

Should Kids Play Video Games?

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Over the years I have spent a lot of my spare time playing video and computer games. While it may seem counterintuitive to admit it, I spend time engaging in these activities, there is no escaping the fact they have played a role in who I am today.

Video games are often considered a waste of time by my parent's generation. Along with the stereotype that it is an antisocial activity, some even think that video games are harming their children's minds, making them more violent or depriving them of the time to do an "intellectual" activity. However, playing video games is among the earliest activities I can remember doing, and I think for me the effects have only been beneficial. What some older people may not realize is that video games, like most other activities, video games are best enjoyed with another person. Having two or more people play something together, be it video games, chess, sports or any other activity, makes one word come to mind for me-competition.

Flash back 12 years ago. At six years old I know I am too little to play sports with my older relatives, and none of them would bother playing a serious game of chess with someone in kindergarten. Luckily for me, as far as video games went, the Super Nintendo was as advanced as it got. Though those old games with 2-dimensional graphics were very primitive by today's standards, these games were a playing field where I could actually compete. Sitting with my older

cousins playing video games was the first time that I got to experience legitimate competition with other people. Better yet was the fact that my age made me an underdog, which made victories all the more rewarding. To me it comes as no surprise that the earliest conversation I remember having was after winning a Super Nintendo game. Hearing my cousin exclaim, "He's six and I'm sixteen and I still lost" sticks in my mind as the first time I remember accomplishing something. I didn't just beat another six year old, or have an adult condescendingly congratulate me for accomplishing something only impressive for a kindergartner. I was actually able to overcome some odds and accomplish my goal of winning. I strongly believe that my early days of competing with others in video games led to the competitive nature I have today. It doesn't matter if I'm playing someone in Madden football on my Xbox, in basketball at the gym, or just trying to do well on a test at school. My drive to succeed is what keeps me from backing down from any challenge, whether or not I or anyone else thinks it is too hard.

It's my competitive nature that causes me to work harder in any pursuit until I reach the top. It's why I practice my instrument so I can be more than just average, or why I try my best to do well in school and avoid having a teacher give me a grade that screams, "you can do better." I know I may not always get a good grade, be the best saxophone player, or win every game of Madden I play, but trying to be competitive at everything I do has taught me an important life lesson. While I can't always be the best at everything, nothing should keep me from trying.



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