

Reality Ride

10. *Most Horrible, Most Excellent*

Spatial Requirements: Regular classroom setup: little or no space required

Activity Type: Group

Grades: 3-12

Group Size: 2 or more

Time: 15 minutes

Introduction: When a good or bad event occurs in life, we need to step back and recognize the factors that led up to that event, either directly or indirectly. This self-evaluation helps us get out of the loop and stay on the right track. The following activity will give students an opportunity to reflect on ways they may have contributed to both the good things that happened to them as well as the bad. It will help them see the value in desisting negative behaviors and continuing positive ones.

Materials:

- 1 paper per student
- 1 pen or pencil per student

Activity:

Give each student a piece of paper. Have them fold the paper in half. Have them label one half of the paper “Most Horrible,” and the other half “Most Excellent.” Direct students to write on the “Most Horrible” side the three worst things that happened to them in the last week or month. Then have them write the three best things that happened to them on the “Most Excellent” side of the paper. Either in small groups or as an entire class, have students share some of the things they wrote under each heading. Explain to students that sometimes bad and good things happen that are completely out of our control, like another car running a red light and hitting your car. But often we do things directly or indirectly that can contribute to the events that happen to us. For example, staying up late to watch a movie on TV contributes to your bad score on a test the next day. As a class, go over some examples of good and bad things that happened and some possible behaviors that contributed to these events. Really try to get students to think of any possible behaviors that could have contributed in any way. Next, direct students to look again at the things they listed on their paper. Have them determine if there was any action on their part that may have directly or indirectly contributed to the event. Have them list anything they can come up with. If you have time, you may have some share what they listed.

You may also want to do this in conjunction with reading the story, *Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day* by Judith Voirst (*WhyTry* Elementary Book list and *Why Try* Elementary Journal, Literature Response Activity).

Processing the Experience:

- What are some of the “most horrible” things you listed?
- In what way did you directly contribute to that happening? Indirectly?
- Can you do anything to prevent this from happening again?
- How is this like getting out of the loop?
- What are some of the “most excellent” things you listed?
- In what way did you directly contribute to these events? Indirectly?
- What can you do to try to have this happen again?
- How is this like staying on the right track?
- What can you do when something bad happens that you cannot control?

*Note: Always be prepared to address the sensitive issues that may arise in an activity like this.