

*Dear*  
**YOUNG AMERICAN**  
**You Have to Keep Going**

**Students will:**

- evaluate how commitment leads to powerful, daily decisions that can positively affect the lives of others
- demonstrate a commitment to acknowledge actions of others that impact daily life

**Core Value Focus: Commitment****Introductory Activity:**

Have students share their experiences of looking in the mirror from the previous lesson. Connect that experience back to Gary Littrell's quote that no one can take your integrity.

Explain to students that you will be discussing commitment today. Lead a short discussion with students about the meaning of commitment. Students can brainstorm examples of commitment either in their life or some examples that they have observed in others.

**Whole Group Activity:**

Watch the Dear Young American video *You Have to Keep Going*, featuring Medal of Honor Recipient Brian Thacker. Ask students to make notes of observations or any advice that he offers

**Individual Activity:**

Following the video, have each student write a short response to one or several of the following prompts.

- Explain how you think Brian Thacker's actions demonstrated commitment to his fellow soldiers in Vietnam, but also in his life after his service.
- Thinking of commitment, what do you believe Brian Thacker means when he says, "...you're in command; you're certainly [not] in charge?"
- How does Brian Thacker's statement "You have to keep reacting and doing and moving" reflect commitment? How can you react and keep moving in your life?
- According to Brian Thacker, what is the most important advice that he offered? How does this advice illustrate a powerful way to demonstrate commitment? How can this advice help in your life?

**Whole Group Activity:**

Have students share their responses. Ask students what examples of commitment and other values they noticed in the video.

**For Next Time: Ask students to demonstrate what they learned from the lesson**

Brian Thacker's most important piece of advice that he offered in this video is the power in committing to say "thank you" to those who have seen you through tough times. Have students think of individuals who have offered support for them. Encourage students to create a commitment to say "thank you" throughout the week or the month to those who offer their help, support, or friendship. Students can create a list of either people to thank each day or situations where they may not always think to thank someone else. Examples could include bus drivers, cafeteria workers, crossing guards, coaches, teachers, friends, or someone who opens a door for them.