

Use Boys Qualities to Engage Them

Our boys are very special and (over the years) I have put together 102 qualities (or traits) that they generally display on a continuum. They have been collated from the many parents and teachers that have attended my seminars over the last 18 years.

When trying to engage and motivate boys in school, at home and in the workplace we need to call on these qualities to get them to participate and do things they sometimes show reluctance for.

Here are some examples:

Boys are quite CURIOUS

Curiosity is why boys like fishing, crabbing etc. Their curiosity has them dangling a line or crab net for ages (even though they are often impatient!), curious about that tug on the line or that shape in the crab net as they pull it up – “Will it be a legal size? Is that a monster fish at the end of my line – or a snag?

Use $? + 8 = 13$ before.... Solve for x: $X+8=13$. Use puzzles and code breakers in class and at home. Re-assess classroom lighting to raise curiosity and intrigue. Darker classes are generally preferred by boys.

Boys (deep deep down) are HONEST

Don't let boys hand in rubbish – use our positive relationships with them to get them to produce work that is worthy of your relationship with them. Ensure, however, it is done privately as bravado can take over when peers are present. Allow boys to self-mark in areas of neatness etc. They are much harder on themselves than we give them credit for.

Boys are CARING and HELPFUL

This is often brought out by boys working with other groups who are OLDER or YOUNGER but is not always apparent within their own peer group. If boys are helping younger children with some mathematical computations etc this will enhance the applicability of their own understanding and hence aid their numeracy. The same applies to boys who are assisting older people (like grandparents) with any job around the house. Boys love to be helpful to teachers as well and we should tap into this wonderful aspect of their natures to bring out the very best in them.

Boys are TACTILE

Boys love hands on activities and we should use a variety of objects to reinforce numerical and other concepts. When the teacher is demonstrating or explaining something at the board, boys should be either fiddling with objects or making notes or drawing sketches as sitting still these days will often have them drift off in their concentration. Slightly more boys than girls are visual (or visual / kinaesthetic) learners so they should be active or be looking at pictorials to reinforce learning. Ensure work set at home includes some tactile experiences for both boys and girls.

Boys are FUNNY

They love a joke, they love it in school or at home when we act silly and laugh with them. A parent or teacher who invokes humour where appropriate can get boys to do remarkable things. They will remember you for eternity for making the learning fun or for the fun they had with you at home. The media portrays how serious and sinister the world is – we must, instead, be positive. Have fun with them.