

Reflections

(Clarifying & adjusting the disconnect between decisions, priorities & character)

Purpose: 1) To help students understand that counselors frequently ask questions intended to explore clarity and consistency of their thoughts, feelings and behaviors (decisions.) 2) To help students realize that everyday decisions reflect their character & priorities whether they're aware of it or not, and 3) To help students further understand that chronic interpersonal problems may require both a change in priorities and character.

Materials: Insight Questions.

Student Materials: Pencil & paper.

Time: Approximately 30 minutes.

Key Words: Situations, Decisions, Priorities, Character and Consistency.

Part 1

Introduce/Reintroduce: Self to all students. Remind students of graduation requirements and inform students that we'll be doing a counseling activity that reflects what often happens in a real life counseling session.

Ask: Students to take out a pencil or pen and a sheet of paper.

State: The paper should have your name and date on it.

Ask: Students to number their papers 1-10 and to skip a line between the numbers.

Instruct: Students to answer all questions to the best of their abilities.

Remind: Students not to share any of their answers or talk out loud as the questions are being asked and that their answers will be shared later in the activity.

(Read the question out loud)

Begin:

Situation Questions

1. As you're walking home from school you see a fire truck outside of your burning home. All the people and pets are safe. The Fire Chief tells you it's safe to go inside and save one thing. What do you choose?
2. Would you trade places for one month with a similar aged multi-handicapped person requiring 24/7 complete & total care?
3. A UFO invites you to travel with them. You'll be gone ten years but will have only aged one year and will be given a cure for cancer upon your return.

You don't have time to tell anyone and you have to leave right now. Do you go?

4. If you had been in the Civil War and had only one chance to avoid capture, punishment and torture by joining with the other side for the rest of your life would you have?
5. If you had to choose just one of the following characteristics for the rest of your life which one would it be: A) Extraordinary Great Looks B) Super High Intelligence or C) Awesome Personality. You should know that any chosen answer automatically lowers the levels of the two categories not chosen. That is, if you choose Great Looks then you're as dumb as a stick and have the personality of a rock but, you'd be the hottest looking person in your retirement home.
6. You're in a life boat in the middle of the ocean. In your boat is the President of the United States, a former romantic interest, a distant cousin, a classroom friend and your classroom teacher. The boat is sinking and you're short one life jacket. Who doesn't get one?
7. Have you ever told a lie to keep a promise? (conflicting characteristics)
8. You find a big bag of money out in the middle of nowhere, do you:
A. Keep it B. Leave it or C. Report it?
9. Would you choose to have an extra 10 million dollars now or an extra 10 years of life added on to your unknown "end" date?
10. One night you're out with some friends and you all decide to get tattoos.
 - a. Would you choose a picture or a word tattoo and what would it be?
 - b. Where on your body would the tattoo be?

(Substitute/Additional/Optional Questions)

If you could only have one book in your life which one would it be: A) Dictionary B) Encyclopedia C) Religious Book D) Family History or E) Medical Book?

If you could travel back in time to witness or change an event, what would it be?

Choose one to become: A) Rock Star B) Movie Star C) Sports Star or D) Star Parent?

Choose one that would tell the most about you: A) Your Heart B) Your Brain or C) Your Soul?

Which is easier to live without Money, Family, Friends or Hope?
Is it harder to tell a lie to a friend or the truth to a family member?

In which situation would you run faster: A. Away from a Starving Bear or
B. Towards a ton of money?

If you had a five dollars for every time you said “I’ll do it later” and still didn’t get it done, how much money would you have: None, A little or A lot ?

Place these three things in order of importance to you: Popularity, Reputation and Image.

Part 2

State: We’re going to come back and get your answers to those questions but before we do let’s get some more information.

Inform: Students to turn their papers over and draw a line across the paper separating the top half from the bottom half of the paper.

Instruct: Students to write down 3 positive character words they would use to describe themselves on the top half of the paper. Ex. Kind, Thoughtful, Generous, etc.

Students to write down three things that are important to them (priorities) on the bottom portion of their paper. Ex. Friendships, Faith, Family, Education, etc.

Part 3

Explain: To students that the purpose of the counseling activity is to determine if their answers in questions 1-10 are consistent with their character traits and priorities. That is, do their decisions line up with who they say they are and what they’re all about.

Generally Review: Several student answers from the first 1-10 questions. Have some fun with this revealing process. Protect students from being critical of each other’s responses.

For Example: Say, Stand up if you chose something of yours from the fire in Question #1. Raise your hand if in question #3 you chose to go off with the spaceship. Raise your hand if in question #8 you left the bag of money alone and just kept walking.

Specific Review: Call on a student to volunteer to stand and answer question #1 about the object he/she saved from the fire. Then ask that student to read aloud the three positive character words he/she used to describe him/herself on the top half of his/her back page. Then ask that student to state aloud what his/her three top priorities in life are (bottom half of back page.)

Ask: The class “Does that person’s item choice sound like it’s consistent with how he/she describes him/herself and what his/her priorities are?”

Repeat: This process several times with several other volunteers.

For Question 10: Call on volunteers to stand and tell the other students what their tattoo would be and where it would be.

Ask: The student audience “Raise your hand if you would be shocked/really surprised if that student (volunteer) came to school one day with that tattoo?”

Remind: The standing volunteer that the only people they need to explain their choices to are themselves and most likely the people closest to them. (Their family and friends may not agree with their decisions but may not be surprised by them either.)

Ask: Students to look at their own responses and compare each of those responses with their *priorities* and *character* traits.

Offer: These examples:

~For those of you who consider yourself as being *thoughtful* raise your hand. Now, who among you for question #1 saved something of importance for someone other than yourself from the fire?

~For those of you who consider yourself as being things like *nice, friendly, and personable* raise your hand. Now, who among you for question #5 chose to be exceptionally good looking or super intelligent?

~For those of you who consider yourself as being something like *unselfish & giving* raise your hand. Now, who among you for question #6 made sure *everyone else* in the sinking boat had a life jacket instead of you?

~For those of you who consider yourself as being something like kind, considerate, giving and caring raise your hand. Now, who among you for question #2 gave the handicapped kid a chance to have a lifetime of memories in a month’s experience of having the privilege of being you?

~For those of you who consider yourself as being *Loyal* and have family & friends as your priorities raise your hand. Now, who among you for question #4 chose to switch sides and abandon your family & friends during the Civil War to avoid capture, punishment and torture?

~For those of you who consider your *family* to be one of your top priorities raise your hand. Now, who among you for question #3 chose to leave your family behind to worry and wonder about whatever happened to you?

Have: Students identify the questions they felt were direct reflections of their priorities and character.

Ask: Student’s to raise their hands if they think any of their answers might be different 10 years from now, if married or having joined the military. (Priorities may change over

time but we also get better at making decisions that reflect and are more consistent with our character and priorities.)

Part 4

State: If you ever go see a counselor this is what they may ask you to do:

- First, to figure out your priorities.
- Secondly, to figure out what characteristics you have and want to have. That is, what kind of person you are and want to be.
- Thirdly, to understand that every decision you make is a reflection on your priorities and character.
- Fourthly, when you start making decisions that are disconnected from your priorities is often the beginning of developing character problems.
- Lastly, know that sometimes it's your priorities that may need to be re-evaluated if you're always having difficulties with family and friends who have your best interests in mind.

Summarize:

Counselors help people figure out what their priorities are, how to make choices consistent with their priorities and their character. Counselors also help people re-think their priorities in hopes of improve their character and relationships with family and friends.