

Citizenship

Ethics, Values & Morals

*The 'Ethics, Values and Morals' entries on this page are designed for teachers to read to (or print out for) their students. Responses could either be written down or discussed among the class; some may spark lively debate.
(for ages 10 and up)*



21 Rules for Living in the 21st Century

1. I will get enough sleep and rest.
2. I will get enough physical exercise.
3. I will seek wisdom by reading widely.
4. I will follow my passions.
5. I will develop my talents.
6. I will look after my health and hygiene.
7. I will eat and drink foods that are nutritious and beneficial to my health.
8. I will live moderately.
9. I will respect others' opinions.
10. I will be courteous.
11. I will act with caution and safety.
12. I will not act in any way to cause hurt or harm to another.
13. I will be honest in all my words and actions.
14. I will use reason rather than blind faith.
15. I will take time out to enjoy myself.
16. I will help and assist where I can.
17. I will treat others as I wish to be treated.
18. I will defend myself against unwarranted attack.
19. I will care for the environment.
20. I will place a high value on learning.
21. I will contribute positively to my community.

Talk about or Write about

- 1) If you could add one more rule to this list what would it be?
- 2) Choose any rule from above and tell about a time when you or someone else put it into action.
- 3) Tell about a time when you should have used one of these rules but didn't.
- 4) Why is it important that we live by a set of rules?



Can of Oil

Wherever he went, the old man carried it with him. If he found a door that was squeaking, he would put a spot of oil on the hinges; if a neighbour's sewing machine wasn't running smoothly, he was always ready with his oil can; and all the boys in the neighbourhood knew where to go if their bikes were needing attention.

As the old man went through life, he and his oil can were always there to make life pleasanter and easier for those with whom he came into contact. Perhaps some of the people we meet have problems that make their life difficult. And perhaps, like that old man, we can lubricate it with the oil of kindness, gentleness and thoughtfulness.

If we have our own can of oil ready for such occasions, what a difference it can make!

Talk about or Write about

1. What adjectives can you think of to describe the character of the old man with the can of oil?
2. The old man made others' lives better by carrying around a can of oil. A person with a special talent (drawing, singing, dancing, playing a musical instrument, ...) can enrich others' lives and lift their spirits by putting their talent on show willingly and freely, expecting nothing in return. Do you know anyone -child or adult- who has done this? (if you don't know of anyone personally you may be able to think of a celebrity who has brought pleasure and joy to others).
3. The can of oil in this passage is used firstly in a literal sense and, at the end, in a metaphorical way. What is the difference between literal and metaphorical?
4. Smiles, nice manners and random acts of kindness are three ways we can lubricate the lives of others. What *are* random acts of kindness?



Some General Principles to Live By

- 1. Pay attention to two-year-olds and puppies. They know what's important.*
- 2. Look at sunsets; smell the flowers; listen to the birds; embrace the people you care about.*
- 3. Take responsibility for meeting your own needs but don't do it in ways that keep others from meeting theirs.*
- 4. Listen to your body and take care of it.*
- 5. Follow your dream. Life is exciting when you're pursuing your own goals.*
- 6. Learn from your mistakes and failures.*
- 7. Peace is possible and it begins with you and me.*
- 8. One of the greatest paradoxes in life is that you get more when you give more.*
- 9. Relationships are more important than things.*
- 10. The greatest challenge you will ever have is to be yourself.*

Talk about or Write about

- (1) Can two-year-olds and puppies really know what's important?
- (2) Look at Principle number 2. What do we spend too much time doing that is the opposite of these things?
- (3) Explain Principle number 4. Give an example of how we could do this.
- (4) Considering Principle 6, can you think of a mistake or failure that you learned from?
- (5) How do we get more when we give more? (Principle 8.)
- (6) How and why are relationships more important than things? (Principle 9)
- (7) Why can being yourself be such a great challenge? (give an example)



Desiderata

Go placidly amid the noise and haste, and remember what peace there may be in silence.

As far as possible without surrender be on good terms with all persons.

Speak your truth quietly and clearly; and listen to others, even the dull and the ignorant; they too have their story.

Avoid loud and aggressive persons, they are vexations to the spirit.

If you compare yourself with others, you may become vain or bitter; for always there will be greater and lesser persons than yourself.

Enjoy your achievements as well as your plans. Keep interested in your own career, however humble; it is a real possession in the changing fortunes of time. Exercise caution in your business affairs; for the world is full of trickery. But let this not blind you to what virtue there is; many persons strive for high ideals; and everywhere life is full of heroism.

Be yourself. Especially, do not feign affection. Neither be cynical about love; for in the face of all aridity and disenchantment it is as perennial as the grass.

Take kindly the counsel of the years, gracefully surrendering the things of youth. Nurture strength of spirit to shield you in sudden misfortune. But do not distress yourself with dark imaginings. Many fears are born of fatigue and loneliness.

Beyond a wholesome discipline, be gentle with yourself. You are a child of the universe, no less than the trees and the stars; you have a right to be here. And whether or not it is clear to you, no doubt the universe is unfolding as it should. Therefore be at peace with God, whatever you conceive Him to be, and whatever your labours and aspirations, in the noisy confusion of life keep peace with your soul.

With all its sham, drudgery, and broken dreams, it is still a beautiful world.

Be cheerful.

Strive to be happy.

Activity

Choose a passage from Desiderata and say why, for you, this passage has particular meaning.

