

Prompt: What was a challenging moment during your time as a Helper? How did you overcome this challenge, and what did you learn from it?

I first signed up to be a helper in p2p after being a buddy in 1st semester of 9th grade. I always wanted to be some kind of leader in society. This led to me taking p2p as an opportunity to improve my leadership and teaching skills. I had a second grader as a buddy when I first took over as a helper for p2p. I was assigned to help him with reading and history problems. Every Sunday we would get up early and have our meeting from 10-11 am before my church service. Even though we had a productive time, we faced challenges throughout the meeting.

One of the challenges that I faced during p2p meetings was the short attention span of my buddy. Typically, I would ask him what passage we are reading and ask him to read the passage. After he finishes reading we answer comprehension questions, but when this happens my buddy would lose concentration and would ask questions that are off topic. Sometimes he searched for something unrelated to the passage we read. This made my mouth hurt because I told him to try to stay on task multiple times. Obviously, this never worked and it felt like I was just tiring myself out every meeting. I tried to find ways to make it easier for the buddy to get active with the learning. I let him try to answer the questions since I thought only me talking was boring him throughout the meeting. This did allow the buddy to answer more problems but he still lost his concentration and asked unrelated questions from the reading passage. I really wanted the kid to improve on understanding whatever he read since I always have passion to help others around me. I knew that the buddy's mom relied on me to help him in reading but I thought this would never happen if the buddy is determined to absorb my lesson. One day I was outraged with all the extra stuff that he said in the meeting and told him that I would inform his mom about his behavior. Also I started to show facial expressions and started showing my frustration during our meetings. I knew that I was immature for my actions, but I had no idea how to kindly make the buddy get inspired to learn. I sat down and started brainstorming, then I suddenly realized that I was pretty much the same as my buddy when I was 8. At this point I accepted the fact that my buddy was only 8 and it was completely normal for him to lose focus easily and disobey my words. I was not really giving him time to mature and just forced him to act like a teenager.

After I accepted the fact that my buddy is still maturing, our meetings were less stressful. When he made Unrelated comment I politely replied and continued with my lesson. It was obviously difficult for me to properly teach my buddy but understanding his situation helped me continue tutoring.