

WELCOME TO POSITIVELY TEENAGE BY NICOLA MORGAN

USEFUL NOTES FOR TEACHERS

These notes are for schools wanting to teach the *Positively Teenage* messages, mindset and strategies. They are also useful if you are having me to visit your school.

Positively Teenage gives young people age 10–15 the tools to approach the teenage years with optimism and understanding and to develop real well-being for life. Shortly after its publication, a school librarian wrote to tell me that a 15yo girl had told her it had changed her life. The media so often portray adolescence negatively but this book shows young people how to approach these years positively so that they can really flourish and be in control. The book contains simple strategies to develop a can-try attitude, growth mindset, self-understanding, determination and resilience - strengths to cope with any challenges, enjoy life and achieve potential. Full of practical, proven strategies for physical and mental health, *Positively Teenage* explains how to flourish physically and mentally. With these new strengths and skills, young people can survive any storms and thrive on the challenges of their exciting lives.

Positively Teenage is perfect for Years 6 to 9, ages 10 to 14, when so much is changing inside and all around them, and when, with great support, knowledge and a positive outlook, they can have the best chance of building well-being and resilience for life. It's also enormously reassuring and empowering for slightly older teenagers, especially those whose earlier years have been difficult.

As my story says on my website: “I wish I could talk to the cripplingly self-conscious, illness-prone and mentally unresilient teenager I was. I would say to her: “Your brain is in your hands far more than you think. I can show you how you can affect your own well-being and have the best chance of self-driven success. Trust me.” This is my message. It's for everyone: any gender, background, culture, personality, and best learnt early, *before* problems arise.

If you are preparing for my visit to talk about *Positively Teenage*:

Thank you! I visit schools all over the world and I know the best events happen when students are well-prepared. But you're busy, so these ideas make it easier for you.

These notes show you what *Positively Teenage* covers and offer ideas and activities to help your students get the most from my visit. It will greatly increase the value if they come with ideas and questions. Otherwise they tend to ask me things like what kind of car I drive or whether I've met J.K. Rowling! Fun but not so useful...

You won't need a class set of *Positively Teenage* – though schools do use my books in that way and it would be a great idea. You just need a copy for yourself and maybe one or two in the school library. If I'm doing an event, I will send you a free copy in advance – just ask.

What the book covers:

- **Introduction:** about well-being and FLOURISH – Food, Liquid, Oxygen, Use, Relaxation, Interest, Sleep, Happiness. These are core to the book.
- **Positively You:** we are all the same (human) and different (individual); teenage brain and body changes; character strengths; personality differences (including introversion, which interests me a lot); different life challenges.
- **Positive Attitude:** focusing on what we can control; mindfulness; psychology of luck; “smart” goal-setting; resilience; growth mindset; “what went well”.
- **Positively Healthy:** feeding our body with food, water, oxygen, sunlight, exercise, sleep.
- **Positively Brainy:** keeping our brain on track with things such as study skills; positive practice; using many brain areas; trying new things; having hobbies; good screen use.
- **Positive About People:** friendships; getting on with people around us; talking face-to-face; trusted adults; growing empathy; doing things for others.
- **Positive Mood:** signs of stress; controlling our environment; music; sight and smell; laughter; engagement; reading for pleasure; value of daydreaming; positive focus.

At the start of the book, readers take the FLOURISH test. If they take it again at the end, they will probably score higher, because they’ll be taking better care of their well-being.

IDEAS TO ENGAGE YOUR CLASS OR GROUP

(Please don’t use the FLOURISH test in advance of my visit. But do download and print the [A4 Flourish sheets](#) if you would like to. They make a great motivational class display.)

1. Investigate Nicola Morgan (if I am doing a visit)

Visit the About Me page on my website: www.nicolamorgan.com/about-me/

- From there, ask them: “Why is each of the following significant to Nicola? Peanut butter, Thomas the Tank Engine, dyslexia, boys, Cambridge, “aptitude”.
- What sort of person do they expect me to be? Why do I understand teenagers so well? Am I a scientist? Why do they think I want to help young people?

2. Take the *Positively Teenage* survey online.

Find the link [here: \(www.nicolamorgan.com/blog-archive/quick-surveys-on-adolescence-life-online-and-readaxation/\)](http://www.nicolamorgan.com/blog-archive/quick-surveys-on-adolescence-life-online-and-readaxation/) You’ll find lots to discuss after that.

- Talk about: What do they think of being a teenager? Mostly positive or negative? What do they think is good/bad? (Discussion will differ between age groups.)
- How does the media portray teenagers? How does that make them feel?
- Have they experienced any of these: problems sleeping and waking up in the morning; mood swings – feeling angry or sad for no reason; arguments with parents; feeling that adults don’t understand them; new fears; changing personalities?

3. Growth mindset

(To refresh your mind, see <http://big-change.org/growth-mindset-research-2/> and www.mindsetworks.com/science/)

- In a visit, I show them something interesting about growth mindsets so you might like to prepare by reading and discussing pp65-69.
- The two boxes on page 66 make a nice discussion point and they might want to investigate Mozart's childhood.
- What can they think of that they can do that they couldn't do five years ago? How did they get to be good at it? Make a class poster featuring every student (and teacher!) doing the thing they feel they are best at. How good would they like to be at their chosen skills? What steps are they taking?

4. Introversion and extroversion

This is something I'm extremely interested in and which I talk about in INSET, because I think it's so relevant to schools, which tend to be places that make introverts more stressed. There's so little time to get the peace we need. I highly recommend Susan Cain's *Quiet Power* for teachers and parents to read.

- Read extracts from pp36-40 and start a discussion to help understanding. Which do they think they are? What are challenges for introverts and extroverts? What does each need? What could they do to make school/home cater better for both? How can they let their friends know when they need quiet/social time?

5. Discuss questions to ask me

- Get the class to discuss and then select one or two question and email them to me? (Use the contact page on my website) I'll answer it on my website and name-check the school.
- If I'm visiting, pupils will get ownership if they ask questions. They won't all be able to so you can have a class discussion in advance, so they can choose interesting questions. We could put them in a box for me to select at random or you could send them in advance or whatever you like. But spontaneity is great, too!

My next book is **Body Brilliant – A Teenage Guide to a Positive Body Image** and I'll have teaching notes. Do take a look at **The Teenage Guide to Life Online**, which has free notes. (Both on my website.)

Thank you for your interest. Do visit my website to see all the free resources as well as information about my other books and work with young people.

Nicola Morgan

www.nicolamorgan.com