



Unit 1: Lesson 1

Who I Am

Goal: To learn that we feel good about ourselves when we do positive actions, and there is a positive way to do everything.

Story:

Anne Marie and Sam rushed to Aunt Louise's office and found her working. She stopped what she was doing and opened her arms wide and scooped her niece and nephew up in a big hug, enjoying every second of being around them. Aunt Louise was eager to listen to what they had to tell her.

Sam and Anne Marie told her about Sam's test and how hard he had studied, and about Anne Marie's "Fun Run" coming up on Saturday and how she's been training every day.

Aunt Louise asked, "So how do you feel about yourselves when you do those things, those positive actions?"

"Great! Just great!" Anne Marie and Sam said the same words at the same time. There was silence for a second or two.

Aunt Marie grinned and said, "That goes double for me!"

All three looked at one another and laughed. "Just wait until you get home and tell your parents," Aunt Louise said. "they are going to love Sam's news!"

Anne Marie, Sam, and Aunt Louise liked the good feelings they got about themselves when they did positive actions. **We all want to feel good about ourselves.** Feeling good about ourselves is one of our most basic needs. Almost everything we think, do and feel is aimed at meeting that need to feel good about ourselves.

The way we think and feel about ourselves is called our self-concept. Our self-concept affects our goals, our attitudes, and our decisions. It impacts everyone, including ourselves, our families, and our communities. The way we feel about ourselves is important to everything we do with our lives.

Here are some examples of self-concept, or positive and negative feelings about ourselves:

<u>POSITIVE feelings about ourselves:</u>	<u>NEGATIVE feelings about ourselves:</u>
Happy	Unhappy
Confident	Uncertain
Peaceful	Anxious
Hopeful	Hopeless
Successful	Unsuccessful

Can you think of any others to add to the list?

The way we think and feel about ourselves is the result of the actions we take. In other words, our self-concept is formed by what we do. The main idea of the *Positive Program* is that **we feel good about ourselves when we do positive actions, and there is a positive way to do everything**. Positive actions are the good deeds we do for ourselves and for others. Our positive and negative actions affect us, and they often affect others, too. We need to consider the actions we take as well as the effect four actions on others, and we have to remember that -no matter what- we can take positive actions.

Here are a few examples of positive and negative actions:

<u>POSITIVE actions:</u>	<u>NEGATIVE actions:</u>
Exercising	Not Exercising
Learning	Not Learning
Creating	Destroying
Being respectful	Being disrespectful
Taking responsibility	Being irresponsible
Being honest	Being dishonest

Can you think of any to add to the list?

To feel good about ourselves, we need to take positive actions in the physical, intellectual, social, and emotional areas of our lives. For example, Anne Marie did *physical* positive action when she ran. Sam learned how to study and achieve in science, an *intellectual* positive action. Aunt Louise did *emotional* positive actions when she showed her niece and nephew that she cared about them.

Aunt Louise knew how to care about her niece and her nephew and how to treat others' self-concepts positively. She treated Sam and Anne Marie with respect, love, and good humor. She also knew that the way to treat others' self-concepts affects our own. When we affect someone else's self-concept, we affect our own self-concept. Aunt Louise knew that we need to treat our self-concept and one another's self-concepts with care.

When we do positive actions, we feel good about ourselves; our self-concept is positive. When we do negative actions, we feel bad about ourselves; our self-concept is negative. Abraham Lincoln said it this way: **"When I do good I feel good, and when I do bad I feel bad."**

We will develop a positive self-concept when we choose to do positive actions. Sound simple, doesn't it? But if it's so simple, why don't we do positive actions all the time? Well, just because something is simple to understand doesn't mean it's easy to do. Here are some reasons why we might not always do positive actions:

1. We don't always know what positive actions are. We learn what positive actions are in different places: home, school, church, and social places. We've learned what's good and what's bad, but in a mixed-up kind of way. Sometimes the things that are okay to do at home are not okay at school. Sometimes what's okay at school isn't okay at the mall. We're trying to navigate this strange world we live in. We want to fit in, but it's tricky! A big problem we have is that what is cool isn't always positive!
2. We haven't been taught that our good deeds, or positive actions, help us to feel good about ourselves. We have just had to figure it out on our own.
3. Positive actions are harder to do at first than negative actions. Sometimes it is easier to be a Negative Nancy instead of a Positive Patty. It's easy to be lazy. Sometimes it's easy to lie or be rude. But these things don't help us feel good about ourselves. Mostly, they make us feel yucky!

Even though positive actions are more difficult, they are more rewarding and work better in the end. They bring us joy, peace, and a sense of satisfaction about our lives. While they take more effort in the beginning, in the end positive actions are much easier.

Feeling good about ourselves is vital to our well-being; it affects our whole lives.

It improves how well we learn and work, how we give and receive love, and how we get along with others.

"We feel good about ourselves when we do positive actions, and there is a positive way to do everything" are thoughts we need to keep in our minds. Learning to do positive actions is a big step in our lives. The more positive actions we do, the more confidence we gain in our ability to do them. And when we do them well, we feel even better about ourselves. Remember, there is a positive way to do everything!

Discussion Questions:

- *Why do you feel good about yourself when you do positive actions?*
- *What positive actions have you done that made you feel good about yourself?*
- *Why do you feel bad about yourself when you do negative actions?*
- *What negative actions have you done that made you feel bad about yourself?*
- *Do you generally do more positive or negative actions?*
- *Do you generally feel more positive or negative about yourself?*

If you are doing this as a family, please answer the following questions together:

- *Is our family positive most of the time?*
- *What positive actions do we do now to feel good about ourselves as a family?*
- *How do negative actions affect us as a family?*
- *How can we help one another develop positive self-concepts?*

Self-concepts can be fragile like an egg. We must be careful that we don't shatter someone else's self-concept. This can be very easy in a family. We are comfortable with each other. We can say hurtful words without even thinking about the consequences. Let's try to build each other's self-concepts. What is something you can say to your family members to help them feel good about themselves?

Take a moment to try to think of something nice to say about some family members. You can either share these thoughts in person or write them down on a post-it note or piece of paper and place it somewhere they will find it.

Is there a place in your house where you acknowledge someone's positive actions? Perhaps a box or space on a wall? Write down positive actions that you have seen others do and place them in this place. Once a week, gather around and read what other's have noticed! Let's see how positive we can make our homes!

Word of the week: **Positive Action**

To do or cause good things to happen.