

# We Can Only Control Our Response

Many of us may understand that we can't control what others do or say, we can only control our response. But no matter your age, that is easier said than done. However, with practice, you can develop a set of skills to help you better manage your emotions.

## SEL COMPETENCIES

Self-Management, Responsible Decision-Making

**SKILLS** analyzing situations, self-discipline, goal setting, impulse control

## MATERIALS

- ✓ Discovering Projectable 2.3.1
- ✓ Connecting Projectable 2.3.2
- ✓ Reflecting Projectable 2.3.3
- ✓ Student Handout: Practicing
- ✓ Student Handout: Applying
- ✓ Family Connection Worksheet

## CLASSROOM CONFIGURATION

- D** whole class **C** small groups
- P** small groups **A** individuals

## OBJECTIVES

Students will

- ✓ understand that they can only control how they respond to other people's actions;
- ✓ practice responding positively to negative situations.

## SKILLS Progression

**LAST YEAR**, students learned to manage anger through understanding how emotions, thoughts, and actions go together.

**THIS YEAR**, students will learn how to respond positively to negative situations

## D DISCOVERING 8 MINUTES



INSTRUCTION

In this lesson, you will explore how understanding your own emotions can help you understand and work more effectively with other people.

**ASK:** *Look at the person next to you. Can you control what they do? Can you control what they say?*

Guide the discussion so that the bottom line is that we can't really control what others do or say.

**SAY:** *People, even our friends and family, will do or say things we don't like, things that are mean, things that hurt, and things that make us mad, sad, and even glad. We can't control them. We can only control how we respond or react to what they do or say. This lesson will help us practice how to respond more positively to negative situations.*

Display **Discovering Projectable 2.3.1** to the class. Read the scenario aloud.

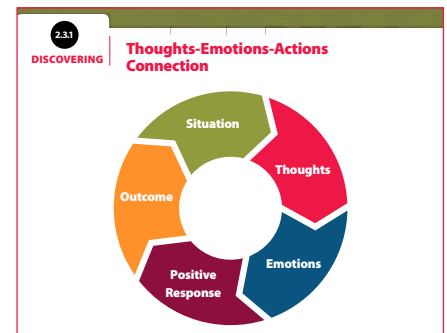
**ASK:** *What was the situation?*

- *What emotions did Ella feel?*
- *What thoughts were causing these emotions?*
- *What could she control? What can't she control?*
- *What did you notice about the relationship among thoughts, actions, and feelings in this situation?*

**SAY:** *In a tough situation, it helps to analyze our negative emotions objectively and then make the choice to respond more positively and learn from the situation.*

**2.3.1**  
**DISCOVERING** **Thoughts-Emotions-Actions Connection**

Ella is fuming because her best friend Maggie has been listed as a starter at her soccer team's next game, and Ella hasn't. Ella thinks her coach is being unfair and overlooks her because she doesn't like her. Ella knows she is as good as Maggie, and she feels she works harder and attends every practice. She thinks about it all day and talks to her friend about it. Her friend suggests possible reasons for the coach's choice. Maybe Maggie is better at a certain position, or maybe the coach is trying to give everyone a chance to start, so Ella will eventually get her chance, too. Ella decides to talk to her coach. She walks in angry, accusing her of punishing Ella by not putting her in the game. Her coach tells her to calm down and that they should discuss this at the next practice. Ella leaves, unsatisfied.



## Turning negatives into positives

Use a creative grouping strategy to divide the class in small groups. Display **Connecting Projectable 2.3.2**. Tell the students the projectable shows a process you can use to respond positively to a negative situation. Read the stages and ask students to think of an example from their lives when someone they know showed strong negative emotions.



**ASK:** *What was the situation?*

- *What emotions did the person show?*
- *Using this process how could they have responded more positively?*

**SAY:** *Let's apply this process to a common situation. You are working at the drive-through of a fast-food restaurant. A co-worker gives you the order of a hamburger, fries, and soft drink, and you hand the customer his bag. He drives away, but later shows up and complains that his order was wrong. In front of everyone, your manager criticizes you for being careless.*

**ASK:** *How would you feel in this situation? Let's use the process to help you react more positively.*

# P PRACTICING

 20 MINUTES

Leave the Connecting Projectable on display and distribute **Student Handout: Practicing**. Review the instructions. When the activity is completed have groups share their responses to the various situations (as time permits). Use the Connecting Projectable and have the groups go through their response.

**ASK:** *What emotion did you respond with?*

- *What thoughts caused you to respond this way?*
- *How did you apply positive thinking to your reaction?*
- *Are there similar situations in your life in which you can apply what we've been discussing? What are they?*

## Community Connection

Encourage students to observe people's interactions in public places like grocery stores and restaurants. Ask them to notice the emotions that people express that are common to everyone and the various ways different people react to the same situation.

## Family Connection

Have students work with family members to identify emotions and responses to situations. Send home the Family Connection Worksheet.

## Applying Across the Curriculum

**SCIENCE** Have students research the brain and its changes during stressful experiences, especially in teenage years. Identify how thoughts, emotions, and actions are triggered in the brain. How can this information help them understand the process of managing emotions?

**SOCIAL STUDIES** Have students watch two different broadcasts of the same news story, online or on television. Then have them write a short compare-and-contrast essay analyzing how each broadcast handled the story. Was one network more understanding than the other? Did one reporter seem to be surprised and shocked by the story? Have students share the news story and their findings.

**Practicing Resource:**  
Student Handout

23  
Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**PRACTICING**  
Work with your group to discuss one of these situations. Use the box to react positively to negative emotions process to describe "how you would take a negative emotion" and respond in a positive way.

<p><b>SITUATION 1</b></p> <p>You apply for a job for the summer after you graduate from high school but do not get the job.</p>	<p><b>SITUATION 2</b></p> <p>Your sibling is getting married, and you are giving a speech.</p>
<p><b>SITUATION 3</b></p> <p>Your boyfriend or girlfriend breaks up with you a week before prom.</p>	<p><b>SITUATION 4</b></p> <p>You need to pass every class to graduate, but your math teacher tells you that you are not doing well in math class and really need to pick up your performance.</p>

**Applying Resource:**  
Student Handout

23  
Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**APPLYING**  
During the next few days observe a situation that causes you to react negatively. Use this handout to help you respond positively to your negative situation.

Identify your emotions.

\_\_\_\_\_

Identify the thoughts you are having that are causing you to respond this way.

\_\_\_\_\_

Decide what you can and cannot change.

\_\_\_\_\_

Choose a positive way to react.

\_\_\_\_\_

Think of something positive you can learn from the situation.

\_\_\_\_\_

**Reflecting**

Display **Reflecting Project 2.3.3** Students use their class notebooks to reflect individually and as a class on what they learned in this lesson.

<b>What?</b>	How can you learn to react more positively to negative situations?
<b>So What?</b>	How will this help you be more effective in relating to others?
<b>Now What?</b>	How will this understanding help you as you face new situations in work or in continuing your education?

**A APPLYING** 2 MINUTES

Distribute **Student Handout: Applying**. Over the next few days have the students observe a situation that causes them to react negatively. Complete the handout as a homework assignment for the next class.

**ASSESSING**

**PRACTICING (INFORMAL FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT)** Check for understanding of the lesson by reviewing their responses to the Reflecting Activity.

**APPLYING (FORMAL FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT)** Review the Student Handout: Applying to assess how well students understand the process of understanding their emotions, thinking through the causes, and responding positively.

**BUILDING SKILLS BEYOND THE LESSON**

**Keep a Journal!**

**REINFORCEMENT**

**PRACTICING** Have students keep a journal and record different experiences and their emotional reactions to them. They should also indicate how they used their thinking process to understand the causes of the emotions.

**Discuss It!**

**APPLYING** Reinforce the process by having groups review their Applying handout experiences and discussing what they felt, what they thought, and how they responded.

**Life Online!**

**ENRICHMENT**

**APPLYING** Ask students how the lesson applies to life online. How do people control their emotions in dealing with each other every day, or how do they fail to? Ask students if they find a difference online from real life.

**Write a Skit!**

**PRACTICING** Have students or groups write and perform a skit for an elementary class that models the process used to respond positively to a negative situation. Then arrange time to perform the skit.