

TEACHER PREPARATION

KEY CONCEPTS

1. The ability to wait for the fulfillment of desires is a sign of maturity.
2. Drugs, alcohol, and premarital sex promise intense satisfaction and gratification immediately, so they are very attractive, especially to people whose lives are difficult or boring. But these dream breakers very often become modern-day slave owners, taking over the lives of those who thought they would be strong enough to regain control of their lives whenever they wanted to.

OBJECTIVES

By the end of this lesson, students should be able to:

1. Explore his or her own level of impulsiveness in tempting situations and his or her own ability to postpone gratification.
2. Describe how dream breakers become “slave masters”.
3. Resist making impulsive decisions about highly attractive temptations.
4. Understand that, for the momentary pleasure that “dream killers” promise us, we will have to pay the rest of our lives.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

NOTE: If you have chosen to have a special guest join you for this class, you will probably not have adequate time to complete all the activities for this lesson. Because this is such an important lesson in terms of understanding the importance of resisting the lure of immediate gratification, you may want to consider splitting this lesson into two sessions.

If you have a special guest, be sure to use **ONLY** the sections marked with a “✿” — sections marked as **Option A**, which gives your special guest 20 minutes of class time.

If you do not have a special guest, use the sections marked as **Option B**.

KEY TERMS

Lure of Immediate Gratification: A desire to have what we want right away, without regard to long-term consequences.

MATERIALS/PREPARATION

In the Box: Grandmothers' Letter and at least two pieces of hard candy.

If possible, have enough hard candy so that each student can be given one piece.

NOTE: If available, the candy Life Savers® is a good choice of hard candy. "Life Savers were designed with a hole in the middle to prevent children from choking on them."

If you have invited a local athlete, musician, etc., to speak to the class, you will want to be certain he or she has at least 20 minutes at the end of the session. To help ensure this, look through the lesson and decide which sections you can cut short or even delete if some portions take longer than planned.

LESSON

BEGINNING THE LESSON



INTRODUCTION

OPTIONS A AND B

[If you have enough hard candy for each student, start the lesson by giving each student a piece of candy, but tell them not to put it in their mouths yet. If you don't have enough candy for each student, pick at least two students, give them each a piece of candy and have them stand at the front of the classroom.]

Tell your students that the candy is for them to suck on while you read them the letter from the grandmothers to Sasha, Natasha, and Dima. Explain that the objective of the test is to discover how long a young person can hold candy in his or her mouth without consuming it. Your students may not take the candy out of their mouths once it has passed their lips. After you are finished reading the story, you will check to see who has the most candy left.]

Everyone ready? Put the candy in your mouths.



STORY

ABOUT 10 MINUTES*

OPTIONS A AND B

[When everyone (or the students you have chosen) has put the candy into their mouths, begin reading the story: "The Candy Battles".]

*Includes passing out candy, story, and post-story comments.

"What have our grandmothers got for us today?" asked Sasha.

"Don't be in such a hurry!" said Natasha. "I like it when the point of the things in their box sort of sneaks up on us."

"Perhaps I can satisfy both of you this morning," said Tatyana Alexandrovna. She set a deep green piece of clear candy on the desk in front of them.

"I'm guessing we're not going to eat this right away," offered Dima.

"It would not be the wisest course of action," agreed the teacher.

Sasha held the candy up to his eye. "This candy isn't for eating. This is for looking through."

Tatyana Alexandrovna laughed, "That's exactly what your grandmother, Ludmilla, thought! It was her piece of candy."

"Yeah, I remember! She kept it in her bag and showed me how to look through it at different things around us."

"So, today's lesson has something to do with the fact that you can do more than one thing with most stuff?" asked Dima.

“Not exactly, although you could conclude that,” answered the teacher.

“If it was my grandmother’s candy, does that mean I get to keep it at the end of the lesson?” asked Sasha.

“Guess you’ll have to wait until the end of the story to find out,” said Tatyana Alexandrovna.

Dear Ones,

Ludmilla’s piece of green candy was one of her prized possessions. It was the only thing she remembers her father ever giving her.

It was one of those incidents full of unintended consequences

Ludmilla’s father wasn’t a kind man. He drank too much, and strange as it might sound, he was afraid of Ludmilla when she was a little girl. I suppose he didn’t know how to treat her and was concerned he’d do something wrong. But fear wasn’t an acceptable emotion, so anger took its place in her father.

When her mother had to stay in the hospital for six weeks because of a blood problem, he was left with a four-year-old to care for. He had a sister in another city, but because he hadn’t bothered to speak to her in years, there was no foreseeable help from that quarter. There was a childcare center that would take Ludmilla for part of the day, and the rest of the time she was in her father’s care.

Often he left her for long periods. On weekends, he got drunk and stayed drunk. Twice a week, he took her to see her mother in the hospital. It was halfway through that six-week period that the clear green candy entered her world.

Ludmilla looked forward to visiting her mother, even though the smells and sounds at the hospital made her queasy. Her father had her put on her best skirt and blouse for each visit. But when they got there, it was obvious that he was as uncomfortable being there as she was. Once they only stayed only 15 minutes, even though they had had to travel almost 45 minutes just to get there!

Ludmilla didn’t know it at the time, but her father couldn’t go without a drink for more than a few hours. Their visits to the hospital stretched him to his limit. Thinking he could stop her whining whenever he left her alone or forced her to leave her mother before a proper visiting time, he came up with the candy game.

As they walked into the hospital one evening, he told her that she could have one piece of candy, but she had to put in her mouth. When the candy was gone, it would be time to leave. At first, she was pleased just to get a piece of hard candy and promptly sucked or chewed it away long before she was ready to go home. Her father would ask, “Do you still have the candy in your mouth? Open up and show me.” All she had to show was a red or purple tongue. The candy was gone. Her father took that as a sign that it was time to go, and they quickly departed.

Of course, Ludmilla felt terrible that their early departure was due to her inability to not eat the candy. Somehow it was her fault that they couldn’t stay and visit her mother longer. And then her father gave her the transparent green piece of hard candy.

When her father unwrapped it and she put it in her mouth, it tasted far more wondrous than any of the candies he had given her before. The purple ones were sour, and the red ones tasted like cinnamon, but this green one was sweet like nectar from the most exotic flower you could imagine. Her heart broke. How could she ever resist such a thing?

But as sweet as the green candy was, the thought of sitting beside her mother’s bed was sweeter still. For the first time, she resisted the desire to eat this particular piece of green candy. Instead of sucking it or crunching it, she held it between her back teeth and kept it as dry as possible.

When her father asked to see the candy she moved it to the front of her mouth and showed him the green candy completely intact.

He was surprised that she hadn't eaten it. A few minutes later, he asked to see it again. Her mother didn't know about their "game," but the third time he asked to see her candy, she began to suspect what was going on.

Finally, her father said it was time to go, candy or no candy – and, this time, her mother agreed. Every time before, when they had gotten ready to leave, her mother's eyes had turned sad and lonely. But this time, she seemed alive and almost vibrant. There was a battle going on for her company, and her daughter was winning her first skirmish.

The candy game ended that night, but something far more important began – Ludmilla knew for the first time in her life that she could control certain things in her world. She had not been left completely to the whims and wishes of others, at least not when it came to the things going on inside her.

She never ate the candy. She wrapped it up and kept it as a reminder that she didn't have to yield to her father's weakness – or her own. She had never heard of the phrase "delayed gratification", but she had tasted the power of resisting impulses for greater prizes – like spending more time with her mother.

In the total scheme of things, the candy battles may sound like little more than some random bit of fluff. But in the heart of one little girl, it was the beginning of independence, and something more – the resolve not to be a slave to her desires.

Your Grandmothers

EXPLORING THE LESSON



CHECKING THE CANDY SIZES

Now, let's see whether we can determine whose candy is least consumed. As I come to check the size of your candy, please hold it between your front teeth.

[Comment on smaller and larger pieces as well as students who have no candy left. Ask your students how they managed to keep from eating it.]

Reinforce the idea that when a person wants to, he or she really can control some very strong impulses. In fact, the ability to wait for fulfillment of desires is a sign of maturity.]

In today's session, we will be exploring our ability to wait until later for things that we want. This is called "delayed gratification". This exploration is based on three observations about life in society:

1. We are surrounded by people, businesses, and media (ads) trying to influence us.
2. Temptation is when someone uses your desires to influence you to do what the other person wants.
3. One of the best protections against temptation is learning how to wait to get things you want or need (delayed gratification).



= 10 minutes (Options A and B)

SOME PEOPLE VULNERABLE DISCUSSION

3 MINUTES

OPTION B

What do you think makes some people more vulnerable to negative influences than other people? Write your ideas in your notebook first.

[Write suggestions on the board and elicit discussion, as time permits.]

Examples of answers:

- Lack of goals for life
- Lack of confidence – a feeling of insecurity
- Lack of self-respect
- Lack of considering the consequences of choices
- Need to be accepted and liked by others



= 13 minutes (Option B)

RESPONSE TO “WAITING” QUESTIONS

8 MINUTES



OPTIONS A AND B

I’m now going to give you a set of questions about yourself. Please write the answers in your notebook.

1. In one or two sentences, tell about a time when you wanted something badly, but your parent or teacher would not let you have it. Describe how you felt and what you did.
2. In one or two sentences, tell about a time when someone made you wait for something you wanted. How did that feel?
3. In one or two sentences, tell about a time you wanted something badly, but you said “no” to yourself even though you could have had it.

Your answer to the third question is the most important answer. If you have said “no” to yourself, you have exercised delayed gratification. The more practice you have in saying “no” to yourself, the more self-discipline you will develop. As other people see your disciplined life, they will be more likely to trust you.

Self-discipline is a process we all work on improving – sometimes we do better than at other times. Lack of self-discipline in some areas of life can have quite sudden and drastic consequences. Others harm us more slowly.

A helpful exercise for developing maturity is saying “no” to yourself when you can have something you want very much, but you realize that giving in to the desire would not be as wise as refusing it.

Wisdom develops as we practice making wise choices. We mature as we practice wisdom.

What you do now shapes whom you will become in the future. Your parents, friends, and teachers have an influence on whom you will become. But you also have a good deal of influence over your destiny. You can exercise that power of determining your direction in life in at least three ways:

1. Avoiding dream breakers.
2. Setting goals for what you would like to be in life.
3. Determining what sacrifices you are willing to make to get there.

Drugs, alcohol, and premarital sex promise intense pleasure and immediate gratification, so they are attractive, especially to people whose lives are difficult or boring. But these dream breakers often become modern-day slave owners, taking over the lives of those who never dreamed they had become enslaved to them.

 = 18 minutes (Option A)

 = 21 minutes (Option B)

RECALL YOUR LIFE DREAMS

ABOUT 2 MINUTES

OPTION B

Have each student choose a partner for this section.

Please think back to the lesson in which you recorded your dreams for life in your Personal Journal, the things you want to be and do as an adult. Write down this dream in a few sentences. If you don't have your Personal Journal with you, just write a new sentence that approximates what you wrote previously.

DREAM OR GOAL DESCRIPTION

ABOUT 3 MINUTES

OPTION B

Now, take one minute each to describe any personal dream you do not mind sharing with a partner in this class. Don't just name it: Describe it and why you want to achieve it.

[Explain that this is optional. If they do not want to share a dream, it is okay.]

Call time at five minutes to give new directions.]

REPORT

5 MINUTES

OPTION B

Based on the discussion you have just had, I'd like some of you to share which of the dreams described to you will take the most perseverance and effort to accomplish. I will write them on the board (or a large sheet of paper).

[After several students have shared and you have your list on the board or paper, comment on the list, especially commending dreams you judge to be worthwhile.]

 = 31 minutes (Option B)

**LECTURE
COMMENTS**

ABOUT 2 MINUTES

OPTIONS A AND B

You might remind your students of one or more quests they have recently read in a literature class, or ask them what quest stories they remember.

DEFINITION: The Sirens are best known for their role in Homer's *Odyssey* where their song lured sailors and led them to their deaths. Odysseus had his crew plug their ears with wax (on the instruction of Circe) to block the Siren's song. In the tale of the Argonauts, Orpheus sang sweetly enough to keep the men from succumbing to the Sirens.

You may want to add "smoking" to this list, particularly if you have taught the optional lesson on smoking (found in the appendix of this curriculum) or if you plan to teach this lesson to your students later in this course.

When you begin pursuing a dream, you start out on a quest. The goals that will be most meaningful and rewarding when reached are those that take effort and perseverance. Think about the quests you have read about in literature – many of them are about heroes who resist temptations to forget their dreams and give in to immediate strong lures.

In ancient Greek mythology, these strong temptations were personified as "Sirens". The heroes who had fallen prey to these Sirens became their slaves and rarely escaped. These stories are appealing because they reflect challenges we face in real life.

Understand that if you have already gotten involved in one of the dream breakers we have studied, you are not trapped in a life of misery and failure. You can decide right now to change your direction. But in experimenting with any of these dream breakers, you have placed yourself on a more difficult road than if you hadn't. If you are involved in the dream killers (drugs, alcohol, premarital sex), here are some of the prices you may pay:

- You may find it increasingly more difficult to be close with people, even those you love most.
- You may find it harder to enjoy things that used to bring fun and happiness.
- Eventually, you may find yourself a slave to drugs, alcohol, or sex. The things you thought would make you feel free can instead enslave you and become your master.

 = 20 minutes (Option A)

 = 33 minutes (Option B)

**WRITTEN
RESPONSES**

ABOUT 5 MINUTES

OPTION B

Here are two questions I'd like you to answer in writing. No one will see your answers but you.

1. Of all the needs and desires you feel, which are the hardest to wait for?
2. Why do you think they are so difficult?

If you want to be a good ballet dancer, you will need to begin early to learn and study the rules and fundamentals of dance. You will have to analyze and practice moves and jumps, stage and set management; you will have to learn about the composers and the authors; you will have to be trained to move correctly on the stage and listen for cues.

For example, if you were pushed out onto the stage at the Bolshoi without learning the techniques and methods, or worse yet, without even knowing correct form, you might have fun jumping around, but the patrons would want their money back.

Instant gratification has its shortcomings. Achieving your goals and shaping your life dream require hard work, discipline, pain, and sacrifice. Nothing is achieved by doing nothing.

This is the meaningful reward principle:

Generally, the more immediate the reward, the less meaningful the outcome, but the longer the reward is delayed, the more meaningful the outcome.

All those who succeed in life are willing to make sacrifices to get there. It can be painful and difficult but, in the end, it is worth it.

In the book *My Sergei* by Ekaterina Gordeeva, she describes many difficulties she had to endure to become a world-class skater. She was up at 5:30 each morning for practice, and then at another practice in the evening from 6:30 until 9:00. She was forbidden to eat certain foods as a child, was separated from her family for long periods of time, missed out on a childhood that was full of play and, ultimately, for Ekaterina, experienced the death of her beloved husband, Sergei.

All of these hardships could have stopped her from fulfilling her life dream, but she was willing to give up many of the immediate joys of childhood for the chance to win medals at the Olympics.

 = 38 minutes (Option B)

INTERVIEW

20 MINUTES

OPTION A

If you choose to include this interview, it will take at least 20 minutes. If you include this activity, you may need to delete one of the previous activities, such as the one on dream breakers.

[Bring into the class a local accomplished skater/gymnast/athlete for an interview. Questions should revolve around the sacrifices made early in life to become who they are. Encourage your guest to share details of the training regimen: how many hours per day, days per week, how tiring it was, what other activities were sacrificed, etc.]

 = 40 minutes (Option A)

**OPEN-CLASS
DISCUSSION**

ABOUT 5 MINUTES

OPTION B

[Discuss with your students whether anyone knows any musicians, dancers, or athletes who have also willingly worked hard to accomplish a long-term goal.]

 = 43 minutes (Option B)

ENDING THE LESSON**PERSONAL
JOURNAL ACTIVITY**

UP TO 5 MINUTES

OPTIONS A AND B

NOTE: If you are uncomfortable with students bringing in ads, you may bring your own selected group of ads for Lesson 24 to make it more pre-structured.

[Have the students locate in their Personal Journal where they earlier rewrote their life dream, along with the goals and sacrifices to achieve that dream. Ask them to read it again in light of the lesson, revise it if necessary, and rewrite it.]

Before the next lesson, assign students to bring examples of ads. They may bring magazine ads, newspaper ads, food labels, or something they've gotten from the Internet, or write down on paper something they've heard on the radio or seen on television.]

In this lesson, we learned about a crucial life skill – delayed gratification. Next time, we'll consider another life skill – unmasking the media.

Before dismissing your students, remember to dictate the Parent-Teacher questions to them.

 = 45 minutes (Options A and B)

RESOURCES

GOING DEEPER

In our last session, we looked at Samson and his superficial reasons for wanting to marry. Today, we're going to hear more about the world's strongest man and the cost of his impatience. Because this is a fairly long story in the Bible, I'll summarize it briefly.

[The following is taken from Judges 16.]

After the death of his first wife, Samson falls for another woman named Delilah. She, too, is a foreigner and, in fact, is conspiring with Samson's enemies. They promise Delilah a huge sum of money if she can find out how to overcome Samson's strength. So one day she asks him, "Tell me, how can you be effectively tied up?" Samson lies and tells her he will become weak if they use a certain kind of rope. When they try and it doesn't work, Delilah pleads with him again, and again he doesn't tell her the secret. This happens three times and finally she says, "How can you say you love me when you won't tell me the truth?"

Day after day, she pesters him to tell her. Eventually, worn out and exasperated, he tells her the secret of his long hair. Delilah then betrays him to his enemies and collects her money. As a result, they capture Samson and take him back to their country where he is placed in chains and forced to work in prison. In the end, his hair eventually grew back, and he once again had the strength to collapse the pillars of the palace and gained retribution in killing more of his enemies in his death than he had through his life.

In our lesson today, we talked about delayed gratification. One of the hardest situations in which to say "no" is when someone you care about is continually asking you to do something you know you shouldn't. Like Samson, it is sometimes tempting to just give in and give them what they want. Samson delayed for quite a while, but eventually Delilah "wore him down".

BRAINSTORM

Let's take a few minutes to brainstorm some areas where adolescents may have trouble "getting worn down". Can anyone think of some examples?

[Accept all answers and write all the meaningful ones on the board.]

If they have trouble thinking of them, you might suggest, “Having a friend who is constantly encouraging you to try drugs, alcohol, or premarital sex;” or “Someone who teases you at every opportunity as being ‘old-fashioned’ or ‘not cool’ because you don’t take part in risky behaviors.” For each example, ask the following question:]

Who can think of some strategies a young person might use to avoid or solve this problem?”

PERSONAL JOURNAL WRITING ACTIVITY

[Have each of your students take a few moments to write in their Personal Journals one area where they think they currently have, or might have, trouble with being “worn down”. It might be a temptation they’ve already begun to yield to, something about which they are being “worn down” or an area where they think they might be vulnerable in the future.

After they’ve written their problem area in their Personal Journals, have them write several steps they might take in a plan to avoid the temptation.]

FOCUS POINT

Be sure to leave time for discussion at the end of the learning activity so your students can discuss the connection between the learning activity and the lesson. Listen to see whether they seemed to understand the key points listed. If you sense that one or more of these points may have been lost, be sure to guide the discussion to make sure they get these main ideas.

- 1. Some temptations that are not too hard to resist initially may become much harder as we are “worn down”.**
- 2. Some dream breakers must be fought again and again over a long period of time.**

PARENT-TEACHER CONNECTION

For Family Discussion:

1. Share with your adolescent a life dream you had that was fulfilled.
2. Share with your adolescent a dream that was not fulfilled and what prevented the achievement of that dream.

