

TED Connection

Don't Eat the Marshmallow:

How marshmallows and 4-year-olds predict future success

Overview

Mensa for Kids' TED Connections are short, easy to use guides that help teachers, parents and youth use TED talks in a classroom or home setting. Rather than a lesson plan format, they have a list of discussion questions, all at higher levels of thinking.



Photo: John Morgan/flickr.com



Joachim de Posada shares how delaying gratification of eating a marshmallow by 4-year-olds turned out to be a predictor of future success in life across cultures.

WATCH THE TED TALK AT:

ted.com/talks/joachim_de_posada_says_don_t_eat_the_marshmallow_yet

Think about it

1. Motivational Speaker Joachim de Posada shares the basic principles of a study done by American psychologist Walter Mischel involving 4-year-olds and marshmallows. What does he say he thinks this study did? What do you predict marshmallows have to do with his answer?

2. Do you feel that the amount of time, 15 minutes, was a good choice? Predict what you think might have happened with more time or less time left alone with the marshmallow. Do you think you would have been able to last 15 minutes in the room with the marshmallow at 4 years of age without eating it?

3. What is the most important principle for success? He stated 2 things do you think these are the same or different? Expound on your answer.

4. What did Posada list as the indicators of success?

5. Were you surprised by the 100 percent statistic related to success from those who did not eat the marshmallow?

6. The study was recreated in Colombia with Hispanic kids. What was different about this study? Did you think this would change the results? Why?

7. Analyze the little girl who ate the inside of the marshmallow. What about her behavior predicts her success?



8. Dissect the example of the salesperson who asks a few questions; how did they not eat the marshmallow and what did they do that will lead to them getting more metaphorical marshmallows or sales?

9. What are some things you suggest that might impact the effectiveness of this study? Defend your suggested items with examples.

10. Give your opinion on the marshmallow theory as a predictor of success in the future. Justify your opinion.

Do it

- Conduct your own marshmallow theory with younger kids you know and see how effective it is.
- Start an “improver” list. Find things that you could improve and document how you would make the improvements.
- Research some of your favorite things and find out if they were first-time successes or if they were borne of failed attempts at other things.

Read about it

- Joachim de Posada and Bob Andleman: *Keep Your Eye on the Marshmallow*
- Joachim de Posada and Ellen Singer: *Don't Eat the Marshmallow ... Yet!*
- Joachim De Posada and Ellen Singer: *Don't Gobble the Marshmallow ... Ever!*

Surf it

- Visit Joachim de Posada's website: joachimdeposada.com