

KIREKIDS
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FREERESOURCE·FOREducATORS&PARENTS

The One Real Thing Toolkit

A free reflection-and-action tool for helping young people
start, show up, and finish.

For teachers, parents, librarians, youth workers, and mentors.
Best for young people ages 9 to 15.

KIREKIDS

Books, journals, and tools for young people learning who they are.

kirekids.ca

Start here

Young people hear a lot of reminders. Most of those reminders are about things adults want done. This tool does the opposite. It asks a young person to choose one thing — their own thing — and carry it from start to finish.

Not five things. One. Not a task handed down. A real thing the young person picks because it matters to them.

The three moves

- **Start.** Most things never fail at the end. They fail because they never begin.
- **Show up.** The middle is where plans quietly disappear. Showing up means coming back on an ordinary day.
- **Finish.** A young person who finishes one real thing learns something a reminder can never teach: *I am someone who follows through.*

A note on the word 'real'

Real does not mean big. A real thing is something the young person actually cares about and can actually do. Reading the next three chapters of a book is real. Learning to cook one meal is real. Saving for one specific thing is real. The size is not the point. The follow-through is.

My One Real Thing

A page to fill in and keep. This is yours — it will not be graded.

Name: _____ Date: _____

1 My one real thing

Write down one real thing you want to do. Just one.

This is something I want to: Start Keep going Finish

2 Why it matters to me

One real thing always has a reason behind it. What is yours?

3 My first small step

What is the smallest first step you could take? Make it small enough that you could do it today.

I will take this first step on: _____

4 Showing up

Showing up means coming back to your thing, even on an ordinary day. Tick a box each time you show up.

[] [] [] [] [] [] [] [] [] []

5 My check-in

Did I do the thing? Yes, I finished it Not yet — still going

If it is not finished, that is okay. Late is not never. Behind is not finished.

What happened — and what did I learn about myself?

Running the tool

A short reflection-and-action activity for young people roughly ages 9 to 15. It works in a classroom, an advisory or homeroom period, a library program, an after-school club, or a mentoring group. No book and no preparation are required.

Step by step

- **Introduce the idea (5 min).** Walk through the three moves — start, show up, finish. Tell the group this is not graded and not collected. It is theirs.
- **Model your own (2 min).** Say your own one real thing out loud. This shows the activity is real, not a worksheet.
- **Protect the word 'real' (3 min).** The most common mistake is a young person choosing something an adult would pick. Real means it matters to them.
- **Find the first small step (3 min).** Push for small. If the first step still sounds like work, it is too big.
- **Check in weekly (5 min).** Once a week: Did you show up? What got in the way? What is the next small step?

When a young person doesn't finish

This will happen, and it is not a failure of the tool. Skip the disappointment. Use the line the tool is built on: late is not never; behind is not finished. Help them name one next small step, and move on.

Discussion prompts

- What is something you started but never finished? What happened?
- What is the difference between being busy and showing up?
- Who do you know who finishes things? What do they actually do?
- Why is starting sometimes harder than the work itself?
- What does "late is not never" mean to you?

Using this at home

Children hear a lot of reminders. This tool is the opposite of a reminder. It asks your child to choose one thing that matters to them, and to carry it from start to finish — with you noticing, not nagging.

This is not a chore chart.

A chore chart is about the household, and the adult chooses what goes on it. This is about your child. The thing is their choice. What they are really practising is a sentence they can keep for life: *I am someone who follows through.*

How to use it

- **Let them choose.** Even if you would pick something else. Their thing, their follow-through.
- **Help make the first step small.** If the first step sounds like work, sit down and make it smaller together.
- **Notice — don't nag.** Once a week, ask how it is going. Once. Then let it sit.
- **Celebrate showing up, not just finishing.** The ordinary day they came back to the thing is the real win.
- **When it stalls — skip the disappointment.** Say: late is not never. Then help them find one next small step.

Why this works

Some children do not need more reminders. They need one small win they can point to.

One finished thing builds more confidence than a month of being told what to do — because this time, the follow-through was theirs.

Late is not never. Behind is not finished.

From the KireKids One Real Thing Toolkit | kirekids.ca
Print it for the classroom wall, or share it with a colleague or family.

WHAT'S COMING FROM KIREKIDS

The One Real Thing Toolkit is a free tool from KireKids — a children's imprint built on a simple promise: story, reflection, action.

The Summer Malik Started follows a young person learning what it means to start something, show up for it, and see it through — the same three moves at the heart of this tool.

Every Crumb and the Every Crumb journal series help young people explore identity, belonging, and the wisdom passed down through family.

When the books arrive, this tool will deepen the work alongside them. Until then, it stands on its own.

KIREKIDS

Books, journals, and tools for young people learning who they are.

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