

Foundations

Self-Care and Helping Others

Best for ages 9 and up. **The purpose of this conversation is twofold: to help children learn the importance of taking care of their own needs before attempting to meet the needs of others and to teach the difference between reasonable and unreasonable sacrifices while helping others.**

“Self-care” is a term that is thrown around a lot. For the purpose of this table talk, it is defined as taking care of our basic needs: physical, spiritual, psychological and emotional.

The human mind often struggles with an “all or nothing” thought process: either I do everything, or I do nothing, either I’m succeeding, or I am failing. The younger kids are when they learn about balance in every aspect of life, the healthier and happier they will be.

Ask your child for an example of a recent time that they chose to help someone. Explore with your child how they felt during and after that time.

- It’s important to take this opportunity to validate the good feelings that occur when we push ourselves to help other people. Helping other people often directly correlates to meaning and happiness in life.

Challenge your child to identify if they had to sacrifice anything when supporting and helping that person.

Teach your child about the difference between reasonable and unreasonable “sacrifices” that one should make when helping others. Use this as an opportunity to help them learn how to evaluate the decision of helping people when opportunities present themselves. Give your child some fundamental questions to ask themselves when they are unsure what to do.

- Will this get risk me getting physically ill?
- Will this cause an unnecessary large stress in my life now?
- Will this get in the way of something that is currently important in my life?
- If I help out, will anybody else get negatively impacted?

This is a great opportunity to teach your child not to shirk current responsibilities when deciding if they should support someone in need.

Help your child process and internalize the need for self-care by helping them realize that if they are not functioning at their best, they cannot help other people. In order to give our best selves to others, we need to make sure we have our best selves to give. This means taking care of our needs and not sacrificing them to help someone else.

Explore with your child the difference between reasonable and unreasonable “sacrifices.” We often need to sacrifice our wants, wishes and plans, to help others – this is appropriate and even proper. The goal of this conversation is to help your children learn how to discern between reasonable and unreasonable sacrifices.



Building Our Future Today.

Foundations

How can I make myself happy?

Sample Conversation:

Parent: I was thinking recently about how all your friends call you for help with their homework and their problems in general. You are such an awesome support – I see how they turn to you and respect you.

Child: Thanks....?

Parent: I was thinking about how difficult it must be to juggle all your own responsibilities and needs with all your friends' needs. Can we talk a little bit about this?

Child: OK.

Parent: There are some pretty practical questions you can ask yourself that I find really helpful when trying to decide if something is too much for me or not. Can you think of an example of a recent time that you helped someone out, that you felt like you had to sacrifice something?

Child: Well, Esther and I were going to go walking last night when Sarah called crying about something. So I didn't go walking because she needed to talk to me. I was a little annoyed about missing the walk but that's what friends do for each other and I'm glad she called me.

Parent: That's a great example! I would have done the same thing as you. How did you feel after this?

Continue the conversation, segueing into the practical tips mentioned above, using the template above.



Building Our Future Today.