

Responsibility Day 2 • Research

RAK Definition: Responsibility is being reliable to do the things that are expected or required of you.

In this lesson, students will learn more about what professor and researcher Dan Ariely calls “fudge factors” and how these fudge factors permit our brains to lie, cheat, or be irresponsible without our realizing it. It is the opposite of self-discipline that we discussed on Day 1. Instead, the fudge factor seems to give us permission to make irresponsible decisions and feel okay about them. Today we’ll discuss what those fudge factors are so we can watch for them and correct them.

Weekly Objectives

Students will:

- Analyze both personal and corporate responsibilities.
- Evaluate their community through the lens of responsibility.

Resources / Materials

- VIDEO: [The Fudge Factor](#) (1:41)**
- If interested, you can review/show other videos showcasing Dan Ariely’s work. [\(Dis\)honesty: The Truth About Lies](#) is long but very well done. There are also TedTalks by Ariely you may find interesting.

Reflect / Assess

Deliverables:

- Daily Participation points
- Responsibility Journal Entry:** What “fudge factor” do you struggle with most? What can you do to take a bit more responsibility in this area and not let the fudge factor influence your decision making so much?

Share

Discussion Starters:

- Do you consider yourself a good and decent person?
- Have you ever told a lie or cheated on something?
- If we are good and decent people, why do we lie or cheat?



Inspire

Our capacity to be dishonest (lie or cheat, even just a little bit) is dependent on what behavioral economics professor and researcher, Dan Ariely, calls the **fudge factor**.



Watch: [The Fudge Factor](#)

Discuss:

- What does the term “fudge factor” mean?
- Here are the 10 things that impact our fudge factors:
 1. Everybody’s Doing It
 2. Conflicts of Interest
 3. I’m Not Hurting Anyone
 4. Lying for Others
 5. Creativity
 6. Lack of Supervision
 7. Social Norms
 8. Fatigue
 9. Distance from the Crime
 10. Self-Deception
- Which of these things resonate with you the most? Which might make you feel like it’s okay to tell a lie or to cheat on something?

Empower

Role Play and Discuss:



Select willing participants to role play the following situations (if no one is willing or if you are short on time, you can simply read each scenario). Each scenario represents one of the fudge factors. Have the selected students role play the situation for the class. See if the other students can **a)** identify the fudge factor being described/shown, and **b)** discuss what the responsible decision actually is (compared to what happened).

Continued...

1. A student in first period texted out the answers to the history quiz, and now everyone is cheating on it so you do, too. **(Everybody's Doing It)**
2. Ms. Smith is the superintendent of the school that needs to hire a painter to repaint all of the classrooms but has a very limited budget. Painter Dan is Ms. Smith's nephew. When all the paint bids come in, Painter Dan's is the highest and is over budget. Other local companies are willing to paint the school for less and within budget. Ms. Smith hires Painter Dan anyway. **(Conflict of Interest)**
3. You can't bring your dog on the city bus unless it's a certified emotional support (ESD) dog. This isn't the case for your dog, but you don't see why it's not permitted to ride. Your pup is well behaved and it's too far to walk downtown from your apartment. Without the bus, you're stuck in your neighborhood. So, you order an "emotional support dog" vest online and put it on her so people assume she is an ESD. The bus driver doesn't even question it now. **(I'm Not Hurting Anyone)**
4. Your co-worker Sam is new and still learning the ropes at the convenience store where you both work. Your boss isn't very understanding, though, and gets frustrated easily, even in front of customers. Sam was supposed to have restocked the snacks but didn't because he was helping a customer with a problem out at the pump. When Sam comes back in you can see your boss about to explode about the snack issue. You step in and say you told Sam you were going to restock the snacks but forgot, and so it's your fault they are low. **(Lying for Others)**
5. Your friends love it when you tell stories about things that happen to you because you always make them interesting, even if they aren't entirely true. It's like when your grandpa used to tell his fishing stories in which the fish were always a little bit bigger than they actually were. **(Creativity)**
6. After school you are supposed to do all your homework and one chore before gaming, but no one is ever home so of course you play before you work. How would your guardians ever know anyway? **(Lack of Supervision)**
7. The speed limit is 55, but people almost always drive 60. In fact, you rarely drive exactly the speed limit. You are always a little over. **(Social Norms)** *(This example could also be "Everybody's Doing It" but it is so common place that it fits into Social Norms better.)*
8. You are babysitting four wild kids. It's a Friday night and you had a huge string of tests that day that you stayed up most nights the past week until 1 am to study for. Plus you have a basketball tournament the next day that you are nervous about and a piano recital on Sunday that you're not ready for. The kids want to watch movies all night and eat junk food. The parents asked that they not watch any TV, but play instead. You are too tired and frazzled to play with these kids right now, so you let them watch TV. **(Fatigue)**
9. Your buddy works at a fast food place. They are permitted to eat one meal on shift. Regularly you pick him up when he's done so you can hang out. Even though he's already eaten his free meal, he'll swipe 4-5 burgers and give you a couple. You don't feel bad about this because you weren't the one who took the burgers. **(Distance from the Crime)**
10. You are regularly 15 minutes late for appointments, practice, school, you name it; you can never make it anywhere on time. But, you don't feel bad about it because you are otherwise a good person and being late isn't the worst thing in the world. At least you *do* show up eventually. **(Self-deception)**