Book Club Guide for Parents and Families

Money for Good Grades and Other Myths About Motivating Kids

Strategies for Parents and Teachers

For more information about this book, visit https://www.routledge.com/9781138368200
Why a Book Club?

Reading and discussing *Money for Good Grades* is a great way to share your struggles and successes about motivating your kids. Why are book clubs effective? Conversation, which is a critical element in an effective book club, allows participants to build relationships and be part of a community. It also provides a time for intellectual stimulation and allows us to share and discuss different ideas and points of view.

Forming a Book Club

When you are forming a book club, there are several things to consider. First, who you will invite and how will you promote your club? When and where will you meet? If you want to meet face-to-face, you can meet in a home; however, many groups prefer to meet in a neutral (and safer) location, such as a library, coffee shop, or community rooms in local government facilities. With face-to-face meetings, will you also provide an outlet for continued conversation outside of meetings?
Online Book Clubs

If you prefer to provide an online book club, you’ll want to consider how you will host it. Will you use Facebook, Twitter, or something else? Consider what format meets your purpose as well as which is most accessible to your audience. Finally, who will facilitate the book club? I don’t think someone needs to “teach” the group; however, I think it’s important for someone to facilitate the group, which includes keeping the conversation flowing and redirecting if the conversation takes a negative tone or someone is dominating the conversation.

All these decisions require that you think about your purpose for the book club. Is it purely social, do you want to promote conversation of learning, or both? That will help you determine who to include as well as where and how to host the club.

If you are facilitating a book club, you may prefer to use some questions to prompt thinking for your participants. If so, I’ve included them in this guide. At the end, you’ll find two questions I’m asked most often about book studies, along with my responses.

A thorough guide to forming book clubs is available at: http://www.ilovelibraries.org/booklovers/bookclub
What motivates your kids?

What doesn’t work when you are trying to motivate your kids?
Thoughts to Consider Before Reading

Before participants read the book, ask them to think about the following questions. These are also questions that can jump-start your initial discussion.

What is an example of a specific time when you felt as though you were successful in motivating your kids?

What would you like to learn as you read Money for Good Grades?
Myth One: Motivating with Rewards is the Best Option

Have you ever tried to reward your kids to motivate them? What happened?

Based on your experiences with your kids, do you think rewards are effective or not? Are there ways that you have found them to be positive? Negative?
Facilitating Questions for Each Chapter

Myth One: Motivating with Rewards is the Best Option

Choose an example of something your kid does that has a natural consequence. Perhaps you have tried to use external motivation in the past. How could you handle a situation using natural consequences?

How do you use praise in your family? On a 1-10 scale, how effectively do you think praise works with your kids? Explain why you chose that number. How might you improve your praise?
Facilitating Questions for Each Chapter

Myth Two: What Your Child Cares About Doesn’t Matter

Describe a time when your kid is or was intrinsically motivated.

What are some of the things your kid is interested in or values? How can you build on that to help your kid be internally motivated?
Myth Two:
What Your Child Cares About Doesn’t Matter

What is an example of a time your kid has not been as independent as you would have liked? How did you respond? What might you have done differently to help your kid become more autonomous?
Facilitating Questions for Each Chapter

Myth Three: It’s Not About Your Relationship with Your Kids

How would you describe your relationship with your kid(s)? Are you satisfied with it or would you like to improve it? If so, how?

What are some examples of how you connect with your kid? Are there areas you would like to better connect? How might you do that?
Myth Three:
It’s Not About Your Relationship with Your Kids

What is your listening style? How would your kid describe you as a listener? How might you become a better listener?

What happens when your kids are upset? How do you respond? If you would like to respond differently, what might that look like?
Facilitating Questions for Each Chapter

Myth Four:
Expectations for Your Child are Not Important

Do you think your expectations for your kids are too high, too low, or just right? What is an example of why you chose that answer?

How would your kids answer that question? If it is different, why? Are there ways you would like to change or ways you might communicate your expectations more effectively with your kids?
Facilitating Questions for Each Chapter

Myth Four:
Expectations for Your Child are Not Important

How can you support your kids as they strive to meet goals without pressuring them?

Are there goals you want your kids to achieve that are really your goals? If so, how might you think about this differently?
Facilitating Questions for Each Chapter

Myth Four: Expectations for Your Child are Not Important

How might you help your kids develop their own expectations?
Facilitating Questions for Each Chapter

Myth Five: It’s Okay for Your Kid to Fail All the Time

What are your feelings about failure? Do experiences related to failure help you grow? How?

How do your feelings about failure affect your kids? Are there ways you want to adjust that?
Myth Five: It’s Okay for Your Kid to Fail All the Time

How do you already reinforce effort with your kids? How might you do that in the future?

Do you think your kids exhibit grit? If so, please share an example. How do you think they have developed grit?
Facilitating Questions for Each Chapter

Myth Six:
It’s Okay for Your Kid to Get Stuck

Has your kid ever become “stuck”? How long did it last? How did he or she get out of the valley (or did they)?

Who is in your circle that has demonstrated resilience? How might you talk about them as a role model?
Facilitating Questions for Each Chapter

Myth Six:
It’s Okay for Your Kid to Get Stuck

How have you built resilience in your own life? How could you share that with your kids?

How can you help your kids build resilience? What is something specific you would like to do with them to teach them resilience?
Myth Seven: 
Competition, Grading, and Homework are No Big Deal

How does your kid respond to competition? Why do you think he or she reacts in that manner?

What is your view toward competition? What messages do you send to your kids about competition?
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**Myth Seven:**
**Competition, Grading, and Homework are No Big Deal**

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Myth Seven:
Competition, Grading, and Homework are No Big Deal

Is there something related to either of these areas you need to discuss with your kid’s teacher? How can you best support your kid in the area of grading and homework?
Myth Eight: If I Do Everything Right My Child Will Be Motivated

Describe a time you felt overwhelmed because you didn’t feel like you were doing anything right with your kid. How did you move past that situation?

If something similar happened again, how might your respond differently?
Myth Eight: If I Do Everything Right My Child Will Be Motivated

Who is a part of your support system? In other words, who are people in your life you can go to for advice or help when you are struggling?

How can you make sure you take care of yourself?
Wrap-Up Thoughts

After participants read the book, ask them to think about the following questions. These are also questions that can wrap-up your club discussion.

How did *Money for Good Grades* change your thinking about motivating your kid?

What is something you have done differently since we started reading? Did it work or not? Why or why not?
Wrap-Up Thoughts

After participants read the book, ask them to think about the following questions. These are also questions that can wrap-up your club discussion.

Do you feel more equipped to motivate your kids? If so, how?

What is one area you would like to focus on with your kids in the future?
Who leads the book study? Or does anyone need to?

The choice of a leader depends on your situation. Ideally, you are looking for someone to facilitate discussion. That means they don’t need to “teach” a book study session; they need to ask prompting questions and pull the group back together if they get too far off-track. I have worked with clubs where someone with a stronger, more direct approach leads. That can work, but I’ve also seen situations where participants were intimidated and unwilling to talk. One compromise is for the person who is more facilitative to assist in leading the conversation, and the person who is more directive can coordinate logistics. Ultimately, you must assess your situation to determine the best approach.

We’ve tried a book club before and one or two of our members dominate the conversation. Often, they try to draw us off track into something else. How can I prevent this or at least lessen the impact?

This can be a real problem in book clubs. There are two ways you can minimize the impact. First, you might ask participants to turn to a partner and share their answers, and then ask for pairs to share with the whole group. This would lessen the impact on the entire group. Second, you will also want the group to agree on other ground rules. They might include norms about how frequently a person can speak or use of a post-it notes to be held for later conversation to capture the thoughts and ideas without impacting the conversation.