

## SEL Activity

# Cast a Vote For You



grades 6-8



30 minutes

### Objectives

- Students identify their habits.
- Students explore how habits help form and reinforce their identities.
- Students create their personal mission and Identity Statement.

### Essential Questions

- How can we build or change our habits?
- How are our habits connected to our identities?
- How can our habits help us form new identities?

### Vocabulary

**Habit:** noun; a settled tendency or usual manner of behavior; something that you do often and regularly, sometimes without knowing that you are doing it.

### MATERIALS + MEDIA

Paper

Worksheet: I'm the Type of Person Who... ([PDF](#))

Video: [Interview with James Clear, Atomic Habits Author](#)  
[James Clear on How to Set Your Mission and Identity \(2:45\)](#)

### SEL CORE COMPETANCIES

Self-awareness: Self-management

Self-awareness: Accurate self-perception

Self-awareness: Growth mindset

Self-management: Goal setting

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### Before you Begin

- Hand out paper (1/student) (THINK.GIVE section).
- Print the Worksheet: I'm the Type of Person Who... ([PDF](#)) (1/student) (THINK.GIVE section).

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### Program Connections

This activity focuses on caring for yourself—a theme that runs through our core programs. To learn more, visit our [PROGRAMS](#) page.

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# THINK • GIVE

Explain: We all have habits—actions we regularly take that we may not even realize we are doing. Maybe you make your bed every morning, or you always have Cheerios for breakfast, or you crack your knuckles. Brainstorm and write a list of your habits.

## Discuss:

- How did you decide what habits to list?
- What do our habits have to do with who we are?

Watch: [Interview with James Clear, Atomic Habits Author James Clear on How to Set Your Mission and Identity](#) (2:45). James Clear, the author of the book *Atomic Habits*, explains how habits have an outsized influence on one's story.

## Discuss:

- What is one thing you are taking away from the interview?
- What is one story you have told yourself about the type of person you are that has become part of your identity (e.g., trustworthy, athletic, etc.)?
- What is the relationship between our actions and our identities?

Explain: Our daily behaviors (habits) reinforce and shape our stories about ourselves (identities). Of course, habits are not the only thing influencing our identities—every experience informs who we are. But because we repeat habits again and again, they have an outsized influence on our stories. Habits provide evidence for the kind of person we are!

## Create an Identity Statement

Hand out the [Worksheet: I'm the Type of Person Who... \(PDF\)](#) (1/student).

Read the following quote aloud: "The key to building lasting habits is focusing on creating a new identity first. Your current behaviors are simply a reflection of your current identity. What you do now is a mirror image of the type of person you believe that you are (either consciously or subconsciously). To change your behavior for good, you need to start believing new things about yourself. You need to build identity-based habits." – James Clear

Students consider their Identity Statements by asking themselves: What type of person do I want to become? What identity do I want to reinforce?

**NOTE:** To get students started, hold a brainstorming session and offer examples (e.g., I'm the type of person who is trustworthy/cares about my physical fitness/finds joy and humor wherever I can).

Students use the worksheets and write an "I'm the type of person who..." Identity Statement and three actions they could take might help reinforce this identity.

Ask volunteers to share their Identity Statements and one of their actions.

### Discuss:

- How did it feel to brainstorm and choose three actions?
- How do your three actions connect to your Identity Statement?
- Was it challenging to choose one Identity Statement? Why or why not?

## CONNECT + CLOSE

### Cast your Vote

Explain: Now that we have our Identity Statements, we need to take actions to reinforce our identities. Think of your actions as votes. **Every action you take is a vote for the person you want to become.** Every time you show up and take an action that votes for or reinforces the person you want to become, you will gradually become that kind of person.

Students choose one of the actions they could take regularly that would cast a vote for their identity.

**NOTE:** Ensure students set up their actions to be adjustable (e.g., if their Identity Statement is that they are the type of person who cares about their physical fitness and their action is to go to the gym every day, it is more important that they show up (5 minutes is enough to cast a vote!) even on days when they don't have time to work out.

### Discuss:

- What actions will you take to cast votes for your identity?
- How can these actions become habits?
- How can acknowledging our habits and identities make us more respectful of others' habits and identities?

## ACTION

Explain: Cast a vote for the person you want to become by taking the first of many regular and small actions.

## REFLECTION

- What action did you take to cast a vote for your identity?
- How did it feel to take this action?
- Are you building a new habit with your actions?