ACCEPTING RESPONSIBILITY

A SMALL PART OF THE BIG PICTURE
ED U. GATOR BREAKS A PROMISE

DR. NASSEH HELPS OTHERS
As you get older and wiser, people expect you to act responsibly. You may already be a responsible person. Do you put away your stuff when you're finished with it? Do you help out around the house? Do you do what you're told in school the first time you're asked? Do you conserve water and electricity, dispose of trash and recycle? Well, good for you! You must be trustworthy and dependable, too! I bet people count on you a lot, because you make good choices, you keep promises and you follow through on tasks. Acting responsibly is a full-time job! But do you know what you get in return? You get respect from other people and respect for yourself!

We can’t all be perfect all the time. Everybody makes mistakes. But when you do something wrong, do you admit it, and accept the consequences? That’s a very hard thing to do sometimes. But it’s a big part of acting responsibly. When we accept responsibility, we can take the credit, and the blame, for all of our actions. That’s the grown-up thing to do.

When you accept responsibility, you help the whole world. Now how can that be? How can a young person help something as huge as the world? Here’s how: When you help out at home, your family has an easier time. When your family helps in the community, everyone in the city and the state benefits. If everyone in each state helped a little and acted responsibly, the whole country would be better. And so on and so on. That’s the big picture! You might just be a tiny part of that great big picture, but accepting responsibility has to start somewhere. And it might as well start with you!

**VOCABULARY:**
- **Conserve:** to protect from loss, waste or harm.
- **Benefit:** to be helped.

**ACTIVITY:**
You probably have some daily responsibilities at home and at school that help your family and your teacher. Think about how your helping out affects your home and your school. If you stopped taking care of your responsibilities, what would happen? Who would have to fill in for you?
Accepting Responsibility

Hey friends. Ed here. I learned a lot about responsibility this week, the hard way. I've always tried to be a pretty good older brother to El, but I really let her down this time. El had been asking me for days to go bicycle riding with her at the park. I just kept putting her off. It wasn't that I didn't want to go, it was just that other things kept popping up. On Monday I forgot and made plans with Gabe and Franklin to work on my clubhouse. Tuesday was baseball practice, so that day was definitely out. Wednesday I didn't really feel like riding bikes, so I told El we could go on Thursday. “Do you PROMISE?” she asked.

“Yes,” I said, just wishing she would stop bugging me. “I PROMISE YOU we’ll ride bikes tomorrow.”

Well, guess what happened. I forgot again! Thursday at school I invited Alice over to check out my new dinosaur 3D CD ROM. When we got home, El was waiting outside with her helmet and bike. “Whoops!” I said. “El, I forgot again.” Before I could say “What about tomorrow?” El threw down her bike and glared at me with tear-filled eyes.

“Ed,” she said, “you PROMISED!” She ran inside the house, slamming the front door behind her. I felt about two inches tall. Alice told me she could always see the dinosaur CD some other time, and that I should probably spend the afternoon with El instead.

When Dad got home from work, he and El went bike riding at the park. That made me feel even worse. I had the whole afternoon and evening to myself to think about how irresponsible I had been. I guess I never realized how important it was to El to go riding, and how important it is to keep a promise. Somehow, I've got to find a way to make it up to El. Otherwise, she may never depend on her big brother for anything again!

ED BREAKS A PROMISE

Questions

1) What was Ed doing to El that was inconsiderate and irresponsible?

2) What did Ed do that hurt El the most?

3) Was Alice understanding of Ed's dilemma? What did she suggest?

4) What made Ed feel especially bad about his irresponsibility?

5) What did Ed learn about promises and responsibility?

6) What are your suggestions for how Ed could make it up to his sister?
LONG WORDS THAT GO A LONG WAY

Directions: Below are two long and very important words: ACCOUNTABILITY and COMMITMENT. Do you know what they mean? If not, ask an adult for good definitions. Then, on the lines below, see how many other words you can find hidden in these two big ones.

A RESPONSIBLE PERSON COMPLETES TASKS

Directions: Complete the following sentences about yourself:

I act responsibly when I...

I am trustworthy because I...

Other people can depend on me because I...

When I make a mistake I...

I accept the consequences for my...

When I make a promise I...

When I start something I...
IN THE NEWSPAPER

Directions: Saving money is a good way to practice and accept responsibility. Some people get allowances, or earn money for doing odd jobs around the neighborhood. Look through the classifieds at the ads where people are selling things, or glance at the ads throughout the rest of the paper or magazine section. Pick something that you might like to save for. How long do you think it will take?

I ACCEPT THESE RESPONSIBILITIES

Directions: In the activity on page 2 you thought about your daily responsibilities at home or at school. What are some other responsibilities that you might be willing to accept? What chores or tasks that someone else is responsible for particularly interest you? List a couple of them in the space below.
Here once was a very responsible man named Ivan Jaspers, who lived in a small town. Ivan was a great cook and an excellent builder. He also loved reading books and had a huge library filled with them. He was humble and soft-spoken, but he had a big heart and was always willing to help others. When Chester Goodville was building a carriage for his horse, he called Ivan. When Lorna Peterson was preparing a meal for out-of-town guests, she called Ivan. The townspeople knew Ivan would never say no, so they kept calling. After a time, Ivan grew so busy helping others, he barely had time to read his books. The townspeople began to take advantage of Ivan’s trustworthiness and generosity. When they asked Ivan to help with a task, they would leave him to work alone while they had fun.

Once, after a very hard day, Ivan sat down to rest in his beautiful library. It had been a week since he opened a book, and he missed his reading very much. That night he made a decision. He packed a box of unread books, a parcel of food, and a bag of clothes. At dawn, he walked to a deserted cabin in the woods. It was far, far away from the lazy folks of Do-Nothing Town. He spent a week enjoying every word on every page of every book in the box.

Back in the village, the townspeople were beside themselves. “Where is Ivan?” they all asked each other. “What will we do if he doesn’t return?” The townspeople had grown so used to Ivan doing their work that they had forgotten how to do even the simplest chores. For days, mealtimes went by without food being prepared, and necessary projects were left unfinished or never began. After four days, convinced that Ivan was gone for good, the townspeople began to relearn how to help themselves.

At week’s end, Ivan came back to his house. Soon a long line of folks appeared at his door with a long list of tasks to be done. Ivan stepped outside and spoke to the noisy crowd. “Dear Townspeople,” he said in his soft-spoken way, “you have somehow managed your responsibilities while I was gone. I will no longer do your chores while you have fun. As always, I am willing to lend a hand, but only for those folks who are willing to help themselves.” A great hush fell over the crowd. The men and women were silent in their embarrassment. From that day on, things were done very differently, and a great deal more responsibly, in Do-Something Town.
Arshidokht Nasseh has led a busy and fascinating life. She was born and raised in Iran. She has studied early childhood education, psychology, counseling and educational leadership at universities in Tehran and in the United States. She has a doctoral degree from the Peabody College at Vanderbilt University, which is where she gets the “doctor” part of her name. The rest of her name is interesting, too. “Arshidokht” means “daughter of heaven,” and “Nasseh” means “advisor.” Throughout her entire life, Dr. Nasseh has lived up to and exemplified those important words.

Dr. Nasseh has worked at Hillsboro High School in Nashville for 18 years, as a guidance counselor for young people who come here from other countries. She currently is responsible for 275 students from 39 different countries. Someone once asked Dr. Nasseh if she spoke all those different languages. “No,” she replied, “but I do know the language of love!” Dr. Nasseh does speak “Farsi” or Persian, “Dari” which is the language of the people of Afghanistan and Pakistan, and English. She also writes and reads Arabic.

Dr. Nasseh helps her international students with almost every aspect of their lives. She helps them to become comfortable in the school system, and she ensures that they find homes that are safe and secure. “I’m on call 24 hours a day,” she says with great pride. She is willing to do whatever she can to assist her students. Dr. Nasseh says, “These are all my children. I am one of them. I have been in their place, and now I believe God is using me to help them.” In her spare time she teaches multi-cultural education throughout the community, and volunteers at the YMCA, the YWCA and the Nashville Chapter of the United Nations. She also keeps track of the hundreds of families she has served in her 18 years at Hillsboro High. That’s a lot of responsibility!

Dr. Nasseh’s family has lived through some very difficult years. At one time they barely had enough change in their pockets to put gas in their car. But Dr. Nasseh believes those experiences made her family stronger. She says, “All of our ups and downs made us realize we are in charge of our lives with God’s guidance. We have to take responsibility to be the best that we can, and to be here for other people.”

VOCABULARY:
Psychology: the science that studies the mind.
Counseling: giving advice or opinions.
Exemplify: to show by being an example of.
Ensure: to make sure or certain.
Multi-cultural: having to do with different races or cultures.
TIPS

1) When your child acts responsibly and shows good judgement, seize the opportunity to acknowledge this positive behavior. It’s a great time to “catch your child” doing something good. Reinforcement for making the right choices can only encourage more of the same.

2) Since you want your child to learn the value of responsibility, make sure you provide opportunities to be “responsible.” The chores or tasks can be simple ones, like feeding a family pet or taking out the trash or the recycling. The trick is to encourage your child to be consistent with these tasks, and to accomplish them with a minimum of reminders from you.

3) Teaching your child to accept the blame for mistakes is a big part of accepting responsibility. Make certain your consequences are delivered consistently and fairly. The end result is for your child to be honest and admit when he/she does something inappropriate or makes an incorrect choice. If a punishment is too severe it may discourage your child from opening up to you the next time it happens.

4) The ability to keep promises is a sign of trustworthiness and dependability. We sometimes make promises to our children that we can’t keep, or that we forget. If we want our children to understand the importance of a kept promise, we must appreciate the value of keeping ours, too.

FAMILY ACTIVITY

Be on the lookout for opportunities to give your child responsibility, autonomy and independence in ways that will be comfortable to you. Here are a couple of “responsibility builders.” Let your child have his/her own library card or video card. Although you will still need to monitor their choices (especially in the video dept.), let them be responsible for knowing when it’s time for items to be returned. If the items become overdue, have your child pay the fines with their allowance or savings.

RESOURCES


FAMILY PLEDGE CARD

Our family has completed the Family Page together.

______________________________
Child’s name

Family members:

______________________________
______________________________
______________________________

School: _______________________

Teacher/grade: _______________________

For more information about Project: Solution, call 726-8918 or 1-800-351-1227, ext. 8033 or 8918.