

# Puberty/Adolescence, Day 5: “What Will I Decide About Touch?”

Grades 9 and 10, Lesson #8

## Time Needed

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One class period

## Student Learning Objectives

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To be able to...

1. List 4 key factors that contribute to thoughtful decisions: multiple alternatives, probable consequences, beliefs, and feelings.
2. Recognize that a “plan of action” and a timeline for evaluating are also parts of a thoughtful decision.
3. Describe how this “thoughtful decision” model applies to a touch situation with a peer.

## Agenda

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1. Review the unit so far, especially the concepts of touch (lesson 2) and friendship (lesson 7) and discuss the relevance of today’s lesson.
2. Use the Touch Reference Sheet to introduce the concept of “thoughtful decisions”.
3. Introduce the “thoughtful decision model” using the blackboard and Jan Flanders Transparency 1. Students can follow along with a Decision-making Worksheet.
4. Have students practice the model individually or in pairs, using the Worksheet and Jan Flanders Transparency 2.
5. Summarize the lesson.

## **Materials Needed**

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### **Classroom Materials (one class set, which you can re-use in subsequent class periods):**

*Touch Reference Sheet*

*Jan Flanders Transparencies 1 and 2*

### **Student Materials (one to three per student):**

*Decision-making Worksheet*

## Activities

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1. Discuss the relevance of the lesson:

*At the very beginning of the unit, we examined the story of “Sleeping Beauty” (lesson 2). We discussed abstinence and we looked at a number of good reasons for postponing sexual intercourse. We also said, though, that there is a very natural human need for some touch ... and we talked about four kinds of touch, sexual touch and three others. Anybody remember what the four kinds were?*

*That’s right: sexual, affectionate, nurturing and violent. So not all touch is sexual and not all sexual touch includes intercourse ... but people do need some touch in their daily lives to be emotionally healthy.*

*As adolescents, you may be getting less nurturing and affectionate touch at home than you did when you were younger ... many families begin to touch less as kids approach adulthood. So teens often begin looking to friends (including boyfriends and girlfriends) for touch ... through roughhousing, football, doing each other’s hair and, sometimes, sexual touch (dancing, cuddling, intercourse, hand-holding, etc.) Today we’re going to look at how people make thoughtful decisions about touch.*

*Before we do that, I want to look at your thoughts about friendship, from lesson 7.*

Read aloud, selectively, from the Friendship Worksheets people completed in Lesson 7 ... choosing two or three unique items from each Worksheet, *without identifying the author unless you get people’s permission*. Compliment the class on their thoughtful, mature articulation of issues regarding friendship.

2. Hand out the Touch Reference Sheet and have volunteers take turns reading it aloud. Point out that it incorporates the concepts of friendship and touch ... and that it repeatedly mentions three other concepts: **CONSEQUENCES**, **FEELINGS**, and **BELIEFS**. Those are key factors in making a thoughtful decision about anything (whether to get a job after school, how to handle a friend’s shoplifting, what to do on Friday night, etc.).
3. Write the term “**THOUGHTFUL DECISION**” on the blackboard. Underneath, list the concepts:

**ALTERNATIVES**  
**CONSEQUENCES**  
**BELIEFS**  
**FEELINGS**  
**DECIDE**  
**PLAN**  
**EVALUATE**

Explain that there are four factors that go into a thoughtful decision:

**ALTERNATIVES** (choices, options, possible solutions ... in general, the more alternatives you consider, the better you'll feel about your decision.)

**PROBABLE CONSEQUENCES** (your best guess, based on **information and experience**, of the likely positive and negative outcomes of each alternative)

**BELIEFS** (your opinions about the ethics or morals of the situation...belief statements include words such as: **right/wrong, good/bad, should/shouldn't, more/less important**. When you are unsure about what you believe, it may help to consider the beliefs of people you trust, such as family, friends and/or religious leaders.)

**FEELINGS** (**emotions** [fear, joy, sadness, love, hurt, affection, etc.] and **physical sensations** [being sleepy, hungry, "turned on," etc.] -- play a part in your decisions. **Knowing** this can help you choose how **much** influence you want your feelings to have. You will also want to consider others' feelings if the decision affects them.)

Explain that, once you have considered those four factors, you do three things:

**YOU DECIDE** ... You choose an alternative.

**YOU PLAN** ... A decision is useless if you don't consider the steps you will need to take to make it happen.

**YOU EVALUATE**... After a specific waiting period, you ask yourself how it's going ... whether you made the best decision and, if so, whether your plan of action is working. One decision leads to another so it's good to figure out if one is working for you before moving to the next.

Hand out the *Decision-making Worksheet*, but ask people not to write on it yet; it is for following along as you walk through a decision on the blackboard. Put Jan Flanders *Transparency 1* on the screen. Walk through the decision together. So, for example, you may end up with something like this on the blackboard:

|                     |                                       |  |  |   |
|---------------------|---------------------------------------|--|--|---|
| <b>Alternatives</b> | a. Say, "It's none of your business." | b. Ask why they want to know ... put the focus back on your friends. | c. Joke around, "I'll let you know when we get married." | d. Tell them you had sex, whether you did or not. |
|---------------------|---------------------------------------|--|--|---|

|   |   |  |  |  |
|---|---|--|--|--|
| <p><b>a. probable positive consequences</b></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- They'll drop it.</li> <li>- They'll respect you for standing up for your privacy.</li> </ul>                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- They'll realize they were out-of-line.</li> <li>- They'll still like you.</li> <li>- Your friend will appreciate your protecting his or her privacy.</li> </ul> |  |  |
| <p><b>b. probable negative consequences</b></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- They'll jump to conclusions.</li> <li>- They'll call you a snob because it sounds like a put-down</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- They'll jump to conclusions.</li> <li>- They'll tease you.</li> </ul>   |  |  |

**BELIEFS:** *This section will vary tremendously from one person to another. Some possible statements of belief, given what we know from the letter, might be:*

- I think we both have a right to privacy.
- Honesty is important.
- My new friend is more important than these turkeys.
- Even friends should have some privacy.
- You shouldn't hurt friends' feelings.

**FEELINGS:** *This section will vary tremendously from one person to another, also. Some possible feelings, given what we know from the letter, might be:*

- I'm scared of losing my friends.
- I hate being teased.
- I really like this new person I went out with.
- I'm angry at the thought of getting put on the spot.
- My new friend might feel betrayed if I talked about our time together.

**MY DECISION:** *Vote on what "Monday Morning Jitters" should do.*

**MY PLAN:** *What steps, what actions, will "M..M..Jitters" have to take to carry out the decision? These might include:*

- Practice in front of the mirror so I can pull it off.
- Talk with a couple of the friends ahead of time, so they'll stick up for me if I do get teased.

**MY EVALUATION:** *For now, just write down when you will evaluate:*

- 1:00 p.m. Monday ... I'll evaluate whether I made the right choice after I see how they treat me, and how I feel, during the morning and at lunch.

- Put Jan Flanders Transparency 2 on the screen and give individuals or pairs of students 5 or 6 minutes to fill out their Decision-making Worksheets as if they were the author of the dilemma. If you are using one day for the lesson, collect the Worksheets and write your comments later.

If you are doing the lesson over two days, you'll have time to discuss the Worksheets and give each person two extra copies. Each person then generates his or her own hypothetical Jan Flanders letter and trades it. Individuals or pairs of students practice the model by filling out the Worksheet, trading letters with another individual or pair and repeating the exercise a couple of times.

- Summarize the lesson and establish the direction the unit is going:

*Touch and touching problems were fairly simple when you were younger: There was healthy touch or unfair touch and you needed to learn how to say no to unfair touch. Now that you're older touch becomes a more complicated issue; you have to make decisions about when, where, how and with whom you want to share it. You also have to learn how to communicate those decisions without unnecessarily losing friends and breaking up with people you care for.*

*Today we looked at the decisions themselves; tomorrow, we'll be looking at **assertive communication** (how to stand up for yourself, after you've **made** a decision). Then we'll be examining touching problems like rape ... when one person has already made a decision about the kinds of touch he or she wants and their partner wants something different ... and imposes it on them without their consent.*

# Jan Flanders Transparency 1

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Dear Jan Flanders,

My friends all know each other's business. When someone goes out with somebody new, they'll ask Monday morning how it went and they mean "did you have sex?" I went out with someone very special last night and I'm scared to death that they'll ask and I won't know what to say. If I say it's none of their business, they'll jump to conclusions anyway. Help!

-- Monday Morning Jitters

## Jan Flanders Transparency 2

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Dear Jan Flanders,

This might sound stupid, but I don't like the way my girlfriend kisses. I like a firm kiss and she kisses like jelly.

Should I just act like I like it? Other than that, I like her a lot. What would you do?

-- Picky Kisser



# Decision-Making Worksheet

What's the Question?

**Deciding**

**1. Alternatives**

|  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|
|  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|

**a.                      b.                      c.                      d.**

**2. Probable Consequences:**

**a. positive...**

**b. negative...**

|  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |

a. **BELIEFS:** my own and those of others I trust - family, religion, etc.

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b. **FEELINGS:** my own and those of others who will be affected by my decision

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**MY DECISION**

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**MY PLAN OF ACTION**

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**MY EVALUATION**

**When** will I evaluate? \_\_\_\_\_

**How** is it going? \_\_\_\_\_

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# Touch Reference Sheet

Rachel was unhappy waiting for Charles to get around to kissing her. She *knew* he liked her. She *knew* he had been involved with someone else last year ... all the kids talked about it. *Why wouldn't he kiss her?!*

Charles had decided not to rush this relationship. He had discovered that his relationship with Natalie, last year, got really stormy after they started touching more. They never really got to know one another. And he liked Rachel a lot. He didn't want to blow it this time.



Avram had never really “dated” before. He had always gone out with a group of kids. He had had a “girlfriend” in fifth grade, but that didn't count...they never even saw each other except at school, and they never said more to each other than, “Do you want to go with me?” and “Yeah, sure.”

Now, Avram was going to a dance with Serena and he was hoping they could go out to eat afterward. He imagined walking down the street with his arm around her, touching his knee against

hers in the restaurant, kissing her good night. In his fantasies it all seemed so right. Would it be so smooth in reality?



In both of these relationships, people were making decisions about sexual touch ... what kinds of touch they wanted, when, where, who they wanted to share it with. How do people *make* these kinds of decisions? The truth is some people decide by *not* deciding ... they just “let things happen” and they may feel lousy about it later. Instead, they could ask themselves:

*How do I feel about this person?*

If the person seems more like a challenge than a human being, you may find that touching is not very satisfying ... and that you feel crummy and sad afterward.

*How does he or she feel about me?*

Does this person seem to genuinely like you? If so, he or she probably shows it in public as well as in private.

*Are we friends yet?*

Friendship doesn't happen overnight. Once you are friends, you know the other person won't tease you for being awkward or nervous. You know that a friend won't need to talk about you behind your back. A friend will care about your feelings later ... next week, next month, even if you stop "seeing each other" or you break up.

*What good consequences could happen from this?*

Will it help you get to know yourselves and one another better?  
Will it help your relationship?

*What about bad consequences?*

Could this decision make it tougher to talk with each other? Sexual touch can complicate relationships. Would the kind of touch you are considering put the two of you at risk for pregnancy? HIV or another STD? Are there safer alternatives that could still express your feelings for each other and/or meet your need to touch?

*What do I believe about this?*

What kinds of sexual touch do you believe in sharing at this point in your life? Kisses? Anal sex? Cuddling? Vaginal intercourse? Backrubs? Oral sex? Do you believe you should be married before you have some kinds of sex? engaged? going together for a year? in love? out of high school?

Doing something **you don't think is right** will only cause you guilt. Your early experiences with sexual touch are ones you will always remember. What kinds of memories do you want?

*What do other people believe about it?*

You don't live in a vacuum...you may think other people's opinions don't matter to you, and most people's truly **don't**. But some people's **do**. Think of somebody you trust and admire ...somebody whose respect you really want. It may be a particular friend or family member. Your coach? Youth leader?

Now, think about how you would feel if that person knew your decision. Would you kiss in front of that person, for instance?

*How do I feel about sex?*

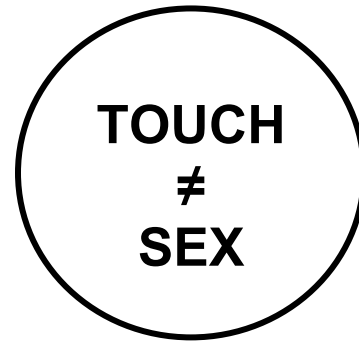
It may sound strange, but many people have their early sexual experiences when they don't even feel particularly sexual. They touch because they think they're supposed to, or in order to prove something, or because the other person seems to want to ... and they actually feel sort of numb or empty. Those kinds of experiences can louse up your ability to have really **good, fun, enriching sex**, later on. What good is empty touching anyway?

If you don't feel particularly sexual, don't assume something's wrong with you. Some people don't feel very sexual at all until they're older ... despite what everyone **says**.

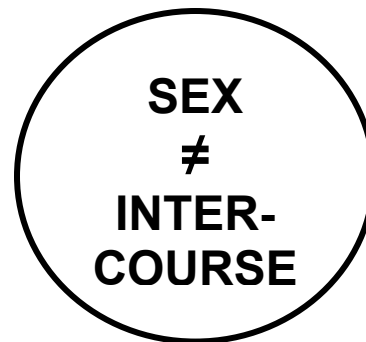
*What does the other person want?*

If he or she doesn't want the same things you want, if this particular touch isn't right for him or her then it probably isn't right for you, as a couple.

**REMEMBER:**  
**Not all touch is sexual.**



**And not all sexual touch is intercourse.**



If you *really* want to hold this person and be held ... that's affection, and it may or may not feel sexual. If you *really* feel like offering a back rub, that's nurturing and it may or may not feel sexual. If the *truth* is you feel like tickling, or wrestling, or walking hand-in-hand you don't have to pretend it's something it's not. You can feel what you feel. You don't have to prove anything to yourself or anybody else.

Remember, you're the one who will live with whatever decisions you make. Today you are making tomorrow's memories. What kinds of memories do you want?