



## Why? Why? Why? Why? Why?

“Why do I need to eat my Broccoli?”  
 “Because it is good for you.” “Why?”  
 “Because they are full of Iron.” “Why?”  
 “Because they are green.” “Why?” “Because  
 they are!” “Why?” “  
 BECAUSE I SAID SO!”  
 “Why?”

Oh, those young ones have the ability to push us to the limit. If we take the time, however, we see that all they want to do is to communicate with us. All we want to do is to relax and forget about the boss who asked us to complete yet another difficult project with an impossible deadline. Life is just so hard!

Why do not use the child’s example and become more inquisitive and start asking “Why?”

In her book ***Building cathedrals not walls: Essays for parents and teachers***, Maren Schmidt describes how the “Five Why’s” can help adults to understand children better. She said that it is important to involve the child in the process. You should not try to “fix” or dominate the child, but rather work with the child to see what they think and feel.

She explains that her philosopher friend Dr. Carey maintained that if we ask “Why?” five times we could discover the root cause of a problem or a core value inherent in a situation.

Let’s put the idea to practice....

“Why do you not eat your fish?...Because I don’t like it. Why do you not like your fish?.....It does not taste good.....Why does it

not taste good?.....It hurts my throat. Why does it hurt your throat? .....Because the fish bones hurt my throat.....If I show you how to remove the fish bones, will you try to eat the fish.....Okay I will try.”

Do you see how the “Five Whys” help you to find the root cause instead of getting angry because your child does not want to eat fish?

I can remember the “Because I said so” that was used so often by my parents. I grew up in an Afrikaans family where children were taught to be seen and not heard. Inspired by Stephan Covey’s ***Seven Habits of Effective People***, I made “First seek to understand before you want to be understood” my motto in my class. Maria Montessori taught that we should respect children, and to try to understand how they feel before we judge them. This approach makes life with children so much easier. We solve problems respectfully by understanding and in doing so we defuse the situation.

Try to ask your child “Why?” this month. Try to find root cause of what, at first take appears to be outright opposition. Work with your child to see what they think and feel. Remember to work **with** children, resisting the urge to control every situation. You would be surprised how much easier your life becomes when your child grasps that there are reasons for things, and that his reasons are also recognized.

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