

For all Mom's and Teachers...
Learning at home during COVID-19!

Three strategies to help you and your student move from procrastinating to productive.

They keep their grades steady,
You keep your sanity!

If you've been hearing yourself, or your teen, saying:

"I can't do this."

"I'm not doing this right."

"It's too hard."

You are not alone!

Hiya Friend! My name is Meg and I am a conscious parenting certified life coach specializing in resilience. Today I put together three strategies for parents to use while helping their kids with learning at home. We are all effected by the global pandemic, uncertainty and chaos all around us, yet that doesn't mean your home life and your kid's grades must be disrupted too.

As a coach for teens, young adults, parents and teachers during these last few weeks, a common theme that surfaces is that no one is feeling prepared nor good enough with the tasks in front of them. So, I thought I would put together three helpful tools that I teach and practice myself with my family and clients. These strategies address some of the most common annoyances and complaints and are some of the most helpful things to say or do to help your kids, and yourself, keep your calm and grow resilience.

#1) "I can't do this."

Who do you know that sits down to get work done and after 10 minutes time feels overwhelmed, helpless, frustrated and with fists in the air, head in hands or tears streaming down their cheeks, exclaim "I just can't do this," your student, yourself? The next time this situation arises with a "I can't do this ... (fill in the blank)": Pause, take three deep breathes and presence yourself and your student to the idea that nothing has gone wrong here, everything is okay, that it is natural for all humans to encounter hard things in life. You see we often think ourselves or our kids should just know or be good at things on first, second or third attempt, but whether you are learning how to walk, solve an algebra equation, or navigate a zoom platform, it takes practiceand, drum roll please...the magic word... YET.

I can't do this...YET.

I don't know this...YET.

This isn't working...YET.

Placing the word “yet” at the end of the sentence reminds us and our student that we are okay right where we are and that we can improve. Maybe we’re not the best at something right now but with repetition and practice we can get better. Having your child learn from home right now offers you the unique opportunity to practice using “yet” with them to reinforce what Carol Dweck calls a “growth mindset” mentality. What this means is that people with a “growth mindset” believe their talents can develop over time with effort, perseverance, good strategies and input from others. They worry less and learn more. Conversely, people who have a “fixed-mindset” believe that their personality and intelligence are largely fixed and unchangeable. This mindset leads to not working as hard to improve themselves because they don’t believe they can learn and grow with practice and experience. True resilience is all about taking our inevitable challenges and using them as opportunities to become stronger and better at something. “Yet” is the bridge that takes your student from a fixed mindset to a growth mindset from where she is presently to where she wants to go.

Just for fun, try this at home:

Recall a time when you were faced with a struggle. How did you feel? What were your thoughts? How did you act or behave in this situation? What was the result? Share this memory with your teen/young adult. So often our kids view their parents as everything but human. By being vulnerable and sharing our own (age appropriate) insecurities and what we learned, not in spite of it but because of it, we build powerful trust, connection and communication.

#2) “I’m not doing this right.”

We are presently living in an unprecedented time and it has many of us feeling on edge. We’re doing our best to navigate the many sudden changes; We’ve got food in the fridge and a make shift desk in our bedroom for work but no one prepared us for the role of teaching our children earth science, calculus or “The Grapes of Wrath.” Not to worry, I’ve got you covered. The next time you hear your teen/young adult say “I’m not doing this right” simply say...

“Take a guess.”

The definition of guess is to make a prediction, estimate or give an opinion about something without having evidence to support it fully. Using the “Take a guess” strategy with your kids/young adults is so powerful when they come to you looking for an answer because the art of guessing releases the stress of being “right” or “wrong.” Guessing tosses caution, insecurity and doubt out the window, creating a new space for kids to relax, tap into their creativity, intuition and imagination as they integrate different parts of their brain focusing on possible solutions. Guessing frees kids from their worries and concerns of speaking up, feeling humiliated or penalized and encourages a strong practice of utilizing wisdom, independent thinking, and resourcefulness.

Just for fun, try this at home:

Conjure up a time when you didn’t know something and took a guess. What were the results? What did you learn from this experience that still serves you today? Humor can be good medicine and a welcoming relief especially in this time of seriousness and chaos. If you have a funny experience, dish it out, laugh with your kids, and enjoy what unfolds.

#3) “It’s too hard.”

When I hear “It’s too hard” I often have my clients imagine that they were curious energetic babies looking at the people that surround them effortlessly walking from one place to another. Their baby self thinks this is something they want to try and so decide to join in on this walking game for the first time. Grabbing hold of the living room coffee table, they pull themselves up, gain their balance, take a step and... fall flat on their precious face. Now imagine, I say to them, if at that very moment, sprawled out on the living room carpet you said, “It’s too hard” and never tried walking again. Yikes! Going from a baby to a walker is hard work. There are many ups and downs and many steps involved: Lying down, sitting, pulling oneself up, cruising the coffee table two handed, one handed...Each effort building upon another. Each step strengthening the body for the next step. “It’s too hard” is often the knee jerk reaction of one whose brain hurts at just the thought of an assignment due. But here’s the secret sauce; “It’s too hard” isn’t about the level of difficulty or even whether your kid has what it takes to get it done. “It’s too hard” is a signal to break down the project into steps, baby steps. Now, this is a brilliant skill for life and here’s how to go about it: Starting with the end results of the lesson or project in mind, work backwards by asking specific questions such as “What do you need to know to help you? Is there something you need to understand more of? Who or where can you reach out to for better clarification? What might be your next step?” Their answer, or guess, becomes their next step. Working backwards and deconstructing the overall task into manageable baby steps strategically breaks down the workload into bite size nuggets that are easy to swallow and schedule and redirects the “It’s too hard” conversation into “I can do that” competency. And remember, mistakes, failures and setbacks can be wonderful teachers.

Just for fun try this at home:

Recollect and share a time when the odds were against you and you wanted to give up but didn’t. What were the facts of the situation? What were your overwhelming thoughts about the situation? How did it feel to you? How did your thoughts help or aggravate the circumstance?

In addition to these effective strategies, I am also offering my one on one life coaching services on a donation-based scale during the course of the global pandemic. If you have an overwhelmed student, young adult or mom at home right now, these practices may be just what you need. For further support I can be contacted at megcabezas.com or 607-793-0708.