

5 Tips for Motivating Your Family to Help

Let's face it; we are busy, busy women! We like to think we can do it all yet the truth remains, we need and deserve help around the house. After all, other people live there too—they should be helping! Yet I know all too well the whines, cries, and power issues that occur between women and their children. I have found the same tips I teach to corporate executives for motivating their teams' can work with the team in our home. Here are five tips to use in helping to motivate your team to success!

1. **Create a team atmosphere.** Make it known that the family is a team and as a team it is expected that the family work together to accomplish things and reach it's team goals. Team goals may include a vacation or just a weekend outing. Help all members of the team feel important to the success of the team. This is a very valuable skill that will help your children succeed throughout life.
2. **Delegating—focus on the end result instead of the process.** I find many women want help yet they refuse to delegate. Why? Maybe they think the person won't complete the task as well as they do. Maybe they think it will take the other person too long to complete the task. If you think these things, you are right. It will take them longer and they may not do it just like you do. Bill Engvall (Blue Collar Comedy) does a great comedy skit where he is talking about his family. The family is getting ready to have dinner and Mom obviously is not happy. As they sit down in absolute silence she finally clears her throat and announces that she is not the only person in the house that can load the dishwasher. Nobody knows how to respond so finally Bill says "Well, honey obviously you are. Because every time one of us put something in the dishwasher, you go behind us and rearrange it." This story hits home for many women. We want the glasses all lined up a certain way on top, the silver ware has to be sorted in the right way, the plates go in a certain place, etc. My question to you is "What is the goal?" Once you focus on the goal, you have to let go of the rest (within reason of course).
3. **Is there an incentive to help?** Let's face it – some household duties are just not fun and there needs to be some incentive to help. Maybe the incentive is "If you *happily* (we don't want them to do it with attitude) help with this, you can go out and play or go to the swimming pool with your friends." The more positive the incentive is, the more likely we will have help. With teens it may be the opportunity to do something with friends on the weekend or to continue to have use of the computer or cell phone.
4. **Is there a consequence for not performing the desired behavior?** This is a big question. Sometimes life gives us consequences (ex. We eat too much and gain weight) and sometimes, as the coach, we have to implement the consequences. It is important for children to learn there are consequences for their actions just as there are benefits to being part of the team. Consequences must mean something to the person. For example, one child may be devastated by a scowling look from a parent whereas another child couldn't care less unless you take their cell phone away. Allow natural consequences and let peer pressure of other team members handle problems whenever possible. For example, if you have delegated the laundry to one "team member" and that team member didn't do the laundry – refrain from doing it for them and let the peer pressure from other family members handle the problem.
5. **Reward incremental successes.** We need to be sure we are rewarding the good behavior and not focusing all our attention on the negative behavior. Sometimes we think "Nobody tells me what a good job I do at keeping the laundry done and the house clean. Why should I have to recognize and reward when someone helps around the house? Here's why – because you don't want to have to spend as much time on housework and you want the help of others. Remember to focus on the goal – the goal being others helping willingly and happily.

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