

Learn From Your Mistakes

Summary

Learn From Your Mistakes is a lesson in which students will recognize and discuss the benefits of learning and growing from mistakes and not repeating them.

Main Core Tie

Health Education I (7-8)

[Strand 1: HEALTH FOUNDATIONS AND PROTECTIVE FACTORS OF HEALTHY SELF \(HF\) Standard HI.HF.3:](#)

Materials

Student Handouts: ["Autobiography in Five Short Chapters"](#)

2 pieces of paper for each student, pencils, crayons, etc.

1 large paper bag and a few rocks (or similar)

Worksheet: ["My Book of Wisdom"](#)

Poster: ["Learn From the Mistakes of Others"](#)

Intended Learning Outcomes

Recognize and discuss the benefits of learning and growing from mistakes and not repeating them.

Instructional Procedures

Lesson at a Glance

Define and discuss mistakes, embarrassment and growth.

Complete the crumpled paper activity.

Read and discuss "Autobiography in Five Short Chapters."

Complete the "Book of Wisdom."

New Vocabulary

mistake

embarrassment

growth

Introduction (Setting Focus)

Conduct a discussion regarding mistakes using the following prompts:

"What are mistakes?"

"What mistakes have you committed?"

"What embarrassing things have happened to you?"

"How did those mistakes and embarrassments make you feel?"

"What kinds of situations or activities have you dreaded or avoided because you were afraid of making a mistake?"

"How are making mistakes part of being human?"

"What does the phrase 'I'm an imperfect person but I'm an okay person' mean?"

Body (Strategies/Activities)

Students tear a piece of paper into two pieces. On one piece, they write a mistake they have made. If appropriate, share the mistake with the class.

Discuss that mistakes are common and an important part of growth. Emphasize that it is best to learn from mistakes and not to keep repeating the same mistakes.

Students write what they learned from their mistakes on the other piece of paper. Explain that we can learn from every mistake we make so we don't continue repeating it.

Read and discuss the "Autobiography in Five Short Chapters" by Portis Nelson.

Students crumple the piece of paper that has their mistake written on it and throw the paper to a specific area. Remind the students that they should keep the paper that has what they learned. Why throw away the mistake? Keeping the mistake only adds emotional baggage, and it can keep us from trying new things or even succeeding in the future. (Show the class a bag and put all the wadded-up papers in it.)

Discuss how unhealthy it is to harbor all our mistakes and become overly critical, judgmental, and depressing ourselves about making more mistakes. Carrying these mistakes with us can weigh us down (put additional rocks or weights in the bag) and prevent us from being happy and reaching our full potential.

Discuss how wisdom develops as we learn from our mistakes. Refer to the piece of paper that the students still have and discuss how much wisdom is available from learning from mistakes. Thomas Edison stated, "I'm not discouraged because every wrong attempt discarded is another step forward." Explain that mistakes and failures are part of being human. The secret is to learn and grow from these experiences and not to ever give up. If people approach failures and mistakes with the right attitude, these can become stepping stones to greater success.

Show the poster, "Learn from the mistakes of others, life's too short to make them all yourself!" and discuss how each student has much wisdom at his or her disposal to look at his or her own mistakes and the mistakes of others as opportunities to become wiser and move forward.

Each student records additional examples in his or her own "Book of Wisdom."

Read the quote "A Wise Man Learns From His Mistakes. A Very Wise Man Learns From the Mistakes of Others," and discuss how we can learn from the mistakes of others. Using the "Book of Wisdom," students write and share examples of things they have learned from others' mistakes.

Closure (Wrap-Up and Extension)

Using a clean sheet of paper, students write what they've learned from one particular mistake. Draw a picture representing the mistake and share the completed work with the class. If desired, you can compile the pictures and make a class or school *Book of Wisdom: What We've Learned by the Seventh/Eighth Grade*.

Authors

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