



## Self-Control

August

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### Character Qualities

- Responsibility
- Respect
- Thankfulness
- Caring
- Perseverance
- Unity
- Integrity
- Service
- Moral Courage
- Citizenship
- Fairness
- Self-Control

**The art of living consists in knowing which impulses to obey and which must be made to obey.**

**Sydney J. Harris**

City of Mission Viejo  
200 Civic Center  
Mission Viejo, CA 92691

### Think S.T.A.R. for Self-Control

The sage philosopher, Seneca, once stated, “Most powerful is he who has himself in his own power.” These insightful words reveal the wisdom of the one who learns that *self-control* is a character value that is developed through mental discipline.

For nearly twenty years, millions of kids throughout America have learned how to practice the mental discipline that leads to *self-control* through being taught the S.T.A.R. process. What is the S.T.A.R. process? It is a character development decision-making tool that the Jefferson Center for Character Education developed to help young people become kids of character. It has been taught to over 6,000,000 children in 6,000 classrooms throughout the U.S. It’s a character-building winner!

**S.T.A.R.** stands for: **Stop, Think, Act, Review...and Success Through Accepting Responsibility.** As a decision-making tool, the S.T.A.R. process teaches young people the four important steps for ethical decision-making that builds mental discipline leading to *self-control*. The four steps are:

- **Stop:** I stop to think before I act. *I learn to observe and not to react.*
- **Think:** I think about my alternative thoughts, feelings and actions. *I learn to see alternatives in order to make the best possible choice.*
- **Act:** I act responsibly. *I understand every action is a choice I make.*
- **Review:** I see the consequences of my actions. *I review my actions to evaluate if they get me closer to or further from my goals.*

Parents and grandparents can teach the S.T.A.R. process to their children to provide them with the mental keys that will continually help them explore life using a character compass that has a True North position called *Self-Control*. As a

child learns to *S.T.A.R.* his or her life for success with friends at school, on the athletic field, and in the home, he/she begins to build the important insight that life requires daily decisions and actions that practice the axiom, “*I am in control with S.T.A.R.*”

Yes, the repetitive use of S.T.A.R. can shape a significant mental habit and the character value of *self-control*. The child who uses the process for charting his/her course on life’s open seas does learn how to be the successful captain of his or her ship in a tough world.

*Self-control* is a very important quality to develop. It involves having control over your feelings and actions, and restraining your own impulses, emotions, or desires. It includes self-discipline--the ability to control and motivate yourself, stay on track and do what is right. Self-discipline is required in practicing an instrument or a skill, obeying rules, and setting and achieving goals.

*Self-control* can keep us on course and help us to avoid bad decisions. This fable by Aesop helps to illustrate the value of **thinking before you act!**

### The Frogs and the Well

By Aesop

Two frogs lived together in a marsh. But one hot summer the marsh dried up, and they left it to look for another place to live, for frogs like damp places if they can get them. By and by they came to a deep well, and one of them looked down into it and said to the other, “This looks like a nice cool place. Let us jump in and settle here.” But the other, who had a wiser head on his shoulders, replied, “Not so fast, my friend. Supposing this well dried up like the marsh, how should we get out again?”

*Look before you leap!*

## Books and Movies of Character

### Fiction

*Hatchet* by Gary Paulsen  
(5<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> grade)

*Center Court Sting*  
by Andrew Clements  
(2<sup>nd</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> grade)

*I'm Gonna Like Me: Letting Off a Little Self-Esteem* by Jamie Lee Curtis  
(Kindergarten to 3<sup>rd</sup> grade)

*Lilly's Purple Plastic Purse*  
by Kevin Henkes  
(1<sup>st</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> grade)

*Pinocchio* by Carlo Collodi

*Understand Betsy*  
by Dorothy Canfield Fisher  
(4<sup>th</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> grade)

### Nonfiction

*Aesop's Fables*  
(Kindergarten to 3<sup>rd</sup> grade)

*Sweet Victory: Lance Armstrong*  
by Mark Stewart (4<sup>th</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> grade)

*Wilma Unlimited: How Wilma Rudolph Became the World's Fastest Woman*  
by Kathleen Krull (2<sup>nd</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> grade)

### Movies

*The Karate Kid*  
*Selma*  
*Hoosiers*

### What is Self-Control?

- Having control over your feelings or actions.
- Restraining your own impulses, emotions or desires.
- Doing what you know you should do and not doing what you should not do.
- Self-discipline—being disciplined in practicing a skill or fulfilling tasks.
- Obeying the rules.
- Learning difficult new skills.
- Controlling your attitude.

## Quotes

**“There is no pleasure in life equal to that of the conquest of a vicious habit.”**  
*Anonymous*

**“Most powerful is he who has himself in his own power.”** *Seneca*

**“Setting a goal is not the main thing. It is deciding how you will go about achieving it and staying with that plan. The key is discipline. Without it, there is no morale.”** *Tom Landry, NFL Coach*

**“Self discipline is when your conscience tells you to do something and you don't talk back.”** *W. K. Hope*

**“Be patient and calm—for no one can catch fish in anger.”** *Herbert Hoover*

**“Self denial is painful for a moment, but very agreeable in the end.”**  
*Jane Taylor*

**“Educate your children to self-control, to the habit of holding passion and prejudice and evil tendencies subject to an upright and reasoning will, and you have done much to abolish misery from their future and crimes from society.”** *Benjamin Franklin*

**“If you get caught up in things over which you have no control, it will adversely affect those things over which you have control.”** *John Wooden*

### Practicing Self-Control

- Learn the skill of controlling your emotions.
- Practice an instrument or athletic skill to develop self-discipline.
- Be diligent in doing your homework and other responsibilities.
- Resist temptations and peer pressure.
- Set goals and do what is needed to achieve them.
- Obey parents and authority.
- Control your temper.
- Be aware of your emotions and maintain control over them.
- Let criticisms and upsets roll off of you!
- Budget time for your responsibilities.
- Resist peer pressure and avoid situations that can get you into trouble.
- Have patience.
- Learn to know right from wrong and have the discipline to make good decisions.

### Applying Self-Control

- Use the **S.T.A.R.** tool: **Stop**, **Think**, **Act**, **Review**.  
**Stop!** Do not react immediately. Count to 10 or force yourself to revisit the situation later.  
**Think** about your choices and the consequences of each choice.  
**Act** responsibly and carefully.  
**Review** your action to determine if it was a good choice or not. Make these techniques part of your daily thought process.

### Personal Commitments to Self-Control:

- I will use S.T.A.R.
- I will control my temper and my emotions.
- I will obey the rules.
- I will discipline myself to do what is required to reach my goals.
- I will say “no” to wrong choices.
- I will manage my time responsibly.
- I will look for personal lessons after defeats and mistakes and move on.