

Student Activity

Make it Monumental

In the video, Aaron Caesar talks about his school’s ESI program, *Peer Group Connections (PGC)* and how it has helped him learn more about himself, build confidence, and respond in healthier ways to other people’s judgments. **Consider these self-reflection questions:**

- Aaron talks about being the subject of racism all of his young life. He reacted by “closing down” and keeping to himself. Have you or someone you know faced racism in your life? How did you react? Looking back on that experience, would you react differently today? Why or why not?
- After being part of Peer Group Connections at his school, Aaron says he “grew a spine.” What does this mean to you?
- Aaron gives advice about speaking up and gaining confidence. What helps *you* gain more self-confidence?

Student Activity

In the video, Aaron explains that when he first participated in PGC, he didn’t believe good things people said about him because he was used to hearing bad things. Words are very powerful; they can affect what we believe about ourselves and others.

- Write down several words or phrases that people have said about you or your friends/family that affected you negatively:

- Now write down several words or phrases that describe your positive qualities:

- Are one set of words more powerful to you than the other? Why or why not?

My Monumental Moment

Look in books, magazines or search online to find images of several U.S. monuments and memorials (see suggested list below). What do you think of the way the monuments look? What is inscribed on the statues/buildings? What do these words mean to you?

- New York City's 911 Memorial and Museum -- <http://www.911memorial.org/>
- Washington Monument -- http://www.nps.gov/history/history/online_books/wamo/stones.pdf
- Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial -- <http://www.nps.gov/mlkm/historyculture/places.htm>
- Statue of Liberty -- <http://www.nps.gov/stli/index.htm>
- Lincoln Memorial -- <http://www.nps.gov/linc/index.htm>

Now it's your turn. If you were hired to create a monument to increase awareness and help put an end to racism, what would it look like? What words or phrases would you inscribe on the monument? On a separate piece of paper, sketch your monument design and write the inscription(s). You can use your own words for the inscription, or use a quote or a line from a song or poem that is meaningful to you.

"No one is born hating another person because of the color of his skin, his background or his religion. People learn to hate, and if they can learn to hate, they can be taught to love." – Nelson Mandela