old in boys
 - b. fifteen in girls; seventeen in boys
 - c. eight in girls; ten in boys
 - d. it begins at the age of twelve in both sexes
5. Voice changes in boys can be cured by:
 - a. practising singing scales
 - b. strength of will
 - c. time
 - d. taking hormone shots
6. Puberty is:
 - a. a time when there are serious medical problems
 - b. a natural time of physical transformation from childhood to adulthood
 - c. a time when many people find themselves to be abnormal
 - d. a time when physical changes take place in exactly the same way and at exactly the same time among all children.

7. Hormones are:

- a. natural body chemicals
- b. injections the doctor will give you
- c. small time-release capsules you take orally
- d. brain waves

Activity 27A

There is a 'flip-side' to moodiness, like the other side of a coin. When you feel moody, think what good can come out of it.

Example 1: I feel sad when I see homeless people in the street.

List three things you can do to help the situation.

Example 2: I feel angry that my parents don't understand me.

Study communications techniques and then role-play different situations.

Example 3: I feel lonely

The best way to make friends is to be a friend. Instead of waiting for someone to call you, call your friends. Join a club at school. Write a letter to a relative who lives in another area, or make arrangements to give a party. Make a list of other ways to get in contact with people in a beneficial way.

Activity 27B

- a. A boy wants to play football but his mother is worried that he'll get hurt.
- b. A girl wants her parents to get her a mobile.
- c. A boy wants to be allowed to play outside later than he is allowed to.
- d. A girl wants to be allowed to wear more make-up.
- e. A boy or girl wants more pocket money (or to receive pocket money).

Activity 28A

Read the following and see how these relate to things that you may have felt.

Taking things step by step helps build patience. Believing that 'every cloud has a silver lining' is a good way to be patient with difficult situations.

Another way to be patient with your situation is to sympathise with someone who is less fortunate than you are. Charlie had a homeless cat who was within a hair's breadth of death, who couldn't be allowed to go out either.

Charlie could have compared himself with Anne Frank, the twelve-year-old author of a diary that was found after her death. Anne's family was in hiding from the Nazis for over a year. They had to be quiet all day long in a confined place and they lived in fear of discovery. Anne contented herself with writing in her diary, and her diary has been an inspiration to countless people ever since.

Activity 28B

Psychologist Steven Stosney gives a three-step model for converting negative feelings like irritability into interest and enjoyment.

Step 1: Validate the feeling. (Identify and name it: "I feel irritable.")

Step 2: Experience it momentarily.

Step 3: Change it into interest or enjoyment by:

- a. telling yourself it is OK to experience interest and enjoyment
- b. rewarding yourself for accomplishing interest and enjoyment.

Think about this example:

Scenario: I'm irritated that my brother is watching his favourite TV programme when I want to watch something else.

Step 1: I am irritable.

Step 2: I really want my programme, but I can't have it—that's a stupid programme he's watching, anyway.

Step 3:

- a. The programme is only a half hour long. Why don't I go and read the magazine in my room—I've been looking forward to reading it.
- b. I'm glad I can do something so interesting. My favourite programme is on after my brother's. That will be good. I'm glad I have more than one interest.

Activity 28C

1. Someone is in front of your locker and you want them to get out of the way. Instead of saying "Move!" you tell yourself:

.....
.....

2. A teacher seems to be forgetting a lot lately and losing things. Instead of blaming and accusing him or her of being stupid, you think:

.....
.....

3. Your mum says she can't help you with your homework. Instead of thinking she's being mean, you think:

.....
.....

4. Your dad tells you to turn the volume down on the TV. Instead of thinking he's an old fogey, you think:

.....
.....

Activity 29A

You have a ton of homework, your mum has chores lined up for you, and your room is such a mess you can't find the things you need. You feel pressurised and want to yell at the world. Choose an effective method of dealing with all this:

1. Decide to do some work, then reward yourself, more work, then reward yourself. Start small and build up, resting in between.
2. Go out and tell that your mother angrily that she should help you clean up your room, help you do your homework, and that she should do the chores herself to take pressure off you.
3. Watch a really exciting, stimulating movie (preferably an action film) to take your mind off things.

Activity 30A

Your dad is yelling at you for starting the car with his keys while you were waiting for him. What might your dad really be feeling? Is he really worried about your safety? What kinds of things might he be imagining might happen?

Activity 30B

Your mum comes into your room. She says, "I'm sorry I accused you of taking money out of my purse without asking. I forgot that I said you could take some lunch money for school. I don't want you to get in the habit of going in my purse, but I shouldn't have been cross with you." Which of these are good responses:

- a. "That's OK, Mum. I know you want to teach me good standards."
- b. "Well, I'm sick and tired of you yelling when you don't know what's what!"
- c. "That's OK, Mum. Only I wish you'd give me a little more time to explain before you yell at me."
- d. "Take your money then—you care more about money than you do about me!"

Rules for the mirror technique

- a. The one who feels strongest about the conflict starts.
- b. He or she sends 'I' messages about how he or she was affected emotionally (keeping statements short!)
- c. The other person reflects back what the first person has said and must receive confirmation from the first person that he or she has reflected it back accurately. Then he or she asks, "Is there more?"
- d. When the first person has fully expressed his or her feelings, it is the other's turn.

Many people are surprised at what this technique brings out. Often, they find that the other party's motives were quite different from what they thought they were. Often, sympathy and goodwill are created or regained.

Activity 32

We've spoken before in this book about there being no freedom without responsibility.

1. How do 'free' attitudes about sexual matters take away from our freedom and the freedom of others?
2. What is the difference between 'pleasure' and 'happiness'? Which one is temporary, which is lasting? Name some things in life that can bring us pleasure but leave us unhappy in the end.
3. Name some things that are pleasant in life, but lead to unhappiness in the end.

Activity 34

1. Write down your conclusions and opinions of the story.
2. Did you notice a change in Alan during the course of the book?
3. Do you think you are more likely to succeed in getting special permission from adults if you present your case well and act responsibly?