

One marshmallow or two?



The Foundations Newsletter

ISSUE 5
december 08

Goals

You have one marshmallow. You're hungry. You can eat it now... or wait 20 minutes and get two. What do you do? Your answer is more important than you think. Researchers did the marshmallow test on 4-year-old kids, then tracked them for years. **Kids who waited for two marshmallows went to college more often, had better jobs, made more money, had better relationships, and had more self-confidence.** The ability to think about their goals—and be patient—led to their success. Your life is real, not a movie. Instant success exists only in Hollywood dreams; time, goals, and planning are critical. So, do you want one marshmallow or two?

We live in a world in a hurry. It's sometimes difficult to teach our children important skills like long-term goal-setting or planning in a culture dominated by fast food, one-hour service, and "buy now, pay later." Here are some ideas to help you teach your teens the importance of thinking long-term.

- **Give an allowance.** Give your teen an allowance and let him or her know that he or she is now expected to buy school lunches, supplies, and/or clothes. In order to teach your teen the value of budgeting and planning ahead, do not give advances (within reason) if he or she runs out. Alternatively, charge your teen interest if he or she needs to borrow money before his or her next allowance. Make sure your child knows the ground rules when you first set up the new allowance structure.
- **Set family goals.** Get together as a family and set some goals to work toward together. Consider things related to getting chores done, being kinder to each other, or a home improvement project. Pick a goal that you as well as your teen will be actively working on. Make sure to have clear goal steps, a completion date, and a reward when the goal is reached.
- **Talk about your goals.** Discuss your personal goals—either goals that you've completed or goals you're working toward—with your teen. Let him or her know about obstacles you've overcome and how rewarding it is to achieve a long-term goal.

"As much as we watch to see what our children do with their lives, they are watching us to see what we do with ours. I can't tell my children to reach for the sun. All I can do is reach for it, myself." –Joyce Maynard

