

DIRECTIONS

Having the Conversation

Setting:

Parent to Child

One on One, not both parents to one child.

If necessary, each parent can have the conversation with the child.

Parent asks, “What would happen IF _____?”

Fill in the blank with child’s big fear

Answer by your child “_____”

Be aware the their body language and emotions

Parent two options:

(1) If child’s answer is extreme or not possible at all: **“It might feel like that, but really what would happen?”**

(2) If child’s answer is negative but actually possible: **“And then what would happen?”**

Answer by your child “_____”

Note any changes in body language or emotions

“And after that?”

Answer by your child “_____”

Personally, it was my Mom that did this with me. Sometimes it would take me 6 or more rounds before I could see that in the long run my big fear would pass and something would always happen. The world doesn’t end. For me, perfection was the goal, even if I wasn’t aware of my perfectionism. I thought it wasn’t enough to do my best, it had to be “THE best” overall. In the real world, this isn’t even possible. Life continued and sometimes I would be able to have an effect on the outcome, sometimes not. If you miss winning the lottery by one number, you can’t go and beg anyone to change it, “just by one”. But if you miss winning it because you forgot to buy a ticket, or you lost your ticket that might have been a winner, or your ticket went through the wash and was destroyed and it might have been a winner, you do something different next time.

Just because something is your responsibility does not mean you are in control of the outcome. You do your best to fulfill your responsibility then you see where you land. You may need to make adjustments, ask for help, or try a new approach.

So what are your child's biggest fears? You won't know if you don't ask. So ask, and whatever they say, proceed by having the conversation. Eventually, the biggest fear will show up. Having the conversation builds your child's trust that you will not "freak out" "overreact" or "kill them on the spot" for not fulfilling your expectations.

Some kids won't tell you a fear. So maybe you should pick one? YES!

Let's say your kid applied only to IVY LEAGUE colleges. Nothing else, it is the only place they want to go. Never mind that they actually know nothing about the schools, they just know it is impressive. They could impress their friends, impress your friends and make everyone proud of them. They may even think acceptance to college proves their intelligence.

“What would happen IF you are not accepted by any of the colleges you applied to?”

Answer by your child “ _____ ”