MoodMaster®

Enabling professionals to deliver
world class programmes to those
that want and need them.

Develop your principles and live by them.

Relevant to: Depression: ✓ Anxiety: ✓ Irritability/Anger: ✓ General emotional control: ✓

A lot of people claim not to have principles, perhaps because it seems a bit pretentious or grandiose. In fact, you certainly will have principles, and you may very well know exactly what they are and already live strictly by these principles. If so, you will be better adjusted than those who are not doing so.

## How to find out what your principles are.

There are two main ways:

1. Imagine it is your next big birthday (20, 30, 70, whatever). You are having a get-together to mark it, and the person who knows you best stands up to make a short speech about you. What would you want him or her to say? That you are loyal, ambitious, ingenious, kind, hard-working, what?

    There are lots of positive qualities it would be nice to have, but if he or she was only going to say two things about you, which two you want them to be?

2. Think of the person you most admire, preferably someone you can identify with, probably your same age and gender. What are the qualities you admire about that person?

    Again, possibly there are several; if so, what are the two qualities you most admire about him or her?
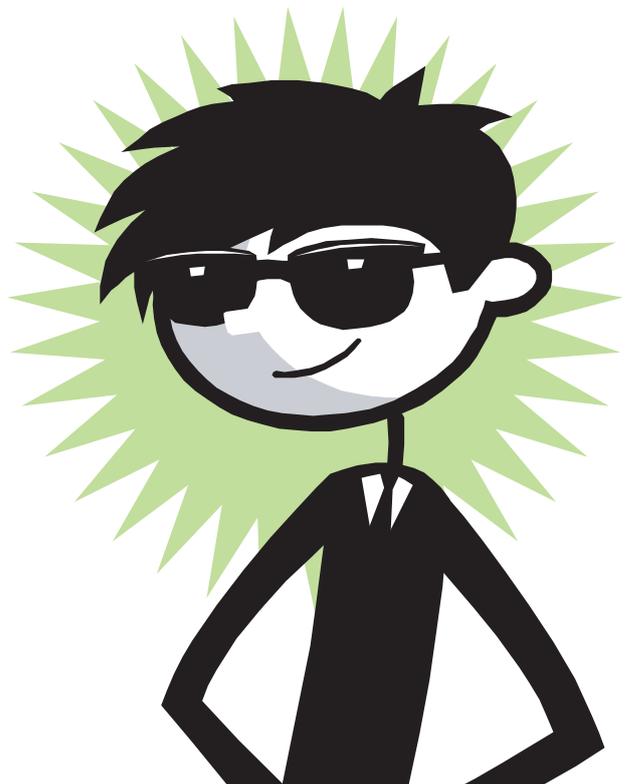
Positively acting on your principles is a definite decision.

Knowing your principles is vital; after all, how can you act on your principles if you don't know what they are?

Equally, acting on your principles is also vital; after all, what's the point in having principles if you don't act on them?

Research shows that those who proactively act on their principles – that is, they deliberately seek out opportunities to enact their principles, rather than wait for opportunities to come to them – tend to be happier and better adjusted than those who don't.

Examples of proactively acting on your principles.

Supposing one of your principles was to be kind. In this case, clearly you wouldn't say unkind things to other people, just to hurt them. But that isn't really being proactive; to be proactively kind we need (in this case) to put some effort into thinking what we could say to make a particular person feel good, for no benefit to ourselves, just to benefit that person. That would be a kind thing to do.

Supposing one of our principles is to be generous. Paying for our round of drinks wouldn't really be good enough, that would just be "not mean". What examples can you think of where people have been proactively generous – they've actually deliberately gone out looking for opportunities to give some of their money or possessions away?
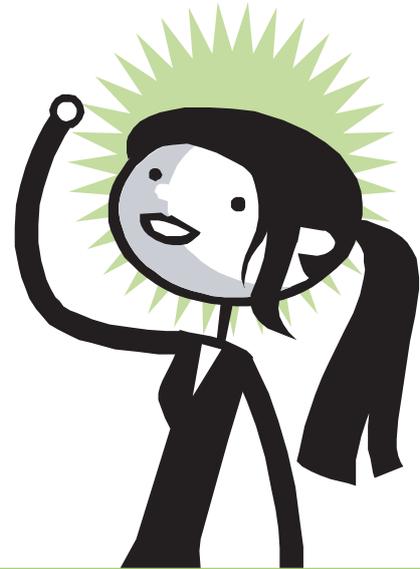
In session discussion points:

1. What principles do you value?

2. Why do you think it is important to be proactive about acting on your principles, rather than just passively acting on them?

3. Why do you think people who proactively act on their principles tend to be happier and better adjusted than those who don't?

Out of session project.

To write down your top two principles and to proactively act on them. Then to fine tune what you do, to your own satisfaction.

Myth Buster.

Myth: Principles are not necessary, it's better to be pragmatic and practical.

It turns out this isn't true: those who have clear principles and proactively live by them benefit other people and themselves.