

## CHOICES SHOULD START WITH EMPATHY AND COMPASSION

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A young high school student was walking one day with his uncle, who he respected very much. As they walked, they saw a pair of shoes sitting out in front of a house. They could see an elderly man in the backyard, mowing his lawn on a blistering hot day. The high school student turned to his uncle and suggested they hide the shoes to play a harmless trick on the man and hide behind the bushes to see the look of surprise on his face to find his shoes gone.

**(WHAT WOULD YOU DO IF A FRIEND SUGGESTED THIS? \_\_\_\_\_)**

The uncle thought that playing a surprise trick on the elderly man sounded like fun, but he asked his nephew how he would feel if after a long day of grueling work, something of his was stolen? The high school student said he would be mad and it could ruin the rest of his day. The uncle asked the boy if he had any money with him, to which his nephew replied that he had two dollar bills on him. The uncle suggested putting a dollar bill in each of the elderly man's shoes, then hiding behind the bushes to watch the man's expression. The nephew thought that was a good idea, so that's what they did.

**(WHAT WOULD YOU DO IF A FRIEND SUGGESTED THIS? \_\_\_\_\_)**

They talked quietly behind the bush as they waited for the old man to finish mowing. When he finally finished his chores, he came to the sidewalk for his shoes. He put one of the shoes on but noticed that it didn't feel right, so he took it back off. He looked so happy when he found the dollar bill in it! When he saw the second dollar in his other shoe, he immediately shouted, "THANK YOU!!!!" so the whole neighborhood could hear. He looked around and around, and then he turned back to his house, laughing with such joy, and shouting inside the house to his wife that they now had the money to buy another loaf of bread so she would have something to eat with her medicine.

**(HOW WOULD YOU FEEL IF YOU SAW THIS? \_\_\_\_\_)**

The student stood there deeply affected, and his eyes filled with tears. "Now," said his uncle, "aren't you much happier than if you had played the trick you originally thought of?" The nephew replied, "You have taught me a lesson which I will never forget. I realized that it's better to play kind "tricks" than hurtful ones."

Questions:

1. How can you be a good influence on your friends by using empathy and compassion?

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2. How can you use empathy and compassion with the bad influences in your life?

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3. What kind of impact do your relationships have on your success in school?

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4. What kind of impact do your relationships have on your success with family?

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5. What kind of impact do your relationships have on your success in life?

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