



Goal-Directed Behavior

Small Victories

Pre-Teaching/ Guiding Language:

Celebrating small accomplishments or even daily tasks helps us to feel motivated to complete larger, more complicated goals. Breaking the idea that only the “big things” deserve celebrations is necessary for us to maintain our attention and increases our drive towards our longer-term goals. When you celebrate or acknowledge your small victories, your mood naturally increases due to your brain releasing dopamine into your system. This gives you the energy to continue forward! Your acknowledgments and celebrations do not need to be huge; this can be as simple as rewarding yourself with a break, having a friend notice how hard you’ve been working, or a teacher saying “no homework” because the class worked so hard today. Try and think about how you can acknowledge your own small victories and those of your friends and classmates!

This strategy reinforces the skills taught in the high school student-directed strategy ***Celebrate the Small Stuff.***

Key Takeaways:

- Students will understand the importance of celebrating the “small stuff”.
- Students will increase their attention to positive details.
- Students will increase their ability to track small milestones.

Duration + Materials:

- 5 minutes

Key Vocabulary:

- **Victories-** Achievement of mastery of success in a struggle or endeavor.
- **Accomplishments-** Something that has been achieved successfully.
- **Dopamine-** A compound present in the body as a neurotransmitter and a precursor of other substances including epinephrine.



Activity:

1. Introduce the idea of celebrating the small victories to your class.
2. Use the discussion questions to have a short conversation around what small victories your students believe deserve celebrating.
 - a. Remind them that different things are hard for different people, sometimes just waking up in the morning deserves a celebration!
3. Pick a short time once a week to allow a student to share a small victory that happened for them.
 - a. Suggestion would be either Monday morning to kick off your week, or Friday afternoon to have a positive end before the weekend.
 - b. This should be no more than 2-3 minutes for sharing and a round of applause from the class!
4. Be sure to do this weekly and choose a different student each week.
 - a. This week prompts students to be aware of the good things that happen and will encourage them to always be prepared to share.

Discussion Questions:

1. What are some everyday things you think deserve celebrations or recognition?
2. What feels hard for you that you think is easy for others?
3. How do you like to be acknowledged?
4. How would you reward yourself for completing a difficult, everyday task?

Reinforcement Activities:

1. Teachers should draw attention to everyday victories, for example, when the class has perfect attendance, everyone passes a pop quiz, or the whole class remembers to push in their chairs!