

GOAT: BEYOND THE GAME

Lesson One – Finding Your Roar with Will & Jett

CREATIVE ACTIVITY – CREATE YOUR OWN WALKOUT INTRO/ STORYBOARDS

Lesson Intention:

In the film, Will Harris and Jett Fillmore model the importance of valuing ourselves for our unique and individual strengths, even in the face of criticism and limiting societal norms. Will learns to celebrate his abilities and ignore the criticism that “smalls can’t ball,” and Jett recognizes that she has worth outside of her athletic ability.

In this lesson, students will understand the importance of valuing their authentic selves in the face of outside criticism and expectations. Students will recognize that pressure and values in their environment can make an imprint on how they feel about themselves. Students will develop an inner compass to celebrate their unique contributions and passions, regardless of external influences.

Learning Goals:

- Students recognize external norms and judgments that can impact feelings of self-worth.
- Students understand the importance of reflecting on authentic identity and apply this self-awareness to celebrate their unique qualities.

Materials for Lesson:

- [Featured Videos – Roarball Roundup: An Exclusive Interview with the Vineland Thorns, Dr. Neha Chaudhary, Storyboards – Behind the Scenes](#)
- [Downloadable Lesson Plan \(PDF\)](#)
- [Lesson Handout for Younger Elementary Students – ‘Walkout Introduction’](#)
- [Lesson Handout for Upper Elementary Students – Storyboards](#)

Prior to Teaching the Lesson:

1. Watch the videos that accompany this lesson.
2. If you are doing the 'walkout introduction' activity, create your own introduction and select your 'walkout' song to play for students. If you are having your students create storyboards, create your own example first to share.
3. Have lesson handouts printed and writing utensils available for each student.

Videos:

[Roarball Roundup: An Exclusive Interview with the Vineland Thorns](#)
[Expert Video with Dr. Neha Chaudhary](#)
[Storyboards – Behind the Scenes](#)

Lesson Plan:

Launching the Lesson:

- Introduce the idea that external feedback and criticism can impact feelings of well-being.
- Highlight the importance of valuing our own unique strengths and talents.

Example of What You Could Say:

"Today we are going to discuss an idea that impacts us every day, even if we haven't noticed it before. I know that today's lesson is something that I personally relate to. In school, we learn many different subjects – math, science, history. All of these subjects are important, but today we are going to talk about the skills and tools that can help us with our relationships and emotions.

I want to start today's lesson with an important question. Have you ever felt like you have to change something about yourself in order to fit in or to make someone else happy? I know that in my own life, I face this a lot. We are all surrounded by outside opinions. What other people think about us – especially if they criticize or make fun of us – can affect how we feel about ourselves. It can feel sad, frustrating, or upsetting when someone is unkind or critical of us.

We are also surrounded by messages on TV and social media about who we should be and what we should look like, and it can be hard to ignore all of these opinions coming from the people in our daily lives and the world around us. Will, a character in the movie GOAT, is surrounded by criticism that he is "too small to ball." Even his teammate Jett says, "Either you win, or you lose. Just like you're either big or you're small." Jett also navigates criticism, with people saying she can't be considered the greatest player of all time since she has never won the Claw Trophy. But she adds that she is her own greatest critic. In the movie, they both grow – Will learns to believe in himself and prove others wrong, and Jett learns to value herself as more than an athlete, while also trusting the team.

By the end of today's lesson, you will learn how to value and celebrate yourself rather than change yourself to fit outside expectations and values. Your own interests, passions, talents,

and even the music you listen to can become a guide for you as you seek to turn the volume down on the outside criticism and turn the volume up on your own inner voice.

I want to share an example from my own life. I often changed something about myself because of what my friends thought about me, or even by the number of likes that I got on a social media post. *(It is important to select an age-appropriate example of a time when you felt badly about yourself because of outside opinions or criticism. Maybe you were made fun of for being different and not conforming to the trends of the time. Sharing a real example from your life will help students understand this concept, and also help them feel more connected to you as their teacher.)*

It is really difficult, if not impossible, to control what other people think of us, or what they say or do. So, how can we keep from feeling bad about ourselves when we are being criticized? There actually is a trick for this that I am going to share with you. It might not make you feel better at first, but if you practice it a little bit every day, you may soon notice a big difference in the way you feel.

We are going to watch a short video from an expert on this topic, and she is going to explain this new way of valuing ourselves– even in the face of other people’s judgment.”

Notes on What You Plan to Say:

Play Expert Video:

- Dr. Neha Chaudhary explains how to make life choices that honor our authentic selves instead of prioritizing what others think of us.

Reflecting on the Expert Video:

- Connect the concepts from the expert video with the creative project.
- Encourage students to check in with their own opinions, preferences, likes and beliefs as they complete the creative activity.

Example of What You Could Say:

"I like this new way of thinking- that we can learn to check in with ourselves rather than looking to other people or outside influences to decide who we should be. Just like in the movie, Will trusted himself and believed he was good enough to play Roarball, even though hardly anyone else believed in him. This way of thinking takes practice at first but can eventually become easier."

Notes on What You Plan to Say:**Introducing the Creative Activity for Younger Elementary Students:**

- Introduce the walkout song activity. Encourage students to write an introduction that celebrates qualities they like about themselves and to select a song that reflects their identity.

Example of What You Could Say:

"Right now, we are going to do a creative project to practice this idea of celebrating our unique identities. Have you ever been to a sports game and heard the announcer introduce each player of the team? This is something called 'player introductions' in basketball, where they share a little bit about each player as they walk onto the court. Players often pick the song that is played as they walk out. Today, you are going to have the chance to write your own introduction and choose your own song that would be played if you were a starting player on a basketball team.

Your introduction should include some of the things you really like about yourself. For example: are you funny, kind, good at a sport or hard-working in school? Are you a good brother or sister or friend? What do you enjoy doing – reading, drawing, or skateboarding?

This is a way of celebrating who you are and will help you to practice noticing the good things you think about yourself and caring less about what others think. I want you to also pick a song that you would like played as you walk out. I am going to give you a handout for you to write your introduction and choose your song, and we will take about 15 minutes to work on this."

Notes on What You Plan to Say:**Introducing the Guest Artist Video for Upper Elementary Students:**

- Introduce the guest artist video that provides students with a look into the process of creating storyboards and the way storyboards are used to make an animated film.

Example of What You Could Say:

"I want you to think about a moment in your life when you were able to demonstrate one or two of your unique qualities, or something you like about yourself. You are going to share this moment in a creative way using a storyboards. Storyboards are similar to a comic strip, and they are often the first step to making an animated movie. Filmmakers tell the story by combining drawings with words from a script. Both GOAT and "Roarball Roundup" started with storyboards before they were turned into animated movies.

On the handout you will see example storyboards from the movie GOAT, and you can see that each box shows a moment in the story when Will was able to 'find his roar.' He believed in himself and didn't give up on his big dream. Each box combines both drawing and writing to tell pieces of the story. We are going to do the same thing and share about a moment in our lives when we demonstrated a unique quality that we like about ourselves. Before you create your storyboards, we are going to watch a video that takes you behind the scenes to show you the way storyboards were used to create the film. This will give you insight into the process and help you feel inspired as you make your own storyboards!"

Play Guest Artist Video

An artist from Sony Pictures Animation will give students a 'behind the scenes' look at how storyboard panels were created for the film GOAT.

Introducing the Creative Activity for Upper Elementary Students:

- Encourage students to create storyboards that illustrate one of their unique qualities or something they like about themselves.

Example of What You Could Say:

"I hope the video gave you a clearer sense of the important role that storyboards play in making a film! I also hope it offers you some inspiration that will help you make your own storyboards. Before you start drawing your storyboards, I want to share my example with you first. *(Share your example with the class, highlighting a time in your life where you demonstrated one or two of the qualities that you like about yourself.)*

Now, I want you to take a look at the handout. On the back of the handout is a template that you can use to make your own story with storyboard panels. Remember that you will use drawing and writing to tell your story– a moment from your life when you really ‘found your roar’ and demonstrated a quality that you really like and appreciate about yourself. This activity is a wonderful way to celebrate those aspects of yourself that are really great, but that you might not always take time to pause and notice. Let’s take 10 minutes to work on this."

Notes on What You Plan to Say:**Creative Activity:****For younger elementary students:**

- Students create a ‘Walkout Introduction’ that highlights their individual strengths, and pick a song to accompany this introduction.
- Make a class playlist including all of the students’ songs. You can use any music playlist platform (e.g., Spotify, iTunes, YouTube, etc.) to organize the playlist and share it with the class to help create a stronger sense of connection and belonging.

For upper elementary students:

- Students create storyboards that represent an experience from their life when they demonstrated a unique quality or strength that they like about themselves.

Lesson Closure for Younger Elementary:

- Invite students to share.
- You can either collect the students' work and read their introductions with an announcer voice while students are walking into the class with their song playing, or students can raise their hands and share on their own.
- Some students may prefer not to have their intro read, and it is important to honor their preference.

Example of What You Could Say:

"We have a couple of choices on how to share this. For those of you who want to share, I could collect your handouts and pretend I'm the announcer and introduce you while playing your song, or you could raise your hand and be your own announcer – sharing your intro and song on your own. Do we have any volunteers? And if you don't want to share out loud, I would still love to see what you wrote if you'd like to leave your handout on my desk after class.

Another way you could share is to talk about what this activity felt like for you. Did anyone notice something new that you haven't noticed about yourself before? (*Invite a few students to share.*) And for those of you who shared, how did it feel to hear your theme song played along with all those wonderful traits and talents that you wrote about yourself? (*Invite a few students to share.*)

Knowing what we like about ourselves and celebrating who we are, even if others might judge or criticize us, is a skill that takes practice. It might not feel easy or natural at first. We will, of course, still be affected by other people's opinions of us. But, over time, if we practice noticing the things we like about ourselves, then it will hopefully get easier for us to feel good about ourselves, no matter what other people say.

However, if the opinions or judgments of others ever feel overwhelming, it's absolutely okay to reach out for support. Talk to a trusted adult, a friend, or someone who makes you feel safe if you need extra help. And you have a song that you can now listen to if you ever want to be reminded of what you like about yourself."

Notes on What You Plan to Say:

Lesson Closure for Upper Elementary Students:

- Invite students to share their storyboards.

Example of What You Could Say:

"I want to invite you to share your storyboards with the class if you would like.

(Invite a few students to share their storyboards).

This was so fun! I enjoyed learning more about each of you. I am also curious about what this activity was like for you. Did anyone notice something new that you didn't know about yourself before? *(Invite a few students to share.)*

Knowing what we like about ourselves and celebrating who we are, even if others might judge or criticize us, is a skill that takes practice. It might not feel easy or natural at first. We will, of course, still be affected by other people's opinions of us. But, over time, if we practice noticing the things we like about ourselves, then it will hopefully get easier for us to feel good about ourselves, no matter what other people say.

However, if the opinions or judgments of others ever feel overwhelming, it's absolutely okay to reach out for support. Talk to a trusted adult, a friend, or someone who makes you feel safe if you need extra help."

Notes on What You Plan to Say:

Supplemental Links & Activities:

1. In the [Players' Tribune article "Underrated"](#), Stephen Curry describes facing criticism and doubt when he began playing basketball as a kid, but was motivated by this criticism to prove his critics wrong.
2. If you would like to offer your students additional practice with this lesson's learning goals, you can guide them through one of the following extension activities:
 - Students write down three things they enjoy doing and spend 15 minutes that night doing one of the activities from their list.
 - Invite students to think of three people they feel they can be authentic with, and spend time with one of those people that afternoon or evening.