

Chapters 1-3

How we see ourselves

Resources: Whiteboard, sticky notes

In *Rising Tide*, Ari struggles to see himself in the positive ways that others see him. He has a fixed view of himself. He believes that because he finds reading and writing difficult he is useless. This is a story that he repeats to himself, and he looks for events and comments from others to reinforce his belief. We all have beliefs about ourselves, but not all of them are accurate or useful.

Discuss with the class the idea that we are often harder on ourselves than others are. Ask them how these beliefs might change our behaviour, and what negative impacts these beliefs can have. Do they think it's reasonable or logical for Ari to believe he is useless, just because he finds one thing hard? Why is it unreasonable or illogical? If someone saw Ari playing soccer would they consider him to be someone who was 'useless'?

Ask the class to offer negative words that they might use to describe themselves. You may wish to give everyone a sticky note so no one has to offer their suggestion verbally in front of the class. Collate the words on one side of the white board and ask the class to then offer a positive word to describe themselves and again collate them on the other side of the whiteboard.

Ask the class to notice how different the two groups of words are, even though they describe the same set of people. Then ask them, if they were to believe only the negative things about themselves, how might their feelings, thoughts and behaviours be different than if they believed only the positive things.

Thoughts become behaviour

Resources: Blackline Master below

Introduce the idea that our thoughts and feelings can dictate our behaviour. Ari worries that he is useless at reading, so he avoids it, which of course results in poor work.

Thoughts, feelings and behaviour match up game: Form groups of 8–12. One half of the group has a thought, the other a behaviour. Each matching pair finds the other, or they can work collaboratively to match all the pairs. Once the pair is found ask them to think of another example of how a thought or feeling can result in a behaviour. Ask each pair to share their match with the group/class.

Finding our strengths

Resources: Online quiz <https://www.allright.org.nz/tools/strengths-finder>

Now that the children are thinking about how they see themselves you may like to ask them to complete the All Right? quiz to find their hidden strengths, either as a class or in self-directed learning time. You, or another adult, will need to register the children on the site and then choose to take the survey for youth.

Ask the children to think of one quality they would like people to notice about them the most. Ask them to write it on a sticky note with their name to give you and other adults in the school the opportunity to notice and comment. Ask the children how they would like these displayed – perhaps next to their photos on the wall, as their device homepage, or as part of an art activity.

Thoughts Become Behaviour-Thoughts

I think nobody will want to be my friend

I don't think I can do times tables

I don't think it'll be fun to try swimming at the beach with my mum

I don't think I'll get picked for any team

I think I'll mess up my speech if I do it in front of the class

I think my aunty will yell at me for misbehaving when I'm at her house

I think I won't like mushrooms because my brother said they're gross

Thoughts Become Behaviour-Behaviour

I don't try mushrooms because I won't like them anyway.

I don't bother practising my times tables because I'll never be able to remember them.

I be silly and rude because I'm sure my aunty will yell at me anyway.

I worry so much about my speech that my tummy hurts and I can't go to school on speech day.

I ask to do something else at sports time so no-one knows I want to play.

I don't take my togs when we go to the beach so I can't try swimming with my mum.

I don't join in or speak to others so no-one knows I'm looking for a friend.

Chapters 4-6

Learning our stories

Resources: Book or device to record thoughts

We've looked at how thoughts and feelings can affect our behaviour. It's not just individual thoughts and beliefs that dictate our feelings and behaviour; sometimes we have whole stories that we've made up that we rely on to tell us how to behave. Everybody has these stories. We gather evidence from our experiences and the people around us to reinforce the truth of these stories. Some stories we have about ourselves are useful, especially if they give us confidence to achieve the things we want to do, but sometimes the opposite happens and we get held back from doing things or having relationships.

In *Rising Tide*, Ari has a big worry. He worries that he isn't good at reading and writing and he worries that his family and teacher will find out about it. Ask the class for examples of what people might worry about at school. Choose two or three examples to build a story around. For example, someone might suggest "I'm too clumsy to be good at sport." Ask the children what kind of evidence would support this story/belief. Can they suggest ways to find evidence to disprove this story? Ask them how having a belief like this would affect someone's behaviour and then how it might affect their ability to improve their PE skills. Can they think of something at school that they worry about not being good enough at? Ask the children to write or type an example of something they worry they're not good enough at, and then to write the evidence that tells them it's true. Some classes will be able to manage swapping at this point and having another class member give them evidence that disproves this belief. However, if you feel your class is not ready for this, ask the children to think of something that could happen that would disprove their belief and record it.

Self-fulfilling prophecy

Resources: Notes from previous exercise

Introduce the concept of a self-fulfilling prophecy. A self-fulfilling prophecy is a thought that we have about ourselves, or others, that comes true because we believe it to be true. An example of this is if you believe that your teacher won't like you, you may begin to behave in ways that are annoying or disrespectful to your teacher. This behaviour leads to your teacher reacting in a way that gives you evidence that they don't like you. Then you feel even more strongly that your teacher won't like you, and so it continues.

Do the children think the worry they recorded previously could be a self-fulfilling prophecy? Are they sure the evidence they have gathered is accurate? You may wish to share an example from your own childhood about a self-fulfilling prophecy you had, or an anecdote about someone else.

Encourage the children to share what they have learned about self-fulfilling prophecies with a family

member and to ask the family member if they can think of an example from their own life or someone else's.

Limiting our self-belief

Resources:

Demonstrating limiting self-belief exercise: Begin by asking one student to demonstrate this exercise before asking the whole group/class to try. Ask the student to stand next to the whiteboard. Ask them to stretch out their arm and place their palm on the whiteboard at shoulder height. Then ask them to keep their palm on the whiteboard as they turn their body away from the whiteboard, and tell them to stop turning away when they feel uncomfortable in their shoulder. Ask the class to notice how far the student turned away. Then ask the student to close their eyes and imagine doing the exact same exercise again, except in their imagination they can turn their body about 30 cm further before their shoulder feels uncomfortable. Ask the student to repeat the exercise, and make sure the student and the class observe how much further the student can turn away. You can find a video demonstration of this activity on our website.

Challenging what we think about the world

Resources: Small chocolate fish in ziplock bags, an example of time worry held you back from trying

Chocolate fish and self-belief: Give each student a small chocolate fish in a small plastic bag. Tell them they can't eat the fish, then tell this story:

“This is a story about a large fish called Bob that was living in a large tank in a lab. This fish was inside the tank because he was being studied by scientists. He was perfectly happy. All his needs were being met. At feeding time, the scientists would drop some little fish down into his tank. The fish would gobble them up.

One day the scientists changed their routine. Instead of dropping the little fish into the tank, they placed them inside a glass tube. The tube was designed so that water could flow freely through it. Bob could easily see the little fish inside the tube. As Bob grew hungry, he began to try to get to the little fish inside the tube. This was his meal! Bob pushed the tube against the side of his tank. Of course, the hungrier he became the harder he tried. Bob knocked that tube with his tail and then with his whole body. Harder and harder he swatted at that tube as his hunger became overwhelming. Eventually Bob learned that he could not get to the little fish; no matter how hard he tried. So, he stopped trying.

Then the scientists changed their plan again. They pulled the tube full of little fish up out of the tank and then dumped them freely right into the large tank with the Bob. Can you imagine what happened next?

You might guess that Bob had a feast but that's not what happened. With his food swimming freely all around him, Bob just sat sadly near the bottom of the tank.

Why wasn't Bob eating the little fish? The answer isn't obvious, but it is simple. He no longer believed he could. Once he stopped believing he could eat the fish, he no longer tried.”

Tell the students they can now eat the fish you gave them. While they eat ask them to think about a time when worry might have held them back in the same way. Are any of them willing to share the worry with the group/class? You might want to share an example from your own childhood or life.

You may have the opportunity to invite another staff member or parent in to share an example from their life.

Managing our worries

Resources: Large paper for class graffiti poster, copies of *Rising Tide*

Remind the students about the worries Ari had about learning. How did he manage his worries? What else might he have done that would have been more helpful? Ask the students some of the ways they manage worry. Can they ignore them? Do they talk about them? Does anyone have any suggestions for calming your mind when it's worried? As a group/class make a graffiti poster for the classroom of suggestions of helpful things to do when you're worried, for example: Talk to someone, Ask for help, Check if your worry is reasonable, and so forth.

Ourselves as learners

Ari had developed a story of himself as a learner that he gathered evidence to support and believed whole-heartedly. Ask the students to think about the story they have of themselves as a learner. Ask them: If they were to change their story, even a little bit, would it help them to learn more? What might people who are confident in their ability to be a learner think/feel/do? What might it look like? Encourage the students to notice when they and their classmates are learning confidently. Can they suggest things they might say to themselves and others that will reinforce a positive belief about themselves and each other as learners?

Chapters 7-8

Getting support

Resources: Whiteboard, paper, pens, copies of

Rising Tide

Sometimes when we become focused on worries we can forget to be compassionate to ourselves and others. We can get easily frustrated with ourselves. It's important to remember that, like Ari, we all have times of self-doubt and worry. What we say to ourselves and others is very powerful. As a class can we look for opportunities to support each other when we're worried about our learning or achievement?

Ask the class who they would ask for help or support with a worry at school, at home and in their wider circles. Collate this on the whiteboard. Ask the students to draw three concentric circles, either in the backs of their copies of *Rising Tide*, or elsewhere. Ask them to write the people closest to them, who they could go to with a worry, in the smallest circle (e.g. immediate family) and then in the next widest circle other people they can trust (e.g. friends, teacher, other family) and finally in the third circle other adults they know who could help them if they needed it (e.g. a Scout leader, the school receptionist, their doctor, etc.).

Ask the class if there is anything they can do as a class to make it easier for the people in their class, or younger children at school, to get support if they needed it. Is there something the school could do to help? Could they fundraise and add a [Friendship Bench](#)? Would they like peer support? Support your class to facilitate the changes they want to make.

Writing our class story

Resources: Whiteboard/paper/device for recording suggestions

We've talked a lot about how individuals have a story, but families, businesses, classes and even schools have them too. Ask the students what they would like their class story to be.

What changes would the class need to make to their thoughts and behaviour to make the story true?

How will they gather evidence for their story?

How will people know what their story is?

What are they going to do first?

How might they present their story so that visitors can know it too?