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Mary Miele:

Hi, everyone. Welcome to the October episode of Evolved Education Podcast. My name is Mary Miele. I'm the founder of Evolved Education Company, and oftentimes my work really helps out my parenting life because I have three school aged children. Right now, I'm actually in an interesting situation in where I have a high school student, a middle school student, and an elementary school student. And so today, because this is interview season for students applying to schools, I asked my son, Trent, whose birthday it is today, happy birthday, Trent.

Trent:

Thank you.

Mary Miele:

To come on the podcast, and he's agreed to do so. He is applying to high school. And so I thought what would be fun is for me to teach you a little bit about interviews. You could listen with your kid, and Trent will tell you a little bit about what he's learned and also some things that your child can take with them as they go through this process. So first of all, Trent, thanks for being here today. All right, so basically what I want to know is what is it like to interview at a school?

Trent:

All right, so I guess I'll tell the whole story of it. Basically, they bring you in, they tour you around. You should know a little bit about the school ahead of time so that when they interview you, you're ready. So they tour you around and they usually bring you into the admissions office. You go into a room with a faculty member and you basically just do the interview. And what I think works the best to really get a good connection with the faculty member to start off with is just engaging with some small talk before you actually do the interview. So ask them questions like how long have you been at the school? What do they like about the school? And really just basically praising the school and asking them questions just to get a good connection to start off with.

Mary Miele:

Yeah, exactly. And you're pretty good at that kind of stuff and I know that you feel pretty comfortable in social situations. And what we do at Evolved is we work with kids. Even if you're not feeling comfortable, if you are feeling comfortable, all is okay with us. But first and foremost, we just want you to feel that you have the ability to go in and say, hey, nice to meet you. I had a really great tour. Wondering how long have you been here for? Usually those are great ways to segue into some small talk. And then of course the interview begins and they might just ask you some straightforward questions. So what are some of the questions that you prepared for that you also were asked in your interviews?

Trent:

All right, so I was really prepared for the kind of questions, why, whatever school, tell me about your family, what books have you read, challenges, how have you overcome the challenge? And basically just the basic interviewing questions you should be ready for because they're always going to ask those. Maybe they'll throw in a special question or two. But if you are prepared ahead of time with answers for the basic interviewing questions, what hobbies do like, what do your friends think of you, then you're going to be fine.

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Mary Miele:

And then there's also something we teach right here, which is answer the question, but they don't know you at all. They don't know who you are at all. They have no idea what your experience is. I think you have a pretty interesting experience in that you're a middle kid, you have a lot of independence here in New York City. You get yourself to school every day on your own. You really handle all your homework and chores and all of these things. And so I've encouraged you to tell specific examples and stories and things like that. Do you find that advice to be helpful when you're prepping for interviews?

Trent:

Yes. Overall, just being ready and being prepared is very helpful.

Mary Miele:

Right. And so when we were driving up to schools, for example, you and I just practiced a lot. Do you think that was helpful in terms of just me answering you a question and then you would just practice answering it?

Trent:

Definitely, because you get chances to make mistakes and then you can fix those mistakes when it comes to the actual interview.

Mary Miele:

Yeah, exactly. So would a good question be for parents and any other stakeholders who are listening, would it be to ask you how much practice you feel like you need? Is that a good thing to ask?

Trent:

Yeah. I'd say so.

Mary Miele:

Yeah. All right, so why don't you tell everybody what was easy, because you've been for an interview now and so you're really in the process still. You're going to experience more interviews. But so far, what has been easy about the process?

Trent:

What is easy to me is if you just keep in mind that you're basically interviewing them, you're really just having a conversation. You're getting to know about the school and just block out the fact that they're trying to get information from you, that it's a huge interview, it's a huge thing, and you really just have a conversation with the person, it always starts out fine. So at the end of the day, just don't over exaggerate the interview and just stick with your roots, basically, stick with what you planned for ahead of time and you're going to be fine. And I found that pretty easy. I also have pretty good social skills when it comes to this kind stuff, so that was definitely the easiest part, just my mindset.

Speaker 1:

So now that you've been through some of these interviews, what was difficult about the process?

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Speaker 2:

Definitely the preparation for it, making sure my answers were terse, to the point. Making sure that I wasn't using filling words like, um and and, and like, you know. All that kind of stuff. Basically just the preparation, making sure I had the right answers.

Speaker 1:

And when we say right answers, we mean really what you yourself wanted to say about yourself. And I know that you don't spend a lot of time in that space where people are asking you, "Trent, what are your strengths? What are your challenges? What do you like about high school?" That is not something that you're often thinking about. So this process causes you to think about those answers. And I remember working with you and sometimes you would write down an answer and then you'd say, "No, this isn't me. That's not me. That's not me. Actually, this is me." And then you got to a better place of where you wanted to say, "This is the answer." Right?

Speaker 2:

Yeah.

Speaker 1:

So tell us a little bit about that process for you. Do you agree that it was a brainstorming, writing, practicing type practice?

Speaker 2:

You got to do the work. Some people, it's easier than others. It didn't take me very long really just to make my answers. But you got to work out it, you got to write it down. You got to come up with the answers, and work on your social skills.

Speaker 1:

Absolutely. I think that's really key. And you're right, some people it might take a lot longer and some people it might not take very long at all. And I know from my perspective of prepping families over this period of time that sometimes there are certain kids where I needed to work on their social skills. And I needed to work on their small talk, and I needed to work on also the answers they might come up with. And some kids really know themselves, and some kids really have a hard time knowing themselves.

And so just to put it out there as parents going through this process and guiding it, you need to assess your kid in terms of how ready are they for an interview based on their social skills, based on how well they know themselves, based on how well they can communicate about themselves, and give those examples. Right?

Speaker 2:

Sure.

Speaker 1:

So let's end off with just some general advice that you'd like to leave families and kids with in this process.

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Speaker 2:

All right. So I said it before, but basically all school interview is this conversation. Don't over exaggerate it. Don't go into it worrying, "Oh, what are they going to think of me? Oh, this is my entire application right here." It's just a conversation with a faculty member. In the grand scheme of things, it's important, but it's not the entire thing. So just don't get worked up over it.

Speaker 1:

That's great advice. And I think it's easy to also not get worked up about it when you have that prep and you really are going in with a clear understanding. Maybe there'll be a curveball question that puts you in an uncomfortable position, but hopefully you're not in a totally uncomfortable position the entire time. So that's really key.

I'm just going to leave the podcast here with a couple of key questions that you can definitely work on with your kid or student who's going through this process. So here's a couple of them.

First of all, what are your strengths? What do you like to do in your free time? Tell me about your family? Tell me about a challenge and how you overcame it? Tell me about some books that you like to read and about why you like to read them? Tell me about what you are as a friend and what your friends would say about you?

These are really great questions that every kid can start with just to have some of that, we call it introspection. Introspection is looking into yourself and being able to communicate to someone else about you. So that's really key.

Then from a parenting perspective, you'll want to make sure you know about your child and have these conversations with your child. Because if you're going into the high school process and you're part of that process, you'll want to amplify what your kid is saying, not necessarily say something totally different. So getting on the same page is really, really important. And that's something that Trent and I have been working on this season, which has been really actually pretty fun. And something I really love about this process, just to put it out there, is that I feel like it does give us time as moms and kids to spend a little bit of time together.

Would you say that's true, Trent?

Speaker 2:

Yeah.

Speaker 1:

Yeah, we spent many hours in the car, right?

Speaker 2:

Six hours.

Speaker 1:

Many hours traveling around. That's not even done. We're still going at it, aren't we?

So anyways, it's really fun because I feel like what Trent's doing is he is 13 today. He has this great gift where he gets to learn about himself. And he has the opportunity to articulate by himself and really look

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into schools and discover what he wants for that high school experience. And I as a mom get to partner with him on that journey. And so I feel like I'm in real time getting to know him, and I'm really supporting the process by also writing things down and going in for my interviews with a very clear idea of what I want to say about you to schools as we go through this process.

Right?

Speaker 2:

Yep.

Speaker 1:

All right. So if you are listening and you'd like to get some more individualized help with this, just know that we have a team here of professionals who work with families. We are educators, so we help you really learn how to do this.

Starting with Randi Dumont, for middle school and high school, Sophie Roberts, Liza Steele, Caitlin Hasson, Stacey Duchak, and Becky Reback, and myself. So we're all working together here with our families to make sure that everyone is prepared and feeling great about going through such an important process. So be in touch with us if you have any questions.

Thanks Trent for being here.

Speaker 2:

No problem.

Speaker 1:

Happy birthday.

Speaker 2:

Thank you.

Speaker 1:

Everybody say happy birthday Trent. It's so exciting to have a birthday and I appreciate you spending time with me as always, helping all of us to do this important work. So, all right, have a great rest of your month, everybody.