

# Teaching values for life

A six-part series by David Koutsoukis

## 1. Be kind to yourself!

### Developing student self-esteem and resiliency

'Who wants to live a happy life?' I ask, as a sea of hands stretch toward the sky. 'Who wants to be successful?' I continue. 'Yeah, yeah!' yell a group of kids from the back of the room. 'So, who'd like to know how to become happy and successful?' 'Me!' replies the crowd with enthusiasm. 'All right then, let me share with you the secret to becoming happy and successful. Put your hands up in the air like this ... with six fingers pointing upwards. These fingers represent the six things you need to do in order to be happy and successful in life. These six things give you a "recipe for life" and act as guidelines to help you make good decisions. 'The "law of attraction" says that "whatever you are thinking and feeling, plus your actions, is creating your future". The "Six kinds of best" will help you think, feel and act in a positive way, and, in turn, will help create a positive future for you!' This is how I start my motivational presentation for kids entitled, 'Make the "Six kinds of best" your personal quest!'



Over my twenty-year period of work in schools, both as a teacher and education consultant, one conspicuous observation has been that students who achieve high marks have a strong internal constitution. In other words, they know what's important to them and they stick to their 'internal rules'. (For the most part.) On the other hand, kids who struggle with school and life lack this 'internal compass' and, consequently, their behaviour is 'all over the place'. This internal compass is, of course, our values.



A great number of our children receive a great values base at home. But with the busyness of life these days, many children don't receive the values inculcation that they need. The 'Six kinds of best' provides a simple framework to help teachers and parents articulate what good values are and gives students signposts to point them in the right direction when they get to 'crossroad' moments in their lives—times when they need to make important decisions. By teaching the 'Six kinds of best', we are giving our children a simple, consistent and meaningful message that will help them remember what they need to do in order to become happy and successful individuals.

The 'Six kinds of best' are:

- |                               |                          |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Be kind to yourself        | 2. Be kind to others     |
| 3. Be kind to the environment | 4. Be the learning kind  |
| 5. Be the achieving kind      | 6. Be the community kind |

In this article, we focus on the first kind of best, 'Be kind to yourself'.

Being kind to yourself is about developing self-esteem and resiliency. It is no coincidence that this is the first kind of best. Without self-esteem and resiliency, it is very difficult to get children thinking about being kind to others or the environment, to be concerned about achievement and learning or about being a positive member of the community.

Research shows that self-esteem in children predicates success in later life. A study by the London School of Economics' Centre for Economic Performance found clear evidence that students with high self-esteem at the age of ten would earn more money in later life than those with higher academic abilities. (Not that money is everything!) Basically, it found that children with a high level of self-esteem do much better in later life than those with low self-esteem.

So, how do we teach self-esteem and resiliency? With a lot of patience and persistence—and with some useful tools. Here are a few ideas to help you teach your children how to be 'kind to themselves'.



Students at Riverton Primary School enjoying 'Six kinds of best'

### Key pointers

### How to encourage self-esteem and resiliency

Encourage your students to:

- I.1 be proud of their uniqueness
- I.2 develop a sense of identity
- I.3 know their strengths and work on their weaknesses
- I.4 exercise regularly
- I.5 eat well
- I.6 sleep well
- I.7 take time to relax
- I.8 minimise physical risks
- I.9 keep learning and growing
- I.10 strive for success
- I.11 love, and value the love of others
- I.12 develop a circle of quality friends
- I.13 stand up for themselves
- I.14 make good choices
- I.15 forgive themselves if they make mistakes
- I.16 be positive
- I.17 be useful
- I.18 have some fun
- I.19 be proud of the things they say and do.

## Seven ways to help teach children to 'be kind to themselves'

1. Teach children the 'Six kinds of best' affirmation so they internalise the core values.
2. Articulate what being kind to yourself means. See the key pointers on the previous page. Put up a poster to remind students.
3. Teach lessons on the key pointers from the *Values education toolkit* books. Free downloads also available at [www.sixkindsofbest.com](http://www.sixkindsofbest.com).
4. Use 'Six kinds of best' language. For example; If someone is putting themselves down, say to them 'Come on Mary, be kind to yourself'. Or if a student gets 'out' in a game and doesn't get upset, say 'Well done John, that's being kind to yourself!'
5. Catch children being kind to themselves. Give them an 'I am kind to myself' sticker or certificate. These are available as free downloads. Better still, ask children to praise each other when they see good examples.
6. Use an individual or class progress chart to reinforce positive examples of good self-esteem and resiliency.
7. Create a 'Be kind to yourself' class display. Find examples at [www.sixkindsofbest.com](http://www.sixkindsofbest.com).

## Ten indicators of good self-esteem and resiliency

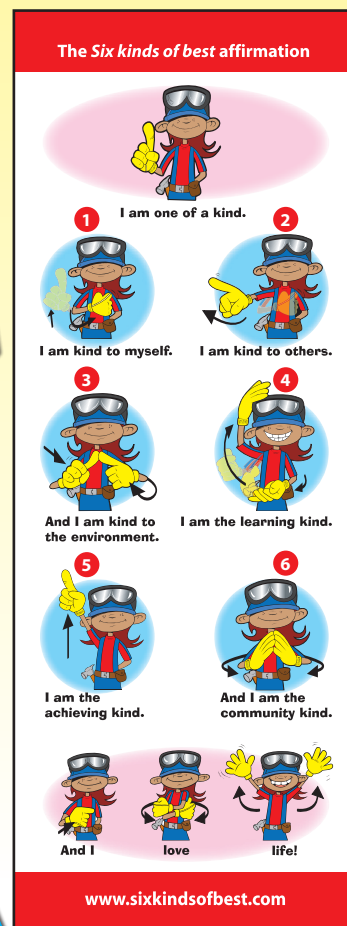
Children with good self-esteem and resiliency will generally:

1. behave well
2. have a positive outlook and use positive language
3. compliment others and won't use put-downs
4. downplay and accept mistakes or losses in games
5. 'have a go' at new things
6. show initiative
7. tend not to have outbursts of anger
8. recognise and acknowledge their strengths without bragging
9. believe that their limitations can be improved upon
10. have confidence, but be humble.

## Give your children 'Six kinds of best'

The 'Six kinds of best' *Values education toolkit* resources have all the tools you need to teach values in your school. Why not help your children become the best that they can be by giving them 'Six of the best'. Many of the resources are also suitable for parents.

David Koutsoukis is a speaker, consultant and author who helps educators build positive and productive classrooms and schools. He runs professional development seminars on 'Creative tools for teaching values' in most capital cities. For more information visit [www.schoolmasters.com.au](http://www.schoolmasters.com.au).



- Articles
- Lesson plans
- Worksheets
- Planning documents
- 6KOB values framework with page links
- Four-term year planner

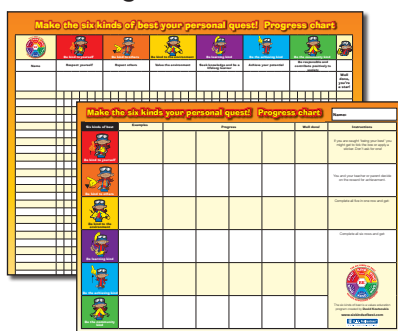
- Sample curriculum: Pre-primary to Year 9
- Workbook cover sheets
- Certificates
- Colouring-in posters
- 6KOB checklists
- 6KOB affirmation chart

Free downloads at [www.sixkindsofbest.com](http://www.sixkindsofbest.com)

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