



## Habit One: Be Proactive

Be proactive means to take responsibility for your choices and actions. Habit one is the groundwork for all other habits, which is why it is introduced first. Be proactive says: "I am in charge of my own life. I can choose how I react to other people or situations. I am in control of me." Young children can easily learn to understand that different choices produce different outcomes. The goal is to teach them to think about those results before they take action. When you talk about Habit One at home, parents can focus on teaching children to take care of themselves, take care of their things, react or not react to others' behavior, plan ahead, and think about what the right thing to do is. Most of us, adults included, react to a situation immediately, without taking time to think about the results of our actions. Part of Be Proactive is being able to stop and think before we act.

### Activities to Try at Home:

1. Brainstorm ways to be proactive at home. (Clean up toys before going to bed, go to bed on time, think about responding to a sibling who upsets you, think about what things in life you have control of).
2. Roll play stopping and thinking before we act in different situations. Use the following ideas to get started, and then think of some that can be immediately applicable to your child's life.
  - a. (In this role play, you should be your child's sibling.) Tell your child that you broke his or her favorite toy by accident.
  - b. (In this role play, you should play the part of your child and your child should play the part of you.) Tell your child that you are "sooooo bored" and there is nothing to do. Complain that no one wants to play and that he or she (as the parent) needs to find something for you to do.
3. Check out some of the following picture books at the library to use as a springboard for discussion about "being proactive."
  - a. King Bidgood's in the Bathtub by Audrey Wood—The King's helper takes initiative and saves the day.
  - b. The Little Engine that Could by Watty Piper—Even though the Little Engine is not the biggest, the fastest, or the newest, it just keeps trying.
  - c. Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day by Judith Vorst—Alexander is not being the leader of his attitude, something he has control over.
  - d. Mirette on the High Wire by Emily Arnold McCully—Mirette demonstrates determination and persistence by convincing the Great Bellini to teach her the tricks of walking on the high wire. Mirette uses what is in her circle of control to help the Great Bellini overcome his fears.

