September: Initiative – Seeing what needs to be done and doing it

SAY IT: This month, we are talking about our second Big Idea of the year: initiative! We believe this value has the potential to change the entire dynamics of your home… for the better. So carve out some time at the end of this week to practice the definition together so it not only becomes a household term but a household way of life!

FIRST STEP: Locate 10 post-it notes (or 10 pieces of scrap paper with a roll of tape on the back). Write out the following 10 words on the post-it notes, one word per post-it: "Initiative, seeing, what, needs, to, be, done, and, doing, it". Make a pile of the words and scramble them face down. Stand in a line, about 15-20 feet from a blank wall in your home. The first person in line has to pick a word from the pile, hop across the room and stick it to the opposite wall. Then, run back and tag the next person in line before getting in the back of the line. Continue until all the words are placed in the correct order on the opposite wall and read out the value and its definition together as a family. Play again, this time with a timer and try to beat your previous times. Or, if you have a family of 6 or more, divide into two teams to compete against each other. (Note: this variation will require two sets of ten post-its).

KNOW IT: Dig a little deeper this week with these discussion starters about initiative:

- What is the chore or job that you're expected to do around the house?
- Do you remember to do the chore on your own or notice when it needs to be done, or do you have to be reminded?
- What would happen if you refused to do it or were too busy to notice it needed to be done?
- What chore or job have you done this week on your own that nobody but you knows about?
- What is hard about showing initiative?
- Is there a problem that you see in the world that you think you should help with?
- Make up a pretend "to do" list of what it would take to solve that problem.

SEE IT: Now that you know what we say initiative means, and you know what initiative means to you, check out this hilarious poem about one little girl who refused to show initiative!

In Shel Silverstein's poem "Sarah Cynthia Sylvia Stout," Sarah is unwilling to take the garbage out, no matter how many times her dad asks her to. Eventually the garbage piles up as high as the sky, drives everyone away from her house, and covers the entire United States with trash! Of course, the poem isn't true, but it does make you wonder what would happen if no one ever took their trash out!

To read this classic poem, go to your local library, bookstore or simply type "Sarah Cynthia Sylvia Stout" into your web search engine.

BE IT: There are so many fun ways to learn how to take initiative and do what needs to be done. When you really think about it, initiative is just like a big detective game. So grab your magnifying glass (or just your regular glasses) and go on a family scavenger hunt this week!

Whether you see it or not, there are opportunities to take initiative everywhere you go. Some are really common. Some opportunities only come up every once in a while.

Here's a list of common and not-so-common things you may see that spark your initiative side. Your job is to open your eyes and see how many of the items on the list you can spot this week. Carry the list around with you and every time you check off an item, you get 2 points. Every time you check off an item and do something about it you get 5 points. Remember to keep your eyes open everywhere you go because you can take initiative …anywhere!

THE LIST

____ Piece of clothing on the floor
____ Dirty dish
____ Incomplete homework assignment
____ Person struggling to carry something
____ Hungry pet
____ Piece of trash on the ground
____ Item that has been left behind
____ Dirty bathroom
____ Something out of place
____ Someone being made fun of
____ Someone being treated unfairly
____ Someone who is sick
____ Someone who is hungry
____ Someone who is lost
____ Someone who is sad
____ Someone who is hurt
____ Choose your own
____ Choose your own
____ Choose your own
____ Choose your own
____ Choose your own