



## HOW TO CULTIVATE HOPE

At the beginning of a new year, many people have hope for the coming year. One aspect of someone with high hope is that they know how to set good goals and how to stay motivated to reach those goals. Thankfully, these abilities can be learned and practiced to help cultivate hope. Below are five ideas on how to help your children cultivate hope in the goals they set.

- Identify and prioritize goals. Sit down with your children and ask them to identify some goals that are important to them. Then, guide them through mapping out their goals, which includes making the goals specific, positive, and attainable. Finally, have your children rank their goals from the most important to the least important.
- Break down the goals. Once your children have a prioritized list of goals, go through and break them down into smaller, specific steps. This can help make the goal seem more manageable and help with motivation to accomplish the goal.
- Plan for different strategies. Brainstorm with your children different ways they can reach their goals. Remind them that everyone has obstacles and that changing tactic can help them still meet their goals.
- Tell success stories. Personal stories of success from family or of strangers can give your children something to reflect on while they work to meet their goals, especially if they don't believe they have many of their own success stories to motivate them to keep trying.
- Be positive! Remind your children that it's ok to make mistakes and to laugh at themselves. Help them practice positive self-talk and encourage them to avoid self-pity.

\*This article is based on information found in "How to Help Students Develop Hope," by Vicki Zakrzewski, published in Greater Good Magazine on November 6, 2012.

## PROCRASTINATION

While procrastination can stall the starting or accomplishing of a goal, it has also been linked to depression, anxiety, low-self esteem, poor impulse control, stress, and overall poor health.

Though there are countless reasons for procrastination, you can help your children avoid procrastination by encouraging them to try the following tips.

- Start! Set aside time or set a timer to work on whatever it is for a specific amount of time. It may give the needed momentum to finally start and see the task through.
- Break it down. To ease overwhelmed feelings, create small steps for whatever is being procrastinated to make it more manageable.
- Be organized. Managing time, prioritizing tasks, and setting deadlines can help push procrastination away.
- Increase motivation. Set specific rewards along the way when a step is completed.

Procrastination does not stem from laziness; it comes from stress or negative beliefs about oneself. If you are concerned that procrastination is seriously impacting your children, talk with a mental health professional.

