

35 - Motivation

Our topic today is MOTIVATION! But what is motivation, you ask? As the Cambridge dictionary puts it, motivation is the need or reason for doing something. But what gives you motivation? How do you use it to achieve your goals. And most importantly, how do you motivate yourself to do things you don't really want to do?

If you've ever seen the movie "Mary Poppins", you might remember when the children were asked to clean their messy room. The problem was, the kids didn't want to clean. (What kid does?) That's when Mary Poppins chimed in, "In every job that must be done, there is an element of fun. You find the fun and SNAP! -- the job's a game."

In order to motivate the children to clean, Mary Poppins turned their chore into a game - and research in subsequent decades has proven that Mary was right! This is called GAMIFICATION.

Gamification is one of the best and easiest ways to motivate children. By turning boring chores into fun games, your kids will see that "whistling while you work" truly is the spoonful of sugar that helps the medicine go down.

>>>Questions we answer on today's episode include:

1. What is motivation?
2. Why do we do the things we do?
3. How can we turn boring chores into fun activities?

Grow Their Mind

On this episode, we talked about the ways to make boring tasks fun. But it's also important for kids to understand WHY motivation is so vital and how it helps them. Take a look at this article from [Read and Spell](#) which outlines the reasons why motivation helps us become the best versions of ourselves! Also - check out this informative article by [Science News for Students](#) about how dopamine works as the brain's reward system for completing tasks!

Activities

* Work with your child to break a large project down into smaller, more manageable tasks. For example, if your child needs to clean their whole room, make the closet their first small project, then the dresser, then the floor, then the garbage and so on. This will help them wrap their minds around a task that can otherwise feel overwhelming. If those still feel too big, break it down even further: one drawer of the dresser, one section of the closet, etc...

* Develop a reward system so your child will be further motivated to complete tasks. Ask your child to help you decide on rewards so they feel they have input.

* In our episode, we talked about GAMIFICATION (turning chores into games). Have your child imagine ways to make tasks fun and write them down! For example, nobody likes to wash dishes. So make dishes a race to the finish line. If you have multiple children, they can compete against each other. If you have an only child, have them compete against you. Set a timer and see who can wash their dishes the fastest while still getting them clean. The winner gets a piece of chocolate or 30 extra minutes of screen time at night.

* Have your child make a list of things that motivate them to complete tasks. If the task is homework, ask them to list three reasons why they do it. If the task is washing the car, ask them to list three things that make it fun. If they have problems determining their motivations, get them started by working on a list with them. For example, if the chore is cleaning out the litter box, perhaps your list of motivations would look like this:

- 1.) It makes the house smell nice.
- 2.) It makes the cat (and mom) happy.
- 3.) I will get a reward if I do it.

Additional Resources

- * Check out this fun article by [Scholastic](#) about how to make chores fun.
- * Here's another - [15 simple ways to make chores fun](#).
- * Read about how to [improve your child's self-esteem](#) via fun household chores.

Kid News

While the pandemic closing down zoos and aquariums was bad news for humans, it was actually great news for many of the animals. Many of these facilities have let the animals wander outside their normal enclosures, giving them a chance to explore and broaden their horizons. For instance, Edward and Annie, the penguins at Chicago's Shedd Aquarium were given free-range of the building, and the videos of them watching other creatures brought great joy to many! You can [check it out here](#).¹

¹ This activity guide is for the Who Smarted? podcast www.WhoSmarted.com