

Defining Success



A 10-minute lesson for grades 2-12 (at home or school)

It's March Madness! Sixty-eight men's and women's teams enter their respective tournament and only one is crowned champion. Can only one team be "successful?" Are all the other teams failures?

Everyone wants to be successful, but how we define and measure success can be troublesome. Often, people define success in ways that they cannot control. It's entirely possible that the team that loses in the championship game played to its absolute best and simply lost to a better team. In that instance, if we define success as winning, then success was beyond their control. Perhaps the officials made a poor call that gave the opposing team free throws to win the game – again, "success" was beyond their control.

So how should we define success? John Wooden offers this definition: "Success is peace of mind which is a direct result of self-satisfaction in knowing you did your best to become the best you are capable of becoming."

School Activity

Ask students to brainstorm how they define success. Put their

ideas on the board. Discuss each definition of success, and the instances in which success is defined in a way as to be out of their control. Discuss why it is problematic to define success in ways that we cannot control. What is a good definition of success? How can students hold themselves accountable to doing their best “to become the best you are capable of becoming?”

Home Activity

Have a family discussion about success. As each family member to share how they define success. Discuss each definition of success, and the instances in which success is defined in a way as to be out of their control. Discuss why it is problematic to define success in ways that we cannot control. What is a good definition of success? How can each family member hold themselves accountable to doing their best “to become the best you are capable of becoming?”

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