

FREE YOUR CHILD'S SPIRIT AND INTELLECT!



**PROVE TEACHERS AND
EXPERTS WRONG!**

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Chapter 6. "Okay Mother, I can do it!"

How to motivate your child

The Spanish book spun through the air before thudding against the wall. "I've had enough of this!" Leo was screaming with frustration. "I don't want to type this stupid vocabulary! I had to type yesterday, and the day before, and I'm sick of it. I want to play soccer now with Ben instead!"

"But you know you have to do your typing training, and alphabet games. I don't know how many times I've had to say that to you!" his mother cried out in exasperation. Leo marched with a determined look towards the door. Although she tried to stop him, he wasn't taking any nonsense from her, he exited the room, slamming the door behind him.

"Leo, come back here at once!" she shouted angrily. The only reply was a muffled thump as the front door also slams shut. "Exercises over, front door shut, Leo gone", she murmured softly.

When soccer rules

A circumstance can arise where even the most engrossing alphabet games are not even half as exciting as usual. This usually begins with a knock on the door, and there stands a friend with a big smile, a ball under his arm or an invitation to go swimming or play computer games together. That said: children don't even need to do anything specific together.

Many boys and girls just want to talk, hang out and spend time together without being bothered by adults and without any chores to do. This is perfectly normal and understandable. Situations like these can usually be handled by choosing a suitable time for letter training where children do not "chillax" together with their friends.

Things become even more difficult for parents if, after practising for weeks on end, no visible success has been achieved. Children then lose interest in continuing with typing training and alphabet games. The child's reaction is marked by increasing reluctance and, depending on their disposition, defiance, truculence or aggression, and is often prone to clowning about or showing off. Those of a gentler temperament react to the lack of success with increasing uncertainty and tearfulness.

The majority of children improve visibly in reading and spelling within the first four weeks of training. However, it may also take as long as 12 weeks before initial progress is noticeable, depending on the extent of the dyslexia.

Around 10% per cent of children need *12 months or longer* until the reading and writing function develops at all and good results are eventually achieved. But even *after* the first signs of success have been noted, it still takes a while before the brain center for reading and spelling **matures** completely. All in all, your child should type and play alphabet games for at least *one* year.

Children are quite likely to lose their appetite for this method. The usual reaction of many parents in such a situation is to win through by ordering their children around, coercing them or offering rewards. "It doesn't matter why – you're going to type and that's that!" – "If you don't play the alphabet games, you can forget about going to your friend's birthday party!" – "Please, if you try I'll give you €2 ..."

However, this is not gratifying, as your child does not really want to stick at it. You will notice that your child will refuse to do anything voluntarily if you are either continually forcing or sweettalking them to practise and play the alphabet games. And even if they practise and play, their efforts are usually unenthusiastic and grudging. Not much fun!

Some parents give up completely if orders, "intimidation" or bribes do not work, thus impairing their relationship with their child. In addition to creating a bad atmosphere which then pervades family life, they also lose face in the eyes of their children.

As a result, these troubles are compounded in the long term. More daring children react to failure in school and the criticism of parents and teachers with defiance and rebellion, and this behaviour not infrequently also ends in open aggression towards these figures in authority.

Pupils who need a lot of recognition frequently act the clown both at school and in the family. In this case your child tries to draw notice to itself through constantly being at loggerheads with

parents and teachers. Adolescents look elsewhere for the admiration they so urgently need, including in such alternative activities such as smoking and alcohol.

The gentler spirits among them become increasingly uncertain and anxious in the face of their failures, and there is a danger that they may slip into the role of the misfit or outcast. Other schoolchildren (and siblings) sense this uncertainty and often react with rejection, the result being that such pupils frequently become mobbing victims.

Frequently, the child's previous circle of friends turns against them, shutting them out completely. They suffer as a result, and utterances such as "I don't want to live anymore" may then be heard more than once. These children are at risk. In these cases, depression is a familiar and dangerous companion. You should not hesitate to consult a specialist doctor, *whom you have faith in*, just to be on the safe side.

But things do not need to deteriorate to such extremes! It is within your power to avoid these various scenarios. What exactly can you do if your child does not want to practise anymore?

You have to reach out to your child so that, for their part, they develop an interest in typing training and, equally, persevere when it comes to playing alphabet games. Put simply, you need to build bridges! There are three steps involved here:

1. finding out what motivates your child
2. awakening its interest in practising
3. using positive criticism through motivational dialogue if setbacks occur

Step 1: Find out what motivates your child

When do people do things with vigour and zest? When they are *asked* to do them? When they are *goaded* into doing them? When they are *compelled* to do them? Or when they are *ignored*? No: They do them when they *want* to do them themselves! In other words, when they are motivated.

Begging your child or ordering it around will never really motivate them. The impetus to do something always comes from within: your child has to want to do it.

Definition: Motivation is demonstrated in voluntary, targeted action.

Consequently, if you want your child to listen to you and do the exercises, giving orders or organising their daily schedule simply is not enough. Your child must want to do these exercises themselves.

You have to motivate your child to adopt your goals so that they are turned into *their own* goals and they are willing to pursue them voluntarily! You think this is a contradiction in terms dear reader? Not at all! In this chapter, you will master this balancing act when you discover what exactly orientates, moves and **drives** your child on a personal level.

In the following exercises, you can then look for correlations between your child's own motivation, the targeted goal and establish a link to both. I would like to show you in this chapter how to win over your child in a fair and frank manner.

Every person possesses a variety of different innate motivations, and your child is no exception. These can be divided into two groups, namely *action-orientated* motives which spur us on to achieve *success, recognition and fulfilment*, and *defensive* motives which strive to achieve security and also social acceptance within a group.

Your task as a parent is to help your child fulfil their innate *action-orientated* and defensive motives through, in this case, typing exercises and alphabet games. Fulfilling motives means success for your child, and success is fun!

Observe your child to discern which motives are most perceptible. This is very easy to do through monitoring during normal day-to-day activities.

Let's take a look at the three main *pro-active* motivators:

1. **Self-Affirmation.** Does your child stubbornly persist at a task they have selected themselves, despite increasing difficulties, and then proudly show you the *results* of their efforts? "Self-affirmers" of this kind expect to receive praise for the **results** of their work. This praise is important, but of secondary significance, as the most important thing is that, having achieved their goal, *they can then pat themselves on the back!* they need and often want no audience.

2. **Social Representation.** Watch to see if your child is seeking the *glowing and enthusiastic admiration* from the group which it feels part of – and that at every opportunity. Your child expects to receive *recognition and wonderment* from this group for their "performance". This behaviour mirrors the second *pro-active* motivator – social representation. People motivated in this manner exploit every opportunity to shine before the group and only select tasks according to this criterion.

3. **Self-Fulfilment.** In contrast, this third *pro-active* motivator - the self-fulfilment motivated person couldn't really care less what other people think of their actions! It is the actual action, *the doing of the thing* that fulfils their motives. The creative task itself is the source of fulfilment.

Goal-attainment, praise and recognition are of secondary importance. The "self-fulfiller" is usually completely disinterested in that which is happening around them. *Paramount is the undertaking of creative action in itself.*

The Two Defensive Motivators

Both of these defensive motives are distinguished by a poorly developed sense of personal initiative, and the avoidance of risk reigns supreme.

1. The **Security** motive leads your child to avoid any endeavours which may harbour risks. These children continually ask what they should do and whether they are doing it right, just to be on the safe side.

2. **Social Acceptance.** In common with social representation, this second defensive motive, is also group-oriented, but with one very significant difference. Your child, motivated by social acceptance, integrates themselves into the group of its choice embedded as a "follower" or "fellow traveller"

They are almost desperate to be accepted by others, also against their better judgement. Even where they personally hold a different opinion to the majority of the group, they agree with the others in order to dispel any suspicions that they might be "different".

So then: how does the situation come about where your child actively tackles or refrains from performing a particular action (in our case typing exercises and alphabet games)? This depends on the degree to which the action corresponds to your child's motives.

If your child believes their motivational needs will be fulfilled through a particular action, they will act accordingly. However, should they believe that the action will not contribute anything towards fulfilment or even to the contrary, they will not carry it out.

In other words, you as a parent should ensure that your child identifies typing training and alphabet games as actions which will fulfil their motivational requirements.

The motivation profile

If you wish to motivate your child, you need to know which types of motives are indicated by particular behavioural traits. This can be achieved with the aid of a motivation profile.

The psychologist Herbert Leger developed a list of motivational manifestations which shape our actions in everyday life to aid identification of what he called the three *pro-active* and two defensive motivators as described above.

Pro-active motivators:

1. Self-affirmation

"Self-affirmers" have a need to prove themselves. They set their own goals and measure themselves against whether they achieve these or not. What is decisive here is success in terms of the targets which they have achieved.

The “self-affirmer” also expects to receive recognition from you: “Mom, Dad, I made a crane out of a thousand Lego bricks! Mom, look how I finished this puzzle! Isn't that great?” The main thing is that your child achieves its goal – it made the crane all on its own! A girl that persists in organising her dolls' corner until it is absolutely perfect and meets her satisfaction in every respect is also motivated in this way. She has achieved her objective and can now pat herself on the back with a feeling of enormous self-satisfaction.

Other distinctive features are also indicative of the self-affirmation motive:

Your child ...

- develops ambition, orients itself according to success in the outcome and regards difficulties as a personal challenge.
- sticks to decisions and sees them through after identifying with them.
- prefers to think for themselves and act independently.
- develops a dogged persistence when pursuing goals they have set themselves. This is especially illustrated through stubborn and aggressive behaviour when there is a risk of failure
- or irritating friends, parents or teachers without any consideration of the consequences for themselves (particularly if they believe their decisions and behaviour represent an obstacle to achieving an optimally successful outcome)
- Your child continually reverts to their own ideas and suggestions and tries to make these work
- is aware of their own value and performance, expecting to be praised accordingly and in the keeping of promises made to them
- frequently assumes that everybody else thinks as they do and, consequently, fails to demonstrate empathy, sensitivity and tolerance
- repeatedly acts like a steamroller in terms of their behaviour, believing as they do so that their own dedication is obvious to others
- lives for success. Sustained failure or palpable denial of accomplishment may, against their better judgement, lead them to tolerate the failures of others, but only because these deflect from their own poor standing.
- tends to have an exaggerated opinion of themselves. In cases where they get into difficulties as a result of their own actions, they try to “box” their way through. This frequently leads to even greater damage which cannot be repaired.

2. Social Representation

This motive is governed by the norms and values of the social group which your child regards as an important benchmark. They continually strive to occupy a position in the upper reaches, or better, the pinnacle of this social group.

Admiration is both expected and demanded from the social group your child selects. In this case, your child wants to build the *best* crane or organise the *loveliest* dolls' corner in their entire circle of friends and be recognised and praised as such by them all.

Other distinctive features of the motive Social Representation:

Your child ...

- develops a dynamism and dedication in all tasks and activities that signal **status**. However, other routine tasks and activities tend to result in procrastination, their passing on to others or a negligent approach, particularly if these are of an everyday nature.
- tries to score “spectacular” successes in areas which they find interesting because they are a confirmation of status (sometimes at the expense of others).
- selects tasks and activities according to these criteria.
- tends to highlight results of this nature and refer to them at every opportunity.
- tries to demean others, particularly in cases of “status competition”.

- regards conflicts with parents or teachers as a good opportunity to 'distinguish' themselves (being also not averse to employing unfair means in this respect).
- pounces on every opportunity to represent the group in the eyes of the outside world.
- tends to take command without permission to do so
- is hardly receptive to criticism and corrections.
- tries to stand out in every situation.
- Where there is no opportunity to present themselves in the context of practical requirements, they try to stand out through banalities and absurdities.

3. Self-fulfilment

Creative action in itself is decisive for people motivated in this way. The achievement of goals, adulation and success is of secondary importance. These individualists are frequently creative and tinker about, paint, decorate, build, write, think, rearrange and embellish all on their own.

They try out a wide range of different options and frequently fail to finish things because they are not result-oriented.

Other distinctive features are also indicative of the self-fulfilment motive:

Your child ...

- sets its own goals and ideas out in as creative a form as possible, identifies rigorously with these and pursues them doggedly despite resistance and failures, often over a longer period of time.
- concentrates on the action of doing when it comes to their objectives and ideas. Whether this action leads to tangible success is of secondary importance.
- feels challenged by that which is new or different. Things of this nature stimulate your child to become active, to experiment and to try things out.
- endeavours to give form to an image in their mind. They favour the creative over the traditional in this respect, and tend to tinker and fiddle about.
- frequently forgets functional requirements (reality) when realising tasks and embellishing ideas.
- as a result, they are usually fixated on ideas (are reluctant to turn away from actions which they perceive to be important in favour of other real-world tasks that require fulfilment).
- regards additional system-oriented requirements to be unnecessary and a burden (they believe they apply to everybody else, but not to themselves).
- sparkles with myriad suggestions and proposals.
- cannot be seriously deflected from their chosen path or their ideas.
- is very little affected by disintegration, a lack of acceptance or hostility, as long as they can pursue their ideas and beliefs.

The three basic motives described above are regarded as *pro-active* motivators or *action-orientated* motives. They are motives that create an active drive to create and achieve.

Defensive motivators

Social Acceptance

This motive aims to prevent becoming an outsider or a misfit in a group.

It is also governed by the norms and values of the social group your child feels attached to but, in contrast to social representation, this motive seeks *acceptance* in this social group (that is, to avoid falling in any way into the role of the outsider or misfit). A position of rank within the group is *unimportant*.

Thus, the social acceptance motive – which is frequently consciously acted out as acceptance *in the group* – can be considered more defensive in nature.

Your child *refrains* from activity to avoid being expelled from the group. The norm prevailing in the group dictates that, in a situation where all other members of the group are wearing green shoes, your child has to do the same. If the leader of the group suddenly thinks xyzzy music is “bullshit”, your child may well also say so, even though they really like this kind of music.

Other distinctive features also indicative of the social acceptance motivator are that:

Your child ...

- continually agrees and repeats the arguments of others, strengthening them as a result
- rarely says no to anybody, particularly in situations in which they shouldn't say yes (because of clearly discernible negative consequences for themselves, due to an obvious overburdening or because of infeasibility which is recognisable from the outset)
- always adapts to general moods and opinions, even where these are contrary to their own clearly expressed opinions stated beforehand
- avoids conflict if at all possible:
 - - agrees to things and tends to promise a lot or even everything. - - when it comes to avoiding conflict, they do a lot of things alone, - secretly try to go their own way.
- frequently suffers under the excessive burden and lack of a systematic approach to work when doing homework or placates others with empty promises and assurances
- conceals their own criticism behind the assertions of others or behind apparently objective facts (such as experience, conclusions drawn from earlier situations of a similar nature, proven recipes, generally applicable statements).

Defensive motive: Safety

If this is your child's primary motivation, they continually strive to avoid risk. For example, your child always holds your hand when crossing the street.

The child may gaze for long periods at other children from the window, asking their mother whether they should join the others in play before finally daring tentatively to approach them and asking to play with them.

As a consequence, this motive frequently leads to your child refraining from activities more than actually participating in them. Your child continually seeks reassurance.

Other distinctive features are also indicative of the motive, security:

Your child ...

- often seeks reassurance, in spite of the fact that they are familiar with the facts
- is fond of routine tasks and routine procedures
- demands rules
- tries to procrastinate when faced with more difficult, new or risky decisions
- likes to obtain additional approval for decisions

It is not difficult to see that your understanding of how your child is motivated is of enormous significance. More daring children need successes, recognition, time and space to allow their creativity to unfold.

However, should your child exhibit a need for security and acceptance, it is also up to you ensure that this need is addressed. If these defensive motives are fulfilled, you can then work together with your child in the search for ways to achieve little by little, the success and recognition that we all desire.

Consequently, it is useful to make a simple *motivational-profile* of your child if you wish to be able positively influence their behaviour. The complete motivation profile takes all five motivators into consideration, because every single person embodies all of these motives to varying degrees.

I am continuing to draw upon the findings of the psychologist Herbert Leger in this respect.

If you wish to compile a *motivation-profile* for your child, then observe him or her closely. This is easy. First compile a list of your child's activities so you can categorise their behaviour according to motives. Ask yourself the following questions while doing this:

- What does my child like to do?
- Do they play on their own? Sometimes? Always?
- What do they play?
- When do they become insolent or aggressive?
- Do they expect praise for doing things?
- Do they expect to be admired?
- Do they want to shine out in front of others?
- Is my child creative, inventive?
- Do they forget about the outside world during the above?
- Who do they play with?
- How do they get on with their friends?
- What makes my child happy?
- What annoys them?
- What do they prefer not to do?
- What opinions do they have?
- Whose opinion do they advocate?
- What makes my child uncertain?
- What makes my child anxious?
- Do they always ask permission to do something?

Following this, compare your observations with the following examples. Each of them mirrors a particular motive. I have mixed up the sequence so that it is not immediately apparent which motivator is being described.

The solutions are given after example no. 5. Think. Which of these scenes most closely reflects your child's situation?

Example 1

Steven finally attended his first private piano tuition lesson today. However, following lengthy negotiations, his mother had to go with him, as he would otherwise not have attended due to the extreme anxiety he felt.

She found it more than a little embarrassing, as he insisted that she be present during the lesson. At last they agreed that she would wait outside the door, but, despite this, he repeatedly called out to her to see if she was still waiting outside.

Example 2

Every afternoon without fail, twelve-year-old Jack plays soccer with his friends. He's a very good player, and his playmates are constantly urging him to become a professional when he's older. Jack likes to recount this at every possible opportunity. He's captain of the soccer team at school.

Recently his friends have started to show a preference for chasing each other around on their bicycles instead of playing soccer. Jack's not as good at this game, and he blames this on his "wobbly" front wheel. He thinks his friends are boring, and he tells them this as well. So instead he now plays soccer every day with the boys from the soccer club.

Example 3

Christine is invited to Sophie's birthday party. Frau Fischer has found a pretty frock for her that really suits Christine and which she likes to wear. But not today! And it almost comes to tears as her mother tries to convince her to do just that. "Chris, you know how pretty you look in it, and you love wearing it otherwise!"

"Yes, but not today! Sophie and her girlfriends all wear tight jeans, and I don't have any!"

"But you don't like that style. That's what you told me last week – before you got the invitation!" said Frau Fischer, distractedly.

"Yes, but I want to wear jeans to Sophie's party. She and her friends all think jeans are really cool, and I don't want to be the only one there in a stupid frock. You want me to have friends too, don't you Mummy?"

Example 4

Ruth, who is nine years old, likes to paint colourful pictures. She spends a lot of time happily painting alone in her room, carefully trying to capture the image of a girl on a rocking chair in every little detail.

Her mother calls her to set the table. "I've more important things to be doing at the moment", she answers cheekily. The consequence of this is an argument between Anja and her mother. After the meal, Anja apologises to her mother and then proudly shows her the completed picture. Her mother praises her for her efforts, and Ruth happily skips away.

Example 5

Day in, day out, Teresa cuts and glues, sticks and stitches and joins a variety of materials together. The patterns she has created for her Indian carpet are colourful, varied and very unusual.

Every time her parents look in on her, they find she has changed the carpet again! "Well, dear, when will the carpet be finished", asks her mother. "I don't really know, someday soon", replies Teresa with a somewhat disinterested air. "First I want to try again to capture the colour of the sky with other things."

Solutions: example 1 = security, example 2 = social representation, example 3 = social acceptance, example 4 = self-affirmation, example 5 = self-fulfilment.

However, it is sometimes difficult to understand why people do what they do purely on the basis of their actions. Their motives become clearer if their *reaction* in the event of *not* achieving their *objectives* is observed.

The following table illustrates how, according to the Leger model, a child (or adult) reacts according to its motivational make-up if obstacles arise and it fails to reach its goal. It is a fascinating additional aid which can be used to identify your child's motives with greater clarity.

Motive	1st stage	2nd stage	Conclusion
Self-affirmation	Rejection Aggressiveness	Defiance Stubbornness	Aggression against the criticising person (such as mother, teacher)
Social representation	Self-justification Compensation	Criticism of the group	Recognition is sought in another group
Self-realisation	Inertia	Continues with activity -secretive behaviour	Seeks in a different location or disinterest

You can compile	Safety	Evasion Pushes the matter away from him/herself	Formalisation (safeguarding, out of harm's way)	Acquiescence or aggressiveness <i>directed against oneself</i>	now a
	Social Acceptance	Justification Excuses Apparent adaptation	Evasion Flight	Resignation Self-pity Aggression or frustration	

motivation profile for your child on this basis. Estimate in relation to each individual motive the percentage to which the respective characteristics apply to your child.

The strength of each motive is estimated with a percentage between 0 and 100 - each motive is assessed *individually*.

Example: Estimation for Martin (12 years old)

Self-affirmation: 80 %

Social representation: 70 %

Self-fulfilment: 15 %

Social acceptance: 30 %

Security: 10 %

Martin's parent should ensure in this case that he can experience success in achieving goals (self-affirmation 80 %) and can shine in front of his friends or, in other words, his social group (social representation 70 %).

Let us assume that you now know your child's main motivators. It is then important to *link* these to the implementation of typing training and alphabet games right from the outset.

I will demonstrate below how you can reason with your child with regard to their motivational profile and how best to structure your *goal-orientated dialogue*.

Step 2: How you can make practising attractive for your child

This can be achieved through the *motivational dialogue*. This communication form demands from your child a specific *additional* task that has to be completed. Your child reacts with "Why?" and the objective here is to answer this as convincingly as possible, so as to encourage your child to type and play alphabet games enthusiastically from now on.

The motivational *dialogue*: Here's how to do it wrong

"Listen, Christian! I've read this great book in which it says that you only need to memorise letters to improve your reading and writing! This can also be achieved through playing. We can do it together!" said Frau Kimmich as she looked expectantly at her 11-year-old son.

"What do you mean? Letters? I *know* the letters, I'm not a baby or stupid!"

"No, no, you've got it wrong again. The thing is that this function needs to develop better in your brain. Everything seems to indicate that it is still underdeveloped. So, come what may, you're going to use this method aren't we!"

"Thanks very much, Mama, but there's nothing wrong with my brain! And as for this new method, we'll just have to see about that, won't we!" With that, Christian ran out of the room, slamming the door behind him.

What went wrong with this conversation? – The answer: just about everything!

The structure of a dialogue with:

- introduction

- addressing of the problem
- mutual development of a solution
- summary and conclusion

was simply not evident.

The *manner of communication* was wholly unsuitable, with no real communication taking place between the two. The mother just fired ahead, telling Christian what she wanted him to do and practically ignoring his reaction. His reaction to this was defiance.

Verbal reasoning techniques were almost completely absent. Frau Kimmich only focused on her son when she wanted to explain to him that something was not quite right with his brain. No surprise that he felt under attack as a result!

The motivational dialogue: Here's the right way:

In contrast to a chat, a dialogue in this sense, is always goal-oriented. It is your objective to win over your child's enthusiasm for typing exercises and alphabet games, which is why the 'discussion' should be structured.

Positive introduction

You should always launch a motivational dialogue in a *positive* manner. Using an **example**, you can show your child what they are capable of achieving or how likeable or constructive they can be (beware: no flattery!). Your aim is to connect with and awaken this energy.

This is important, as only too frequently the *problem* is immediately addressed at the beginning of the conversation, and your child feels immediately under attack. With a positive introduction, *your child is then the positive focus of the dialogue*.

Addressing the problem

Avoid accusations. You should illustrate the problem as a *shared* situation and name it clearly. Be receptive to any objections your child makes, showing understanding for their opinion without reinforcing it.

Finding a solution together

This phase of the dialogue is frequently the longest, and it is particularly important for your reasoning be in line with your child's *motivational profile*. In other words, you should show your child that typing exercises and alphabet games will contribute to fulfilment of their motivational needs: **success, recognition and safety**.

You should refrain from trying to impose. Work instead with suggestions and examples. Show understanding for any objections your child may have, and reason with them, employing the "if, then" strategy ("if you do this, then you will achieve that").

Also allow your child to propose solutions, as this will give them an opportunity of ownership. You can then see whether their proposals will contribute to achieving the commonly defined goal.

If they do, it is imperative that these suggestions be employed as part of the agreement. If not, explain why using the "if, then" strategy and offer your own suggestion.

If the child's proposals for a solution do contribute to achieving the objective but are in themselves partially inadequate, supplement them with your own suggestions.

Summary

Summarise the results of the dialogue and secure these with "Okay?" or "Agreed?" to make sure that your child and any others involved are in accord with what has been agreed upon. This should be achieved if you have conducted the dialogue openly and your reasoning has been skilful. You can then record the result in writing.

Success monitoring

Safeguard the measures by agreeing to a system of success monitoring from the outset and designating a firm date for this (such as after *one* week in each case).

For example, I would like to describe a motivational dialogue with an “pro-actively motivated” child. Let us assume that the results of the motivational analysis are as follows:

- Self-affirmation: 80 %
- Social representation: 65 %
- Self-fulfilment: 15 %
- Social acceptance: 40 %
- Security: 30 %

You will notice that successes are important for this child, and they want to achieve them for themselves. Of secondary importance, but also significant is their need for recognition and admiration in the group. The motivational dialogue should now be conducted in line with these pro-active motivators.

Example: Christian Schnell

An indication of how this can be done is illustrated in the following conversation between Christian, a pro-active motivated 11-year-old boy, and his parents.

Positive introduction

Mother: “Christian, please sit down with us here for a moment. Do you remember that time when you wanted to build a hut in the garden using branches, leaves and even the floorboards from the workshop? You almost cried with rage when it kept falling apart. But you kept at it until the hut was finished. Your friends were thrilled, and so were your Papa and I.”

Addressing the problem

Father: “Now listen, we've got a problem: we need you to show this determination again! You know, your reading and spelling in school could be a lot better, even though we've tried everything to help you.”

Christian: “I know it really gets on my nerves as does Mr Smith; he can't explain the rules at all. And the others in the class just keep....”

Finding a solution together

Mother: “Slow down Chris. Look, I think I've found a good solution that's just right for a determined guy like you who doesn't just give up at the first hurdle. And the method you can use to improve your reading and spelling skills is really easy. All you need to do is type texts out and/or play alphabet games every day.”

Christian: “Why alphabet games?”

Mother: “The problem is with the letters, because you haven't memorised them properly.”

“Now just a minute! I'm not a baby, and apart from that, I *know* all the letters. Would you like me to write the alphabet out while you watch?”

Mother: “I *understand* what you're trying to say, Christian. Of course, you know your letters. But the fact is that they need to be imprinted even deeper and stronger in your long-term memory bank – just like programs on a computer hard drive.

And when this adjustment is secured, the program runs automatically to set and identify the right letters in the correct order, imagine writing a dictation and getting a 1 for it, and being able to read much better than the other children. You can do it! You can prove to yourself and everybody else just what you're capable of! And it only takes twenty minutes a day to achieve this.”

Christian: “I don't know, I mean, I've still got to do my homework, and then another twenty minutes each day on top of that – I won't have much time left for myself.”

Mother: “Well yes, I understand you point. Okay, we'll do it this way: From now on, we'll forget all our supplementary reading and spelling exercises.

Secondly, to save time I'll read everything out to you in other subjects, and we'll turn it into a question-and-answer quiz.

Thirdly, I won't grumble anymore about essays after you have written them. I'll help you with the structure. This method is also really great for this! And you'll save time in the end."

Father: "I'm sure you've got some ideas about how we can use these typing exercises to your advantage for your homework. Come on, think of a few!"

Christian: "Yeah, well, I'm not sure. Could I type out French and English as well?"

Mother: "Yes, that's a great idea! If you do that, we're sure you'll get better results a lot quicker! And, *last but not least*, I'll ask your class teacher if you can also hand in your homework *typed*."

Christian: "Well I wish you a lot of luck with that one, Mama!"

Father: "Okay Chris, when will we start?"

Christian: "Well, definitely not today! Maybe tomorrow?"

Summary

Father Schnell: "That's great, I'll take your word for it! Tomorrow, and every day, you'll type at three in the afternoon and play alphabet games for 20 minutes, okay?"

Christian: "Yeah, okay, don't pile it on. But I've got something else to do now ..."

Monitoring Success

Mother: "Good. I'll make a note of what we have agreed upon, ok?"

Christian: "Okay, Mama."

"Now, same time, same place next week we'll check and review to see just how well we're keeping to this agreement. Okay?"

Christian: "Okay, Mama."

Mother: "Super, I'm really proud of you and you know what? This is going to get results!"

Radiate confidence – your child is sure to pick it up! Record this agreement accurately in writing and read it out at the next meeting.

I purposely selected a pro-actively success motivated child in this example, because these children are the most difficult to convince. *Defensively* motivated children are more inclined to do that which their parents wish them to do. The dialogue with them is, in principle, conducted in the same manner, but you should select other arguments and take more time to *encourage* your child and give them a feeling of security and support.

The other objective here is to arouse the *pro-active* motives in your child and to bring them out of the defensive and into the offensive-mode. Your child should *not do it for you*, but for themselves

I have listed the most important arguments for each motive in the following table. You can employ these to convince a child. In addition, it also contains objections which your child may have, along with suitable answers with which you can address these objections in a positive manner while continuing to reason with the child.

Motive:	Parents' argument:	Child's objection:	Positive uptake/ Further argument:
Self-affirmation	You can achieve success with this method.	I can't do this.	Yes, you can, and we'll help you. If we do it together, you'll be unbeatable!

	Show your classmates just what you're capable of!	I don't care what those idiots think.	I can imagine that the others get on your nerves. But prove to yourself that you can do it!
	Ten fewer mistakes in dictation, that's a target worth achieving.	You always want me to do so much!	Because you're so important to me. If anybody can do it, then you can! Show what you're capable of.
Social Representation	You will be one of the best in the class.	The class stinks.	I can understand your disillusionment. If you keep at it, you'll get to where you should be – right at the top!
	School will be a lot more fun if you have better marks in English and Spanish	I don't care about that; I can have fun when I'm dancing.	I see. How about fun and amazement in the disco <i>and</i> at school? That would be the perfect mix, and you can achieve both!
	You want to go to secondary school? (or university, depending on the age of the child).	There's nothing that great about secondary school / university.	Maybe you're right. But if you type regularly, you can <i>choose</i> where YOU want to go.
Self-fulfilment	You can develop your creativity even further using this method.	That's not so important. I'm also not very bothered by the dyslexia.	I find your calmness really impressive! Combine it with typing, and you'll be able to express your ideas even better! I'll help you.
	You're a creative person. All these mistakes just diminish your performance, you can change this.	Typing every day and playing the same games will be boring – the same thing every day!	You can play really creative alphabet games, and think up a few of your own. If you can read and spell better, you will find it easier to develop your ideas – along with having more time for your thoughts and concepts.

Step 3:
to

Social acceptance	This method will help you achieve marks that are just as good as those of your friends.	Yeah, okay, <i>even more</i> work. Nobody wants me to have any fun in this life!	Oh, you poor thing! Come on, cheer up! If you practise regularly, you'll be successful in the end and have more free time for yourself and your friends. We'll do this together.
	You can go to secondary school / university, just like the others.	I'll never be able to do that, it's much too much for me.	I appreciate that you think it is a lot. If you tackle this step by step, you'll get there very nicely and you'll be delighted just like your friends. Now come on!!
	Typing and alphabet games will get you better marks, and that's fun.	It's just more work! I've already got tons of homework that I have to do correctly. How am I supposed to do this too?	I understand your concerns, but don't worry, we'll do this together. And I'll speak with your class teacher.
Safety	This method will really ensure that you make less mistakes, and you'll have more fun at school.	Okay, I'll do it at some stage.	Precisely – how about right now. Come on, let's get down to work to make sure you're safe and sound!!

How

reprimand your child without demotivating it

To monitor the level of success, make a note how often your child practises in accordance with the agreement, and how often they do not. It is also *imperative* to note your child's improvements in reading and writing in this respect – *including small ones!* This will ensure that both you and your child have increasing evidence that the problem is more and more under control, and that you are not at the mercy of the problem!

Time and again we see that, although children practice typing and playing day in, day out, they unfortunately still get a 6! However, if we look closer, we see that your child no longer makes 30 mistakes in dictation, but only 20 – and nobody says anything!!

In other words, a 30% improvement is evident, but this is not officially appreciated by teachers and sometimes missed by the parents. It is therefore even more *imperative* for you yourself to recognise improvements.

When it comes to spelling, it is the number of mistakes which is indicative of your child's progress. In this case, there is only one thing to do: give praise, and lots of it!

The emphasis with regard to monitoring your child's success is always on that which your child has done. For example, if they have typed on four days and then not on three, you should evaluate this effort as positive: "You typed on four days, that's good!"

You should then indicate that the other three days were a wasted opportunity, there is still more to be achieved and the agreement must be kept in full. Tell your child that you are disappointed – not personally in the child, but in its behaviour.

Encourage your child to make proposals for improvements. These, in turn, should be noted for the next talk. So, keep record in a folder specifically named Monitoring (your child's name) Success

How to Criticise

First, here's how not to:

"Okay Christian, you, lazybones!" his father says to the boy in a provocative tone of voice. "Why are you constantly moaning about this typing exercise? Your mother has told you a thousand times that you have to do it. I'm getting a little bit tired of your tantrums every evening.

Do you realise just how hard and long I have to work every day, just so you can have an iPad, an iPhone and now a brand-new bicycle? Well? Do you really appreciate what that entails? Your mother also works every day, and all you ever do is run off like a little child.

From now on, you're going to type, and as far as I'm concerned, you'll play those weird alphabet games every day. Now get out of my sight! Go to your room and think about what you need to do to improve yourself!"

Christian meets his mother in front of the door to his room. She is almost in tears. "Chris, please don't behave like this, there's a dear, okay? We only want what's best for you. You don't want to fall behind and have to do part-time jobs after you've finished school for the rest of your life, do you? You know what? If you do what we want you to, you can choose a new TV for your bedroom, okay?" she says in a trembling voice.

Christian pulls back his shoulders. "Well okay, but then I want the PlayStation XXL+ to go with it!" he replies cheekily.

This rather exaggerated example illustrates the type of mistakes parents often make.

The *manner of communication*: The father talked incessantly, made accusations and gave orders. He didn't let Christian get a word in. He didn't even stop to check whether what he said had been received and understood by Christian.

The mother only let Christian speak after she had catapulted him into a power position with her bribery attempt – which, of course, he took immediate advantage of!

The *rhetorical techniques*: To be honest, there was a complete absence of dialogue structure. The father made a speech, an aimless monologue. The mother ceded what was left of her diminishing authority by begging instead of reasoning.

The *structure of a dialogue* with an introduction, addressing of the problem, the solution and a summary was non-evident. Aside from this, no success monitoring was agreed upon. Failure guaranteed!

How to criticise fairly and effectively

You should employ a *critical dialogue technique* if your child fails to honour agreements. In other words, use it if the mutual plan for regular typing and playing of alphabet games is at risk.

Seen as a motivational instrument (in spite of its title), the critical dialogue is also a mutual search for solutions. The structure remains the same as with the motivational dialogue, with:

- introduction
- illustration of the problem
- mutual search for a solution
- summary and success monitoring.

Example: Critical Dialogue with the pro-actively motivated Christian Wagner

Positive introduction

Mother: "Chris, good that you're here! Take a seat. Would you like a glass of something? That was a super cup game on Saturday! Your lot played really well, even though the other side is in the league above your team, and you almost won! You really led your team well. Well done, Chris, Papa and I are really proud of you!"

Christian: "Thanks, Mama, thank you Papa, and it was nice that both of you could come to the game, your support was great!"

Addressing the problem

Mother: "We were happy to be there, my boy! Eh, Christian, we've got a problem."

Christian: "What's wrong, Mama?"

"Chris, you didn't want to do your typing training yesterday afternoon, and when I asked you about it, you simply exploded and then cleared off to play soccer with your friends! To be quite frank, you haven't shown much of an inclination to type or play alphabet games recently. I find that very disappointing."

Christian: "Yes, well, I didn't mean it the way it seemed, Mama, but this typing training is really getting on my nerves!"

Mother: "I can imagine, Chris, but everything has its price. If you don't stick to it, your marks in German will remain poor, not to mention English and Spanish. And it's questionable whether you'll pass your final school examination with good marks. In fact, it's unsure whether you'll pass at all. What do you think the consequences of having bad results or failing the examination would be?"

Christian: "That won't happen! I want to be an engineer, and I need good marks in this exam and I want to study in Konstanz!"

Finding a solution together

Father: "You see, and that's why we're sitting here together to help you. Engineers have to read a lot of books too. If you fail to achieve your own goals, you'll be terribly, terribly disappointed in yourself."

Christian: "Yeah, and I certainly don't want to be the worst among my friends, with miserable exam results!"

Father: "Well good, then you have to type and imprint the letters continually."

Christian: "But I've been doing that for months and it's no help!"

Mother: "Now take it easy, let's take a closer look at this together. You're now making a lot fewer spelling mistakes. You used to make more than 35 mistakes in each essay, but last week there were only 12! You're also making excellent progress in English and you obviously understand the grammar much better."

Christian: "Yes, when you look at it that way, you're right, Mama, but the mark for the English essay wasn't any better than before."

Mother: "I can understand your disappointment. But if you stick to it, your marks for essays will also improve over time. The fact that you hardly used to read is also relevant. I mean, you've noticed yourself that you now pick up a book much more often. That's really super! And it will soon pay off for you in the form of better essays!"

After dealing with the teenager's objections, the search to find a solution together can continue.

Mother: "Okay Chris. I'm sure you have a suggestion as to how we can rid ourselves of the problem with the typing exercise and alphabet games that are not being done!"

Christian: "Yeah! Okay, I'll do my typing, without complaining, or should we play a game. Could we not buy *Scrabble*? It's a bit more challenging!"

Father: "We can do that, if you like."

Summary

Mother: "Great, Christian! Let me just summarise what we have noted and agreed. Your spelling has really improved immensely, and you're reading more. You're going to continue to do the alphabet exercises every day – without complaining or grumbling."

Christian: "Okay, Mama. And I'm sorry about yesterday."

Mother: "Very well. If you keep this up, you'll be sure to be at university Konstanz studying engineering in 18 months. We're absolutely convinced that you can do it!"

Success monitoring

Father: "Okay. I suggest we meet again in a week at the same time to see how well things have worked out. Okay? Agreed? Good, Chris, then give it your best! If you stick to it until the end of the year, then maybe we can talk about that new laptop that you would like."

Conclusion

When conducting this dialogue, always strive to achieve a solution which comes from your child. If none is forthcoming, then make a suggestion which gives them the opportunity to fulfil his motives.

In the event of negative behaviour, depict this as a self-impediment for your child. Using positive comparative examples, illustrate the areas in which your child is good (sport, skills when working with their hands, talent when playing, painting and in puzzles, etc.).

Look also for examples in the area of social behaviour, such as an affectionate relationship with animals or siblings, occasions where, for example, your child showed they were friendly or helpful. Draw on at least two examples as a contrast to any point of criticism you make.

Summarise the agreed measures and determine when they should be checked. This success monitoring should *always* be realised in a *positive* manner. The motto should be: "What was good, and what could be better?"

The first improvements with typing training and alphabet games are usually apparent after four weeks. In most cases, your child begins to read better, and the number of spelling mistakes diminishes.

In this regard, it is *your* task to observe your child attentively at all times to determine any improvements of this kind, regardless of how minor these may be. If you show these to your child, they then have measurable proof that their efforts are paying off.

A child can rapidly lose interest if they notice that they are not improving. In other words, you must motivate your child further until the promised improvements become apparent.

Even after this, you should continue to look for evidence that shows that your child is still making progress, and then praise them for this. If your child starts to read better than before, then praise them emphatically and show them why. You and your child are on the right path!

Experience shows that a child needs at least *one* year until they have mastered their dyslexia. Be on the alert when your child starts with the first or second foreign language, as reading and spelling difficulties may resurface. In this case, have your child take up typing training (especially for vocabulary and grammar) and the alphabet games again, preferably immediately at the introduction of the new foreign language.

Doing this will help you win the cooperation of your child. But what about their teachers?