Examples of ways to contrive motivation for a learner to Mand for Information

**Note**: Not all of the following examples may contrive motivation for every learner to mand information. Every child is different. Make sure your learner is motivated before prompting these mands. In addition, try not to talk to contrive motivation. Notice how the teacher does not speak to contrive motivation in each of these examples below.

**What**

The teacher will bring in a paper bag with things the child likes inside the bag (i.e. little toys, gummies, books).

The teacher shakes the bag or turns on a toy in the bag to contrive motivation for the child to want to know what is in there.

Once the learner looks interested, prompt him/her to say, "What is in there?" or “What’s in the bag?”

Teacher then removes item from the bag and says it’s a (name of reinforcing item) and delivers the item to the child.

Change the ring on your cell phone so that it plays a song or rings in a way the learner has never heard before. Hide the cell phone in the room with the learner and have someone else call it. When you see that the learner is looking around to find the source of the noise, prompt the mand, “What’s that noise?” Tell the learner it is your phone and show it to them. Allow them to talk on the phone if they want to.

While the learner is downstairs, have someone go upstairs and begin hitting the floor with a broom or toy bat. The learner will hear the noise upstairs. If the learner begins looking around the room to find the source of the noise, prompt the learner to mand, “What is that noise?” Therapist can then tell him something to the effect of, “it is your brother and he is playing baseball (or some other fun activity that the learner enjoys). Let’s go play with him” *(Example provided by Erica from York, PA)*

**Where**

Order a kid’s Meal from a restaurant and take the French fries out of the container (do not allow the learner to see you do this). When the learner opens the Meal, prompt him to mand “Where are my fries?” Once he mands, provide the information that leads to the French fries *(Example: They are in the bag on the seat next to you.)*. *(Example provided by Mayda from NC)*

Remove all of the learner’s videos from the video cabinet. Tell him that he can go watch a movie. When he goes to the cabinet to get the movie he wants to watch, he will open the closet and the movies will be gone. Once you determine he is motivated for the information, prompt him to mand, “Where are my movies”. As soon as he mands, give him the information that leads to the location where he can find the movies.
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When it is time to leave for school, hide the learner’s bag so that it is no longer in the place he typically finds it. When he goes to get the bag and notices it is missing, prompt “Where is my bag?” Tell him the answer and let him get it himself.

Take the learner’s trains out of his toy chest (or location they are normally kept). When learner opens the toy chest (as soon as he sees it is empty), prompt him to ask “where are my trains”. Give him the info that leads to the trains.

Give the learner a bowl of cereal or ice cream with no spoon. When he goes to the drawer to get a spoon, make sure there are no spoons in the drawer. Once he sees no spoons are present, prompt the learner to say, “Where is the spoon?” Tell him the information that leads to a spoon. (Example provided by Jennifer from MD).

Present the learner with the case to his favorite CD rom computer game. When he opens the case, the CD rom will be missing. Once he notices it is gone, prompt him to mand “Where is my game?” Tell him the information that leads to the game.

While engaging in a craft activity, hide the learner’s markers or scissors. At the point he needs the item and begins to look for them with no success, prompt him to mand, “Where are my…?” Tell him the answer and let him get it on his own.

During lunch hour at school, give the learner their lunch box with no lunch in it. Prompt “Where is my lunch”. Provide information to assist him in finding it.

While playing with the Mickey Mouse clubhouse, give the learner all pieces except for Mickey. When the learner looks around as if he is trying to find Mickey, prompt, “where is Mickey mouse?” Provide information so that he can find Mickey on his own.

**WHY**

Order a Happy Meal from McDonalds remove the food (do not allow the learner to see you do this) and replace the real food with all plastic food. When the learner opens the Meal, he will notice there is only plastic food in his box. Once he notices, prompt him to mand, “Why is it like this?” Answer the question by telling him you thought it was funny or that you thought he might like to give that meal to his doll. Ask him if he wants to order a meal for himself (if he finds it “fun” to self order) or tell him that you have his “real” meal right next to you.

While engaged in an activity with the learner, suddenly stand up and put on your coat and hat. When the learner looks at you as if he is wondering what you are doing, prompt him to ask, “Why did you put your coat and hat on?” Once he mands, tell him “because we are going to the park to play” (or other fun location that is better than the current activity). Added note: In the summer, you can put on your hat and sunglasses.
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At mealtime the teacher puts a NON-food item on the learner’s plate and gives the plate to the learner. Wait for the learner to appear to “care”. Prompt the learner to say, "Why did you do that?"
Teacher should act as if they got it mixed up and present the learner with the correct plate which should have something special on it (or could be a plate with their favorite TV character on it so that the mand is more heavily reinforced).

Change things in the house (ex. hang Pooh Bear from the ceiling fan) and if the learner notices and cares, prompt “Why is Pooh Bear on the fan?” The answer needs to be valuable to the learner (example: “because I wanted to make him fly”- and then turn on the fan so that pooh bear flies across the room.)

When it is time to leave for school, have a swimsuit hanging on the hook where the learner keeps his bag. When he goes to get the bag and notices the swimsuit, prompt him to say, “why is my swimsuit here?” If he asks, tell him that after school you are going to go swimming (only if the learner finds the activity valuable).

While engaging in a craft activity, when it is time for the learner to cut with scissors, hand him an umbrella. When he looks perplexed, prompt “why did you do that?” Tell him that you wanted to play a game of splashing in the mud outside and we need the umbrella to stay dry. This same example could work with anything you want to hand him that does not allow him to cut (something that would seem weird to hand him in the moment he needs the scissors). Make sure that the outcome after he asks “why” is that you are going to do something MORE fun than cutting.

While the learner is in the bathtub taking a bath, turn off the lights in the bathroom (only if the learner will not get scared). When the learner notices that the lights are off, prompt them to mand, “Why are the lights off”. Once he mands, you can tell him something like “Oh, because I wanted to show you my glow in the dark bath toys” (or something else that will be reinforcing to the learner). (Example provided by Mayda from NC).

Push all of the learner’s videos from the video cabinet over to the side and add some boxes that appear to look like shoe or cereal boxes or something that obviously doesn’t belong in that cabinet. Wait for the learner to be motivated to watch a movie. When he goes to the cabinet to get the movie he wants to watch, he will open the closet and see the boxes. In the moment he is looking at the boxes in a perplexed manner (and only IF he is motivated), prompt him to mand, “Why is this box here?” As soon as the learner mands, tell him that his favorite snack is in the box and that you thought he would like to have these with the movies so that he can snack while he watches a film.

Give the learner a key but do not tell him what it is for. When the learner appears motivated, prompt, “Why did you give me this?” Tell him that it opens a box that has a surprise in it and show him where the box is to open.
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Change things in the house (ex. hang Pooh Bear from the ceiling fan) and if the child notices and looks confused, prompt “Why is Pooh Bear on the fan?” The answer needs to be fun to the learner (example: “because I wanted to make him fly”- and then turn on the fan so that pooh bear flies across the room.)

**HOW**

*Notes about teaching this mand:* When teaching “how” mands, make sure the learner is physically able to perform the action required once the information is provided to him. If he is unable to physically perform the action himself, the proper mand should be “help me” and not “how”. If the learner figures out “how” to do it before you show him, do not prompt the mand.

Place an item that the learner typically finds valuable in a container that he does not know how to open. Be sure that the learner would physically be able to open the container if someone showed him how (otherwise the proper mand would be “help me” or “open it”). Give the learner the container with the item in it and tell him he can have the item. As soon as the learner begins attempting to open the container, prompt him to say, “How do you open it?” Then tell him how to open it and allow him to open it independently.

Present the learner with a tape player or CD player that he will want to listen to. Put it in front of the learner but do not turn it on. When you see that he is looking to try to figure out how to turn it on, prompt the learner to mand, “How do you turn it on?” Tell him how to turn it on and then let him turn it on himself.

While playing with identical transformer toys, take yours and transform it into a different object. Do not allow the learner watch you do it. Then show him what you did. When he picks up his transformer and unsuccessfully attempts to “transform” it, prompt him to mand “How did you do that?” Once he mands, show him how to do it and then allow him to do it himself.

Give the learner batteries to make his toy work properly. When he cannot successfully figure out how to put the batteries in the toy, prompt “How do you do it?” Show him how to do it and allow him to do it himself.

Teacher has a race car that races forward when you pull it back toward you. Teacher pulls the race car back so that the learner does not see how it works. Then the learner puts the car in front of the child and lets it race forward so that the learner sees it go. The teacher then places the race car in front of the learner and allows him to attempt to make it race forward. When the learner’s attempts are unsuccessful, the teacher prompts the learner to say, “How do you make it go?” Once the learner mands, the teacher tells him how to pull it back to make it go. *(Example provided by Jennifer from Brick, NJ)*
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When the learner wants popcorn, give the learner the bag (prior to popping it). Wait for the learner to try to figure it out and then prompt, “How” or “How do I pop it?” Once he mands, you can show him how to put it in the microwave and press the button to start it. (Make sure you allow the learner to put it in the microwave and press the button himself after you show him how to do it).  (Example provided by Mayda from NC).

During a time when the learner will want a pencil, give the learner a pencil with no point and wait for him to notice. When he attempts to use the sharpener or make the pencil work in some other unsuccessful way, prompt “how”. Then show him how to use the electric sharpener and make sure you allow the learner to sharpen the pencil himself.

Turn on a wind-up toy that the learner likes. When the toy stops if the learner attempts to make it move again, prompt “How do you do it?” Then show him the button he has to push or twist and allow him to do it.

While coloring or drawing with the learner, draw your picture on carbon paper so that you end up with several copies. If the learner looks interested and wants to do the same, give the learner regular paper. When the learner looks motivated, prompt, “How did you do that?” Show him how to do it and allow him to color on the carbon paper himself.

**HOW MUCH**

Make a fun craft activity such as tie dying or painting a shirt or creating colored water with which to dye Easter eggs. Make sure the activity calls for a specific amount of dye to be dropped into each container. For each step of the activity, be sure to tell the learner how much of the dye to put in to each individual cup. Make sure that each time you tell the learner a different number of drops so that he does not anticipate the answer. If the learner is interested, then for the third time he picks up the dye, do not tell him how many drops to put in. When the motivation is present, prompt him to ask “how many drops do I put in?” then you can tell him the answer and let him put the drops in the cup.

**WHICH**

Teacher should put a valued item in one hand and switch it back and forth, hiding the location. If the learner appears interested, extend your hands and wait for the learner to indicate motivation. Then prompt the learner to ask, “Which hand?” Give him the information “my right hand” or “the hand with the sticker on it” so that the learner can identify the appropriate hand and get the valued item.

Teacher will put out 3 containers that are the same and will place a reinforcing item under one of them (similar to the shell game). Show the learner that the item is under one container and then move the containers around so that he doesn’t know which one of the containers is hiding the item. Prompt the child to ask, “Which one is it under?”

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Have a locked box with several keys present on the table. Make sure the learner sees that a valued item is locked inside the box. This should contrive motivation for the learner to open the box. When the learner begins touching the keys indicating motivation to open the box, prompt the learner to say “which key”. Then tell him identifying information that assists them in finding the correct key “The key with the orange tip on it”.

Walk to the parking lot to go for a ride in the therapist’s car. When the learner approaches the parking lot, if he does not know what the car looks like and begins to look motivated to go to a car, prompt him to say “which car?” Once he mands, tell him identifying information he may use to find the car “It is a red convertible”. This should allow the learner to approach the correct vehicle for his ride.

**WHO**

Teacher pauses the learner’s favorite video on the screen so that many of the learner’s favorite characters are visible. Teacher asks the learner to tell her the names of the characters. When the learner points to a character he does not know, the teacher prompts the learner to say, “Who is that?” The teacher then tells him the name of the character and turns the video back on. *(Example provided by Charlene, Brick, NJ)*

Teacher knocks on the door and when the learner opens it, gives the learner a piece of candy or other valued item. Next, someone different rings the doorbell. When the learner opens it, this person does NOT give the learner something valuable. Next, someone else rings the doorbell and this person does have something valuable for the learner.

The learner starts to realize that particular people have valued items for him. Therefore, the motivation begins to increase to know who is at the door. When it is obvious that the motivation is increasing, prompt “Who is it?”

This example may also be done with the telephone as in the following example… Only have people the learner knows be on the phone for him. Phone rings. Mom tells the learner it is Dad and puts the learner’s ear to the phone. Dad says, “this is Dad, there is a piece of candy under your pillow on your bed”. The learner runs to get the candy. Next, the phone rings. Again, it is for the learner. Mom says, “it is Aunt Kathy” Once on the phone Aunt Kathy says, “This is Aunt Kathy. There is a toy for you in the drawer under the TV”. The learner will likely be more interested in knowing who is on the other line. IF the motivation is present, prompt him to ask who is on the phone. Make sure the person on the other line is able to tell him where something valuable is hiding or provide him with some other valued information *(example: Dad is coming home now and he is taking you to a favorite store, or taking you for a car ride, etc.)*
Teacher presents pictures of known people e.g. mom, dad, grandparents and unknown professionals. 
The teacher holds up the picture to the learner. If he is motivated to know who the person is in the picture, prompt, “Who is that?” and then tell the learner who it is.

Using toys that are reinforcing to the learner, the teacher will hide a toy character that the learner is motivated for (ex. Buzz Light-year or pooh bear) behind a barrier and say "Guess who is behind here". Prompt "Who?" Show the item and say it is “Buzz Light-Year” and let the learner ask for Buzz if he wants it.

Place many different characters around the room (example: stuffed mickey mouse doll, baby doll, etc.). Tell the learner you are going to play a game by choosing a card from a deck. Each card should contain a photo of a valued item and each character in the room should have one item on one of the cards hiding behind the character. When the learner chooses a card, if he indicates motivation to have what is on the card, prompt him to ask “Who has the X item?” Once he asks you can tell him the name of the character. Example: The learner pulls a picture card with candy on it. He says, “Who has the candy?” Teacher says, “Mickey Mouse has the candy”. The learner then goes to Mickey mouse and gets the candy. This “game” may also be played with real people. Later it can be generalized to the classroom or can be played with real people during a team meeting. Each of the people in the room can have a different item for him and he can ask “who” and then ask the person if he can please have the item.

**WHEN**

Place an empty bag of a highly preferred food on the table setting. Do not talk about the item however have it sitting on the table while doing something in this setting with the learner. When the learner starts looking at the empty bag, prompt him to ask, “When can we get more XXXX?” Once the learner echoes your prompt, tell him “After you XXXX” (The activity that the learner should have to engage in prior to the requested activity should require only a short duration in time, so as to reinforce the requested).

Bake cookies with the learner and when the batter is ready, place it on the tray in the oven. When you see the learner looking into the oven at the cookies, prompt him to ask “When will they be ready?” As soon as the learner echoes your prompt, tell him the amount of time that the cookies have to bake for. Then tell him that he can eat something else that is valuable while he waits. (When first teaching this skill, you may want to teach this when there are only a few seconds left for the learner to wait. You may also want to respond to the mand for “when” with “After you do XXXX” (This activity should be an activity that the learner enjoys. Try to time the activity so that it is completed right at the time the cookies are finished baking).

Learner sees you packing their bag for the pool. Prompt, “When are we going to the pool?” Tell the learner, “After you put your shoes on”. *(Example provided by Amy from York, PA)*.