

Exploring Leadership

PLANNING & ORGANIZATION: INITIATIVE

Initiative can be difficult to identify and describe because those who possess it don't wait to be told it's time to act. Sometimes they are finished doing something before anyone else has recognized it needed to be done.

CONVERSATION STARTER:

After setting up environment explained in "Facilitation Tips" ask: "Did anyone notice it when you arrived? Isn't it interesting that you all noticed it, but no one corrected it?" Taking care of something without being asked is Initiative!

Often young people are timid about taking "charge of a situation" because they fear the judgement of their peers, but Initiative is a critical skill that will benefit young people and those they work with. In this lesson, participants will examine examples of Initiative and share some of their own.

KEY OBJECTIVES:

- Describe Initiative
- Share examples of Initiative

WHAT YOU'LL NEED:

- Enough quotations cut out ahead of time for each participant (Appendix)
- Time prior to teaching to set up environment as described in "Facilitation Tips" section

EXPLORATION ACTIVITY:

Initiative is about doing, but sometimes it can be hard to describe, so we're going to look at many different ways it has been described.

- Give each participant a quote about Initiative.
- Have each participant read their quote aloud to the group. (If there aren't many people in the group, give each person more than one and go around the circle twice.)
- Ask these questions:
 - How does Initiative play into this group? Who in this group shows the most Initiative? Why?
 - Does everyone have Initiative built-in or is it a skill you develop?

FACILITATION TIPS:

- Before the participants arrive, arrange something in the environment that requires someone to act on it.
- Possibilities: put some obtrusive (but not heavy) item in front of the door so that everyone who enters has to walk around it; place some litter in a very obvious place; move the desks/chairs; scatter supplies into an unusable mess.



REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

- Now that you've heard all these descriptions of Initiative, how do you know it when you see it?
- What are specific examples of initiative? (What does Initiative look, sound, or feel like?)
- What fears do we have to overcome in order to demonstrate Initiative?

APPLICATION DISCUSSION:

- What are some real life circumstances in which you might demonstrate Initiative?
- What are some strategies for getting started? (How do we overcome the fears?)
 - This is the rest of the quote by Mark Twain: "The secret of getting started is breaking your complex, overwhelming tasks into small manageable tasks, and then starting on the first one."



CONCLUSION:

Initiative is the ability to assess a situation and act independently. Those with Initiative do not have to be told to do something; they just do what needs to be done. Initiative is important because all the planning in the world isn't going to matter if someone doesn't put the plan into action. Bo Bennett said, "Without Initiative, leaders are simply workers in leadership positions." As young leaders, you must take the opportunity to exercise your Initiative; otherwise, you aren't really leading. Victor Hugo is attributed with this quote: "Initiative is doing the right without being told." Don't wait! Do what you know to be right!

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REFERENCES

- <https://www.goodreads.com/quotes/tag/initiative>
- <https://www.aeseducation.com/blog/how-to-teach-initiative-high-school>



APPENDIX:

"I would rather regret the things that I have done than the things that I have not." — Lucille Ball

"Success seems to be connected with action. Successful people keep moving. They make mistakes, but they don't quit."

— Conrad Hilton

"A good plan implemented today is better than a perfect plan implemented tomorrow." — George Patton

"What we think or what we know or what we believe is, in the end, of little consequence, the only consequence is what we do." — John Ruskin

"Even if you're on the right track you'll get run over if you just sit there." — Will Rogers

"It will never rain roses: when we want to have more roses, we must plant more roses."

— George Eliot

"Never interrupt someone doing something you said couldn't be done." — Amelia Earhart

"I would not sit waiting for some vague tomorrow, nor for something to happen. One could wait a lifetime, and find nothing at the end of the waiting. I would begin here, I would make something happen." — Louis L'Amour

"It is better to beg forgiveness, than ask permission." — Grace Murray Hopper

"Don't wait for your ship to come in, swim out to it." — Cathy Hopkins

"The best way to predict the future is to create it." — Abraham Lincoln

"The only way I'm going to make any friends is if I take the first step." — Alexandra Robbins

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APPENDIX (CONTINUED):

"Today, not starting is far, far worse than being wrong. If you start, you've got a shot at evolving and adjusting to turn your wrong into a right. But if you don't start, you never get a chance."

— Seth Godin

"Many lose through never starting. A job well begun is half done." — Orrin Woodward

"How wonderful it is that nobody need wait a moment before starting to improve the world.

— Anne Frank

"None will improve your lot / If you yourselves do not." — Berthold Brecht

"Nothing will ever be attempted if all possible objections must be overcome."

— Samuel Johnson

"If you don't crack the shell, you can't eat the nut." — Russian Proverb

"Knowing is not enough; we must apply. Being willing is not enough; we must do."

— Leonardo Da Vinci

"The secret to getting ahead is getting started ." — Mark Twain

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