

Foundations

Does substance really matter?

Best for ages 9 and up. The goal of this conversation is to help children recognize the imperative value of being a strong individual with a keen sense of self-identity and awareness.

Start this table talk with 2 shopping bags present: 1 filled with heavy items, like books, for example, and one empty. Ask your child to blow the empty bag and see how easily it moves. Then, ask your child to blow the bag that is filled with heavy items. No matter how hard your child blows, that bag will remain stationary.

Use this as a metaphor to learn the importance of self-identity and awareness. Explore with your child the “pressures” that can cause people to sway easily, if they are not rooted and aware of what they stand for.

Benjamin Franklin famously said: “It is hard for an empty bag to stand upright.” Alexander Hamilton said: “If you don’t stand for something, you will fall for anything.” Explore these quotes with your child as you process the empty bag/full bag analogy.

Help your child learn what it means to be a “full” person. Guide them to start thinking about what is important to them, what their strengths and goals are and what they are passionate about. Explore with your child how much simpler it is to withstand peer pressure and other pressures, if they believe in themselves, their values and their goals.

Below is an example of how this conversation may play out:

Parent(after the child blows both bags): Why do you think one bag swayed so easily and one didn’t budge – no matter how hard you blew it?

Child: Because one is packed with heavy things. Blowing is not going to move it. I would need to physically pick it up or push it.

Parent: Exactly! The heavier something is, the more difficult it is to move – even under pressure, like your breath, when you blew it. That’s similar to people. The more we know ourselves and what’s important to us, the more difficult it will be for our surroundings to cause us to “sway” or do things that we are not comfortable with. What do you think this means?

Child: Um, that I need to know myself and what’s important to me so I can stand up to peer pressure?

Parent: Yes! A large part of knowing yourself is not only knowing what’s important to you, but recognizing your strengths, like what you are good at, and your goals as well. What are some things that you think you are good at? And what are some things that are important to you?

**Note – Foundations will explore managing peer pressure in more detail in the month of Iyar.
This month’s table talk for ages 9 and up is focused on self-identity.**



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