

*"Without goals, and plans to reach them,
you are like a ship that has set sail with no destination."*

Fitzhugh Dodson

November 2009

The 7 Habits of Happy Kids

Habit #2: BEGIN WITH THE END IT MIND

The Parent Corner is a professional publication designed to provide Jericho parents with practical tools and effective strategies that will serve to strengthen family ties and help our children make healthy life choices.

The toolbox skills presented in this year's *Parent Corner Newsletters* are based on the work of Steven and Sean Covey, a father and son team, who have authored a series of books which highlight healthy habits and character building strategies.

Last month, we learned that ***being proactive*** is the key to unlocking the six other habits in our new toolbox. "I am the force. I am the captain of my life. I can choose my attitude. I'm responsible for my own happiness or unhappiness. I am in the driver's seat of my destiny, not just a passenger." We learned that people make choices based upon values and reflective thinking. Now we need to establish our destination. This month, we will *begin with the end in mind!*

http://www.jerichoschools.org/HS/docs/2009.10.26-Habit1_Be_Proactive.pdf

TOOLBOX SKILLS

- | |
|-------------------------------------|
| ★ Be Proactive |
| ★ Begin with the End In Mind |
| ★ Put First Things First |
| ★ Think Win-Win |
| ★ Seek First to Understand |
| ★ Synergize |
| ★ Sharpen The Saw |

HABIT # 2: Begin with the End in Mind

Imagination is the ability to visualize what you cannot see with your eyes alone. This habit is based on the principle that all things are actually created twice. There is a cognitive process that occurs before any action or goal is realized. The physical course of action follows the mental; just as a building a house follows a blueprint.



To begin with the end in mind suggests that we should encourage our children to start projects, tasks and goals with a clearer understanding of their ultimate destination. A good example for our young people can be seen in the movie *Star Wars*. Yoda, the famous Jedi Master, urges Luke Skywalker to see an outcome and work through the problem until the outcome manifests into the reality. With a clear vision, Luke overcomes obstacles, conquers great challenges, and is ultimately successful in achieving his goal. We want our children to be goal-oriented, however, recognize

that being such requires maturity, perseverance, and often times, our guidance. But, do they want our help and direction?

HOW TO GUIDE

“Don’t worry, Mom, we have three weeks to complete this project.” Just because students are in high school does not guarantee they are all prepared to handle high school work. The high school years open students to far more freedoms, social opportunities, new technologies, and countless distractions. Subsequently, many teens simply cannot seem to figure out how to manage all of their obligations. Studies show that parent involvement drops dramatically as students move from elementary school into middle and high school.

Yet given the complexities of today’s secondary schools, high school is a time when many students are most in need of parental support and involvement. Common views like, “I don’t know how to teach geometry, chemistry and the classics. How can I possibly help Chuck?” and “I just don’t have the skill to help Donna create her multi-media presentation for Global History” are often held by parents.

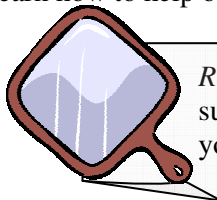


Indeed, while parents may not remember the Pythagorean Theorem or be well-versed in the latest technology, parents can play a central role in helping their young people grow into independent learners who understand how to chart and travel the path required to to achieve a desired outcome. A great challenge for many high school students is staying organized, facing great difficulty managing their assignments and agendas. By helping teens learn the vital *skill* of goal-setting, parents can support their children’s success not only in secondary school, but also as they move on to higher education and beyond.

It’s not simple! How does a parent guide his or her high school student towards greater organization when the student is striving for freedom from his or her parents? As Johnny is presented with more privileges and responsibilities, he wants to take flight from his parent’s influence. Despite this power struggle, parents can still step in to offer guidance and support.



To learn how to help our teens do this, let’s practice!

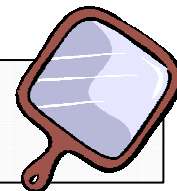


Reflection: Think about something you want to achieve in the near future. Make sure it is authentic. Is this what **you** want to achieve, or is this what others think you should achieve?

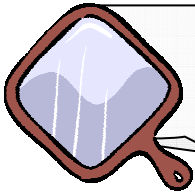
When talking to your teen about his or her goals, be sure to communicate the importance of embracing their own values, and being distracted by peer pressure or societal expectations. Ask Jeffrey why this achievement is important to him. Encourage Jeffrey to think about both the near and distant future. What would he like to be? Where would he like to go? How will he contribute to the world around him?

The power of this habit is in your ability to make a vivid, colorful representation of your goals. The more detail you have in the representation the better.

Reflection: Visualize your desired achievement.



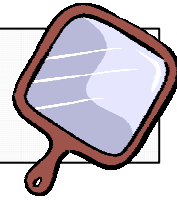
Suggest that your teen see his or her goal in the first-person perspective. The better Lauren can visualize her goals, the more power the representation will have for her. Encourage Lauren to use her natural talents to articulate her goals. She might to choose to write, sing, dance, or draw her vision.



Reflection: Imagine breaking your own visualization into smaller steps with a timeline attached.

Deliberate steps will direct your plan. Robert needs to know that within the attainment of both his long and short-term goals, he will need to create checkpoints that will lead to his ultimate goal. When Robert achieves each checkpoint, he will become confident that he is headed in the right direction.

Reflection: How might your checkpoint plan read?



Amanda is disappointed with her PSAT score. She wants to be sure to show significant improvement on the actual SAT in the spring. Instead of resolving to just improve her score, she needs to choose an end goal: the exact result that she wants to achieve. Where does she want to go to college? What score does she need? Is she being realistic? What score would please her? She might decide to post her desired score inside her locker, inside her agenda book, and on the family fridge. Research shows that we more often achieve our goals when they stay foremost in our minds.

Once Amanda has defined her goal, she can start her plan – *beginning with the end in mind*:

1. Set a target date.
2. Use a numbering system to count out the number of weeks from now to target date.
3. Break the weeks into equal sections, i.e. break 16 weeks into four checkpoints.
4. Define targeted goals for each checkpoint.
5. Make a list of what she needs to be successful, i.e. books, materials, study environment.
6. Elicit the support of those who will be helpful.

Finally, Amanda needs to create weekly actions that will successfully lead her to reaching each checkpoint. Once she passes each checkpoint, she is that much closer to achieving her desired result.

SUMMARY: HABIT #2

While you may not you may not be able to help with calculus or microbiology, and you may not ever have learned to conjugate a verb in Latin, you can absolutely, positively play a critical role in your child’s academic success.

The ultimate goal is to help students become self-sufficient managers of their time and resources in order to get the most out of high school. They may need your help even if they don’t realize it. Help them to develop habits and strategies for greater achievement while encouraging them to take increasing responsibility for their work.



Remember, energy flows where attention goes! Begin with the end in mind!

**The next issue of *The Parent Corner* will present
Habit # 3 Put First Things First ...**

NEA, Parents’ Guide to Helping Your Child Get the Most Out of High School, Washington, DC
The 7 Habits of Highly Effective Teens by Sean Covey
The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People by Steven Covey