

Choosing Positive Paths

Imagine you're lost in a big city. Would you wander down a dark alley as you try to find your way? Or would you look for a brightly-lit main street?

Just as you choose your route in a city, you can decide where to let your thoughts travel. When you're worried or disappointed, it's easy for your mind to head down negative roads that make you feel sad. But you can direct your thoughts along positive paths.

Thinking positively takes a little practice. First, catch the gloomy thoughts. "I can't," "I hate," or "I'll

never" are clues to negative thinking. When you notice them, focus on something optimistic instead. The thought, "I'll never win that competition. I should quit," can become, "I'm the best I've ever been." If you're having trouble switching to positive thoughts, talk to a parent or friend.

The path of life can be challenging. But when you steer your thinking in positive directions, you can build confidence and hope. And that helps make any journey happier.

Practice making positive choices by matching the negative thought to the positive thought that could replace it.

1 I'LL PROBABLY *FAIL* THE MATH QUIZ.

2 I WISH I HAD A CELL PHONE. MY PARENTS *NEVER* BUY ME WHAT I WANT.

3 I'M SICK OF THE *AWFUL* PLAYERS ON MY SOCCER TEAM.

4 ALL THIS *TRASH* ON THE GROUND IS SO GROSS. WHY DOESN'T SOMEONE CLEAN IT?

5 I DON'T WANT TO GO ON THE FIELD TRIP—THOSE KIDS ARE ALL *GEEKS*.

6 IT'S NO FAIR THAT I DIDN'T GET A LEAD ROLE IN THE MUSICAL. THE DIRECTOR MUST *HATE* ME.

7 I CAN'T STAND TAKING THE BUS. WAITING IS *SO BORING*.

8 *SINA* STARTED A NASTY RUMOR ABOUT ME. I HAVE TO *GET BACK* AT HER.

A I THINK I'LL SAVE UP MY ALLOWANCE TO BUY A CELL PHONE.

B MAYBE I'LL MAKE A NEW FRIEND ON THE FIELD TRIP.

C I WISH I HAD A BETTER PART. I'LL WORK FOR A BIGGER ROLE *NEXT YEAR*.

D I'VE STUDIED HARD, AND I'LL JUST DO MY *BEST* ON THE QUIZ.

E I'LL INVITE MY TEAMMATES OVER TO PRACTICE BEFORE THE BIG GAME.

F I NEED TO TELL *SINA* HOW I FEEL. I HOPE SHE UNDERSTANDS AND WON'T DO IT AGAIN.

G I'M GOING TO E-MAIL THE CITY ABOUT GETTING A GARBAGE BIN HERE.

H I LOVE HAVING TIME TO READ ON THE BUS.

