

# One Easy Way to Prepare for the Greatest Year of Your Life

If you'd like something different to think about this week and next, choose initiative.

Especially if you'll be with others, and you want to be a blessing, choose initiative. Talk with your children so they'll do the same.

Initiative is recognizing and doing what needs to be done before being asked. Initiative is action. It's helpful. Purposeful. Directed. About others. Tasks to bless people.

Initiative is "just do it" now.

Choose to see what you can do for the people you're with. Have ears to hear. Help your children see and hear in these ways, too. Talk about this idea. Model the behavior. Reward it with "Thanks!"

Picture your family at your mom's for dinner. She's cooking when you and your children arrive, and the table isn't set. There are maybe four possibilities for your children:

- They don't notice the need and do their own thing. This is not good.
- They pay some attention to their grandmother and ask, "Do you need any help?" This is good.
- They ask, "May I set the table for you?" This is better.
- They know where the dishes are and set the table, knowing it needs to be done. This is best. This is initiative.

You arrive home with a car full of groceries.

- Adults and children who are home pretend not to notice they could help. This is not good.
- Someone yells from another room, "Do you need any help?" This is good.
- Someone asks, "May I help you bring the bags in from the car?" This is better.
- Someone stops what he or she is doing, meets you in the garage and carries as much as possible into the house. This is best. This is initiative.

Using initiative honors others. It's efficient. It decreases arguments. (Imagine not having to declare, "I could use some help in here" ever again.) Initiative can increase peace and joy.

Initiative feels good. A few minutes ago, while I was working on this post, my brother needed to locate the serial number on the back of his TV cable box. He moved it with one hand and had his phone in his other hand, talking with the tech person who was helping him. There wasn't much light in the area, and I knew the numbers would be small. So, without being asked, I stopped writing, put down my laptop, and stood up and walked toward him as I turned on my phone's flashlight. I positioned the light so Dave could see the numbers. He was able to read them for the person on the phone. He was grateful. So was I.

I'm not special. You can do this, too. So can your kids. It feels good. It is good. It is initiative. {eo}

**Dr. Kathy Koch** is the author of *Screens & Teens: Connecting with Our Kids in a Wireless World*.