

Mindsets for Happiness and Success



EMPATHY

We can only understand another person's behavior when we put ourselves "in their shoes."

Let's TALK about LIFE

The single most important thing we can do for our children is talk to them about life. At dinner, at breakfast, eating burgers in the car, or sipping hot cocoa before bed. Decades of research has shown that children who eat 3 to 4 times a week with their parents are 3 times less likely to get involved with drugs, alcohol, or smoking. They do better in school, have higher self-esteem, and stronger relationships with their parents. With the little time busy parents have, we might as well talk about what's important. All it takes is 10 minutes a day.

LET'S TALK conversation starters have been strategically designed in a specific sequence to help children (and parents) learn the

Happiness and Success

twelve most important mindsets that lead to happiness and success. They are based on decades of research and the literature from hundreds of experts who study happiness and success. In the same way that we learn to walk, play a musical instrument, speak a new language, or dance the salsa, we also build mindsets through repetition. By repeating new, similar thought patterns over and over again during a 30-day period, we actually rewire certain ways of thinking into our brains. Eventually it becomes a habit that we continue without any effort. LET'S TALK is designed for ages five and up. Feel free to adapt the questions to what you know your children are able to understand and can relate to.

EMPATHY Intro - 1

When we put ourselves in someone else's shoes and try to understand what's going on in their lives - or what they may have experienced in the past - we are better able to understand their behavior and feel empathy for them...even those who have been mean or hurtful, and those we strongly disagree with.

These conversation starters will take children through a series of animals, different people they know, and a variety of challenging circumstances - in order to help them imagine and talk about how it would feel to be something or someone else.

Introduction for Parents

EMPATHY Intro - 2

We begin by asking them what it might feel like to be a bug, a fish, a snake, a horse, etc. Specific questions are included, such as: What's great about being a bird? What does a snake worry about? What do you think a dog might be afraid of? Why would an elephant be happy or sad? After a series of animals, we move onto people your child is familiar with; mom, dad, grandparents, teachers, coaches, and maybe even the neighborhood fireman. Finally, we stimulate discussion around what it might feel like to be handicapped, blind, disadvantaged, or less fortunate in some way.

Introduction for Parents

EMPATHY Intro - 3

After 20 to 30 of these brief conversations, the brain has created new neural pathways. When your child encounters situations that call for empathy, she/he will automatically think about how someone else feels.

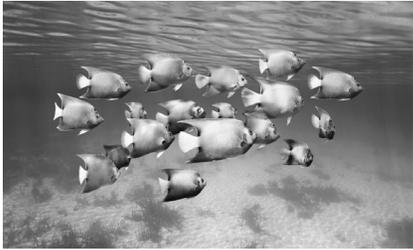


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Introduction for Parents

What would it feel like to be a fish?

Imagine you are swimming with a school of fish in the ocean. What's great about being a fish? What do you think fish are afraid of, or worry about? What might make fish happy or sad?



Day 1

What would it feel like to be a bug?

Imagine you are a bug, scurrying across the floor in someone's home. What's great about being a bug? What do you think bugs are afraid of, or worry about? What might make a bug happy or sad?



Day 2

What would it feel like to be a bird?

Imagine you are a bird, flying around in the big blue sky. What's great about being a bird? What do you think birds are afraid of, or worry about? What might make a bird happy or sad?



Day 3

What would it feel like to be a rabbit?

Imagine you are a rabbit, hopping around someone's backyard. What's great about being a rabbit? What do you think rabbits are afraid of, or worry about? What might make a rabbit happy or sad?



Day 4

What would it feel like to be a snake?

Imagine you are a snake, sliding around dirt and rocks in the hot sun. What's great about being a snake? What do you think snakes are afraid of, or worry about? What might make a snake happy or sad?



Day 5

What would it feel like to be a dog?

Imagine you are dog that lives with a family in an apartment with no yard. What's great about being a dog? What do you think dogs are afraid of, or worry about? What might make a dog happy or sad?



Day 6

What would it feel like to be a monkey?

Imagine that you're a monkey, swinging between trees in the jungle. What's great about being a monkey? What do you think monkeys are afraid of, or worry about? What might make a monkey happy or sad?



Day 7

What would it feel like to be a horse?

Imagine you are a horse with different people riding you every day. What's great about being a horse? What do you think horses are afraid of, or worry about? What might make a horse happy or sad?



Day 8

What would it feel like to be an elephant?

Imagine you are roaming free with a group of elephants. What's great about being an elephant? What do you think elephants are afraid of? What makes an elephant happy?



Day 9

What would it feel like to be a lion?

Imagine you are a lion who is kept in captivity at the zoo. What's great about being a lion? What do you think lions are afraid of, or worry about? What might make a lion happy or sad?



Day 10

What would it feel like to be a mom?

How is the life of a mom different from yours? What's important to a mom? What do you think moms worry about? What makes a mom's life difficult? What might make a mom happy or sad?



Day 11

What would it feel like to be a dad?

How is the life of a dad different from yours? What's important to a dad? What do you think dads worry about? What makes a dad's life difficult? What might make a dad happy or sad?



Day 12

What would it feel like to be a grandparent?

How is the life of a grandparent different from your own life? What's important to grandparents? What do you think they worry about? What makes them happy or sad?



Day 13

What would it feel like to be your sister or brother?

How is the life of a brother or sister different from your life? What's important to him or her? What do you think he/she worries about? What makes him/her happy or sad?



Day 14

What would it feel like to be your teacher?

How is the life of a teacher different from your life? What's important to your teacher? What do you think he/she worries about? What would make him/her happy or sad?



Day 15

What would it feel like to be your best friend?

How is the life of your friend different from your life? What's important to your friend? What do you think he/she worries about? What would make him/her happy or sad?



Day 16

What would it feel like to be one of your neighbors?

How is the life of your neighbor different from your life? What's important to him/her? What do you think he/she worries about? What would make him/her happy or sad?



Day 17

What would it feel like to be your sports coach or music teacher?

How is your sports coach/scout leader/music teacher's life different from yours? What's important? What do you think he/she worries about? What would make him/her happy or sad?



Day 18

What would it feel like to be your doctor?

How is the life of your doctor different from your life? What's important to your doctor? What do you think he/she worries about? What would make him/her happy or sad?



Day 19

What would it feel like to be the neighborhood fireman?

How is the life of a fireman different from your life? What's important to a fireman? What do you think he/she worries about? What would make him/her happy or sad?



Day 20

What would it feel like to be missing an arm or a leg?

How would missing an arm or a leg change your life? What good things could you still enjoy? What would you be afraid of, or worry about? What would make you happy or sad?



Day 21

What would it feel like to be confined to a wheelchair?

How would being in a wheelchair change your life? What good things could you still enjoy? What would you be afraid of, or worry about? What would make you happy or sad?



Day 22

What would it feel like to be blind?

How would being blind change your life? What good things could you still enjoy? What would you be afraid of, or worry about? What would make you happy or sad?



Day 23

What would it feel like to have an illness that required daily shots?

How would that change your life? What good things could you still enjoy? What would you be afraid of, or worry about? What would make you happy or sad?



Day 24

What would it feel like to be the kid on the bench at every game?

How do you think that kid feels while he sits there watching everyone else play? How would it feel to be the last one picked to join the team or participate in a class project?



Day 25

What would it feel like to be super smart or struggle with school work?

How would it change your life to be super smart? Would there be extra pressure to do well - all the time? How would it feel to struggle, not understand, or fall behind everyone else?



Day 26

What would it feel like to be very rich or very poor?

Being super rich may sound appealing, but there are many negatives. Can you think of some? Imagine how it feels to be very poor. What would you worry about most?



Day 27

What would it feel like to be super popular or have no friends at all?

How would it change your life to be super popular? Would there be anything negative to worry about? And how would it feel to be all alone with no friends?



Day 28

What would it feel like to be a person of color is you are white or vice versa?

Whatever color you are, put yourself in someone else's shoes and imagine what their life is like. What do they experience? How do they really feel? What can you do to help?



Day 29

How would it feel to have kids make fun of you because you are different?

We are all different in one way or another, and life is better when we understand and accept those differences. Remember, when you witness bullying, it could be you. How would that feel?



Day 30