

# Motivation Formula

## 10. *Persnickety*

**Spatial Requirements:** Classroom with moderate space required

**Activity Type:** Movement/group

**Grades:** 2-12

**Group Size:** 4 or more

**Time:** 10 minutes

**Introduction:** The word “persnickety” is a fun word to say, and this activity is a fun way of looking at how we make choices. It might be a good introduction to explain to students that persnickety means being careful about our choices because we want only the best and the finest. This activity is designed to help students see that our choices – whether narrow or broad – affect our futures, and should therefore be deliberate and thought-out. This activity also ties in to the “Reality Ride.”

**Materials:**

- 1 piece of paper per student
- 1 pen or pencil per student
- Blackboard or whiteboard

**Activity:**

Make sure you have an empty space in four areas or corners of your room for students to move to depending on their choice. Have students gather to the middle of the room. Explain that you are going to give them four choices, and they are to choose one of them. If possible, label each corner/area with a number. Then read the first question in Choice List 1 and have them go to the corner that corresponds with their answer. Ask a few students to share why they made the choice they did, and continue this for all the questions in Choice List 1.

For Choice List 2, have students sit at their desks or tables and hand out papers and pencils. This time, when students are given a choice, they are to write the number response on their paper. Have a few students explain their choices.

Finally, give students Choice List 3, and have students write down their responses to these open-ended questions. Then go over each choice and have as many students as possible share what they wrote and why.

**Choice List 1:**

1. If you were a cookie what kind would you be? A. Chocolate chip; B. Peanut butter; C. Oatmeal; D. Sugar
2. If you were an animal, what would you be? A. Dog; B. Cat; C. Frog; D. Porcupine
3. If you were an entertainer, what kind would you be? A. Singer; B. Dancer; C. Actor; D. Musician
4. If you were a store, what kind would you be? A. Grocery; B. Clothing; C. Toy; D. Furniture

**Choice List 2:**

1. If you were a type of candy, what would you be? A. Chocolate bar; B. Sucker; C. Bubble gum; D. Licorice
2. If you were a bird, what kind would you be? A. Eagle; B. Penguin; C. Hummingbird; D. Flamingo
3. If you were stranded on a desert island with one person, who would you choose? A. Your best friend; B. Your Mom; C. Your teacher; D. Bill Nye
4. If you could go on a vacation, where would you choose to go? A. Disneyland; B. A beach house; C. Camping; D. New York City

**Choice List 3:**

1. If you were a drink, what kind would you be?
2. If you could meet a famous person from history, whom would you choose?

3. If you could go anywhere in the world, where would you go?
4. If you were a piece of furniture, what would you be?

**Processing the Experience:**

- Which choices were easiest? Why?
- Which choices were hardest? Why?
- Did other people's choices influence your choices at all in the first round?
- What influenced your choices in round 2 or 3?
- If your choices in the first two rounds hadn't been limited, would you have made different choices?
- Which choices did you think about the most before making them? Why?
- In real life, do you have choices with limited options? What are they?
- In real life, do you have choices with unlimited options? What are they?
- Which kind of choices do you have to think about more? Which are you more careful about? Why?
- Do you think it is good to make decisions based on what others are doing? Why?
- What kind of decisions do you think it would be good to be persnickety about?
- In what ways can your choices affect your motivation?