

# WELCOME TO POSITIVELY TEENAGE BY NICOLA MORGAN

## USEFUL NOTES FOR TEACHERS

These notes are designed for schools wanting to teach the *Positively Teenage* messages, mindset and strategies. They are especially useful if you are having me to visit the school but this is not necessary!

*Positively Teenage* gives children age 10–13 the tools to approach the teenage years with optimism and understanding and to develop real well-being for life. The media so often portray adolescence negatively but this book shows young people how to approach these years far more positively so that they can really flourish and be in control. The book contains simple strategies to develop a positive attitude, growth mindset, self-understanding, determination and resilience - strengths to help cope with any challenges, enjoy life and achieve potential. Full of practical, proven strategies for physical and mental health, *Positively Teenage* explains lots of ways 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 8, ages 10 to 13, 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.

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 for hosting an event about *Positively Teenage*! I give talks on adolescent well-being all over the world and I know the best events happen when students are well-prepared. But you’re busy, so these ideas are to make it easy 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:** all about well-being and FLOURISH – Food, Liquid, Oxygen, Use, Relaxation, Interest, Sleep, Happiness. These are core to the book. I have a poster, worksheets and postcards to reinforce them. Throughout the book there are *loads* of practical ideas.
- **Positively You:** how 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:** difference between mood and well-being; signs of stress; controlling our environment; music for mood; sight and smell; laughter; finding things to be engaged in; power of reading for pleasure; value of daydreaming; focusing on the positive.

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 PREPARE 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/](http://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](#), you’ll find lots of things to discuss after that. In my talk I might tell them some of the comments teenagers have made to me.

- 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 Y6 and older years.)
- 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/](http://www.mindsetworks.com/science/))

In a visit, I will 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. I'll ask what they know about all this, so it would be fun if they knew a lot!

### 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.

You might read extracts from pp36-40 and start a discussion to help their understanding of this. Which do they think they are? What are challenges for introverts and extroverts?

### 5. Discuss questions to ask me

Pupils will get real ownership of this talk if they ask questions. Of course, they won't all be able to so you can make this work best with a class discussion in advance, so that the class 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. And if I'm not doing a visit, why not get the class to choose a question and email it to me? I'll answer it on my website and name-check the school.

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](http://www.nicolamorgan.com)