

Motivation Formula

8. *Mind Over Matter*

Spatial Requirements: Regular classroom setup: little or no space required

Activity Type: Group

Grades: K-12

Group Size: 2 or more

Time: 5 minutes

Introduction: A lot of our success in achieving goals depends on our ability to put “mind over matter.” We have more power in our minds than we ever use. There is a term called self-fulfilling prophecy, which means that what we think is what will take place. This is similar to the benefits of “positive self-talk” and “believing in change.” This activity is designed to help students realize the power of the mind in accomplishing goals, and the effect the mind can have on our actions and abilities.

Materials:

- 1 15-inch piece of string per student
- 1 Lifesaver candy per student

Activity:

Give each student a 15-inch piece of string with a Lifesaver tied to one end. Have each student hold their string up in front of their face so that the Lifesaver hangs about six inches from their eyes. Their arms, elbows, and hands must not be touching anything, such as a desk or a chair. Now have them stop the Lifesaver from swinging by using their other hand to stop its motion. Tell them that they are going to make the Lifesaver start to swing by just using their mind power. Have them focus carefully on the Lifesaver and think, “left, right,” while imagining it moving from left to right. While they are doing this, you will be saying slowly, “Left, right, left, right.” Repeat this phrase over and over until the Lifesavers start to swing back and forth. Most of the students will have their Lifesavers moving left and right. This is because the mind sends signals to the hand to move the Lifesaver in the same direction as the command you are giving. The success depends on the fine motor development of the students as well as how hard they are concentrating.

If you really want to amaze them, change the commands from “left to right” to “front, back” or “around and around” and have them focus on the same movement. For advanced students, you can start the Lifesavers moving in a circle and then change the direction and make the Lifesaver move in a circle in the opposite way.

Processing the Experience:

- How many of you were able to make the Lifesaver follow my commands?
- How powerful is our mind (positive self-talk)?
- How do our actions influence what we think and say to ourselves?
- In what kinds of activities do your thoughts or self-talk impact your behavior?
- How can our thoughts and self-talk impact our goals?