



USE WITH:

Individual students, small group, or whole class



GRADE LEVEL:

Middle school or high school



CONTEXT:

Remote friendly

CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

# Imagine Your Best Possible Self

Help students consider their purpose by imagining their future selves.

Created by [Greater Good Science Center at UC Berkeley](#)

## Description:

This activity can help students envision a positive future for themselves, energizing them to work through challenges and placing them on a path of purpose and hope.

Prep time needed:

**10 minutes**

Est. time to complete:

**30 minutes**

## Steps:

1. Begin by telling students that they're going to imagine what their lives might be like at the age of 25. Let them know that this practice will help them answer the questions: What am I meant to do? What gives my life meaning? How do I want to contribute to the world? In other words, it will help them identify, or put them on the road to discovering, their purpose.
2. Tell students what purpose is: Having a sense of purpose means being committed to something that is meaningful to you and makes a difference to something bigger than yourself. How you want to leave your mark on the world and make it a better place, how you want your life to have mattered—that's what purpose is.
3. Model thinking and speaking about your purpose. Share your answers to the following questions: How do you contribute to the world? Who is most important in your life? What is most important to you?
4. Invite students to close their eyes or look at a spot on the floor in front of them, and take a few deep breaths in and out through their nose.

5. Say: Take a moment to imagine your life at 25 years of age. Things have gone as well as they could possibly have gone in your life. Silently visualize your answers to my next questions. What will you be doing? Who will be in your life? What will be most important to you?
6. Next, give students the [Best Possible Self handout](#) and ask them to complete it on their own, imagining themselves at age 25.
7. When students have finished, give them the opportunity to share either their writing or their thoughts about this process with each other or with the whole class, if they feel comfortable doing so.

### **Tips for Educators:**

- For this activity, consider the overall culture of your classroom and between and amongst students as you decide how to have students share.
- As this activity can be challenging for students and draw out new and unexplored thoughts, it might be best for students to share their exploration with just 1 other student, as opposed to small groups or whole-class, particularly for students at the secondary level.
- Additionally, consider naming for students at the onset that this activity might be challenging at first, and that there are no right or wrong answers or a perfect way to state their purpose.
- Consider stating that understanding one's purpose in life is a life-long journey, that it often changes over time, and that it is informed by many things such as life experiences, family, religion, personal interests, etc.
- As an educator, you are in a powerful position to encourage your students' development of purpose. You may notice inclinations and talents that are out of the awareness of students' parents and even the students themselves. Without intervention, students' interests may go unrecognized and wither away. Research has shown that the support of teachers, mentors, and other adults outside the family is often crucial to young people's development of purpose, particularly in the early stages.

Inspired by:

1. Schmid, K. L., Phelps, E., & Lerner, R. M. (2011). Constructing positive futures: Modeling the relationship between adolescents' hopeful future expectations and intentional self regulation in predicting positive youth development. *Journal of Adolescence*, 34(6), 1127-1135. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.adolescence.2011.07.009>