



Character Education Resource Center *News You Can Use*

September 2020

5 Inspirational Quotes

Use these inspirational quotes weekly to help get through this “tense-filled” month.

“Think of all the beauty still left around you and be happy.” -Anne Frank

“They don’t teach you this at Harvard Business School, but it’s all about people. Everything happens by, with or through people. Nothing just happens on its own.”

- James Koch, Sam Adams

“Only those who will risk going too far can possibly find out how far one can go.” - T.S. Elliot

“Working hard for something we don’t care about is called stress; working hard for something we love is called passion.”

- Simon Sinek

“Believe you can and you’re half way there.” - Theodore Roosevelt

What Teachers Can Do to Boost Student Motivation

Education Week, Digital Edition, December 9, 2019 (edited)

Researchers have identified four specific ways to nurture a sense of intrinsic motivation in students.

(1) Why Autonomy Matters Giving students a role in deciding what their educational experience looks like can help motivate them; having a say in their classroom environment, being able to choose their homework assignment, and allowing them to develop ideas for their own assignments.

(2) Praising Competence Instead of Natural Ability Students are more likely to do something if they feel like they have the ability to be successful doing it; praising effort instead of natural ability, showing students their growth over a semester, and having students become teachers to their classmates.

(3) Helping Students Relate to Others Building relationships with peers and teachers helps students feel cared about by people they respect. Creating learning situations in which students come to like and respect their classmates. Provide opportunities to work with such classmates. Create positive relationships between teachers and students.

(4) Making Students’ Work Relevant For students to feel motivated, they must see the work they are doing in the classroom as interesting, valuable, and useful to their present lives. Have lesson plans and discussions about topics prevalent in students’ lives, have students set academic and non-academic goals, and challenge students to write about why and what they are learning is relevant.

Make Distance Learning Work

[A Teacher Shares the 5 Steps That Homeschooling Parents Need to Take to Make Distance Learning Work](#) by Julie Mason, Teacher Vision

When COVID-19 shut down our schools, I thought: I've got this. Boy, was I wrong. Flash forward two weeks later, and I found myself scrambling and struggling to manage their Zoom classes, Seesaw assignments, handouts, and teacher communication. I realized that in order to make distance learning work for my family, I was going to have to slow down, focus on quality over quantity and cut everyone some slack. Most importantly, I started listening to my kids and asking for their feedback. Here are the five steps you can take to restore your sanity and homeschool smarter.

Step One: Start With Systems (Google Docs, Google Calendar, Alexa, and Old Fashioned Folders) I made a master Google Doc with every login and password, and I printed it out for my boys. I put it in a folder along with scrap paper so they would have access to it. I also put all of their Zoom classes into Google Calendar and set a reminder. Setting reminders using Alexa so the boys would know that they had five minutes to get ready and signed in was critical to lessening the pre-class chaos. Another system that has worked well for us is using mealtimes to touch base on the schedule for the day. During breakfast, my boys and I cover the first half of the day, and over lunch we review the schedule for the rest of it.

Step Two: Put Them In Charge In addition to teaching, I have an eight month old baby and the kids all have to eat! My boys are seven and nine, and while they are experts in Minecraft and anything Nintendo Switch, there has been a big learning curve when it comes to some of the new tools they are using, including Google Classroom, Zoom, and Seesaw. It is so much faster and easier for me to log in for them or to troubleshoot when the technology isn't working. However, in the long term, this doesn't save time. The boys are constantly asking me for help. I put them in charge of managing their usernames, passwords, and Zoom meetings. I forced myself to hold back and now they are able to manage these tools on their own.

Step Three: Ask Your Kids For Feedback --When I first started homeschooling I created a detailed schedule, printed out handouts, and set up their iPads. I just started teaching. After a week of behavior challenges, it occurred to me that I needed their feedback. I introduced them to [Glows and Grows](#), a self-assessment and goal setting framework that supports students to give and receive feedback. By asking the boys to give and receive Glows and Grows I was modeling for them that this homeschool experience belonged to them, too. We were in this together, for better or worse. Another framework that I love to use for this is the [3-2-1 Reflection](#).

Step Four: Incorporate Social-Emotional Learning I recommend beginning your homeschool day by asking your kids to set a goal or an intention for the day. The intention might be something like, "I can participate during my reading Zoom lesson" or "I can ask mom for help when I need it." I like to support kids to use the word "can" because it is empowering. Another framework I love to use for this is the rose and the thorn. The kids share a highlight from the day (the rose), and a challenge (the thorn). Together as a family, we brainstorm solutions for the challenges.

Teaching kids how to keep a gratitude journal is also helpful. When I ask my kids to share a bright spot, behavior improves and learning continues. [Brain Breaks](#) and physical movement are also an important way to give kids a break and help them reset throughout the day. If your kids are frustrated and they need to change their chatter, I recommend using [Instead of This, Try This](#).

Step Five: Assess Your Kids And Circle Back --. While I would argue that mastering every skill isn't the priority right now, health and safety are, it is important to make sure kids are understanding and learning the material we are using for homeschool. One way to assess your kids is to ask them directly how confident they feel about the material by using a [Self Assessment Scale](#). Good teachers circle back. They don't teach a skill or concept once and never revisit it again. Also, if your child is struggling with a particular skill, ask their teacher for additional materials or strategies. Here are some of my favorite [assessment resources](#) (and they are all [free](#) right now and easy to [download and print](#)). And finally, give yourself grace.

Fall Essay and Poetry Contest

Poetry allows the writer to discover things about himself and spoken word often allows others (listeners/readers) to see things about themselves. So in many ways, poetry is very conversational, whether it be with the self or with others. This idea in its purest form is expression, communication is simply expression. There are very few mediums that allow a person to converse with themselves the way poetry does. You are able to use images and language that you aren't typically allowed to in conventional discourse, that is liberating and allows you as a writer to tap into all of your senses the best way you can.

Daniel Summerhill (poet, performance artist and Assistant Professor of Poetry/ Social Action & Composition, School of Humanities & Communication, CSUMB)



Theme: How My Character Developed During the Pandemic

The Character Education Resource Center, in the Department of Learning and Teaching, School of Leadership & Education Sciences at the University of San Diego, is pleased to announce a new essay and poetry contest for all public, private, and home school students in grades 6 through 8 and grades 9 through 12 in San Diego and Imperial Counties.

The purpose of this contest is to encourage middle and high school students to explore and address the issues, thoughts, and feelings that are most important and significant to them as they cope with living through the COVID-19 Pandemic.

Click [here](#) for more information.

CHARACTER EDUCATION RESOURCE CENTER



Character • Leadership • Service

In these times, it is crucial to remind readers to cultivate and demonstrate the character traits and services that this Center has been promoting since 1995. The Center's staff and advisory committee seeks to help school leaders and others deepen their understanding of character education and to integrate character education into every aspect of the student's school experience.

Our Motto: If we don't have it, we can get it, or create it.

Our Vision: We believe that education for human service must be grounded in the public's desire for ethical, civic-minded, character-based leaders and citizens.

Our Mission: It is the Center's responsibility to provide services and resources to schools, families, communities, K-12 educators, students, teacher educators, community agency leaders and others interested in educating the "hearts and minds" of children and youth.

What do you think of this month's NUCU? We'd love to hear your **thoughts**, **questions** and **feedback**: character@sandiego.edu

Enjoying this newsletter? **Forward to a friend!** [They can sign up here.](#)

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