

My strengths can change over time

Learning objective

Students explore things they are good at, identify these as their strengths, and explore how these can change over time.

Take Home Messages

- Everyone has things they are good at (strengths).
- People have different strengths.
- Some strengths change over time.

Materials

- [Teacher resource sheet - Animals strengths](#). - 1 copy displayed electronically or in hard copy
- A4 card - 1 per student
- Optional - [Strengths cards \(to be purchased prior to lesson\)](#)

Before You Get Started

- It is important to acknowledge diversity of bodies and abilities in this lesson. The focus is on celebrating different strengths.

Learning Activities

Different strengths

Whole Class

1. Display [Teacher resource sheet - Animals strengths](#).
2. Explain:

"We are going to ask all of these animals to do some activities to see which one is the best animal.

? First, they all have to climb a tree, which of the animals is going to win?

(monkey, cheetah)

? Next, they have to swim across a river, which animal is going to win?

(fish, crocodile)

? Now, they have to sing a song, who will sing the prettiest song?

(bird)

? Finally, they have to tie some shoelaces, which animals will be able to tie shoelaces?

(none)

3. Discuss:

"The fish cannot climb a tree - does this mean it is not the best animal?

The bird cannot swim across the river - does this mean it is not the best animal?

The crocodile cannot sing a song - does this mean it is not the best animal?

None of the animals can tie shoelaces - does this mean that none of the animals are the best?

No! Of course not. Each of the animals are good at different things. They all have different strengths. It is not fair to compare them in this way.

Similarly, WE all have different strengths.

Some of us are good at climbing trees, some aren't. Put your hand up if you are good at climbing trees.

Some of us are good at swimming, some aren't. Put your hand up if you are good at swimming.

Some of us are good at singing, some aren't. Put your hand up if you are good at singing.

Some of us are good at tying our shoelaces, some aren't. Put your hand up if you are good at tying your shoelaces."

Teaching tip: You may wish to get the adults in the room to model NOT putting their hand up to be good at everything and making the point that it is ok not to be good at all of these things. You may also point out that some people don't like doing these things and that can be why we aren't so good at them, and that is ok.

Strengths can change over time

Whole Class

4. Discuss:

"The strengths of these animals don't really change over time. Can a fish ever learn to climb a tree? Can a crocodile ever learn to sing?"

5. Revisit the timelines that were created in lesson [1. Milestones - birth to now.](#)

6. Discuss:

"Some of our strengths change over time"

? How have your strengths changed from when you were a baby? What things can you do better now?

(walk, run, talk, write your name, read some words, etc)

Teaching tip: It is important to acknowledge diversity and disability (e.g. not all people are able bodied and some people are not able to walk or walk unassisted).

? What are some things that an adult or older sibling can do better than you?

(run, climb, drive a car, cook, play basketball, play piano, type on a keyboard, draw, etc)

? Why are adults able to do these things more easily?

(bodies are grown, stronger, had more practice, etc)

? What are some things that you can do better than an elderly person?

(handstand, climbing trees, picking up things you have dropped, playing sport, etc)

? Why might some elderly people find it harder to do these things than you?

(bodies are ageing and can't move as easily, can't see as well, might be unwell, etc)

? What are some things that you would like to get better at as you grow older?

(drawing, maths, writing, sport, making friends, etc)

My strengths over time

Independent or Small Group

7. One a piece of A4 piece of card - on one side students draw a picture of a strength they have NOW, on the back they draw a strength they will have when they are a teenager/adult.
8. Hang the pictures around the room and have students share the strengths that they will have when they are older.

Reflection: strength complements

9. Have students sitting in a circle (on floor or chairs).
10. Model how to pay a 'strength complement'. Stand in the centre of the circle and, for example, say,

"Jayden's strength is bravery. He was very nervous to speak at assembly, but he was very brave and did an amazing job."

9. This student then comes to the centre of the circle to pay another student a 'strength complement'. Alternatively, you can ask for volunteers to pay the next 'strength complement'.

Teaching tip: To try to ensure all students get a complement, you may wish to make the rule that a new person has to be chosen each time.

Optional: Strengths cards

1. Place the strengths cards on the floor around the room.
2. Invite students to stand next to a strength they think they have. Ask for volunteers to share their strength and why they think they have this strength.
3. Invite students to stand next to a strength that someone else in the room has. invite volunteers to share their answers.

3-2-1 Reflection

1. Ask some students to show their work to the class and explain their responses.
2. Discuss, as a whole class, the students' responses of what they would like their strengths to be in the future.
3. Highlight words such as happy, enjoyment, fun, good at, strength, persistence, practise, set-backs, getting help.
4. Send T-charts home with students to share with their family.

Feelings, body signals and positive coping strategies

Learning objective

Students explore different emotions, the signals their bodies give for each emotion, and positive coping strategies for different scenarios.

Take Home Messages

Our body give us signals to show us what emotion we are feeling.

There are no 'good' or 'bad' emotions. All emotions are useful.

Emotions change depending on what is happening to us or around us.

There are always things we can do to help us cope with our different emotions.

Materials

- Book or YouTube reading of [I have feelings! by Jana Novotny Hunter](#)
- Large sheets of butchers paper to draw body outline - can be life size (for children to draw around their own bodies or scaled down and pre-drawn).
- Markers, crayons, pencils or paints.
- Optional: scrap craft materials.

Learning Activities

Book: I have feelings!

Whole Class

1. Read [I have feelings!](#) book.
2. Read the book a second time stopping at each emotion.
3. Ask students to show the way the possum is feeling with the body language, facial expressions and words.
4. Draw attention to the different body signals the students are demonstrating for each emotion.

E.g. Happy - large open eyes, arms in the air, smile, warm feeling in belly, etc.

Body outlines

Independent or Small Group

5. Divide the students into groups of 3 or 4 using a [grouping strategy](#).
6. Give each group some large butchers paper to trace around one person's body.
7. Allocate each group with a different emotion - sad, angry, scared, happy, excited, frustrated, loved, calm, silly, etc.
8. Ask students to draw body signals on the body outline to represent their allocated emotion.

Optional: use scrap craft materials to represent body signals.

E.g. Scared - squiggly drawing in tummy, clenched teeth, knees shaking, frozen still, eyes wide, mouth open

Teaching tip: It is important to draw attention to the fact that different people can have different body reactions to the same emotion. People can also have different body signals for the same emotion in different scenarios. The flight/fright/fawn/freeze response is an example of this.

9. Display the body outlines and share each groups response.

Positive coping strategies

Whole Class

10. Use the body outlines as visual prompts to discuss the following questions:

? If we are feeling silly, is it OK to run around the classroom and bump into each other?

(No, it could hurt someone or break something)

? What are some positive things we can do to get the sillies out?

(Wiggly our bodies to some music, run around the playground, laugh with our friends)

? If we are feeling angry, what things might someone do that are unhelpful or unsafe?

(Hit, scream, break something, etc)

? What are some positive things we can do to help if we are angry?

(Hit a pillow, scream into a pillow, run around outside, talk to a friend or trusted adult, do something we enjoy, listen to calming music, eat some food or have a drink, etc)

11. Continue for other emotions that students have created body signals for.

Reflection - help seeking

Whole Class

12. Ask:

? Which of these body signals might someone notice if they were feeling unsafe?

(sweaty palms, butterflies in tummy, feel unwell, heart racing, frozen, etc)

13. Say:

"These body signals are very important. They are warning us that we might not be safe. If we listen to our body signals carefully, they can help keep us out of danger."

? What can we do if we start to feel any of these warning signs?

(talk to a trusted adult, don't ignore the signals, tell a friend, move away, call 000 if it is an emergency,

etc)

14. Revise the 'helping hand' network by asking students to list off their 5 trusted adults (one for each finger) to themselves.

Appreciating friendships

Learning objective

Students distinguish between friendly and unfriendly behaviour and identify their own 'getting on with others' strengths and limitations. Students practise using friendly behaviour with others by giving and receiving compliments.

Take Home Messages

- Appreciation and encouragement of the behaviour of others.
- How to maintain friendships.
- Practise showing appreciation and gratitude and being a good friend.

Materials

- Book: How to Be a Friend: A Guide to Making Friends and Keeping Them by Laurene Krasny Brown and Marc Brown
- Teaching Resource: Friendly and unfriendly signs
- Student Activity Sheet: Getting along with others quiz [one per student]
- Several pairs of old glasses with no lenses or cardboard glasses made from cardboard cylinders taped together

Before You Get Started

- Be sensitive to the students who have difficulty making friends and keeping friends. Help these students identify the personal strengths they possess and the attributes required when being a friend.
- It is important to read and understand the Guides: [Resilience and life skills](#) and [Establishing ground rules](#) in order to create a safe environment for all students to feel supported and trusting.

Learning Activities

Whole Class

Students reflect on actions, attributes and feelings associated with being friendly and unfriendly.

1. Conduct a [shared reading](#) of [How to Be a Friend: A Guide to Making Friends and Keeping Them](#). This 'guide to friendship' covers who can be your friend, how to show someone you would like to be friends, how to handle bosses and bullies, best ways to be a friend and not be a friend, and ways to settle an argument with a friend.
2. Using the Teaching Resource: Friendly and unfriendly signs, place a 'friendly' sign at one end of the room and 'unfriendly' sign at the other. Have students consider several of the following scenarios then move to the sign that best represents their opinion. Invite students to discuss their placement with others near them.

- You have a different type of backpack to all the other girls in your class. Some of the girls in your class laugh and point at your backpack when you walk to class.
- A new girl has joined your class. She looks a little lonely at recess so you ask her if she would like to play on the swings with you.
- You tell your friend about your exciting weekend away on a farm and he just talks about what he did on the weekend and says nothing about your time on the farm.
- Your friend lets you take her favourite doll home for the night to play with.
- A boy in your class always slams the ball down hard when he gets out playing four square.
- Your friend is good at doing tricks on the trampoline. You are not so good and often make mistakes. She never laughs at you. She just tells you in a kind voice what you did well.

3. Ask students the following questions:

- How do we feel when people are being friendly to us? (warm, happy, like we belong)
 - How do we feel when people are being unfriendly to us? (sad, nervous, rejected)
 - What are some of the skills for getting along with our friends and others? (social skills that lead to good relationships such as being positive; saying thank you; being a good listener; finding things in common; being a good winner and loser; being interesting; cooperating; sharing information about yourself; sharing your possessions; giving compliments)
- Draw a [T-chart](#) and label it 'Friendly' and 'Unfriendly'. Whiteboard these responses under the 'Friendly' column and draw pictures for each to act as a trigger for poorer readers.

4. Ask the students:

- Are you born with these skills? (no, you have to learn and practise them. If you get along well with others you have a sense of belonging and satisfaction. Practising these skills while you are young will help you get along with people better when you are adults)
- What kinds of problems can friendships have? (misunderstandings, arguments, jealousies, growing apart – stress that all friendships have problems sometimes but these problems can usually be sorted out. Some friendships are only temporary but this doesn't mean that one of you has done something wrong or that you are not likeable)
- What are some things that make it harder to be friendly with someone even though they are probably a nice person? (unhealthy behaviours such as being a poor loser or winner; making negative comments; constantly talking about self; scowling and looking grumpy; not saying anything about self or how they feel; not sharing; being mean and nasty; starting fights over small things; not being flexible)
 - Whiteboard these responses under the 'Unfriendly' column of the T-chart and draw pictures for each to act as a trigger for poorer readers.
- Do we use fewer 'getting on with people' skills with our brother(s) and sister(s) or mum and dad? Why?

Independent or Small Group

In this activity, students practise using friendly behaviours such as saying thank you, using positive language and giving compliments.

1. Explain that showing our friends that we are grateful for their friendship is a skill that not only helps us get along with people but also makes us feel happier.
2. Revisit the strategies under the 'Friendly' column of the T-chart above. Have students complete the Student Activity Sheet: Getting along with others quiz after explaining and giving examples for each item in the quiz. (Parent helpers or buddy students may be useful to help with this activity.)
 - Discuss results and have students circle two skills they would like to practise at home and at school.

3. Have students form small [circle talk](#) circles and give each inside circle one pair of glasses with no lenses (or two small cardboard cylinders taped together and decorated to form glasses). Explain that these are called 'Grateful Glasses' and that when you wear these glasses you have to practise being grateful for your friendships. To do this they give a compliment to the person opposite them by telling him/her something that they are grateful for, e.g. "I'm grateful that you tell interesting stories" or "I'm grateful that you let me use your textas" (Stress that they can use the strategies from the 'Friendly' column of the T-chart to give them ideas). The person receiving the compliment must say "thank you" and then the glasses get passed to the next person in the circle.
 - When everyone on the inside circle has worn the glasses, pass them to the outside circle and repeat the process.
4. Ask the students:
 - How did you feel when you heard the compliment from your partner?
 - Were you surprised by what he/she said? Why/why not?
 - Was it easy to find something to be grateful for everyone? (enforce the 'no names' rule here)
 - Why do you have to practise 'getting on with others' skills to have friends?
 - Why is it important to share with friends what we appreciate about them?

3-2-1 Reflection

Using a computer program, have students complete and illustrate the sentences:

"One 'getting on with people' skill I do most of the time is....."

"One 'getting on with people' skill I need to practise is....."