

IF

A routine for generating potential actions from one's principles & convictions

Choose an issue, ideal, or guiding principle to consider on each of the 4 fronts below:

If I take this ideal/principle seriously...what are the day-to-day implications for how I live my life? What might my personal actions and behavior look like? What might I choose to do differently? When and where might I find myself speaking out?

If my community takes this ideal/principle seriously...what are the implications for our collective action and behavior? What new actions would we take on? What current actions or behaviors might we need to change?

If our nation takes this ideal/principle seriously...what are the implications for our country? What current and future policies and proposals are needed? What wrongs need to be righted?

If I/we don't do anything ...what will happen?

Purpose: What kind of thinking does this routine encourage?

This routine can be used to encourage the generation of ideas related to taking action in the world based on one's guiding principles and convictions. The routine also encourages perspective taking by considering actions beyond oneself as well as uncovering issues of causality by considering motivation and even the results of a lack of action.

Application: When and where can it be used?

Students often study and learn about the world but find it hard to action, or they may think their actions or too little or too small to make a difference. After the study of such an issue, students can collectively or individually use the IF routine to begin their thinking about and generating possible courses of action based on their conviction.

Launch: What are some tips for starting and using this routine?

Begin by identifying a principle/ideal stemming from the class's study, reading, or inquiry. For example, after studying issues of water scarcity and the importance of clean water to wellbeing, the class may identify the principle that "everyone deserves access to clean water." When studying the constitution of any country guiding ideals are often laid out as guiding principles in that democracy. In studies of health, students often learn about the life time benefits of remaining active or in sport's classes the ideal of sportsmanship may be explored. Having identified and clearly articulated the principle or ideal, for the class (often by writing it on the board), tell students that the class is going to explore what it might look like to take that ideal seriously. Pose the first IF question to students and have them either work with a partner or small group to identify possible actions. After groups/pairs have generated some ideas, share them out so that others can hear the variety of actions generated. Don't judge or evaluate the actions yet. Repeat this process for each of the other three IF's. Options for moving forward might include: 1) Students select an action (at any level) that most intrigues them. Put students in groups based on their choices to explore and shape these actions further, 2) Students choose an action at each level that they think has the most potential to effect change and discuss, reflect, and/or write about why. 3) Students sort their actions into direct (engaging in action) and indirect (advocating and promoting) actions.

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