PARADIGMS AND PRINCIPLES

In the next several advisories, we will be working on lessons adapted from Sean Covey’s *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective Teens* and *The Six Most Important Decisions You’ll Ever Make*. If you haven’t read these books, they are recommended to help you deal with the craziness that life can become.

PARADIGMS

In this first lesson, we’ll be learning about paradigms (sounds like pair-a-dimes) and principles. Covey writes, “remember how your ancestors used to think the world was flat? That was a paradigm. It affected how they saw the world (literally!) and how they behaved. Some people thought Columbus was nuts because he wanted to sail to the edge. They believed he would fall off the edge of the world. But he didn’t. That was the paradigm shift.”

“Paradigms are like that. How you see the world affects what you believe, how you think, and how you act. You have paradigms about yourself, other people, and about life in general. If you think you can’t do well in school, then, you probably won’t. If you think you will never get along with your parents, you probably won’t. If you think the whole world is against you, you are going to have a hard road ahead. Changing those paradigms takes effort, but it can make all the difference in the world.”

Now, let’s think about a paradigm that you used to hold and how it changed. In the space below, write about your paradigm shift and how it felt when it changed. For example, “I used to think that my parents were perfect and could never make a mistake.” Use the box below to write about yours.

Now share your paradigm shift with a trusted class member.
Now open up your school email and send a message to a parent, grandparent, older sibling, or trusted adult and tell the person you are learning about paradigms. Ask the person to share about a paradigm shift he or she experienced and what it was like to shift thinking. When you finish, read the section below about principles (silently, on your own) and complete the activity.

**PRINCIPLES**

Covey writes, “a principle is a natural law. You know – like gravity. Whether you are standing on top of the world or on the bottom, that apple is going to fall. We also have principles that govern our human interactions – things like **honesty, trust, patience, service, love, compassion, charity, freedom, wisdom, justice, humor, fairness, and courage.**”

“It takes courage to live by principles. Sure, it’s often easier to be dishonest, for example. But in the long run, it will catch up to you. Being honest feels better anyway and will prove your intelligence. Promise. Principles never fail us. Putting principles first is the key to doing well in other areas of life.”

Activity: in the space below, write down five or six principles. Then number them in order of priority in your life. Examples: “Always treat everyone with compassion,” or “always keep promises.”

My principles:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>My principles:</strong></td>
<td></td>
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Time permitting: write the opposite of those principles in the space below. Discuss with a friend what life would be like living with the opposite of the principles.