

Positive+Parent™ Newsletter

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IF WE TEACH OUR KIDS TO “ACT AS IF ...”, THEY ARE GOING TO BE SUCCESSFUL

To guarantee success, act as if it were impossible to fail. ~ Dorothea Brande

None of us have to teach a child up to age 4 to act as if. It is so wonderful to watch kids this age play because they “get into it” completely. If a little girl is having tea with The Queen of England, as far as she is concerned, sitting across from her is The Queen of England. When a little boy is an astronaut flying to the Moon, they are on the way, I hoped you packed them a lunch!

Some would say that kids under age 5 or 6 don't fully grasp reality. That they cannot tell the difference between reality and fantasy. This is a good thing because they use it as a learning opportunity. As they get older and, perhaps, more jaded, they lose this ability.

Once a child loses this ability and understands the difference between reality and fantasy, they often look at reality and it scares them. What if they try flying to the moon and they fail? What if they invite The Queen for tea and she turns down their invitation?

This kind of thinking causes people to fail before they even try. The obvious solution to this problem is to try even if you might fail. This brings to mind a quote by Wayne Gretsky, “You miss 100% of the shots that you never take!” which leads us to the opening quote.

We have to help our kids learn to take the chance and act as if they cannot fail. They might still fail, but they might be wildly successful.

Having this attitude will give our kids a ton of confidence. Of course, they need confidence to have this attitude. It is sort of a chicken and egg situation.

So we have to help them create a little bit of confidence so that it will grow.

Of course, the result of having this attitude will be that they will begin to see some results. Those results will give them more confidence and it becomes an upward spiral.

Once our kids start seeing results they get really proud of what they are doing. They are so proud that they start taking some more risks and their confidence grows some more and so on and so on.

At this point, even if they experience some failures, they have the confidence to keep on trying. Part of

Act as if what
you do makes
a difference.
It does.

William James

this was proven by a researcher, Carol Dweck who showed that kids who believe that their accomplishments are a result of their hard work are more likely to persevere. On the other hand, kids who believe that their accomplishments are the result of a talent that they were born with will be afraid to try again after a failure, most probably because they may not know how to create success again.

To accomplish this upward spiral of confidence, we can simply talk to our kids about their efforts. Simply asking them what they might try if they knew they could not fail will get them thinking.

The second step would be to ask them what the worst possible outcome will be if they fail. Would it simply be embarrassment? This might be reframed as pride in having tried. Might they feel “stupid”? This can be reframed as being smarter in that they now know what does not work.

What ever it is that we do, we have to help our kids create this upward spiral of confidence. It will serve them well for their whole lives!

You can reach me by email at DrShaya@PositiveParentPlus.com I love to hear reader comments.

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