



# Make the six kinds of best your personal Quest

Six key strategies to show your students how to develop good values and lead a happy and successful life!

*David Koutsoukis*

**Y**ou're walking down the school corridor ... Bruce is sitting outside a classroom looking quite forlorn. Being the friendly teacher you are, you stop for a chat.

'Hi Bruce, how are you?' you ask.

'Annoyed', he grunts back.

'Why's that?' you calmly reply.

'Because I got sent outside.'

'What did you do wrong?' you enquire.

'Nothing!'

Does this sound familiar?

Of course, many students like Bruce know exactly why they got into trouble. However, a significant number of them genuinely don't understand what they did wrong. This may be due to a lack of clarity in class rules and expectations, but in many cases the students just don't realise that what they have done is inappropriate. Put another way, we could say that they lack good basic values.

This lack of values is apparent in many areas of society. We often hear about poor behaviour on and off sporting fields, at shopping centres, on public transport systems and of course, in schools. And it's not only children we're talking about! We are experiencing the symptoms of a society where children are spending less time with busy parents, less time in church and for many reasons where they are not getting the same basic values education that previous generations have experienced.

More than ever, values education in schools is crucial for developing future citizens of good character. This is especially important in the early school years when children are developing behaviour patterns they will

keep for the rest of their life. Like it or not, schools are being expected by default to help develop good values in our children. If we neglect this role, we do so at our own peril, both in terms of behaviour management in schools and behaviour in the community.

In a nutshell, we need to teach our children what is right and wrong. Some educators might argue against this, but I agree with the federal Minister for Education, Brendon Nelson, who says, 'a values-free education is likely to produce values-free adults'.<sup>1</sup>

## What are values?

Values are ideals that guide our behaviour and decisions, and help us distinguish between what is right and wrong. They outline what is important to us in terms of our conduct, our interaction with others and how we might live our lives in a meaningful way. Values give us a guiding framework by which to lead our lives. People who engage in antisocial behaviour are lacking this values framework.

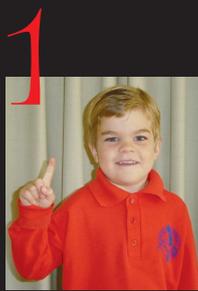
Values, of course, are only values if we live by them. I guess you could say that our values are demonstrated by: '... what we do when we think no-one is looking'.<sup>2</sup>

## Why teach values?

Developing good values gives us a framework to guide our conscience and helps us make good choices. If we have strong values and are put in challenging situations, we are more likely to make good decisions according to those values. Developing strong values also helps address our spiritual needs and self-esteem by giving us a personal sense of identity and direction.

# The Six Kinds of Best Affirmation

The Six Kinds of Best Affirmation is a great way to teach the core values in a way that is memorable and fun. Students recite the affirmation while doing the actions to engage visual, audio and kinaesthetic learners.



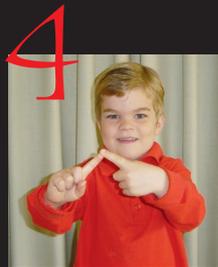
I am one of a kind. (Right index finger in the air in front of body.)



I am kind to myself, (Clenched right fist over heart.)



I am kind to others, (From clenched fist over heart, swing right arm clockwise and point outwards.)



And I am kind to the environment. (Touch left index finger with right index finger—Auslan sign language for 'E'.)



I am the achieving kind, (Point upwards—aim for the stars.)



I am the learning kind, (Have left hand flat, palm upwards, waist height—like a book—take right hand and sweep the left hand with the back of your hand and swing your hand up to touch the top of your head—putting the information from the book into your head.)



And I am the community kind. (Form an 'A' shape in front of your body with your fingers—like a house.)



And I (point to yourself and touch your chest)



Love (hug yourself)



Life! (hands and arms outstretched above your head)

Also, it helps develop in us a sense of responsibility for the consequences of our behaviour and how our actions might affect ourselves, others and the environment.

I believe that by teaching values in schools we are not only taking a proactive approach towards managing student behaviour, but are also giving our students effective strategies to help them lead happy and successful lives.

## People think values are important

The three 'Rs' have always been priorities for parents, but increasingly they are expecting schools to teach about values. This is one of the reasons why many parents opt to send their children to private schools. Research I have done in schools shows that values development is seen as important by teachers, parents and students alike. Here is a sample of results from a recent survey conducted in conjunction with a values education program I facilitated in a Perth senior high school:

99% of parents said that it is important that values are taught in schools.

98% of students said that it is important for people to have good values.

100% of parents said that the six core values from the Six Kinds of Best concept provided a good framework for teaching values.

90% of students said that the information they learned in the Six Kinds of Best day was important.

## The Six Kinds of Best Concept

The Six Kinds of Best concept is a model that outlines six core values for becoming a person of good character and for leading a happy and successful life. It frames the core values in a way that students, teachers and parents can remember and apply in everyday situations. It provides 'anchor points' upon which we can reflect when faced with decision-making situations and helps us make good choices. I guess you could say that it is a 'recipe for life'.

## The Six Kinds of Best are:

Be **KIND** to yourself (Respect yourself)

Be **KIND** to others (Respect others)

Be **KIND** to the environment (Value the environment)

Be the learning **KIND** (Seek knowledge)

Be the achieving **KIND** (Achieve your potential)

Be the community **KIND** (Contribute positively to society)

The Six Kinds of Best concept uses a play on the word 'kind' to make it memorable and repeatable. It also reinforces the word 'kind', which is an attribute that is badly needed in today's society. What you see here are just the headings for each of the core values. Each Kind of Best has a number of key pointers and examples to illustrate the values.

The Six Kinds of Best concept gives us a framework and a language for teaching and reinforcing values at school and in the home. The idea is to get students to become familiar with the six core values and internalise them by using the Six Kinds of Best Affirmation. (See pictures in this article.)

Teachers and parents can reinforce behaviours by using the language of the Six Kinds of Best. For example:

A student puts herself down - 'Olivia, you're not being kind to yourself are you?'

A student is bullying someone - 'John, you're not being kind to others are you?'

A student drops some rubbish - 'Ava, you're not being kind to environment are you?'

The class does well in a test - 'Well done, class, you really are the learning kind!'

A student does a great assignment - 'Excellent, Matthew, you are the achieving kind!'

A group of students help clean up - 'Thanks, guys, you really are the community kind.'

The great thing about the Six Kinds of Best concept is that it provides a mechanism to continually reinforce good values, and teach them in context.

In Malcolm Gladwell's book *The tipping point*<sup>3</sup>, he talks about the driving forces behind cultural change. He explains that 'the message' is a key factor in developing a positive culture. The Six Kinds of Best provides a clear, congruent and consistent message that can be spread throughout the whole school. If everyone knows and uses the language, the message is even more consistently reinforced.

## Where to now?

The great challenge for educators these days is not only about teaching students how to learn and acquire skills in an increasingly complex world, but also about how to help them become people of good character. Values education in schools helps us do this.

The outcome of developing good values in students is win-win. It is a win for teachers and schools in terms of student behaviour, it is a win for parents who want to be proud of their children, and it is a win for students because having good values will help them lead happy and successful lives.

Here are three ways you can apply the information from this article:

1. Teach your students the Six Kinds of Best Affirmation and actions.
2. Use the language of the Six Kinds of Best in your classroom to reinforce good values.
3. Determine how you might incorporate the teaching of values into your everyday school life.

And remember, whenever you get the chance, say to your students:

'Make the Six Kinds of Best Your Personal Quest!'

## Values for Australian schooling

The Australian Federal Government recently released its nine values for Australian schooling. They are:

Care and Compassion; Doing your Best; Fair Go; Freedom; Honesty and Trustworthiness; Integrity; Respect; Responsibility; Understanding, Tolerance and Inclusion.

The Six Kinds of Best concept incorporates all these values.

## References

1. Nelson, Brendon. Federal Minister for Education. In an article from *The Age* newspaper. 23 September 2003.
2. From a quote by H Jackson Brown, 'Character is what we do when we think no-one is looking'.
3. Gladwell, Malcolm. (2000) *The tipping point*. London: Abacus
4. The Virtues Project. [www.virtuesproject.com.au](http://www.virtuesproject.com.au)
5. R.I.C. Publications Health and Values series. Visit [www.behaviourmanagement.net](http://www.behaviourmanagement.net)

### About the author:

David Koutsoukis is an educator with over 20 years' experience. He is the author of the Behaviour management toolkit, the R.I.C. Publications® Behaviour management and Values poster sets, and the Daily dose of fun series of books. He is now a full-time presenter and consultant who works with schools helping them build positive school cultures. David does a motivational program for school students called 'Make the Six Kinds of Best Your Personal Quest.' You can visit his websites at [www.behaviourmanagement.net](http://www.behaviourmanagement.net) and [www.funman.com.au](http://www.funman.com.au)



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