

# Introduction

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The purpose of this course is to help you become more self-determined. This personal activity book includes worksheets you can use to complete each activity in the *Steps to Self-Determination* class.

Being self-determined means being able to set goals that are important to you and having the skills to achieve these goals. To become self-determined, you have to know who you are. You have to know your strengths, weaknesses, and what you want in your life. Because you are growing and changing every minute of the day, getting to know yourself is a continuous process.

If you want to be self-determined, you also need to accept, respect, and value yourself just as you are. You need to believe in dreams and know that you are worthy of achieving them. You need to be able to stand up for your rights and step up to your responsibilities.

Finally, to be self-determined, you need skills to take those dreams out into the world and make them happen. You need to be able to turn dreams into goals. You need to plan and make choices and decisions that will help you create the life you want. You need to “go for it.” You need skills in communicating assertively and negotiating agreements.

To be self-determined, you need to learn not to give up and to keep trying until you reach your goal. Being creative will help you discover new and different ways to reach your goals when you meet barriers. Finally, a sense of humor can help you communicate with people. It can help you deal with frustration when you don't reach your goals as quickly as you would like.

Will you always get what you want? Probably not. None of us create our lives by ourselves. Our lives are shaped by the experiences we have. Some of these experiences are created by others, some by ourselves, and some “just are.” Life presents us with many opportunities. We may create some of those opportunities, and some of those opportunities may surprise us when they appear. These experiences are not totally in our control. However, most of us can have a much greater impact on our lives than we think we can.

This program will help you learn how to be more self-determined. It will help you learn more about yourself and develop the skills that can help you achieve your goals. It will help you learn how to get support from your friends and family and to access other resources when you need them. Finally, it will help you learn from each experience so you become more self-determined every day.

You already know a lot about self-determination. Everyone has had experience trying to decide what they want and figuring out ways to get it. What you already know about self-determination is important. This program will give you an opportunity to build on the skills you have and make them stronger. Your teacher is going to provide experiences and support that can help you learn how to be more self-determined. However, only you can decide what you will learn.

Becoming more self-determined is not something you learn once and then you're done. It's a lifelong process that we can all learn more about, no matter how old we are. Your teachers are going to be learning and completing the activities along with you. They will be becoming more self-determined just as you will.