

Rick Lavoie's "The Motivation Breakdown" is about motivating the "forgotten" student that traditional methods don't always reach. He began by explaining that he targets parents, coaches, and teachers. There are several questions he speaks of. A lot of people wonder why a student is motivated one day but not the next or why a student is motivated in language arts but not reading. Dr. Lavoie then begins saying that most people don't understand motivation and in fact before this, he didn't even understand motivation.

Rick Lavoie speaks of several myths and misconceptions of motivation. The first one is that, "nothing motivates that kid." There are times as teachers where we become frustrated with a student and in a sense give up on their capability to be engaged, motivated, learners. Rick says that all human behavior is motivated and I agree with this statement. It's really just about how you motivate that student.

Another misconception that Dr. Lavoie speaks of is performance inconsistency. He talks about the good and the bad days. Something that I think is really interesting that he brings up is how it isn't what we do on the bad days but the real test is what we do on the good days. Often time's teachers get frustrated with a kid who always has bad days then all of a sudden has a good one. They say things like, "see, I told you you are capable of this." Or "well, I guess you can do it after all can't you." We need not pick apart bad days but celebrate the good ones.

A third misconception that Dr. Lavoie brings up is that, "That kid is so lazy, he won't try." He mentions that laziness is often learned helplessness. Laziness is a completely different thing than learned helplessness. He says that often times we treat them the same and that is the first mistake. He used a cool analogy about two people with a headache. They both go to the doctor with the same symptoms yet ones getting brain surgery and

another just has allergies. Both laziness and learned helplessness have the same symptoms yet different diagnosis. Dr. Lavoie then compares learned helplessness to a trained elephant at the zoo. Elephants are strong and could easily pull the chain out of the ground, but they've been taught since they were babies to give rides to people and walk around in a circle. Rick encourages us to encourage our kids to break the chain.

After speaking on common misconceptions, Rick Lavoie goes into his views on rewards. He says flat out, "They don't work." Dr. Lavoie says that if you just give stuff to kids they aren't going to learn it. It will only be short term. He says that rewards are foolish and teachers, parents, and coaches use it because it's the easy way out. For example, if a child is not doing his math homework and we give him a reward for doing his math homework we still don't know the reason for the lack of motivation. But if we take the time to look at all the possible reasons the child could not be doing his homework we could get somewhere with that child. He also talks to something similar to what I did as a child. I remember the pizza hut book reward challenge. It motivated me to read but only so I could get pizza, not so I could read and learn. Dr. Lavoie says the same thing. The food reading clubs only motivate for the food not to read.

I really learned a lot from Dr. Lavoie and thought that the misconceptions he talked about will only help me become a better teacher. Keeping those in mind will be important in the classroom. I could see myself going back to his motivational talk to remind myself of his recommendations for certain situations. Motivation is such an important part of teaching and Rick gives some great tips and suggestions.