Taking a Chance

On a recent school visit, one parent asked for a very specific inscription for the book, *How I Did It*. The inscription requested was: Abbi, Take Chances!

What stops us from taking chances?

Fear.

Fear of failure can have us frozen in our steps. Even as young as first grade I’ve seen children not pick up their pencils to draw for fear of not being able to “do” it right. I’ve seen children crumple their papers – only to unroll them and find a beautiful drawing. For some reason, we don’t always see the success in what we do. When teaching peace, View is one of the first things we delve into. It’s how we learn to see ourselves with love, and see the world with that same love. The same thing goes for viewing our “tries” in life. I think sometimes we forget to give ourselves props for trying. After all, trying is how we find out what we like. Trying is how we get to the next level, how we take the next steps. It’s how we move forward.

In the Three Peace Code, we try to take the weight off of the words “right” and “wrong” and interchange them with “learn” and “explore.” Exploring allows you to keep trying without the weight of failure marked in your mind. Exploring encourages you to keep trying. It promotes options. Learning means you’ve gained the knowledge to keep going. Exploring and learning reframes the ideas of success by saying if you’ve learned something, that’s success. Every path offers us a gift of knowledge, even if it’s as simple as not taking that path again! This idea can be expressed clearly in Thomas Edison’s famous quote about trials, “I have not failed, I’ve just found 10,000 ways that won’t work.”

In this spirit, how about changes and celebrating “The Try?” Isn’t it time we embraced learning with a reframed understanding of success? I’m sorry for the shameless plug here, but in the book *How I Did It*, our protagonist, Capitol I, tries and fails, until “I” can see the success of the try, and moves onto even more exciting adventures – better than the ones “I” could even imagine. Trying builds our resilience as we open the door to infinite options. In this spirit, I’ve attached a multiple form PDF in black and white and color, of The Peace Dragon’s celebration exercise of “The Try.”

**How do U do it?**

The downloadable PDF has six printable cards in either color or black and white. Print off one card for each student.

Discuss how important trying is and what you hope to inspire through trying.

Here are some ideas you might want to incorporate in the introduction:

- Introduce the idea of success as the platform for “trying” and “keep trying” (that’s why we added the “What next?” section on the page.) Just because right now you don’t like something or couldn’t do something, it doesn’t predict the future. It’s only about right now. Remind kids to attempt their “try” again later, or set-up your program to try something at the beginning of the year and at the end. When I was growing up, my whole family adored ketchup. I never liked ketchup until I had kids. Same with meat loaf until I had meat loaf.
made with ground turkey and applesauce, now I’m a big fan. We grow, we change, and so do our taste buds and our knowledge banks! And yes, sometimes they don’t, but at least you’ve tried.

• List some “spark” ideas for kids to consider and send home the list. The support of having each family member try something too creates a wonderful shared experience. Everyone can try something different or everyone can do the same thing.

• Create a presentation period, where students can stand up and share their “try” and what they learned. Encourage an exchange of tries for the next time. If they tried a new food and liked it, perhaps they could bring it in so everyone can try it.

**Picking the “Try”**

When you pick out the “Try,” if this applies, research ways people have done it before. If it’s a skill, watch videos and/or research tips on the Internet and in the library. Keep track of which tips worked best for you to share at the end.

If the “Try” includes tasting a food they thought they didn’t like or a new food, research the ways it can be prepared. See how to mix the flavors you like with new ones. This is a great family dinner activity, and the class could also get in on the sharing. Researching exposes students to the variety of options in our lives. If one way doesn’t work, there are an infinite numbers of different paths to take. Whatever the “Try”, the success is in the try and finding a new or tried and true path or a new question.

When we put a new lens on success, the “Try” can be fun. An awareness of who we are offers a peaceful base to move forward. Knowing more about our strengths comes through trying. Personal growth happens through trying. How about giving it a “Try?”
I'm Going to Try This!
I will try: _________________________
I learned: _________________________
What's next? _______________________

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How did you do it?

Tell a story where you solved a problem and how you did it! What can you help teach others from what you learned?
Hey guys! Can you help me out? My friends need your kind words to turn things around. Can you fill in the spaces and thought bubbles with nicer words and ideas?

E yelled, "Take it easy!"

F just frowned.

G gasped, "Good grief!"

J said, "Why, if you get all bent out of shape, you'll be erased for sure! Quit being a joker!"
Hey guys! Can you help me out? My friends need your kind words to turn things around. Can you fill in the spaces and thought bubbles with nicer words and ideas?

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"Good Grief!" gasped G.

Why, if you get all bent out of shape, you'll be erased for sure! Quit being a joker!