



*If you use the right methods in the life journey,  
the most difficult things can be resolved!*

### Month Three

#### Caring for your Body & Brain



This month focuses on how to take care of body and brain. Di Zi Gui provides advice that resonates even now: “With food and drink, don’t be picky. Eat just enough. Don’t eat excessively.”

Master Ted Sun offers advice that incorporates the dangers of modern chemicals and food additives. “The odds of absorbing negative energy and negatively affecting our health through eating potato chips, drinking unhealthy beverages, or consuming processed foods is far greater than eating simple and natural foods. “

“Therefore, the secret codes of life view health as a very important factor to a happy life. In order to stay healthy, we should consume natural, unprocessed foods without chemical alterations. This way, we are able to function normally and generate positive energy every day to fight against the pollution and toxins in the world, which will help us reach optimal health.” Master Ted Sun’s counsel is not draconian or absolute. In moderation, candy and sweet treats, savory chips will be consumed in our modern society. However, a diet of mostly processed foods with chemical preservatives will not be healthy.

That is only the beginning to explore with your students. They should be able to come up with some tips for having a healthy body and brain. Use the attached set of cards to give to each team to come up with good advice. They can do internet research and make a poster with the advice on the topic. We include: Balanced diet, enough sleep, exercises, proper hygiene, dental care, limiting screen time, breathing fresh air, clean clothing, and challenging the brain.

#### Beauty Inside and Out

One of the most difficult concepts to help adolescents with is understanding that they are given a body that needs to be cared for and appreciated. The gratitude theme from last month should be carried over to this month. The process of comparison that children employ is not helpful to their sense of self. They might feel too short or too fat or not like their hair or complexion. You can help them appreciate that the life they have is dependent on how well they take care of their body.

We can help by showing the students that people are different in many ways, including physically. Sometimes we can change our physical body (for example with exercise) but some things can’t be changed. During growth and maturation changes to our bodies are beyond our control. During these middle school years, we grow and mature as nature’s plan for us unfolds. Instead of focusing on deficits, we need to focus on accepting ourselves as we are and accepting others. Instead of feeling bad about what we think are negatives in our physical appearance, we need to aim to be the healthiest we can be by honoring our body with good food and exercise.

Have your class brainstorm about the way people are different and the way they are the same.

Make two columns on the board or flip chart and have the students fill in the characteristics.



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### Similar and Different

Then discuss how some things can be changed and some can't be changed. Have them come up with examples of things that can't be changed, even if they want to change them. Their journal page corresponding to this month offers a look at their body. Your task is helping them accept their physical body.

**Convince your students that every body deserves to be respected and cared for by their "owner".**

- ✓ Some things we can change through effort (by studying, practicing, etc.)
- ✓ Some things we can change like hair color, tinted contacts
- ✓ Some things we can't change, even if we want to (height)
- ✓ Some things will change over time as we mature (height and weight, body shape)

One thing that makes the world interesting is that everyone has his or her own set of unique qualities. Just as with other traits, each of us grows, develops, and matures at different rates. Normal physical growth and development involves rapid changes in height, weight, and weight distribution.

**Girls develop earlier than boys:**

- Usually begins between 10 ½ and 11 ½ years old (but could be early 8/9 or as late as 12/13)
- Full physical growth/development is usually reached by age 15 ½
- Maturation sometimes makes a drop-off in physical activity

**Boys:**

- Usually begin to develop between 11 and 13 ½ years of age
- Usually, full development is reached by age 16 or 17
- There is usually a dramatic increase in muscle and strength
- Early physical maturity gives some youth an advantage in sports

Increases in appetite happen normally as children. Encourage your students to think of eating healthy but not "dieting". A healthy diet is good nutrition. If adolescents restrict their calories or nutrients they will not grow properly and perhaps experience health problems later.

Unfortunately, media images of celebrities are doctored and photoshopped. You could have the students in your class bring in magazines or print from the internet the unrealistic images that advertisers use to make us want to buy that product.

You want these take aways from your month discussing body image:

- ✓ We are all different physically
- ✓ Everyone has a certain body type & being happy with what you have is healthy
- ✓ We inherit our body type
- ✓ We can do something about our physical fitness by exercising and eating healthy
- ✓ Physical change happens during adolescents and is unavoidable



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- ✓ Accept others for who they are inside and not how they look

We are all different in many ways, both physically and in terms of ability. We should focus on being the best person we can be and staying healthy. Accept ourselves and accept others. What is inside your mind and heart can't be seen physically, but can change to be a kinder, caring and helpful adult.

