



SEASON 1, EPISODE 2

Initiative

by Rachael Domer

DISCUSSION GUIDE

In this episode, Rachael Domer shares how initiative—the drive to step up, take action, and lead without waiting for permission—transformed her TSA experience and career in engineering education. From after-school projects in middle school to leading at the state and national levels, Rachael’s story shows that leadership starts with a decision to try. Whether it was competing in events, or creating new opportunities for military-connected students, Rachael’s journey is powered by purpose and perseverance. Her story reminds us that initiative is a habit, a mindset, and a skill that opens doors to leadership, growth, and lasting impact.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Middle School

1. Rachael says that signing up for TSA after her engineering class was her first act of initiative. What is one example of a time you went beyond what was expected or required?
2. She talks about feeling scared and excited when entering TSA events for the first time. How do you handle those kinds of feelings when trying something new?
3. Rachael didn’t always win competitions—but she kept trying. Why do you think trying matters more than winning when you are building leadership skills?
4. Rachael’s teacher “Mama Rosas” helped her see potential she didn’t see in herself. Who is someone in your life who has encouraged you to step up or try something new?
5. What is one way you could take initiative in your TSA chapter or at school this month?

High School

1. Rachael says initiative isn’t just about going first, it is about seeing a need and taking action. What is an example of something at school or in your chapter where you could take initiative?
2. She took initiative to network with college professors and discovered a new path in engineering education. How has exploring opportunities helped you learn more about your future goals?
3. Rachael balanced leadership, competitions, a job, and a health challenge in high school. How do you stay focused or motivated when life gets overwhelming?
4. Through TSA and TCA, Rachael created new outreach programs and helped expand access to engineering education. What kind of impact would you like to make through your own initiative?
5. Rachael says TSA is a place where it is safe to fail. Why is that kind of environment important when you are learning to lead?

Optional Extension Activity

Create an “Initiative Impact Map.”

- Draw a mind map with “Initiative” at the center. Around it, write 3–5 specific actions you have taken in TSA, school, or life that show initiative (e.g., starting a project, leading a team, trying a tough event). Then, add what each one taught you or where it led.
- Close by identifying one new way you plan to take initiative this year, big or small. Write it down and share it with a peer, teacher, or advisor for accountability.