

## Grade 9 March Part 1

### Self-concept affects your entire life: Make it positive!

Self-concept is the view we have of ourselves. We see ourselves as good or bad, attractive or ugly, smart or stupid.

Actually, each of these views has two aspects.

First, we are aware of how well we are achieving or how we act in certain situations. For instance, suppose we get a "C" in mathematics. When we evaluate that "C," we either say:

*"C" again! I'm really stupid!*

Or,

*A "C"! That's great! I'm hanging right in there.*

### What others think

People—parents, peers, teachers—help us develop our self-concept. They are usually only too willing to tell us what they think of us—especially the negative things. Before long, we come to believe these messages. We begin to think of ourselves in a certain way and to act accordingly.

If our self-concept is negative, we may avert our eyes, look away, or cross the street rather than meet a person. Or we may stop trying because we are sure we will never be as good as a brother or sister.

If our self-concept is positive, we hold our heads high, square our shoulders, look people confidently in the eye, and know we will succeed.

### Analyze your self-concept

What is your self-concept?

Analyze yourself. Talk with your guidance counselor and parents. List all your strengths, things you know you succeed at.

For example, what subjects are you passing?

What hobbies or interests do you have?

List the compliments you've received over the past week. By brainstorming with a counselor, a favorite teacher or your parents, you'll each think of things that the other has forgotten.

### Improving yourself

Once you have the list completed, think of one—and only one—thing about yourself that you would like to improve.

Maybe you'd like to make more friends. Use your strengths to do that.

For example, you might enjoy building things at home with your dad. Carry the skills you have developed at home over to school. Go into the wood-working shop after school. You'll probably find other students with similar interests there already working on projects. Your common interests will naturally bring you together.

Or, you could join a club. If you play chess at home, join the chess club at school. The school doesn't have one? Ask a favorite teacher to help you start one.

We all have strengths and weaknesses. More important, though, is the fact that we all have more strengths than we are usually aware of. Will Rogers said, *"We're all ignorant, only in different things."* The other side of this is: *"We're all gifted, only in different things."*

Self-concept is what we make it. Make yours good!

*"What a man thinks of himself, that is what determines his fate."*

—Henry David Thoreau