

Raquel

Community Level Challenge Story

I found myself volunteering for another fundraising event @ my daughter's school.

This time instead of just bringing something in or being a body for muscle somehow, I ended up on the Board and was responsible for putting on an entire production. A masquerade ball complete with auction & sit down dinner for over 200 guests.

At first, I was afraid, I was petrified but then I told myself to chill down, if I could throw a child's birthday party, I could throw a quinceañera and if I can throw a quince then I could do this event. In fact, I could do a community festival or emergency event should something happen in my neighborhood. Relatively there all the same when you think about it.

So, I did what I knew best, drew from my past experience like the quince and began identifying the strong suits of those I was working with. Luckily, I knew some of the volunteers from prior school events and what each could bring to the table. I also knew that once I paired/teamed certain individuals up magic happens things get done and goals are met quickly and efficiently.

Manny is great at décor; Brenda is awesome at food and Lydia rocks at communication. But when I team them up the flow of everything goes smooth and more inspiration gets onboard.

This is like the milpas in the farming community known as the three sisters.

Take for example corn, beans & squash, if you plant these separately, you'll have a lesser yield than if you plant them near each other. A little science lesson, corn stalks provide a pole for beans to grow/vine up. Beans give nutrients to the soil for the corn and well the squash with all its leaves shades the ground and helps prevent overheating to the corn & beans from the hot sun.

So at our local science museum has this interactive garden exhibit where you give a go at farming. Characteristics like shade & position come into play along with the three-sister rule. I let my daughter play with it and she got a pretty good score. Once I explained the 3 sisters or milpa rule to my daughter, her score at the garden exhibit improved. Pulling from prior knowledge and showing my daughter this scenario so she could take this notion with her when approaching other tasks & challenges has value. I'm hoping she'll keep this in mind.

There's value in approaching challenges with using past experience in mind. There's also usefulness in identifying strengths and assigning roles like the three sisters. So _____ tell me, when faced with challenges (big or small) do you find it beneficial to draw from experience,

Personal Story

Greeting: find out name and current weather of listener, tell her ours.

Opening/Intro:

Have you ever heard the phrase “Work Smarter, not Harder”?

This is a common phrase used in my household. As a solo mama, I find it easier for me to use this approach “ Work Smarter, not Harder” when faced with decisions. I'm always a fan of not having to repeat things in order to get it right. I'm definitely not a fan of wasting time, energy & stress so I can spend this time focusing on other things. There's value in that.

I tend to talk things thru or explain without being asked to my daughter as to why I'm making certain decisions/choices so

1. I beat her to the punch of asking me “Why?!!”
2. So, she'll understand how & why the decision was made in hopes she would learn & do the same for herself. Ultimately, I don't want her to struggle.

When faced with multiple choices, my mind immediately begins to weigh the pros & cons, good & bad of things, even something so simple as what I'm going to wear that day takes thinking. Its X degrees outside, I'm not going to wear _____ (clothing opposite of weather), right?! Maybe it it's cute.

Speaking of my kiddo and choosing options, she isn't in elementary school anymore and now gets to choose her electives. She wanted to discuss her required music option (band or choir). We discussed the ups & downs of each, should she choose to play an instrument that would require her

- carrying the instrument to each class in addition to her backpack & lunch bag
- -and not to mention practicing each afternoon.

Should she choose choir,

- she will always have her instrument (her voice) with her
- but would have to sing in front of her classmates and we all know how that can be.

Ultimately, she chose band after considering that she already has an after school sports & homework and couldn't take on practicing a new instrument to add to her busy schedule. See prepping her to understand that she'll do this same decision-making process thru high school, again when choosing where to attend college & career path will involve this sort of thinking has given her a valuable advantage in thinking things thru for what is best for her when considering things involved.

So most recently we (my daughter and I), had the opportunity to attend a hands-on interactive exhibit @ our local museum. Its name was “The Helmet Design Challenge”. Let me explain a bit about it.

The objective is to find a solution based on material choices given in order to design/choose the inner cushions of a helmet. You can easily test the impact of the choices when a lever comes down and it displays a rating score on a screen. Think of it like the “high striker” big hammer game at the carnivals that lights up when you hit it. The choices were gel packs, heavy silicone mats, cotton filling and such. My daughter discovered that the silicone mat provided the best safety rating however it was extremely heavy. While the lighter options still provided an acceptable safety rating with a light feel. We figured the heavy silicone mat would work best for Motorcycle & ATV riders whereas the lighter options would work best for maybe a child on training wheels. We joked that the design challenge was like Goldilocks, finding something that was just right for what you were looking for.

Even when faced with options, even when you’re stuck between a rock & a hard place, there’s still much to consider to help make the right choice.

INVITATION: Name, I really appreciate you chatting with me about the advantage of weighing the benefits & trade offs when faced with options to choose from. In what scenarios NAME do you find yourself weighing decisions every day and how do you choose?

What advantages do you see when using this approach?

Ready common examples: What to wear (based on schedule, mood & weather)

What to eat/cook (diet restrictions, what's available, time, weather)

Traffic route (school zone, speeds, # of stops)

Do you find any value in not just blindly reacting?