

Helpful Habits

Group activity worksheet



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Developing an emotionally intelligent school involves commitment, time, and planning. VisionWorks teaching programmes systematically build emotional intelligence and profoundly improve the climate for learning.

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Written by teachers for teachers

One way to create helpful habits

The purpose of this activity is to show students that, although we might consciously want to change habits, our approach to the task we set ourselves can help us or hinder us and it is useful to be aware of this.

You will need:

- to display this on a whiteboard and groups of 3-4 (optional)

Action

Read Jack's Problem to the class.

Jack's Problem

Jack knew he would feel better all-round if he were to exercise more. He decided that he would play more football and do some exercises at home every evening. He bought some football boots and some weights; he even got some new kit to wear. But there always seemed to be something that stopped him from ACTUALLY exercising. He was fed up; he really wanted to be fit.

"Why," he asked himself one evening, as he was on Facebook, "Why, oh why is it so hard to exercise?" He was exasperated with himself.



continued

One way to create helpful habits *continued*

Action *continued*

EITHER When we ask ourselves questions, our brains are quick to respond; Jack soon had his answers :

- It's boring
- it makes me tired
- It's too cold or too hot
- There's something good on TV
- I need to see my friends
- I've got homework to do.

OR Ask students, in groups of three or four, or as a whole class, to come up with the answers provided by Jack's brain. Feedback as a class.

Then ask students how keen they think Jack feels about doing exercise now?

Not much. It certainly won't make him feel inspired and energized.

* * * * *

What would happen if Jack were to ask himself a different question: "*What makes exercise easy for me?*"

In groups of three or four, or as a whole class, ask students to come up with some answers that Jack's brain might provide.

These might be:

- I can do my weights at any time so it fits in easily
- It makes me feel great
- I love playing football with my friends
- The more I exercise, the easier and more enjoyable it becomes.

Feedback as a class. Discuss how Jack feels about doing exercise with these answers as opposed to the previous ones.

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continued

One way to create helpful habits *continued*

This approach can be applied to any habit that we would like to form or change.

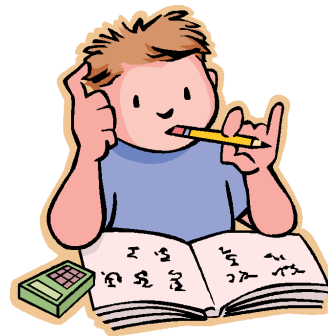
Ask students individually to think of a habit they would like create or one they would like to change.

eg

- Have beautiful nails



- Do my homework



- Ride my horse more



- Keep my temper



- Get up on time



Anything!

continued

One way to create helpful habits *continued*

When they are ready, instead of asking themselves what will be difficult, they ask themselves the question “What makes it easy for me to ... (whatever they’ve chosen).” Suggest that they repeat this question every day for a week, maybe writing down the answers that come to mind. They know that there are going to be hard bits but do they really want these to stop them achieving their goal? If they truly want to make changes, they will focus on the positive aspects presented to them by their minds.

Follow up

In a week’s time discuss as a class whether or not they feel more motivated to create/change the habit they have chosen.

Remind students that the mind will always do what we ask it to do. If we tell it to look at the problems, it will. If we ask it to show us the positive, it will. There is a place for both. And it helps us to be aware of this when we ask ourselves questions and when we make choices.

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