Lesson Plan 1  

How to Get Real

Objective

You’ll need to establish some guidelines with the students because this is the first session to set the tone for the program. It is most important that your students feel comfortable and respected. Make the girls and boys feel like this is a really special club. If possible, allow them to wear comfy clothes, eat snacks while you’re presenting, sit where they want, etc. Show them you trust them. Create an environment that feels less like another class and more like a safe place to hang out. Shift your role to be similar to that of a Counselor or Life Coach, so try to quiet your “Teacher voice” and talk to the kids like a friend giving advice...a Friendship Coach!

This session focuses on self-awareness, teaching children to ‘get real’ about who they are. In order to create healthy friendships, we need students to first look inward and shine a light on their strengths. Students will learn that character is what matters most and they have the power to be the best version of themselves.

The key outcomes in this lesson include:

- Students will apply the Friendology 101 Guidelines: Be kind to yourself and others, be open to learning and growing, be honest, be brave, and have fun.

- Students will dispel myths around gender stereotypes, thinking critically about the messages that are imposed on them because of their gender and challenge those limitations and expectations to focus on who they really are.

- Students will identify the things they can and cannot control about themselves. They will learn to embrace qualities they cannot change and feel good about who they are. They will also learn that although they can’t control the shape of their nose or color of their eyes, for instance, they can control their behavior and choose to be happy.

- Through the Friendology Project (writing in a gratitude journal), students will focus on seeing life through a positive lens and the importance of expressing gratitude and appreciation.

- Through the Friendology Project (Looking into Your Sole), students will examine the main aspects of who they are and describe themselves in a variety of ways.
Materials

Each session requires a computer, projector, and a screen to display the slideshow. Some sessions also require internet access. You will need:

- Facilitator’s Guide
- Session 1 Slideshow & Teaching Notes
- Folders & pencils
- Bin to keep folders
- Handouts: The Real You Chart
- Handouts: The Real You Chart
- Handouts: Looking into Your Sole
- Name tags for students (optional)
- Music!
- Example & paper bags for the Looking into Your Sole project

Before the next session:

- Review Lesson Plan 2 – How to Make Friends
- Round up a set of balls or beanbags, enough for half the class
- Copy enough handouts for the students
Looking into your Sole - Art Project

If you were a shoe, what would you look like? Think about your personality and your interests and create a shoe that perfectly symbolizes who you are. Are you a soccer cleat with video games all over it, representing your passion for soccer and obsession with video games? Or maybe you’re a flip-flop with birds, representing your casual demeanor and your love of the outdoors? Try to encapsulate all of your unique qualities in one shoe.

Instructions:
1. Think of the shoe for you!

2. Using the paper bag provided, draw your shoe on the outside of the bag. You may also create your shoe on the computer and print it out.

3. Inside the bag, place pictures, items, and words to show all the things in your life that make you who you are.

4. Make it stand out! Add some design elements like color and ‘kick’ it up a notch!

5. Bring it to the final Friendology session so we can match the sole to the soul!
The Real You Chart

Take some time to think about who you really are and who you want to become. Complete the chart below. Once you’re done filling out the chart, go through each quality and highlight the things you have control over and circle the things you don’t have control over.

| What I like about myself | What I don’t like about myself |

Here’s the point:

It’s time to keep it real! Stop worrying about the things you have no control over. Be proud of who you are and embrace those qualities that make you special and different. Besides, what’s the point of worrying about something that you can’t control anyway? It’s time to let go... As for those things that you can control, it’s time to take life into your own hands and be the person you want to be!

Choose to be happy!
This session focuses on self-awareness, teaching children to ‘get real’ about who they are. In order to create healthy friendships, we need students to first look inward and shine a light on their strengths. Students will dispel myths around gender stereotypes, thinking critically about the messages that are imposed on them because of their gender and challenge those limitations/expectations, to focus on who they really are. They will learn that character is what matters most and they have the power to be the best version of themselves.
Start the session off by explaining the Friendology 101 Guidelines. This is meant to set the tone, so quickly go over each one of the guidelines:

- **Be kind to yourself and others** – Ask the students, “We all know it’s important to be kind to others, but why do we need to be kind to ourselves? What does that mean?” Linking their answers, encourage the students to tune in to their self-talk – that voice in their head when they talk to themselves. Let them know that sometimes self-talk can be negative and it’s important to make sure they understand they’re in control of that inner voice.

- **Be open to learning and growing** - Explain that it is important for them to be willing and open to improving themselves, which starts with acknowledging that nobody is perfect. Challenge them to have an open mind. It’s also important to remind them that we’re always learning and growing, but you cannot learn or grow if you do not open yourself up to it!

- **Be honest** – Explain to the students that honesty is about living with integrity. Being honest, even when it’s tough, is one of the keys to being a good person.

- **Be brave** – Remind the students that bravery helps us learn, grow, and become stronger. Bravery is when we feel butterflies, but do it anyway because we know it’s the right thing to do. Be sure to really emphasize the importance of Friendology 101 being a safe environment in which to ask questions.

- **Have fun** – Having fun is central to all Friendology 101 activities, so be sure to find a nice balance between the seriousness of the material and being able to relax, laugh, and enjoy this special time together.
Note: You can choose to focus on one gender in this activity if you want to dig in with just boys or just girls.

Ask the questions on the slide, “What qualities does the ‘Perfect Girl’ have and what qualities does the ‘Perfect Guy’ have? What does the perfect girl/guy look like? What do they act like? What are their friendships like?” Get them to come up with a clear vision in their mind of what this Perfect Girl or Perfect Guy is all about. Say, “Think of someone who perfectly captures what being a girl is all about and someone who perfectly captures what being a guy is all about.” On their own, or in a group, get the students to make a list of qualities that define each gender. Once done, ask them to describe them to you! As they’re describing her/him, create a list for the students to see by writing out their responses on the whiteboard or on chart paper.

Almost every time, kids will describe someone who is FAR from perfect and a lot of their answers will be based in gender stereotypes. For girls, common responses include: blonde hair, bossy, catty, gossipy, skinny, posse, spoiled, expensive clothes, nice when adults are around but mean when adults aren’t around, etc. Their responses typically focus on looks and popularity. For guys, common responses include: strong (6-pack!), athletic, fit, no drama (i.e. stoic, doesn’t cry), funny, girls like him, etc. Their responses also focus on looks and popularity. However, both lists will reveal stereotypical gender-based behavior. Highlight some of the differences you notice and point out any negative or unhealthy attributes they mention. Erase or strike out “Perfect Girl” and replace with “Perfect Guy” and vice versa. Ask if boys can have these qualities that girls have and if girls can have these qualities that boys have.
Ask, “Where do we get these ideas from?” prompting them to ultimately express that the media and world around them create these expectations and impose these stereotypes on them. Discuss how photos in magazines and on billboards aren’t real and are created in PhotoShop.

The video links to one of the Always #LikeAGirl videos. Even if you have boys in your group, get the students to stand up and say: “Show me what it looks like to throw like a girl.” Get them to demonstrate. “Show me what it looks like to run like a girl.” Get them to demonstrate. “Now, fight like a girl.” You will see in all these actions they will be demonstrating stereotypical girl behavior. Then, click on the movie icon and show the video. Make sure you have internet access and your sound is up nice and loud. Have a discussion after the video about how gender stereotypes can be limiting.

_video link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XjJQBjWYDTs

Here are a few additional videos that you can show to your students that highlight gender stereotypes if you would like to dig deeper. Again, you can focus on just one gender or spend a bit of time on both.

**Girl Stereotypes:**
- Dove Real Beauty Sketches: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=litXW91UauE
- Always #Unstoppable: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VhB3l1gCz2E
- Always Keep Playing: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N433aXwj59E

**Boy Stereotypes:**
- Kleenex Time for a Change: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8LnuWQgL7Wg
- Upworthy Gendered Language for Boys: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LGfMNA7mPw
- HatchKids Male Gender Stereotypes: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QxYvhh1hQvk

**Suggestion:** If you’d like to take this conversation further, here are two documentaries focused on gender stereotypes by The Representation Project. These documentaries are recommended for adults, so you could consider hosting a screening for the educators or parents and then discuss how you plan to combat these stereotypes through Friendology 101. Here are the trailers (Warning: Explicit Language & Adult Content):
- The Mask You Live In: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hc45-ptHMxo
- Miss Representation: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W2UZZV3xU6Q
Get the students to recognize that nobody is “perfect” and the goal is to just be true to who they are. Ask them, “What are the good things about being real, totally true to who you are, flaws and all?” Here are some answers to hope for:

- To be happy, genuine, and authentic
- To learn and grow as a person
- So that we are all different and unique
- To keep our ego in check (to be humble and modest)
- To keep life interesting
- To be a better friend (when you are true to who you are and admit your faults, you’re more relatable, down-to-earth, easy-going and other kids won’t feel like they have to compete with you)
Ask the students what their “True Colors” are. Explain that it’s an expression used to describe someone’s true self – what makes them special and unique. You can get the students to scribble words down in their journal, finishing the sentences on the slide, or share them aloud with the group. Share with them some of your True Colors, offering both positive and negative attributes. For example: “My True Colors are that I love spaghetti, I’m terrible at basketball, I’m sometimes afraid of the dark, I have one brother and one sister, and I instantly tear up if I see someone cry.”

The video links to the Dove True Colors commercial. Show them the video and discuss how it makes them feel.

Video link: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tUA8PvLsZgU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tUA8PvLsZgU)

Suggestion: If you have a small group, ask the students to think about one positive quality that makes them unique. Go around the group and have each student share one of their true colors!
Explain to the students that we are all different and one of the ways we’re different is around our level of sensitivity. While some kids might be highly sensitive, other kids might be not be. Ask the students if they can identify where they think they would be on the sensitivity spectrum? Get them to stand up and tell them one end of the room represents super sensitive, while the other end of the room represents not-so-sensitive. Tell them to stand where they think they would rate themselves on the sensitivity spectrum. Ask them, “Why are you standing where you’re standing? What is it about you that makes you say you’re more/less sensitive?” Get them to articulate the qualities within themselves they were thinking about when they chose where to stand. Ask them, “Are you surprised where anyone else is standing?” Ask them if they think one side is better than the other. Help them understand that although they might relate better to students near to them on the spectrum, they can always find something in common with people who are on different sides.

**Note:** This is an important topic, particularly for boys, because I found in my research that the ‘sensitivity spectrum’ between boys is larger than what we typically see with girls. Here’s an excerpt from my research paper following the GoodGuys pilot workshops conducted in 11 schools across 3 countries with hundreds of boys (2014):

*The spectrum for boys is expansive; from the effeminate, sensitive boy who creatively expresses himself through art to the rambunctious, sporty boy who expresses himself through rough play. Because of their immense differences, their ability to respectfully connect can sometimes be difficult. Consequently, one of the challenges boys face in their friendships is this inability to relate to someone who has interests that are vastly different from their own. It is common for boys to only form friendships with those who are close to them on the spectrum and have nothing to do with those who are not. This, in itself, is sometimes enough to ignite a Friendship Fire® and the reason we need to help boys close this gap.*
“Stop dreaming and start embracing!” Ask the students: “What does embrace mean?” Explain that to embrace something means to accept it. It also means to hug. It’s like putting your arms around something and giving it a big bear-hug because you accept it for what it is.

Get them to imagine what life would be like if they were always worrying about or disliking things they have no control over. Ask them if that person would be happy? Explain that it is a wasted emotion; wasted energy on something that is out of their control.

Read the chant aloud to the students then get them to stand up, put their hand on their head like a fun salute or hand on their heart, and say the chant with you. If you have time, encourage them to write this down. Let them know that the next activity will help them acquire “the wisdom to know the difference.”
Get the students to pull out this handout from their folders (or hand them out, if you haven’t done so already) and read over the instructions together. You can either have them get started on it and complete it at home OR take it home to complete. Remind them, however, that this is a very personal assignment so be sure not to peek at other papers. Give them examples and ask if it’s a quality they can control or not. “Can you control the color of your hair? Freckles? How about being shy? What about snorting when you laugh? Your height? Being bossy? The color of your skin? Your temper?”

Explain that the act of circling is like embracing, or hugging, that quality. The act of highlighting means that these are things you can work on or change about yourself, if you want. Read “Here’s the Point” at the bottom of the sheet, so they understand the purpose of the assignment emphasizing that they are in control of who they want to be!
Read this poem to the students and explain this is how we aim for happiness! Reiterate the sentiments, “Take little set-backs and failures in stride and remember successes with pleasure and pride.”

The back story: This poem came from my Mom when I was a Tween. I was in grade 3 (back in 1988) and was always so hard on myself and thought I was never good enough – not pretty enough, not smart enough, not athletic enough, etc. I would cry every day after school and always wished I was more like my friends. I came home one day from school and found this poem (on a plaque) waiting for me on my pillow. I’ve kept it with me my entire life and often share it with students in our URSTRONG Camps. Please feel free to share this story with the students and if they ever feel like I did, so that they:

1. Know that they’re not the only one who’s ever felt down on themselves,
2. Talk to someone about it, like their mom or someone close, and
3. Trust that it gets better.

Suggestion: Get the students to make a music video, rapping this poem and beatboxing the beat. Or, ask them to give you a beat while you rap it out!
Give the students a minute to think about someone they admire. Once they have the person they admire in their minds, ask them: “Why do you admire this person? What is it about them?” You will notice all of the qualities they say relate specifically to character. After each student shares a quality, ask them if that’s a quality they could have. For example, a student might say, “I admire my uncle because he’s so caring and always helps me when I need it.” Then say, “Interesting! Can you think of someone who is caring and helpful?” The students will start to notice that they can have these same qualities as the people they admire.

Point out that none of the qualities relate to looks or popularity (like the “Perfect Girl” or “Perfect Guy” activity). Emphasize that a person’s character is what people actually value the most. Remind them that they can control their character and be someone that people admire too!
Encourage the students to be the best versions of themselves. Here are some examples if you want to elaborate:

- **Set rules for yourself** means to learn from your mistakes and make choices. For example, after getting into a fight with a friend, you might set a rule for yourself that you will never yell at a friend again, even if you are really mad.

- **Listen to your angel voice** means to listen to that voice in your head that tells you to do the right thing. It is your intuitive, gut instinct.
  
  **Suggestion:** Read the poem, “The Voice” by Shel Silverstein to reinforce what this means. Your angel voice is that little voice inside of you. When people say, “Trust your gut!” this is what it means.

- **Be strong** means to stand up for what you believe in and do the right thing, even when it’s hard.

- **Be a leader** means to not just do what other kids are doing, but instead do what is right for you.

- **Be honest** means to live with integrity and tell the truth, even when you’ve made a mistake.

- **Be patient** means to accept that sometimes things don’t always follow our preferred timeline. There are many lessons along the way.

- **Be forgiving** means to accept that nobody is perfect (even yourself) and that people make mistakes. Forgiveness is a healing virtue.

  **Suggestion:** If you have time, divide the students into 7 groups and assign one quality to each group. Get them to think about that quality, explain it to the class with an example, or get them to act it out to demonstrate that quality in action!
Discuss the message behind this Dr. Seuss quote. Ask, “What does it mean?” Encourage the students to write this quote down in their journals. Reiterate the main theme behind this session – be true to who you are and be real. Remind them how important it is to be the Youest You!

Show the music video, “I am Me” by Willow Smith, and encourage them to listen to the lyrics.

☞ Video link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VUMK4Da9Avg
Give the students a copy of the “Looking into your Sole” handout and read over the instructions with them. You should explain that their job is to figure out which shoe perfectly symbolizes who they are. Remind them not to bring in their finished project until the very last session. Also, if it’s an option, let the students know you’ll be hanging their “Soles” up on the bulletin board or displaying them somewhere.

**Suggestion:** Create your own to model as an example of how you would like the finished product to look. It also gives them some insight into you as a person, helping them feel closer and more connected to you.
Explain to the students that there will be a Friendology Project at the end of each session, encouraging them to put their learning to practice until your next session together.

For this session, explain that the Friendology Project is to write what they’re grateful for in a journal every night before bed. Tell them to call it a “Gratitude Journal”. Even if they’ve had the worst day ever, they still have to list five things they are grateful for that day. Explain some days will be so easy (they may have way more than five), while other days it may be harder to come up with five.

At the beginning of all subsequent sessions, you will discuss the meaning behind the Friendology Project assignments.

You did it…You finished your first Friendology 101 session!

Be sure to take a peek at the end of the Lesson Plan for Session 1 in the Facilitator’s Guide to see what to do to prepare for the next session.