



What does it mean to Value Process Before Results?

Many would agree that there is value in the *process* of learning, not just in reaching the final goal, getting the best grade, or winning the competition. But what does this really mean in terms of your child's approach to learning and the role you play in the development of that approach?

Valuing Process Before Results involves an appreciation of the incremental steps along the path to the ultimate goal. It requires an understanding that each success, loss, challenge, and trial hold as much value as the outcome. It necessitates a thoughtful and concerted effort on the part of parents and teachers to actively model, uphold, and embody this belief.

Many of our social and educational experiences have reinforced the notion that intelligence and ability are fixed - one is good at math and bad at sports. That it's possible to improve in certain domains, but if you don't have innate talent in a particular area, you'll never become very good at it. Of equal concern is the notion that if you *are* successful in a certain area, you are gifted, talented, smart. What we often fail to emphasize is that success comes from dedicated effort and the willingness to embrace challenge.

How can you support your child with Valuing Process Before Results?

When something comes very quickly and easily to your child, how do you respond? Although you might be inclined to praise your child (you're so smart, you're a great reader, you're such a talented musician, etc), this approach will cause more harm than good. The corollary to "you're so smart because you learned this quickly" is "you're not smart if you have to *work* at something."

How do you respond when your child experiences a setback or loss? If you try to comfort them by suggesting that they were wronged in some way - "That's not fair! The game was stolen from you!" - or that perhaps this just isn't your child's forte - "I never could learn to play guitar either", you deny them the chance to experience the loss and grow from it.

Instead, help your child see challenge as an exciting opportunity for growth.

- You got that so quickly. Let's find something more challenging to try next.
- I see that you are working very hard at this. What is your strategy/what steps are you taking to reach your goal? What have you learned so far?
- I see that you are really struggling with this. What has your strategy been so far? How can you approach it differently (with support if necessary)?



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- You worked so hard (during your soccer game, on your math homework, drawing that picture). What was your favorite part of the process? What was challenging?

Habits to practice each day:

- Give process oriented feedback (see above)
 - Mistakes are *opportunities* for growth - celebrate them
 - Quick and easy solutions mean there isn't enough challenge/learning
 - Emphasize the *process* (learning happens incrementally; not *yet* doesn't mean not *ever*)
- Discuss your child's or your *approach* to solving problems without an emphasis on the result
 - What was your favorite part of the process?
 - What was most challenging?
- Be aware of what you're modeling
 - Your response to challenge (be excited about it)
 - Your physical and verbal reaction to setbacks (for your child or yourself)

Interested in learning more?

Many of these ideas stem from psychologist and researcher Carol Dweck's findings about growth and fixed mindsets and their role in learning and success. You can read and learn more about her work and its relationship to Valuing Process Before Results here:

- ["How Praise Can Harm and How to Use it Well"](#)
- ["How Praise Became a Consolation Prize"](#)
- ["The Power of Yet" TEDx talk](#)
- ["The Secret to Raising Smart Kids"](#)

The Art of Learning Project is a non-profit educational initiative centered on the learning principles outlined by Josh Waitzkin in his book [The Art of Learning](#). For more information about Josh and The Art of Learning Project, please take a look at our [website](#) and, to go more in depth, watch and listen to these [interviews](#).