

# Walking the Walk. Talking the Talk.

Whoop hoo! I had purchased my three kits and was ready to take those first steps! But was I?????

Let's take it back a step. It had been bugging me for a while. My three boys (ages 9, 7 and 4) are smart and caring. However, when it came to money they really had no clue. How could they? Their needs were small and whatever they needed they got ... new soccer cleats, toys to play with, school supplies, treats. Now, please don't for a minute think that my boys are spoiled. They are not. However, what I was realizing was that they struggled to put a value on the dollar. Pie in the sky. Not their fault. They never had to really touch it, feel it, smell or use it. It was time to start.

What was my focus? What message did I want to send to my boys? Quite simply, I've never personally been motivated by money but I do recognize that we live in a society that requires you to use it.

I want my boys to understand the power behind money.  
I want them to create the opportunity to have choices in their lives.  
I want them to realize that it isn't about how much money they have but how they use it.

Getting started ... I was feeling pretty gung ho with my kits under my arm when the realization struck me. There are no shortcuts. I need to plan to do this. Consistency and clarity is key if I want to create the right habits and send the right message.

Think! So, I did. I read the book in the kits and figured out my action plan. Good old common sense!

I got \$100 in \$1 coins from the bank. I wasn't intending on using all of this but I wanted a simple denomination of coin that would be easy for the kids to handle.

Whilst I was at the bank I made an appointment to take each of my boys individually to open their first account (I was imagining a sense of regal importance, pomp and ceremony being firmly imprinted on each boys mind).

I talked to hubby. If we were going to do this we needed to be consistent. We decided on a \$5 allowance per week. I have to say, this was a struggle but we wanted a \$\$\$ amount that was enough that they could reach their goals with a time line that wasn't in another decade. We also wanted an amount that could be split easily when it came to dividing their money.

I picked a day. A quiet, wet (couldn't predict the weather) Sunday afternoon. The whole family was mellow and in a mood to learn. We had milk and cookies on the table.



The boys were given the task of collecting their "piles of money" and bringing them to the table resulting in quite an eclectic mix (think pigs of three different shapes, old boxes and a wallet). The immediate impact of my boys "saving" habits was sitting right in front of me. My eldest hoarded every dust covered cent and dime that he found. All three of his money boxes were full and heavy. My middle son had 46 cents, a pokémon figure and an empty sweet wrapper (an insight into the future perhaps?). My youngest simply didn't care about the contents. He was more intent on shaking what he had and grinning broadly.

Now it was time to get started. The moment of truth had come. I used the book as my guide. We had some interesting conversations about where money comes from. I was surprised by how much the kids had picked up on their own but also how much was a little skewed. For example, money comes from a hole in the wall. True. Of course, that stemmed the next conversation about how it gets there ... work, role of banks etc. Money also grows on trees. False!

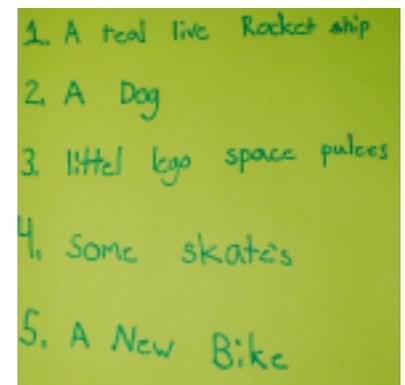
One conversation led to another until finally my seven-year old hit a brick wall. To coin his phrase "Mom, I've put my crazy brain in now". It didn't matter. We'd done together, as a family, what I had hoped. We'd talked about money. We'd talked about the practical stuff like where it comes from and what we use it for. We'd explored

the different coins and notes. We wrote our wish lists (think rocket ships to the moon). We'd counted and stacked. We labeled our jars and divided what we had.

That was four weeks ago and I'm proud to say that every Sunday afternoon we sit down for about half-an-hour and look at where we are at. The boys are given their allowance and they bring anything else they have accumulated throughout the week. We look at their lists and they can see how close they are getting to their goals. It is not a greed fest. The kids are motivated and realistic. You can see their big brains churning :)

To finish. Here was my realization. You have to walk the walk if you plan to do this. It takes time and patience. I know it won't happen in a week, or a month but over the years I'll help them create good habits that will last a lifetime.

My hope is that I can hand over my boys to the world as strong, independent adults. I want to teach them about money in the same way that I teach them to show respect, to have good manners, to eat the right foods, to listen and to learn. I feel that I'm on the right track.



This mom used the four quarter\$ kids kit as the foundation to teaching her boys about money.  
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