

Choose Life

Being a teenager, you think you will live forever and that nothing can harm you so you run across the road between the cars, you drive fast and don't wear a seatbelt and you take risks. But the statistics show that young people get injured and die because they do not think of the consequences of their actions. You can choose to be a little more careful. Choose to live!



Work your money

You can choose to save money. Get into the habit of putting some money away even when you are young. A small amount will grow bigger till you can pay for your dream. Money does not make you rich but how you spend it will. You must decide if you want things now (using a credit card) or you wait till you can pay cash. Credit cards can be monsters gobbling up your money with all that interest. Cut up the credit cards and used debit cards to manage your finances. Borrowing money to pay for extras means you are paying double because of the high interest. Manage your money by writing down in two columns: money in and money out. You can always earn extra cash. Choose to work hard. There is nothing for mahala!

Helping out

Choose to become involved in issues. If the street is full of rubbish organise a work party and clean up your street. If the sea is full of plastic bags then get some friends together and clean up your beach. If the local old age home or crèche needs a coat of paint – then offer to be part of the action. If a child needs extra lessons then become their teacher. When we help others we usually feel better about ourselves because we can see the difference we are making. And all this volunteering will look good on your future CV!

Other People

No matter how strong we think we are, we need other people. We would like the respect of our family and we want to feel accepted by our friends. We can choose how we handle our relationships. If we criticise others all the time then they will be critical of us. We need to build up others. We need to be kind and not to cause harm. We need to argue our case with words not violence. And get your friends to stand up with you to face a bully. A bully can only bully if those around them allow them to be bullies. Stop them!



Find the need

If you are waiting for Father Christmas, the government or your fairy godmother to grant your wishes then you will have a long wait for nothing. You need to learn to make your own luck. No job for you? Then make a job for yourself. There is always a need somewhere you just have to look for it. If somebody needs to transport something then you do the transporting. Somebody needs help then you provide the help. And money is not the only form of payment. You can exchange your work for goods!

Choose a coach

Choose a mentor who can guide you. It does not have to be a person who knows everything but should be someone who will listen to you with respect; who can explore choices with you; who can refer to others who might know more and who will not share your stories with others. This person must inspire hope in you!



MY PRESENT MY FUTURE:

LIVE IT TO WIN IT

*A few things for a young person
to think about*

The Choice is yours

You always have a choice. Sometimes it is hard to find but you always have a choice. Each choice has consequences. You have to weigh up which consequences you can live with and which are just not cool for you. If you belong to a religion then its principles can guide you to make certain choices. "Do not steal" is a principle. If you adopt that then you will know what to do if the person next to you on the bus forgets a famous brand of sunglasses on the seat!



Go for Gold

Getting a matric certificate is the first door to opening a better future. Once you have that then you can study further, apply for a job or get an internship. Only you can choose if education is important to you. When you make the decision to not allow anything to stop you getting to matric then you become more focused. Studying when others are having a party is not easy. Find odd jobs if you need money for extra books and sanitary products to make sure you don't miss any school time. Work hard during the holidays especially during the last two years. If you have good marks you can apply for bursaries during your matric year to make sure you can continue studying. Look at different careers. There are other jobs besides lawyers and teachers. An electrician and a plumber can earn more money per hour than a doctor!

To have or not to have it!

As a young adult you want to do new things. This may include thinking about having sex with someone. No, not everybody is having sex. There are many who choose to wait until they are older or have their matric or have a job. The choice of when to have sex should be yours alone. Don't fall for the line, "If you love me you will have sex with me". That is just somebody trying to manipulate you. Whatever you do make sure you are safe. Using a condom and a contraceptive (pill, injection, IUD, implant) will prevent a pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections such as HIV. If you are forced to have sex then make sure to get to a health centre to receive medication to stop a pregnancy and infections.



Fat must fall

Are you worried about the extra weight you are carrying? Find out what your correct, healthy weight should be. A health worker can work it out using the Body Mass Index/Table. Sometimes the weight just starts piling on until one day you wake up and none of your clothes fit anymore. You feel that you are as big as an elephant and your self-image takes a knock. Then you must seriously stop and think about what you are doing to your body. If you eat too much food and you don't work it off it will become fat. So, eat the right kinds of food: fruits, vegetables, drink more water. Having a burger and chips once a week over a weekend is a treat. But when you are having it every day then that is just greedy (and unhealthy). Have fewer fried foods. Try to do about 30 minutes a day of physical activity –even taking a walk is better than doing nothing. Have you tried figuring out why you eat too much/go for second helpings/finish off the leftovers on everybody else's plates? Maybe your parents argue too much or there is too little money for extras or you have exam stress? If you can do something about your problems then do it but if not then choose to adapt to the situation. Talking to someone you trust can also help.



Choose Health

Choosing a healthy lifestyle will help you to make choices that are good for your health. Part of that is being physically active. Playing team sports like soccer is great for some but not for everyone. You might want to do body building or do Zumba or go for a run. Just choose to do something (not sitting in front of the television).

You can try to make healthy choices about food and exercise but sometimes things happen to the body that are frightening. If you have a lump or are bleeding from anywhere on your body then you need to get to the clinic to have it checked out. Being embarrassed is natural but getting sick from something that you could have prevented is worse.

Choose your friends

You might have friends who drink too much alcohol, take drugs, use tobacco products and gamble. No, not everybody is smoking, drugging, drinking and gambling. There are more and more who are choosing not to do these things. These are harmful habits that can only lead to ill health, poverty and death. You must decide what your standards are. Then stick to them. Maybe you have to choose other friends if those you know now are forcing you to do things you don't want to. If you feel that these habits are controlling your life then you need to speak to someone to get help to stop.

Phone LifeLine for more advice: 021-461 1113

