

Positive Child Behavior Management In The Classroom

Part 4

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One of the ways of developing the strength of self-control is to practice life-balance. A balanced life means that you do just enough of what you need to do to remain physically energized and emotionally under control. If you sleep too little, eat too much, exercise too little, work too much, play too little, socialize too much or too little you become physically and emotionally weakened, meaning that what happens to you or around you more easily overwhelms your power to handle it with peace and poise.

Another factor that has bearing here is what we can call your point of leverage. Your point of leverage is characterized by whatever your particular strength is in the classroom. Your strength and your inspiration go together. You feel most inspired by whatever you are naturally strongest in, best in, most gifted in. Some teachers' strength is in their sense of humor. For others, it is their orderliness. For others, it may be a passion for their subject. For others, it may be the ability to empathize and connect emotionally on a personal level with the students. Relying on your strengths to maintain classroom order, to manage a challenging behavior, gives you the most leverage in dealing with the challenge.

What is being described here is a way of demonstrating and developing *authentic* leadership in your classroom. You can use every episode in which you feel tested by a student's unruly conduct to grow into a more confident, competent leader and thus turn those challenging episodes into positive self-development that translates into more easily achieved and maintained classroom order.

Reacting with visible stress and strain ends up reinforcing the chaotic condition you want changed. The student who can trigger you off feels a sense of power over you, and since disruptive students are generally rebelling against their sense of powerlessness, your loss of composure equates with a transfer of power from you to the disruptive student.

Students who routinely disturb the order of your classroom typically have the lowest self-esteem. They do not believe in their power to achieve significance through a positive contribution. To compensate for their feeling of low self-worth they act as if classroom decorum, showing the teacher respect and even education itself are of no value. To counteract this, be sure to provide the troublesome student with plenty of positive feedback. Look for and point out what she does well. No matter how many times he lets you down, be open and willing to relate with him as someone you genuinely care about and are glad to see.

You also need to be firm when firmness is called for. Just being "nice" to a "naughty" student fails to sufficiently clarify what you will and will not stand for, resulting in the student's uncertainty about the acceptable boundaries.

In sum, the challenging student gives you an opportunity to grow into a wiser, more skillful leader in your classroom. Focus on the process of developing your leadership rather than expecting yourself to perfectly handle every challenge that comes your way. Work every day on maintaining your inner peace and poise to lead your students *from within* toward secure and orderly self-conduct.