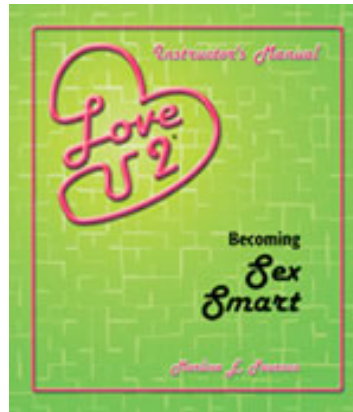


Sample Lesson

Love U2: Becoming Sex Smart

By Marline Pearson



Grades 8-12

Length: 11 one-hour lessons

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BECOMING SEX SMART

Philosophy and Goals of Entire <i>Love U2</i> Series	I
About the <i>Becoming Sex Smart</i> Unit	V
Using the <i>Curriculum</i>	VII
Lesson 1. Confronting the Paradox: More Sex, Less Joy; Teen Regrets; Who’s Really Doing What? Why Teens Become Sexually Active.	1
Lesson 2. Is Experience Always the Best Teacher? Challenges of Coming of Age; Unmet Needs and Sexual Involvement	21
Lesson 3. Understanding the Paradox: Who’s Having the Best Sex and Why? Six Parts of Sexuality—It’s More Than Physical; Sex-too-Soon and Relationship Development ...	33
Lesson 4. Male-Female Differences: Understanding Each Other; Gender and Sexual Arousal Patterns; Tips for Guys; Tips for Girls	63
Lesson 5. The 17 Steps of Physical Intimacy and Defining Your Boundaries; Increasing Steps & Escalation of Desire; Risks to Heart and Risks to Health; How Far Should We Go? Enjoying the Early Steps	87
Lesson 6. Pressure Situations and Decision-Making; Real Situations Brought to Life from <i>My So-Called Life</i>	105
Lesson 7. STD Facts and Information That Teens Need to Know	111
Lesson 8. Skills to Adhere to Boundaries and Strategies for Pressure Situations; Risky Situations, Pressure Lines, Refusal Skills; Mixed Messages & Faulty Assumptions....	153
Lesson 9. Changing Course and Designing Your Personal Policy; Words and Expectations: Get On the Same Page	181
Lesson 10. Hearing From Older Teens and Young Adults—Some Who’ve “Been There, Done That” and Those Who Haven’t.....	211
Lesson 11. Culture Pressures: Who’s Pulling Your Strings? Advertising and Media	219
Appendixes	
Appendix A: End of Unit Review	229
Appendix B: Sample Letter to Parents	237
Appendix C: Chatting Our Way to Adulthood.....	239
Appendix D: Research and Educational Materials for Teachers.....	241
Overview of Entire <i>Love U2</i> Series.....	247
Acknowledgments	255
About the Author	257
<i>Love U2</i> Catalog	259

ABOUT THE *BECOMING SEX SMART* UNIT

Parents overwhelmingly prefer a strong delay message about sex for their teens. Surprising to some, however, is the survey finding that most teens *themselves* believe that they should be given a strong message by society to wait on sex.¹ Teens, from mainstream to the highest-risk, have also indicated in both surveys and focus groups that they want to hear more about the emotional aspects of sex and relationships. Similarly, they want to hear about the full range of the consequences of sex, not just health impacts. Furthermore, they want more than a one-shot talk. Thus, these lessons are devoted to what young people lack most: the opportunity to more deeply explore the social and emotional terrain of sexuality in the context of relationship building.

We need to acknowledge that even teens committed to abstinence can be snagged by an entirely new campus or twenty-something sexual scene a few years later. Note in this regard the recent finding that virginity pledgers turn out to have STD infection rates that are similar to non-pledgers six years later. What this might suggest is that young people need to do more than merely pledge to wait.² They need to be encouraged to think deeply about the kinds of relationships they want, as well as about the meaning of sex and the many consequences of sex that go beyond themselves. This can help guide teens in their current and future relationships. This unit aims to counter the “emotional downsizing” of sex in the popular culture and to equip young people with the language, insights, and skills they will need to negotiate the dynamics of their romantic relationships.

Summary of Sexuality Unit

The starting point for this unit is a paradox revealed by surveys and interviews with teens that could be characterized as “more sex, less joy.” That is, the majority of teens surveyed regret early sexual involvement—a sad commentary on something that is supposed to bring such meaning and pleasure. To investigate and understand this paradox, this unit uses findings from sex research, as well as the actual experiences of teens and young adults as shared through stories, testimonies, and in videotaped and live conversations. Teens will have the opportunity to discover just how many teens are sexually active and explore some of the factors that propel them in that direction. Through activities and discussions, teens will see how a positive and satisfying sexuality involves a lot more than a physical connection. Learning about the other ways in which people connect with each other—for example, emotionally, socially, or spiritually—they will start to get an understanding of what true intimacy is and a sense of how it develops.

To become more in charge of themselves so they don’t just “slide” into sexual involvement, teens will engage in an activity that both identifies discrete steps of physical intimacy and links those steps with knowledge about the escalation of sexual arousal. In short, teens get the chance to think through what each progressive step of physical intimacy might mean for them with respect to their hearts, their health, and how they define their personal boundaries. The unit emphasizes the benefits and pleasures of relationships that move slowly through the early steps of physical intimacy, along with the freedoms associated with having clear boundaries and postponing sex. The unit frankly addresses the physiological and hormonal gender differences that factor into the differing ways in which teen boys and girls generally approach relationships and sexuality.

¹ Teen survey data from the National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy.

² This is in no way meant to diminish the importance of virginity pledges, which research has found to have a significant impact on delaying sexual initiation (18 months on average) and on having fewer sexual partners. It may also point to the need for anyone sexually active to be more deliberate in taking steps to reduce risks and more cognizant of the dangers in not doing so.

An essential goal of this unit is to help teens identify what they want in relationships, to learn more about what a healthy and satisfying sexuality is about, and to explore the reasons why early sex is likely not to deliver. They explore how “sex-too-soon” impacts relationship development. Teens will participate in activities to clarify goals and establish personal policy on sex and then engage in hands-on practice in the concrete skills and strategies they need to stay true to those choices. These are truly asset-building activities designed to improve a teen’s ability to handle the dynamics of a romantic relationship and negotiate the natural pressures towards escalating physical involvement. Importantly, the unit discusses the topic of changing course for teens who have begun sexual activity but who are now ambivalent about it and wish they’d waited. Finally, far from ignore the subject of health and risks, this unit addresses it head on. It includes up-to-date information on STDs with straight talk to sexually active teens on risk and risk-reduction. (The unit that follows, *Baby Smarts*, addresses pregnancy.) The implications of alcohol, drugs, and cultural messages will also be addressed. Overall, this unit aims to attend to the heart, soul, and relational issues of sexuality that are too often ignored in sexuality discussions with teens.

USING THE CURRICULUM

Becoming Sex Smart is one unit within the five-unit series *Love U2: Getting Smarter About Relationships, Sex, Babies, and Marriage*. Although this unit can stand on its own it is recommended that you follow this unit with the pregnancy unit entitled *Baby Smarts: From the Eyes of the Child*, especially Lessons 1, 2, and 6. Please note that this sexuality unit refers to and reinforces the relationship concepts found in the core lessons of the *Increasing Your Relationship Smarts* unit (Lessons 4, 7, 8, 9, 10). Although not necessary, it is recommended that you teach the core relationship lessons as a preface to *Becoming Sex Smart*. In the appendix you will find an overview of the entire *Love U2* series.

Each lesson in this unit is packed with activities and plenty of background information to aid the leader. Teachers are encouraged to use as directed or to pick and choose, add, delete, or combine as they see fit. Because the lessons are activity-based, they lend themselves to youth groups or the classroom. The activities and concepts have worked very well for grades eight through twelve in numerous pilots in schools and community youth programs. Following this narrative, suggestions will be offered for working with teens that are at highest-risk.

Stories from the anthology *The Art of Loving Well* are woven into a few of the lessons. This anthology contains short stories, poems, and fairy tales on romance and relationships from classical as well as contemporary teen literature. It is included in the *Love U2* Instructor's Manual. This anthology is also the centerpiece of the Loving Well Project, an independent literature-based character education program pioneered by Boston University and used in language arts and sexuality classes for the 8th to 12th grades. Evaluations among 10,000 students found the Loving Well Project to have a significant impact on delaying the onset of sexual activity. The lessons in the sexuality unit of *Love U2* that use these stories suggest that you read them aloud. We have found that stories bring concepts alive, touch the emotions, and engage teens in a way that straight information does not. Stories slow teens down and give them the time they need to reflect and discuss sensitive issues through the "safety" of the experiences of the characters in a story. They promote the language of emotions and intimacy. These stories can also be assigned for reading at home. This approach allows a teacher to explore a lesson's themes even when time is limited.

Included with this curriculum is the complete critically acclaimed series *My So-Called Life*. The experiences, challenges, dilemmas, joys, and confusion of the three main characters in this series will give your teens access to real situations and images. There are 19 episodes in the series' four-volume DVD set. This unit uses two of the episodes, while other *Love U2* units use other episodes. The series may be a valuable resource for other teachers and programs in your school or youth group, since it includes episodes on romantic relationships, sexuality, friendships, drug, violence, peer pressure, and family topics. There are also two other videos included with this unit. One is the recently released video on STDs, *The Rules Have Changed*. The other is a video of six young adults sharing their experiences and wisdom about teen relationships and sexuality. Some lessons, notably 1, 3, and 11, have optional video recommendations. Ordering information is provided in those lessons, but remember to order in advance, if interested.

Many lessons include take-home resources and assignments for encouraging parent-teen discussion. Recent research underscores that, contrary to conventional wisdom, parents are an important influence on

their teen children. Indeed, parent-teen connectedness has been found to be the most important protective factor for teens. Yet, many parents are only too aware of just how difficult it can be to maintain connectedness. A brief summary of these findings, as well as further resources for parents and teachers, can be found in the appendix. We hope that parents will welcome the discussion prompts and information provided by this curriculum. In this light, we also encourage you to use the sample parent letter to communicate the content of the curriculum, as well as the short but compelling article on parent power (included in the appendix) by the director of the National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy, Sarah Brown.

You may find that a number of lessons, because of their straightforward skills, principles, or activities, lend themselves particularly well to service learning. One pilot successfully engaged 11th and 12th graders in service learning by having them “teach” chosen lessons to 8th and 9th graders.

It’s highly recommended that you get a boom box and play music at times to engage your students. You might consider playing music at the start or finish of certain activities. Music engages the emotions and can put the brain in an active-alert mode. Find out what radio stations and songs your students listen to, but use your favorites as well. Or ask students to bring in music that relates to the themes at hand. This unit ends with an optional capstone music project.

Note that this entire curriculum draws on some of the latest research in sexuality, relationships, communication, and the protective power of parent-teen connectedness, marriage, and family. As much as possible, sources have been footnoted and important resources and websites flagged for your attention.

We hope you’ll find the lessons easy to use, with clear instructions for how to set up and teach the lessons and carry out the activities. Although no training is necessary, the author is available to do so if requested. Finally, the counseling, social work, and nursing staff at your school may find value in some of the lessons that offer talking points and activities that could be adapted to individual and small group work. You may contact the author through the publisher. We welcome your comments and suggestions.

Suggestions for Working with High-risk Teens

You may work in a community where the majority of teens begin sexual involvement at an early age and where the problems arising from that behavior seem daunting. Indeed, a new report, *This Is My Reality: The Price of Sex*, indicates that the views of many urban, low-income African-American teens on sex, relationships, pregnancy, abstinence, and marriage are troubling.³ *“Many of these young teens view sex as a transaction, harbor little trust for each other, and believe that adults are contributing to the problem of early, casual sex and pregnancy. Trust and communication are rare in their relationships, in particular Black girls do not feel valued, and both male and females report a high level of derogatory sexual terms used to describe women. Both sexes say cheating is rampant, and girlfriend and casual sex partners are common among males. These teens note that girls are becoming more aggressive saying they are simply imitating the casual attitude toward sex and relationships exhibited by many teen boys.”*

The report is a frank and disturbing slice of teen reality in America. But before dismissing this as an aberration, or something applying only to some black teens, it is important to remember that many mainstream trends, including music and fashion, often begin in the inner city. Teen views about sex may be strikingly similar despite different life experiences.

³ For full report: See Motivational Educational Entertainment (MEE) at www.MEEProductions.com. A shorter summary of *This Is My Reality* is available at www.teenpregnancy.org.

More than anything else, the voices of these teens tell us that they need visions and models of positive relationships. Despite their often harsh realities, these teens are also amazingly resilient. They need guidance in building relationships, acquiring genuine communication skills, building and assessing for trust, and exploring the real and myriad consequences of sex for their hearts, bodies, and future children. And the more concrete this guidance is, the better.

Because many of the lessons of *Love U2* contain highly concrete steps, schematics, skills, and scenarios, they have been well received by some of the highest-risk teens in pilots. If your teen population is, in fact, high-risk, consider beginning with a vision-building activity. Ask your teens to close their eyes and extend their hands out, palm up. Say: *It's now ten years in the future and you have achieved the education and job you want. Imagine that your relationship or marriage is in the palm of your hand. Paint the picture of your ideal relationship. How do you want it to be? Think about how your partner treats you and how you talk to each other. What do you do together? How are you together?* After a minute pass out 3x5 index cards and ask the teens to write down several descriptions of their relationship ideal. Suggest that they start each line with “we,” as in: We are affectionate every day with each other; we can share our thoughts openly and honestly; we can trust each other to be loyal to each other; we do fun things together; we can disagree and fight fairly. Consider playing music as they write. Invite them to share their ideals after they are finished.

In general, weave in inspirational examples of positive relationships as much as possible. A wonderful resource to consider reading aloud from is the collection *All The Man I Need: Black Women's Loving Expressions on the Men They Desire* (1999) by Anaezi Modu and Andrea Walker (Gateway Publishers: Newark, New Jersey). These short writings were derived from nearly two thousand letters written in response to a simple question posed to readers of *Essence Magazine*. It was “How would you describe the ideal man?” Consider asking your young men to write their own responses to describe the ideal woman. Additionally, see Lesson 12 of the relationship unit, titled, “Soul Food: Adult Couples Share Their Stories,” as another way to help teens construct an ideal. That lesson invites couples from the community to share their experiences and wisdom about love, commitment, and marriage in the context of an inter-generational dialogue.

Finally, a highly recommended film to view and discuss is *Antwone Fisher*. Teens have responded well to the themes of this incredibly rich and inspirational film. See Lesson 3 for discussion prompts.

LESSON 9

CHANGING COURSE

AND DESIGNING YOUR PERSONAL POLICY

OVERVIEW

Most young people experience a number of romantic relationships—serious and not so serious—as they make their way towards adulthood. As we know from surveys, many teens wish they had left sexual intercourse out of their relationships.⁴ Even the highest risk teens, who live in communities where the vast majority of teens are sexually active, say this.⁵ Teens report that they would like help in learning how to build relationships not based on sex. Thus, helping teens with “changing course” is one topic of this lesson. A guiding assumption of this unit is that there are not just two groups of teens out there—abstinent and sexually active—but also a third group. Many teens in this group are ambivalent, and may be open to changing course if offered support and guidance to make that a realistic possibility. Recovery messages that offer realistic and hopeful solutions that seem attainable will be offered.

In this lesson, teens will explore the challenges of changing course. They will be presented with practical suggestions, asked to add their own ideas, and then invited to help someone change. Gender differences regarding words and meaning in sex and relationships will also be examined. Participants will be further engaged by writing a private statement defining their values with regards to teen sex, and then by designing their own personal policy of rules and actions to guide him or her. The session ends with a demonstration on how sexual involvement can influence the emotional consequences of relationships. A handout on sexual choices is provided to facilitate group discussion and to encourage parent-teen dialogue.

Goals

- Explore the option of changing course—that is, moving away from being sexually active.
- Examine concrete strategies and actions that will help someone who wishes to change course do so.
- Gain awareness of common gender differences about the meaning of some words regarding sex and relationships.
- Identify personal sexual values, clarify life goals, and elaborate a personal policy of rules to guide oneself.
- Examine how sexual involvement colors one’s emotional experience of relationships.

⁴ *With One Voice* 2003, National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy.

⁵ See *This Is My Reality: The Price of Sex* (2004) based on interviews with low-income urban African American teens in ten cities. (www.MEEproductions.com).

Lesson-at-a-Glance

1. Changing Course Activity.
2. Let's Talk About Words – Mini-Lecture.
3. Designing Your Personal Policy.
4. Broken Hearts Demonstration.
5. Discussion and Parent-Teen Dialogue Handout on *Which Path For Me?*

Materials Checklist

Elmer's, or similar brand glue, and four sheets of different colored construction paper. Cut out four large hearts on different colored construction paper. Smear glue over the entire surface of one and attach second heart. On the other pair of hearts apply glue in two small places the size of a silver dollar and attach. Choose a scenario and duplicate enough "Changing Course" worksheets (Resource 9a), "Reflection Questions" (Resource 9b), "My Statement on Sex" (Resource 9c) "Goals for My Life" (Resource 9d), "Personal Policy-Rules/Course of Action" (Resource 9e), and "Which Path for Me?" (Resource 9f) for each participant. You can run off "Goals..." and "Personal Policy" back-to-back. Tape up the newsprint poster from previous lesson "Risky Situations." Newsprint, markers, pencils, and 5 x 8 inch unlined index cards for writing Personal Policy. *Optional:* Duplicate "My Personal Line" (Resource 9g) for personal policy activity. See below.

I. Changing Course

20 minutes

Announce to the group that we are now going to turn our focus to teens that are, or have been, sexually active. This might be, or could be, your best friend, or even yourself. Remind them that earlier in this unit, we learned that most teens who are sexually active wish they had waited (almost 8 out of 10 girls, and six out of ten boys). Listen to this quote:

Epifany, now 19, says, "When I was younger, everyone was playin' everyone. It was use or be used. It was just what you did. Now I know that guys, even though they won't admit it out loud, respect a girl who doesn't give it up. It's weird. When you lose it (your virginity), you want to keep it. You do it just to do it. Even though I acted tough at the time, my heart's been torn too many times."

Ask the group to consider the following: In one survey of sexually active teen girls, when they were asked to rank fourteen items in terms of what teens need most, the number one response was: "Help with changing my life if I've started down the wrong path." The second item was, "How to build a relationship

not based on sex.”⁶ In another survey of pregnant teens, when asked what could be done to bring down the teen pregnancy rate, the overwhelming response was, “Teach us how to say no and not hurt our boyfriend’s feelings.” Clearly, there are many teens and young adults who would like to start over. Remind the group of Veronica in *My So-Called Life*, who had sex with her boyfriend Kyle, but then told Angela she had broken up because she didn’t think she should have to compromise her values.

1. Activity: Brainstorming—Why It’s Hard to Stop

It’s been said that once a teen has become sexually active, it is often hard to change course. Why is that? Brainstorm as a group the possible reasons. Either break down into small groups or do a large-group brainstorm. Invite their responses and discuss. If applicable, point out that if a teen lives in a community where it seems that lots of guys are “players,” everyone seems to be cheating. Sex may seem to be just a transaction, and so it may be especially difficult to swim against the tide and change course. After their responses, add that no one assumes a smoker can’t stop, especially if they’ve only smoked a bit. Why are our expectations about sex so different?

2. Activity: Helping Someone Change Course

(*Teacher’s Note:* Choose the activity that best fits the cultural context of your group—or use all three, asking teens to choose which letter they want to tackle.) Point out that people make mistakes and sometimes violate their own values. Or, perhaps they “slide” into doing something they hadn’t planned to because they had never clarified their values or developed a plan. Some teens simply do what everyone else around them is doing, or what they *think* everyone else is doing. But the beauty of being human is that we can consciously change our ways. Note in this regard that the Chinese character for crisis combines two meanings: one is disaster, and the other is opportunity. This points to the fact that we have the ability to learn and move forward from our difficulties or mistakes, or to learn nothing and be taken further down. With regard to the subject at hand, sex, a person can say no, even if they’ve said yes before.

Announce that you have real letter(s) from real teen(s) wishing to change course. State that you want them to work in groups to come up with a written response to the letter. The group’s response can be in the form of a letter, or simply a list of points and recommendations to offer this teen. (*Teacher’s Note:* Use whichever letter(s) best fit your group, and consider sending their responses to a teen newsletter). Begin by reading aloud the letter from Amy, Elesha, or Dywane found on the “Changing Course” worksheets (Resource 8a). After reading the letter(s), announce that the groups will have two tasks. List:

Two Tasks:

1. Give this person encouragement and support. Often people in this situation may feel they might not be able to change even though they want to. They’ve already said yes and think they can’t go back. They may feel everyone else is doing it, and it’s just expected: They may even feel like “damaged goods.” Part of your job is also to point out the benefits of relationships that leave sex out.
2. Offer practical advice and information. Be concrete:

⁶ Stan Weed, Ph.D. This particular survey was done for *Friends First* of Longmont, Colorado. Towards the bottom of the list were items like more bio-reproductive and birth control information.

- If this teen continues the relationship, what will he or she have to say and do? What risky situations will they need to avoid? What strategies will they need to follow? *Be specific.* (It would be useful to tape up the newsprint poster on “Risky Situations” from the previous lesson.)
- If someone breaks up with his or her partner, what advice can you give that person for future dating relationships? What should his or her personal policy be?

Teacher Prompts:

Depending on whether you feel your teens need it, consider reviewing what they’ve learned so far that these teens might benefit from knowing. If you feel your group doesn’t need much prompting, simply add the following to the final discussion, if not mentioned when debriefing on their letters and suggestions.

Does s/he know:

- Most teens aren’t “doing it.” Some guys lie about having sex.
- Most teens regret it and wish they’d waited; they are not alone.
- The six parts of what makes sex meaningful.
- The difference between love and lust and the nature of infatuation (RQ Lesson 4).
- Most teens respect virginity, even if they don’t say so aloud.⁷
- The differences between males and females when it comes to sex, relationships, and sexual arousal.
- The low-risk dating strategy. Remember the five ways to get attached and golden rule. (RQ Lesson 10)
- The seven principles of smart dating (RQ Lesson 8).
- The three questions to ask about feelings to gauge the health of the relationship. Does it feel controlling or nurturing, conditional or unconditional, and mostly physical or attraction on many levels? (RQ Lesson 7)

Teacher’s Note: If you have the posters available from the relationship unit, they might be useful to put up as peripherals to jog their memory and reinforce learning.

Let the groups know they will have ten minutes to discuss and write. Ask that each group decide on a writer or note-taker as they brainstorm ideas for their response. After they’ve completed their response, ask each group to read aloud their letter or list of suggestions for Amy, Elesha, or Dywane. Add the following ideas if not mentioned in the discussion:

1. Even if the teen said yes already does not mean s/he can’t say no now.

⁷ One teen reported in *This Is My Reality: The Price of Sex*, “If a girl tells me she doesn’t want to have sex with me, that would make me like her, because she got respect for herself.” p. 8.

2. This teen really needs to think about what s/he wants increasing steps of physical intimacy to mean. His or her vision—the desired meaning for sexual love—can then guide him or her.
3. He or she also needs to identify the risks and consequences of sex, such as pregnancy and STDs, and communicate clearly to his or her partner a desire to avoid these.
4. If the other person doesn't agree to the same sexual boundary lines, or agree to respect his or hers, the relationship will have to end (Veronica did that with Kyle in *My So-Called Life*: "I shouldn't have to give up my beliefs.").
5. He or she needs to find a trusted adult or mature friend who cares about her or him, who will help hold her or him accountable for their decision. The teen needs someone to ask him or her about it regularly. It will support his or her decision to change.
6. S/he needs to find friends who put a value on abstinence.
7. S/he needs to determine a clear boundary line, such as not under the clothes or in the "underwear zone," and she needs to talk about her expectations and her boundary line early on in a romantic relationship.
8. The importance of avoiding risky situations, especially those involving alcohol, drugs, and long periods of time alone being physically affectionate.
9. Also, going out with people older than she is by one or two years is *very, very risky*. Not only is an older guy or man into more adult interests, but because of the power differences implied by age, she is much less likely to have any say-so in the relationship.
10. Girls tend to be the recipients of pressure more often, and if there are "brakes" to be applied to physical escalation in a relationship, it is most often is the girl who applies them. However, many boys get pressured as well. And this may be a growing phenomenon. All the above suggestions can apply to both.

* * *

2. Let's Talk About Words - Mini-lecture

5 minutes

Guys and girls may not be on the same page when it comes to words and their meaning regarding sex and relationships. So, what does "I love you" mean in the context of sex?

Guys who want sex: A guy may untruthfully tell a girl what she wants to hear. Guys often use the word love when they mean like. They may use the word love because they want to be sexually active. Surveys over and over have found that a large number of high school boys say they would say just about anything to get a girl to make out and have sex. *Caution:* Not all boys are like this. Many boys do believe sex is something very special and respect girls. Nonetheless, boys in general are much more visually stimulated and sexually focused. They can get erections by just looking at a girl or even a picture.

Females are very verbal: It's been said that females say 2,000 more words a day, on average, than males. We talked earlier about boys having an "eye gate" and girls having an "ear gate."

“Females tend to be more interested in a relationship, an emotional connection, and affection, than just sex on its own. Sex tends to be more an emotional thing for females.

Advice for girls: Words can be cheap. It’s wise for girls not to put too much stock into words. Don’t think, “Oh. If he says he loves me, he must.” Look, guys have learned that if they say love or like, they often can get more physical. Don’t be dumb. Young males can be more driven by their biology and sometimes blinded by it. Males usually don’t put the idea of sex together with a meaningful relationship until their twenties. Girls need to ask themselves if they really want to be boys’ experimental material. In a recent series of focus groups of college males, conducted by Rutgers University’s National Marriage Project, young men said that if they “scored” with a woman that they picked up in a bar, she is definitely not someone they would consider having a serious relationship with. It is generally easier for males to imagine a sexual experience without the desire of an emotional connection. This may not speak to character, and it’s a clear double standard, but it is a reality that girls ought to be aware of. Girls should not think that physical involvement equals a relationship or emotional readiness on the part of the guy.

Here’s the integrity issue for girls: What do you really want? If it’s affection, caring, love, a relationship—which are all good things—then don’t offer sexual involvement as a short-cut way to get it. Be clear about what you’re after. Unfortunately, many girls have used physical involvement, even sexual intercourse, as a way to get love and a relationship. And many boys have used the words “like,” “love,” and “relationship” to get sex. It’s dishonest both ways. Probably, when all is said and done, this more than anything helps explain why most teens, but especially girls, regret their sexual involvement and wish they’d waited.

Here’s the integrity issue for guys: Know that girls are ready to believe what you say. Using the word “love” to bargain for sex is dishonorable. A girl will be hurt when she realizes her trust was misplaced. It doesn’t show integrity or character. Don’t say it because you think it’s the thing to say. Someday sex *will* be about love and a real relationship. Sex typically is a big deal to a girl. When you are physically affectionate with a girl, she usually takes that as a sign of your true interest in her as a person.

Only interested in sex? There are some guys who might feel they are being honest in telling a girl he only is interested in sex, not a relationship. And there are some girls who are so emotionally needy, and want to be loved so badly, like Rayanne in *My So-Called Life*, they’ll agree. This is like taking candy from a baby. It’s taking advantage of a needy person. It doesn’t show integrity or honor. On the other hand, there are girls who are so tired of guys “playing girls,” they’ve decided to act the same way. But does anyone really win here? Two wrongs don’t make a right. Sex in that context is not too beautiful.

Guys need to: Think of how they can handle the peer pressure from other guys to score. Most guys are relentless in harassing other guys about sex. Guys also need to ask up front about their partner’s feelings and boundaries. And guys need to consider their own values and boundaries—and what strategies they will use to stick to them. Boys need to talk about a strategy with their partner that they can use for honoring those boundaries. For example, will you agree to make out only so long? To only touch outside the clothes? To not spend unlimited time in empty places, etc.? Don’t *ever, ever* have sex without talking first about your values and attitudes about pregnancy and children, and that means talking about your values and views about adoption, abortion, marriage, and being a parent. *Sex can always lead to the creation of a child. A child needs adult, committed parents who are emotionally and financially ready for marriage and parenting.*

3. Designing Your Personal Policy

20 minutes

Earlier in the “17 Steps of Physical Intimacy” lesson, teens were asked to identify a personal boundary. In other words, at which step does one draw the line? Announce that now they are going to design a Personal Policy that will aid them in sticking to their boundary. Point out that, while a clear personal line is important, it’s never enough to just have an idea in one’s head. Remember, most teens “stumble” into their first sexual encounter. Making decisions about how to handle your sexuality takes thought. One’s goals need to be firmly in mind, along with a plan of action that includes rules for one’s self. State that the work they are about to do will be strictly private and personal. No one, leaders or other teens, will read anyone’s personal policy unless a teen chooses to share it.

To come up with their own *Personal Policy*, teens will need to think first about their values—in effect, their “North Star” when it comes to relationships, sexuality, and all of its consequences. Then they will consider the goals they have for the next ten years of their life or beyond. Finally, with these in mind, they will devise a set of personal rules or a course of action that will help them reach their goals and live by their values.

➤ **Activity: Multi-step process for designing a Personal Policy**

1. Pass out the “Reflection Questions” (Resource 9b). Tell the group that these questions for reflection may help them think about their values. Ask everyone to write brief responses to these questions. Allow five minutes or more.
2. Then pass out the “My Statement on Sex” (Resource 9c) sheets and ask them to write a summary statement about their ideals regarding sexuality, their boundary line, and why they’ve chosen as they have.
3. Next, ask them to identify the top goals they have for their life, focusing especially on the next ten years. Pass out the example of one teen’s top “Goals For My Life” (Resource 9d). Along with this, pass out 5 x 8 inch blank index cards and ask them to identify the top goals they have for their own life that reflect their own personal view, and write them on the card.
4. Finally, pass out the example of “My Personal Policy Rules/Course of Action” (Resource 9e). State that this is an example that goes along with the above example of ten goals. Ask them to look at their own goals on their 5 x 8 inch card and then state a rule or course of action that corresponds to each goal they have defined for themselves. Instruct them to write this on the back of their goal cards.

When they have finished, emphasize that by setting goals and making their own rules, they are exercising their Personal Power—their ability to take charge of their own lives. With that power comes self-respect and self-confidence. The more you behave according to your own Personal Policy, the more power you have over what happens in your life. However, the reverse is also true. The more you abandon your beliefs and engage in activities that you don’t feel right about, the less respect you’ll have for yourself and the less self-confidence you’ll have. Don’t let things “just happen” to you.

Activity adapted and used with permission, Susan Pogany, Sex Smart, Chapter 11.

Teacher's Note: This activity can also be done as a homework assignment. Or you might begin the process in class and then ask teens to finish it at home.

Optional: For sexually active teens in the throes of considering change (or for the oldest teens), you may want to provide the additional worksheet “My Personal Line” (Resource 9f). Additionally, a highly compelling read for teens ready to leave high school is Chapter Seven of, “Sex, Lies, and the Great Escape” from *Relationships: How to Make Bad Relationships Better and Good Relationships Great*, by Drs. Les and Leslie Parrott. This book, written for college-age adults, would be relevant and accessible for senior high students.

* * *

4. Broken Hearts Demonstration

10 minutes

Announce that you’re going to do a little demonstration about breaking up. Start by asking the group how likely, or unlikely, it is that they will experience a broken heart at some point in high school. Think about it. Considering that less than 1% of high school sweethearts end up marrying, it’s almost a sure thing that you’ll experience a break-up at some point, and probably more than one. When two people break up, at least one person is usually hurting—typically the one who got “dumped.” It hurts to be rejected, no doubt about it. Point out that not all break-ups are traumatic, but it is pretty common for people to be hurt by the experience. *Teacher's Note:* Read through this section so you understand what you will do with the two pairs of glued hearts. Experiment with the two sets of glued hearts so that you apply the right amount of glue to get the desired effects on the hearts.

Activity: Two Hearts

Announce that you have two sets of hearts representing two different couples that are breaking up. Hold up the first pair of hearts, the ones that are completely glued together, and announce that this couple had been having sexual intercourse. Then hold up the hearts glued in two spots and announce that this couple is also breaking up. However, while they enjoyed their physical affection, they did not engage in sexual intercourse. (Don’t mention the glue.)

- Ask for a volunteer to come up and tear apart the pair of hearts that represents the couple that was not sexually active. Ask the group what they notice. They will probably notice that one leaves a little residue of itself (in the glue spots) on the other heart. Ask the group what this symbolizes to them. Add, if needed, that the tearing and residue represents hurt or discomfort. There’s more loss for one of the hearts because it can be sad to lose a relationship you care about. Rarely are the desire to end a relationship and the hurt experienced totally equal.
- Now ask for another volunteer to try to tear apart the pair of hearts representing the sexually active couple. Ask what they notice. Yes, one or both hearts have much more of them torn off. A greater piece of the heart itself is taken. Ask the group about the symbolism of this.

The moral of the story here is that young couples who’ve been sexually active and then break up often experience greater pain, sadness, and hurt—at least one of them, if not both—than those young couples that are not sexually active and break up. Ask the group to recall the lesson they did on the 17 steps of

physical intimacy. Remind them that they rated each progressive step for its risk to one's heart. Sex usually carries greater expectations for at least one person. When that person shares something as private as sex, he or she exhibits great trust in the other person. It is the giving of a part of himself or herself. You want the person to respond to you positively. When you don't get that, you can feel let down. When you find out it didn't mean what you thought, you can be hurt. Sex is a big deal. It is often a heavy emotional involvement for at least one of the partners. Adding sex almost always complicates things and can make a break up more painful.

Read Aloud: Read the following passages aloud to give voice to this demonstration.

Jarod, now 18 years-old, relates, *"I was on the football team, and everyone probably thought I was a sex god or something, but it wasn't true. I was totally inexperienced. I believed in saving it for marriage, but one night Melissa started pushing me. I was afraid she'd think I was a "wuss," so I just went along with it, you know, kind of let her do it to me. Being close to her like that got to be the biggest thing in my life. I felt like Melissa was my life. I had this feeling we'd get married when we were older. After she broke it off, I couldn't give her up. I kept on calling and driving by her house all the time, even after she started seeing this other guy. I felt so bad I didn't see much point to living."*

(*Sex Smart*, Susan Pogany pp. 18-19.)

Jarod would be an example of the second set of torn hearts. His heart was torn badly by his experience. But here is another quote from someone who might represent the first set of torn hearts. This couple drew the line before sexual intercourse.

Amy, now 21: *"I had a steady boyfriend when I was 17. We loved each other and got along great. We even talked about getting married. We were physically close, too. My boyfriend wanted to have sex, but he was a sweet guy and he understood when I told him I wasn't ready. He was disappointed, but it didn't ruin the relationship. We had some great times together. I'm glad I waited because we eventually split up. I was sad, but this year, I met someone new that I really care about. I'll always remember my first romance as something very special, and I hope my old boyfriend does too."*

In this case, there was sadness, but not at all as much heartache as Jarod experienced. The couple above was free to move on without a lot of emotional baggage. Waiting to have sex gives teens the freedom to enjoy, experience, and learn from dating relationships without getting derailed. A relevant point to remind the group of is the fact that 8 out of 10 first-time teen sexual experiences last six months or less. One-quarter of them are one-time occurrences.

Final Words of Wisdom: Most people spend several years or more trying to find someone who they want to love and commit to forever. True, there are a few people who find a great partner for life early on, but for most, it's through many trials and errors. Many of the experiences along the way are uneven. In early relationships, couples may find they're not really compatible, or that one person doesn't feel as strongly as the other, or vice versa. Sometimes it may be the right person, but the wrong time to make a commitment. Here are some words to tuck in your mind: Be patient and give yourself time. It takes a while for most people to figure out who they are and where they are going. Also, give yourself time to find someone who truly is a good match for you. Wait for someone who is as crazy about you as you are about him or her. Always keep a North Star for the kind of relationship you want in your range of vision. Let it guide you and your decisions.

* * *

5. Discussion and Parent-Teen Dialogue Handout

Pass out "Which Path For You?" (Resource 9f). Ask participants to read it over and then ask for comments and reactions. Request that they take this home and have their parent or guardian read it over. Instruct them to ask their parent(s) for reactions to the handout and additional insights and suggestions. Have the parent(s) sign the handout and ask them to bring it back to class.

* * *

Resources to be found on the following pages:

Resource 9a "Changing Course" worksheets.
Resource 9b "Reflection Questions. " Two pages, run back to back.
Resource 9c "My Summary Statement. "
Resource 9d "Goals for My Life."
Resource 9e "Personal Policy-Rules/Course of Action."
Resource 9f "Which Path For Me?"
Resource 9g "My Personal Line" (Optional).

Resource 9a

CHANGING COURSE WORKSHEET

Dear Ann,

I've gotten myself into a mess. I'm a 16 year-old girl who is having sex with my boyfriend, who is 18. I'll call him Ed. I'm what you'd call a nice girl, I think. I don't smoke or do drugs or any of that stuff. My grades are good. After Ed and I had been dating for a few months, it just seemed natural to have sex with him. He didn't pressure me. I wanted it as much as he did. We're using birth control pills and condoms, so I'm not worried about getting pregnant. What I'm worried about is how I feel now about Ed and me. I don't want to keep on doing this. I told Ed I want to stop, but he doesn't. I don't enjoy going out with him anymore, because I know every date will mean more sex. My parents know what's going on, and my dad can hardly look at me. The other day, he said he wanted to have Ed arrested for statutory rape. Some days, I wish he would. It looks as if it's the only way I can get out of this situation. I thought I was in love with Ed, but now I know it was more physical than anything else. I had heard people say it's dumb to have sex at my age, but I wouldn't listen. I'd do anything to undo what I've done.

Amy

* * *

Write a response to Amy on the back of this sheet. You have two tasks:

1. Give Amy words of encouragement and support. Often a person in this situation feels a bit hopeless, like they might not be able to stop even though they want to. They may even feel like "damaged goods." Part of your job also is to point out the positives, the benefits of relationships that leave sex out.
2. Offer concrete and practical advice and information.

If she continues the relationship with Ed, what will she have to say and do? What risky situations will they need to avoid? What policies or strategies will they need to follow? Be specific.

If she breaks up with Ed, what advice can you give her for future dating relationships? What should her personal policies be? Be specific.

* * *

Hey man, I still can't believe it that I got it, you know... herpes. What a drag. I get blister-like sores on the skin of my groin and partly at the base of my penis every couple months now, and it hurts like h___ for a week or two. I've been told by a doc that I'll have to deal with this for the rest of my life. Man, I thought this would never happen to me. And I'm only 15! I've only had sex with Jess, and we're not even together any more.

Now there's a girl I really like. Her name's Alyssa. She's not like the others. She's got a lot of self-respect. What should I do? Should I tell Jess? Do I tell Alyssa if we start going out? When should I tell her, and what will she think of me then? Will she even want to be with me? I know I pushed pretty hard with Jess. I'm afraid I'll do the same thing with Alyssa. I'm a normal guy with feelings. How could something that seemed so simple make my life so complicated?

Wondering about it all in Cleveland,

Dwayne

* * *

Write a response to Dwayne on the back of this sheet. You have two tasks:

1. Give Dwayne some words of wisdom and support. What does he need to know? What does he truly think about girls who want to maintain their virginity? What are the advantages for teen guys with relationships not in a hurry? What are the disadvantages and risks of sexual relationships for guys?
2. Offer concrete and practical advice and information:

If he starts to go out with Alyssa, what will he have to say and do, and when should he tell her? What risky situations will they need to avoid? What policies or strategies will they need to follow? Be specific.

What does he need to do about Jess?

* * *

Dear Jena,

I don't like the way things are. But who am I to complain—and it's not like anyone else is doing anything different than me. But somehow I think it should be different. Sometimes I have this dream about having a man who really treats me well, that lets me know I'm precious all the time—not just when we're alone and having sex. And about sex—I don't know. I always thought it should be beautiful, but it doesn't feel that way. I thought it would keep him with me, but I know he's got his ho's on the side. You just can't expect a guy to be loyal. Can't trust nobody these days—not even your girlfriends. My friends say they are all sick of guys playing them. They say it's their turn to play these guys. They even trying to get my man. It's messed up. And this relationship is just so complicated. If I had the chance to go back in time, I would have waited for sex.

Wishing for something better,

Elesha

* * *

Write a response to Elesha on the back of this sheet. You have two tasks:

1. Give Elesha words of encouragement and support. Plant seeds of hope. A person in this situation can feel a bit hopeless, like there's no way to change and go against the current. It may seem like there's no options in her world. Part of your job also is to point out the benefits of relationships that leave sex out, and how others, even guys, may secretly admire a girl who respects herself and says no. What messages does she need to tell and retell herself?
2. Offer concrete and practical advice and information.

If she continues her relationship, what will she have to say and do? *Be specific.*

If she breaks up with him, what advice can you give her for future dating relationships? What should her personal policies be? What risky situations will she need to avoid? *Be specific.*

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. How would I feel about having to choose between abortion, adoption, or raising a child?
2. Am I ready to marry, parent, and support a child?
3. How do I think a child would feel having parents who weren't married and committed and not able, emotionally and financially to be a parent? How would it feel to a child to be abandoned by his or her father?
4. If my partner and I were faced with an unplanned pregnancy, how would our relationship be affected? How would our families be affected?
5. How would my education and chance at a good career be affected?
6. If I got a sexually transmitted disease, what would happen to my health? How would I feel about myself?
7. If I began having sex with my partner, and he or she walked out on the relationship, how would I be affected? What if this happened several times?
8. Is there something special about my virginity? Do I respect virginity? What do I want sex to mean?
9. What do I really think about players? Would a player make a good father for my child? Would I want my own son or daughter to be a player? Would I want my own daughter or son used by a player?
10. Deep in my heart and mind, do I think teen sex is right or wrong?
11. Do I "live for the moment" without thinking of how my behavior might hurt me or another person later on, or do I carefully consider the consequences of my actions?
12. Do I believe that sex should take place only in a serious, long-term relationship that has commitment from both partners? Should sex take place only in marriage? Only in marriage?

Some adapted and used with permission: Susan Pogany, *Sex Smart*, p. 107.

Resource 9c (Duplicate and cut in two.)

MY STATEMENT ON SEX

Write a brief summary statement, no more than a paragraph, on your ideals about sex, your boundary line, and why you've chosen it.

MY STATEMENT ON SEX

Write a brief summary statement, no more than a paragraph, on your ideals about sex, your boundary line, and why you've chosen it.

GOALS FOR MY LIFE—ONE EXAMPLE

1. Stay physically and emotionally healthy.
2. Work hard, stay in school, go to college, and get my college degree—maybe even more.
3. Work at a career I enjoy. Become economically self-sufficient.
4. Travel and live in a different country for awhile.
5. Enjoy friendships with people of both sexes.
6. Save sex for my lifetime partner.
7. Don't be in a hurry to get married; enjoy my freedom.
8. Choose a marriage partner carefully, after we've known each other for at least two years. Make sure we agree on values.
9. Choose a time to have children when my marriage partner and I can give our kids all the love, attention, and financial security they need.
10. Work hard at being a strong, mature adult who can handle problems.
11. Work at a job I love and work at keeping my marriage good. Have a good satisfying sex life.
12. Give back to the community or those less fortunate than myself.

Adapted and used with permission: Susan Pogany, *Sex Smart*, p. 108.

PERSONAL POLICY—RULES/COURSE OF ACTION

1. Have fun dating, but don't have sex while I'm a teenager.
2. Keep dating safe by sticking to curfew, staying away from unchaperoned parties, refusing to go to homes unless adults are present, and dating partners who are my age.
3. Never knowingly risk my health. Avoid alcohol, drugs, smoking, reckless driving, unplanned pregnancy, and sexually transmitted diseases.
4. Choose my friends carefully.
5. Schoolwork comes first. Maintain decent grades to get into college.
6. Don't disappoint or hurt my family.
7. Always keep my eye on my future—don't make dumb or dangerous decisions on the spur of the moment.
8. Find ways to help others, volunteer in the community.
9. When in doubt about sex, drugs, or any risky behavior, say "no."
10. Don't let anybody pressure me or talk me into breaking my own rules.

Adapted and used with permission: Susan Pogany, *Sex Smart*, pp. 109-110.

Resource 9f

WHICH PATH FOR YOU?

Choosing Abstinence: Abstaining from sex as a teen has many benefits. There can be more fun in a new romance as you really get to know someone. You feel more assured that your partner likes you and not just your body. You're freer to enjoy the affection of a relationship that isn't in a hurry. Leaving sex out will make relationship development more genuine: You won't risk having sex blur your vision in what you see in each other or, worse, have sex "glue" you to a bad relationship. Emotionally, you're less likely to suffer regrets or betrayals from your relationship experiences. You'll have less emotional baggage, be freer to date a variety of people, and/or move on after a break-up. You'll be clear in your conscience that you aren't risking pregnancy and sticking a child with an unprepared and unwed mother or an absent father for life. And you don't have to worry about disease. Other teens will respect you—even if they don't say so out loud. By taking a low-risk approach, the focus can be on fun and on building and enjoying good relationships. Have a clear boundary for how far you will go and acquire skills to stay true to your choice.

Considering Changing Course: If you've already had sex, you can decide to change course and move into the group that is abstaining. Just because you've said yes in the past doesn't mean you can't say no now. Put yourself in charge. Some teens change after getting pregnant or an ugly STD, but wouldn't it be nicer to change course before that? Ask yourself if this is what you really want to be doing. Is sex bringing you the connection, affection, respect, commitment, or love that you thought it would? Does it make you feel good, or are you just accepting a situation because you think that's all you can expect? Is your motivation selfish? Are you pressuring someone to do something they really do not want to do, or might not want to do, if they knew your true feelings? It's never too late to make a decision to change course. Get checked out by a doctor, take positive steps to change, and ask a friend and a trusted adult to support you in changing.

3. Sexually Active, Not Ready to Change: First, are you using the most effective method you can to prevent pregnancy? Second, are you using a condom correctly each and every time to reduce the risk of transmitting STDs to others or becoming infected yourself? Third, are you committed to being checked out by a doctor every 6 months (many STDs have no symptoms) and *Every* time you change partners? Are you checking out the possibility that your partner is cheating on you and exposing you to more STDs? Finally, and most importantly, have you considered the real possibility of pregnancy? Sex can always create a child. Have you talked with your partner *and agreed* about what you would do? Would you get married and parent together? Would you put your baby up for adoption or have an abortion? Have you talked about how it might feel to a child to be abandoned by his or her father, as so many children of teen mothers are?

MY PERSONAL LINE

This activity is to help you think about what you want for your relationship(s) and the meaning you attach to sexual involvement. It can assist you in negotiating the pressures towards physical escalation in your relationships. What is right for you, and how will you stick to your decisions? To help you explore this, first read the physical intimacy scale below, and then answer (use back).

The Physical Intimacy Scale⁸

1. Embracing and hand-holding.
 2. Cuddling and gentle caressing.
 3. Polite kissing on the lips.
 4. Passionate total mouth kissing.
 5. Intense and prolonged total mouth kissing.
 6. Fondling breasts and genitals outside the clothes.
 7. Fondling breasts and genitals under the clothes.
 8. Oral or genital stimulation to orgasm outside the clothes.
 9. Oral or genital stimulation to orgasm under the clothes.
 10. Genital intercourse.
1. With this scale in mind, where do you draw your personal line? Why?
 2. When you think of where your personal line is, what are the benefits for you and your relationship? What are the risks for your relationship?
 3. What practical things can you do to make sure that you stick to your personal line? What are alternative things you can do with your partner that are fun, pleasurable, and romantic?

⁸ L & L Parrott, *Relationships: How To Make Bad Relationships Better and Good Relationships Great*, 1998, p.137.