

Components for Motivation

1. Desire and arousal towards accomplishment of a goal
-Necessitates an exploration of values and clarity about how to proceed
2. Belief/confidence that one is capable of achieving a goal
-Must practice distress and frustration tolerance as well as experience success
3. Belief that resources are available and the environment is conducive to helping accomplish the goal
-Necessitates an understanding of what's needed and access to those things

Communicating Your Thoughts

Scenario: Your child has an assertion about how things are or should go. You have a different perspective.

Possible response:

"May I make a suggestion?" or "I have a thought about that if you're interested" said in a way that communicates you will be fine if they say no to hearing your suggestion or are disinterested in your thoughts.

Why? -It is an offer to partner with them should they want it and minimizes defensiveness.

Possible response:

"You might be right" communicates that they have one perspective and you may have another and that is okay.

Why? -It models engagement where no one has to be "right" and open dialogue and difference of opinions are welcome.

Possible response:

"I recognize we may not see eye to eye on this, but it is important for me to share something with you. Can we/ let's talk for a minute." When you must speak your mind, do so in a way that lets your child know that a true conversation is taking place and give it the time and attention it necessitates. Be as concise as possible.

Why? -This respectfully communicates to your child that you have authority over them, and the right to exercise it in order to be heard or to impose boundaries, expectations and consequences. It also sends the message that your feelings, thoughts and experience matter.



Providing Help

Definition: Make it easier for (someone) to do something by offering one's services or resources.

Helping others is a way in which we all grow and expand. It is also a way of showing support and a means for connection. It also has the potential, to create dependency and entitlement. Exploring the intention in why you are helping is important.

The primary question to ask when recruited for help is "*What is their motivation?*"

-Is my child attempting to avoid discomfort- frustration, boredom, anxiety? Is there value in them enduring it through the completion of their task?

-Do they lack confidence? How can you assist them in building it?

-Are they requesting assistance as a bid for connection?

-Am I helping them to alleviate my own anxiety/distress/discomfort?

Be fully available to help and then do so as minimally as possible.

Scenario: Child is struggling but engaged and not seeking help or hasn't thought to ask for help.

Possible response:

"You have been working so hard at this. I've seen you get really frustrated, but you're clearly not giving up without a fight." Acknowledge, during the process and/or afterwards, their perseverance and how much you believe in them, are proud or even inspired by them. Resist the attempt to rescue or lighten their load unless necessary or until they ask. Continue to offer support to them, in the way of acknowledgment and encouragement. If it appears as though the child hasn't thought to ask for help or is resistant to do so, you can make yourself available by sharing you have some thoughts or suggestions if they are interested.

Why? -Letting the child know you see their struggle gives the child permission to openly have a difficult time. Acknowledging that lets them know they aren't alone and that it doesn't alter your confidence in them. Acknowledging their perseverance, grit and resilience in the midst of their struggle acts as positive reinforcement for these values. The work product is far, far less important to emphasize than the process.



Scenario: Your child is struggling and they ask for help or you determine the situation necessitates intervention.

Possible response:

Ask the question, "What might be helpful to you right now?" or "How can I help?" and give the child room to explore and articulate the answers to those questions. Recognize they may not know at first. Brainstorm and talk with them about what help might entail and then proceed to do so, with the child taking the lead.

Why? -This teaches kids how to not just complain/explain a problem but explore possible solutions. In the process of exploring what may be helpful, we also often gain deeper insight into what the true nature of the problem is.

Scenario: A request is, implicitly or explicitly, made for unnecessary help.

Possible response:

First, explore what the possible reason is as to why. If you deem the child is attempting to avoid something difficult or perhaps has some right-sized anxiety around it, you can respond with "No, you got this" and/or "No, you can handle that." You can also offer light support in the way of problem- solving out loud or getting them started.

Why? -This communicates to your child that you find them capable and that it is not your job to complete tasks that they delegate to you. Helping them initiate their work may be just enough to increase their confidence and help them gain momentum.

Possible response:

If you see that your child is hoping to connect with you, inviting you to work alongside them (not for them), you may choose to help, but by doing so in a way that still holds them as the one who owns the process. This may sound like, "I think this could be fun. What's your plan? How can I help?"

Why? -This communicates that you see this as an opportunity to engage in an experience with them and have some positive feelings about doing so. The focus is the experience together, not the task at hand.

