

NEWS LETTER



HAPPY
FEBRUARY



Taxes

Some parents' tax situation permits them to deduct some or all of the money they pay to the School as child care expense. If you are able to do this, you will need the School's tax I.D. number, which is **95-3193683**.



► **We ask all children to be at school by 8:15 a.m.
Why bring your child on time?**

1. You get the most for your money. You give your child the best opportunity to progress academically, to more deeply understand the work shown to him and enough time to practice with the materials.
2. You set a good example for life about the importance of being on time to your child.
3. The first hours of the day in the classroom tend to be the time that the children work with the greatest concentration. This is when their minds are free from the distraction of the activities of the day.
4. When your child comes into the classroom late, this is a disturbance to the children who have already settled down to do their work.
5. Coming to school late can give a message to your child that school is not important and it does not matter when you arrive.

► **Spring Break
Mark your calendars!**

April 2nd – April 6th.

► **School Shirt Day**

Don't forget! **Every last Friday of the month**, is Meher's School Shirt Day! We hope to have 100% participation so that every class can have a party.

► **Updates**

- Please update school of any important change. Such as address, cell phone, work phone or email.
- Please let the school/teacher know of any important family change, death, loss of a pet, parent separation.

Thank you. Mrs. Muñoz



Hello dear parents, we're back again for another month of adventure, learning and fun things to do in our classroom and the school as a whole. We bid goodbye to January but there were happy memories that tag along. These are the following: Bible class, School Shirt Day and our Public Open House. The Bible class is free to all and focuses on right conduct, activities and good values. We had another 100% School Shirt last January; our 6th completion so far since September. The prize for this success was claimed on Friday, February 2nd. Our target together with our parents is to have a 100% School Shirt Days through June! I believe that our children loves Meher Montessori School and are proud of their school as shown in their camaraderie and excitement to wear their school shirt every last Friday of the month. The Open House was a success – there were a lot of families that came to see the school and the classrooms. They are all delighted and parents would always comment that the classrooms are very clean and organized, materials are beautiful, attractive and right-sized for children.

February is the month of "love" with colors of red and pink. The children made these colors vivid in

class through their valentine projects posted on the walls of the staircase leading to our classroom in the basement. Each child punched two stenciled pictures: a heart and cupid. These were mounted on white doilies.

February is the month too that we discuss the great works and leadership of two presidents of the United States of America. First Abraham Lincoln, whose birthday was this February 12th, was the 16th president, a statesman and lawyer, and known as the log cabin president. I read a book to the children about his life – he has a great saying: keep on reading books and you can attain your goals in life. George Washington was the 1st president of the United States; he was a statesman and soldier. He loved dogs and animals in general. They have learned that being a president isn't a bed of roses, that they have to strive hard to learn more and that anyone can be president.



**ABRAHAM LINCOLN AND
GEORGE WASHINGTON**

The children's current interest focus on the growth cycle of the following insects we have in our classroom: the "lady painted butterflies," "ladybugs," and "praying mantis." Each insect has a different number of weeks to hatch and turn into adults. Every school day the children had the chance to watch all three insects on Mrs. Rivera's table after they had done at least two age - appropriate works.



We have been very busy in our classroom this month. The older children are now working with special Montessori materials: Animals and their Groups. They learn about the special names for certain groups of animals. For example: a pod of whales, a troop of kangaroos, a knot of toads, a murder of crows, a litter of kittens (plus more than 30 others).

They've also been working as a group with me on Puzzle Words. These are words that have to be memorized (also called sight words) rather than sounded out using our traditional Montessori phonetic

approach. They have been doing well with this. The younger children are coming along with their numbers and phonics through the use of our sand paper letters. They love learning especially when we do it in a game process.

Last but not the least, I'd like to thank Mrs. Suh and Ms. Bayon for keeping our classroom safe and happy. They maintain good team work and are always there for the children's needs. To you ladies, thank you so much from the bottom of my heart.

With this saying of Confucius, the great philosopher, I end my newsletter; "Wherever you go, go with all your heart." Hope everyone had a very happy Valentine's Day and a Happy Lunar New Year!

With all our love –
Mrs. Rivera, Mrs. Suh, Ms. Bayon





The Month that Was

We had our public Open House last January 27th. A good number of visitors came to visit our classrooms. A special thank you goes to Mr. Tony Fan (Jessica's dad) who graciously welcomed and talked with the visitors that came that day. It's always good to have someone share their Montessori experience with prospective parents that our school. We also had a number of students from Meher who volunteered that day. Among them was Zoe Alvarado who came with her sister Francesca – they greeted guests and showed them around. Michael Diaz (Julian's dad) also dropped by to say hello. On that day, I also got to meet the family of our new student in class Cylis Garcia.

This Month

February is a short but busy month filled with exciting things happening especially because we are celebrating Valentine's Day and the Chinese New Year in the same week. As always, we do appreciate your continued support when you sign up for things we need in the classroom. The classroom was buzzing with activity the day before Valentine's as the children prepared Jello treats. They eagerly watched how the powder transformed and

changed it's consistency as hot water was poured into the bowl. They each had the chance to mix and pour it into containers. It became like a mini science experiment and cooking activity which they all enjoyed. We plan to do more of these in the future. Another treat the children will share together is the "Friendship Mix". We will gather as a group and each child will pour the treat they brought into a large bowl, mix them together and share among them. I hope you enjoyed counting those tiny treats with your children.

"Xin Nian Hao" to everyone celebrating this Year of the Dog. Thank you to all of you who have contributed to our sumptuous lunch.

Evah Pitner turned 5 years old on February 18. Happy birthday to you.

There are several "additions" to our classroom. The children will have the chance to observe the growth of a ladybug, a butterfly and a praying mantis. Once these insects are fully grown, we will release them in the garden. So in the next few weeks, we will read books about different insects and bugs and talk about their life cycle, what they eat and their different body parts.

Maria Montessori gave importance to introducing children to nature. She

writes, "A child, who more than anyone else is a spontaneous observer of nature, certainly needs to have at his disposal material upon which he can work. Children have an anxious concern for living beings, and the satisfaction of this instinct fills them with delight." (from "The Discovery of the Child" p. 73). Children come alive and are delighted to see tiny insects in the garden. The other day Claire reached out and happily called to the yellow butterflies fluttering by the plants in the playground saying, "Butterfly, butterfly, I'm here, come". She followed them around for several minutes and called to them.

Here's a little song and dance you can do with your child. Ask them to show you how to do it.

*With your foot you make a tap, tap, tap
With your hands you make a clap, clap, clap
I love you, you love me
Turn around and dance with me.
La la la la la ...*

Till Next Time,

Mrs. Roque
Ms. Mills
Ms. Kulwicki
Ms. Martinez
Ms. Alvarado

13 Things Mentally Strong Parents Don't Do

by Amy Morin
Forbes



Raising mentally strong kids who are equipped to take on real-world challenges requires parents to give up the unhealthy – yet popular – parenting practices that are robbing kids of mental strength.

Of course, helping kids build mental muscle isn't easy – it requires parents to be mentally strong as well. Watching kids struggle, pushing them to face their fears, and holding them accountable for their mistakes is tough. But those are the types of experiences kids need to reach their greatest potential.

Parents who train their children's brains for a life of meaning, happiness, and success, avoid these 13 things:

1. They Don't Condone A Victim Mentality

Getting cut from the soccer team or failing a class doesn't make your child a victim. Rejection, failure, and unfairness are part of life. Rather than allow kids to host pity parties or exaggerate their misfortune, mentally strong parents encourage their children to turn their struggles

– article continued on page 8



Class News

Thank you parents for making our Valentine's and Chinese New Year celebrations feel special! You are so thoughtful with your healthy, homemade treats and organic, kid-size portions and the kids were involved in what they brought and were eager to share the goodies with their class. For the parties, the children came up with their own games, shows, and decorations and are impressive in the way they work together and encourage each other.

Curriculum News

The third year students have shown great leadership and taken on much responsibility, and some have really grown in this area over the course of the year. Their voices are more confident, they take the initiative, and stand up for themselves more than ever. They have begun a fun literature group led by Mrs. Gonzalez's younger daughter, Jackie, and are reading *Time Cat* by Lloyd Alexander, a fantasy novel about a time-traveling cat. Along with reading and discussing the story elements, they have many other language lessons going on right now such as Greek mythology, verb tenses, and rules of punctuation.

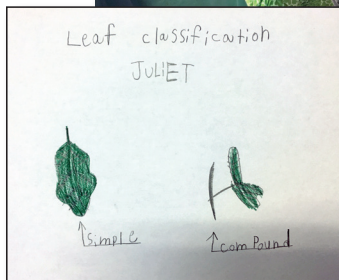
Their work has inspired other students. A second-year decided she wanted to read Greek mythology too. We have been having lots of good discussions about ancient civilizations such as Greek, Latin, and Egyptian because they have come up a lot in lessons and presentations. For example, the Olympic Games is held during the month of February, and I gave the class a brief overview of this historical sporting event that originated in Greece to honor Zeus, king of the gods. Many of the students were already interested in Greece and had been learning about the gods and goddesses through Greek mythology. Another child happened to have been reading a book called *Amazing Places in the World* and read the page about the Acropolis, including the Parthenon, which was built for the goddess Athena. The children get to study language through the beautiful mythology genre, the history of ancient civilizations and their contributions to the world, and geography, because they want to know the locations that they are reading about.

First and second-year students continue to work on grammar, prefixes, measurement, fractions, and addition and subtraction. Some new lessons

we have started include division, equivalent shapes, decimals, past tense, and factors. Much work is continued over the whole year, and even year after year. Each student is working on a good foundation across many topics. It is interesting to see what some individuals pick to study day after day aside from the lessons covered by the teacher. A couple of examples of research topics that some students have shown great interest in on their own are ancient creatures and natural disasters, and they have gotten others to join them as well. Very good!

Calendar News

We observed Lincoln's birthday on February 12, and President's Day on February 19, and School Shirt Day was February 23! February flew by! Thanks for all your involvement and interest in your child's education. We are very lucky to have such wonderful children and families.



into strength. They help them identify ways in which they can take positive action, despite their circumstances.

2. They Don't Parent Out Of Guilt

Guilty feelings can lead to a long list of unhealthy parenting strategies – like giving in to your child after you've said no or overindulging your child on the holidays. Mentally strong parents know that although guilt is uncomfortable, it's tolerable. They refuse to let their guilty feelings get in the way of making wise choices.

3. They Don't Make Their Child The Center Of The Universe

It can be tempting to make your life revolve around your child. But kids who think they're the center of the universe grow up to be self-absorbed and entitled. Mentally strong parents teach their kids to focus on what they have to offer the world – rather than what they're owed.

4. They Don't Allow Fear To Dictate Their Choices

Keeping your child inside a protective bubble could spare you a lot of anxiety. But keeping kids too safe stunts their development. Mentally strong parents view themselves as guides, not protectors. They allow their kids to go out into the world and experience life, even when it's scary to let go.

5. They Don't Give Their Child Power Over Them

Kids who dictate what the family is going to eat for dinner, or those who orchestrate how to spend their weekends, have too much power. Becoming more like an equal – or even the boss – isn't healthy for kids. Mentally strong parents empower kids to make appropriate choices while maintaining a clear hierarchy.

– article continued on page 10

► Ms. Strand's Class

MAKING ICE CREAM

CLASSROOM NEWS



PARTNERSHIP PROJECTS

The past month has been rather busy in the Upper Elementary. We all took a trip downtown to The Music Center along with thousands of other fifth graders for a special performance from a group from Argentina. The dancers, called Che Malambo, were experts in tap dancing, rhythm movements, and drumming. It was such a rare and exquisite performance that we all enjoyed!

Valentine's Day was all about science in our room! We spent one full day beforehand experimenting and learning about physical and chemical changes. Then science and cooking came together on Valentine's Day, when everyone made their own ice cream in a bag. It was fun and delicious!

Partnership projects are underway with the third years from Ms. Tenold's room. Each of the six 3rd years have older partners that they have been working with each day. They have begun researches, are planning Going Outs, and have been trying out new lessons together. Our sixth graders spent one full week up at the Middle School for their partnership projects too. It's always so great to see the mixed ages come together for a work they are passionate about!



PARTNERSHIP PROJECTS PLAYING DECIMAL BINGO



RESEARCHING DURING PARTNERSHIP PROJECT



LEARNING CROCHET PARTNERSHIP
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Hello, Meher family. It's February, which is a short month, but holds an outsized list of celebrations - Valentine's Day, President's Day, and Black History Month. Also, on a more provincial level, this month marked the opening of the Middle School's business venture - H2GO (pronounced - **H-two-Go**). It's fantastic to observe how engaged the students are with running their business. After each sale day, which occurs every Thursday between 2:45 and 4:00, the students gather and review what they call their KPI (key point indicators), which, in everyday speak means, they talk about what went well, what didn't, and what they will modify.

I really appreciate this short month with its two Mondays off; it's a break, a resting place between the frantic and chaotic pace of the holidays and the transition to spring. However, the month also gives good reason to muse, as our 1st year Middle School student, Julia, does (below) on the disquiet of Valentine's Day.

Valentine's Day 101

By: Julia Hernandez

Everybody loves Valentine's Day! The chocolate, the flowers, the teddy bears, the cute, cheap cards from the dollar store that you get at the very last minute, but lets face it, not all of us have an admirer to give us all those wonderful gifts, so instead we spend our Valentine's Day watching Netflix and lying in bed eating the chocolate our parents gave us or that we stole from them.

To other people that just sounds sad and lonely, and even though it is, it's actually the best time of our lives because we get to lie there and watch whatever we want and don't have to feel our self worth depends on gifts from others. But this Valentine's Day I encourage you to live your poor, sad life to the fullest!

Instead of eating ice cream and crying over some sappy romantic movie like 'The Notebook' or 'Titanic' get out of bed and out of those comfy jammies, and start living your life!

6. They Don't Expect Perfection

High expectations are healthy, but expecting too much from kids will backfire. Mentally strong parents recognize that their kids are not going to excel at everything they do. Rather than push their kids to be better than everyone else, they focus on helping them become the best versions of themselves.

7. They Don't Let Their Child Avoid Responsibility

You won't catch a mentally strong parent saying things like, "I don't want to burden my kids with chores. Kids should just be kids." They expect children to pitch in and learn the skills they need to become responsible citizens. They proactively teach their kids to take responsibility for their choices and they assign them age-appropriate duties.

8. They Don't Shield Their Child From Pain

It's tough to watch kids struggle with hurt feelings

— article continued on page 12



Happy Lunar New Year!

The children have had a very busy month so far. On February 9th, we had a farewell party for Delilah Witter. She and her family moved to Georgia to be closer to extended family. The children and the staff alike were sad to see her go. But we made her promise to come back for visits.

As sad as it was to see Delilah go, we were happy to welcome two new students to the Meher family. Oliver Kim started on February 5th, and Elodie Hartman started on the 13th. The children have been very loving to our new friends and eager to be their helpers throughout the day.

As we do every February, we have been listening to music from black musicians from a broad spectrum of music. We've had jazz, reggae, pop and Motown so far. After we listen to the music, we watch a short video performance of the musician on YouTube, to help the children put a face to a name. We have also been reading books about people that were pioneers in Black History like Rosa Parks, Jackie Robinson, Barack Obama, and George Washington Carver.

Chinese New Year started on

February 16th this year. It lasts for 15 days every year. This year is the Year of the Dog. Those born in the Year of the Dog are said to exhibit honesty, loyalty, friendliness and a strong sense of responsibility. On the flip side, they may also be stubborn, critical and lacking when it comes to social activities. To honor the new year, we have been reading books and short stories about Chinese New Year traditions and celebrations. Our classroom also has some festive decor to promote good luck and wealth.

Our Valentine's Day party was a huge success. Many of the students chose to bring in something to pass out to their classmates. They really enjoyed sharing their valentines.

Parent Night

On Thursday, February 22nd, we had Parent Night. It was from 7:00-8:30 pm. This year we walked through the Mathematics materials, hopefully this gave you an idea of what the children are experiencing.

School Shirt Day

Sadly we did not hit our goal of 100% participation for School Shirt Day in January. February's School Shirt Day will be on Friday, the 23rd.

Hopefully, we can turn this slump around and get 100% for February. Our baking activities only occur the month following a 100% School Shirt Day.

Next Month

On March 9th, Education Through Nature will return to the school. This year we will try a brand new program. It will be a dinosaur and fossils program. Details on that will go out on March 1st.

On March 18th, Meher will once again have an information table set up at Sierra Madre's Wistaria Festival. Volunteers are always welcome. Details for that will also go out at the beginning of March.

Until Next Month,
Mrs. Wildhaber,
Miss McCray & Miss Tinajero

or anxiety. But, kids need practice and first-hand experience tolerating discomfort. Mentally strong parents provide their kids with the support and help they need coping with pain so their kids can gain confidence in their ability to deal with whatever hardships life throws their way.

9. They Don't Feel Responsible For Their Child's Emotions

It can be tempting to cheer your kids up when they're sad or calm them down when they're angry. But, regulating your kids' emotions for them prevents them from gaining social and emotional skills. Mentally strong parents teach their children how to be responsible for their own emotions so they don't depend on others to do it for them.

10. They Don't Prevent Their Child From Making Mistakes

Whether your child gets a few questions wrong on his math homework or he forgets to pack his cleats for soccer practice, mistakes can be life's greatest teacher. Mentally strong parents let their kids mess up – and they allow them to face the natural consequences of their actions.

11. They Don't Confuse Discipline With Punishment

Punishment is about making kids suffer for their wrongdoing. Discipline is about teaching them how to do better in the future. And while mentally strong parents do give out consequences, their ultimate goal is to teach kids to develop the self-discipline they'll need to make better choices down the road.

12. They Don't Take Shortcuts To Avoid Discomfort

Giving in when a child whines or doing your kids' chores for them, is fast and easy. But, those shortcuts teach kids unhealthy habits. It takes mental strength to tolerate discomfort and avoid those tempting shortcuts.

13. They Don't Lose Sight Of Their Values

In today's fast-paced world it's easy to get wrapped up in the day-to-day business of homework, chores, and sports practices. Those hectic schedules – combined with the pressure to look like parent of the year on social media – cause many people to lose sight of what's really important in life. Mentally strong parents know their values and they ensure their family lives according to them. ■

Amy Morin is a psychotherapist and the author of 13 Things Mentally Strong Parents Don't Do.

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by Cory Turner

February 14, 2018

"This humane, thoughtful book turns the latest brain science into valuable practical advice for parents.... Read it. Your children will thank you."
—PAUL TOUGH, author of *How Children Succeed*

The Self-Driven Child

*The SCIENCE and SENSE of
GIVING YOUR KIDS MORE
CONTROL OVER THEIR LIVES*

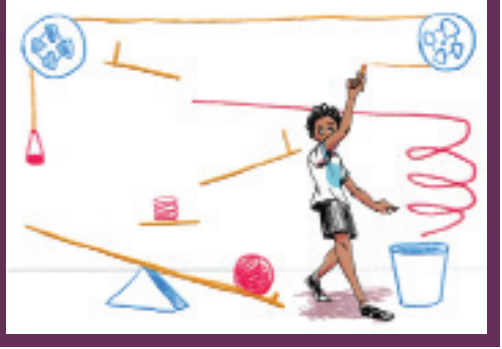
WILLIAM STIXRUD, PhD,
and NED JOHNSON

The Self-Driven Child

The Science and Sense of
Giving Your Kids

More Control over Their Lives

by William Stixrud and Ned Johnson



The Key To Raising A Happy Child

For much of the past half-century, children, adolescents and young adults in the U.S. have been saying they feel as though their lives are increasingly out of their control. At the same time, rates of anxiety and depression have risen steadily.

What's the fix? Feeling in control of your own destiny. Let's call it "agency."

"Agency may be the one most important factor in human happiness and well-being."

So write William Stixrud and Ned Johnson in their new book, *The Self-Driven Child: The Science and Sense of Giving Your Kids More Control Over Their Lives*. Feeling out of control can cause debilitating stress and destroy self-motivation.

Building agency begins with parents, because it has to be cultivated and nurtured in childhood, write Stixrud and Johnson. But many parents find that difficult, since giving kids more control requires parents to give up some of their own.

Instead of trusting kids with choices — small at first, but bigger as adolescence progresses — many parents insist on



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micromanaging everything from homework to friendships. For these parents, Stixrud and Johnson have a simple message:

Stop. Instead of thinking of yourself as your child's boss or manager, try *consultant*.

To discuss the book's big ideas, I spoke with Bill Stixrud, a neuropsychologist who has spent the past 30 years helping parents and kids navigate life's challenges. Our interview has been edited for length and clarity.

Let's start with a basic definition from the book's title. What does it mean for a child to be self-driven?

When I used to do psychotherapy, I was struck by how many young adults I saw who said, "I feel like I've spent my whole life trying to live up to other people's expectations. I want to try to figure out what's really important to me."

I think that the self-driven child is driven by internal motivation as opposed to other people's expectations, rewards, insecurity or fear.

To be self-driven, kids need to have a sense of control over their lives and are energetic about directing their lives in the direction they want to go.

Consultants, not managers? I can imagine some parents feeling really uncomfortable giving up that much control over their children's lives.

When I used to do therapy — I'm going going back 30 years now — I'd see family after family that said, "I hate the time after dinner at our house because

it's World War III." And I was struck by how many of these meaningless fights would happen over homework — completely unproductive fights, hugely stressful, pitting the kid against his parents.

I just came up with this phrase: "I love you too much to fight with you about your homework."

What I said to parents is that, if you decide you're not going to fight about this anymore, you say instead, "How can I help?" You think about yourself as a consultant and acknowledge respectfully that it's the kid's homework. You can't *make* your child do it. What you can do is offer to help.

You can set up what I call consulting hours between 6:30 and 7:30 p.m., and just say, "I'm not going to fight with you. I just love you too much. I don't want all this friction. This is your work, and I respect that you can figure this out and I'll help you." A family just told me that the temperature went down in their house by 20 degrees.

Letting go can be especially hard for anxious parents, who worry a lot about their kids getting good grades, getting into a good college, landing a good job, etc. How do you help them let go?

All of us have what I call a shared delusion: that the path to becoming successful is extremely narrow and, if you fall off it, you're sunk. And it just doesn't take very long to look around and realize how untrue that is.

Research suggests that it doesn't make that much difference where you go to college in terms of how successful you are financially or professionally or how satisfied you are or how happy you

are. The idea that, somehow, getting into the most elite college at any cost is the right focus of a kid's development is completely wrong. It's wrong-headed. And many parents with enough support can come to see that and make peace with it. But it's a big project because so much of the world that we live in gives the opposite message.

Also, we need to make peace with reality. And the reality is, you can't make a kid do his work. And that means it can't be the parent's responsibility to ensure that the kid always does his homework and does it well.

In some ways, it's also disrespectful to the kid. You know, I start with the assumption that kids have a brain in their head and they want their lives to work. They want to do well. That's why we want to change the energy, so the energy is coming from the kid seeking help from us rather than us trying to boss the kid, sending the message, "You can't do this on your own."

One of my favorite moments in the book is when you reveal how you, as a parent, approached homework and report cards with your kids. What was the message you were trying to convey to them?

When my kids were little, I had just been reading some research that suggested there's a very low correlation between grades and success in life. And so, when my kids were in elementary school, I said, "I'm happy to look at your report card, but I don't care that much. I care much more that you work hard to develop yourself, and part of that is developing yourself as a student. But also it means developing yourself as a person. If you want to be an athlete

or musician or whatever is important to you, I care much more about that because that's the stuff — that self-development — that helps you be successful. It's not the grades."

When my daughter was in high school, she came to a lecture I gave on the adolescent brain, in which I mentioned this low correlation between grades and success and how research on valedictorians suggests that they don't do better than other college graduates once they're in their mid-20s. Driving home, she said, "You know, I liked the lecture, but I don't really believe that you believe that stuff about the grades."

I told her, "I absolutely believe it." In fact, I believed it enough that I offered her a hundred bucks to get a C on her next report card.

I assume she was an A student at the time?

Yeah, she's now got a Ph.D. in economics from the University of Chicago. She's a brilliant girl and a really good student. But I offered her a hundred dollars for a C, so she could understand and have the experience that, you know, one bad thing or one thing that seems like a disaster is just not that big a deal.

She didn't take you up on it?

She never did. But I think it helped her to know that there's many ways people become successful. And I think that message was really helpful to my son, who did not learn easily and needed help to get through school. He was a later bloomer but ultimately got a Ph.D. in psychology and is an incredible

person.

I walked this walk with him — in the sense that I never oversaw his homework. If I happened to notice that he hadn't done a very good job on something, I'd offer some suggestions, and often he'd take me up on it. Other times, he wouldn't. And I'd say, "This is your education. I'll help wherever I can."

On the subject of homework, you say: Inspire but don't require.

I wrote a couple papers on homework in 1986, and I reviewed what we know about the effects of homework on learning. And I was dumbfounded to learn at that time that there's virtually no correlation between the amount of time spent on homework and what you learn in elementary school. And that's partly why I concluded that it doesn't make sense to fight with kids and have all this stress about something that doesn't seem to contribute to learning.

Thirty-some years later, it's still the case that there's no compelling evidence that homework contributes to learning in elementary school and even in middle school — or in high school beyond two, 2 1/2 hours. It just doesn't do much.

I think the wisest thing is to try to inspire kids to learn at home. I don't want kids going home and being on social media or video games all night. I want them to be working on developing themselves, and I want teachers to inspire kids to learn. Tell them, "Here's what you're going to get out of this assignment. I think it will help you. Or find a different way to learn this material." But don't require homework and grade it because, in my

opinion, it confuses the means for the end.

You say the best way to motivate a child for the things you think he should focus on is to let him spend time on the things he wants to focus on. Why?

There's a scientist by the name of Reed Larson who studies adolescent development with a strong focus on motivation. And he concluded some years ago that the best way to develop a self-motivated, older-adolescent adult is to encourage their participation in their pastimes — in the stuff they love.

The point he's made is that, if a kid is deeply involved in something that he loves to do, he's going to create a brain-state that combines high focus, high energy, high effort and low stress. Ideally, at least in our professional lives, that's where we want to be most of the time. We want to be interested, engaged, active, alert, and focused but not highly stressed.

In my own experience, I was a C+ student in high school, but I spent at least two or three hours a night working on rock'n'roll music. I was in a band and learned to play instruments and learning chord structure and practicing harmony parts. Oftentimes, I'd tell myself, "Well, I'll go into my music room for half an hour, and then I'll do some homework." But commonly, two-and-a-half hours later, I'd come out and have no idea where all the time went.

I feel that I really sculpted a brain that, once I found something professionally that really speaks to me, I could go pedal to the metal. ■