FIRST 5 MINUTES
This book is designed to cover 35 weeks of activities which make up a school year. It is to be used in the 1st period class by all the teachers, or a period decided upon by the staff. The class period needs to be the same for all teachers using the book so that students are not going through the same exercises twice in the same day.

It provides 5 minutes in every school day with quotes, discussions, and activities to enhance the metacognitive, personal, and leadership skills of the student as well as prompting interaction between students and teacher and students with each other.

Each activity provides the “seed” for the teacher to amplify with illustrations, personal stories, or additional prompting, quotes, activities, etc. On Mondays (Acts of Kindness) and Fridays (Target Letters), it is important to spend time sharing what happened as a result of the previous Monday and Friday assignments. Then give the new assignment.

Amazingly, this 5 minutes a day will provide an accumulated 15 hours of social/emotional training throughout the school year. We continue to see it make a positive difference for both teachers and students when used consistently.

**Darrell and Sandy Scott**

**Co-founders of Rachel’s Challenge**
First 5 Minutes

**Monday:** Mondays are for acts of kindness. Four minutes should be used to listen to stories about the acts of kindness performed during the week before. The last minute should be spent going over what this week’s act will be.

**Tuesday:** Tuesdays are for journal writing about the quote of the day. Have students write about their interpretation of the quote, how it makes them feel, and how it relates to their lives. Discuss.

**Wednesday:** Wednesdays are for journal writing about ethical questions or scenarios. Have your students write their own answers to the questions or what they would do in those scenarios. Discuss.

**Thursday:** Thursdays are for class discussions. Discuss the topic as a class getting many points of view.

**Friday:** Fridays are for target letters of kindness. Have your students write a quick note expressing appreciation for that week’s target.
Week 1

Reach out to a new student this week. You may just want to say, “Hello” or go so far as to have lunch with him or her.

“Instead of looking at circumstances, choose to see through them and you will find purpose. Be a see-througher, not a look-atter, and life will reward you.”

—Darrell Scott, author, speaker, founder of Rachel’s Challenge organization

Who are some people that lived their lives as “see-throughers”? Einstein, Mother Theresa, JFK, Martin Luther King, Jr. etc.

If you buy a hot dog and pay with a $5 bill but received too much change back, what would you do?

What is character and how do we develop it? What role does adversity play in helping us develop character?

Parent/Guardian #1
Week 2

**M** Look for an opportunity to give to someone without expecting anything in return. It may be money, time, attention, a gift, or just listening to them.

“Successful people are always looking for opportunities to help others. Unsuccessful people are always asking, “What’s in it for me?”

—Brian Tracy, author, speaker

**W** If you borrowed someone’s car, would you return it with a full tank of gas or replace the amount of gas you used?

“Inspiration” comes from the words “in” and “spirit.” What are some of the sources of inspiration? What inspires you?

**F** Math Teacher
Week 3

Sit down with someone who is much older than you and ask them about their life. It may be a grandparent or you might even visit a senior citizen’s home. Learn as much as you can about them.

“Spend time with someone that you consider to be old, and you will be amazed at what you can learn from them.”

—Sandy Scott, Rachel’s Stepmom

When you go out to eat with friends, do you contribute just enough money to pay for what you ate or do you give a little more?

What are obstacles? What can we do to overcome them?

Grandparent #1
Week 4

Choose one person and “gossip” about them in a good way, complimenting them to others, on Facebook, Twitter, etc. Do it without them even knowing you did.

“Set out each day believing in your dreams. Know without a doubt that you were made for amazing things.”

—Josh Hinds
motivational speaker, author

If there is one piece of pizza left, do you take it without hesitation or do you ask if anyone else wants it?

What does it mean to judge someone? How can we learn to respect them?

Coach or youth leader
Week 5

Do something unexpected for your parent(s) or guardians this week: Take out the trash, wash dishes, vacuum the house, etc.

“I remind myself every morning: Nothing I say this day will teach me anything. So if I’m going to learn, I must do it by listening.”

—Larry King
(b. 1933), American television and radio host

If someone asks you to keep a secret, do you tell no one or do you tell someone else and say something like, “I am not supposed to say anything, but...”?

What is confidence? Believe in your own ability.

Custodian
Week 6

**M**
Spend time with a younger brother, sister or neighbor helping them with homework, playing a game, reading a book, or just hanging out.

**T**
“The greatest compliment that was ever paid me was when one asked me what I thought, and attended to my answer.”

—Henry David Thoreau
(1817-1862); philosopher, writer, naturalist

**W**
Do you do what is right because of the fear of consequences or because it is simply the right thing to do?

**TH**
How can you delete your grudges and resentments? Forgiveness

**F**
Security Guard
Week 7

**M** Say hello to 5 new people a day. This is a good way to meet new friends. You might recall how you felt the last time someone randomly said, “Hello” to you. Now you can imagine the impact you will have on another.

“Listening is an attitude of the heart, a genuine desire to be with another which both attracts and heals.”

—J. Isham

**T** When you tell someone you will be there by a certain time, do you show up on time, early, or a little late ordinarily?

**W** What is the difference between kindness and compassion?

**TH** Principal
Week 8

Monday

Eat lunch at a different table everyday. Mixing in with different groups of people will help break up the clique mentality that prevails on campus. We might have a lot more in common with other groups than we know.

“Wisdom is the reward you get for a lifetime of listening when you’d have preferred to talk.”

—Doug Larson; cartoonist

Tuesday

Do you think throwing a cigarette or a piece of gum outside of a car is wrong?

Wednesday

Should I give money to a homeless person? How do I decide between what my heart and my head are telling me?

Counselor

Thursday

Friday
Week 9

**M**
Attend usually unattended sporting events. It is always more exciting to perform in front of a crowd instead of empty stands. Fill those stands up and you’ll inspire your team to succeed. Support your school by supporting your team. This will also be a good time to show appreciation to the assistant coaches.

**T**
“Listening is such a simple act. It requires us to be present, and that takes practice, but we don’t have to do anything else. We don’t have to advise, or coach, or sound wise. We just have to be willing to sit there and listen.”
—Margaret J. Wheatley
writer, consultant

**W**
Do you throw your trash away after lunch or do you let the custodians take care of it?

**TH**
How do I make room for people who view the world very differently than I do?

**F**
Food Service
Week 10

"Clean up the cafeteria week." Show the cafeteria workers how much you care by giving them a hand. You might just start a chain reaction of school cleanliness.

"Each day when I awake I know I have one more day to make a difference in someone's life."

—James Mann
(b. 1946); writer

If someone is being bullied, do you think watching and not doing anything to stop it is as bad as doing the bullying?

What’s the difference between a “view”, a “value”, and a “virtue”? View = my opinion, Value = my personal belief system, Virtue = universally accepted truth (honesty, kindness, generosity, etc.)

Language Arts Teacher
Week 11

“Reconciliation week.” It is never too late to say sorry to someone that you have been meaning to. Apologies are not always easy to give; sometimes doing the right thing is not easy. Make the effort and say you’re sorry.

“You need to be aware of what others are doing, applaud their efforts, acknowledge their successes, and encourage them in their pursuits. When we all help one another, everybody wins.”

—Jim Stovall
author, speaker

When someone is gossiping in a negative way, do you join in or do you end the conversation?

How is a team stronger than an individual?

History Teacher
Week 12

Focus on thankfulness this week. Let this be a time to express your thankfulness to those people in your life. Not only will they be touched, but you will probably feel pretty good about brightening their day.

“Your vocation in life is where your greatest joy meets the world’s greatest need.”

—Frederick Buechner (b. 1926), educator, writer, theologian

Do you think it is OK to lie in order to spare someone’s feelings? Example: Would you say, “I really like your hair” even though you do not?

Where do you get your strength when you’re alone?

PE Teacher
Week 13

“Compliment week.” Can you recall how you felt the last time someone gave you a great compliment. Some compliments last a lifetime. Choose one person a day that you would not ordinarily compliment. Make it a good one!

“We must not, in trying to think about how we can make a big difference, ignore the small daily differences we can make which, over time, add up to big differences that we often cannot foresee.”

—Marian Wright Edelman (b. 1939); activist, president and founder Children’s Defense Fund

Do you complain about your parents in front of your friends? Do you think that is OK?

Who of your friends make you feel strong? Or feel weak?

Administrative/Office Staff
Week 14

Ask your teachers how their weekends were. Showing interest in your teacher’s lives can bring your relationship with them to another level. You will be surprised how much they will want to talk about their weekends.

“Unless someone like you cares a whole awful lot, nothing is going to get better. It’s not.”

—Dr. Seuss
(1904-1991), Writer, cartoonist

During a movie in a theater, do you think it is OK to talk to your friends while the movie is playing?

Are the most important things in life visible or invisible? (Example: love, peace, happiness vs. clothes, car, house) What are some of the great invisible things? How do I express them in my life?

Friend #1
Week 15

“Open door week.” Open the door for people at your school and greet them with a smile and a hello. This common courtesy may have an uncommon affect on the people you greet.

“Let me not hurt, by any selfish deed Or thoughtless word, the heart of foe or friend; Nor would I pass, unseeing, worthy need, Or sin by silence when I should defend... 'The world is better that I lived to-day.'”

—Ella Wheeler Wilcox
(1850–1919); author and poet

If you are hanging out with friends that steal or draw graffiti on a wall, do you think you are guilty by association?

What do you do when you’re angry? How can we make better choices when we’re angry?

Assistant Principal
Week 16

**M**
Week four’s focus is to show appreciation to the assistant coaches. Usually the head coaches get all the credit. Tell an assistant coach how much they are appreciated.

**T**
“The more one does and sees and feels, the more one is able to do, and the more genuine may be one's appreciation of fundamental things like home, and love, and understanding companionship.”

—Amelia Earhart (1897-1937); aviator, author

**W**
If one of your friends told you they wanted to hurt himself/herself or others, would you tell someone? If so, who would you tell?

**TH**
What does it mean to be a friend?

**F**
Elective Teacher
Week 17

Show an interest in someone else’s pastime. Join someone in doing an activity that they really enjoy even if it is something that you do not do often. You might learn something new about a friend of yours and you may even enjoy the new activity.

“Make it a habit to tell people thank you. To express your appreciation, sincerely and without the expectation of anything in return. Truly appreciate those around you, and you’ll soon find many others around you. Truly appreciate life, and you’ll find that you have more of it.”

—Ralph Marston
author and publisher of The Daily Motivator

Do you choose not to cheat on a test because you might get caught or because you think it is wrong to cheat?

How can we reach out to those who are bullied?

Past Teacher
Week 18

**M**
Show appreciation to those students that don’t get the same type of accolades as many athletes: THE BAND. Tell some of the school band members how much you appreciate what they bring to different school events.

**T**
“One of the sanest, surest, and most generous joys of life comes from being happy over the good fortune of others.”

—Archibald Rutledge (1883-1973); poet

**W**
If you found a wallet with $100 inside and decided to send it back to its owner, would you return the wallet with or without the money?

**TH**
What are ways that you can make a new student feel comfortable?

**F**
Friend #2
Week 19

**M**

Spend time with, or on the phone with, a family member you do not often see or speak to. Try to rekindle a relationship that might have taken a back seat to your other relationships.

**T**

“A word of encouragement during a failure is worth more than an hour of praise after success.”

—Unknown

**W**

Do you agree with the saying, “Finders keepers, losers weepers.”?

**TH**

What does it mean to put others before you?

**F**

Bus Driver
Week 20

Anonymously give a gift to someone. This could be a friend, a relative, or anyone in your life. The key here is to not give up the fact that you were the gift giver.

“You can do anything you think you can. This knowledge is literally the gift of the gods, for through it you can solve every human problem. It should make of you an incurable optimist. It is the open door.”

—Robert Collier
(1885-1950); motivational author

Do you agree with the saying, “The ends justify the means.”?

How have you been impacted by kindness shown to you?

Favorite Elementary Teacher
Week 21

Show appreciation to those students that make sure we are full of school spirit: cheerleaders/pep squad. It is their jobs to put a smile on your face. Make it your job to put a smile on theirs by making it known that their skill and talents are recognized and appreciated.

“One of the things I learned the hard way was that it doesn’t pay to get discouraged. Keeping busy and making optimism a way of life can restore your faith in yourself.”

—Lucille Ball
(1911-1989); actress, producer

Is it OK to listen to music loud with the windows down while driving through a residential neighborhood at night?

How can we remind ourselves to show kindness each day?

US Troops
Week 22

Make “kindness coupons” that friends, family, and anyone else can redeem. The coupons might be for a free car wash, help with the laundry, help cleaning up the classroom, etc. The more coupons the better. You can never have too many acts of kindness.

“The essence of optimism is that it takes no account of the present, but it is a source of inspiration, of vitality and hope where others have resigned; it enables a man to hold his head high, to claim the future for himself and not to abandon it to his enemy.”

—Dietrich Bonhoeffer (1906-1945), pastor, theologian, German Resistance fighter in World War II

Do you think musicians, athletes, actors, etc. have a responsibility to be a good example for young people?

Name specific random acts of kindness that have been shown to you?

Friend #3
Week 23

**M** Spend some time with a student who has special needs this week. Take time to visit with them and hear their story.

“If you realized how powerful your thoughts are, you would never think a negative thought.”

—Peace Pilgrim
(1908-1981); pacifist, peace-activist

**W** Do you think those in the media (musicians, actors, producers, video game creators, etc.) have a responsibility to create things that are positive influences on young people or is it the responsibility of the public to be wise in choosing the media they decide to pay attention to, or both?

**TH** Compare situations in which you felt like an outcast vs. when you have been shown acceptance by others.

**F** Police Officers
Week 24

Help a custodian by picking up paper in the hallway, gym, school grounds, bathrooms, etc. Take time to ask about his or her family.

“Optimism is the faith that leads to achievement. Nothing can be done without hope and confidence.”
—Helen Keller
(1880-1968); author, lecturer, activist

Is it OK to exaggerate on your resume in order to get a job you really want?

What does the following quote mean? “Will you do the right thing when no one is watching?”

Fire Fighters
Week 25

Monday

Introduce yourself to a teacher you have never talked to and ask what they teach or about their family.

Tuesday

“Compassion is the ultimate and most meaningful embodiment of emotional maturity. It is through compassion that a person achieves the highest peak and deepest reach in his or her search for self-fulfillment.”

—Arthur Jersild
professor of psychology and education

Wednesday

If you were playing tennis and the umpire said that your opponent hit the ball out but you could clearly see that it was in, what would you do? Why?

Thursday

Why is it that you can remember compliments and insults for such a long time?

Friday

Paramedics
Week 26

**Monday**
Greet another student that you don’t know and ask about his or her life. Tell them it is for your class project.

**Tuesday**
“Giving connects two people, the giver and the receiver, and this connection gives birth to a new sense of belonging.”

—Deepak Chopra
(b. 1946); physician, author

**Wednesday**
When is it OK to plagiarize?

**Thursday**
Why do you think people choose to bully others?

**Friday**
Siblings/close relative
Week 27

Select a person in your neighborhood or class who is feeling down. Send that person a greeting card anonymously.

“It is lack of love for ourselves that inhibits our compassion toward others. If we make friends with ourselves, then there is no obstacle to opening our hearts and minds to others.”

—Unknown

Is it more acceptable, less acceptable, or equally as unacceptable to spread a rumor through text messaging as opposed to word of mouth?

Other than physical, what are some other forms of bullying?

A student that you have never talked to.
Week 28

Monday
If you’ve been a jerk (for instance, if you got into a name calling situation and lost control), apologize, even if the other person is wrong.

Thursday
“Compassion is the desire that moves the individual self to widen the scope of its self-concern to embrace the whole of the universal self.”
—Arnold Toynbee (1852–1883); economic historian, social reformer

Who is more at fault, the person that starts the rumor or the person that continues to spread it?

Initially, should respect have to be earned or just given?

Parent/Guardian #2
Week 29

**M**  Take birdseed in a small pouch and spread it where you see our feathered friends congregating.

“Nobody has ever measured, not even poets, how much a heart can hold.”

—Zelda Fitzgerald  
(1900–1948); novelist

**W**  If you are at an amusement park and you see one of your friends near the front of a line for a ride, is it OK to join your friend?

**TH**  What is one thing you would do to change this school to make it a more inviting and friendlier place?

**F**  Grandparent #2
Week 30

**M** Visit an animal shelter and bring some treats for the animals and the staff.

“Don't worry so much about your self-esteem. Worry more about your character. Integrity is its own reward.”

—Laura Schlessinger  
(b.1947); radio host, author

**W** Is it OK to use profanity in public? Why or why not?  
(When is it OK to use profanity in public?)

**TH** How could you practice Positive Gossip?

**F** Yourself
Week 31

**M**
Do a job (like mowing the lawn, cleaning the house, or shoveling snow) for someone who is having hard times, and surprise him or her by not charging.

“What is uttered from the heart alone, Will win the hearts of others to your own.”
—*Johann Wolfgang von Goethe* (1749-1832); philosopher, scientist, author

**T**
If you are a boy and you go out with a girl and pay for dinner and a movie, does she owe you a kiss?

**W**
What are some steps you could take to make it more likely that you would achieve your goals?

**TH**
A person you admire
Week 32

**M**
Consciously make eye contact and smile at everyone you see this week and see if it initiates conversations.

**T**
“Honesty is the first chapter in the book of wisdom.”
—*Thomas Jefferson*  
(1743-1826); 3rd US President

**W**
If you are a girl and go out with a boy, would you bring money or would you expect the boy to pay?

**TH**
Would you consider the influences in your life to be positive?

**F**
Mailman
Week 33

**M**
Be conscious of opening doors for others all week and see how many “Thank You’s” you receive.

**T**
“A person is not given integrity. It results from the relentless pursuit of honesty at all times.”
—Unknown

**W**
You are at a restaurant with people you just met and they are going to pay for your meal. The prices of the meals are $10, $15, $20, and $25. What meal price would you choose? (How much would your meal cost?)

**TH**
How have you shown prejudice in your life? How do you think your perception of some people would change if you looked for the best in them?

**F**
Friend #4
Week 34

**M**
Ask your parents to tell you something about them that you don’t know. Listen and thank them when they are done.

**T**
“Dare to be true: nothing can need a lie: A fault, which needs it most, grows two thereby.”
—George Herbert (1593–1633); poet, orator, priest

**W**
You are at a restaurant with people you just met and they are going to pay for your meal. You find out the restaurant has your favorite dessert. Would you order it?

**TH**
What are the benefits to keeping a journal?

**F**
A clerk in a store that you shop at: grocery, clothing, gas, etc.
Week 35

Share with your class the most enjoyable target letters week.

“You may be deceived if you trust too much, but you will live in torment if you don’t trust enough.”

—Frank H. Crane
(1873-1948); stage and film actor, director

Someone is speaking to your entire school and you do not agree with them. Is it OK for you to shout at them?

What does the term “see-througher” mean to you?

Garbage Collectors